



GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION



"Just as through one transgression condemnation came upon all, so through one righteous act acquittal and life came to all. For just as through the disobedience of one person the many were made sinners, so through the obedience of one the many will be made righteous."
(Romans 5:18-19, NABRE)

God Creates And Forms His Chosen People

God's journey in forming His chosen people, the Hebrews, into the nation of Israel spans approximately 2,000 years, beginning with His profound call to Abraham. This sacred history unfolds through a series of pivotal events in salvation history, each revealing God's covenantal relationship with His people.

This process involved key figures like the patriarchs, Moses, the Judges, and the Kings, as well as significant events such as the Exodus, the giving of the Law, and the exile. Each era reveals different aspects of God's plan

Through all of these developments, God was preparing His people for the ultimate fulfillment of His promises in Jesus Christ, who would come from the line of David to redeem not only Israel but all of humanity.

This long process of formation, punctuated by moments of covenant and renewal, prepared the Israelites to receive the fulfillment of God's promise and for their mission to be a light to the nations and the people through whom the Messiah would come.

Below is an outline that highlights the key moments and milestones that shaped this remarkable narrative of faith and identity.

The Call of Abraham (c. 2000 BC)

- **Abraham's Call and Covenant:** God begins forming His chosen people by calling Abram (later renamed Abraham) from Ur of the Chaldeans (Genesis 12:1-3). God promises to make Abraham's descendants into a great nation, through which "all the families of the earth will be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). This marks the beginning of the Hebrew people.
- **The Covenant:** God enters into a formal covenant with Abraham, promising him numerous descendants, land, and a special relationship with Him (Genesis 15). Circumcision is given as the sign of this covenant (Genesis 17:10-11). This covenant is a foundational moment, identifying Abraham and his descendants as God's chosen people.

Isaac and Jacob (c. 1900 BC)

- **Isaac:** The covenant promise is passed on to Abraham's son, Isaac. Though Isaac's story is shorter, it represents the continuation of God's promise and protection of His chosen people.
- **Jacob (Israel):** Isaac's son, Jacob, receives the promise and is renamed "Israel" after wrestling with God (Genesis 32:28). Jacob has twelve sons, who become the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel (Genesis 49). Through Jacob, the family of Abraham expands, moving closer to becoming a nation.

Joseph and the Hebrews in Egypt (c. 1700–1300 BC)

- **Joseph:** Jacob's son, Joseph, is sold into slavery by his brothers but rises to power in Egypt, saving his family from famine (Genesis 50). This brings the Hebrews to Egypt, where they settle and multiply. Though initially welcomed, over time they become enslaved by the Egyptians (Exodus 1:8-11).
- **400 Years of Enslavement:** The descendants of Jacob live in Egypt for about 400 years, where they grow into a large population (Exodus 12:40). This period is marked by suffering, but it is also a time in which the people's identity as Hebrews solidifies.

The Exodus and the Giving of the Law (c. 1300–1200 BC)

- **Moses and the Exodus:** God raises up Moses to lead the Hebrews out of slavery in Egypt (Exodus 3:10). This dramatic event, known as the Exodus, is central to the identity of the Israelites as God's chosen people. The Exodus marks the moment when the Hebrews transition from a people bound in slavery to a people on the journey to becoming a nation.
- **The Passover:** The Passover foreshadows Christ's sacrificial death as the Lamb of God (John 1:29). The blood of the lamb that saves the Israelites from death in Egypt points to the ultimate salvation through Christ's blood.
- **The Covenant at Mount Sinai:** After the Exodus, God gives the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19-20). This Law, including the Ten Commandments, forms the foundation of Israel's religious, moral, and social life. It defines the Israelites as a people bound to God in covenant, distinct from the surrounding nations.

The Conquest of Canaan (c. 1200 BC)

- **Joshua and the Conquest:** After Moses' death, Joshua leads the Israelites into the Promised Land of Canaan (Joshua 1). The conquest of Canaan fulfills God's promise to give the land to the descendants of Abraham (Genesis 15:18). By settling in the land, the Israelites begin to form themselves as a nation.
- **Tribal Confederation:** In Canaan, the twelve tribes of Israel live as a loose confederation, bound by their common worship of God and adherence to the Law. They are led by a series of judges, who provide leadership and deliverance during times of crisis (Judges 2:16).

The Period of the Judges (c. 1200–1050 BC)

- **Judges and Leadership:** After entering the Promised Land, Israel experiences a cycle of faithfulness and sin. During this period, the Israelites are often at odds with neighboring peoples. God raised up judges like Gideon, Samson, and Samuel to lead and deliver His people. The recurring cycle of sin, oppression, repentance, and deliverance underscores the need for stronger, centralized leadership. This period highlights the need for a righteous and lasting leader, which foreshadows the coming of Christ as the true Judge and King.

The United Monarchy (c. 1050–930 BC)

- **The Establishment of Kingship:** The Israelites request a king, and God anoints Saul as their first king (1 Samuel 9). However, it is David, the second king, who establishes the unified kingdom of Israel and secures its borders. David's reign (c. 1010–970 BC) is remembered as a golden age, during which the nation flourished. The covenant is a direct prophecy of the Messiah, who will be born of David's lineage (Matthew 1:1).
- **Davidic Covenant:** God makes a special covenant with David, promising that his descendants will rule Israel forever and that the Messiah will come from his lineage (2 Samuel 7:12-16). This covenant shapes the Israelites' hope for the future, especially during times of hardship.
- **Solomon and the Temple (c. 970-930 BC):** David's son Solomon builds the Temple in Jerusalem (1 Kings 6), providing a permanent place for the worship of God. The Temple became the center of Israelite religious life and is seen as the dwelling place of God among His people. Under Solomon, Israel enjoyed a period of peace and prosperity, but after his reign, the kingdom became divided. Solomon's Temple prefigures the coming of Christ, who will be the true Temple (John 2:19-21).

The Divided Kingdom and Exile (c. 930–538 BC)

- **Division of the Kingdom:** After Solomon's death, the kingdom was divided into the **Northern Kingdom** of Israel and the **Southern Kingdom** of Judah (1 Kings 12). Both kingdoms struggle with internal corruption and external threats.
- The Northern Kingdom was conquered by Assyria in 722 BC, and its people were dispersed (2 Kings 17).
- The Southern Kingdom, Judah, was conquered by Babylon in 586 BC, and many were taken into exile. The destruction of the Temple and the exile represented a profound crisis for the Israelites, but the prophets offered hope for restoration and the coming of a Messiah.

The Prophets (c. 900–400 BC)

- **Elijah and Elisha (c. 850 BC):** These early prophets called Israel to return to faithfulness, prefiguring the prophetic mission of John the Baptist, who would call people to repentance in preparation for Christ (cf. Malachi 4:5-6; Matthew 17:12).
- **Isaiah (c. 740–680 BC):** Isaiah offers some of the clearest prophecies concerning the Messiah. He speaks of a suffering servant who will bear the sins of many (Isaiah 53), and of a virgin who will give birth to Emmanuel, "God with us" (Isaiah 7:14). These prophecies are directly fulfilled in Christ.
- **Jeremiah and Ezekiel (c. 600–580 BC):** Jeremiah prophesies the coming of a "new covenant" (Jeremiah 31:31), and Ezekiel foretells a restored Israel and the coming of a shepherd-king (Ezekiel 34). These prophecies find their fulfillment in Christ, who establishes the New Covenant through His death and resurrection.

The Return from Exile (c. 538 – 400 BC)

- **Return and Rebuilding:** After the Persians conquered Babylon, King Cyrus allowed the exiled Israelites to return to their land (Ezra 1). Under leaders like Ezra and Nehemiah, they rebuilt the Temple and re-established their religious identity. Though the nation is restored, the people remain under foreign rule and await the fulfillment of God's promises through the coming of the Messiah.

The Intertestamental Period (c. 400–0 BC)

- During this period, Israel remains under foreign rule, but the hope for the coming Messiah grows. Jewish writings from this time reflect a deep yearning for God's intervention and the establishment of His kingdom. The Maccabean revolt (167–160 BC) demonstrates a fervent hope for deliverance, foreshadowing the ultimate deliverance Christ would bring.

The Fulfillment in Christ (c. 4 BC–30 AD)

- **The Birth of Christ (c. 4 BC):** In the fullness of time (Galatians 4:4), Jesus is born of the Virgin Mary, fulfilling the prophecies of Isaiah and others. His coming is the fulfillment of God's promise to the patriarchs, kings, and prophets.
- **The Ministry of Christ (c. 27–30 AD):** Jesus preaches the kingdom of God, heals, and performs miracles, fulfilling the messianic prophecies. His passion, death, and resurrection complete the work of redemption, securing salvation for humanity.
- **The Ascension and Pentecost (c. 30 AD):** Christ ascends to heaven and sends the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, empowering the Apostles to preach the Gospel and continue God's work of salvation through the Church.