**The Story of Israel!**

**The Time:** isabout **6:30 a.m. October 7, 2023!**

**The Place:** isthe border between Israel and Gaza!

**What exactly happened?** Somewhere between 3,000 and 6,000 Islamic inspired terrorists invaded Israel by land, sea and air.

* Hamas announced that it was “The Operation Al-Aqsa Flood.” Al-Aqsa is the name of the Muslim mosque that sits upon the Dome of the Rock. The Dome of the Rock is where:

1. The First Temple was built by King Solomon around 957 BC and later was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC.
2. It is also the place where the Second Temple was built around 516 BC and was later expanded by King Herod during the early part of the 1st century. It too was later destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD.
3. Today, all the Jews are allowed to do around this holy site is pray at the Wailing Wall, also known as the Western Wall, which is a remnant of the foundation wall of the 2nd Temple.

* For the Jews who live in Israel today, October 7, 2023, will be “a date which will live in infamy"—a day of disgrace and dishonor.

**Question:** If the Jews were God’s chosen people, why has God allowed them to be persecuted so severely, time and time again, going back, 3,000 years, to their beginning, when they were a people living in bondage in Egypt under a ruthless Pharoah.

Well, this brings us to **The Story of Israel** which begins with God calling a man by the name of Abram. This is how God often works by calling a individual man to do something incredible to advance the Kingdom of God.

**The Time:** is approximately **2,000 B.C.**

**The Place:** isUr of the Chaldeanslocated near the Euphrates River in what is today southern Iraq.

**To learn what happened: Genesis 12:1:** The Lord had said to **Abram**, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you.”

**Hebrews 11:8** says, ‘By faith **Abraham**, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.”

* Why did God call **Abram** to pick up and leave everything and set out for this foreign land? To bring from his lineage the birth of the Savior of the world.

But first, **God had to form a nation**. **Genesis 12:2** says, “And I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you.”

* To do this, God had to give **Abraham** some sons which God promises to do in Genesis 15:1, “[The Lord] took [Abraham] outside and said, “Look up at the heavens and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”
* God blessed **Abraham** with a son and named him **Isaac**. Later, God gave Isaac a son, named **Jacob**. In Genesis 32:28, the Lord changes Jacob’s name to I**SRAEL**, which means “One who struggles with God!” Does this not describe the history of Israel even to this day?
* God blessed Jacob with twelve sons who would become the 12 Tribes of Israel. The sons were: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph & Benjamin.

**Judah:**

* In the Bible, when certain men came to the end of their lives, they would call their sons to come and stand before them, one by one, to make a prophetic declaration over them.

**Genesis 49:10** says, “The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, **until He comes to whom it belongs**, and the obedience of the nations is his.”

* In Jacob’s blessing of Judah, the Lord is foretelling the coming of the Messiah, the Savior of the world, would come from the line of Judah and would be a king who will rule the nations.

**Joseph:**

* Sold by his brothers and ends up in Egypt!
* Through a series of miracles, Joseph rises to be ‘ruler over Egypt’ subject only to Pharoah.
* A famine in the region eventually serves to bring the rest of Joseph’s family, Jacob (Israel) and his 11 brothers down to Egypt where they can be protected from the famine.
* After the death of Jacob, Joseph, and the rest of that generation, a new Pharoah comes to power who does not know their story.
* Over the course of many years, the Hebrews become exceedingly numerous which leads to Pharoah enslaving them and forcing them into harsh labor.
* It’s time for God to call another man!

**Moses:**

* **The Time:** is approximately 1450 B.C.
* **The Place:** isThe region ofMidianlocated somewhere in what is today western Saudi Arabia.
* **What happened:** The angel of the Lord (the preincarnate Christ)spoke to Moses from a burning bush.

**Exodus 3:5-13:** “I am the God of your father, the God of Abrham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob…I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the land of the Egyptians and to bring them out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites. So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.

When Moses asked God, who shall I say is sending me, God replied, “I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I Am has sent me to you.’”

* Moses led the Israelites through the desert for forty long years and then passed the baton to **another man who is called by God**: **General Joshua**. It was his task to lead the Israelites into the land of Canaan to take possession of it in fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham.
* Over the course of time, the Israelites attacked and destroyed most of the people who lived in the land of Canaan. Then, Joshua divides the land among the 12 Tribes of Israel.   
    
  It is important to note two important aspects of the 12 Tribes:

1. The Levites did not receive a portion of land as their portion would simply be God Himself and they were to serve him in the temple.
2. At Jacob’s death, he gave Joseph a double portion by adopting his two sons: **Manasseh** and **Ephraim**. Thus, Joseph’s allotment of land went to them. So, you will see on any map of ancient Israel Manasseh and Ephraim included among the 12 Tribes.

* The next period of time, from about **1390-1095 B.C**. the Israelites were ruled over by **JUDGES**, such as Othniel, Deborah, Gideon and Samson, until another man is called by the name of **Samuel**.

**Samuel:**

**The time:** is approximately 1095 B.C.

**The Place**: is the territory of Benjamin just north of Jerusalem.

* Samuel’s main purpose in God’s providential plan was to ive the Israelites what they wanted—a king like all the nations around them.
* Samuel anoints **Saul** an impressive and tall man as the first King of the United Kingdom of Israel. However, Saul turned away from so God rejects him as king and sends Samuel to the little town of Bethlehem to anoint one of the sons of Jesse, a shepherd boy by the name of **David**.

**King David:**

**The time:** is approximately 1055 B.C.

**The Place: Israel**

* David would become the greatest King in the history of Israel and establish Israel as a powerful nation.
* Although a man with many flaws, David loved the Lord and was an obedient servant of God.

**Acts 13:22** says, “After removing Saul, [the Lord] made David their king. He testified concerning him: ‘I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart: he will do everything I want him to do.’”

* David accomplished many great things for God and Israel, including stoning a giant Philistine warrior by the name of Goliath. But like so many great men in the Bible, he had a might fall when he committed adultery with Bathsheba, and then, had her husband, Uriah, murdered.
* Bathsheba later became his wife and bore him a son by the name of **Solomon**.

**King Solomon:**

**The time:** is approximately 1015 B.C.

**The place: Israel**

* King David had at least 8 wives and at least 10 concubines. Solomon would take this to another level with 700 wives and 300 concubines which was against God’s will. This will eventually lead to the downfall and collapse of the entire nation of Israel over the course of the following 400 years.
* At Mount Sinai, God gave the law to Moses which was to be given to the Israelites that they might obey it and the Lord would be able to bless and protect them.

**Deuteronomy 7:1-6** lays out the will of God for his people as they prepare to enter the Promised Land.

7 When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations—the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you— 2 and when the Lord your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy. 3 **Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, 4 for they will turn your children away from following me to serve other gods, and the Lord’s anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you.** 5 This is what you are to do to them: Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their Asherah poles and burn their idols in the fire. 6 For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.

* This was the Lord’s will. But the Israelites were a stubborn and obstinate people. Turn with me to **1 Kings 11:1-8**.

**Solomon’s Wives**

11 King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh’s daughter—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. 2 They were from nations about which the Lord had told the Israelites, “You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods.” Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. 3 He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. 4 As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been. 5 He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. 6 So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the Lord; he did not follow the Lord completely, as David his father had done.

7 On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. 8 He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods.

* Because of Solomon’s egregious sins against God in defiling the land with altars built to false deities such as Baal, Ashtoreth, and Molech, God had no choice but to judge the nation of Israel by dividing it in two. However, he promised not to do it in Solomon’s lifetime in honor of David.
* Thus, at the time of Solomon’s death, a rebellion is incited by Jeroboam, one of Solomon’s officials. Rehoboam, Solomon’s son, succeeded him as king over all of Israel. When he heard of Jeroboam’s rebellion, he mustered up 180,000 fighting men to make war against the house of Israel to regain the kingdom for himself.
* What happened next? The Word of God came to Shemiah the man of God and warned Rehoboam, king of Judah not to go up to fight against his brothers, the Israelites. They were to go home for this was God’s doing. So Rehoboam and the Judahites obeyed the word of the Lord and went home again, as the Lord had ordered.

**The** **Divided Kingdom Israel:**

**The time: 975 B.C.**

**The place: Israel and Judah:**

1. Israel in the north under King Jeroboam.
2. Judah in the south under King Rehoboam.

* This is where we say goodbye to the southern kingdom and focus our attention on Israel, the northern kingdom. Here are some key facts to know about Israel.
* Jeroboam had an evil heart and totally rebelled against the word of God. He built golden calves and placed them in Behel and Dan so the Israelites could bow down and worship them without traveling down to Jerusalem. Scripture says, “This thing became a sin!”
* Jeroboam built shrines on high places and appointed priests from all sorts of people, even though they were not Levites.
* Eighteen kings followed in his footsteps and every single one was evil. They became so evil that they even practiced child sacrifice.
* After about 175 years, God basically said, “Enough!” Now, it was time for God to call another prophet to being a message to His wayward people.

To deliver God’s message of pending judgment, it was time for God to call another man. That man was the prophet Hosea who was given a very difficult assignment, both personally and prophetically.

**Hosea 1:2-3** says, When the Lord began to speak through Hosea, the Lord said to him, “Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the Lord.” So he married Gomer a daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.”

**The time:** is approximately **780 B.C.,** during the reign of Jeroboam II.

**The place:** the northern kingdom of Israel.

We will pick up with Hosea chapter 1 next week.

**The Time:** 8:15 PM, January 14, 2025

**The Place:** 1312 Annapolis Drive.

**Closing challenge.** God is still in the business of calling **a man** who is willing to surrender his life in obedience to Him. Are you that man?

There are three types of calls:

1. The call to **the one who has not surrendered** his life to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and is thirsty to know God and be saved.

**John 14:6**, "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"

**Romans 10:13**, “for, everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

1. The call to **the believer who finds himself in a desert**, in a wilderness of pain, suffering, and perhaps, even depression and is thirsty for spiritual nourishment.

**In Matthew 11:28** Jesus says,“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you **rest**…for I am gentle and humble in heart, and **you will find rest for your souls.**”

1. The call to **the believer who is thirsty** to follow the Lord more wholeheartedly, and sacrificially and is ready and willing to heed the call.

Paul says in **Philippians 3:10-11**, “I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his suffering, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain the resurrection from the dead.