


## HISTORICITY OF ISRAEL: GOD'S PROMISE TO THE CHOSEN PEOPLE

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### ABSTRACT

This article presents the historicity of Israel. Historically, based on the Old Testament, it was explained how Israel originated. The established society of Israel was formed by the Twelve Tribes of Israel, characterizing the tribal period, and was occupied by the direct descendants of Jacob. Initially, Israel was governed by a unified monarchy, Saul, David, and Solomon, which later became politically divided into two kingdoms, the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom. The first was called the Kingdom of Israel, and the second was called the Kingdom of Judah. The divided monarchy led Israel to the Babylonian exile that lasted about 50 years, until its return to the promised land. This land was promised by God to Abraham, in his covenant with Him.

**Keywords:** Israel. Old Testament. Tribal Period. Monarchy of Israel. Babylonian Exile.

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## INTRODUCTION

The historicity of Israel is deeply rooted in religious traditions, with records dating back thousands of years. It begins with the patriarchal figure of Abraham, considered the founder of the Israelite people, to whom God promised a land for his descendants, known as the Promised Land.

According to the biblical narrative, Abraham, originally from Ur, in Mesopotamia, was called by God to leave his homeland and head to a new land, Canaan, which would be given to him and his descendants (CASTRO ET AL., 2016). This promise was renewed for Abraham's children and grandchildren, especially Isaac and Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, which means "let God prevail", from which the name "Israelites" derives.

The promise of the Promised Land is central to the identity of Israel and its people. This land is described as "a land flowing with milk and honey", symbolizing abundance and prosperity. The fulfillment of this promise went through many challenges, including the Israelites' slavery in Egypt and their subsequent liberation under the leadership of Moses, culminating in the crossing of the desert towards Canaan.

Israel's history is marked by moments of conquest and loss of the Promised Land, as well as exile and return, which reinforces the notion of a dynamic and ongoing relationship with this land, seen as a divine gift, but also as a testament to God's faithfulness to his people.

The promise of the Promised Land is not only a geographical aspect but also a spiritual one, representing the covenant between God and the people of Israel (BRIGHT, 2004). Over the centuries, this promise has shaped Israel's faith, culture, and national identity, being a central element in religious and historical narratives to this day.

## ORIGIN OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

Biblical narratives, as stated by Catenassi (2018, p. 94), show God relating to Abraham and his descendants, through Isaac and Jacob, so that the promise made by God may be fulfilled. The biblical account of the three patriarchs, Genesis 37, gains prominence when it begins the story of Joseph, one of Jacob's twelve sons. After chapters 37 to 50 of Genesis, Abraham's descendants go down to Egypt due to a great drought in their homeland and are welcomed there by the great empire.

Joseph was an interpreter of dreams and, for this reason, was taken to Pharaoh Sheshi I, who was tormented by dreams that needed to be interpreted, but none of his

priests could do so (SANTOS, 2013). In gratitude for Joseph's deed, the Pharaoh appointed him Governor of Egypt, and there, he brought all his descendants, children, brothers, and relatives, who lived well in Egypt until a certain period in history, when they began to be subjected to forced labor to build large warehouses for the Pharaoh.

The Book of Exodus records that in Egypt, the Hebrews grew in number, leaving the Pharaoh of the time very concerned about possible rebellions, forcing the workers to perform forced labor (CASTRO ET AL., 2016). In this part of the biblical history of Israel, a liberator guided by God appears, named Moses, who had been raised in the house of the pharaoh himself, and who was responsible for the liberation of the Hebrew people, together with Joshua, his successor, having guided the Israelites to a triumphant return to the promised land, Canaan, settling them in the territory, divided between the so-called Twelve Tribes of Israel, which carried descendants of each of the twelve sons of Jacob. Although Moses had guided the Israelite people on the path to the promised land, they never got there.

According to Castro (et al., 2016, p. 253), the Lord said to Moses: "This is the land that I promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac, and Jacob, when I said to them: I will give it to your descendants. I have allowed you to see it with your own eyes, but you will not cross the river, you will not enter it." Therefore, Moses, the servant of the Lord, died and was buried in Moab, as the Lord had said, but to this day no one knows where his tomb is located.

Biblical historicity affirms the covenant made with Father Abraham and his descendants every time it is said: "God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob".

After arriving in the promised land, the Twelve Tribes of Israel, which carried the descendants of Jacob's sons, joined Palestine, located south of Syria (BERLESI, 2017). From this historical account, the so-called tribal period arose.

In this vein, after being established, the villages grew and some generations of the patriarchal families gave rise to clans, which, coming from groups with similar identities, were settled on the plain. It is not known for sure how this settlement occurred, but today we have four theories that propose to explain it: that of conquest, that of revolution, that of peaceful entry, and that of regions (CATENASSI, 2018, p. 115).

Castro et al. (2016) state that there are records in the Holy Scriptures about two types of settlement: the first occurred through Moses and Joshua, through the Israelites' conduct to the promised land, and the second in a more gradual manner, involving all the

Twelve Tribes of Israel, characterizing the tribal period, represented historically in the book of Judges.

The groups that originated the Israelites were uniting their historical and religious traditions. They felt united, and belonging to the same family, and the identity of the mountains made them tell their story as if they were one. Therefore, the patriarchal traditions were considered first, followed by the clans' own experience of the exodus.

In this vein, Catenassi (2018) states that a common genealogy of the tribes was being formed and projected into the history of the patriarchs, ensuring the representation of the differences and tensions that existed between them, but legitimizing the feeling of identity.

Palestine, where the Twelve Tribes of Israel were settled, is divided by the Jordan River from north to south into two zones, one more fertile to the west and the other rocky and sterile to the east, and is bordered to the north by the Lebanon mountain range and to the south by the Dead Sea (BERLESI, 2017).

Canaan was the place where the Canaanites, who spoke Semitic languages, lived, which generated numerous territorial disputes. Kaefer (2017) states that the areas of Canaan were fertile and, therefore, were always coveted by other peoples, as was the case with the Egyptians, who ended up subjugating Palestine and Phoenicia in the third millennium. The same author states that as a result of the loss of Palestine by Egypt in the second millennium, the territory was slowly populated by Hebrew tribes under the name of Israel.

However, not all tribes arrived at the same time. The tribe of Judah and the neighboring tribes that inhabited the semi-desert region of the South remained for a long time in the form of clans, although they adapted their ways of life, migrating from herding to agriculture (BERLESI, 2017).

## **THE UNIFIED KINGDOM**

The tribal system remained in Israel for around 200 years, despite all the difficulties they faced at the time. Due to constant invasions by other peoples, mainly the Philistines, there was a need for the Israelite tribes to form a single state, called the united monarchy or unified Israel, initially led by Saul (KILPP, 2022).

Catenassi (2018, p. 130) states that the first attempt to establish the monarchy in Israel took place around the region of Shechem by Abimelech (Judges 9). The text of

Judges presents an organized movement made by the so-called Lords of the City, tribal leaders, together with the established sanctuaries, who proclaimed Abimelech king, sponsoring mercenaries who wanted to compose his army.

The popular reaction was negative to this installation of a monarch, as recorded in the book of Judges (Judges 9, 45.49.56), as it revealed cruelty associated with the centralizing power, of a single man, with manifestations of resistance to this act (GERONE JR., 2017).

A change occurred, in opposition to that imposed reign. Therefore, the name of Saul appears to assume the monarchy at that time. Saul was the first king of Israel, effectively chosen by God, announced by the prophet Samuel. Bright (2004) states that Saul was the son of Kish, a wealthy man who belonged to the tribe of Benjamin.

The story of Saul appears in 1Sm and has other records such as in Chronicles I (9-10). Saul was a brave, courageous, determined, and modest man and, therefore, was chosen by God.

When Saul assumed the reign of Israel, he fought and won victories against all his enemies around him: against Moab, the children of Ammon and Edom; against the kings of Zobah and the Philistines; among others (CASTRO ET AL., 2016).

The unified monarchy, based on Saul's initiative, was succeeded by David, and then by Solomon, according to the biblical records indicated in 1Sm, 2Sm, and 1Kgs.

After Saul's death, David returned from the defeat of the Amalekites and spent two days in Siceleg where, after that, he would assume the position of king of Israel in Saul's place (CASTRO ET AL., 2016).

According to Catenassi (2018, p. 136), Saul's succession was made by David, and his entry into the court is told in several ways in the Holy Scripture. The main one is historically linked to the military campaigns of David, who became part of Saul's army.

David was seen by the Israelites as a brave and courageous warrior at the forefront of the battle lines against Israel's enemies. This fact is recorded historically by the event of David's unusual victory over Goliath, the Philistine giant, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1 - David's Fight against the Giant Goliath.



Source: Conegero, 2023

According to Schwantes (2018, p. 26, apud Catenassi, 2018, p. 137), strategically serving a Philistine king, David had the opportunity to learn about the structure of a state that had a more elaborate form where he could improve his military techniques, violating, for example, the tribal law of the “Holy War”, according to which one could only wage war in cases of defense, since God himself fought there in favor of his people.

The time when David occupied the throne of Israel, historically around 40 years, was the time when the Israelite people experienced their greatest conquests, because during that time not only was the city of Jerusalem captured by them, but their greatest enemies were also defeated (SANTOS, 2013). The tension between the Dravidian government and the demands of the tribes became quite evident at the end of David's story, on the occasion of his succession (CATENASSI (2018). Many interests disputed the great empire built by King David. On the one hand, there was Adonijah, supported by Joab and Abiathar, representing the tribes. Solomon was the counterpoint, defended by Nathan, Benaiah, and Zadok, representing David's new monarchical model.

The great dispute for the throne of Israel was won by Solomon and his supporters, under the enormous influence of Nathan and Bathsheba. According to Catenassi (2018, p.145):

As soon as he came to power, Solomon tried to eliminate the opposing group, ordering the killing of Adonijah and Joab, exiling Abiathar to Anathoth, and replacing him with Zadok. Shimei, who supported Absalom in his revolt against David, was also killed.

Thus, Solomon managed to carry out his reign, centralizing power and seeking to eliminate dissenting voices. After narrating the “cleansing” carried out by the new king, with great bloodshed, the biblical text concludes: “And the royalty was then consolidated in the hands of Solomon (1 Kings 2:46)”. King Solomon was also known as Jedidiah, which means “beloved by the Lord”, as he was called by the prophet Nathan (2 Sam 12:25).

Chronologically, it is stated in history that King Solomon was the fourth of David’s sons, born in the city of Jerusalem (SHAPIRA, 2018). Solomon is described in biblical texts as majestic, of great wisdom, of great constructions, and of great commercial capacity.

Solomon’s wisdom is described in 1 Kings 4, as stated by Castro et al. (2016, p. 371):

God gave Solomon wisdom, extraordinary discernment, and a breadth of knowledge as immeasurable as the sand of the sea. Solomon’s wisdom was greater than that of all the men of the East and than all the wisdom of Egypt. He was wiser than any other man, more than Ethan the Ezrahite; wiser than Heman, Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol. His fame spread throughout all the surrounding nations. He composed three thousand proverbs, and his songs numbered a thousand and five. He described plants, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows on the walls. He also spoke of four-footed animals, birds, animals that move along the ground, and fish. Men from all nations came to hear Solomon’s wisdom. They were sent by all the kings who had heard of his wisdom and intelligence.

Wisdom texts attributed to Solomon tend to devalue the wisdom of the Ancient East, thus valuing the real wisdom that comes from God. Historically Solomon distributed the territory into twelve districts, as illustrated in Figure 2.



Figure 2 - Map of King Solomon's districts.



Source: Catenassi, 2018

Each district had a governor (1 Kings 4:7-9). However, not all of the districts distributed by Solomon were properly structured and, therefore, did not respect tribal boundaries.

According to Catenassi (2018, p. 150), the maintenance of tax collection depends fundamentally on three factors:

The army: David had subjected the neighboring kingdoms to his command. Therefore, Solomon's army did not need to go on military campaigns in the region, since peace had been established.

The administration: The king equipped himself with bureaucrats who came from the court itself and were responsible for administering the collection of taxes from Solomon's twelve provinces.

The temple: Part of the taxes were paid on food. The temple was dedicated to Yahweh, the God of the peasants, which was a typical resource of royalty in the Ancient East.



All of King Solomon's prestige collapsed before the peasant people due to the extremely high taxes imposed on them and the imminent demand to support the "royal machine".

According to Bright (2004), King Solomon faced serious administrative problems, causing the loss of part of the territory that had been conquered by his predecessor, having to sell some cities to be able to buy construction materials and hire specialized labor. Solomon also had to pledge cities to pay other royal debts.

This fact contributed to the division of the unified kingdom, resulting in the so-called divided monarchy or divided reign, creating the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom, after the death of Solomon, who reigned for around 40 years.

## **THE DIVIDED REIGN**

After Solomon's death, there was a large northern movement in favor of the peasantry and against royal tax oppression. In 1 Kings 12, the story is told of the great assembly held in Shechem, to which Solomon's legitimate heir, Rehoboam, had gone to be consecrated king.

According to Conegero (2023):

The divided kingdom arose after the death of King Solomon. In 930 B.C., Rehoboam, Solomon's son, ascended the throne of Israel. The unified nation of Israel was made up of twelve tribes. But at that time there was great discontent among the Israelites, especially those who belonged to the northern tribes. Solomon had burdened the people with excessive taxes. However, when Rehoboam assumed the throne, he refused to heed the citizens' complaints, which were completely justifiable in that context. Instead of listening to the people's demands, King Rehoboam preferred to listen to his young advisors. Then, with the contempt of the court as a backdrop, the northern tribes rose in rebellion led by Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:24).

The pressure and groups for the return of the Ephraimite Jeroboam, belonging to the tradition of Northern Israel, manifested itself with a violently anti-monarchical character because for them the tribal system still seemed a more interesting way out to escape royal oppression (CATENASSI, 2018, p. 152).

The Northern Kingdom was marked by many conspiracies, where Jeroboam himself, the first king of the Northern Kingdom, was directly involved in idolatry, even creating illicit centers of worship in his territory, creating an erroneous religious division, which displeased the God of Israel himself (CONEGERO, 2023).

As king of the North, Jeroboam, according to biblical records, rejected the continuity of a state along the same Solomonic lines, concretizing the division of the kingdom into North and South, the first called the Kingdom of Israel and the second the Kingdom of Judah (KILPP, 2022).

Figure 3 illustrates the territorial division of the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom.

Figure 3 - Map of the division of the Kingdom of Israel and the Kingdom of Judah.



Catenassi, 2018

According to Catenassi (2018), unlike the North, a more monarchical stance still prevailed in the South, and for this reason, the region welcomed Rehoboam as its new leader, preserving the Davidic dynasty. As a result, the tradition maintained that the kings of Judah had to be direct descendants of David.

Since Rehoboam, the foreign policy of the Southern Kingdom faced the same problem as the Northern Kingdom: its relationship with its neighbors (CATENASSI, 2018,

p. 162). It was during this period of the Ancient East that different empires grew, many of which were against Rehoboam himself.

According to Conegero (2023):

The capital of the Southern Kingdom continued to be Jerusalem. Unlike the kings of the Kingdom of Israel who came from different dynasties, the kings of the Kingdom of Judah were all descendants of the house of David. The only exception was the period of just over six years in which Athaliah usurped the throne of Judah after Ahaziah, her son, was assassinated. In general, the Southern Kingdom had kings who were more committed to the will of the Lord.

Worship took place in the Temple of Jerusalem, although the Kingdom of Judah had presented numerous problems of idolatry and, as a result, the Southern Kingdom was warned by the Lord through the prophets about the imminent judgment that would be poured out because of the sin committed there (SHAPIRA, 2018).

According to Catenassi (2018, p. 176), Babylonian rule was established in Palestine at the end of the Kingdom of Judah, where the social structure had been eroded injustices were blatant, and political power was occupied with militarism and its decisions that did not take into account the survival of the majority of the peasant population, which displeased God.

Then came the most delicate period in the ancient history of Israel, the Babylonian exile, which marked the end of the Kingdom of Judah, which had 20 kings throughout its monarchical period.

## **EXILE AND POST-EXILE**

After the death of King Solomon, the period of the unified monarchy came to an end. Thus came the period of the divided monarchy, which divided the Israelites between two kingdoms, the North and the South.

In this context, with the divided kingdom, the people of Israel became more vulnerable to attacks from their enemies. Thus, the impact of the decline of the Northern Kingdom, Israel, was felt by the inhabitants of Judah, the Southern Kingdom, who felt protected by their sacred institutions. However, the Southern Kingdom also declined under Babylonian rule, leaving the religious security of the people of Judah completely vulnerable.

Historical records account for the divided monarchy, the Northern Kingdom, Israel, and the Southern Kingdom, Judah, lasting around 200 years, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1 - Period of the Divided Monarchy.

Monarchy	Kingdom	Monarchical Regime	Period	Reign time
Northern Kingdom	Israel	SOLOMONIC	931 b.c. - 721 b.c.	Around 200 years
Southern Kingdom	Judah	DAVIDIC		

Source: Adapted from Catenassi, 2018

Antes da divisão do reino de Israel, em Reino do Norte e Reino do Sul, havia uma Israel mais forte, sob o regime de uma monarquia unificada, cujo período durou por volta de 120 anos, conforme ilustração do Quadro 2.

Table 2 - Period of the Unified Monarchy.

United Kingdom	Period
Reign of Saul	1030 b.c. - 1010 b.c.
Reign of David	1010 b.c. - 970 b.c.
Reign of Solomon	970 b.c. - 931 b.c.

Source: Adapted from Catenassi, 2018

Babylonian rule, as stated by Catenassi (2018, p. 176), was established in Palestine at the end of the Kingdom of Judah, where the social structure had deteriorated injustices were blatant, and political power was occupied with militarism and its decisions that did not take into account the survival of the majority of the peasant population, which displeased God.

The Kingdom of Israel ended in 721 BC with the conquest of Samaria by the Assyrian people, with part of its people deported to Assyria. In contrast, the Kingdom of Judah in 587 BC, when Jerusalem was sacked, had its temple desecrated and the royal palace destroyed by the Babylonian people, with a large part of its people deported to Babylon.

The Babylonian conquest of the Southern Kingdom had numerous consequences for the people of Judah, according to biblical accounts. According to Gonçalves (2022), during two military campaigns, Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and its temple, executing dozens of people and deporting thousands of others to Babylon, namely Kings Jehoiachin and Zedekiah.

Given what happened, only the least favored fraction of the people remained in Judah, effectively the poor who, sometime later, were mostly murdered by Ishmael, and the rest of them took refuge in Egypt, leaving the territory of Judah uninhabited.

Given the above, it is clear that God was dissatisfied with Israel's disobedience and lack of faith. Thus, the religion that formed the link between God and the people of Israel, and would guarantee them divine protection, was incapable of protecting the people. The faith, once strong and rigorous, was completely shaken, faced with so much dissatisfaction, and the Babylonian "gods" managed to defeat Yahweh.

This whole situation caused the people of Israel to reflect on their faith again after the unfortunate experience of the Babylonian exile, which lasted for about 50 years, creating a theology that provided answers to the challenges of their time.

The post-exilic period of Israel, which followed the return of the Jews from the Babylonian exile in 538 BC, was a phase of reconstruction and reorganization, both physical and spiritual, for the Jewish people. During this time, led by Ezra, Nehemiah, and Zerubbabel, the Jews dedicated themselves to rebuilding the Temple of Jerusalem, reestablishing religious practices, and reinforcing the cultural and religious identity that had been weakened during the exile. According to Bright (2004), during the period of Babylonian exile, the exiles faced the challenge of maintaining their cultural and religious identity in a foreign land. However, with the fall of Babylon to the Persians in 539 BCE, Cyrus the Great issued an edict allowing the Jews to return to their homeland and rebuild their temple in Jerusalem (Ezra 1:2-4). This action by Cyrus is seen as a providential event for the restoration of Israel, as mentioned by Isaiah: "He is my shepherd and will perform all my pleasure, saying to Jerusalem, 'It shall be built'; and to the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid'" (Isaiah 44:28). The return of the Jews to their homeland was made possible by the decree of Cyrus the Great, king of Persia, who conquered Babylon in 539 BCE and allowed the captive peoples, including the Jews, to return to their lands and rebuild their temples. This event marked the beginning of the post-exilic period (GRENZER, 2001, p. 121). During the post-exilic period, the Jews faced the challenge of rebuilding the Temple of Jerusalem, the second Temple, and the city of Jerusalem, which had been destroyed. This period also involved the reorganization of the Jewish community around its religious practices and laws, which had been partially interrupted during the Babylonian exile. According to Catenassi (2018, p. 228):

In 164 B.C. the temple of Jerusalem was restored, as well as the priesthood that had been faithful to Judaism. The seven-branched candelabra that stood there (the menorah) was lit again, giving rise to the Feast of Lights, or "Dedication of the Temple." Many incursions were made into the region of Judah, but also into Galilee

and Transjordan, meeting the Israelites who had never stopped worshiping Yahweh and taking them to Jerusalem.

Important figures such as Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah led the people in this physical and spiritual reconstruction. As Grenzer (2001) explains, Zerubbabel oversaw the reconstruction of the Temple, while Ezra and Nehemiah played important roles in restoring religious practices, educating the people about the Torah, and rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.

The independence of Judea was favored by the international political crisis. The Seleucids and Ptolemies were in decline due to constant wars of conquest, as was Egypt. Rome was in a civil wars. The region of Syria itself, neighboring Israel, was taken from the Seleucids by the Armenians between 89-69 BC until it was dominated by the Romans. Taking advantage of this situation, The Maccabean revolt, which had begun as a popular and charismatic movement, began to gain the support of the great forces of the time, the Romans and the Ptolemies, who were interested in the problems caused by the government of the Seleucids (CATENASSI, 2018, p. 229).

Lopes (2024) points out that the post-exilic period was crucial for the strengthening of Israel's national and religious identity, shaping the way Judaism would be practiced in the following centuries and profoundly influencing Jewish culture and history.

This period was also marked by a reevaluation of traditions and laws, with the compilation and reaffirmation of the Torah as the center of Jewish religious life. The community reorganized itself under new administrative and religious systems, adapting to the influences and pressures of Persian rule.

The post-exile period was therefore a period of renewal, in which the Jewish people redefined their cultural and religious identity, laying the foundations for the Judaism that would continue to develop in the following centuries.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The historicity of Israel, through the panorama traced from the origin of its people, its foundation, to the post-Babylonian exile period, is marked by the constant reaffirmation of the divine promise and the resilience of a nation in the face of worldly challenges. The origin of Israel, rooted in God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, establishes the foundations of a national and spiritual identity that would develop through the centuries. This sacred bond, renewed repeatedly throughout history, served as the foundation on



which the nation was built. After the beginning of the tribal period, to strengthen Israel against its enemies, there was the unified reign, initiated by Saul, and his succession through David and Solomon, which represented the pinnacle of the fulfillment of divine promises, with Israel consolidating itself as a strong and prosperous nation, endowed with a spiritual temple in Jerusalem, built by King Solomon.

However, after Solomon's death, the unified reign was divided, separating the people of Israel into a new territorial distribution. The Northern Kingdom emerged, ruled by Jeroboam, and the Southern Kingdom, ruled by Rehoboam. The Northern Kingdom, known as the Kingdom of Israel, had the Solomonic monarchical regime, as it followed the same directives outlined by King Solomon. However, the Southern Kingdom, known as the Kingdom of Judah, had a Davidic monarchical regime, following the same ideas outlined by King David. Consequently, the division of the unified kingdom brought about a weakening of Israel, which subsequently left this nation chosen by God helpless due to its fragility in faith. However, the divided kingdom and the subsequent spiritual and political decline demonstrate the dangers of straying from divine commandments, leading the nation to vulnerability and, eventually, to exile.

The Babylonian exile was a period of profound crisis, but also of reflection and renewal. Far from home, the Israelites were faced with the need to rediscover and reaffirm their faith, in a context of dispersion and oppression, which lasted for around 50 years. The Babylonian exile was characterized as a period of oppression and slavery of the people chosen by God.

The return from exile, driven by the divine promise, symbolized not only the physical restoration of Jerusalem and the Temple but also spiritual renewal and renewed commitment to God's covenant.

At this stage, they were led by Ezra, Nehemiah, and Zerubbabel, and their main objective was to strengthen the faith, which had been weakened during the period of Babylonian exile. All this was possible thanks to the fall of Babylon to the Persians in 539 BC, Cyrus the Great issued an edict allowing the Jews to return to their homeland so that they could build their temple in Jerusalem. This action by Cyrus is interpreted as a providential event for the restoration of Israel.

Thus, the history of Israel, in its entirety, is a narrative of faith, challenges, and restoration. God's promise to the people of Israel not only guided the historical development of the nation but also provided hope and direction in times of crisis.

According to Ávila (2021), the Holy Scriptures, in the Holy Bible, contain God's promise to Abraham, which contains four elements recorded at different times in Abraham's life (Gen 12:1-3; Gen 15:18-21; Gen 17:1-21):

1. Descendants: God promised descendants to Abraham (Gen 17:2-7). In Galatians 3:8 and 16, Paul points out that this descendant is Christ.
2. Land: God promised Abraham that he would have a place to live (Gen 15:18-21; Gen 17:8).
3. Nation: God promised Abraham that he would be the father of multitudes, a great nation (Gen 12:2; Gen 17:4).
4. Protection and blessing: God promised Abraham His blessing and that in him all the families of the earth would be blessed (Gen 12:3).

In this context, it is clear that God's promises are trustworthy. Is because He is trustworthy. As the story of redemption unfolds, we can see and understand that, despite the unfaithfulness of Abraham and his descendants, the people of Israel, the Lord assumed the commitment and responsibility to keep what was promised to Him. In Christ, we find the final fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham. He is the seed, He gives us an eternal dwelling place, He makes us a nation set apart for God, and in Him, the blessing of salvation is available to all families on earth (ÁVILA, 2021). This legacy of perseverance and faith continues to resonate in the identity of the Jewish people to this day, evidencing the lasting impact of divine promises and the centrality of the covenant with God in the history of Israel.

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