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B0608 – February 26, 2006 – Major Bible Themes
Chapter 42 – Israel in History and Prophecy

I. ISRAEL IN HISTORY

A. Call of Abram

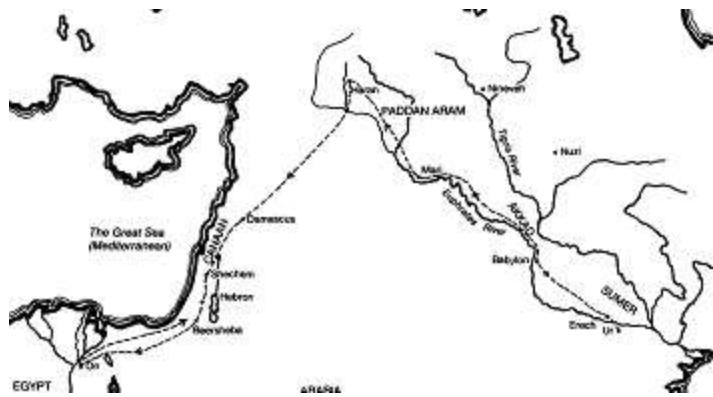
The formal history of Israel begins with Jacob who was re-named Israel (Gen 32:28). However, it is important to begin with the Call of Abram in Gen 12 because this is when God began to call out a people for Himself.

Apparently God called Abram while he was still in the city of Ur.

Nehemiah 9:7 "You are the LORD God, Who chose Abram And brought him out from Ur of the Chaldees,

Genesis 12:1-3 ..."Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you;

Abram was to leave all that he had ever known in life and start a new life in a new land (it is apparent that Abram had a true encounter with the living God and was convinced that He was able to fulfill all that He promised). Because Abram believed God's promises his father, Terah, moved the family along the Euphrates River (the Fertile Crescent), planning to enter the land of Canaan.



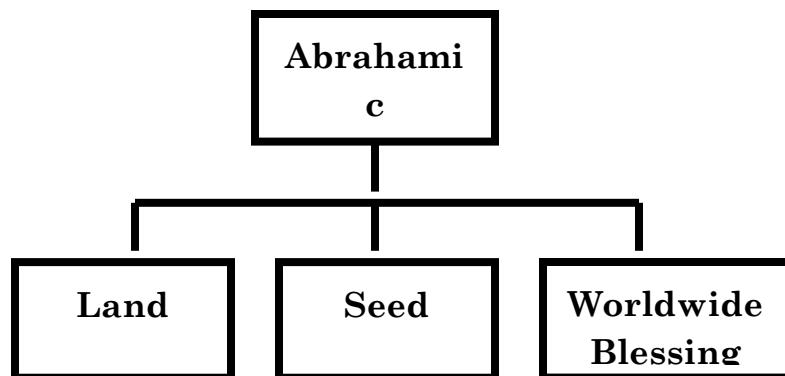
Genesis 11:31 Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran, and settled there.

They went as far as Haran and for some reason stopped and settled there. After Terah died Abram God “took...Abraham from beyond the River, and led him through all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac” (Josh 24:3).

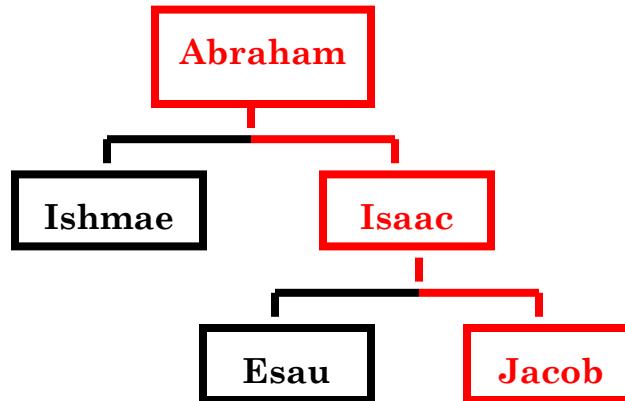
When God originally called Abram out of Ur He made three kinds of promises to Abram;

1. personal promises (Abram)
2. national promises to Abram’s descendants (Israel)
3. universal promises to all the families of the earth (Nations)

Because God made these promises this section of Scripture is known as the Dispensation of Promise. The promises are declared in Gen 12, 13, 15, 17, 19, 22, et. al. Even though there are many many promises there are three at base; 1) Promised Land, 2) Promised Seed, and 3) Promised Worldwide Blessing.



Later, when Abram was in the land God entered into an unconditional covenant with Abraham. God was responsible to sovereignly fulfill His promises to Abraham, Israel, and the nations. These covenant promises were then confirmed to Abraham's son Isaac and not Ishmael and then to Isaac's son Jacob and not Esau.



Jacob's name was changed to Israel by God in Gen 32:28. Israel then had twelve sons (Exod 1:2-4). These twelve sons went with their father Jacob and their families into Egypt because of a famine. Their brother Joseph was already there because they had sold him into slavery.

B. Exodus

Then God built the small family of 70 into a nation of ~2,000,000 in Egypt and supernaturally delivered them out of bondage in Egypt by their leader, Moses. When they left they plundered the Egyptians of silver, gold and other articles which would provide an economic base for the new nation and economic collapse for Egypt.

C. Mt Sinai

Then the nation traveled to Mt Sinai where God gave them the Law. A dispensational shift occurred here from the Dispensation of Promise to the Dispensation of Law. The nation wandered in the wilderness for 40 years because the nation was afraid of the inhabitants in the Promised Land. They failed to walk by faith choosing to walk by sight.

D. Conquest and Settlement

After everyone over the age of 20 died except Joshua and Caleb, Joshua led military conquests for seven years in Canaan and conquered a large portion of the Promised Land

(Josh 14:7, 10). Under Joshua the nation prospered but afterwards the nation declined morally and spiritually and the time of the Judges followed.

E. Election and Reign of King David

After the period of the judges failed the nation asked for a king. They wanted a human leader like the other nations. God chose Saul to be king. Saul was a spiritual failure and lost his anointing. Then God chose as his successor, David, a great warrior and man after God's own heart. He was able to conquer much of the territory in the Promised Land.

F. Golden Era of King Solomon

David's son Solomon succeeded him and the kingdom of Israel enjoyed its greatest prosperity. Solomon spread its borders near the Euphrates River. But Solomon's violation of God's command not to have multiple wives and not to depend on military alliances for safety prepared the way for the kingdom's decline.

G. Kingdom Decline

Solomon's son Rehoboam was a spiritual idiot. Instead of relying on the *wisdom* of the elders in national policy making he followed the *folly* of his best friends. This is no surprise considering the fact that Solomon's children were raised by heathen wives. As a result the kingdom declined and eventually divided.

H. Kingdom Divided

The 10 northern tribes (Israel) succeeded from the 2 southern tribes (Judah) and set up their own high places and fell into mass idolatry. The kings in the north were spiritual morons. The two southern tribes (Judah) were also quite idolatrous but the majority of the kings were evil and only a few were good.

I. Exile

As a result of mass apostasy, and in accordance with Lev 26 and Dt 28, God's judgment came upon the northern kingdom in 722BC sending the nation of Assyria as His weapon of judgment. The north became so hungry that mothers actually ate their own babies. Eventually they suffered military defeat and went into Exile to Assyria.

God's judgment on the southern kingdom was delayed until 605BC when they finally reaped the judgment of God in accordance with Lev 26 & Dt 28. The nation God sent to judge Judah was Babylon. Her destruction and exile came in three stages; 605BC, 597BC, and 588-586BC. The two kingdoms remained in exile for the prophesied 70 years (Jer 29:10) after which the nation was partially restored.

J. Restoration

Israel and Judah were partially restored beginning in 536BC when they were permitted to return to the Promised Land. Under Zerubbabel they began to rebuild the Temple but this Temple would not be completed until Herod in the first century AD.

K. Times of the Gentiles

When the southern kingdom Judah went into exile to Babylon the "times of the Gentiles" began. The "times of the Gentiles" began in the 6th century. Daniel prophesied of these Gentile kingdoms in chapters 2 and 7.

| Kingdom | Dan 2 | Dan 7 |
|----------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| • Babylon | Head of Gold | Lion |
| • Medo-Persia | Arms & Chest of Silver | Bear |
| • Greece | Waist & Thighs of Brass | Leopard |
| • Rome | Legs of Iron | Ten-Horned Beast |
| • Revived Rome | Feet of Iron & Clay | Little Horn |

Each symbols qualities graphically portray the qualities of the kingdom they represent. Daniel also prophesied of Israel's future, exclaiming that their Exile would not last just 70 years but seventy times seven or 490 years. These years are lunar years of 360 days each and the countdown was to begin with the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. This decree was made by Artaxerxes Longimanus in 444BC (Neh 2:1-8). During the first 49 years Jerusalem was built (Dan 9:25). The remaining 434 years concluded with the Triumphal Entry of Christ (33AD). After this the Messiah was to be cut off, that is, crucified. Then the Romans would destroy the Temple completed by Herod. This was fulfilled in 70AD (Dan 9:26). The final seven years of the 490 year calendar have yet to be fulfilled literally as the previous 483. The final seven years will begin when the little horn, the Antichrist, makes a firm covenant promising peace to Israel for seven years (Dan 9:27). It will appear that he has solved the Middle East crisis but he will break his covenant after 3 1/2 years and commit the abomination of desolation in the Tribulation

Temple. The last 3 ½ years will be the “time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer 30:6-7), also known as the “great tribulation” (Matt 24:21) which will lead up to the repentance of Israel and the Second Coming of Christ.

In light of the Second Coming of Christ, the OT Jewish prophets

1 Peter 1:10-11 ...made careful searches and inquiries, ¹¹ seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.

It is important to understand that the OT prophets could not distinguish between the two coming of the Messiah. It was difficult to understand how one Messiah could both suffer and reign. As a result, some thought there would be two Messiahs; Messiah ben Joseph, the suffering Messiah and Messiah ben David, the glorious Messiah. They did not perceive that one and the same Messiah could come two times, once to suffer and later to reign in glory. It was difficult to figure out since many OT texts spoke of both the suffering and glories in the same context. However, Jesus showed that often two prophecies with a large amount of time in between them could be butted up against one another. From a straightforward reading it would be impossible to know that a large gap of time would intervene between their fulfillments. I will show you two passages to illustrate this. First,

Zechariah 9:9-10 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout *in triumph*, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey. ¹⁰ I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; And the bow of war will be cut off. And He will speak peace to the nations; And His dominion will be from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.

If you were reading these verses before the Messiah came you would think that these events would happen within the same time frame. However, we now know that verse 9 refers to the king’s first coming and verse 10 refers to the second coming. No gap of time in between is revealed but later revelation clarified that there are often such gaps.

Second, Jesus’ reading of Isa 61:1-2 in the synagogue gives another example.

Isaiah 61:1-2 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the

brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners; ² To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD And the day of vengeance of our God;

When Jesus read this text he left off the last phrase.

Luke 4:17-19 And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, ¹⁸ "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED, ¹⁹ TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD."

Jesus knew that "the day of vengeance of our God" was yet future and referred to His Second Coming, not His first coming.

Most of prophecy is fulfilled around the 1st and 2nd Comings of Christ. A whole slew of OT prophecies were fulfilled in Christ's 1st Coming and they were fulfilled literally, to the very jot and tittle. All prophecies that remain to be fulfilled will be fulfilled in the exact same way, literally, to the very jot and tittle (Matt 5:18).

II. ISRAEL IN PROPHECY

As I said earlier, the northern and southern kingdoms were dispersed and went into exile in Assyrian and Babylon. 70 years later there was a partial restoration but for the most part the nation remained dispersed, eventually spreading out over the entire world. Promises of scripture assure us that the national identity of Israel will never be lost. They refused their Messiah at His first coming and they will remain in dispersion until His Second Coming. At that time He will regather His people into their own Promised Land and He will fulfill all of His covenant promises. So, the final regathering of Israel will not occur until the Second Coming of Christ.

There are four major stages that must take place in order to lead up to Israel's final regathering. *First*, Israel must be recognized as a political state in order for the Antichrist to make a "firm covenant" with the nation of Israel. This step has already been fulfilled in May 1948. Since that date Israel has gained more territory (in the six day war of 1967) although she returned the entire Sinai Peninsula to Egypt in 1980. She nevertheless has thrived and has become an important factor in world affairs. This is a prelude to the

fulfillment of other prophecies. *Second*, the leaders of the nation of Israel must enter into a firm covenant with the Antichrist who will be a Gentile Roman ruler of the Mediterranean region. This covenant will be planned for seven years. *Third*, the Antichrist will break this covenant after 3 ½ years and Israel will undergo persecution rather than peace. They will enter into the time known as “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer 30:6-7) and as “the great tribulation” (Matt 24:21). *Fourth*, Israel will turn to Jesus as her Messiah and He will return and eliminate the Antichrist and his armies at the battle of Armageddon. He will then establish His millennial kingdom and plant Israel firmly and securely in their Promised Land and she will be the head of the nations.

These four stages are crucial since, as you can see, the first has already been fulfilled. The stage is being set for a dramatic unfolding of end-time events in which Israel will play a major role.

Other prophecies that are highly significant include “the kingdom” and “the day of the Lord”. The “kingdom” is the most prominent theme of the entire OT. No topic is more pervasive than “the kingdom” in the entire Bible. I think it is downright sad that we hear so few sermons on the kingdom today. The OT predicted a time when Israel would dwell securely in her land under the rule of the Messiah, a time when the world would be restored to the garden of Eden, and there would be immeasurable spiritual and physical blessings. All the prophets spoke of this glorious time on earth and placed Israel on center stage and the Messiah as her King. When this major theme is coupled with the theme of the return of the King this period is referred to as “the day of the Lord”.

The “day of the Lord” refers to the period of the Tribulation and the Millennium which follows, a period of 1,007 years. The first seven years are a “day of gloom and wrath” but the 1,000 years that follow are a “day of light and blessing”. Two passages speak of a specific “day of the Lord” and term it “the great and terrible day of the Lord” (Joel 2:31; Mal 4:5). This day refers to the Second Coming of Christ.

As you can see there is much prophecy to be fulfilled and we are living in exciting times as we can see the stage being set for major world events to begin shaping up for the Second Coming of our King. In the following weeks we will unfold some of these events.

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