

“ISRAEL MY GLORY”

Israel’s Mission, and Missions to Israel

by

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CHAPTER ONE

ELECTION

ISRAEL’S NATIONAL ELECTION—UNCONDITIONAL; ISRAEL’S PRESERVATION TO THE END OF TIME— GUARANTEED

God’s purpose is to bless the world, to recover the human race from the effects of the fall, and to fill the earth with His glory.

This purpose is clearly revealed in His Word.

- **“The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea”** (Isaiah 11:9),
- **“The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it”** (Isaiah 40:5).
- **“Men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed”** (Psalm 72:17).

Universal blessing is guaranteed by Him whose purpose cannot be frustrated, so that the combined powers of evil; though permitted for infinitely wise reasons to delay the blessing, cannot by any possibility succeed in finally preventing it.

The same certainty applies to the channel and instrumentality for the diffusion of universal blessing. Hence the unconditional election of Abram, and of the nation which sprang from his loins,

“Now the Lord said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house unto the land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 12:1-3).

“**I will bless thee**” is an **unconditional** promise; *“and thou shalt be,”* or, *“be thou, a blessing,”* is also **unconditional**; whilst the middle promise and threat are both conditional, **“I will bless them that bless thee,”** and **“him that curseth thee I will curse.”**

Kindness to the seed of Abraham will certainly bring blessing, and unkindness will as certainly bring curse; but no conditions whatever are attached to the promises, **“I will bless thee,”** and **“thou shalt be a blessing.”**

The grant of the land of Canaan is no less **unconditional**, **“And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land”** (Genesis 12:7).

In considering Israel’s election it may be well to define terms.

- What is meant by the term *Israel*?
- What is meant by the term *election*?

By the term *Israel* we do not mean the Anglo-Saxons; nor do we mean the Christian Church; but simply and exclusively the natural descendants of one man, Jacob, whom God named Israel. **“The children of Jacob, whom He named Israel”** (II Kings 17:34).

The Anglo-Saxons as such, being uncircumcised, have a lower position than the national Israel; whilst the Christian Church, Abraham’s spiritual seed in a covenant of faith made with him in an uncircumcised state, has a much higher calling than the national Israel. But while, on the one hand, the application of the term Israel to either the Anglo-Saxons or to the Christian Church is both unscriptural and mischievous, on the other hand, we must not limit the term to the ten tribes or ancient kingdom of Israel, but allow it to describe any of the natural descendants of Jacob.

Jews of the two-tribed kingdom of Judah and Benjamin are as really Israelites as are the descendants of the ten-tribed kingdom, being all alike the children of one man named Israel. Paul, though not a descendant of any one of the ten tribes, was an Israelite, and though not of Judah was also a Jew. He says, **“A man who am a Jew,”** and **“Are they Israelites? So am I.”**

All Jews are Israelites, though all Israelites need not be Jews; just as all Londoners are Englishmen, though all Englishmen are not Londoners. By the term Israel, as used throughout these pages, we mean the natural descendants of Jacob, whom God named Israel; so much for the term Israel.

What is meant by the term *Election*?

Election is simply *choice*, or the act of choosing by voluntary preference to any office or mission as the election of a Lord Mayor, a Member of Parliament, or the choice of a secretary or president of an association.

The Scriptural view of election has reference to Divine choice. There is an election or Divine choice of individuals to eternal life in Christ Jesus, **“Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world”** (Ephesians 1:4). The Lord Jesus says, **“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you”** (John 15:16). **“Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace”** (Romans 11:5). But this is *individual election* within the sphere of *spiritual interests*, affecting the *soul’s eternal destiny*.

Israel's election is equally a matter of Divine choice, but the sphere of that election is *time* and affects necessarily only *temporal interests*. In *national* election the wicked often largely share in the temporal blessings of the righteous; and the righteous also largely share in the calamities of the wicked.

The descendants then of the twelve sons of Jacob, called Israel, and who are most fitly termed Israelites, have been chosen or elected by God for some specific purpose, as the result of the infinite wisdom of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will; and who has declared, **"This people have I formed for Myself, they shall shew forth My praise"** (Isaiah 43:21). Thus Nehemiah says, **"Thou art the Lord God who didst choose Abram . . . and gavest him the name of Abraham"** (Nehemiah 9:7). Stephen also testifies, **"The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy land, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee"** (Acts 7:2, 3). And the Lord said, **"Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?"** (Genesis 18:17, 18).

The leading promises associated with Abraham's call or election are, blessing for Abraham himself, blessing on all who bless him, and blessing through him and through his seed on all nations. In order that this **"great and mighty nation"** may fulfil its high destiny, the Lord makes a grant of land to Abraham, secured to him and to his seed by a perpetual covenant for an everlasting possession (See Genesis 17:7, 8).

To Isaac these promises are renewed. **"I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee and unto thy seed I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father . . . and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed"** (Genesis 26:3, 4).

They are confirmed to Jacob. **"I am the Lord, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac; the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; . . . and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed"** (Genesis 28:13, 14).

In the changing of Jacob's name to Israel, his sons became children of Israel and their descendants Israelites.

We have now in Jacob's sons, as heads of tribes, a broad foundation laid for the development of the nation, the line no longer being confined to one single family. These **"Children of Israel,"** as we shall now designate them, leave the Promised Land and become comfortably located in the land of Egypt, where jealousy of their number and influence converts the Egyptians into oppressors and persecutors. The sighs and cries of the children of Israel are regarded by God. **"And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God saw the children of Israel, and God took knowledge of them"** (Exodus 2:24, 25).

These **"Children of Israel"** are now taken as a people.

“Say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord . . . and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: and I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God . . . And I will bring you in unto the land concerning which I lifted up my hand to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob I and I will give it you for a heritage” (Exodus 6:6-8).

They are now a politically redeemed *people*, and as a *people* are separated from all others as God’s own. **“Ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from the other people, that ye should be Mine”** (Leviticus 20:26).

Their perpetual separation is guaranteed. **“Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations”** (Numbers 23:9). They are also to be above all other nations in praise and honour; a chosen, holy, and peculiar people. **“For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth”** (Deuteronomy 14:2).

They are a redeemed people, to be unto God a people for ever. **“And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, LORD, art become their God”** (II Samuel 7:23, 24).

Just as the land is given to be the people’s inheritance, so the people have been taken by God for His inheritance. **“The Lord hath taken you . . . to be unto Him a people of inheritance.”** **“That good land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance”** (Deuteronomy 4:20, 21).

We have now sufficiently traced the development of the nation of Israel from the call of Abraham, through his son Isaac, and his grandson Jacob, to the descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob, as heads of tribes; constituting an elect, redeemed, separated, protected, preserved, and honored people, with a mission of distinguished service in the interest of the human race and for the glory of the Lord.

The leading characteristic of Israel’s national election is, that it is **unconditional**. Were it otherwise, we should have looked for, not simply temporary national calamity as the result of the nation’s sin, but total extinction, and Israel’s mission annulled. The purposes of Israel’s election must be secured against all contingencies, and those purposes are as secure as is the immutability of His counsel, **“for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance”** (Romans 11:29)—amongst such **“gifts and calling”** are the gift of Palestine and the call or election of Israel.

Unconditional—not because they were *numerous*.

“For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

“The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers” (Deuteronomy 7:6-8).

Not because they were righteous. **“Speak not thou in thine heart . . . saying, For my righteousness the LORD hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee. Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people”** (Deuteronomy 9:4-6).

As the election of the nation and the gift of the land were, in the first instance, unconditional, so the final restoration and blessing of the nation are also unconditional. **“Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went.” “Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord GOD, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel”** (Ezekiel 36:22, 32).

- The election of Israel is also perpetual.
- The election was confirmed by an everlasting covenant, and the land given for an everlasting possession.
- Israel's preservation as a distinct people is guaranteed in the simplest, clearest, and strongest language.

“Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD” (Jeremiah 31:35-37).

“Considerest thou not what this people have spoken, saying, The two families which the LORD hath chosen, he hath even cast them off? thus they have despised my people, that they should be no more a nation before them. Thus saith the LORD; If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them” (Jeremiah 33:24-26).

The above passages just quoted from the prophecies of Ezekiel and Jeremiah, as their contexts plainly show, bring us down to the period of Israel's final restoration and national conversion preparatory to the opening of the millennial era.

As Israel's beneficent mission will not be accomplished till the close of the millennium, their preservation as a distinct nation is guaranteed until their mission is accomplished.

“For as the new heavens and the new earth (millennial) which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain” (Isaiah 66:22).

But it may be asked if the covenant confirming the election and mission of Israel be an everlasting covenant, and guaranteeing Palestine as an everlasting possession, why has the elect nation been dispossessed of the land for so many ages? The answer is plain. The nation was brought under another covenant, a *conditional* one, at Mount Sinai: obedience to the law then given was made the condition of *continued possession*.

“The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day” (Deuteronomy 5:2, 3).

The disobedience of the elect nation has interrupted the possession and enjoyment of their inheritance, but has not deprived them of their right to the land as an unconditional gift from God. The present condition of the nation is represented rather by *interrupted communion* than by *severed union*.

The nation of Israel—a type of the Church of Christ—is as really one in the mind and purpose of God as is the Church—the antitype; so that we need not be surprised to find sacrifices offered for the whole twelve tribes, as recorded twice in the Book of Ezra, even though a very partial restoration from Babylonish captivity had taken place (Ezra 6:16, 17; 8:35).

Thus before the original purpose of God through Israel in the blessing of all nations can be realized, the scattered tribes of Israel must become one united people and nation in the possession of their ancient inheritance.

“Thus saith the LORD God: Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them *one nation* in the land, upon the mountains of Israel, and *one king* shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all . . .

“And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob My servant, wherein your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and My servant David shall be their prince for ever. Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them: it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And the *heathen shall know* that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore” (Ezekiel 37:21, 22, 25-28).

The simple believer in the word of the living God feels no surprise whatever that a nation originated and developed under such exceptional and miraculous circumstances, and for so divine a purpose, should have its preservation guaranteed until its mission of universal blessing has been fully accomplished.

“Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation” (Joel 3:20).

“He hath remembered His covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a *thousand generations*” (Psalm 105:8).

The national election of Israel is unconditional, and the existence of the nation guaranteed to the end of time.

The history of the Jewish nation, and God’s dealings with that nation, illustrate the principles of the moral government of God.

Israel is a grand object lesson for all nations and for all time. The national election of Israel typifies the election of the Church; circumcision in the flesh is typical of faith in Christ; the former is essential to the privileges of the national election, the latter essential to the enjoyment of spiritual blessings in Christ. The nearness and dearness of the marriage tie between the national Israel and the Lord God illustrate the nearness and dearness of the relationship subsisting between the Church and her Head, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sin in the Jewish nation has interrupted national communion, just as sin interrupts spiritual communion in the Christian. The national election of Israel is unconditional, and the spiritual election of the believer in Christ is all of grace. Indeed, Israel and the Church are so linked together as type and antitype that to loosen the foundations of faith in the national future of Israel would equally loosen the foundations of faith in the future security of the believer in Christ.

The preservation of Israel as a nation throughout time is no less secure than is the salvation of the believer in Christ throughout eternity.

“Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto *Thy people*; O visit me with Thy salvation: That I may see the good of Thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of Thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance” (Psalm 106:4, 5).

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