How did ancient Israel lose its covenant with God?

God's Covenant With Israel



God's unique relationship with ancient Israel is often stressed in the Bible. The Lord exhibited His great interest in Israel by delivering them from their slavery in Egypt. "But the Lord has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be His people, an inheritance" (Deuteronomy 4:20).

At Sinai, the Lord said to Israelites, "For you *are* a holy people to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who *are* on the face of the earth" (Deuteronomy 14:2 also 2 Samuel 7:23; 1 Chronicles 17:21). And He made a covenant with them saying: "And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly" (Genesis 17:2 also Exodus 2:24).

The words, "Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God" (Ezekiel 11:20; Jeremiah 7:23; Jeremiah11:4; Jeremiah 30:22), show the covenant relationship that Jehovah had with Israel. This covenant covered the entire plan to make Israel the

spiritual center of global missionary efforts to reach the world.

Conditional Promise

God's covenant with ancient Israel was conditional on their obedience to Him: "Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth" (Deuteronomy 28:1 also Ezekiel 36:26-28). Had the necessary obedience been done, Israel's residence in their land would have been permanent. From that land would have gone out the message of peace to bring to the whole world the truth.

Israel's Unfaithfulness

Sadly, Israel proved unfaithful, and accordingly lost the glorious calling that might have been hers, and the promises of the Lord's covenant (Deuteronomy 28:1-14). Therefore, the Lord had no choice but to respect their freedom of will. And the nation was abandoned to the destiny it chose. And it received the curses of the Lord, "Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything, therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the LORD will send against you…" (Deuteronomy 28:47-48).

Consequently, Israel's enemies conquered them. Their kings were taken into exile with the people (Jeremiah 9:15-16; Jeremiah 16:13). And even when they returned from exile they again backslid greatly and their apostasy climaxed when they crucified the Son of God – the Savior of the world.

Before His death, Jesus declared, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not

willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate" (Matthew 23:37-38). Thus, the Jewish probation ended and they were finally utterly destroyed as a nation by the Romans in 70 AD.

Spiritual Israel

When Israel, as a nation, didn't choose to live up to her high privileges and to carry on her responsibilities, this special position was taken from her and given to the spiritual family of God on earth, the Christian church, which Paul speaks of as "the Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16).

God's covenant was transferred to the New Testament believers who became spiritual Israel and heirs of God's promises (Romans 8:17; Galatians 4:6-7). The "kingdom of God" was taken from the Jews and was "given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matthew 21:43). However, as individuals, the Jews may be saved if they accept Christ as Savior (Romans 11:23-24).

In the future, God's plan to save the world would no longer be dependent on the literal nation of Israel. In the New Testament, both Jews and Gentiles are brought into the family of God through submission to Christ. "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:26-29).

Every one regardless of race can be saved through faith in Christ. "by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:4 also John 1:12-13; John 3:3). God's grace makes the believers "sons of God" (1 John 3:1), and so "joint-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17), and

receivers of grace and of all the family privileges (Galatians 4:6-7).