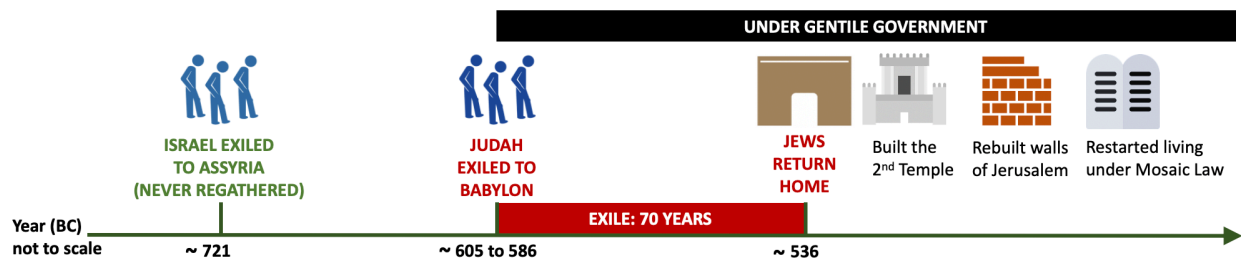


Lesson 29: The Jewish Expectation (I)

Previously...

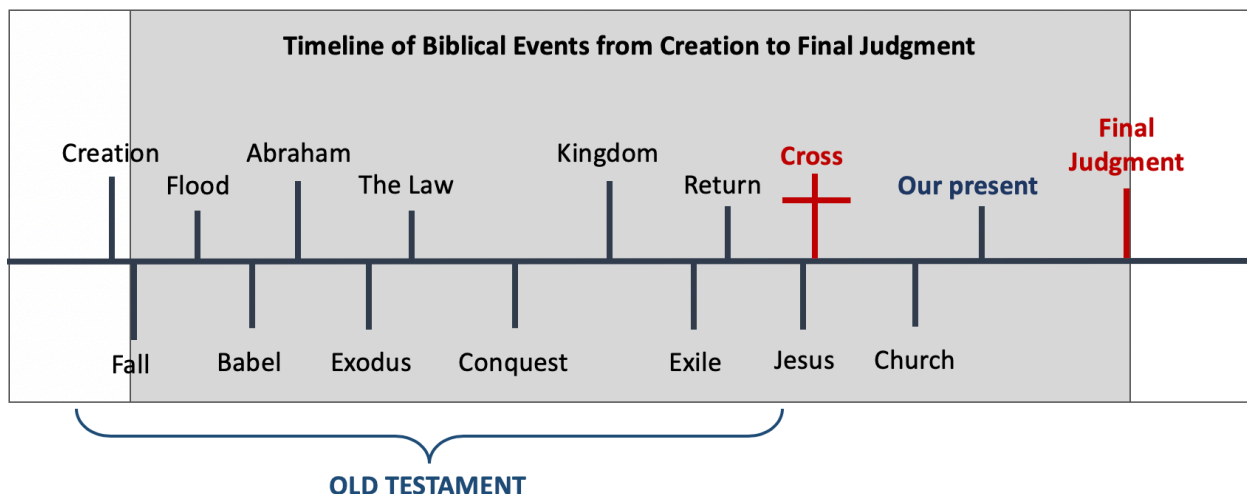
After the Jews spent 70 years in exile, Yahweh caused the pagan Persian kings to send some of them back to Jerusalem.

The Gentile kings provided the Jews resources to rebuild the temple, walls, city of Jerusalem and the surrounding towns. About 50,000 Jews returned (Ezra 2:64–65). However, they returned as subjects of a pagan nation, not as an independent nation. Nevertheless, they kept their Jewish identity. The returning Jews restarted the priesthood and began to live life under the Mosaic Law again.



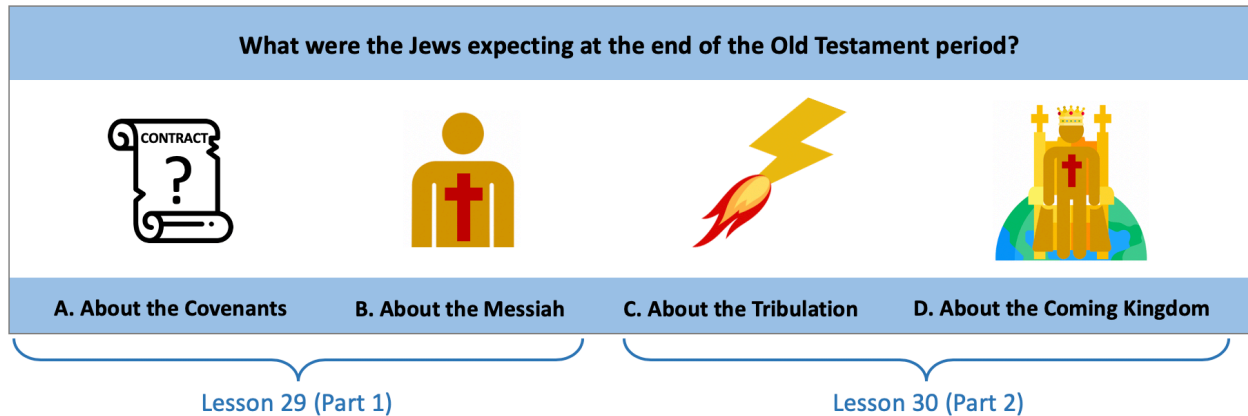
However, many other Jews, like Esther and Daniel, continued to remain in Babylon and elsewhere. God sovereignly used them as “missionaries”. They lived differently from the pagans they were among, and they shared Yahweh’s history and truth using the completed Old Testament.

At the end of the Old Testament period, the Jews had experienced about 1,500 years of history with Yahweh. They had gone through times of great prosperity and peace as well as times of tremendous suffering and war.



But what was on their minds?

Before we move ahead to the New Testament, we will review what the Jews were expecting about their future. Knowing this background will help us better understand their responses and reactions in the New Testament. We will cover this over two lessons.



A. What the Jews were expecting from God's Covenants

Yahweh started the nation of Israel from one man, Abraham. At that time, most of the people in the world had chosen to reject or ignore Him, so He interrupted history to provide a way for mankind to be reconciled to Him. He would do it through Abraham.



1. Abrahamic Covenant

God called Abraham and promised him land, descendants and that he would be a worldwide blessing.

Genesis 12:1-3

¹ The LORD had said to Abram, “Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father’s family, and go to the land that I will show you. ² I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. ³ I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.”

These promises that God made to Abraham were unconditional, meaning that Abraham didn’t have to do anything, either good or bad, to receive these promises. God alone would fulfil them.

Abrahamic Covenant



Unconditional Promises

- Land
- Descendants
- Worldwide blessing

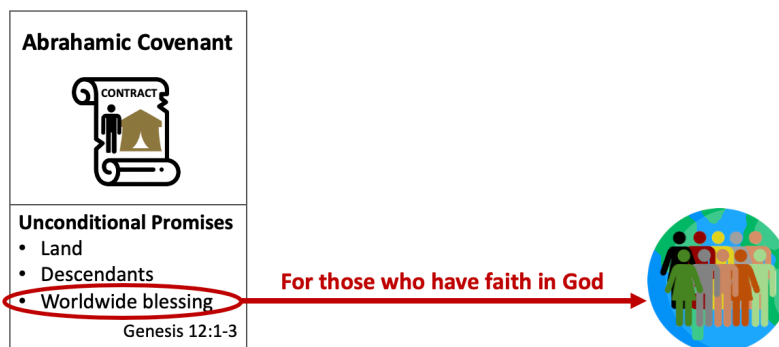
Genesis 12:1-3

In fact, God alone had signed this covenant with the very serious ceremony involving the halved animals, smoking firepot and flaming torch (Genesis 15:12–21).



In doing this, Yahweh was saying He had placed a curse on Himself if He didn't deliver on all that He had promised to Abraham. The Bible says that Abraham believed God and His promises.

One important aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant is that even though the peoples of the world are not parties to this contract, God has a special worldwide blessing to give through Abraham's family to everyone. However, to gain this blessing, they will need the same kind of faith that Abraham had—just trust in Yahweh and His promises! This means they must choose to leave behind the Kingdom of Man and enter the Kingdom of God.



Through the Abrahamic Covenant and His actions throughout history, we see that Yahweh is more willing to bless than to curse. But His blessing is based upon a person's willingness to listen and to trust Him.

The Jews understood this.

For example, we see that the prophet Jonah was reluctant to speak to the wicked people of Nineveh because he knew Yahweh preferred to bless rather than to curse. In Jonah's opinion, the evil people of Nineveh didn't deserve to be saved.

And indeed, when the people of Nineveh believed Yahweh's words and repented, God withheld the judgment He was about to send on them. So Jonah was not pleased!

Jonah 4:1–2

¹ This change of plans greatly upset Jonah, and he became very angry. ² So he complained to the LORD about it: "Didn't I say before I left home that you would do this, LORD? That is why I ran away to Tarshish! I knew that you are a merciful and compassionate God, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. You are eager to turn back from destroying people.

So we see that God wants to bless the people of the world through the Abrahamic Covenant. But He doesn't just bless anyone. These blessings are not meant for those who reject Him.



2. Mosaic Covenant

In keeping with His promise, God intervened many times in the life of Abraham's family to ensure that his descendants survived.

After saving Abraham's family out of slavery in Egypt, God set up the nation of Israel with Abraham's descendants.

He established the Mosaic contract with them. God gave them His Law which described how their Father-son relationship should be. However, this covenant was conditional.

- If they obeyed His laws, He would bless them.
- If they disobeyed, He would curse them.

If the people had obeyed, they would have enjoyed all the physical and spiritual blessings of the covenant.

The nations around Israel would also be blessed because Israel would have been a living, working example of a just society. Israel would have demonstrated what happens when God's divine institutions work properly. Responsible dominion, marriage, family and limited civil government functioning correctly would create a society filled with prosperity, peace and unity among the many different people groups in the nation.

Deuteronomy 4:5–8

⁵ "Look, I now teach you these decrees and regulations just as the LORD my God commanded me, so that you may obey them in the land you are about to enter and occupy. ⁶ Obey them completely, and you will display your wisdom and intelligence among the surrounding nations. When they hear all these decrees, they will exclaim, 'How wise and prudent are the people of this great nation!' ⁷ For what great nation has a god as near to them as the LORD our God is near to us whenever we call on him? ⁸ And what great nation has decrees and regulations as righteous and fair as this body of instructions that I am giving you today?

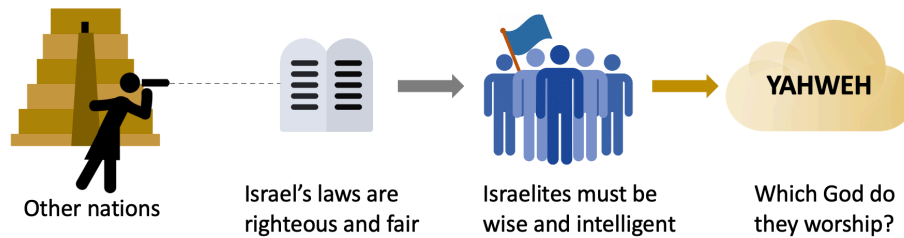
Mosaic Covenant



Conditional Promises

- Blessings for obedience
- Cursings for rebellion

Deuteronomy 28:1-68
Leviticus 26:1-46



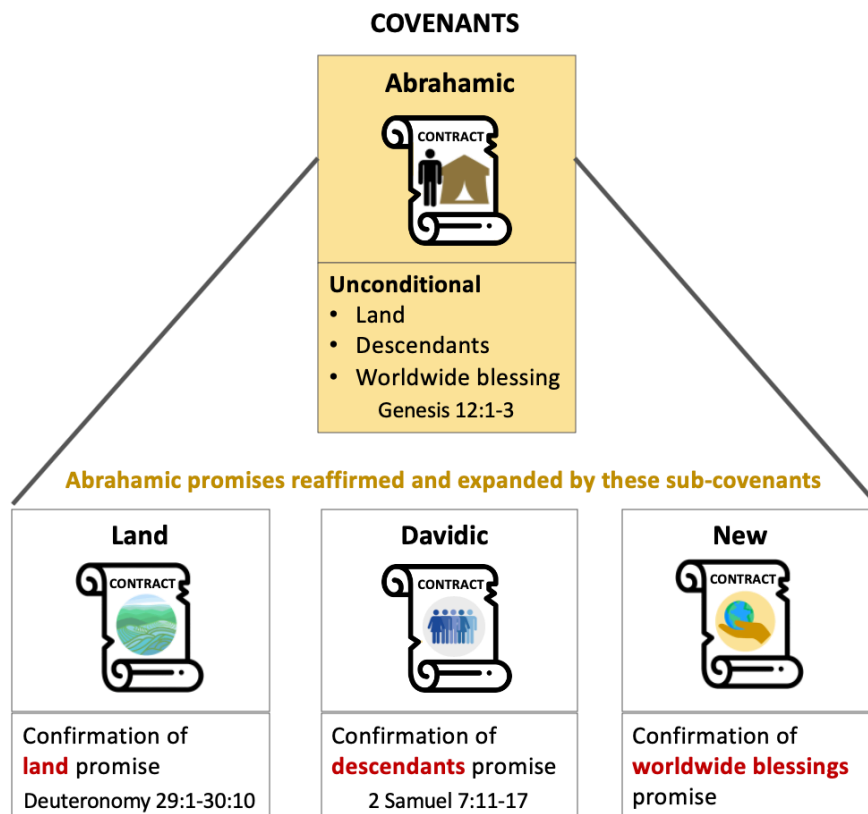
But instead, Israel disobeyed. God warned them that there were five levels of cursings starting with economic disaster, military defeat, sickness and disease and ending in exile from their land.

Despite God’s warnings, over the course of Israel’s history, both the leaders and the people constantly rebelled against Him. God finally caused His people to be exiled.

Now we reach a point in history after the 70-year exile, where a remnant of people have already returned to the land.

However, through all their disobedience, God never forgot nor gave up on the unconditional promises He made to Abraham.

In fact, He confirmed and expanded on these promises with three other supporting covenants, even while Israel was being rebellious! These were the Land, Davidic and New Covenants! These covenants provided more detail on the original promises He made to Abraham.





3. Land Promise

God had originally promised Abraham a very large area of land.

Genesis 15:18–21

¹⁸ So the LORD made a covenant with Abram that day and said, “I have given this land to your descendants, all the way from the border of Egypt to the great Euphrates River—
¹⁹ the land now occupied by the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, ²⁰ Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, ²¹ Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites.”



Later, God confirmed this in a separate unconditional land covenant which He spoke to Moses about before the Israelites entered the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy 29:1

These are the terms of the covenant the LORD commanded Moses to make with the Israelites while they were in the land of Moab, in addition to the covenant he had made with them at Mount Sinai.

In making the Land Covenant with them, Yahweh reminded them of His original promise and assured them He would give them the land. When they turned rebellious, He would discipline them severely. But one day in the future, He would regather them again to this Promised Land and bless them.

God repeatedly reminded them of this promise through the prophets.



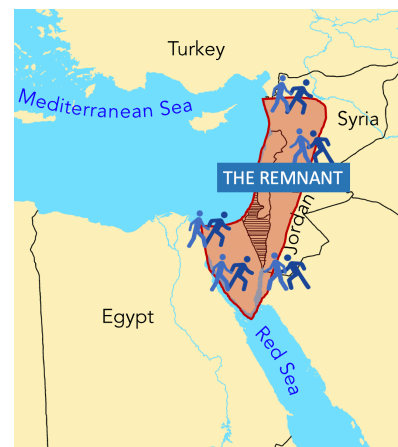
<p>Isaiah 14:1 But the LORD will have mercy on the descendants of Jacob. He will choose Israel as his special people once again. He will <u>bring them back to settle once again in their own land</u>. And people from many different nations will come and join them there and unite with the people of Israel.</p>	<p>Ezekiel 20:40 For <u>on my holy mountain</u>, the great mountain of Israel, says the Sovereign LORD, <u>the people of Israel will someday worship me, and I will accept them</u>. There I will require that you bring me all your offerings and choice gifts and sacrifices.</p>	<p>Amos 9:14–15 ¹⁴ I will <u>bring my exiled people of Israel back from distant lands</u>, and they will rebuild their ruined cities and live in them again. They will plant vineyards and gardens; they will eat their crops and drink their wine. ¹⁵ <u>I will firmly plant them there in their own land</u>. They will <u>never again be uprooted from the land I have given them</u>,” says the LORD your God.</p>
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However, at the same time, God made it clear that not all Jews would get to return to the land.

God consistently used the words “remnant” to refer to the portion of Jews who would return.

Isaiah 10:20–22a

- ²⁰ In that day the remnant left in Israel, the survivors in the house of Jacob, will no longer depend on allies who seek to destroy them. But they will faithfully trust the LORD, the Holy One of Israel.
- ²¹ A remnant will return; yes, the remnant of Jacob will return to the Mighty God.
- ²² But though the people of Israel are as numerous as the sand of the seashore, only a remnant of them will return.



Question: Who are these people in the “remnant”?

Answer: Those who trust Yahweh and put their faith in Him.



This is what God said through the prophet Habakkuk.

Habakkuk 2:4

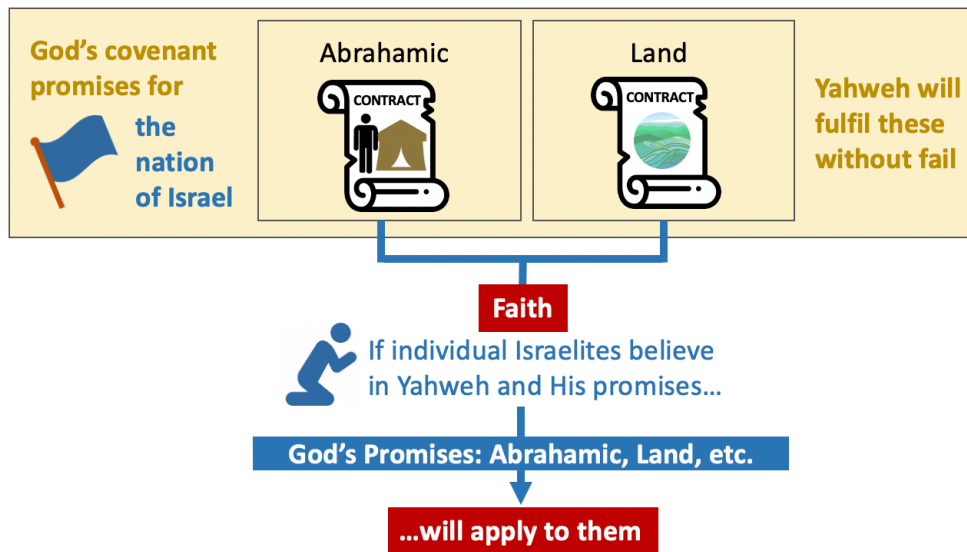
“Look at the proud!
They trust in themselves, and their lives are crooked.
But the righteous will live by their faithfulness to God.”

The choice offered by Yahweh was clear:


- Are you, as a man, your own final authority? Will you save yourself?
- Or is Yahweh your final authority and will you rely on Him to supply your need and save you?

<p>Pagan Kingdom of Man</p> <p>Based on WORKS Man would save himself through his own ideas</p>	<p>Kingdom of God</p> <p>Based on GRACE God would save man</p>
 <p>SELF</p> <p>Ultimate authority</p>	 <p>YAHWEH</p> <p>Ultimate authority</p>

The remnant are those who personally put their faith in God. Even though God made unconditional promises to all Israel, only the Jews who put their faith in Him would get to benefit from the promises.



So at the end of the Old Testament period, what were the Jews expecting?
They were expecting that God would one day give them all the physical land He had promised.

WHEN?




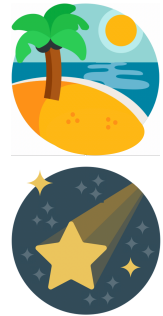
4. Descendants and David's Dynasty

Another promise that Yahweh made to Abraham was about descendants. God first promised Abraham a son, though he was a childless 75-year-old man at the time. And that was exactly what Abraham received. It was a miracle because God enabled him to have Isaac even though he was 100 years old and his wife Sarah was 90 years old!

God also promised Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous as the sand on the seashore and the stars in the sky.

Genesis 22:17–18

¹⁷ I will certainly bless you. I will multiply your descendants beyond number, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will conquer the cities of their enemies. ¹⁸ And through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed—all because you have obeyed me.”



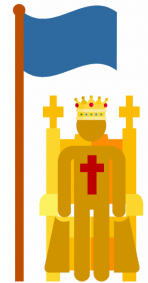
Despite being persecuted throughout history, including the horrors of the Holocaust, God sustained their entire people group and ensured their continued survival, just as He had promised. Today, there are more than six million Jews in Israel and an estimated 14–20 million Jews worldwide.

However, Yahweh also expanded on this promise of descendants He made to Abraham by making another unconditional covenant, this time with King David. This is part of God's covenant with David.

2 Samuel 7:11, 16

¹¹ “Furthermore, the LORD declares that he will make a house for you—a dynasty of kings! ¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom will continue before me for all time, and your throne will be secure forever.”

Yahweh promised King David that his dynasty would be an everlasting one. God was saying that a Son of David would rule forever from David's throne in Jerusalem! This would be the promised Saviour, the Anointed One, the Messiah.



However there was a problem with the royal line of David fulfilling this covenant. When Judah was exiled into Babylon, the last kings tried to defy Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king whom Yahweh had chosen to bring judgment against the nation. As a result, King Jehoiachin (also known as Coniah or Jehoiakin) only survived three months before being exiled to Babylon.

2 Kings 24:8–10, 15

⁸ Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. His mother was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan from Jerusalem.

⁹ Jehoiachin did what was evil in the LORD's sight, just as his father had done. ¹⁰ During Jehoiachin's reign, the officers of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came up against Jerusalem and besieged it.

¹⁵ Nebuchadnezzar led King Jehoiachin away as a captive to Babylon, along with the queen mother, his wives and officials, and all Jerusalem's elite.

Though Jehoiachin had sons who could have taken over as king and kept the Davidic line of kings going, Yahweh was angry with Jehoiachin’s disobedience. So He declared the end of Jehoiachin’s royal line.

Jeremiah 22:24–30

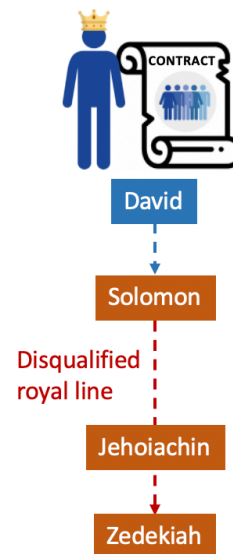
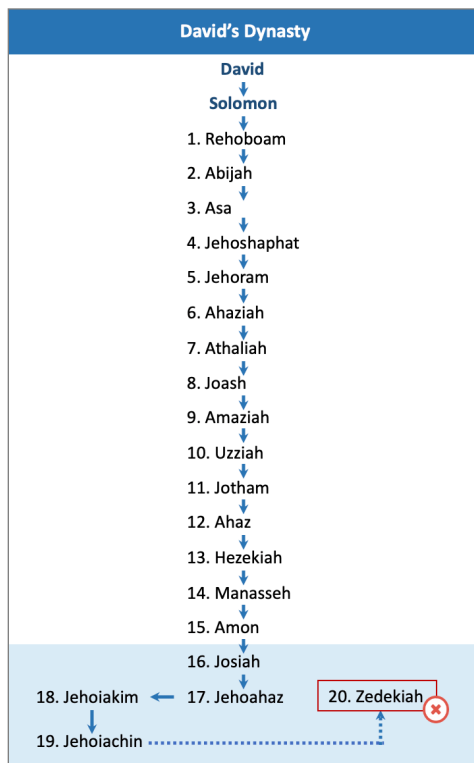
²⁴ “As surely as I live,” says the LORD, “I will abandon you, Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah. Even if you were the signet ring on my right hand, I would pull you off. ²⁵ I will hand you over to those who seek to kill you, those you so desperately fear—to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and the mighty Babylonian army. ²⁶ I will expel you and your mother from this land, and you will die in a foreign country, not in your native land. ²⁷ You will never again return to the land you yearn for.

²⁸ “Why is this man Jehoiachin like a discarded, broken jar?
Why are he and his children to be exiled to a foreign land?”

²⁹ O earth, earth, earth!
Listen to this message from the LORD!

³⁰ This is what the LORD says:
‘Let the record show that this man Jehoiachin was childless.
He is a failure,
for none of his children will succeed him on the throne of David
to rule over Judah.’

After Jehoiachin was exiled, his uncle, Zedekiah, reigned for 11 years until he, too, tried to defy Nebuchadnezzar. The Babylonian army captured him, killed all his sons and blinded him (2 Kings 24:17–25:7). No further kings ruled the Jews again.



With this end of Solomon's line, how will Yahweh restore the Davidic royal line of kings in spite of His curse against it? We will learn how in upcoming lessons.

So what were the Jews expecting at the end of the Old Testament period? They were on the lookout for a descendant of David to restart the Kingdom and take His seat on the throne in Jerusalem. They were awaiting the promised "Son of David".



5. Worldwide Blessing and the New Covenant

God promised Abraham that all the families on the earth would be blessed through him. At the end of the exile period, God had already done some of that. For example:

- Yahweh had worked with and through Israel to preserve His history and truth in the form of written Scriptures.
- Then, through the exile, Yahweh scattered His Scripture-carrying Jews all around the world.



In this way, God made His Word accessible and available to people everywhere.

However, God would use yet another covenant to enable the worldwide blessing to go out into the world. He promised to give Abraham's descendants, the nation of Israel, the unconditional New Covenant.



	Noahic Covenant	Abrahamic Covenant	Sinai (Mosaic) Covenant	New Covenant Prophesied
Parties 	God, mankind and nature	God, Abraham and descendants	God and the 12 tribes of Israel	God, Israel and Judah
Promises 	No future global floods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land • Descendants, • Worldwide blessing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blessings for obeying all the laws • Cursings for disobeying the laws 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God will forgive their sins. • God will change their hearts. • God will regather all Israel to the Promised Land forever.
Signatories 	God alone (with the rainbow)	God alone (by passing between the animal halves)	God (with the sign of the Sabbath)	To be revealed
Founding sacrifice 	Noah sacrificed groups of clean animals. Genesis 8:20–22	Abraham sacrificed a heifer, goat, ram, turtledove, and pigeon. Genesis 15:9–10	Moses sacrificed bulls and sprinkled the blood on the altar and on the Israelites. Exodus 24:4–8 Hebrews 9:16–20	To be revealed
Type 	Unconditional	Unconditional	Conditional	Unconditional

These are the details of the New Covenant.



A. Parties to the New Covenant

God will make the New Covenant with His people, Israel and Judah.

Jeremiah 31:31

“The day is coming,” says the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah.”



(We will discuss the Gentiles later).



B. Promises of the New Covenant

When God made Israel into a nation, He gave them His righteous law at Mount Sinai.

The law was given to the nation of Israel as a whole. This means that if the entire nation of Israel would obey His laws, He would richly bless them with economic prosperity, good weather, cooperative nature, military success, peace, population growth and His continued presence with them.



Deuteronomy 28:1–13

¹ “If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully keep all his commands that I am giving you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the world. ² You will experience all these blessings if you obey the LORD your God:

- ³ Your towns and your fields will be blessed.
- ⁴ Your children and your crops will be blessed.
The offspring of your herds and flocks will be blessed.
- ⁵ Your fruit baskets and breadboards will be blessed.
- ⁶ Wherever you go and whatever you do, you will be blessed.

⁷ “The LORD will conquer your enemies when they attack you. They will attack you from one direction, but they will scatter from you in seven!

⁸ “The LORD will guarantee a blessing on everything you do and will fill your storehouses with grain. The LORD your God will bless you in the land he is giving you.

⁹ “If you obey the commands of the LORD your God and walk in his ways, the LORD will establish you as his holy people as he swore he would do. ¹⁰ Then all the nations of the world will see that you are a people claimed by the LORD, and they will stand in awe of you.

¹¹ “The LORD will give you prosperity in the land he swore to your ancestors to give you, blessing you with many children, numerous livestock, and abundant crops. ¹² The LORD will send rain at the proper time from his rich treasury in the heavens and will bless all the work you do. You will lend to many nations, but you will never need to borrow from them.

¹³ If you listen to these commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today, and if you carefully obey them, the LORD will make you the head and not the tail, and you will always be on top and never at the bottom.

(See also Leviticus 26:3–13.)



However, Israel was never able to enjoy God’s Mosaic Law blessings. Even though there were individual Israelites who were faithful and obedient to God, Israel as a nation was continually hard-hearted towards Him. They could not change their rebellious hearts to be obedient.

When God gave the prophecy about the New Covenant, He promised that He would do for the nation of Israel what they could not do for themselves. God would change their hearts. He would put His law into them and forgive their sins. And He would regather them to the Promised Land.

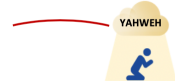
Ezekiel 36:24–28

24 For I will gather you up from all the nations and bring you home again to your land.



Land promise

25 “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols.



Forgiveness promise

26 And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.



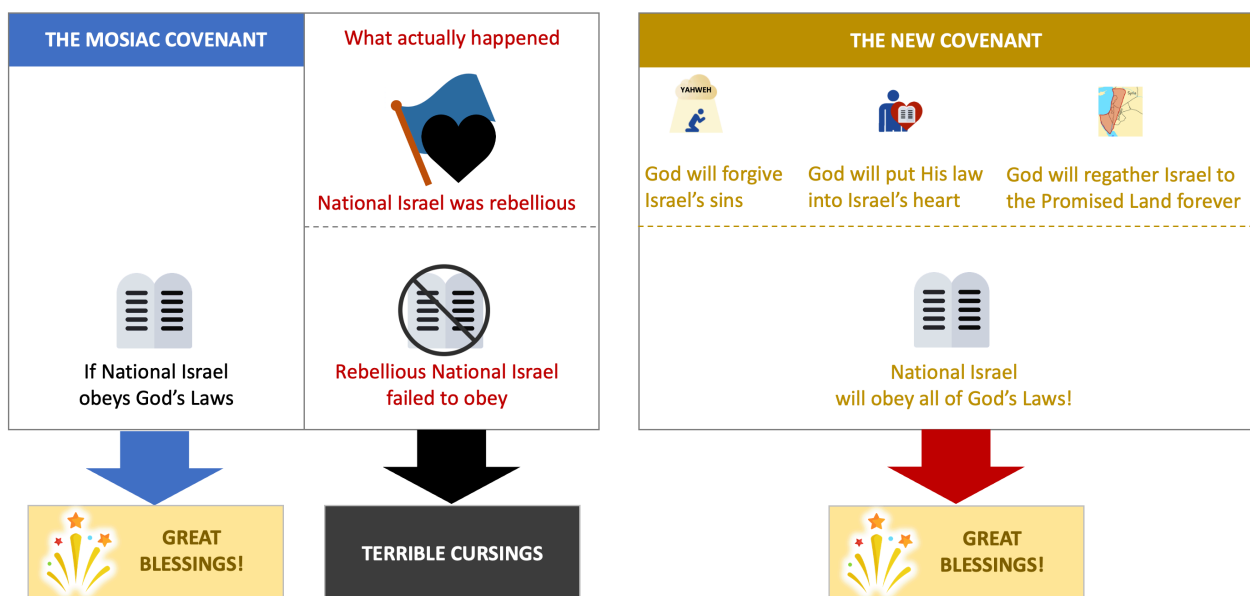
New heart promise

28 “And you will live in Israel, the land I gave your ancestors long ago. You will be my people, and I will be your God.



Land promise

In the future, when God personally does all these things for Israel, they will finally be obedient to Him. And at that time, national Israel will at last receive the abundant blessings from God that they never received under the Mosaic Law.



Importantly, the three promises that God made in the New Covenant are a package deal: all must and will come true at the same time in the future.



How do we know this? This is what the prophet Jeremiah wrote:

Jeremiah 31:23–28, 31–40

²³ This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says: "When I bring them back from captivity, the people of Judah and its towns will again say, 'The LORD bless you, O righteous home, O holy mountain!' ²⁴ Townspeople and farmers and shepherds alike will live together in peace and happiness. ²⁵ For I have given rest to the weary and joy to the sorrowing."

²⁶ At this, I woke up and looked around. My sleep had been very sweet.

²⁷ "The day is coming," says the LORD, "when I will greatly increase the human population and the number of animals here in Israel and Judah. ²⁸ In the past I deliberately uprooted and tore down this nation. I overthrew it, destroyed it, and brought disaster upon it. But in the future I will just as deliberately plant it and build it up. I, the LORD, have spoken!

³¹ "The day is coming," says the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. ³² This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant, though I loved them as a husband loves his wife," says the LORD.

³³ "But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel after those days," says the LORD. "I will put my instructions deep within them, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ³⁴ And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they need to teach their relatives, saying, 'You should know the LORD.' For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will know me already," says the LORD. "And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins."

³⁵ It is the LORD who provides the sun to light the day
and the moon and stars to light the night,
and who stirs the sea into roaring waves.
His name is the LORD of Heaven's Armies,
and this is what he says:

³⁶ "I am as likely to reject my people Israel
as I am to abolish the laws of nature!"

³⁷ This is what the LORD says:
 “Just as the heavens cannot be measured
 and the foundations of the earth cannot be explored,
 so I will not consider casting them away
for the evil they have done.
 I, the LORD, have spoken!

³⁸ “The day is coming,” says the LORD, “when all Jerusalem will be rebuilt for me, from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. ³⁹ A measuring line will be stretched out over the hill of Gareb and across to Goah. ⁴⁰ And the entire area—including the graveyard and ash dump in the valley, and all the fields out to the Kidron Valley on the east as far as the Horse Gate—will be holy to the Lord. The city will never again be captured or destroyed.”

The prophet Ezekiel also wrote this:

Ezekiel 36:6–12

⁶ “Therefore, prophesy to the hills and mountains, the ravines and valleys of Israel. This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am furious that you have suffered shame before the surrounding nations. ⁷ Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I have taken a solemn oath that those nations will soon have their own shame to endure.

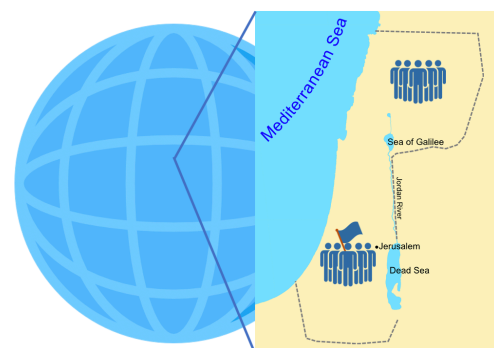
⁸ “But the mountains of Israel will produce heavy crops of fruit for my people—for they will be coming home again soon! ⁹ See, I care about you, and I will pay attention to you. Your ground will be plowed and your crops planted. ¹⁰ I will greatly increase the population of Israel, and the ruined cities will be rebuilt and filled with people. ¹¹ I will increase not only the people, but also your animals. O mountains of Israel, I will bring people to live on you once again. I will make you even more prosperous than you were before. Then you will know that I am the LORD. ¹² I will cause my people to walk on you once again, and you will be their territory. You will never again rob them of their children.

The promises that God makes in the New Covenant are about things that have never happened before. They are about a totally righteous nation in the future living in their own land and where everyone in the whole nation is obedient to Him!

The blessings that God will pour upon them requires them to have actual geographical land! The Jews cannot be a people group who loves and serves God without a land to call home. Neither can they benefit from the blessings that God promised: climate, weather, botanical, zoological, economic, social, political unless they are safely returned to their own land!

At the end of the Old Testament, Israel still did not occupy all of the Promised Land. In fact, it wasn't even an independent nation any longer. It was under the control of foreign nations and at the start of the New Testament, it was under the control of Rome. Even today, modern-day Israel only exists because Gentile nations and treaties allowed it to restart!

Clearly, none of the promises of the New Covenant has been fulfilled yet.



C. The Signing of the New Covenant

The New Covenant was not signed at this point in history. Jews in the Old Testament did not know when it would be signed nor how it would be done.

D. Founding Sacrifice

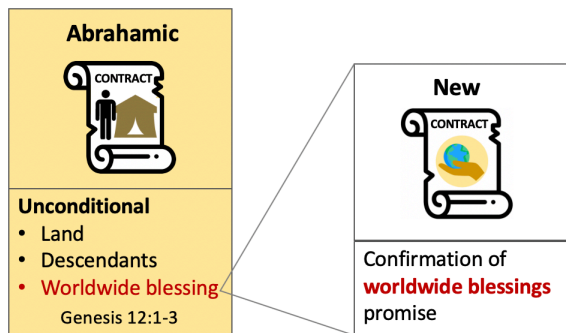
There was no founding sacrifice in the Old Testament for this New Covenant. While there were prophecies given about the New Covenant, the contract did not start at that time. Again, the people would have to wait and see what God would do.

E. Type



Because the prophesied New Covenant is a sub-contract of the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant, the New Covenant would also have to be unconditional.

How can the New Covenant be a worldwide blessing to the Gentiles?

The New Covenant is supposed to be a confirmation of the “worldwide blessing” promise found in the Abrahamic Covenant.

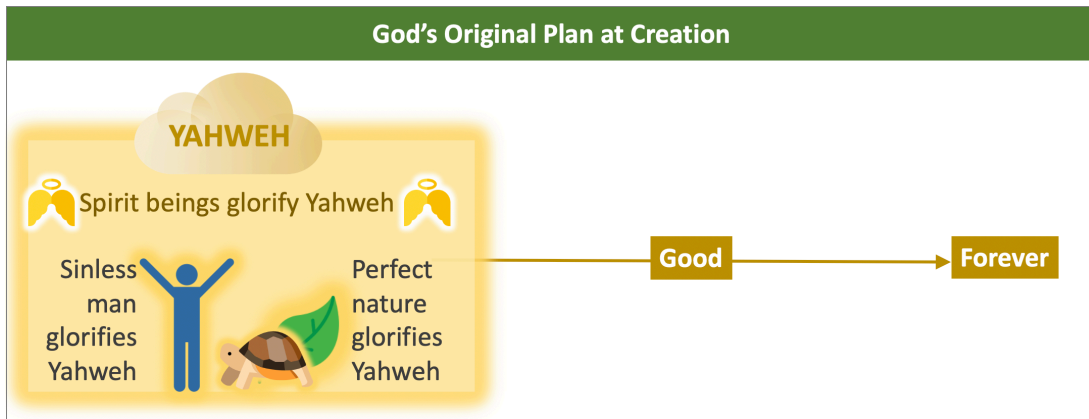


But the promises in the New Covenant that we went through so far all appear to only benefit Israel. Moreover, just as He did with the earlier covenants, God is making this New Covenant only with Israel and not with the Gentiles.

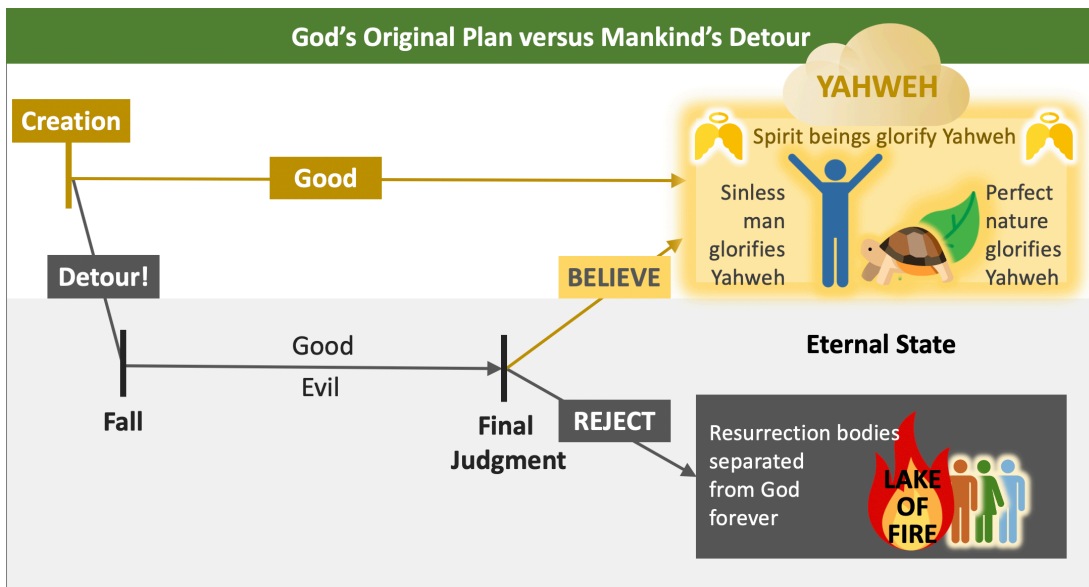
	 Abrahamic	 Mosaic	 Land	 Davidic	 New
 Parties involved	God, Abraham and descendants	God, 12 tribes of Israel	God, Israel	God, David and specific descendants	God, Israel and Judah

How then can the New Covenant be a “worldwide blessing”?

To better understand this, it is helpful to remember that when God first created the world, His original plan was for all creation to enjoy Him, worship Him and reflect His glory.

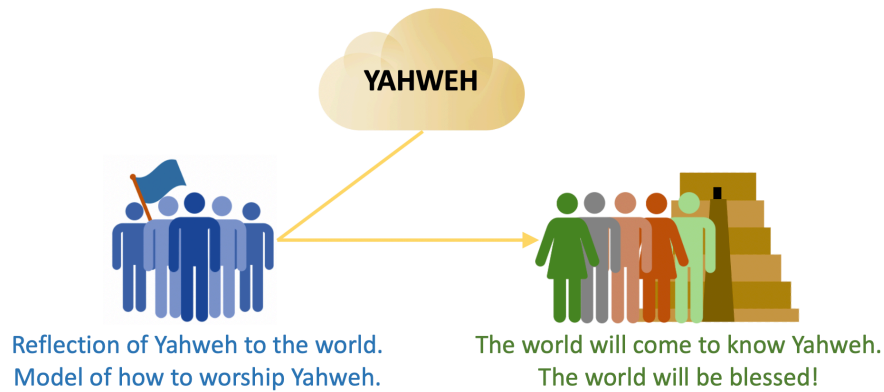


However, man took a huge “detour” away from God’s original plan.



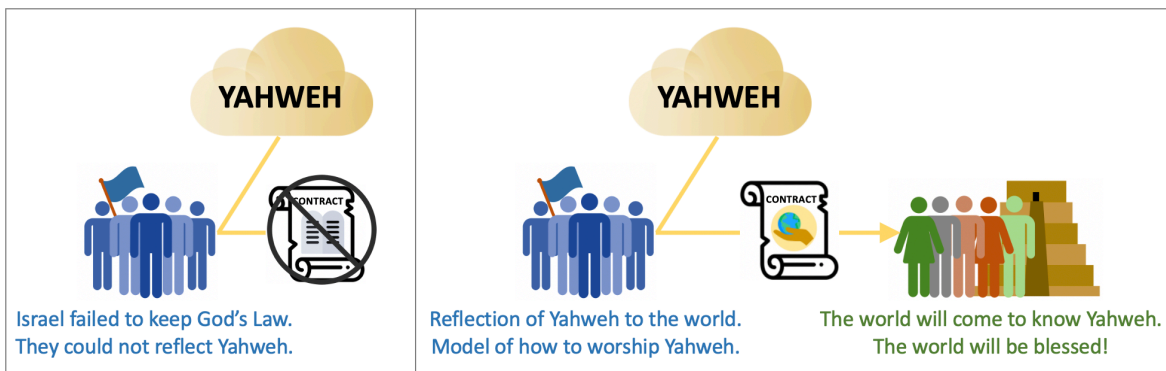
When mankind chose to live rebellious lives which would lead to eternal death, God interrupted history by calling Abraham. God planned to have Abraham’s descendants, the nation of Israel, be a counterculture to the evil ways of the pagan Kingdom of Man.

National Israel was supposed to be a living, breathing model and example of how mankind should worship and glorify the Creator-God of the universe. They were supposed to point the pagan world back to Him. That was how Israel was to be a blessing.



Unfortunately, Israel never became the model that God wanted. The Mosaic Law that God gave them could not make them righteous. To live righteously they would have had to do what Joshua, Samuel, David and all the other believing Jews of the remnant did—personally trust in Yahweh to forgive their sin and empower them to follow His will as shown in the Law.

Because most of the Jews did not believe, the nation as a whole failed to bless the world through their lives.



It is for this very reason that Yahweh promised to restore Israel in the future.

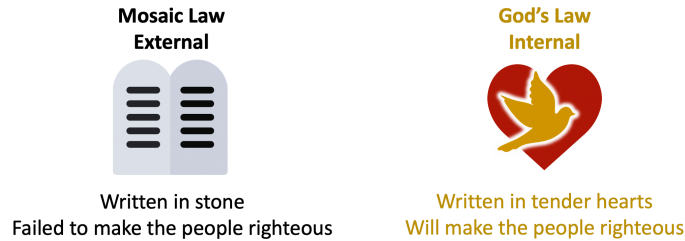
In order for His name to be glorified and for Israel to properly reflect Him and be a blessing to the world, God promised to make the New Covenant with them.

Ezekiel 36:22–28

²² “Therefore, give the people of Israel this message from the Sovereign LORD: I am bringing you back, but not because you deserve it. I am doing it to protect my holy name, on which you brought shame while you were scattered among the nations. ²³ I will show how holy my great name is—the name on which you brought shame among the nations. And when I reveal my holiness through you before their very eyes, says the Sovereign LORD, then the nations will know that I am the LORD. ²⁴ For I will gather you up from all the nations and bring you home again to your land.

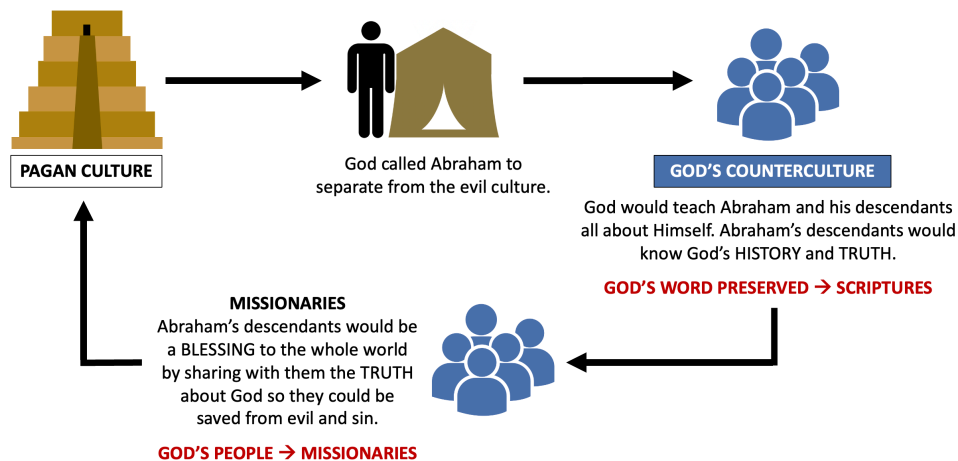
25 “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols. 26 And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.

28 “And you will live in Israel, the land I gave your ancestors long ago. You will be my people, and I will be your God.



Throughout Israel’s history, both before and after the exile, no more than a small remnant of Jews had a change of heart to be faithful and obedient to God.


It didn’t seem that the nation would ever be able to bring in God’s worldwide blessing that He promised in the Abrahamic Covenant. It didn’t seem the world would ever worship and acknowledge God as the Sovereign Lord of the universe because of Israel’s example.



So to ensure that God’s promises in the Abrahamic Covenant will be fulfilled, Yahweh will make an unconditional New Covenant. He Himself will supernaturally change the hearts of the entire nation to ensure Israel will be righteous and holy. He will make sure Israel will qualify to be the centre of God’s Kingdom on earth.




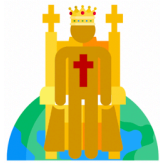
Although Gentiles are not parties to the New Covenant, God will indeed bless Gentiles greatly by fulfilling the Abrahamic Covenant through the New Covenant. We shall learn more in the coming lessons.

So what were the Jews expecting at the close of the Old Testament period? They were expecting that God would perform His spiritual heart surgery on the whole nation and permanently set it up as God’s priestly nation on earth. But they did not know how and when this would happen.



In summary, this is what the Jews were expecting from the covenants.

What were the Jews expecting at the end of the Old Testament period?

			
A. About the Covenants	B. About the Messiah	C. About the Tribulation	D. About the Coming Kingdom

Jews were expecting to fully occupy the Promised Land, to have a Son of David on the throne in Jerusalem and as a nation, have a new heart to love Yahweh forever.

But the Jews also had great expectations about the coming Messiah.



B. What the Jews were expecting about the Messiah

The Jews were also expecting and waiting for God’s prophecies regarding the Messiah to be fulfilled.

For example, God told Daniel that five pagan kingdoms would reign before God’s Kingdom arrived physically on the earth.

These kingdoms were represented by a statue whose parts were made up of different metals.

In the prophecy, a great rock, which God specifically said was not cut by human hands, would come to crush the statue and destroy it. The Jews understood this to be the coming Kingdom of God that would finally return and conquer all other kingdoms of man.

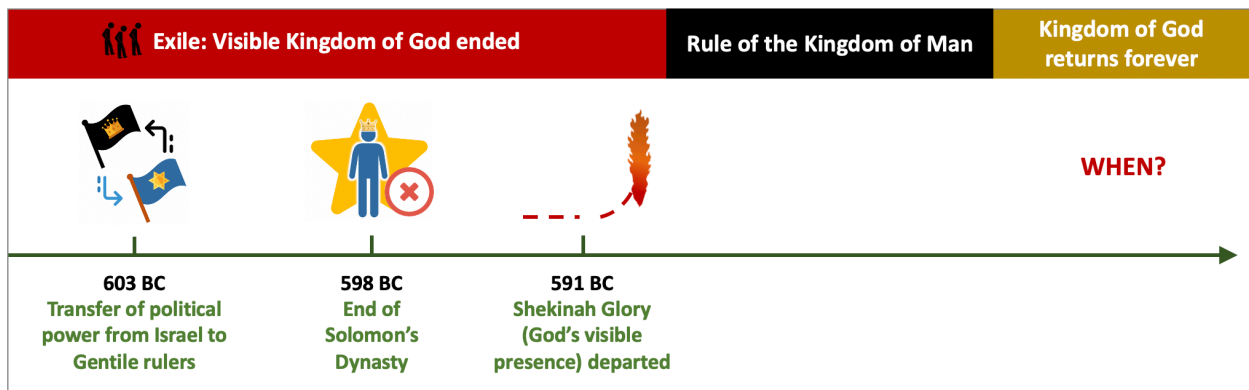
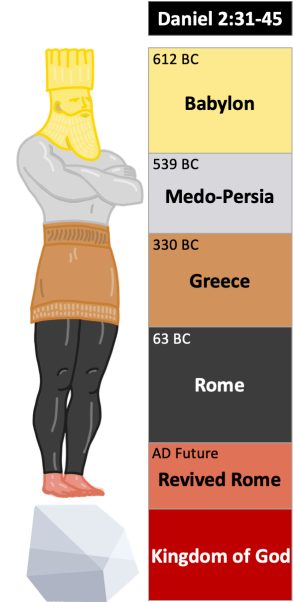
Daniel 2:44–45

44 “During the reigns of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed or conquered. It will crush all these kingdoms into nothingness, and it will stand forever.

45 That is the meaning of the rock cut from the mountain, though not by human hands, that crushed to pieces the statue of iron, bronze, clay, silver, and gold. The great God was showing the king what will happen in the future. The dream is true, and its meaning is certain.”

The visible and physical Kingdom of God on earth which was only in Israel at that time ended with the exile.

But God promised that one day in the future, it would return to crush all the kingdoms of man.



However, instead of ruling just Israel as it did in the past, the future Kingdom of God would rule the whole world.



Daniel stated that “the dream is true and its meaning is certain”. God would bring this about. The question was when?



1. The coming Conquering Messiah

God also gave Daniel the following information.

Daniel 7:13–14

¹³ As my vision continued that night, I saw someone like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient One and was led into his presence. ¹⁴ He was given authority, honor, and sovereignty over all the nations of the world, so that people of every race and nation and language would obey him. His rule is eternal—it will never end. His kingdom will never be destroyed.

Daniel saw someone like a “Son of Man” approach Yahweh, the Ancient One. Yahweh gives Him sovereignty to rule not just over Israel but over all the earth, for all eternity. The Jews understood that the “Son of Man” is the Messiah.

They believed that the Messiah’s job would be to fulfil God’s covenants and resolve mankind’s sin problem once and for all and be the King not just of Israel, but the whole world.

Other Scriptures in the Old Testament also told them more about this coming Messiah. For example, Psalm 2 is one of the Messianic psalms. It gives details about the coming Messiah.

Psalm 2:6–9

⁶ For the LORD declares, “I have placed my chosen king on the throne in Jerusalem, on my holy mountain.”

⁷ The king proclaims the LORD’s decree:

“The LORD said to me, ‘You are my son.

Today I have become your Father.

⁸ Only ask, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance, the whole earth as your possession.

⁹ You will break them with an iron rod and smash them like clay pots.”



From these verses, we can see that the Messiah comes as a victorious or conquering King to smash all who rebel against Yahweh.

The prophet Isaiah also writes about Him in this way:

Isaiah 11:1–5

¹ Out of the stump of David’s family will grow a shoot— yes, a new Branch bearing fruit from the old root.

² And the Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

³ He will delight in obeying the LORD.
He will not judge by appearance
nor make a decision based on hearsay.

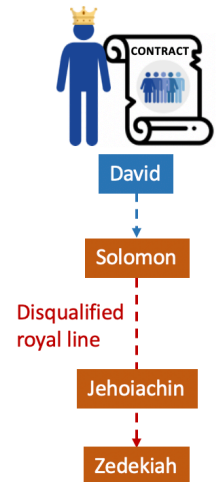
⁴ He will give justice to the poor
and make fair decisions for the exploited.

The earth will shake at the force of his word,
 and one breath from his mouth will destroy the wicked.
⁵ He will wear righteousness like a belt
 and truth like an undergarment.

The conquering Messiah would be from David's family line. That's why the Messiah was often referred to as the "Son of David".

But because God had cursed King Jehoiachin and disqualified his line, He would somehow have to work around this curse and still provide the Messiah to Israel.

However, aside from these prophecies of a conquering Messiah, there was another set of prophecies describing how the Messiah would suffer.

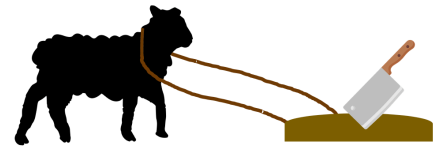
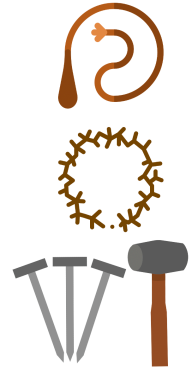


2. The coming “Suffering Servant” Messiah

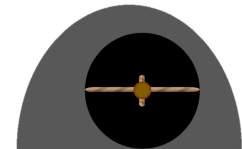
Isaiah 52:13–53:12

- ¹³ See, my servant will prosper;
 he will be highly exalted.
- ¹⁴ But many were amazed when they saw him.
His face was so disfigured he seemed hardly human,
 and from his appearance, one would scarcely know he was a man.
- ¹⁵ And he will startle many nations.
 Kings will stand speechless in his presence.
 For they will see what they had not been told;
 they will understand what they had not heard about.
- ¹ Who has believed our message?
 To whom has the LORD revealed his powerful arm?
- ² My servant grew up in the LORD'S presence like a tender green shoot,
 like a root in dry ground.
 There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance,
 nothing to attract us to him.
- ³ He was despised and rejected—
a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief.
 We turned our backs on him and looked the other way.
 He was despised, and we did not care.
- ⁴ Yet it was our weaknesses he carried;
it was our sorrows that weighed him down.
And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God,
a punishment for his own sins!
- ⁵ But he was pierced for our rebellion,
crushed for our sins.
He was beaten so we could be whole.

- He was whipped so we could be healed.
 6 All of us, like sheep, have strayed away.
 We have left God's paths to follow our own.
 Yet the LORD laid on him
 the sins of us all.
- 7 He was oppressed and treated harshly,
 yet he never said a word.
He was led like a lamb to the slaughter.
 And as a sheep is silent before the shearers,
 he did not open his mouth.
- 8 Unjustly condemned,
 he was led away.
 No one cared that he died without descendants,
 that his life was cut short in midstream.
 But he was struck down
 for the rebellion of my people.



- 9 He had done no wrong
 and had never deceived anyone.
But he was buried like a criminal;
 he was put in a rich man's grave.
- 10 But it was the LORD'S good plan to crush him
 and cause him grief.
 Yet when his life is made an offering for sin,
 he will have many descendants.
 He will enjoy a long life,
 and the LORD'S good plan will prosper in his hands.
- 11 When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish,
 he will be satisfied.



- And because of his experience,
 my righteous servant will make it possible
 for many to be counted righteous,
 for he will bear all their sins.
- 12 I will give him the honors of a victorious soldier,
 because he exposed himself to death.
 He was counted among the rebels.
 He bore the sins of many and interceded for rebels.


Isaiah described what people have come to call the "Suffering Messiah".

For many Jews, this portion of Scripture clashes with the image of a conquering Messiah. They couldn't quite understand how or why the Messiah could be both conquering and suffering at the same time.


So what were the Jews expecting at the close of the Old Testament period?

They were expecting that the Messiah would come, crush all the pagan kingdoms and restore the kingdom of Israel. He would be known as the “Son of Man” and also the “Son of David”.

But some Jews believed there was going to be two Messiahs: a Conquering Messiah and a Suffering Messiah.







**Conquering
Messiah**



**Suffering
Messiah**

In summary, this is what the Jews were expecting from the covenants and the Messiah.

What were the Jews expecting at the end of the Old Testament period?			
			
A. About the Covenants	B. About the Messiah	C. About the Tribulation	D. About the Coming Kingdom
<p>Jews were expecting to fully occupy the Promised Land, to have a Son of David on the throne in Jerusalem and as a nation, have a new heart to love Yahweh forever.</p>	<p>Jews were waiting for God to send the promised Saviour.</p>		

If the New Covenant and the Messiah are for the Jews, then how do Gentiles receive salvation and be reconciled with God?

To answer this question, we will quickly review history recorded by God in Scripture.

The Fall

Since the time of the Fall, no one, Jew or Gentile, can reconcile themselves to God and save themselves from eternal death. Thankfully, God graciously provided a way. He announced that the “offspring of the woman” would be the Saviour. He would be a man, born only of a woman and without a human father.



Animal sacrifices

While mankind waited for that Saviour to appear, God used historical events to teach people about His righteousness and justice.

He taught that everyone was sinful and separated from Him. The only way they could be made acceptable was if they acknowledge their sin problem and trust Him to solve it for them. They had to trust Him for forgiveness and reconciliation.

Through the ceremonial animal sacrifices, God showed how He would provide a suitable substitutionary blood sacrifice that allowed Him to punish evil without punishing man. These sacrifices were a picture of how God Himself would one day provide the sufficient and truly satisfactory sacrifice for mankind.



The Flood and Babel

In spite of Yahweh graciously explaining these things, people everywhere rejected Him. So God brought a global flood judgment on the world to end evil. Only one family, Noah's, responded positively to God and He saved them.

After the Flood, the people again rejected God's revelation. He judged them at Babel, scattering mankind all over the world.

The call of Abraham

At this point in history, God in His grace chose a single man, Abraham. Through Abraham's descendants, the Jewish nation of Israel, God would fulfil the promise He made in Eden to Adam and Eve.

All the promises and covenants He made with Israel were for the ultimate purpose of bringing the offer of salvation to everyone in the world, both Jew and Gentile.



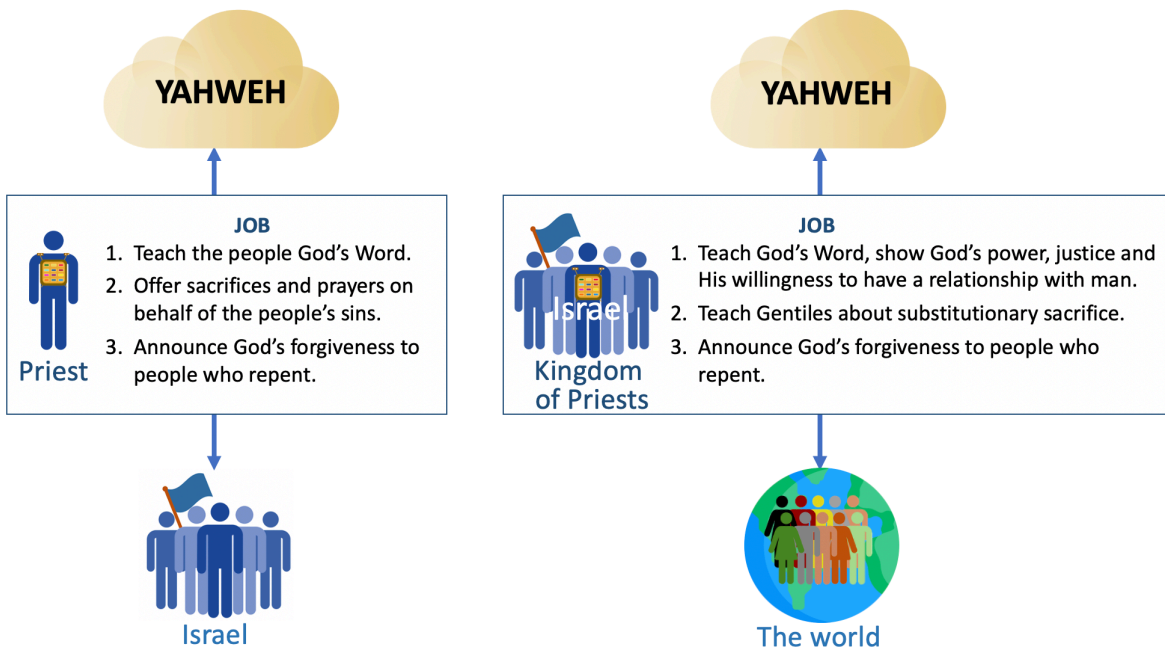
A. Israel's role of being priests to the world according to the covenants

After God made the descendants of Abraham into a nation through the Mosaic Covenant, Yahweh announced Israel's job.

Exodus 19:5-6

⁵ Now if you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my own special treasure from among all the peoples on earth; for all the earth belongs to me. ⁶ And you will be my kingdom of priests, my holy nation. This is the message you must give to the people of Israel.”

What was the job of a priest? Within the nation of Israel, the Levitical priests were to act as the go-between, or mediators, between holy God and sinful people. Likewise, as a nation, Israel was to function like priests for the whole world. God chose Israel to be the mediator between all of mankind and God.



At that point in history, the Gentiles, like Israel, could approach God through the sacrificial system that God had set up through the Mosaic Covenant. Repentant Gentiles could also receive forgiveness and be reconciled to God. Gentiles would end up praising God for His grace and provision and enjoy His blessings.

The nation of united tribes

But Israel as a nation of united tribes failed in its mission. The people were rebellious and disobedient to God. This was God’s conclusion of that time period.

Judges 21:25

In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes.

Instead of turning back to God, they rejected His leadership and asked for a fallen leader.

1 Samuel 8:4–5

⁴ Finally, all the elders of Israel met at Ramah to discuss the matter with Samuel.

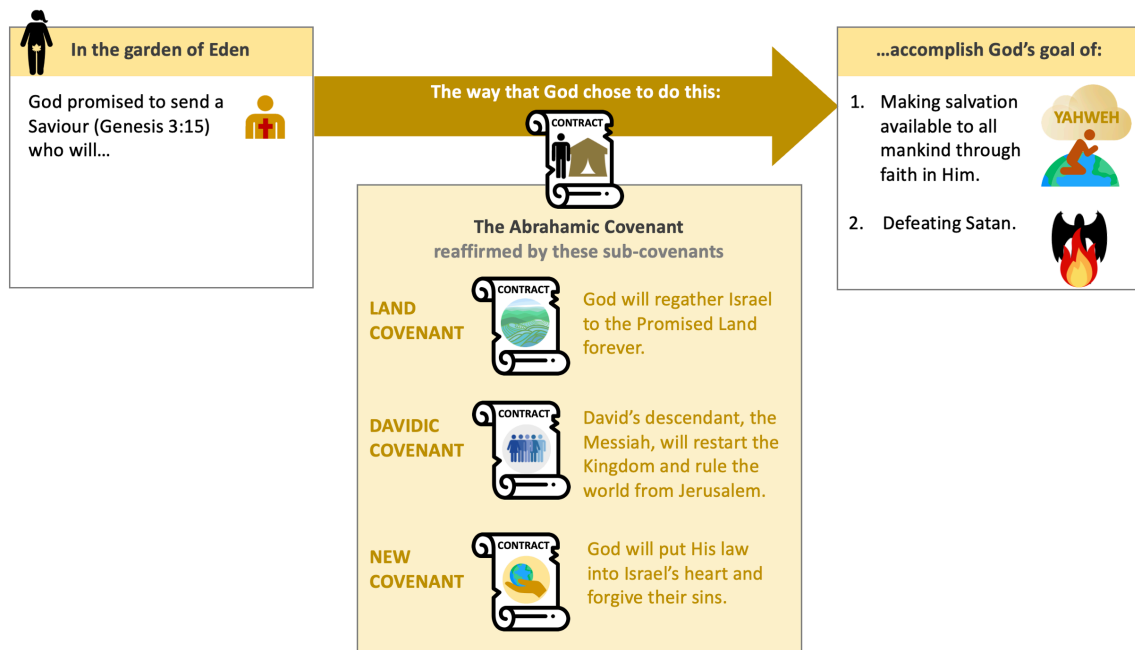
⁵ “Look,” they told him, “you are now old, and your sons are not like you. Give us a king to judge us like all the other nations have.”

Israel under a king

God allowed them to have a king. While God called David, the second king, a model king, most of the successive kings were rebellious. So both the leaders and the people failed to fulfil Israel’s role as a priestly nation to the Gentiles.

The Abrahamic Covenant is the foundation

Though Israel failed in its job, God reaffirmed His promises through additional covenants.



These additional covenants guaranteed that God will fulfil the Abrahamic Covenant and bring salvation to the whole world through Israel.

This means that Israel will undoubtedly be able to fulfil its role as a priestly nation and be a mediator between God and all mankind at some point in the future.

Ultimately, in fulfilling the Abrahamic Covenant with its promise of a worldwide blessing, Yahweh will be fulfilling the promise He made to mankind in the Garden of Eden.

Gentiles worshipping with Israel in the future

In fact, Yahweh's prophets prophesied a future time when Gentiles will join Israel in worshipping Yahweh!

(In the passage below, Kedar refers to a nomadic Arab tribe living in northern Arabia while Sela, an Edomite city. Both represent Gentile peoples in far remote places.)



Isaiah 42:10–12

- ¹⁰ Sing a new song to the LORD!
 Sing his praises from the ends of the earth!
 Sing, all you who sail the seas,
all you who live in distant coastlands.
- ¹¹ Join in the chorus, you desert towns;
 let the villages of Kedar rejoice!
 Let the people of Sela sing for joy;
 shout praises from the mountaintops!
- ¹² Let the whole world glorify the LORD;
 let it sing his praise.

Malachi 1:11

But my name is honored by people of other nations from morning till night. All around the world they offer sweet incense and pure offerings in honor of my name. For my name is great among the nations," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

The prophets talked about how Gentile nations will be praising Yahweh, the God of Israel. These and other passages show that God's salvation plan has always included Gentiles.

One day in the future, the Messiah will enable Gentiles to have a genuine change of heart and come to faith in Yahweh for salvation and together with Israel will praise and worship God.

But how this will happen was not made clear to the Jews at the close of the Old Testament era. What is clear is that Yahweh has plans for the Gentiles.

B. The work of the Messiah in fulfilling Israel's role

Through the prophets, God described two very important future works that the Messiah will accomplish. The first work is for Israel and the second is for Gentiles.

First, as the ideal Leader of Israel, the Messiah will take on the priestly role and be the mediator between God and the nation. Second, the Messiah will lead all Israel into being the kingdom of priests for the whole world.

In the following passage, God the Father calls the Messiah, "my servant".

Isaiah 42:1–6

- ¹ "Look at my servant, whom I strengthen.
He is my chosen one, who pleases me.
I have put my Spirit upon him.
He will bring justice to the nations.
- ² He will not shout
or raise his voice in public.
- ³ He will not crush the weakest reed
or put out a flickering candle.
He will bring justice to all who have been wronged.
- ⁴ He will not falter or lose heart
until justice prevails throughout the earth.
Even distant lands beyond the sea will wait for his instruction."
- ⁵ God, the LORD, created the heavens and stretched them out.
He created the earth and everything in it.
He gives breath to everyone,
life to everyone who walks the earth.
- And it is he who says,
- ⁶ "I, the LORD, have called you to demonstrate my righteousness.
I will take you by the hand and guard you,
and I will give you to my people, Israel,
as a symbol of my covenant with them.
And you will be a light to guide the nations.

The covenant that God is talking about here is the New Covenant. The Messiah will be part of the covenant for Israel.



The Messiah Himself said the same when He spoke in the following passage:

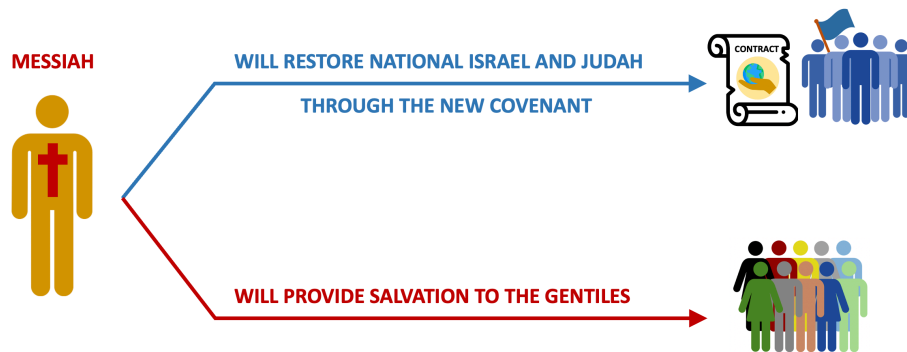
Isaiah 49:5–6

⁵ And now the LORD speaks—
the one who formed me in my mother’s womb to be his servant,
who commissioned me to bring Israel back to him.

The LORD has honored me,
and my God has given me strength.

⁶ He says, “You will do more than restore the people of Israel to me.
I will make you a light to the Gentiles,
and you will bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.”

What these passages are saying is this:



i. The Messiah initiates the New Covenant for Israel and Judah.

These Messianic prophecies show that God has an important role for the Messiah in His covenants to Israel. The Messiah will restore Judah and Israel back to God. This is clearly described in the New Covenant.

Since the Messiah is the key person in the covenant, it is very likely that He will be the One to sign the New Covenant. Recall how with each unconditional covenant, God had been the only One to sign it. It is therefore most probable that God’s Messiah will sign the New Covenant in the future.



Signing and initiating the New Covenant are very important, because it will allow Israel to fulfil its priestly function of bringing about the promised worldwide blessing of the Abrahamic Covenant to the world.

ii. The Messiah offers salvation to the whole world.

These prophecies also show the worldwide scope of the Messiah’s role.

As the Leader of the nation, He will fulfil the priestly role of teaching people about God. He will also bring justice “throughout the earth”, meaning He will teach and maintain God’s standard of righteousness all over the globe. People everywhere will learn about God’s righteousness and their own sinfulness.

As the priest to the world, the Messiah will also offer sacrifice to God for sin. The sacrifice He offers needs to be sufficient, complete and available for all mankind, from Adam to the last person in history. How will the Messiah achieve this?

Jews who were aware of their Scriptures would realise that for the ruling Messiah to offer salvation to all mankind, He will also need to be the “Suffering Servant Messiah” of Isaiah 53.

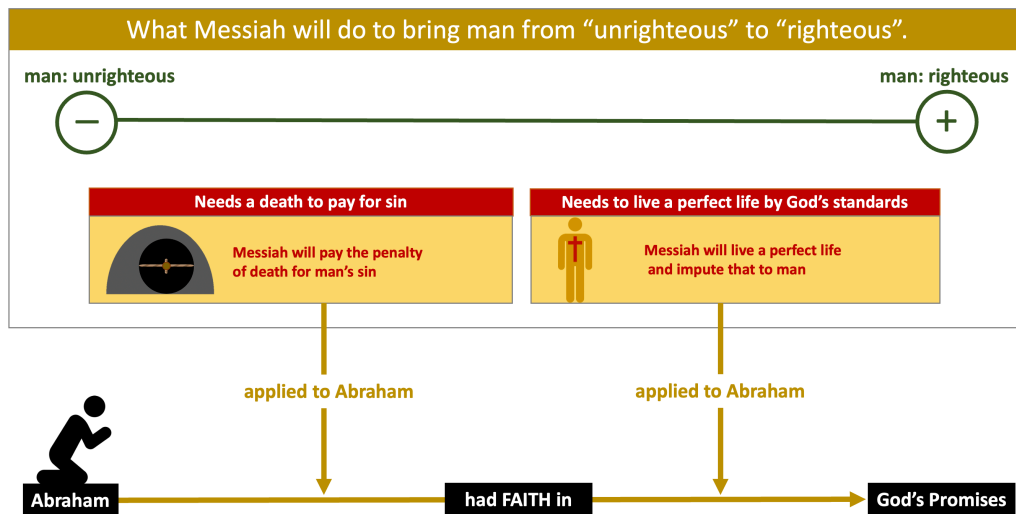
At this time near the end of the Old Testament, the Jews would have practised almost 600 years of blood sacrifice. They would understand how an innocent substitute could die to pay for a guilty person’s sin.

Isaiah 53:11

When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish,
he will be satisfied.

And because of his experience,
my righteous servant will make it possible
for many to be counted righteous,
for he will bear all their sins.

God’s Messiah will be completely righteous. This way, He can justify fallen mankind and make people righteous.




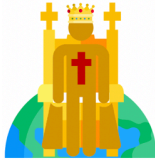



And finally, Jews familiar with their own Scriptures would know how to receive the salvation that the Messiah will offer. They would need to respond in the same way as their ancestor Abraham did.

Genesis 15:6

And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith.

Through the Messiah, salvation will come to everyone, both Jew and Gentile, who places their faith in God alone, just as Abraham did.

What were the Jews expecting at the end of the Old Testament period?			
			
A. About the Covenants	B. About the Messiah	C. About the Tribulation	D. About the Coming Kingdom
Jews were expecting to fully occupy the Promised Land, to have a Son of David on the throne in Jerusalem and as a nation, have a new heart to love Yahweh forever.	Jews were waiting for God to send the promised Saviour.	 Next lesson	

The Jewish expectations about the fulfillments of both the covenants and the Messiah certainly include the provision of salvation for all mankind—Jew and Gentile alike. That, after all, was the goal of God’s programme of world redemption through Abraham.

In the next lesson, we will continue to explore what the Jews were expecting about the Tribulation and the Kingdom of God at the time of the close of the Old Testament period.

Discussion Questions

Discuss the following questions as a group or use them for personal reflection.

1. Pagan gods do not make contracts with mankind. But Yahweh, the Creator-God of the universe, chooses to bind Himself to mankind with not one, but six covenants. With mankind being so rebellious, how is He able to ensure He can keep His promises? What do the covenants tell us about how He is directing world events?
2. How does knowing that God never forgets nor breaks His contracts affect the way we think of Him? How should this understanding affect the way we read Scripture?
3. Despite the Jews’ rebellion throughout history, God never gave up on them. As a loving Father, He comforts them; He scolds them; He gives them advice; He punishes them. He is still working on them. As a believer in Christ, God is also our heavenly Father. How do you think God has encouraged or disciplined you? How is He directing your life?



Pre-reading for next lesson: Isaiah 65:17–25; Ezekiel 36–37; Zechariah 12–14