1. **Introductory Overview**

**(Gen. 12:1-4)***, 1 Now the Lord had said to Abram: “Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”4 So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him…*

*"So Abram departed..."*

In terms of their global, cultural impact - past, present, and future - the first 3 words in Genesis 12:4 are perhaps some of the most significant words in the Bible. With these 3 words, nations were born; cultures created; lands would be given; lands would be taken; wars fought; blood shed; promises made - promises that have been kept; promises that will be kept.

Ripples from these 3 words can be seen on nearly every television around the world on the nightly news – even thousands of years later.

From the moment Abram accepted and obeyed the word of the Lord in Genesis 12, a people – a nation – was born. This nation would enter into a unique relationship with God. The Israelites, God’s chosen people, would become a *corporate* “son” of the Most High God.

**(Ex. 4:22)***,* **22** *Then you shall say to Pharaoh, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Israel is My son, My firstborn.* **23** *So I say to you, let my son go that he may serve Me…*

God, in His infinite wisdom, love, desire for eternal fellowship with man, chose Abram to birth a nation. **God chose Israel to be His people, His nation, through whom all the nations of the earth would be blessed** (Gen 12:2,3).

Paul says that Genesis 12, the promise of God to Abram that through this people all the nations of the earth would be blessed, was at the core of the gospel.

**(Gal. 3:8)***, And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.”*

Then God, in Genesis 15, made a covenant with Abram that He would give to this new nation their own land – land that the Lord had chosen.

**(Gen. 15:18)***, On the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying: “To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates…”*

He also prophesied to Abram that there will come a time when this nation would be in captivity for 400 years (Gen 15:13) but would one day return to the promised land – the land of God’s covenant people.

When the Lord brought Israel out of the bondage of Egypt, He took them up to Mt Sanai and made a covenant with the nation. A covenant, by the way, that He fully intends on keeping.

**(Ex. 19:5,6)***, “***5** *Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; 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 which you shall speak to the children of Israel.”*

1. **But Why Israel?**

The question must be asked, “But why Israel?” Why did God choose them?

This question has been asked for thousands of years? It was perhaps even being asked as early as the book of Deuteronomy.

God answers this question in Deuteronomy 7.

**(Deut. 7:6-8)***,* **6** *For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples of on the face of the earth.* **7** *The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples.* **8** *but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers…*

So why Israel?

1. Because He loves them. The Lord loves Israel because He loves Israel. 😊
2. Because He promised Abram. God chose Israel because He chose Israel. 😊

This covenant of love will be kept. God is not a man that He should lie **(Num. 23:19)**. He will not break a covenant.

Throughout the history of the Gentile, Christian church some have minimized Israel’s special place in God’s heart, thinking that it somehow diminishes us in God’s heart. This cannot be further from the truth.

It is good news for us – Gentile believers thousands of years later – that the God of Salvation keeps His word? Why would we want God to break His promises to Israel? Heaven forbid it!

**God is a keeper of covenant and that is great news for us. He is Faithful; He is true; and His promises are “yes and amen.”**

1. **To What End?**

So, the Lord chose Israel as His special treasure. But to what end? Why did God choose a people, a nation, for His special purposes and plans for the earth?

For the answer to this question, we need to go back to the beginning.

**It was always God’s plan to release His glory and exercise His dominion on the earth in and through human beings.**

**(Gen. 1:27,28)***,* **27** *So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.* **28** *Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”*

The first commands to the first humans: Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, subdue, and exercise dominion. By the way, these are eternal commands.

But man sinned and continued to sin. Man continued to do things their own way. Instead of carrying out God’s plans, man began to carry out their own plans. So much so that it is said of man in the days of Noah that *“every intent of the thought of [man’s] heart was only evil continually”* (Gen. 6:5).

God brought the flood as judgement upon the earth.

Years later, in Genesis 11, man again attempted to do things their own way - to build a way to God in a way that God did not intend. So, God “came down” and put and end to this building project.

At Babel, God brings two things to the peoples of the earth:

1. Confusion (Gen. 11:7)
2. Division (Gen. 11:8)

God brings confusion to the people by mixing up their languages.

God brings division by scattering the people abroad.

But in the *very next chapter*, Genesis 12, God begins the process of building a new nation, one that will bring forth a Unifier, a Savior – one who will bring together all things in Himself; One who will sit upon a throne on the earth surrounded by every people, nation, tongue, and tribe.

In other words**, immediately after God divides the nations, He begins the process of birthing a new nation through whom will come the One who brings all the nations back together in Himself.**

**(Zech. 2:11)***, Many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you.*

This great Unifier, the Jewish Messiah named Jesus, would come from a human lineage – from the Jewish line. He will be a Son of David, a Root of Jesse, a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, and on down to Solomon, Jehoshaphat, Josiah, Zerubbabel, and Zadok.

**The Savior of all of humanity was, is, and forever will be, a Jewish Man.**

**The national assignment of the nation of Israel was that they would have a primary role in bringing the nations of the earth to a knowledge of God and the good news of the gospel.**

A Blessing to All Nations

God also chose Israel to be the nation through whom He would bless all other nations of the earth.

**(Gen. 12:2,3)***,* **2** *I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.* **3** *I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*

**There is a promised blessing upon a people who bless the nation of Israel.**

God wants us to walk in the blessing, as a people who love His people. We should love the nation of Israel and the Jewish people, not because it’s some sort of political platform, but because we love Jesus, and love what He loves, and we want to walk in His blessings. This issue is not one of politics, but of passion.

To support and bless the nation of Israel does not mean that we necessarily support and agree with everything that the nation does. Israeli politicians can made good Godly decisions, and they can make poor ungodly ones. To support and bless Israel and the Jewish people means that we come into agreement with God’s heart – loving what He loves; it means that we honor her, serve her, pray for her, intercede on her behalf, and keep our hearts tender towards her.

Christ’s Passion

To get a glimpse into Christ’s passion for Israel, consider the story of the Triumphal Entry in Luke 19.

Jesus has so much passion and love for His people that as he entered Israel’s capital city, Jerusalem, on a donkey, He wept because His “special treasure” did not, as a nation, reciprocate His affections. Jesus took this personally.

**(Lk. 19:41-44)***,* **41** *Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it,* ***42*** *saying, “If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.* ***43*** *For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side,* ***44*** *and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”*

As many people are praising and singing, and shouting, He is weeping. Knowing the hearts of men, Jesus knew that many of these who were now crying out, “Hosanna!” would soon be shouting, “Crucify Him!”

Jesus had come *from* the Jews, *to* the Jews, and *fo*r the Jews, in order to gather them to Himself (Matt. 23:37). Yet they refused. **Jesus, in that moment felt the sting of unrequited love, and it hurt Him, and He wept.** This is personal to Jesus, so it should be taken seriously by each one of us.

Consider the passion in His heart for His people when you read the following verses:

**(Zech. 2:8)***, For thus says the Lord of hosts: “He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; for he who touches you* [Israel] *touches the apple of My eye.”*

**(Zech. 8:2)***, I am zealous for Zion with great zeal; with great fervor I am jealous for her.*

In those final days of Jesus’ time on earth, many of the Jewish people – the ones for whom Jesus came – rejected the idea that He was their promised Messiah.

Even now to this day many of the Jewish people still reject this idea. The people from whom, to whom, and for whom He came, treat His name as a curse word. Our brother has seemingly squandered His inheritance and left the house of his father - but make no mistake, our brother will return. And when he does, will he find us, the Christian church, running side by side with the Father to welcome him home? Let it be so.

1. **Where Do We Go From Here?**

This teaching was primarily about getting us, Gentile believers, into the story line. Our faith is not disconnected from the story of our brothers, the Jewish people. It is their Messiah, the Jewish Man, Jesus, who is the centerpiece of our faith.

In fact, if Jesus is not the Messiah of Israel, He’s not the Savior of the world. If He didn’t fulfill that part of His “mission” then He is not who He says He is.

The goal here was to stir our hearts and minds related to Israel. I want us to feel what God feels for His people. I want our love to be stirred in a new, fresh, and dynamic way.

This is a call – a call to the church to come into agreement with God’s heart for His people.

It is time that we grow in our understanding and affection for Israel and the Jewish people.

Here are a couple of ways that we can grow in this capacity:

1. Begin to pray for Israel and the Jewish people. What we need in this hour is more tears – tears in the place of prayer. If we are going to see tears of repentance leading to tears of joy flow from the eyes of the Jewish people, we must cry the tears of compassion and intercession.
	1. Truth: What you faithfully and fervently pray for you will fall more in love with.
	2. What to pray for? How to pray?
		1. Protection
		2. Salvation
		3. Blessing
2. Read/Study Scriptures as our His- tory.
	1. When the Bible speaks of the Israelites, the Jews, Israel, Jerusalem, it means Israelites, Jews, Israel, and Jerusalem. The church has not replaced Israel! I repeat, the church has not replaced Israel!
	2. Yes, scriptures and prophecy give us multiple layers and fulfilments, but the we should start with the words as they are.
		1. Hermeneutics 101 – It says what it means, and means what it says.