



SAVED TO SERVE

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WHO DOES GOD IDENTIFY AS ISRAEL TODAY?

1. In this Sabbath School Lesson, we will discover from scripture, who God identifies as His people Israel, today. We will also answer the question, will all blood-born Israelites be saved?
2. God promised to Abram that He would be the father of many nations. He became the father of the Jewish nation of Israel. What did God say He would do through Abram? Genesis 12:3

3. **Note:** God chose to make Abram a great nation or race or people in order to bless every single human through Abram and his descendants. He wasn't chosen to be exclusive and keep God's truth to himself but rather, to share it with everyone. The books of the Old Testament detail how the Jews obeyed and then disobeyed God. Through the prophet Daniel, they were given a set period of probation to remain faithful to God and evangelize the world or be cut off as His chosen people. Let us now briefly study Daniel 9:24-27 to identify this prophecy.
4. Read Daniel 9:24. How much time was "determined" upon Daniel's people, the Jews?

5. **Note:** Using the 'day for a year' Biblical template for prophecy (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6), the 70 weeks represent 490 literal years. 70 weeks x 7 days = 490 days. 490 days represent **490 years**, because a day represents one year in Bible prophecy.
6. What event signals the beginning of the 70 weeks prophecy? Daniel 9:25

7. Which king gave the commandment or decree for the Jews to rebuild their temple in Jerusalem, and in what year of his reign was it given? Ezra 7:7-13, 21-27

8. **Note:** According to history, king Artaxerxes began his reign in 464 B.C. See the following reference for confirmation.

"In (Nehemiah 2:1) we have another Artaxerxes. We may safely identify him with Artaxerxes Macrocheir or Longimanus, the son of Xerxes, who reigned 464-425 B.C." Smith's Bible Dictionary <http://biblehub.com/topical/a/artaxerxes.htm>

Count seven years in the future from 464 B.C. and you will arrive at the date 457 B.C., the year that Artaxerxes gave the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.
9. Using 457 B.C. as the starting date for the 70 week prophecy and going 490 years into the future, what year marks the end of the 70 week prophecy? (Hint: It is VERY IMPORTANT to remember that when you cross over from B.C. to A.D., you must add one year because there is no "zero year." Look at the following example for clarity (2 B.C., 1 B.C., then 1 A.D., 2 A.D., etc).

10. What does Daniel 9:24 say the Jews were to accomplish in 490 years?

11. **Note:** Daniel 9:24 states that the Jews had 490 years to put an end to sin and accept the Messiah, Jesus Christ. However, as a nation, they rejected and crucified Jesus (John 1:11). The final rejection of Jesus and His message of truth happened after the cross, when the Jews stoned Stephen. The stoning of Stephen is the primary event which signaled the close of probation on the Jews. Let us prove this point.
12. Stephen preached in Acts 7:51-52 that the Jews were guilty of slaying Jesus, the Just One. As they began to stone Stephen, he saw Jesus "standing at the right hand of God." Where did Jesus sit after His ascension to heaven? Acts 2:32-34; Hebrews 1:3; Hebrews 10:12

a) What does it mean when Jesus is seen sitting at the right hand of the Father? Romans 8:34

b) However, Jesus was seen by Stephen “standing at the right hand” of the Father. What does it mean when Jesus is seen “standing” in heaven? Luke 13:25-28; James 5:9; Ezekiel 9:3-6 (the phrase “gone up” means that the Lord rose up or stood up).

13. **Note:** Based on the Bible and history, Stephen was stoned in the year 34 A.D. When you use 34 A.D. and count backward 490 years, it confirms the starting date of 70 week prophecy which is 457 B.C. See the following article which proves 34 A.D. as the year of Stephen’s death.

“On Dec. 26, the universal Church commemorates the death of St. Stephen in 34 A.D., the first man to give his life in witness to the faith. He is sometimes referred to as the ‘protomartyr.’” <https://www.catholicnewsherald.com/faith/190-news/faith/faith-dec/142-%20ststephen-the-first-martyr-remembered-dec-26>

14. The words by Jesus, “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate” (Matthew 23:37-38), confirm that because of the rejection of Jesus, and Stephen by the Jews, they were no longer considered God’s chosen people. This is why Jesus taught and trained the disciples to raise up the Christian church which would carry the gospel to the world (Acts 11:26). Since then, to whom did the apostles spread the gospel? Acts 13:46-48

15. Let us now do a study on Romans 11 which many Christians use to teach that ALL of the nation/people of Israel will be saved. What question does Paul ask concerning the Jewish people, and how does he answer his own question in Romans 11:1, 2?

16. Read Romans 11:11, 16-17. Paul said that the Gentiles received salvation through the fall of the Jews as God’s chosen people. Paul then compared the Jews to the branches of an olive tree, and he compared the Gentiles to branches of a wild olive tree that were grafted in to the original olive tree. Who is the Root of the tree? Revelation 22:16; Isaiah 11:10, 1-2

a) Who is the also called the Vine, and what must all the branches do to maintain life? John 15:5

17. What warning did Paul give to the Gentile converts concerning their interactions with the Jews? Romans 11:18-22

18. Why were the Gentiles not to boast against the Jews or condemn them? Romans 11:23-24

19. What does Romans 11:26 say which people misunderstand?

20. In Romans 11:26-27, Paul was quoting from Isaiah 59. According to Isaiah 59:20-21, when the Redeemer or Deliverer comes to Zion (His people - Isaiah 51:16), which group of them will He make a covenant with?

21. **Note:** Comparing Paul’s words in Romans 11:26-27 with Isaiah 59:20-21, we see that those who will be saved from the Jewish people of Israel, are those who turn from their sins. God will make a covenant with this group and they will keep His words in their mouths. In the same way that not all humans will be saved because of their personal choice and rejection of truth, likewise, not all blood-born Jews will be saved; only those Jews who turn from their sins and accept their Redeemer, Jesus. Notice how these points connect with Romans chapters 9, 10, & 11 in the following questions.

22. In Romans 9:27, what does Paul say as he quotes the prophet Isaiah? Isaiah 10:21-22

23. After quoting the prophet Isaiah in Romans 9:27, what desire does Paul express in Romans 10:1?

a) In addition to turning away from sin, what does Paul say the people of Israel must do to be saved? Romans 10:9-10

24. In Romans 11, Paul says there is a remnant of Israel according to the election of what? What were they not to be saved by? Romans 11:5-6

25. **Note:** Paul makes it clear that a remnant of the Jews will be saved: those who accept Jesus and His salvation by grace and not by the works of the law contained in ordinances which were abolished at the cross. This is outlined in Ephesians 2:5-16.

26. We just learned that God will save the Israelites who accept Him, His grace, and repent of their sins. Let us now see which groups of people are considered by God as Israel today. In Romans 9:24-25 when Paul quotes the prophet Hosea, who does God refer to as "my people"?

27. What is said in Romans 10:12-13?

28. **Note:** This clearly shows us that both blood-born Jews and Gentiles (people of all races) who accept Jesus as their Savior, repent of their sins, and receive His grace by faith to overcome sin are called "Israel" by God and are considered "His people." Thus, Paul is correct when he says in Romans 11:25-26 that "all Israel shall be saved" because it is referring to converted Jews and Gentiles who are in the fold of Jesus Christ; the natural branches and the branches that were grafted in!

29. Although a person may not be a blood-born Jew, how can he or she be Abraham's seed and heirs of those promises? Galatians 3:27-29

30. Meditate on the apostle Paul's words in Romans 2:28-29 as we close.
