

# ISRAEL



## 1. God's Purpose for Israel

### Introduction

The State of Israel was established in 1948 by the United Nations to provide a homeland for the Jewish people. Although the nation had not been in existence for almost 2000 years, it is certainly not new. Much of the Old Testament is the story of the nation of Israel. Are the promises that God made to Israel so long ago, still relevant today? What are God's purposes for this land? We are going to see what the Bible says about Israel and the City of Jerusalem, to help us know how to pray for this land, and have a glimpse into God's plans.

### 1. Where did Israel come from?

How did the nation of Israel begin? Most of us know it began with Abraham. When Abraham obeyed God's call to leave his country and people, God gave wonderful promises. See Genesis 12:1-2, 15:7

God said he would make Abraham a great nation. We know from Scripture that Abraham's promised son was Isaac, and his grandson, Jacob. Jacob's name was changed to Israel, and this became the name of his descendants and the nation that grew from them.

- ✧ What two promises did God repeat to Jacob? Genesis 35:9-12  
*(The promise that he would become a great nation.  
The promise that the land he gave to Abraham would be given to him.)*
- ✧ How do we know these promises still apply today?  
*(The first promise was given to Abraham if he was willing to leave his people and his country. He obeyed, and we have seen that God kept his promise and will continue to do so. When God promised Abraham the land, he confirmed it by making a covenant. God always keeps his covenants. Genesis 15:8, 18)*

### 2. What was God's purpose for Israel?

God called Abraham and his descendants for a purpose.

- ✧ What was that purpose according to Genesis 12:3?  
*(They were to be a blessing to all peoples on the earth.)*
- ✧ How many times is this promise repeated and to whom? Genesis 18:18, 22:18, 26:4, 28:14  
*(It is repeated at least 4 times to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.)*
- ✧ In what ways was Israel to be a blessing to the nations? Exodus 19:5-6, Isaiah 9:6-7, 49:6, Romans 9:5  
*(They were to be a Kingdom of priests and a holy nation.  
Jesus would be a descendant of King David.  
They were to be a light to the nations, bringing salvation to the ends of the earth.)*
- ✧ How were these promises fulfilled in Jesus Christ? Acts 4:12  
*(Salvation came through Jesus Christ. The lineage of Jesus can be traced back to King David, and all*

*the way to Abraham. He was the fulfilment of the promises given to Abraham.)*

### 3. What happened when the Church was born?

During the time when Jesus was on earth most of the Jewish leaders did not believe Jesus was their Messiah and had him crucified. Even the crowds turned against him at that time. However after the Holy Spirit was poured out, and the early church began, many did believe. See Acts 6:7. By the end of the first century there were one million Jewish believers. The gospel began to spread to other nations too.

- ✧ What were some of the nations where the gospel began to spread? Acts 11:19-20, 15:41, 28:16, 30-31  
*(Phoenicia, Cyprus, Antioch, Greece, Syria, Cilicia, Rome)*
- ✧ According to God's Word, who belongs to the church, and why? Romans 9:8, 10:9-13  
*(Anyone, either Jew or Gentile, who has believed in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. In this way God shows he is just. There is only one basis for salvation for all mankind, and that is through his Son.)*

As more Gentiles came to know Jesus, they realised that they were the spiritual Israel of God. Some of the theologians began to condemn the Jews for crucifying Jesus, and said that God no longer had any purposes for natural Israel. Gradually Christians turned against the Jewish people. Fewer and fewer Jews turned to their Messiah. Sadly it was so-called Christians who persecuted and killed millions for Jews.

### 4. Has God finished with Israel?

Was it true that God had finished with the Jewish people? For nearly 1900 years that is what the mainline Church taught, but today the Holy Spirit is opening the eyes of believers.

- ✧ How does Paul answer this question? Romans 11:1-2, 11:11, 24  
*(By no means, not at all!)*

### Conclusion

It certainly is a miracle that after nearly 2000 years Israel became a nation once again. God's purpose for Israel have not been completed, and he is setting the stage for the promises he made so long ago, to come to pass. If God has not rejected Israel, then neither should we. Let's pray for this nation.