

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S ANGLICAN CHURCH IN THE TOWN OF TONAWANDA, NY

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“Israel, Palestine, and the Coming of Christ”*(understanding our present and future in light of the past and the witness of God's Word)****“Called to Be the Chosen People of God” (part 2)*****I. Review of Covenant**

Human history hinges on Christ's first coming and culminates with His Return. Our Old Testament provides the foundation for both comings. **“Old Testament” is another way of saying Old Covenant.** Covenant is the term used to denote holy agreements that God makes with mankind. **Every covenant God makes with mankind usually has four main components: a promise, a sign, an obligation, and a fulfillment.** While there is often an obligation on man's part, God will fulfill the covenant regardless of whether man fulfills his end of the covenant. Thus, God's covenants with mankind can be **conditional and and/or unconditional.** This latter point we will discuss further below as it will be important for understanding the role of Israel as God's Chosen People.

God's covenants are made with mankind and in time and space. Therefore, they are both **historical and eternal realities.** The five main covenants of the Old Testament are the Edenic Covenant, the Noahic Covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant, and the Davidic Covenant. We cannot fully understand world history, salvation history, i.e. the significance of Christ's coming both his first and second comings unless we understand the covenants of the Old Testament.

A. Covenants with Abraham and Moses

We looked in detail at the Abrahamic and the Mosaic Covenants last study. Recall God made a covenant with Abram (name means “exalted father”) around 2000 BC in which God promised Abram that he would be the father of a great nation, with many descendants and that he would be a blessing to all the families of the earth (**Gen. 12:1-4**). Later God told Abram that the promise would include the land of Canaan and that his descendants would have that land forever (**Gen. 13:14-15**). Moreover, a male heir would be born to him. All Abram had to do is believe God at His word and follow the Lord. In **Gen. 15** God says, ***“one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.”*** *5And He took him outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”* ***6Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness...On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying “To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates..”***

God changes Abram's name to Abraham (“*exalted father of many*”) **to represent the permanence of this covenant.** Abraham and his wife Sarah eventually are blessed with a **baby boy they name Isaac.** Isaac later has Jacob. **Jacob has his name changed to Israel.** He is still known as Jacob to his family. His twelve sons' descendants become **the Twelve Tribes of Israel.** Hence, God is known to the people of Israel as ***the “God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”***

After their deliverance from slavery in Egypt, God made a new covenant with Moses and the people of Israel. They were to be God's people expressed through obedience to God's law revealed on Mt. Sinai (the Ten Commandments). They were to be a kingdom of priests to the world and a light to the Gentiles.

How? By obedience to the law represented by the Decalogue (lit. the “Ten Words”) which are commonly called the Ten Commandments today. God would bless His people if they obeyed His law but they would be cursed if they disobeyed His law. Thus, the Mosaic Covenant was a conditional covenant. **And yet, it would also be an unconditional covenant because even though the majority of the people would rebel against God and thereby lose His blessing and face His judgment, they still remained His Chosen People!** Otherwise, the prophesied Messiah would have no people to which to come. In fact, there always is a remnant of true believers in every age since the time of the Exodus.

Thus, we see the reality of God’s Kingdom is being set up through the revelation of the divine covenants. **Every kingdom has four elements – 1) a ruler 2) a domain or area of rule - land 3) subjects and 4) laws.** Both the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants build a foundation for understanding God’s Kingdom.

After making the covenant with Moses and Israel, the Lord God later assured his people like He did with Abraham that, *“I will set your border from the Red Sea to the Sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the Euphrates, for I will give the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out before you” (Exodus 23:31).* God kept this promise by leading the Israelites to conquer the land (Joshua 21:43–45) where Solomon later *“ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt” (1 Kings 4:21).*

And yet, it is important to note that even though Moses told the people of Israel that God gave them this land *“for all time” (Deut. 4:40)* he also warned them before they entered it: *“When you father children and children’s children, and have grown old in the land, if you act corruptly by making a carved image in the form of anything, and by doing what is evil in the sight of the Lord your God, so as to provoke him to anger, I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will soon utterly perish from the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess. You will not live long in it, but will be utterly destroyed. And the Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few among the nations where the Lord will drive you. And there you will serve gods of wood and stone, the work of human hands, that neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell.”*

B. God Keeps the Covenant even when Israel didn’t!

We know from history that this judgment befell first the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 BC when it fell to the Assyrians and then the same happened to the Southern Kingdom of Judah in 586 BC at the hands of the Babylonians. But God preserved a faithful remnant both in the exile and in those left behind. In fact, the prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel are all examples of Jews who remained faithful. Jews have always been present in the Holy Land in every historic period since! Why? They are still part of God’s prophetic plan of salvation.

For Moses continued with these words in the next verse of **Deut. 4:29-31:** *“But from there you will seek the Lord your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, you will return to the Lord your God and obey his voice. For the Lord your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers that he swore to them.”*

The covenant God made with Abraham was still in effect with Moses and the future descendants of Israel. It is why God called it an everlasting covenant. This leads us to the third OT covenant that continues in the line of the first covenant God made with Abraham and that is the Davidic Covenant.

II. The Throne of David and the Davidic Covenant

A. From Judges to a King - while the land of Canaan became the land of Israel during the conquests of Joshua, there followed a period known as the reign of the Judges (1250 – 1050 BC). The Judges were political and military leaders chosen by God to lead His people. The most famous of the judges were Gideon, Samson, and Deborah. However, during this time the people often fell away from the Lord and engaged in the false worship and promiscuity of their neighbors. And yet even before this cycle of apostasy and turning back to the Lord began, God said this as both a promise and a warning, *“Now the angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said, **‘I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land which I have sworn to your fathers; and I said, ‘I will never break My covenant with you, 2and as for you, you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.’ But you have not obeyed Me; what is this you have done? 3‘Therefore I also said, ‘I will not drive them out before you; but they will become as thorns in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you.’ 4When the angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the sons of Israel, the people lifted up their voices and wept.**”*

They would experience God’s judgment and then return back to him. Eventually the people yearned for a king like those of the surrounding nations. God knew such leadership would prove problematic but allowed His people to choose a king. Under the direction of the prophet Samuel a man by the name of Saul was chosen to be the first King of Israel (circa 1050 BC). He reigned for forty years and was followed by David who also reigned for forty years (and six months). David, who is described as a *“man after God’s own heart”* (**I Sam. 13:14**) was given the task of establishing a place that would be the center of worship for Yahweh’s people. After defeating the Jebusites in battle in about 1003 BC, David claimed the area for Yahweh, and the Israelites renamed the city *“Jerusalem”* which means “city of peace.” This city became the capital of Israel, but more importantly, God’s city (see further below).

B. An Everlasting King and an Eternal City

1. Davidic Covenant - from Jerusalem, David reigned another thirty-three years. It was during this time that God declared two promises for all time. The first regarded David’s Throne. Through the prophet Nathan God made a covenant with David. We read in **2 Sam. 7:8-16**: *“Now therefore, thus you shall say to My servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people Israel. 9‘I have been with you wherever you have gone and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make you a great name, like the names of the great men who are on the earth. 10‘I will also appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them, that they may live in their own place and not be disturbed again, nor will the wicked afflict them any more as formerly, 11even from the day that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. The LORD also declares to you that the LORD will make a house for you. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, 15but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. 16And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.’ 17In accordance with all these words, and in accordance with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David.”*

Towards the end of his life King David says in **2 Sam. 23:5**: *“For does not my house stand so with God? For he has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure.”*

2. The significance of Jerusalem - the second promise concerned the capital city Jerusalem, also known as the city of David. Jerusalem was to be the center for the worship of the one true God – Yahweh. God told David that He would have His temple constructed in the city, but it would have to wait until his son, Solomon came to the throne. We find out why in **1 Chron. 22:7-10**: *“David said to Solomon, **“My son, I had intended to build a house to the name of the LORD my God. 8“But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘You have shed much blood and have waged great wars; you shall not build a house to My name, because you have shed so much blood on the earth before Me. 9‘Behold, a son will be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies on every side; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days. 10‘He shall build a house for My name, and he shall be My son and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.’**”*

It was during the reign of King Solomon that one of the truly ancient wonders of the world was built. The Tabernacle or “Tent of Meeting” that had been the central place of worship for God’s people now became constructed into a massive stone structure. **2 Kings 5-8** and **2 Chronicles 2-5** describe its construction and beauty.

What is noteworthy about Jerusalem is its unnoteworthiness from an earthly perspective. The city has no geographic significance. It has no harbor and no river flows through it. It sits astride a range of unremarkable hills at a narrow neck of land that joins the two largest continents on Earth – Asia and Africa. Great societies flourished north and east (Mesopotamia in the Euphrates and Tigris rivers) as well as south and west (Egypt and the Nile River valley) outside of the united rule under David and Solomon. Moreover, due to Israel’s rebellion against God, they became everyone’s doormat.

But why Jerusalem? It is to be the center of God’s redemptive plan for our world – to bring salvation to all! It is the only city that God’s Word specifically tells us (**Ps. 122:6**) to pray for! In fact, in **2 Kings 21:7-10** even as the writer rebukes the sins of the later King Manasseh, we see how important Jerusalem is to the plan of god: *“Then he (Manasseh) set the carved image of Asherah that he had made, **in the house** of which the LORD said to David and to his son Solomon, **“In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever. 8“And I will not make the feet of Israel wander anymore from the land which I gave their fathers, if only they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that My servant Moses commanded them.” 9But they did not listen, and Manasseh seduced them to do evil more than the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the sons of Israel.”**”*

Jerusalem’s ultimate significance, however, is that it is the place from which that God would raise up another king like David. This king would not only reestablish Zion –God’s rule from Jerusalem– He will be king of all the nations of the world forever! The coming Messiah will be the fulfillment of God’s promise to David.

3. unconditional and eternal - the prophet Jeremiah affirms this covenant in **Jer. 33:14-22**: *“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when **I will fulfill the promise** I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. 15In those days and at that time I will cause **a righteous Branch to spring up for David**, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. 16In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: **‘The LORD is our righteousness.’** 17“**For thus says the LORD: David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel, 18and the Levitical priests shall never lack a man in my presence to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings, and to make sacrifices forever.” 19The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: 20“Thus says the LORD: If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night will not come at their appointed time, 21 then also my covenant with David my servant may be broken, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and my covenant with the Levitical priests my ministers. 22As the host of heaven cannot be numbered and the sands of the sea cannot be measured, so **I will multiply the offspring** of David my servant, and the Levitical priests who minister to me.”***

Here we see that **the covenant God makes with David is unconditional**. God will continue His throne forever, but it will be through a particular descendant. While the throne of David in terms of earthly political rule is dependent upon the faithfulness of his future heirs, the throne itself is guaranteed by God Almighty. That David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne did not mean that there would always be a Jewish ruler on the throne in Jerusalem. On the contrary, the royal line's authority and power did end in 586 BC with the destruction of the Temple and conquest of Judah and Jerusalem by the Babylonians. However, regardless of the *faithlessness* of God's people, God made sure that a descendant in the line of David would continue until the true heir was born! We know that the true heir is Jesus Christ, son of Mary and Joseph. Both Matthew and Luke highlight this in their genealogies of Jesus in their gospels. In the very first verse of Matthew we read, ***"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, the son of Abraham."*** Since King David was a member of the tribe of Judah, the Messiah coming from the tribe of Judah is a fulfillment of **Genesis 49:8-10** and then confirmed in **Rev. 5:5** - *and one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, **the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome** so as to open the book and its seven seals."*

Upon his death, David's son Solomon succeeded to the throne. However, as noted above, at the end of King Solomon's reign, the Kingdom of Israel fell into Civil War and split into two kingdoms – the Northern Kingdom of Israel representing ten of the tribes of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah which included the tribes of Judah and Benjamin – the priestly tribe. Jerusalem, God's eternal city, remained capital of Judah while the northern Kingdom of Israel established its capital in Samaria.

But God still maintained His people and His promises – fulfilled in Jesus Christ!

So, **let's review the significance of the three main covenants of the Old Testament**. First, in the Abrahamic Covenant God promises that through Abraham a great nation of many descendants will form, with specific land, and through a descendant of which all the world will be blessed. Second, in the Mosaic Covenant God gives His Law and that Israel will be a holy nation again with the same land promised to Abraham. They will be a people of God's own possession who are to be a light of God's glory to the surrounding nations. Their obligation to fulfill this promise is obedience to God's law. In the Davidic Covenant, **God promises a son that will come from the line of David, whose kingdom will reign not only over Israel but over all nations, and His kingdom will be forever**. There is no obligation on the part of David. God will do it. However, the authority and power to rule will only be available if David's descendants remain faithful to God.

Hence, the prophecy from **Isaiah 11:1-5**: ***"Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse (Jesse is David's father), and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. 2The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. 3And He will delight in the fear of the LORD, and He will not judge by what His eyes see, nor make a decision by what His ears hear; 4But with righteousness He will judge the poor, and decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; and He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. 5Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, and faithfulness the belt about His waist."*** This prophecy was fulfilled with the coming of Jesus Christ! Only Jesus has fulfilled such promises and will vindicate His authority and power at His return (note the similar description in **Rev. 19:11-18**).

III. Christ and the New Covenant

A. The New Covenant

1. Fulfilled promise - these three covenants are fulfilled in the New Covenant that Christ established on the eve of His crucifixion. The context of the New Covenant was the celebration of the old – the Passover – as it was a Passover meal that Jesus had with the Apostles. It also was predicted by the prophet Jeremiah in **Jer. 31:31-34**: *“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, 32not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. ³³For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”*

Jesus said on the night before He died as He celebrated a Passover meal with His disciples, *“And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” ²⁰And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.” (Lk. 22:19-20)*

2. The spiritual blessings - what has God done in the New Covenant to fulfill the Abrahamic covenant? He has blessed all families through the birth, life, death, resurrection, and outpouring of the Holy Spirit through God the Son, Jesus Christ. He has made a great nation of faithful believers – Jew and Gentile – through faith in His grace. He has revealed His Kingdom – **1) Christ is our king 2) He rules over a new people – the Church made up of both Jews and Gentiles who put their faith in Him 3) the entire world is His domain but His reign really must begin in the spirit of a person and what fully take control until His return 4) the law of Christ is the “new” rule in life.** This does not mean God’s spiritual and moral law has changed only that we know can truly understand and fulfill it through the knowledge and person of Christ.

B. A New People – Ekklesia – both Jew and Gentile

In establishing the the New Covenant (**Luke 22:20**), Jesus established a “New People” to be of all races – both Jew and Gentile – through a relationship with Jesus, the Son of God. We now have access to the Father through the Son. As a result, a new creation called the Church was born. The Church is also known as the Body and Bride of Christ. It is through the Church that God will manifest His Kingdom – His glory, His power, His wisdom, and His love to the world. The Church’s purpose to bring glory to God and to reveal Christ to the world – the Kingdom of God. **We find this in the giving of the Great Commission in Mt. 28:18-20**; *“And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

IV. Are the Jews Still the Chosen People of God?

So now we must ask the question, “*Are the people of Israel, those who are ethnically and religiously Jewish still the Chosen People of God?*” And if they still are what does it mean for our future especially in light of Bible prophecy?

A. No Longer the Chosen People of God?

First, let’s briefly look at the view that the Jews are not still the Chosen People of God. This view has been held since the 3rd century by many in the Church and really took hold during the Reformation as leading reformers on the continent like Martin Luther and John Calvin who believed that the Church (Jews and Gentiles who put their faith in Jesus as the Messiah/Christ) replaced Old Testament Israel as the true chosen people of God. Many in the Christian faith still believe this view. You can understand this thinking when you read Paul’s greeting of Gentile Christians in Galatia as “*the Israel of God*” in **Gal. 6:16**, thereby suggesting that spiritually the Church is the “new Israel.” James likewise addressed Jewish believers as “*the twelve tribes in the Dispersion*” in **James 1:1**. And Peter called Christians “*a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for [God’s] own possession*” (**1 Peter 2:9**), terms that would have clearly described the Jewish people prior to the coming of Christ.

In addition, proponents of this view highlight the *conditional* aspects of the covenantal promises God makes with Abraham and Moses. For example, the Lord told Isaac that he initiated his covenant with his father “*because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws*” (**Gen. 26:5**). This would seem to indicate that the covenant was *conditioned* upon Abraham’s obedience. Likewise, God declared to Moses and His people, “*If you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples*” (**Ex. 19:5**)

Later, Moses reminds the people concerning the covenant God made with them, “*If you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth*” (**Deut. 28:1**). Conversely, he warned, “*If you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today . . . the Lord will send on you curses, confusion, and frustration in all that you undertake to do, until you are destroyed and perish quickly on account of the evil of your deeds, because you have forsaken me*” (**Dt. 28:15, 20**).

Jesus consistently challenged the Jewish religious leadership for their misinterpretation and misapplication of God’s laws as well as their emphasis on man-made traditions and external ceremonies. Jesus rebuked them in **John 8:39** by saying “*If you are Abraham’s children, do the deeds of Abraham.*”

Following the birth of the Church at Pentecost and Paul’s call to take the gospel to the Gentiles, the apostle declared, “*No one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter*” (**Rom. 2:28–29**).

He explained: “*Not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but ‘Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.’ This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.*” (**Rom. 9:6–8**).

The apostle clearly believed that the Jews of his day needed to trust in Christ: “*My heart’s desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved*” (**Rom. 10:1**). This is why he testified that he had “*great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart*” for them (**Romans 9:2**).

Fr. Ward’s response to the above position: While it is true that the Church has become a new spiritual Israel, and that faith in Christ is the means for becoming a true descendant of Abraham and member of the Covenant community, to ignore or negate the continual faithfulness of God demonstrated in His Word and throughout history belies the fact that the original Israel still should be considered the Chosen People of God. The key to understanding this supposed dichotomy is to understand what is meant by the name “Chosen People.” The Chosen People of God are also called a “*Holy Nation*” (**Ex. 19:6**). Holy does not simply mean totally righteous, **it first means “set apart for God’s purposes.”** In other words, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants were set apart by God for the purpose of saving the world. One of their future descendants would be in fact the Messiah, God’s special Anointed One, who would save the world from sin, evil, and death. **It is why the name, “Jesus,” means “Yahweh saves.”**

While God’s blessing and power would only flow through faithful Jews, and the rebellious would fall under judgment, **at no time did the Lord completely reject His people, Israel!** The truth is that for most of Israel’s history the majority of the people DID NOT FOLLOW OR OBEY God, and yet God did not totally cast them away. Therefore, as we will see from the passages below, it is crystal clear that the Jewish people as a whole and modern day “Israel” still are the Chosen People of God. This does not mean that they are saved simply by being Jewish or being an Israeli. **It simply means that they are still being used by God in a special way to complete His plan of salvation for our world.** The passages below bear this out.

B. Still the Chosen People of God!

“*You are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth” (**Deuteronomy 7:6; cf. 14:2**). The psalmist similarly declared, “*O offspring of Abraham, his servant, children of Jacob, His chosen ones!” (**Ps. 105:6**).**

And the Lord stated through his prophet: “*But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend; you whom I took from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest corners, saying to you, ‘You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off’” (**Is. 41:8–9**).*

No conditions are stated here, which would seem to indicate that the Jews retain this status today.

After bringing the ark to Jerusalem, David exhorted the people: “**Remember His covenant forever, the word that he commanded for a thousand generations, the covenant that he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac, which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant.**” (**1 Chronicles 16:15–17; cf. Psalm 105:8–10**)

When Peter preached the gospel to the Jews who were in Jerusalem during Pentecost, he still addressed them as covenant (chosen) people of God. He proclaimed, “**You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.’ God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness” (**Acts 3:25–26**).** Note the present tense that the Greek words are in the present tense, “you are.”

In addition, God’s Word makes clear that Jewish people who are not members of the Body of Christ will one day turn to Jesus as their Messiah (cf. **Zechariah 12:10–14; Romans 11:25–27**), continuing God’s unconditional Abrahamic covenant with them as a people.

However, it is Paul's words in **Romans 9 and 11** that confirm that God's covenantal promises with the Jewish people are still in effect. While verses from those chapter were given as examples of the conditional nature of the covenant God made with Israel, Paul also noted that the Jews' rejection of Christ did not mean that God had rejected them: **"God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew" (Romans 11:2)**. It is not too late for them to turn to God through Christ: **"If they do not continue in their unbelief, [they] will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again" (v. 23)**.

Paul continues and writes, *"For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—**that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; 26 and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.**" 27**"THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS."***

Paul is quoting **Is. 59:20-21** and **Is. 27:9** (the words in capital letters) to reaffirm that the Jewish people are still part of God's plan of redemption for our world through His covenant with them. He even assured the Romans, **"In this way all Israel will be saved" (v. 26a)**. This does not mean that all Jews automatically go to heaven since not all have trusted in Christ as their Savior, a commitment which is essential for salvation (cf. **John 3:18; 14:6; Acts 4:12**). Rather, it points to the "way" in which Jews can be saved: by trusting *"the Deliverer"* who has *"come from Zion"* (**Romans 11:26b**), the Lord Jesus Christ! **Thus, "All" Israel includes both the "New" Israel – the Church; and the "Original" Israel of the Old Testament Covenants.**

In this sense, **the Church of Jesus Christ has become the "spiritual" Israel**, replacing ethnic Israel as the true representation of the family of God today. **However, as noted above, the Jewish people still have a special place in God's heart and a central role to play in the redemption of the world through Christ.** God is not finished with the *"apple of his eye!"* (**Dt. 32:10; Zech. 2:8**). In fact, we will see next study that the events of our world in the past 2000 years have set our present day up for the return of Christ back to Israel and to Jerusalem! He is coming back not just to our own world but to the very people who for the most part initially rejected Him. **It is for such reasons that we can strongly conclude that the creation of the modern-day state of Israel was the result of the hand of God and His prophetic plan!**