



## Life More Abundant Bible Study

# An Introduction to Bible Prophecy

The **central theme** of the bible is ***God's Plan of Redemption*** that He architected for the restoration of His image in mankind and the eradication of sin in the universe.

### Definition:

**Redemption:** deliverance from sin; salvation; <sup>2</sup>recovery by payment, as of something pledged.

The Plan of Redemption is God's **perfect** plan for justly dealing the penalty for sin, while showing mercy to His erring sons, mankind. The plan exalts God's law (Exodus 20: 1-17) as holy, unchangeable, and just (Romans 7:12, 3:31), while showing grace and mercy to men. The plan also clearly demonstrates to the universe, the true character of God (1 John 4:8 – Love) in contrast to that of Satan. The plan is God's solution to what has been called the *Great Controversy* between good and evil.

The bible is written from the perspective of the “sons of God” in relation to the “sons of men”

- Sons of God are those who worship the God of Creation, are obedient to His Law, and embrace His plan of redemption [Genesis 4:25-5:32; 6:1, 2; Job 1:6; Luke 3:23-38; 1 John 3:1-3; Hebrews 11:13-16]
- Sons [and daughters] of men (or children of men) generally refers to members of the human race, but more specifically to rebellious people, who like Cain reject God's plan of redemption and pursue an idolatrous lifestyle [Genesis 6:1-4, 11:5; Psalm 4:2, 31:19]

God is not prejudiced towards people, nations, or cultures. However, the bible is written from the perspective of the people God once called or appointed [sons or descendents of Abraham] to be emissaries for spreading the gospel message of redemption (good news) to the rest of the world (Amos 3:1, 2; Matt 20:16). Again, ***the central theme of the bible is God's plans to save mankind, restore His image in mankind, and eradicate evil!***

### Facts about the Jewish Nation:

1. Descendants of Abraham, a friend of God who demonstrated **righteousness by his faith** in God (Genesis 15:6, 22:8; Isaiah 41:8-14; Romans 4:1-16; Galatians 2:16, 3:6; Philippians 3:8, 9; James 2:23)
2. The name Israel is a heavenly name, given by God to Abraham's grandson Jacob for his victory with God over sin (Genesis 32:22-29). The name Israel, meaning “Prince with God” or “One who prevails with God”, was the name given to a man and his heirs, the succeeding nation. Yet, its true meaning and

- fulfillment is founded in the man, Christ Jesus [see study on Israel, and the true Jewish Nation].
3. God claims there was nothing special about the children of Israel, only that they descended from Abraham to whom He promised great things for Abraham and his descendants (Genesis 26:24; Deuteronomy 7:6-8; 1 Chronicles 16:14-22)
  4. God established covenant blessings and curses to prove the children of Israel and keep them aligned and faithful to Him. All of God's promises are based on obedience and conformity to His eternal Decalogue (10 commandments) and those statues and commandments enforced when relevant through the Laws of Moses (Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 26:17-19)
  5. The history of the children of Israel was a roller-coaster ride of their rebellion and God's efforts to redeem this people, chosen to proclaim the gospel to the rest of the world (Deuteronomy 4:6-8; Isaiah 55:5, 56:3-8, 60:1-18; Jeremiah 12:14-17; Zechariah 8:23, Hosea 2:23; Amos 3:1, 2)
    - a. God made a covenant promise to Abraham to establish him as a great nation with descendants that were to be as numerous as the sand of the sea and stars in the sky (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-6). God's purpose was that through Abraham, all families of the earth would be blessed (Gen 12:3), in other words, Abraham would be the progenitor of the promised Messiah. Abraham was called a friend of God and the Father of the Faithful because of his belief in God and resulting acts of faith towards God, embracing the *Everlasting Covenant* (Genesis 3:15)
    - b. Abraham's descendants migrated to Egypt to avoid a famine and to preserve the seed in fulfillment of the everlasting covenant. Pharaoh would imprison the children of Israel for approximately 430 years. (Exodus 1)
    - c. God delivered Israel on eagle's wings from their physical bondage and confirmed the Old Covenant with them to deliver them from their spiritual bondage (Exodus 2-19). The people were appointed to be a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:4-6) who would minister by opening their mouths wide (Psalm 81:8-16) and telling the rest of the world of God's wonderful acts of deliverance, mighty hand to save, and love for mankind in the promise of a Savior (*Everlasting Covenant*). The Ten Commandments, everlasting provisions of the covenant, were given to be a tutor and guide for ordering the nations conduct (Exodus 20:1-17). God desired to dwell among this nation and be their God [theocracy] (Exodus 25:8). God established the priestly ministry to continually direct the people's hearts and devotion to God - the Creator, Redeemer and Lord, as well as His everlasting covenant. Despite God's plans for the Children of Israel, they rebelled against Him in the wilderness and were made to dwell in there for 40 yrs (Acts 13:18)
    - d. God appointed Judges to give guidance and preside over the civic and legal affairs of the nation, Moses being the first, While God reigned as King over the nation (Exodus 18:21-26; Book of Judges). Judges

judged for 450yrs (Acts 13:20). The time spent in the wilderness plus the time over which Judges presided is 490years.

- e. The Children of Israel, not content with God as their Sovereign King, requested an earthly [human] king and thus rebelled against their Lord and King (1 Samuel 8:1-22). Saul of the tribe of Benjamin was anointed King by Samuel the Prophet and served for 40yrs
- f. God rose up David of the line of Judah and he became the king from whom the Seed would come, confirming the everlasting covenant. David and his son Solomon reigned for 40yrs respectively and then the kingdom was divided into the Northern Kingdom (9 tribes of Israel) called Samaria, and the Southern Kingdom (Judah, Levi, and Benjamin).
- g. Despite God's prophets which He sent to turn the people's hearts back to him in keeping His commandments, the people rebelled (2 Kings 17:13-17; Jeremiah 2:5-13; Matthew 21:33-36). The bible chronicles another 490yrs of apostasy by the Children of Israel, pursuing strange gods, breaking the covenant statues and commandments God had established with them [see point 3 above]. God's types, symbols and ordinances became trite rituals and "*leaves of profession*", practiced for show rather than from a heartfelt conviction of their significance (Isaiah 1:10-17, Matthew 21:18, 19; Nehemiah 9:26-31).
- h. God sent the Babylonians to punish the Children [Nation] of Israel in fulfillment of the covenant curses of Leviticus 26 (1 Chronicles 9:1) and prophecy foretold to Moses (Deuteronomy 28:47-68; Jeremiah 15:1-9). The Children of Israel were subject to captivity for 70yrs before decrees sanctioning self-rule were issued by their oppressors. God placed the Children of Israel on a final 490 year period of probation that would commence when self-rule was reinstated in Israel, to determine if they would fulfill their work of being a special people to God and spreading the gospel message [the everlasting covenant] to the rest of the world (Matthew 18:21, 22).
- i. The Nation of Israel remained under the command of world empires/powers and was required to pay taxes, though given self-rule. God positioned Israel within the realm of their "captors" to see if they would fulfill their appointed mission of being a peculiar people [see point 2 above] and announcing the coming King, Jesus Christ (Nehemiah 9:33-38).
- j. For approximately 400yrs after the reinstatement of self-rule for the Nation of Israel, the bible gives no evidence of God sending prophets to Israel (Malachi was last Old Testament prophet recorded). Cognizant of their past sins that led to their captivity, and in the absence of a prophet, the nation resorted to strict formalism based on the Law of God (Decalogue) and the Laws of Moses. Hundreds of new laws (600+) based on man's dogmas for ordering personal conduct and worship were introduced that strived, through man's own effort, to bring the people into conformity to God's ways. However, none of these

- laws yielded a true heart conversion which God desired (Psalm 78:35-39). The Nation of Israel's efforts of *righteousness by works* were exalted over the simple, pure, and acceptable *righteousness by faith* demonstrated by their forefather Abraham.
- k. God sent the prophets Zacharias (father of John the Baptist), Simeon, Anna, and John the Baptist in the time of Christ to herald the coming Messiah. The bible says of Christ the Messiah: "He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him... And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 1:11; 3:19; Luke 12:54-56).
  - l. Hoping for the establishment of an earthly Kingdom of God where the Jews would reign supreme over all people of the earth (Luke 19:11), the Jews misinterpreted by ignorance and by the will of the Jewish leadership, the works of Messiah and forsook the *Kingdom of Righteousness* within that Jesus offered to all who came to Him (Luke 11:52).
  - m. Jesus, before His crucifixion lamented, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her!! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Matt 23:37-39). Probation for the Nation of Israel was nearly complete with Christ's utterance (Matthew 21:33-43).
  - n. Mercy continued towards the Nation of Israel for 3.5 more years as prophetically described by the parable of the Wedding Feast in Matthew 22:1-14 (see also Acts 3:22-26). The Jews en mass rejected the invitation of God to join His wedding feast, where the oxen and fatted cattle, a symbol of Jesus' sacrifice, were killed. 490 years of probation met its completion for The Nation of Israel 3.5yrs after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ with the martyred death of James (Acts 12:1-3) and the stoning of Stephen in 34AD. The unrepentant leadership and masses of the Nation of Israel, the blood descendants of Abraham, *corporately* forfeited their right to remain the special/peculiar people of God (Matthew 27:19-26; John 19:12-15; Acts 7:54-60; 8:4-8, 14; Romans 9:1-4; 10:17-21).
6. The spreading of the gospel (good news) was entrusted to the early Christian Church [Spiritual Israel] comprised of both believing Jew and Gentile. This body, the spiritual body of Christ and His church, received the same promises and commissions once entrusted to the natural Nation of Israel (Isaiah 8:13-18; Hosea 2:23; Matt 8:11, 12; 21:28-44; 22:1-7; John 4:20-24; Acts 13; Romans 2:28, 29; 9:1-4, 24-27; 11:1-36; 15:9-12; Galatians 3:26-29; 1 Peter 2:4-10).
  7. Followers of the religion of the Jews became the first to persecute believers of "the way" of Jesus Christ, including Saul, whose name was changed to Paul. Paul, after his conversion by the will of God the Father and Jesus Christ,

- became one of the greatest of Apostles of Jesus Christ (Acts 16:17, 24:1-14; Galatians 1)
8. The era of the Christian Church [Spiritual Israel] ensued.