

Israel
And The Rapture
Genesis 12:1-3

In the world of geo-eco-politics, it is not often that promises are kept over time

But a promise God made Abraham more than 4,000 years ago is still in force

It is shaping our world today and will shape it even further as we approach the end of the age

But we know that God's promises are forever

Most Israeli and many Jews living outside Israel, know someone who has been the victim of Palestinian terrorism in the Jewish homeland

Living with the prospect of death or injury due to Palestinian terrorism is a daily reality for Jews in Israel

We need to understand that the term "Palestinians" is a generic term used to refer to Arabs who occupied the land of Palestine prior to 1948 and who were displaced when Israel was made a nation. Palestinians resent that displacement and they want their land back and they want Israel to be erased from the map. They want Jews either to be killed or to leave their land and live elsewhere in the world. Acts of terrorism are their ongoing effort to attack Israel's right to exist.

Israel is a nation around 9,000 square miles. About the size of New Hampshire. And is surrounded by some 5 million square mile area of Arab nations that want to see its destruction. In 1948 Her status as a legally reformed nation has resulted in a constant state of attacks. Thousands of Israelis have been killed by Palestinians and thousands of Palestinians have died as a result of Israel's response to the terror attacks. Israel has never been the aggressor in the Arab-Israel conflict. Israel has been willing to find a solution and even making concessions to the Palestinians, but her offers are always because they want Israel to cease to exist.

Israel is fighting for its own existence. When Israel takes the tough by necessary measure to defend herself, she is slammed by the world, but if she fails to take those measures, she is attacked by hostile neighbors.

Oppression of the Jews is not new history. The descendants of Abraham were enslaved for 400 years, then the 10 Northern tribes were captured by the Assyrians in 722 BC and the 2 Southern tribes by the Babylonians in 586 BC. Then the Romans crushed the Jews in AD 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem and scattering them around the world for the next 1878 years until 1948.

There is only one factor that can explain why the Jews still exist as a people and a nation: The promise of God.

Ezekiel 36:23—"I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know

that I am the LORD,” declares the Lord GOD, “when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight.

And through Isaiah God reminded the Jews that many of her hardships were discipline for her sins

Why does God have a future for the Jews?

Two reasons: Because of a promise made to Abraham and because of God’s faithfulness to His Word.

We are going to look at how Israel plays a roll in the end times and the rapture through Genesis 12:1-3

- 1) An Unconditional Covenant
 - a) Listen God says “I Will” five times in Genesis 12:1-3
 - b) God is not asking Abraham to reciprocate, He is stating what God Himself will do for Abraham and his descendants.
 - c) God will later confirm the unconditional nature of this covenant in a unique ceremony in Genesis 15
 - d) God promised not to break that promise and took responsibility for the keeping of the covenant
 - e) This was not an agreement between equals, this was God promising to do something for Abraham and his descendants
- 2) A Personal Covenant
 - a) When God made the promise to Abraham, He made the statements personal
 - b) Gen. 12:2—” 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;**
 - c) God uses the personal pronouns “you” and “your” 11 times in verses 1-3
 - d) The promises have universal implications, nut they began as personal promises to Abraham
 - e) God told Abraham to leave his land and head to the rich and abundant land of Canaan
 - f) Abraham prospered and he was promised a seed and that his descendants would prosper as Abraham had done
 - g) Abraham was revered in his own day as a powerful leader and the personal promise of the land to Abraham’s descendants through Isaac and Jacob was never rescinded and still remains in force today
- 3) A National Covenant
 - a) Part of the promise to Abraham was that God would make a great nation from his descendants in verse 2
 - b) In spite of the millions of Jews who have been killed through the centuries, the Jews are indeed a great nation
 - c) Although it is minute in size, and only a sliver of Mediterranean coastline, Israel has withstood continuing Arab onslaught, wars, boycott and terrorism. It has turned itself from a poor, rural country, to an industrial and post-industrial powerhouse...it has

reduced social, educational and health gaps between Arabs and Jews and some of its achievements are unprecedented

- 4) A Territorial Covenant
 - a) In verse 1 God promised a homeland to Abraham
 - b) **In Genesis 15:8—” 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;**
 - c) **In Ezekiel 48:1, 28—” “Now these are the names of the tribes: from the northern extremity, beside the way of Hethlon to Lebo-hamath, as far as Hazar-enan at the border of Damascus, toward the north beside Hamath, running from east to west, Dan, one portion. “And beside the border of Gad, at the south side toward the south, the border shall be from Tamar to the waters of Meribath-kadesh, to the brook of Egypt, to the Great Sea.**
 - d) Abraham was promised a huge grant of land—all of modern Israel, Lebanon, the West Bank of Jordan and large parts of Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia
 - e) And because Israel has never occupied all that land, many scholars believe the promise of land should be only spiritualized to refer to Heaven instead of a literal homeland
 - f) Why did Abraham have to travel all the way to Canaan could God have not just given it to him where he was living
 - g) No
 - h) This was the promise about literal land that will one day be fulfilled
 - i) This promise was reiterated several times
 - j) To Isaac in Genesis 26:2-5
 - k) To Jacob in Genesis 28:13 & 35:12
 - l) This land in this promise is the most important block of real estate in the world
 - m) As such, it will be the most hotly contested land in the world until Christ returns
 - n) Israel has been removed from the land three times
 - i) 1—When Joseph’s people travel to Egypt
 - ii) 2—During the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities
 - iii) 3—The diaspora after AD 70
 - o) Other places give this promise to the people: Jeremiah 32:37, 41; Ezekiel 11:17, 20:42, 34:13, 37:2-25, 39:28; Amos 9:14-15
 - p) This is a promise that we should take at face value
 - q) When the United Nations created the homeland for the Jews in 1948, they carved off a portion of what had historically been Israel’s land—part of Judea and Samaria, which is now called the West Bank—and gave it to the Palestinians. But when the Palestinians and others attacked Israel in 1967 in the Six-Day War, Israel won the West bank back. They did not take it by aggression. They won it while defending themselves from attack—land that had been given to Abraham by God thousands of years earlier
 - r) Israel regaining the central part of her homeland in 1948 is a sign for all who know biblical prophecy
 - s) It is an indication that we are moving into the period to the Second Coming of Israel’s King
- 5) A Reciprocal Covenant
 - a) God promised to protect and bless Abraham and also bless those who bless Abraham and his descendants

- b) It is very simple: nations that bless Israel will be blessed and nations that curse Israel will be cursed
 - c) In ancient times, powerful nations like Egypt, Midian, Moab, Babylon, and Greece were ruined by raising their hand against Israel
 - d) In the modern era, Communist Russia was dissolved and Nazi Germany was crushed
 - e) Again during the Six-Day War in 1967, the United Arab Republic along with the Egyptians, Syria and Jordan attacked Israel from three directions. Although hopelessly outnumbered, Israel defeated all these nations and captured vast amounts of land including the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank
 - f) The most foolish thing any modern nation could do is to stand against Israel in its foreign policy
- 6) A Universal Covenant
- a) We have to understand that the promise to Abraham was not to exclude but to include
 - b) Abraham's descendants would be the rich repository of the knowledge of God that all humanity needs
 - c) For example, almost all of the writers of the Bible were Jewish
 - d) Jesus was a descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
 - e) The land of Israel and city of Jerusalem exist because of the promises to Abraham being fulfilled through his descendants
 - f) It is to that land and city which the King of kings and Lord of lords will one day return to judge the world and establish His Kingdom on earth
 - g) The entire human race has been blessed by the promise of God and Abraham
- 7) An Eternal Covenant
- a) God's promise to Abraham came in three stages:
 - i) Initiated in Genesis 12:1-3
 - ii) Formalized in Genesis 15:1-21
 - iii) Amplified in Genesis 17:1-18
 - b) It is in Genesis 17, when Abraham is nearly 100 that God comes to him to affirm that the covenant is an "everlasting covenant"
 - c) We even see that in in Ezekiel 37, when the vision of the dry bones come back to life and reunited to inherit the blessing of Abraham's covenant
 - d) That is what we are seeing today
 - e) But rebuilding the "bones" of the nation is not enough
 - f) Israel has not been made totally spiritually alive yet
 - g) But Ezekiel say the breath of God coming into the resurrected physical bodies (Ezek. 37:8-10) and that will happen (Zech. 12:10, Romans 11:27-28)
 - h) Two prophecies are yet to be fulfilled: Israel needs to inhabit all the land promised to her, and she needs to turn to her Messiah
 - i) But all those will be fulfilled in God's time
 - j) Israel is indeed a sign to the world that God keeps His promises and the end of the age is approaching