

The Biblical Narrative of Israel

A. Introduction

1. The nation of Israel plays a key role in the Grand Redemptive Storyline of God. She is the vehicle through which God's salvation plan for mankind is accomplished.
 - a. In the First Coming, the Messiah Yeshua is born through the lineage of Abraham and Jacob.
 - b. In Yeshua's Second Coming, the leaders of Israel will have to cry out to Him from Jerusalem and welcome Him into the city. From there, He will establish His kingdom over the earth.
2. God, who has covenanted Himself to Israel, has a wonderful storyline for this chosen nation. Throughout history, God has revealed His faithfulness to and through her.
3. These notes, which accompany the attached set of charts, elaborate on the Biblical narrative of Israel from Genesis to Revelation, as depicted in the charts.
4. Taken together, the charts and notes aim to give clarity and understanding to the Gentile church regarding the central role that Israel plays in the Grand Redemptive Storyline of God that has been unfolding throughout human history, and especially at the End of the Age.

B. The Abrahamic Covenant (ca. 2100 – 1800 BC)

1. In Genesis 12, Yehovah called out a Chaldean named Abram and made a covenant with him. This covenant consisted of 3 aspects (Gen 12:1–3,7, 17:1–8; Gal 3:8):
 - a. God would raise up a great nation through him;
 - b. God would give to Abram and his descendants a certain expanse of land;
 - c. All the nations and families on the earth would be blessed through him.
2. It is through the Abrahamic covenant that God's plan of restoration for mankind began to unfold through Abraham and his descendants, Israel.
 - a. God changed his name from Abram to Abraham, calling him the "*father of many nations*" (Gen 17:5).
 - b. Yehovah confirmed the Abrahamic Covenant with Abraham's descendants by His sovereign election of first Isaac, and then Jacob (Gen 17:19–21, 26:2–5, 28:13–15; Rom 9:6–13).

- c. Jacob's name was changed to Israel (Gen 32:28). He had twelve sons who formed the 12 tribes of Israel. From there, they grew to become the nation of Israel.

C. The Mosaic Covenant (ca. 1500 – 1200 BC)

1. The Mosaic covenant is the covenant Yehovah made with the nation of Israel on Mount Sinai after He redeemed them from slavery in Egypt (Ex 19).
2. God covenanted with Israel to make her His special possession — a kingdom of priests and a holy nation unto Himself (Ex 19:5–6).
3. God promised provision and protection to the nation of Israel if she walked with Him and kept His commandments (Ex 23:22; Deut 28:1,15).
 - a. Through the covenant and commandments, the ways of Yehovah were revealed to Israel so that she could walk with Him.
 - b. If Israel walks with God, she will enter into her destiny as God's "prototype nation" — a prototype of what it means for a nation to follow and walk with God, and thus be a blessing to the peoples of the earth.

D. The Davidic Covenant (ca. 1000 BC)

1. Yehovah God made a covenant with King David to establish his house, his throne and his kingdom forever (2 Sam 7:16). The Davidic Covenant speaks of the redemptive hope of the coming Messiah that God has prepared for all nations.
2. While the Abrahamic Covenant promised a nation through whom God would bless all nations, and the Mosaic Covenant provided the laws of the Kingdom of God, the Davidic Covenant promised a man from the lineage of David who would be the King over the eternal kingdom that God would eventually establish on Earth.

E. The Babylonian Empire (606 – 539 BC)

1. In Jeremiah 25:9–12 and Ezekiel 4:1–6, God spoke about the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem, the exile of the Jewish people to Babylon, as well as the time period of His judgement upon the nation of Israel.
 - a. Jeremiah first prophesied about a 70-year exile as a form of judgement, followed by Ezekiel, who prophesied during Israel's captivity that she would be judged for a total of 430 years.
 - b. The fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophecy can be seen from two angles — the first siege by Babylon and the final siege by Babylon. (For the fulfilment of Ezekiel's prophecy, see Section H below.)
2. God's judgement seen through the first siege by Babylon:
 - a. The time frame between the first Babylonian siege (606 BC) and the first return of Jewish exiles was 70 years.

- b. Due to their rebellion and idolatry, God judged Israel and exiled them to Babylon.
 - i. The number of years from the first siege and deportation by Babylon (606 BC) to Israel's first return to Jerusalem, initiated by the decree of King Cyrus (536 BC), was exactly 70 years.
 - ii. Israel was judged for a period of 70 years because she did not obey the Lord in the command to allow her land to rest on the Sabbath years (Lev 25:4; 2 Chr 36:21).
- 3. God's judgement seen through the final siege by Babylon:
 - a. The time frame between Babylon's final siege of Jerusalem (586 BC) and the re-establishment of the Second Temple was also 70 years.
 - b. In 586 BC, the Babylonian army fully conquered Judah and destroyed the temple in Jerusalem. This 70-year judgement was fulfilled with the re-establishment of the Jerusalem temple by Zerubbabel and Joshua in 516 BC (Ezra 6:14–16).

F. The Promise of the New Covenant

- 1. The Prophet Jeremiah prophesied of the New Covenant that Yehovah would establish with the nation of Israel (Jer 31:31–34). The New Covenant promised a new way for the restoration of the relationship between mankind and God.
- 2. Through the New Covenant, God promised a new heart (by grace through faith in Yeshua) and empowerment by the Holy Spirit to walk in His commandments and ways (Ezek 36:26–27).
- 3. The book of Hebrews declares the supremacy of Yeshua as the surety (guarantor) of this New Covenant (Heb 7:22).
 - a. Yeshua offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice with the shedding of His blood, and as the Mediator of the New Covenant (Heb 9:15–18, 12:24).
 - b. The salvation of all mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, will be by faith in Yeshua, the Jewish Messiah (Rom 1:16–17, 3:21–24; Gal 2:15–17; Eph 2:8, 3:6).

G. The Ottoman Empire (1516 – 1917)¹

- 1. In 1517, the Ottoman Empire captured Jerusalem. This marked the beginning of four centuries of nearly uninterrupted Ottoman rule over the land of Palestine.

H. The Restoration of the Modern-Day Nation of Israel

- 1. The restoration of the modern-day nation of Israel was the fulfilment of the Prophet Ezekiel's pronouncement of judgement upon God's people, compounded with God's further judgement upon her for her continued rebellion even after her return from Babylonian exile.

¹ <https://www.history.com/topics/middle-east/history-of-israel>

- a. In Ezekiel 4:1–6, God spoke about the span of judgement on Israel that would total 430 years ($390 + 40 = 430$).
 - b. The first 70 years of this judgement (as prophesied by Jeremiah) was fulfilled by Israel's exile to Babylon. Thus, there remained another 360 years of God's discipline for Israel ($430 - 70 = 360$). This was why Israel continued to be under Gentile domination by various empires even after her return from Babylonian exile.
 - c. Furthermore, in Leviticus 26, God had already warned Israel that if they did not turn back to Him in obedience even after He had sent judgement, He would punish them 7 times more for their sins (Lev 26:18,24,28).
 - d. As Israel did not fully turn back to God in obedience even after her 70-year exile, God then judged Israel 7 times more upon the remaining 360 years. This would bring the total span of God's remaining judgement on Israel to 2520 years ($360 \times 7 = 2520$).
2. The fulfilment of these 2520 years of judgement can be calculated from two starting points — the first return of exiles to Jerusalem in 536 BC and the re-establishment of the temple in 516 BC.
- a. From the first return of exiles in 536 BC, Israel was under Gentile domination by various empires, before being completely obliterated as a nation by General Titus of the Roman Empire in AD 70, together with the destruction of the temple.
 - b. This diaspora continued until the re-establishment of the modern-day nation of Israel in 1948, which completed the 2520 years of judgement from her first return.
 - i. On average, one "year" in the Hebraic calendar is equivalent to 360 days (this figure is a long-term average that takes into account the occasional "leap month" of Adar that is inserted once every 2 – 3 years).
 - ii. Converting the number of days in 2520 Hebraic years to our current modern calendar with 365.25 days per year, these 2520 Hebraic years are equivalent to 2483.8 years today, which works out to be the number of years between 536 BC and AD 1948!
 - c. Similarly, from the time that the Jerusalem temple was rebuilt in 516 BC to the return of the city of Jerusalem to Israel's control in 1967, there is again a period of approximately 2520 Hebraic years (2483.8 years today).
3. God's Word is prophetically accurate, He is faithful to His covenant, and He is zealous for the restoration of Israel.
4. It was in the late 19th Century that God began to orchestrate and set into motion events with the purpose of re-establishing Israel as a nation and for Jerusalem to return to Jewish control.

I. First World Zionist Congress (1897)

1. The First World Zionist Congress was held from 29 – 31 August 1897 in Basel, Switzerland.
 - a. Theodor Herzl and other leaders advocated for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.
 - b. The widespread antisemitism and persecution of Jewish communities in Europe in the 19th and early 20th centuries served as a major catalyst for the Zionist movement.
2. For many centuries before the Holocaust, Jews in Europe were subjected to antisemitic persecution and often deadly violence.
 - a. Governments and churches across Europe imposed waves of restrictions on Jews.
 - b. For example, Jews were barred from owning land, and restrictions were placed on where they could live and what jobs they could hold. At times, Jews were even forced to wear distinctive markings to make them social pariahs.²
3. This longstanding history of exclusion and persecution led many Jews to conclude that the only future for Jewish communal life was the creation of a homeland in the land of Palestine — the location of ancient Israel.
4. In the late 19th century, a new Jewish political movement called Zionism was founded to advocate for this goal. This movement grew in popularity in Europe after World War I as the rise of new anti-Jewish political movements and policies intensified persecution.

J. British Empire Liberates Jerusalem (November 1917)

1. In World War I, Jerusalem was liberated from the Turks by Britain. This happened on 11 December 1917, on the day of Hanukkah, when British General Edmund Allenby entered Jerusalem.³
2. The Balfour Declaration in November 1917 was a letter from British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour to Lionel Walter Rothschild, a leader of the Anglo-Jewish community, expressing British support for the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine.⁴
3. In 1922, the League of Nations awarded Britain an international mandate to administer Palestine during post-war negotiations that redrew the map of the Middle East.⁵

² <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/postwar-refugee-crisis-and-the-establishment-of-the-state-of-israel>

³ [https://jcpa.org/the-first-jerusalem-liberation-day-in-the-modern-era-in-1917/#:~:text=British%20General%20Edmund%20Allenby%20enters,\(Library%20of%20Congress.\);https://jcpa.org/hanukkah-eve-and-a-maccabean-deliverance-jerusalem-december-11-1917/](https://jcpa.org/the-first-jerusalem-liberation-day-in-the-modern-era-in-1917/#:~:text=British%20General%20Edmund%20Allenby%20enters,(Library%20of%20Congress.);https://jcpa.org/hanukkah-eve-and-a-maccabean-deliverance-jerusalem-december-11-1917/); <https://jcpa.org/the-first-jerusalem-liberation-day-in-the-modern-era-in-1917/>

⁴ <https://www.ajc.org/IsraelConflictTimeline>; <https://www.britannica.com/event/Balfour-Declaration>

⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN1J11RB/#:~:text=British%20troops%20captured%20Jerusalem%20from,map%20of%20the%20Middle%20East.>

- a. The British Mandate over Palestine also included the Balfour Declaration,⁶ in which Britain expressed support for “a national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine.
 - b. During the Mandate, from 1922 to 1947, large-scale Jewish immigration, mainly from Eastern Europe, took place with numbers swelling in the 1930s because of increasing Nazi persecution.
4. Arab demands for independence and resistance to immigration led to a rebellion in 1937. This was followed by continuing terrorism and violence from both sides.
- a. The UK considered various formulas to bring independence to a land ravaged by violence but to no avail. In 1947, the UK turned the Palestine issue over to the United Nations.⁷
 - b. It was only in 1948 that the British, being exhausted from World War II as well as the strain of holding the warring Jewish and Arab forces apart, withdrew from Palestine.

K. World War II (1939 – 1945)⁸

1. The Holocaust was the massive and horrific genocide of European Jews in World War II.
2. Between 1941 and 1945, Nazi Germany and its collaborators systematically murdered some six million Jews across German-occupied Europe (two-thirds of Europe’s Jewish population). This was done through mass shootings and poison gas in extermination camps.
3. During the Holocaust, many Jews were desperate to leave Europe. However, immigration to destinations like the United States and British-controlled Palestine was tightly restricted.

L. The Modern-Day Nation of Israel (1948 – Present)

1. By 1947, Britain announced its desire to terminate the British Mandate.
 - a. In May 1947, the United Nations proposed partitioning Palestine into two independent states, one Arab and the other Jewish, with Jerusalem placed under international administration (Resolution 181 (II) of 1947).⁹
 - b. This proposal was rejected by Arabs in Palestine, the Arab League as well as other Arab governments,¹⁰ but accepted by the Jewish people.

⁶ <https://www.ajc.org/IsraelConflictTimeline>; <https://www.britannica.com/event/Balfour-Declaration>

⁷ [https://www.un.org/unispal/history/#:~:text=In%201947%2C%20the%20UK%20turned,Read%20more.&text=After%20looking%20at%20alternatives%2C%20the,\(II\)%20of%201947](https://www.un.org/unispal/history/#:~:text=In%201947%2C%20the%20UK%20turned,Read%20more.&text=After%20looking%20at%20alternatives%2C%20the,(II)%20of%201947)

⁸ <https://embassies.gov.il/UnGeneva/AboutIsrael/history/Pages/History-Israel-Timeline.aspx>

⁹ <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-185393/>; [https://www.un.org/unispal/history/#:~:text=In%201947%2C%20the%20UK%20turned,Read%20more.&text=After%20looking%20at%20alternatives%2C%20the,\(II\)%20of%201947](https://www.un.org/unispal/history/#:~:text=In%201947%2C%20the%20UK%20turned,Read%20more.&text=After%20looking%20at%20alternatives%2C%20the,(II)%20of%201947).

¹⁰ <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-hccc-worldhistory2/chapter/the-partitioning-of-palestine/#:~:text=The%20UN%20Partition%20Plan%20for,end%20of%20the%20British%20Mandate>.

2. On 14 May 1948, after nearly 2000 years of non-existence, the State of Israel was miraculously re-established. It happened fifty years after the first Zionist congress in 1897.
3. In the aftermath of the Holocaust, most Jewish people felt that there was no future for Jews in Europe.
 - a. They desired a homeland where Jews would no longer be a vulnerable minority.
 - b. As a result, there was huge wave of Jewish people migrating from Europe to the newly established state of Israel, including many Holocaust survivors.
4. Yet another miracle of God was the restoration of the Hebrew language, which had been dead for almost 2,000 years.
 - a. The revival of the language began in the late 19th century.
 - b. It became one of the three official languages in British-ruled Palestine in 1921 and was proclaimed as the official language of Israel in 1948.

M. The Six-Day War (5 – 10 June 1967)

1. The Six-Day War, which lasted from 5 – 10 June 1967, was a brief but intense conflict in the Middle East. It was a war fought primarily between Israel and a coalition of Arab states, including Egypt, Jordan, and Syria.
2. It resulted in an overwhelming victory for Israel — the capture of large swathes of territory from the surrounding Arab states, which created an important defensive buffer for Israel, and the reunification of Jerusalem, which then came under Jewish sovereignty for the first time in nearly 2,000 years.¹¹
3. Israel took control of Jerusalem fifty years after the Balfour agreement in 1917.

N. The Yom Kippur War (October 1973)

1. Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israel during Yom Kippur, 6 October 1973, the holiest day in Judaism.
2. The conflict came to an end via a ceasefire on 25 October 1973. Israel eventually withdrew from the Sinai Peninsula as part of the 1978 Camp David Accords.¹²

O. The Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty (26 March 1979)

1. Following the Camp David Accords, the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty was signed by President Anwar Sadat of Egypt, Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel, and witnessed by President Jimmy Carter of the United States on 26 March 1979.

¹¹ <https://www.mfa.gov.il/Jubilee-years/Pages/1967-The-Six-Day-War-and-the-Historic-Reunification-of-Jerusalem.aspx#>

¹² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yom_Kippur_War#:~:text=At%20the%201978%20Camp%20David,Israel%20as%20a%20legitimate%20state;https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/research/additional-resources/camp-david-accords/framework-for-the-conclusion-of-a-peace-treaty

2. Egypt was thus the first Arab nation to recognise Israel as a nation.¹³

P. Current Events

1. Israel is a clear eschatological signpost that we are living in the generation of Jesus' return.
2. In recent years, we have witnessed vicious attacks launched by terrorist organisations such as Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis on Israel, as well as rapidly rising antisemitism around the world. On top of that, nations like Iran have openly called for the annihilation of the nation of Israel.
3. At the End of the Age, Israel will be the key and central issue for all nations and peoples (Zech 12:2–3).
 - a. She will be a vortex that pulls all nations into the valley of decision. Nations will have to decide whether they are aligned with God's heart for Israel or they are against Him.
 - b. It is wisdom to search out God's heart for Israel through the Scriptures, align with Him and establish firm convictions now, so that we can stand our ground and hold fast in the coming times of intensities and persecution.

¹³ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab–Israeli_relations#:~:text=After%20several%20Arab%20Israeli%20wars,Morocco%20and%20Sudan\)%20normalized%20relations.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab–Israeli_relations#:~:text=After%20several%20Arab%20Israeli%20wars,Morocco%20and%20Sudan)%20normalized%20relations.)