



THE ISRAEL DILEMMA - ANCIENT PROPHECIES (part 1)

As Israel was preparing to enter the Promised Land 40 years after the exodus from Egypt, Moses wrote a set of prophecies about Israel's future. These prophecies were linked to the covenant God had made with Abraham hundreds of years earlier and the covenant made with the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai when the Ten Commandments were given. In later generations, prophets would call the Israelites back to the covenant by repenting for their sin in worshipping the false gods of the nations around them and practicing violence and injustice.

The prophecies of Moses form the following five-step list of events or phases that Israel would go through when it became a kingdom and broke its covenant with God. These steps form the search criteria that will be investigated in the film, steps about which many scholars today have become skeptical. Will finding evidence for them verify the truth of the Bible, the reality of the covenants God made with Israel, and even inform our understanding of the conflicts Israel is experiencing today?

KINGDOM

The promise to Abraham and his descendants - Gen. 12:1-5, 13:14-17, 15:1-21, 17:1-21, 22:15-18, 28:13-15, 35:10-12

"And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Gen. 12:2-3)

*"...for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring **forever**. I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted." (Gen. 13:15-16)*

God's initial covenant with Abraham, which was repeated to Isaac, his son, and Jacob, his grandson (who would be renamed "Israel"), included three main aspects—descendants, a land, and a blessing. A key factor of this covenant is that it was said to be everlasting.

The Promise of a Kingdom - Gen. 17:6, 17:15-16, 35:11, 49:10, Deut. 17:14-20

*And God said to him [Jacob], "I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and **kings** shall come from your own body. (Gen. 35:11)*



According to the Bible, after the Israelites conquered the Promised Land, they remained primarily shepherds ruled by judges for centuries. But Moses made it clear in the Torah that Israel would someday establish a **Kingdom** ruled by a king.

A Temple and Strong Kingdom - 1 Kings 6:2, 9:19, 10:23, 1 Chron. 28:19

Thus King Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. (1 Kings 10:23)

The Bible describes this kingdom as very powerful and wealthy. Its crowning jewel was the magnificent Temple built for Israel's God Yahweh in Jerusalem by King David's son Solomon according to God's specifications.

DESTROYED

The Kingdom Destroyed - Lev. 26:31-32, Deut. 4:26, 28:20, 31:29, 2 Kings 18:9-10, 25:8-10

*"The LORD will send on you curses, confusion, and frustration in all that you undertake to do, until you are **destroyed** and perish quickly on account of the evil of your deeds, because you have forsaken me." (Deut. 28:20)*

Moses had made clear that God would send hardships on Israel as warnings for breaking the covenant, but then the first judgment of the series for breaking the covenant would be the destruction of their kingdom. The northern Kingdom of Israel would fall to the Assyrians around 720 BC, and the southern Kingdom of Judah would fall to the Babylonians in 586 BC, when Jerusalem and its Temple were **Destroyed**.

SCATTERED

The defeated Israelites Scattered to foreign lands - Lev. 26:33, Deut. 4:27, chap. 28, 2 Kings 17:6, 24:11-15, Psalm 137:1-4

*And the LORD will **scatter** you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will drive you. (Deut. 4:27)*



After the kingdom was destroyed, the Israelites were **Scattered** among the nations. The Assyrians and Babylonians exiled many of the surviving Israelites and replaced them with people from other parts of their empire.

PERSECUTED

In these foreign lands, the Israelites would be severely Persecuted - Lev. 26:38, Deut. 28:37, Deut. 65-68, Dan. 3:8-30, 6:14-23, Esth. 3:6, 2 Kings 17:7, 13-14

"And you shall become a horror, a proverb, and a byword among all the peoples where the LORD will lead you away." (Deut. 28:37)

And this occurred because the people of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God... Yet the LORD warned Israel and Judah by every prophet and every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes, in accordance with all the Law that I commanded your fathers. But they would not listen. (2 Kings 17:7, 13-14)

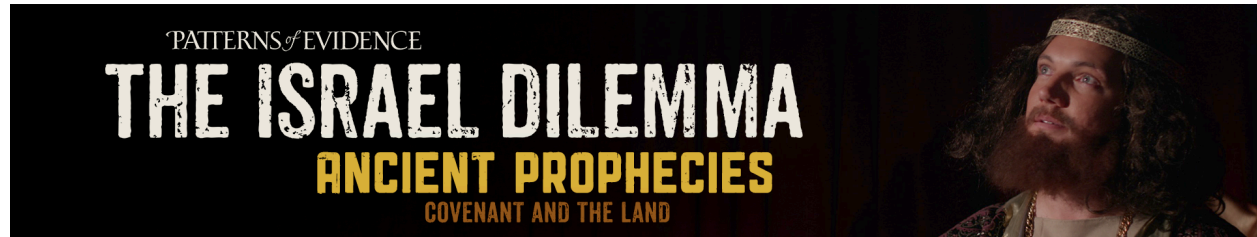
Moses predicted they would be severely **Persecuted**, and the Bible tells of how the Jewish exiles, even those who were favored in the high court, suffered persecution because of their identity as Jews who worshiped only one God. Daniel's companions were thrown into a fiery furnace for refusing to bow to a pagan idol, and Daniel himself was thrown into a den of lions because he continued to pray to the true God when this was outlawed. Hammon sought to kill all the Jews in the empire at the time of Queen Esther.

RETURNED

Returned to the Promised Land - Lev. 26:44, Deut. 30:3-5, 2 Chron. 36:22-23, Ezra 2:1, 3:2, 6:3-12, Neh. 2:17, 6:15, Isaiah 44:28-45:1

Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not spurn them, neither will I abhor them so as to destroy them utterly and break my covenant with them, for I am the LORD their God. (Lev. 26:44)

Then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have mercy on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you... (Deut. 30:3)



Despite the Israelites' hardships, God promised that because of the covenant made to Abraham, he would preserve them and one day gather them from where he scattered them, and they would be **Returned** to the Promised Land. Isaiah the prophet had named the king (Cyrus), who would release them around 539-536 BC, more than a century before Cyrus' birth. Two leading figures in the return were Ezra and Nehemiah, and during their time, a modest version of the Temple was built, and the walls of Jerusalem were repaired.

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