

Major Bible Themes

52 Vital Doctrines of the Scriptures Simplified and Explained

Adapted from the book *Major Bible Themes*
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Israel in History and Prophecy

- Introduction
 - The history of Israel begins with the call of Abraham in Gen 12 and is a major theme in the Old Testament.
 - The stewardship of Israel plays a very important role in God's plan and program for the ages.
 - The ages under Israel's stewardship are...
 - ✦ The Age of Promise (Past)
 - ✦ The Age of Law (Past)
 - ✦ The Age of the Incarnation (Past)
 - ✦ The Age of Tribulation (Future)
 - ✦ The Age of Millennial Reign (Future)
 - Five of the biblical covenants are directed toward Israel.
 - The covenants God made with Israel are...
 - ✦ The Abrahamic Covenant (Land/Seed/Blessing)
 - ✦ The Mosaic Covenant (Commandments/Judgments/Ordinances)
 - ✦ The Palestinian Covenant (Dispersion/Regathering)
 - ✦ The Davidic Covenant (Royal Lineage/Throne/Kingdom)
 - ✦ The New Covenant (Salvation/Faithfulness/Blessing)
 - The Palestinian and Davidic covenants reinforce the land and seed promises of the Abrahamic Covenant whereas the New Covenant replaces the Mosaic Covenant for Israel's blessing.
- Israel in History
 - Although the history of Israel properly begins with Jacob (renamed Israel) the history of Israel usually includes Abraham and Isaac, the grandfather and father of Jacob.
 - The account of the lives of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob takes up Gen 12-50 which shows how important Israel is to God, especially given that the entire creation account takes up only two chapters (Gen 1-2) and man's fall into sin takes up only one chapter (Gen 3).
 - From the divine viewpoint, the history of Israel is an important key to history as a whole.
 - Abraham originally lived in Ur of the Chaldees.
 - Abraham went with his father Terah to Haran and became a wealthy herdsman.
 - After his father's death, Abraham, his wife Sarah, and his nephew Lot left Haran and went to the Promised Land.

- Miraculously, after Abraham and Sarah were too old to have children, the son of promise Isaac was born.
- In due time Isaac and his wife Rebekah gave birth to twin sons, Jacob and Esau, with the younger twin Jacob being chosen by God to be the head of the nation of Israel.
- In keeping with the prophecy in Gen 15:13-14, the people of Israel made their way to Egypt in a time of famine.
- Their way was prepared by Joseph, who had risen to great authority in Egypt.
- Abraham and his family were cared for in Egypt during the lifetime of Joseph.
- After Joseph's death and a change of rulership in Egypt, Israel lost its privileged status and became slaves.
- The Lord raised up Moses and Joshua to lead them out of their bondage in Egypt and into the Promised Land.
- Israel failed God at Kadesh-barnea and, as a result, were disciplined to wander in the wilderness for 40 years.
- After the 40 years had passed, God enabled Israel to conquer the land east of the Jordan and, after Moses' death, to cross the Jordan and conquer much of the Promised Land.
- Israel prospered during the lifetime of Joshua, but they soon departed from God and went on a spiritual roller coaster ride as recorded in the Book of Judges.
- God then raised up Samuel the prophet who in large measure restored Israel spiritually.
- Israel rebelled against God and demanded a king to rule over them – Saul failed as Israel's first king.
- David followed Saul and was a great warrior that conquered much of the territory belonging to the Promised Land.
- David's son Solomon extended his influence until he put under tribute much of the area mentioned to Abraham, from the river of Egypt to the River Euphrates.
- Solomon's failure to obey God's command not to multiply wives nor depend upon military strength (Deut 17:16-17) prepared the way for Israel's decline and the divided kingdom.
- Solomon's children were raised largely by heathen wives who had no concern for the law of God.
- After Solomon's death the ten tribes of the north withdrew and had a succession of wicked kings who were representative of the spiritual idolatry of the people.
- God's judgment descended upon the northern kingdom when they were taken captive by Assyria.
- The two remaining tribes of the southern kingdom, although having some godly kings, followed the same downward spiral and were led into captivity by the Babylonians.
- After 70 years of captivity, Israel was able to go back into the land as prophesied in Jer 29:10.
- The people of Israel rebuilt the temple and later the walls of the city of Jerusalem.
- Although in the land, Israel did not follow the Lord and were under the dominion of the Medes and Persians for 200 years.

- Israel was then caught in the middle of the war between Syria and Egypt after the death of Alexander the Great.
- After this, the power of Rome began to expand until Jerusalem was subdued by the Roman General Pompeius.
- Israel was treated harshly under Roman rule and hundreds of thousands of Jews were carried off into slavery.
- Jesus Christ was born while Israel was under Roman dominion and was crucified under Roman authority.
- In 70 A.D., Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans and the people of Israel were driven from their homeland and scattered all over the world.
- It was not until the 20th century that Israel began to return to their homeland and were established as a national entity and recognized as a political state in 1948.
- The History of Israel and Fulfilled Prophecy
 - In keeping with the prophecies given to Abraham, Israel became a great nation.
 - Three prophecies were given regarding dispossessions of the land and these were literally fulfilled...
 - ✦ Israel's descent into Egypt, subsequent bondage and release.
 - ✦ The Assyrian and Babylonian captivities.
 - ✦ The dispersion following the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
 - Another important theme of prophecy and its fulfillment relates to the Davidic kingdom – the Davidic throne is promised to David and his seed forever (2 Sam 7:16).
- The Prophecy of Israel's 490 Years
 - A major prophecy regarding Israel was given through the prophet Daniel in Dan 9:24-27.
 - ✦ Seventy weeks ($70 \times 7 = 490$ years) were to comprise Israel's future history (Dan 9:24).
 - ✦ The 490 years were to begin with the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (Dan 9:25).
 - ✦ This took place when Artaxerxes Longimanus issued the command to rebuild the city of Jerusalem in 444 B.C.
 - ✦ After 69 weeks ($69 \times 7 = 483$ years) Messiah would be cut off and have nothing (Dan 9:25-26) which occurred exactly as prophesied in 33 A.D. when Jesus Christ went to the cross.
 - ✦ After the Messiah is cut off, Jerusalem itself would be destroyed (Dan 9:26) and this was fulfilled in 70 A.D.
 - ✦ It is implied in Daniel's prophecy that there is a period of time between the end of the 69 weeks and the 70th week.
 - ✦ The last week (7 years) begins with the making of a covenant between a future "prince" and the people of Israel (Dan 9:27).
 - ✦ This "prince" is of the people who destroyed the city (Dan 9:26) which means he is Roman.

- ✦ After the Rapture of the Church there will be a revived Roman empire out of which the Antichrist will arise.
 - ✦ The covenant will be broken half way through when the Antichrist commits the abomination of desolation (Dan 9:27; Matt 24:15).
- The first 483 years of the prophecy were literally fulfilled and the final 7 years will be literally fulfilled as well.
- The final week of Daniel's prophecy is further explained in Rev 6-18 – events leading up to Christ's second coming in Rev 19.
- Prophecy Concerning the Advent of Messiah
 - It is clear from 1 Pet 1:10-11 that prophets of old had difficulty distinguishing the two advents of the Messiah.
 - The dispensation of the Church was kept so perfectly as a mystery in the counsels of God that the events fulfilled at Christ's first coming and those which are yet to be fulfilled at His second coming were in no way separated as to time of fulfillment in the eyes of the prophets.
 - While reading Isa 61:1-2, Jesus abruptly stopped when he had concluded the record of those features which would be fulfilled in His first advent (Luke 4:17-21).
 - Jesus made no mention of the remainder of the features of the prophecy in Isa 61 which will be fulfilled at His second advent.
 - As with the prophecy in Isa 61, the angel Gabriel related events from both advents when he spoke to Mary about the Son she would bear (Luke 1:31-33).
 - O.T. prophecy speaks of Messiah as a sacrificial, unresisting Lamb (Isa 53:1-12) and the conquering, glorious Lion of the tribe of Judah (Isa 11:1-12; Jer 23:5-6).
 - Given that, it is no wonder that the prophets struggled to know the person or time in which these events would be fulfilled.
 - Prophecy stipulated that the Messiah would...
 - ✦ be of the tribe of Judah (Gen 49:10) and the house of David (Isa 11:1; Jer 33:21).
 - ✦ be born of a virgin (Isa 7:14) in Bethlehem Ephrathah (Micah 5:2).
 - ✦ die a sacrificial death (Isa 53:1-12) by crucifixion (Ps 22:1-21).
 - ✦ rise again from the dead (Ps 16:8-11).
 - ✦ come to the earth again (Deut 30:3) with the clouds of heaven (Dan 7:13).
 - Jesus of Nazareth has fulfilled or will fulfill every requirement of prophecy concerning the Messiah.
- Prophecy Concerning the Final Regathering of Israel
 - The people of Israel have been scattered among the nations of the earth (Jer 9:16; James 1:1).
 - In no way does the dispersion mean that Israel's national entity had been lost (Jer 31:36).
 - Israel stubbornly refused the offer and provision for their regathering and kingdom glory made by their Messiah at His first advent (Matt 23:37-39).
 - When Christ returns, He will regather His people Israel into their land and cause them to enter into the blessings of every covenant promise concerning them (Ezek 37:21-25; Mt 24:31).

- Prophecy Concerning the End Time
 - There are four major movements to Israel's future in relation to the events leading up to the Millennial Kingdom.
 - ✦ Israel must be reconstituted as a political state in order for them to make a covenant with Antichrist – their regathering in unbelief in 1948 has given them this status.
 - ✦ Israel will enter into a covenant with Antichrist in an attempt to obtain peace and security.
 - ✦ The covenant will be broken after 3 ½ years and Israel will suffer persecution like never before in the Great Tribulation.
 - ✦ Israel will be dramatically rescued at the second coming of Christ when He returns to establish His kingdom on earth.
- Prophecy Concerning the Messianic Kingdom and the Day of the Lord
 - There is no theme of Old Testament prophecy comparable with that of the Messianic Kingdom.
 - Almost every prophecy detailing Israel's chastisement from God includes prophecy concerning the glory which will come when Israel is regathered into her land with unmeasured spiritual blessings under the reign of their Messiah-King.
 - The chastisement was literally fulfilled and just as certainly the promises of future glory will be literally fulfilled (Isa 35:1-10; Jer 32:26-41; Amos 9:1-15).
 - There are also many O.T. prophecies of the Day of the Lord.
 - The Day of the Lord refers to the period of time including the judgments of Israel and the nations during Daniel's 70th week through the end of the Millennial Kingdom of Christ.
 - The Day of the Lord begins after the Rapture of the Church with the signing of the covenant between Israel and Antichrist.
 - The Day of the Lord ends when this universe is destroyed by the burning of intense heat after the end of the Millennial Kingdom (2 Pet 3:10-12; Rev 20:7-11).
- Questions
 - When does the history of Israel properly begin in Scripture?
 - Describe the ages within the dispensation of Israel.
 - Name the five covenants which are major conditions of Israel's history and prophecy.
 - Summarize the major events of the lives of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

- Describe the history of Israel from Joshua to Samuel.

- Summarize the history of Israel during the reigns of Saul, David and Solomon.

- Describe the divided kingdom after Solomon's death as well as the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities.

- How was Israel restored after the Babylonian captivity?

- Summarize the relationship of the Roman Empire to Israel.

- What are the three dispossessions of her land and dispersion of the nation Israel?

- What important promises were given in the Davidic covenant?

- What is included in the 490 years of Israel's history described in Dan 9:24-27?

- When did this period begin?

- What two events took place after the 69th week (483 years) of this period?

- Has the 70th week of this prophecy been fulfilled?

- What are the major events of the 70th week according to Dan 9:27?

- Where do we find a detailed description of the events of the 70th week in the New Testament?

- Describe the mingled picture of the first and second comings of Christ in the Old Testament.

- What are some of the specific prophecies found in the Old Testament relating to the coming of the Messiah?

- In view of the fact that Israel was regathered from the first two dispossessions of the land, why is it reasonable to believe that the third regathering will be fulfilled also?

- What is the first of the four movements which relate to Israel's future and why does the fulfillment of this movement imply that the others will follow?

- What is the second movement in Israel's restoration which is still yet future?

- What is the third movement in Israel's restoration and when does it occur?

- What is the fourth movement in Israel's restoration and when does it occur?

- What are some of the important prophecies relating to Israel's blessing in the Millennial Kingdom?

- What is meant by the Day of the Lord and what period does it include?

- In view of the literal fulfillment of Israel's prophetic program in the past, what does this teach us concerning the certainty of literal fulfillment of Israel's future program?