

God's Timeline of Israel and the Last Days

The story of God's plan for Israel and the end times is a sweeping narrative that spans centuries, leading to the ultimate return of Christ. This timeline explores the key events that unfold in this divine saga, starting with the establishment of God's covenants with Israel, followed by their exile and eventual restoration. It delves into the prophesied reestablishment of Israel, culminating in the Second Coming of Christ and the unfolding of the Tribulation Period, where the Antichrist rises to power. We will explore the Millennial Kingdom, the final judgment, and the ultimate creation of a new heaven and new earth.

Through this journey, we will uncover the intricate tapestry of messianic prophecy and explore diverse interpretations of these events. The timeline will provide insights into the significance of these events for both the Jewish people and the world at large, highlighting the importance of understanding God's eternal plan.

 **by janice wright**



Overview of God's Covenants with Israel

God's covenants with Israel are a cornerstone of biblical history and theology. They reveal God's unwavering faithfulness to His chosen people and lay the foundation for His ultimate plan of salvation. Through these covenants, God promises to bless Israel, to establish a relationship with them, and to fulfill His purpose through them.

The Abrahamic Covenant, established in Genesis 12-17, is the foundational covenant for Israel. God promises Abraham a vast land, a numerous offspring, and a special relationship with him and his descendants. This covenant lays the groundwork for God's future dealings with Israel and sets the stage for the coming of the Messiah.

Given to the Israelites at Mount Sinai, the Mosaic Covenant codifies the Law, outlining the ethical and religious standards for God's chosen people. It emphasizes the importance of obedience and highlights the consequences of disobedience. The Mosaic Covenant provides a framework for living in harmony with God and with each other. This covenant, while important, is ultimately a temporary covenant meant to prepare the Israelites for the coming of the Messiah. The Mosaic covenant does not focus on individual salvation but rather on the collective covenant relationship between God and the nation of Israel.

Made with King David in 2 Samuel 7, the Davidic Covenant promises that the Messiah will be a descendant of David, establishing an everlasting kingdom. This covenant not only ensures the continuity of the Israelite monarchy but also foreshadows the coming of a greater King who will reign in righteousness and peace.

God's covenants with Israel are not merely historical agreements but ongoing promises that shape the future of His people and the world. They reveal God's faithfulness and His commitment to His chosen people, even through periods of disobedience and hardship. They also serve as a foundation for understanding the coming of the Messiah and the unfolding of God's ultimate plan for the world.





Exile and Restoration of the Jewish People

Babylonian Exile

The Babylonian Exile began in 586 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar II, King of Babylon, destroyed Jerusalem and the First Temple. This event fulfilled the prophecies of Jeremiah, who warned the Israelites for their sins and disobedience. The Jewish people were forced into exile for 70 years, a period of immense suffering and hardship. They faced oppression, forced labor, and cultural assimilation, leading to a profound loss of identity. The exile, however, became a period of spiritual awakening for the Jewish people. They rediscovered the importance of their faith and the meaning of their covenant with God. Their shared experience of suffering and displacement strengthened their bonds as a people, and the longing for Jerusalem and the restoration of the temple became a central theme in their prayers and literature.

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Return to Israel

In 538 B.C., Cyrus the Great, King of Persia, issued a decree allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their temple. This marked a significant turning point in their history, known as the "Second Temple Period." While the return was met with challenges, it symbolized a restoration of hope and a renewed commitment to their faith and cultural heritage. The return to Israel was not a simple or immediate process. Many Jews chose to remain in exile, while those who returned faced challenges in rebuilding their city and temple. Despite these difficulties, the return to Jerusalem represented a triumph of faith and a testament to the enduring power of hope. It marked a new chapter in the history of the Jewish people, one that saw the gradual reestablishment of their religious and cultural identity.

Diaspora

The Diaspora, meaning "scattering," refers to the dispersion of the Jewish people after the Roman destruction of the Second Temple in 70 A.D. This event led to the exile and dispersal of Jews throughout the world, where they faced persecution, discrimination, and cultural assimilation. While the Diaspora marked a period of immense suffering, it also fostered a remarkable resilience and a deep sense of shared identity among the Jewish people. They preserved their traditions, culture, and faith across generations, awaiting the prophesied restoration of their homeland and the coming of the Messiah. The Diaspora became a crucible of Jewish identity, forcing them to adapt and endure in the face of adversity. They developed new ways of preserving their traditions, creating vibrant communities in various parts of the world. Despite the pain of exile, the Diaspora also witnessed a remarkable flowering of Jewish culture and intellectual life, with the development of rabbinic Judaism, the emergence of new religious and philosophical schools, and a flourishing of Jewish literature and art.

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The Prophesied Reestablishment of Israel

Restoration of the Land

The Bible foretells a time when the Jewish people will return to their ancestral homeland, a land promised to Abraham and his descendants. The return of the Jews to Israel after the Babylonian Exile, as well as the establishment of the modern State of Israel in 1948, are seen as significant steps in fulfilling this prophecy. The prophet Ezekiel, for instance, describes a future restoration of the land, with a renewed focus on agriculture and prosperity. (Ezekiel 36-37). This prophecy speaks to a time of peace and flourishing, where the land will be revitalized and the Jewish people will thrive.

Ingathering of the Exiles

The Scriptures speak of a massive gathering of the Jewish people from around the world, fulfilling the prophecy of the regathering of God's chosen people. This ingathering, in which Jews from various nations are drawn back to Israel, is an ongoing process with profound implications for the future. The prophet Joel states, "I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and I will enter into judgment with them there concerning my people and concerning my inheritance, Israel." (Joel 3:2). This gathering is not only a physical event but also a spiritual one, as Jews from all over the world are awakened to their heritage and their connection to God's promises. The ingathering signifies the restoration of Israel's identity and the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham.

Spiritual Awakening

As the Messiah's return draws near, a profound spiritual awakening is prophesied to occur in Israel, leading to a national recognition of Jesus as the promised Savior. This awakening will usher in a period of peace and spiritual revival, transforming the nation. Zechariah, in his prophetic vision, speaks of a time when the Jewish people will look upon Jesus as the one who was pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only son. (Zechariah 12:10). This spiritual awakening will be marked by repentance, a turning back to God, and a deep understanding of His love for Israel. It will be a time of profound transformation, with the nation embracing the truth of Jesus as their Messiah and King.



The End Times and the Second Coming of Christ

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Great Tribulation

A period of unprecedented global turmoil and persecution of believers, culminating in the battle of Armageddon. This time of great trial will mark the final stage of God's judgment on the world. During this time, the Antichrist will rise to power and seek to rule the world with an iron fist. He will establish a one-world government and enforce a global economic system, compelling people to worship him and reject the true God. The Church, however, will remain steadfast in its faith, enduring persecution and tribulation for the sake of Christ.

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Rapture of the Church

As the Great Tribulation intensifies, faithful Christians will be supernaturally transported to meet Christ in the air, escaping the wrath to come. This event, known as the Rapture, is described in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, where it states, "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." The Rapture signifies the separation of believers from the world and marks the beginning of the tribulation period.

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Second Coming

Jesus Christ returns in power and glory to establish His Millennial Kingdom on earth. This momentous event will mark the culmination of God's plan for humanity, ushering in an era of peace, justice, and righteousness. Upon His return, Christ will defeat the forces of evil, including the Antichrist and his armies, at the battle of Armageddon. This victory will signify the final triumph of God over sin and darkness, bringing an end to the age of evil. The Second Coming of Christ is the fulfillment of countless prophecies found in the Old Testament, and is the central hope of Christians around the world.

The Tribulation Period and the Antichrist



The Antichrist

A powerful, charismatic leader who will rise to prominence and deceive the world, demanding worship as a false messiah. He will break the covenant with Israel and attempt to establish a one-world government and religion, culminating in the persecution of believers. He will use his power to control the economy, restrict freedom of speech, and persecute those who oppose his ideology. His reign will be marked by oppression, tyranny, and the violation of human rights.



Global Upheaval

The Tribulation will be marked by unprecedented natural disasters, wars, famines, and spiritual deception, testing the faith of believers. It will be a time of great suffering, but also of great opportunity for Christians to demonstrate their faith and witness to the world. People will experience widespread fear, uncertainty, and despair as the world descends into chaos. The Antichrist will use these events to manipulate the masses and consolidate his power, creating an atmosphere of fear and submission. However, amidst the turmoil, the light of God's truth will shine brighter than ever before, prompting many to seek refuge in the Lord.



Remnant of Israel

A faithful remnant of the Jewish people will endure the Tribulation, leading to their ultimate salvation and restoration. They will be persecuted by the Antichrist, but ultimately protected by God's grace and will come to recognize Jesus as their Messiah. They will face intense pressure to conform to the Antichrist's demands, but their unwavering faith and trust in God will guide them through the storm. The Tribulation will be a crucible that refines their faith, purifying them and drawing them closer to the Lord.

The Millennial Kingdom and the Final Judgment



Reign of Christ

Jesus Christ will establish His kingdom on earth, reigning from Jerusalem with justice and righteousness for a thousand years. This era will be characterized by peace, prosperity, and the complete restoration of Israel, as the exiled Jewish people will be gathered back to their homeland. The blessings of the kingdom will extend to all nations, with the earth flourishing in abundance and the curse of sin broken. The lion will lie down with the lamb, and there will be no more sickness, suffering, or death. The creation itself will be redeemed and restored to its original beauty and harmony.



Final Judgment

After the Millennial reign, Jesus Christ will return to judge all humanity. Every individual will stand before God, and their deeds will be judged according to His perfect standard. Those who have trusted in Jesus Christ as their Savior, who have repented of their sins and followed His teachings, will inherit eternal life in the new heaven and new earth. They will enjoy everlasting fellowship with God, experiencing unimaginable joy and peace. The wicked, however, those who have rejected God's grace and chosen to live in rebellion against Him, will be separated from His presence and face eternal judgment. They will be cast into the lake of fire, where they will experience eternal separation from God and all that is good.



New Creation

Following the final judgment, God will create a new heaven and a new earth, free from sin and death. This new creation will be a perfect and eternal dwelling place for God's people, where they will experience complete joy, peace, and communion with their Creator. The city of Jerusalem will be the center of God's kingdom, shining with the glory of the Lord. There will be no more pain, suffering, or tears, only everlasting peace and joy. The redeemed will enjoy perfect fellowship with God, as well as with each other, and the creation will be renewed and restored to its original glory.

The New Heaven and the New Earth

The Bible paints a vivid picture of a new heaven and a new earth, a glorious future where God's presence fills all things and the effects of sin are completely eradicated. This is not simply a restoration of the original creation, but a transformation into a new, perfect state. The old heaven and earth, marred by sin and its consequences, will pass away, making way for a new, perfect creation.

This new creation will be free from the curse of sin. The pain, suffering, death, and mourning that have plagued humanity throughout history will be no more. God will restore everything to its original, perfect state, eliminating any traces of the brokenness caused by sin. This means a world filled with His glory, where beauty, joy, and peace reign supreme.

One of the most striking elements of the new creation is the New Jerusalem, the heavenly city that will descend to earth. This city will be the capital of God's eternal kingdom, a place where believers, both Jews and Gentiles, who have accepted Jesus as their Savior, will dwell in His presence for all eternity. Imagine a city where the glory of God shines brightly, illuminating the streets and casting out all darkness, symbolizing His perfect presence and everlasting peace.

The Tree of Life, a symbol of eternal life and abundance, will be restored, offering its fruits to those who dwell in the New Jerusalem. This symbolizes the fullness of life and blessings that God has prepared for His people in the new creation. The presence of the Tree of Life indicates a world where life flourishes and abundance reigns, where every need is met and every desire is fulfilled.

The curse of sin, which brought death, mourning, crying, and pain into the world, will be lifted, creating a world free from suffering.	God will restore all things to their original perfect state, creating a new heaven and a new earth filled with His glory.
The New Jerusalem, the heavenly city, will descend to earth, becoming the capital of God's eternal kingdom.	Believers, both Jews and Gentiles, who have accepted Jesus as their Savior will dwell in the presence of God for all eternity, enjoying fellowship and worship.
The Tree of Life, a symbol of eternal life and abundance, will be restored, offering its fruits to those who dwell in the New Jerusalem.	There will be no more night, for the glory of God will illuminate the New Jerusalem with an everlasting light, signifying the presence of God and His perfect peace.

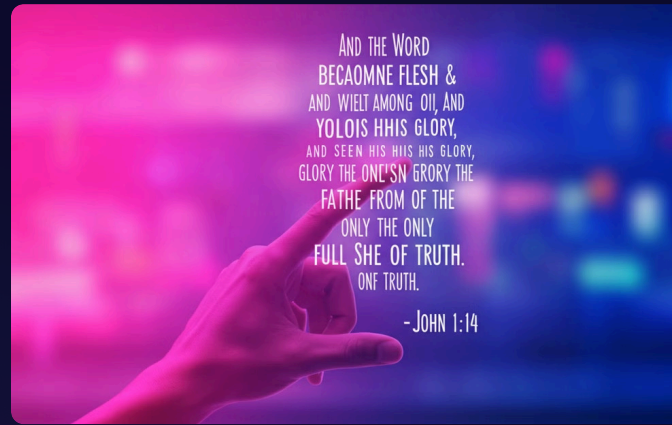


Messianic Prophecy



Promised Savior

From the very beginning, God's plan for Israel included the promise of a Messiah, a divinely appointed leader who would bring salvation and restore God's kingdom. The Hebrew Scriptures are filled with prophecies that point to the arrival of this extraordinary figure, painting a vivid picture of a King who would conquer sin and establish lasting peace. This promise echoed through generations, offering hope and anticipation for the coming of a deliverer who would redeem his people and usher in a new era of righteousness and justice.



Prophetic Descriptions

These prophecies go beyond a mere prediction of a leader. They delve into the very nature of the Messiah: his divine origin, his miraculous birth in Bethlehem, his sacrificial death, and his eventual reign of power and glory. These prophetic insights reveal a deeper understanding of the Messiah's mission, emphasizing his role as a savior who would not only conquer sin but also reconcile humanity with God. The prophecies paint a comprehensive picture of the Messiah's identity and mission, offering a rich tapestry of detail that leaves no doubt about the magnitude of this coming King.



Fulfillment in Jesus

The New Testament is a testament to the fulfillment of these Messianic prophecies. Christians believe that Jesus Christ, the central figure of the New Testament, perfectly embodies the characteristics and actions prophesied throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. From his lineage, his birth in Bethlehem, and his sacrificial death, Jesus' life and ministry provide undeniable evidence that he is the Messiah, the long-awaited deliverer promised for generations. His teachings, miracles, and ultimate sacrifice on the cross all point to the fulfillment of these prophecies, demonstrating the depth and power of God's plan for redemption.

Biblical Interpretations

Literal Interpretation

This approach views the Bible as a historically accurate and divinely inspired text, interpreting its words literally. Proponents of literal interpretation often focus on the details of the text, seeking to understand its historical context and applying its teachings directly to modern life. This approach emphasizes the Bible's authority as the ultimate source of truth and guidance. For instance, literal interpreters might take Genesis 1-2 as a factual account of creation, emphasizing the divine creation of the universe and humanity. They often hold that the Bible is inerrant, meaning free from error, and view it as a trustworthy source of knowledge about God and his will. Literal interpretation has been influential in various Christian denominations, shaping theological viewpoints and moral principles.

Allegorical Interpretation

This method interprets the Bible symbolically, seeking deeper meanings and hidden messages. Allegorical interpretation often sees biblical stories as parables, with underlying spiritual truths and principles that can be applied to diverse situations. This approach emphasizes the Bible's richness and its ability to speak to different levels of understanding. For example, an allegorical reading of the story of Jonah might see the whale as a symbol of death and resurrection, with Jonah's experience representing a journey of repentance and transformation. Allegorical interpretation is often associated with early church fathers and mystical traditions, emphasizing the symbolic nature of biblical language and its ability to convey spiritual truths on multiple levels.

Historical-Critical Interpretation

This scholarly approach analyzes the Bible within its historical and literary context, considering the authors' intentions and the social realities of the time. Historical-critical interpretation seeks to understand the Bible's message by exploring its historical background, literary genre, and cultural influences. This approach emphasizes the Bible's complexity and its relevance to human experience. For example, historical-critical scholars might analyze the Gospel of Mark, considering its literary structure and its relationship to other New Testament texts, in order to understand the author's theological perspective and the historical context of the early church. This approach aims to shed light on the Bible's origins, development, and meaning within its specific historical and cultural setting.

