

Pastor Scott L. Harris
Grace Bible Church, NY
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The Rise & Fall of Israel
God Calls a People for Himself
Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus

Introduction

For several months we have examined the attributes of God with the specific purpose of emphasizing that God can be trusted because of who He is and what He is like. The God who has revealed Himself in the Bible is the self-existent and self-sufficient Creator of all that exists. He is eternal, infinite, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, immutable, sovereign, holy, just, good, faithful, merciful, gracious and loving. You can trust Him in any and every circumstance of life.

For the last two weeks I have made an emphasis from 2 Peter 1 that this same God by His divine power has given to us everything pertaining to life and godliness through a true knowledge of Him and His precious and magnificent promises. The better you know the Lord and what He has said, the better able you will be to live a godly life. Why? Because if you do not know the truth you cannot live according to the truth. You will be subject to the lies of this world and self deception in the pursuit of your own selfish desires.

Last week was the practical application of all of these truths, for the life of faith is one in which God is known and is trusted. The diligence which is required of each of us in the pursuit of living a godly life is all based upon your faith in God. The sequence Peter gives in 2 Peter 1:5-9 of moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love are all things that are supplied by faith. That is why what Peter says is not in anyway legalistic or some form of works righteousness. Your effort to live a godly life is the result of what you believe about God instead of an effort to earn something from God. Or to summarize this point, it is what you believe about God that will direct how you live. That is why it is critical that you grow in your knowledge of God Himself and what He has revealed for you cannot believe what you don't know.

Let me state all of this a different way in the answer to the question, Why should I strive to live for God? 1) Because God is your Creator and He will hold you accountable for the life that He has given to you. 2) God's various infinite attributes prove He is sovereign and will accomplish His will whether you live in harmony with Him or rebel against Him. 3) Because God created you according to His own design and purposes, He knows best how you can live your life in the fulfillment of the purpose of your existence. 4) God's various moral attributes prove His sacrificial love is beyond full human comprehension. This changes obedience from something forced upon you to obedience motivated as a loving response to the love received from Him - we love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). Or to put this in a simple statement, I strive to live a godly life because I love God in response to His love for me proven in Jesus Christ, and I strive to obey Him because I trust Him and He knows what is best for my life.

Loving and trusting God is essential for living a godly life and experiencing the grace and peace He supplies in every circumstance that may occur in your life. Or as someone has succinctly put it: "*Know God, Know Peace. No God, no peace.*" That is a thought that you need to have thoroughly embedded in your mind and a truth that will direct your life. Over the next couple of years I will be preaching a series of messages that is meant to prepare you to live a life of peace and success regardless of any circumstances that may come upon you including direct persecution because of your righteousness.

This morning I will start a short series giving the history of God's choosing of the nation of Israel, how she became a nation of great glory, and how she declined to be deported from her own land. There

are parallels in this that explains what is happening to our own nation at the present time. I will then be preaching through 1 Peter in which the apostle specifically writes to encourage them in a time a persecution. This will be followed by preaching through the book of Revelation so that you are aware of what God has planned in His prophetic calendar. That will actually help you understand the news headlines and why and where things are going. Evil is rising rapidly, but God has not lost control in the least.

The Call of Abraham & His Descendants - Genesis

Adam to Abraham - Genesis 1-11

The Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, were written by Moses during the Exodus and prior to entering the promised land under Joshua. Each book has a specific purpose related to preparing the nation of Israel to enter the land and be God's covenant nation that would proclaim the Lord to the world. The specific purpose of Genesis was to introduce the theocratic nation (Israel) to its origin in God's sovereign establishment of a promised and chosen seed.

Genesis 1 begins with a history of God creating the heavens and the earth and all that is in them in six days. Genesis 2 focuses on the creation of Adam from the dust of the ground and fashioning Eve from Adam's rib and the establishment of the first family. Genesis 3 reveals the origin of sin in Satan's deception of Eve and Adam's failure and willing participation in the sin along with all the resulting curses on the serpent, Eve, Adam and the earth. Genesis 4 traces the multiplication of sin in Cain's line while Genesis 5 traces Seth's line to Noah, though the consequences of sin is still prominently displayed in that though the average life span was 912 years, each of them died. Genesis 6 reveals that the wickedness of man had increased so much that *"every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."* All human life would have been destroyed, but Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD and God had him build an ark to preserve his family and a pair of all the animals that could not survive outside the ark in the worldwide flood as recorded in Genesis 7 & 8. Genesis 9 records the exit from the ark, God's establishment of the Noahic covenant, and the curse on Ham's son, Canaan. Genesis 10 records the families that descended from Noah's sons, Japheth, Ham and Shem. Genesis 11 records the refusal of the people to scatter over the earth as God commanded and instead build a tower, but God confused their language and caused them to scatter. Genesis 11 concludes with Shem's genealogy ending with Terah's sons, Abram, Nahor and Haran.

Abraham - Genesis 12-22

Genesis 12 begins the next section with God making a covenant with Abram that will be extended to his descendants. This covenant is the critical factor in God's future relationship with the nation of Israel, so we need to review it and its three-fold promise.

"Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; ² And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; ³ And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

This is the Abrahamic covenant. First, God promised Abram and his descendants that He would give them certain land. The details of the borders of that land would be told to Abram at a later time in Genesis 15. Second, God promised that He would make Abram a great nation. This would take the LORD's intervention because though the name *"Abram"* means *"exalted father,"* he was already 75 years old and had no children. Third, God promised that He would bless all the families of the earth through Abram. He would be the one through whom God would bring the promised redeemer. Related to these promises God would be Abram's protector because He would bless those that blessed Abram and curse those that cursed him.

It is crucial to understand what God is doing here. Man was created to be bring glory to God by being His representative on earth with man ruling over it on God's behalf (Genesis 1:26-30). Instead,

man sinned and failed to fulfill the position for which God had created him. Satan became the usurper who rules over the world in the present age, but that does not mean that God was done with man. God still had a purpose. Man was to proclaim God to all creation while waiting for the time when God would redeem man and restore him to his proper place. However, man following his individual conscience, continued in sin and would not obey God. The early human governments which should have helped the situation did the opposite and man became more entrenched in his opposition to God. Yet, in the midst of all this God always had a remnant, the few that did seek to know and follow God and proclaim Him to others. The line of that remnant is what is traced through the genealogies from Adam through Seth to Noah and then through Shem to Abram. God now chose a particular man and a particular line of his descendants that would become a nation that were to be a blessing to all mankind by proclaiming God to them and through whom the promised redeemer would come.

Genesis 12 continues recording that Abram did what God told him to do. He took his wife, Sarai (which means “princess”), along with his nephew, Lot, and traveled to the land of Canaan as far as Shechem. It was there that the LORD again appeared to Abram and said, *“To your descendants I will give this land”* (Genesis 12:7).

Why would God choose Abram? There is nothing in the narrative in Genesis 12 to indicate there was anything extraordinary about Abram that God would make such a covenant with him. In fact, though he had enough faith to believe God and leave Haran to go to Shechem and then Bethel, he did not have enough faith to tell the truth to Pharaoh about his wife. He feared for his life and lied even though God had just made these promises to him which guaranteed he would continue to live in order for them to be fulfilled. It is not until Genesis 15:6 after God reiterated the covenant that Abram *“believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.”* Abram’s heir would be physical descendants and not his servant, Eliezer. Both Paul and James quote this verse to emphasize that it was faith and not works by which God judged Abram to be righteous and a friend of God. Faith in God and His promises is still the only means by which anyone can be counted as righteous before God. It must also be pointed out that this was a unilateral covenant with God making the promises to Abram without requiring anything of Abram.

This covenant would not be fulfilled immediately, for God also told Abram that his *“descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years.”* The reason for the delay is that *“the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete.”* The judgment of the Canaanites whom they would dispossess would not occur until their sin had reached a certain level (Genesis 15:12-16).

In Genesis 17, thirteen years after Abram had listened to his wife’s advice to have a child on her behalf through her maid, Hagar, the LORD appeared to Abram again and confirmed the covenant changing his name to Abraham, meaning father of nations. It is at this time that circumcision was instituted as a sign of the covenant, but again, all the promises were on God’s part toward Abraham and not Abraham towards God. An emphasis is made that this was an everlasting covenant that the LORD would be God to Abraham and his descendants. The LORD also made it clear that this covenant would go through Isaac who was to be born by Sarah and not through Ishmael.

It is not until Genesis 18:19 that the first indication is made of why the LORD chose Abraham. *“For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.”* God initiated the covenant for Abraham’s benefit in knowing the way of the LORD in order to follow it and be blessed by it. It is an action of mercy and grace on the Lord’s part for the benefit of Abraham and his family in fulfilling His covenant promises. The same is true for everyone that is saved from sin through faith in Jesus Christ. It arises from God’s mercy and grace being extended and not because of any inherent righteousness in them (Rom 3:10-12 ; Titus 3:5).

Genesis 18 also explains why Sodom and Gomorrah would be destroyed with chapter 19 describing the warning given to Lot's family, the destruction of the cities, and Lot's debasement which resulted in the Moabite and Ammonite nations. Genesis 20 reveals Abraham's lapse of faith in lying to Abimelech and God's blessing of Abraham anyway in keeping with His promises.

Genesis 21 records Isaac's birth and Hagar and Ishmael being sent away. Genesis 22 records Abraham's greatest act of faith in obeying the LORD'S command to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, because as Hebrews 11:17-19 points out, it required him to believe that God would raise the dead because Isaac was their heir of the covenant. It was an action that confirmed both Abraham's faith and God's provision to keep the covenant (Gen. 22:16-18).

Isaac - Genesis 23-26

After Sarah's death in Genesis 23, the focus shifts to Isaac who marries his second cousin, Rebekah. The LORD appears to Isaac in Genesis 26 and extends the Abrahamic covenant to him of land, descendants and blessing with verse 5 specifically stating it was *"because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws."* Why is that statement important? Two reasons. First, it means that the covenant was extended to Isaac because God was keeping His promises to Abraham and not because of anything in Isaac himself. Second, it means that the man of little faith in Genesis 12 that lied to protect himself had become a man of great faith over the decades that had followed. It was a faith demonstrated in his obedience to the LORD as Abraham learned the LORD'S commands, statutes and laws. Such growing faith and consequential obedience should be true of all who seek to follow God and therefore especially true of professing Christians.

I will quickly note here that God was faithful to his promise to make Abraham a father of nations for several nations came from him beyond just the two through Ishmael and Isaac. After Sarah's death, Abraham married Keturah who bore him six sons. Among their descendants came the nations of Midian and Dedan which are mentioned later in the Scriptures (Exod 2:5; Jer. 49:8). However, the Abrahamic covenant went only to Isaac and his descendants.

Jacob - Genesis 27-35, 48-50

Isaac had two twin sons, and though Esau was the firstborn, Jacob ended up with the birthright and blessing through deception (Genesis 25:19-34). Jacob becomes the focus of the narrative from Genesis 27-35 and then again in chapters 48-50. Jacob flees to his mother's relatives in Haran to escape Esau's death threats in revenge for Jacob's deception (Gen. 27-28). While on his way, the LORD gave Jacob a dream in which the covenant made with Abraham and Isaac of land, descendants and blessing was extended to him along with a promise that God would be with him and would bring him back to the land of his birth (Genesis 28:1-15). Again, this covenant was unilaterally made by the LORD.

When Jacob arrives in Haran he meets his cousin, Rachel, and agrees to work for his uncle Laban for seven years in order to marry her. Laban deceives him and gives him Rachel's sister, Leah, instead, and Jacob works another seven years for Rachel. He then works an additional six years to earn a flock for himself. During that time his two wives and their maids, Bilhah and Zilpah bore him eleven sons and

one daughter. On his way back to Canaan and just before he met his brother Esau of whom he was afraid, God wrestles with him and changes his name to Israel meaning *“he who strives with God”* (Genesis 32:24-29). After Jacob arrived back in Bethel, God appeared to him again and reiterates the change of name to Israel, and then reconfirms a covenant of descendants of a nation, a company of nations, kings and the land being given to him and his descendants. Soon after this, Rachel gave birth to his twelfth son, Benjamin, and died.

Joseph - Genesis 37-47

Genesis 36 traces the descendants of Esau and the nation of Edom that they formed that settled in hill country of Seir southeast of the Dead Sea. The focus of the narrative then switches to Joseph from Genesis 37-47. Joseph was the first born of Rachel and so was Israel’s favorite son setting up a sibling rivalry that resulted in his brothers selling him into slavery in Egypt. Yet, as Joseph himself states in Genesis 50:20, what they had meant for evil, God meant for good in order to bring about the result of preserving many people alive during the seven years of drought and famine. That included Israel’s family of seventy that had come to Egypt. That relocation would bring about the fulfillment of the prophecy God gave to Abraham in Genesis 15:13 that I mentioned earlier that his descendants would be enslaved in a foreign land.

Of special note is Genesis 49 in which Jacob gives prophecies concerning each of his sons and each tribe of their descendants that formed the nation of Israel. In particular is the prophecy that Levi would be scattered among the tribes and that the scepter and ruler’s staff would not depart from Judah.

Captivity & Freedom to Serve the LORD - Exodus

Captivity - Exodus 1-2

Exodus 1 begins with a simple census that Jacob’s family of seventy that had gone down to Egypt had *“increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filled with them.”* A small family (Isaac) had become a large family (Jacob) and was now a nation of a multitude. But trouble began when a new king in Egypt arose *“who did not know Joseph.”* No longer having any respect for what Joseph had done for them, the Egyptians began to oppress the Israelites, yet the more they were oppressed, the greater they multiplied and spread out until the Egyptians were in dread fear of the Israelites. Pharaoh made an edict to kill the male babies, but in God’s providence, not only was Moses’ life spared, but he became the adopted son of Pharaoh’s daughter enabling him to become educated and trained for leadership. Though Moses was forced to flee after he had killed an Egyptian for beating a Hebrew, it was part of God’s plan in training him. Forty years in the house of Pharaoh and forty years as a shepherd in Midian prepared him for the final forty years as a leader of God’s people.

Egypt Judged - Exodus 3-12

The oppression of the Israelites continued to grow and they cried out to God for help. Exodus 2:24 states that *“God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and*

Jacob.” God then spoke to Moses through the miracle of a bush on Mt. Horeb that was burning but was not burned up. He tells Moses that He has come down to deliver His people from the power of the Egyptians and bring them back to the land promised to them in the Abrahamic covenant (Exodus 3:7-9). Furthermore, God was sending Moses to Pharaoh to bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt and to worship Him at this mountain. Though Moses was hesitant to take on the assignment, God prevailed in Moses through miracles and then providing assistance from Aaron. God forewarned Moses that Pharaoh would not let them go except under compulsion, so God would strike Egypt with many miracles that would punish them, and He would also give the people favor among the Egyptians so that they would end up plundering the Egyptians (Exod. 12:35-36). This was all in fulfillment of the prophecy given to Abraham over 600 years prior (Genesis 15:13-16; Exodus 12:40-41).

The ten plagues against Egypt accomplished several important tasks. First, they humiliated the panoply of Egyptian gods and goddesses for each plague was set against the power of particular pagan deities. Second, they made a clear distinction between the children of Israel and the Egyptians (Exod. 9:4; 11:7). That would also serve as a warning to the children of Israel from even thinking about worshiping the pagan deities. Third, it shattered Egyptian power by destroying their economy (Exod. 10:7). Fourth, all of these magnified the name of the LORD, Yahweh, the God of the Israelites, among the nations and proved that He will keep all of His covenant with Abraham (Exod. 6:6-8; 7:4-5; 8:3, 19; 9:16).

Before I go on, let me stress again what the LORD was doing and why it is so important. 1) God made a unilateral covenant with Abraham which was extended to Isaac and then to Jacob and his children. The sons of Israel ended up in Egypt by Joseph’s hand to preserve that family alive (Genesis 50:20). They then sojourned there according to the prophecy given to Abraham in Genesis 15:13-16 until the sin of the Amorites had become so bad that God would annihilate them. The timing and the manner of the exodus would also be done in fulfillment of that same prophecy. It would be exactly 430 years from when Abraham entered Canaan until the sons of Israel would escape Egypt. The Exodus would take place because, as Exodus 2:24 states, “*God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.*”

2) Exodus 6:6-8 lists important specific actions the LORD told them He would take: **“I have remembered My covenant.”* **“ I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.”* * *I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of Egypt, and I will give you the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession; I am the LORD.*” Of key importance here in this study is that the LORD would make them His people. All of this is in keeping with His covenant with Abraham.

3) The ten plagues were done so that “*the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the sons of Israel from their midst* (Exod. 7:5), “. . . *that you (Pharaoh) may know that there is no one like the LORD our God*” (Exod. 8:10), “*in order to show my*

power, and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth” (Exod. 9:16), “. . . that you may tell in the hearing of your son, and of your grandson, how I made a mockery of the Egyptians, and how I performed My signs among them; that you (the sons of Israel) may know that I am the LORD” (Exod. 10:1-2).

To summarize: the plagues on Egypt and the Exodus were in fulfillment of God’s covenant with Abraham and the prophecies given to him, and to proclaim the name and power of the Lord to all - Pharaoh, Egypt, the sons of Israel, all the earth.

Escape to Sinai - Exodus 13-18

Following the final plague of the Passover in which the first born of man and beast would perish at the hand of the angel of death unless the blood of the lamb was brushed onto the doorposts and lintel of the house, the children of Israel left Egypt. The Passover was then set as a memorial meal to be observed every year as a reminder of who God is and what He had done. It is not actually that far from the land of Goshen in Egypt to the promised land if you go by the coast, but God purposely led them by the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea *“lest the people change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt”* (Exodus 13:17). This first great test of the people was when they were camped before Pi-hahiroth opposite Baal-zephon by the sea. The LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart so that he would pursue them and catch them at a place they could not flee. The people cried out to the LORD I fear saying that it would be better for them to serve the Egyptians than die in the wilderness. Moses rebuked them and according to God’s directions, he lifted his staff over the sea and the LORD divided it by a strong wind that night so that a dry path was made to the other side with walls of water on either side. The LORD protected them from Pharaoh’s army until they were safely on the other side of the sea, then when Pharaoh’s army was allowed to proceed, they rushed onto the same path, but the waters closed over the army and they all drowned. Egypt’s military might was now destroyed too. This was the first of many miracles the LORD would perform to protect and provide for Israel while they were in the wilderness.

The LORD provided water at Marah, then Manna to eat beginning at the wilderness of Sin. They would eat this miracle food for forty years until they had crossed the Jordan to conquer Canaan. He also provided quail for them there to eat as meat despite the judgment they deserved for their grumbling. The LORD provided water for them again at Rephidim where they were also attacked by the Amalekites, but the LORD had them prevail and overwhelm Amalek. It took them three months to make the journey to Sinai where God would make a covenant with them.

Covenant at Sinai - Exodus 19-40

Exodus 19:3-6 records what happened after the children of Israel arrive at Mt. Sinai. ³ *Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: ⁴ ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to Myself. ⁵ ‘Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My*

covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; ⁶ and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.”

Everything else that happens at Mt Sinai is related to this purpose. God made a covenant with Abraham that was extended to Isaac and then to Jacob and his children. The seventy people that made up this family when they went down to Egypt had increased to be 603,550 men of military age, 20 and older, so a total population of up to 2 million. The Mosaic covenant that was being made with what was now a nation was unilateral from the standpoint of God choosing them, but it was conditional on whether they would reap the full benefits of it in being a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) and all of the various specific ordinances for the people instructed them on what it meant to be holy - set apart to the LORD. The details on the construction of the Tabernacle concerned how and where they were to meet with God in their midst. God had called a people for Himself and these were the commands concerning how they were to behave as His people and the relationship they were to have with Him.

A couple of points to emphasize in all of this. First, the Mosaic covenant was being extended to them because of God’s covenant with Abraham. Leviticus 26:40-45 brings this out in its warnings about the consequences of disobedience which could include deportation from the land according to Leviticus 26:33 and Deuteronomy 28:64-66. Yet this passage gives hope, for confession and repentance is a return to obedience which will bring blessings again and God will be faithful to His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the land (vs. 42). In verses 44-45 the LORD states, ⁴⁴ *“Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God.”* ⁴⁵ *“But I will remember for them the covenant with their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God. I am the Lord.”*

Second, God’s choice of Israel to be His people was according to His own mercy and grace. Moses points this out in Deuteronomy 9:5-7 as part of telling the second generation raised in the wilderness their history and how they became a nation by God’s design. ⁵ *“It is not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart that you are going to possess their land, but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord your God is driving them out before you, in order to confirm the oath which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”* ⁶ *“Know, then, it is not because of your righteousness that the Lord your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stubborn people.”* ⁷ *“Remember, do not forget how you provoked the Lord your God to wrath in the wilderness; from the day that you left the land of Egypt until you arrived at this place, you have been rebellious against the Lord.”* The passage then continues on to recount specific examples of their rebellion which in turn magnifies the Lord’s mercy and grace to them as that second generation prepared to enter the promised land. Knowing their history and God’s intervention in it gave them confidence in His faithfulness to keep His promises in the future.

Conclusions & Application

Daniel 4 gives us the story of King Nebuchadnezzar and how he became proud and God caused him to be insane. Why? To teach him as stated in verse 32, *“that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whomever He wishes.”* Seven years later Nebuchadnezzar lifted his eyes toward heaven and his reason returned to him. He then blessed, praised and honored the Most High *“for His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation.”*³⁵ *“All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’”*

God raises nations according to His own will to fulfill His own purposes. That includes our own. Israel is unique among all nations because God has chosen her for Himself as His people according to the everlasting covenant He made with Abraham. He has given the Jewish nation specific promises of blessing for obedience and curses for disobedience and restoration upon repentance. However, there is a general principle here that is the same for all nations.

The Hebrew prophets tell of many nations specifically raised up to punish other nations for their evil, and in turn they are punished for their own evil. At the same time, nations that would align themselves with God’s people and follow His commands would be blessed. As Proverbs 14:34 succinctly states, *“Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a disgrace to any people”*

The United States is not Israel nor does it have any claim on the promises made to Israel. However, it has been blessed by God as a Gentile state because of its foundation in Biblical principles of righteousness and a people who were either Christians themselves or heavily influenced to live according to Christian principles of righteousness however imperfectly. That is the wonderful heritage of this nation and the reason we became a great nation. Psalm 78 admonishes the older generation to tell the younger generation and those to come *“the praises of the LORD and His strength and His wondrous works He has done.”* That would include not only the Biblical stories, but also the stories of God’s work in individuals and in nations. Those who are ignorant of history, including our own as a nation, cannot do that and will fail in giving God the glory He deserves for what He has done in establishing us. They will also fail in giving the next generation the roots needed to hold fast and withstand the winds and floods of political philosophies that seek to destroy and change the nation to be like any other evil nation around the world. If you do not know the history of where you came from, you cannot know why you are where you are currently, nor can you stay on course since you will not where you should be going.

My challenge for you this week is to reflect on God’s hand in the history of His calling a people to Himself and establishing the nation of Israel - both ancient and modern, for modern Israel is also miraculous. Then consider God’s hand in forming this nation. It was not by accident or happenstance. Finally, consider how you have seen God work in your own life and family - and tell the next generation about it!

If you are not familiar enough with history to recognize God's work in the past, then you will need to start learning history so that you can recognize it in the past and present. Start with Genesis and then progress through the historical narratives of the Bible. Read William Bradford's "*Of Plymouth Plantation*" to gain a sense of a religious heritage that traces to the Pilgrims and God's intervention so that they survived. Ask your older relatives about stories about the past such as situations in which they should have been severely injured or killed, but God intervened. History is His Story - so gain a sense of what He has done in it.

Sermon Notes - 7/10/2022

The Rise & Fall of Israel: *God Calls a People for Himself* - Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus

Introduction

God can be _____ because of who He is and His attributes

God has given to us _____ pertaining to life and godliness though knowledge of Him & His promises

The life of faith knows & _____ God and therefore diligent to follow God's commands in becoming mature

Striving to live a godly life is a response to His _____, and obedience is due to knowing and trusting Him

A history of the rise & fall of _____ with parallels that explain our own nation

The Call of Abraham & His Descendants - Genesis

Adam to Abraham - Genesis 1-11

Genesis introduces Israel to its _____ in God's sovereign establishment of a promised and chosen seed

Genesis 1-11: Creation, Man, Sin, Cain's line, Seth's line, Noah & the Flood, Tower of Babel, Shem's line

Abraham - Genesis 12-22

Genesis 12: The Abrahamic covenant of _____, people & blessing - unilaterally made by God to Abram

Abram showed faith in leaving Haran, but he _____ faith in lying about his wife to Pharaoh

Gen. 15:6 - Abram's faith in the LORD is reckoned as _____ - God would give him a physical heir

Gen. 17 - circumcision is made the _____ of the covenant, and Sarah would have a son

Gen. 18:19 - The LORD _____ Abraham - so that he would keep the way of the LORD & receive its blessings

Gen. 21 - Isaac's birth and Hagar & Ishmael sent away. Gen. 22 - Abraham's faith in offering _____

Isaac - Genesis 23-26

Gen. 26 - the Abrahamic covenant extended to Isaac. Abraham had become a man of _____ faith

Abraham became the father of _____: Ishmaelites, Israelites, Midianites, Dedanites

Jacob - Genesis 27-35, 48-50

Jacob usurps his older twin brother, Esau, as prophesied and God extends the Abrahamic _____ to him

Jacob marries Leah & Rachel in Haran, and after 20 years returns to Bethel wealthy with a _____ family

The LORD changes Jacob's name to _____ and reconfirms the covenant to him

Joseph - Genesis 37-47

Joseph's brothers sell him into slavery in Egypt, but God _____ Joseph & uses their evil to preserve life

Jacob's family of _____ relocate to Israel - which will enable the prophecy of Gen. 15:13 to be fulfilled

Captivity & Freedom to Serve the LORD - Exodus

Captivity - Exodus 1-2

Jacob's family had become a _____ of a multitude causing the Egyptians to fear and oppress them

Moses' life was spared to become the _____ of Pharaoh's daughter and educated before fleeing to Midian

Egypt Judged - Exodus 3-12

God remembered His covenant with Abraham and sent Moses back to _____ to free His people

The ten plagues 1) _____ the panoply of Egyptian deities. 2) Made a distinction between Israel & Egypt

3) Shattered the Egyptian _____. 4) Exalted the name of Yahweh among the nations

God made a _____ covenant with Abraham and extended it to Isaac and then Jacob & his descendants

Exodus 6:6-8 - God actions _____ the covenant and prophecies returning the people to the land

The ten plagues proclaimed the power of the _____ to Pharaoh, Egypt, the sons of Israel, all the earth

Escape to Sinai - Exodus 13-18

Passover became a _____ meal to remember who the LORD is and what He had done.

The Red Sea crossing showed God's _____ to a faithless people and shattered Egypt's military might

The LORD performed many _____ in providing & protecting the Israelites in the wilderness

Covenant at Sinai - Exodus 19-40

Everything that happened at Mt Sinai was related to establishing the Israelites as _____

The Mosaic Covenant was made because of God's covenant with _____

Leviticus 26:40-45, Disobedience would bring punishment, but the LORD would still _____ the covenant

Deut. 9:5-7, God _____ Israel to be His people according to His own mercy and grace

Conclusions & Application

Daniel 4 - God raises up and puts down _____ as He desires according to His own purpose and plans

Israel is a _____ nation as God's people, but obedience brings blessing & disobedience curses to any nation

The U.S.A. is a Gentile state which has been blessed by God due to its foundation in _____ principles

National & family heritage and stories of God's work in them should be told to each _____ - Psalm 78

KIDS CORNER

Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help. **Young Children**

- draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch.

Older Children - 1) Count how many times "covenant" is mentioned. 2) Talk with your parents about God's covenants with people and the importance of God keeping them.

THINK ABOUT IT!

Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. Why can you trust God? What is the relationship of knowledge, trusting God and living a godly life? Summarize each chapter of Genesis 1-11. What are the elements of the Abrahamic Covenant in Genesis 12? How would you rate Abram's measure of faith at that time? What does God do in Genesis 15 that proved God's covenant with Abram was unilateral? What did Abram believe that it was reckoned to him as righteousness? Why is the covenant extended to Isaac and not Ishmael? Why is the covenant extended to Jacob and not Esau? How did God work the evil done to Joseph by his brothers into something good? How does this fit with the prophecy of Genesis 15:13? Why did the Egyptians oppress the Israelites? What is the importance of God remembering His covenant with Abraham in Genesis 2:24? What was the effect of the ten plagues on 1) Egyptian deities, 2) Distinguishing Israel and Egypt, 3) The Egyptian economy. 4) The name of the LORD? What important actions by the Lord are detailed in Exodus 6:6-8? What is the meaning and purpose of Passover? Why did God lead the children of Israel to the Red Sea instead of directly to Canaan? How did God test Israel at the Red Sea? What other miracles did God do for Israel in the wilderness? What are the fundamental aspects of the covenant made at Mt Sinai - Exodus 19:3-6. How large was Jacob's family when they went to Egypt? How large was it when they left? What did promise to do if they disobeyed him? How does God intervene in the rise and fall of nations? What is the importance of knowing history - ancient, national, family? What are the dangers of not knowing history? If you do not know history, what will you do to learn it?