



# World Christian Fellowship

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## History

### Luke 13:34-35

#### **Luke 13:34-35,**

God called Abraham and promised him that God will make him a great nation.

#### **Acts 7:2-8,**

Passover is the supreme celebration of the greatest event in Israel's history as a nation, her redemption from Egypt. Israelites go in their memory to affirm the divine origins really of their national identity.

The Israelites were rescued from the bondage in Egypt through the Prophet Moses. They were brought into the land of Canaan.

Redeeming history of Israel. God Himself instituted the Passover in Exodus chapter 12 as a reminder for them to know how the Lord God rescued them out of bondage.

Passover thus become the remembrance for every Jewish to know that they have history with God.

Thus Passover, celebrated every year that the Jews might never forget the greatness and the goodness of God in rescuing them from Egypt to take them into the land He had promised to them. It was called Passover because the angel of death passed over the houses which were sprinkled with the blood of the sacrificial lamb. In every other house, the first born were slain by that angel of death.

God in His wonderful mercy and with His great power delivered Israel to bring them to the land of promise Canaan.

God brought them to the land of Canaan so that they

- could worship Him,
- could be blessed by Him,
- could be sheltered by Him,
- could be protected by Him,
- could love Him, and
- could have sweet fellowship with Him.

However, it wasn't long after they left Egypt in a series of incredible, divine miracles, including the parting of the Red Sea so that the whole nation of up to two million people walked across on dry land, subsequently followed by the closing of that sea on the whole of the Egyptian army and drowning them.

It wasn't long after coming out under those unbelievable miracles that they became characterized by

- rebellion,

- distrust of God,
- disobedience of His word,
- unbelief,
- complaining,
- immorality, and
- even idolatry.

Their sins were many and they were constant!

God kept them wandering in the wilderness in no-man's land between Egypt and Canaan for forty years until the whole generation who came out and rebelled had died off.

Forty years of wandering, waiting to enter the land that God had promised to them.

After 40 years, after the whole generation had died out, that generation of adults, the people found themselves camped on the east side of the Jordan River. A very narrow river and just across the Jordan was the land of Canaan, the land that God had promised to them.

The plains of Moab, they were in that valley, east of the Jordan. They were basically directly across from the very well-known town called Jericho, just north of the Dead Sea.

They had been wanderers for forty years, pitching their tents in that very location. They were there for about a month.

In God's timing, they were now going to go into the land. But before they went into the land, they needed to be rehearsed on some very important issues.

They needed to hear again the law of God and that came to them in the book of Deuteronomy, which means “second law.”

The book of Deuteronomy was given to the people of Israel as they stood on the brink of entering in the Promised Land, to remind them of what was required by God.

The Ten Commandments had been given by God at Mount Sinai in Exodus 20. They made a solemn covenant with the Lord stating that they will obey every law prescribed by God in Exodus 24. In fact, you will find that they made a blood covenant with God.

The rest of the law had come after that, but that generation had turned from that law of God into sin and all that adult generation had perished.

Now as they stood on the brink of going into the land again, the law needed to be given a second time, since all the old generation have died.

So, they knew what God required.

- Blessing awaited them if they were obedient.

- Curses will come upon them if they were disobedient.

**Deuteronomy 26:16,**

This was never to be anything superficial. God never would be satisfied with superficial obedience. It was from the heart and the soul.

**Deuteronomy 26:17,**

They did exactly what they did at Sinai when Moses gave the law. They went through a ceremony.

They even were affirmed in blood covenant to obey the law of God and they had been unfaithful and that's why they had languished forty years in the wilderness.

But here they are again, the law is repeated, they affirm that they will keep the law. They declare the Lord to be their God, they will walk in His ways, His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and they will listen to His voice.

**Deuteronomy 26:18-19,**

God says that you keep your side of this covenant and this commitment and I promise you that I will set you on high above all nations. I will make you a people for praise and fame and honour as a consecrated people to the Lord your God.

God confirmed that I promise you greatness and national prosperity and national prominence and national glory for your obedience.

**Deuteronomy 27:1,**

This is the way they are prepared to enter the land.

When they go in the land, there is something the Lord wants them to do.

**Deuteronomy 27:4-6,**

Whitewash the stone, write the law on it.

**Deuteronomy 27:11-15,**

Two mountains near each other.

- On one, six tribes are going to stand, and
- On another six tribes are going to stand.
  
- ✓ **Mount Ebal** represent **cursing's**,
- ✓ **Mount Gerizim** represents **blessings**.

The Levites are going to answer and say to all the men of Israel with a loud voice, verse 15, cursed is, cursed is, cursed is, and go through all the curses.

This is that monumental moment when they have just gone into the land and the people are split into the six tribes on Ebal and

the six on Gerizim and they are reminded in this dramatic, graphic, unforgettable event of the fact that God promises to bless their obedience and promises to curse their disobedience.

The curses go on starting in verse 15 to the end of the chapter and again in chapter 28:15 to 68 end of the chapter.

All of this was told to them and then they were told to go and rehearse it back and forth in a theatrical sense on the mountains when they came into the land so they would never forget.

### **Deuteronomy 28:1-2,**

Blessed, blessed, blessed, blessed.

God makes promises to them as they go into the land. He says when you get in the land, hold this dramatic ceremony so no one will forget, and everyone will know in which you rehearse the promise of God to bless your obedience and to curse your sin.

Sadly, disobedience was the path they chose. Israel's history from the time they entered into the land is a history of curses.

They refused to believe God. They didn't even believe God could overcome the occupants of that land. They feared that

the occupants of the land of Canaan were like giants and they were like grasshoppers.

They didn't have the faith to believe in the God who had delivered them from Egypt being able to bring them into the land of Canaan.

They were marked by unbelief.

They were marked by fear.

Even when they conquered a city, they were marked by outright disobedience. One man in particular, Achan, did exactly what God told him not to do, steal something, buried it in his tent. As a result, he was executed before the eyes of the whole nation that they might understand the curse that comes upon disobedience.

Nonetheless, it wasn't very long in the land until they were marked by disobedience, until they fell into immorality and idolatry.

Nation of Israel was ruled by Judges and they messed so much. They rebelled against God by asking for King.

Saul was disobedient to God and lost the kingdom.

The great Solomonic temple, the most glorious of all the temples ever built, was glorious in its beginning and God came in his Shekinah glory and dwelt there.

But of course, the sin, the immorality, the idolatry, the unbelief eventually caused God to leave.

*'Ichabod'* was written on that temple, "the glory has departed," and the prophets give images of the glory going up over the door and out over the top of the temple and out over the mountain and gone.

God left.

Until the kingdom was split, until they were overcome often by their enemies, until they experienced wicked, wretched rulers in both the north and the south.

There wasn't one righteous king in the northern kingdom at all. They were literally under the seduction of false and lying prophets and corrupt priests and there awaited them more captivity. They were hauled off to Babylon. Later, they were defeated by the Greeks and their temple was desecrated. Assyrians came and captured the Northern Kingdom in 722 B.C.

The Babylonians came and smashed that Solomonic temple to the ground, massacred tens of thousands of Jews, and hauled others off into captivity.

By then the northern kingdom had disappeared forever.

Seventy years after captivity, the Jews came back, and Nehemiah helped them to build the wall and eventually they rebuilt a temple under the leadership of a man named Zerubbabel.

It was a rather meagre thing compared to the Solomonic temple. But they continued the same pattern of disobedience, rebellion, sin, and immorality. Though they seemed to have been cured of worshipping other gods, they disobeyed the true and living God.

The Greeks came a Greek monarch by the name of Antiochus, who called himself Epiphanes, meaning Antiochus, the great one.

The Jews called him Epimanes, which means “the madman,” “the maniac.” Antiochus came and slaughtered a pig on the altar in the holy place and desecrated that temple.

Herod came along and spent years in this great enterprise to build the Herodian temple, the third temple.

It wasn't as glorious as the Solomonic temple, but it was a lot more glorious than the second temple.

- ✓ God had left the first temple, *Ichabod*, and it was destroyed.
- ✓ God had left the second temple, *Ichabod*, and it was destroyed.
- ✓ Jesus says, "your house." "This once was my Father's house.

This once was My house.

You have made it into a den of thieves.

It is now your house," which is to say, I Am gone.

By the time we come to Luke 13, the Romans occupy their land.

They are still under the curse. Not only are they under Roman sovereignty, and with that, their land is filled with pagan Gentiles.

There are idolatrous representations of Caesar everywhere, on banners, on placards, on buildings and on coins.

They are also under the rule of the Herodian family, non-Jewish Idumeans. Their land is not their own. The curse has gone on for centuries.

Their religion, by the time Jesus comes, is apostate.

Their leaders are hypocrites.

The people have followed the apostasy and the hypocrisy.

Consistent with their past disobedience, they have killed the messengers of God.

They have stoned the prophets, and in some cases cut them in half.

Finally, God sends His son and they kill Him.

The curses reach the climax.

The words that Jesus speaks at the end of the 13th chapter of Luke reflect that reality. Verse 35: "Behold your house is left to you, desolate."

Brief words of judgment, but familiar to the Jews.

They understand that.

In 66 A.D., about thirty years after this when the Jews fomented a rebellion against Rome and led to the destruction of Jerusalem. The complete dismantling of the glorious temple to the point where there wasn't one stone on top of another and all that's left of it today is a western Wailing Wall that holds up the hill it was on. It's not even a wall from the temple.

It was May of the year 66 when the Jewish revolution against Rome broke out. Having taken about as much as they could tolerate of Roman oppression, Roman injustice and pagan idolatry.

The Jews turned against their occupying rulers, largely driven by a group of Jews called Zealots. Zealots are the party of radical nationalism, known for their guerrilla tactics and terrorist strikes. Many Jews took up whatever arms they could find and joined in the rebellion. Rome struck back and Rome struck back with devastating force.

The first strike fell on Jews in northern Galilee when the Romans soldiers came and slaughtered thousands of them.

Eventually Titus himself, Titus Vespasian, the Roman ruler, came down to Jerusalem with an army in excess of 80,000 men, when the Jerusalem population was less than 40,000.

After stationing his army in and around the city he demanded the full surrender of the Jews. They replied with mocking laughter according to some historians and the attack was unleashed.

Before it was done, Jews were massacred everywhere. The massacre also went all the way to the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the demolishing of the temple.

At the same time the Gentile inhabitants in Damascus, which is north and east of Israel are said to have caught the spirit of the Romans and in their own hatred for the Jews slit the throats of some 10,000 Jews living in and around the area of Damascus.

That got it all started.

It was several centuries later that the **Roman Emperor Theodosius II (401-450 A.D)** enacted a legal code that declared Jews were inherently inferior as a race and did not deserve the same legal rights and protections and privileges as other people.

Anti-Semitism became codified as law in the ancient world. These anti-Semitic views permeated subsequent western culture and law.

In **A.D. 630** the **Byzantine Emperor Heraclius** banished from Jerusalem all Jews who had come back and resettled there.

**Crusaders, A.D. 1096- 1271**, the established church in Europe, not Christians. The established church instigated what was declared to be a holy war to deliver the holy land from the occupation and control of Muslim Turks who had ruled it for many centuries.

The monolithic system of Catholicism determined to take back the holy sites for "Christianity," and to go there and attack in a series of crusades the Muslim Turks. However, as a sidelight, they feared the Jews might want to resettle the land once it was freed from the Turks and might want to lay claim to it and so many crusaders, as history records, repeatedly engaged in

brutal massacres of European Jews to try to eliminate that possibility.

Sad to say they did it in the name of Jesus Christ as they marched toward Jerusalem. Jewish people don't forget this.

You know they don't forget the Holocaust and many of them who know their history don't forget that in the name of Christ they were slaughtered all over Europe.

It's not just a matter for them of believing in the gospel of Jesus Christ. It's getting past the fact that people in the name of Jesus Christ exterminated their people.

During that crusade atrocities were committed that are hard to even understand. Sometimes the soldiers would herd all the Jews into town or city together into a central place, give them an ultimatum. The ultimatum was to confess Christ and publicly baptized in the name of Christ or die on the spot.

Some Jews, under the duress of that, would confess Christ and be baptized to save their own lives. Others would refuse and be executed where they stood.

There are records of atrocities such as trampling the Jews under the horses as well as other means of execution that are too brutal.

Rather than face this kind of defection as they saw it to save their lives, rather than face humiliation and a horrible death, many Jews committed suicide when they were informed that the crusaders were on the way to their town.

So, the thousand years after the time of Christ was a horrific time for the Jews.

For a few years after that, they were given a bit of respite and a little asylum, relatively safe and untroubled years, particularly in England.

But a Dominican monk, in the 13th century, began to study the Hebrew Scriptures ostensibly in order to understand Jews so he could do mission work with Jews. He himself, however, in the study of the Old Testament decided to convert to Judaism and he had himself circumcised. In an irritated reaction, the Roman Catholic Church had all Jews expelled from Cambridge, England.

The persecution of Jews was front and centre again even in England, where they had had some protection for a while.

In other parts of Europe, however, Jews were facing terrible, terrible circumstances. Falsely accused of counterfeiting coins, accused of other crimes, almost an endless list. They were put through sham trials or no trial at all. The accused would be then tortured, imprisoned, exiled or even executed.

In many communities, the Jews had to wear identifying arm bands. Hitler didn't event that by any means.

That was done back in the 13th century, arm bands or badges to set them apart. Even in London a group of Jews had their arms and legs tied to horses that were then driven off in opposite directions. The bodies, after being ripped apart, were draped on gallows for the townspeople to see how Jews were to be treated.

It was the 14th century in Europe and the Black Plague hit Europe, killing hundreds of thousands. Many people blamed the Jews for the Black Plague. That resulted in more torture and death.

In France, they were accused or poisoning the water wells. In one town, a synagogue filled with worshipers was burned to the ground while fully occupied.

In desperation, many Jews fled to Poland and others fled to Russia. They fled to the farthest reaches of Europe where many of their descendants still live today.

Having found some freedom in Poland, they established several outstanding Talmudic schools and seminaries there. They were, however, later oppressed by the church.

Nevertheless, they did join the government in fighting the Russian Cossacks. However, when the Cossacks were victorious over the Poles, the Jews were vengefully massacred by the Cossacks.

The Jews who fled to Spain found no refuge there either. Among their worst persecutors, **King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella**, who were commissioners of Christopher Columbus, the two monarchs who basically commissioned him to come and discover this new world.

Spain was described by one Jewish poet as the hell of the Jews.

During the Spanish Inquisition, the graves of those who had converted to Judaism were opened up and the bodies were exhumed and desecrated.

The heirs of all Jews and proselytes had their property confiscated as a warning to others who might consider converting.

Every Jew had to wear a symbol of burning crosses on him at all times, and in 1492, the very year that Christopher Columbus began his first voyage, most Jews were expelled from Spain. A large number emigrated to Russia, where persecution in varying degrees broke out and has continued in some ways ever since.

It wasn't Nazi Germany that invented persecution of the Jews. It was medieval Germany. Jews were accused of using the blood of Christian children in their Passover rights. They were accused of drinking the blood of German children. Some were charged with stabbing the host.

They therefore accused Jews of stabbing the host as a means of killing Christ, thereby re-enacting His crucifixion. Such accusations were lies, of course, but those accused of things were tortured and killed in a variety of cruel ways.

For many centuries anti-Semitism polluted most of western civilization. It was 1894, a Jewish army officer by the name of **Albert Dreyfus, in France**, falsely accused and convicted of treason simply because he was Jewish.

Then comes the Holocaust. Before Hitler is done, in excess of six million of them have been slaughtered, gassed, killed in a myriad of ways. Some of the horror stories are known to all of us and to some of us many of those stories are known.

The massacre of Jews in a town in Poland is demon-inspired atrocity.

There is no justification for any of it, but with little rest and little relief for 2,000 years the Jews have endured

- persecution after persecution,
- falsely accused,
- treated unjustly,

- denied dignity, and
- even driven out of country after country.

Frequently massacred without mercy, for no other reason than just being Jewish.

The modern state of Israel continues to be besieged and beleaguered by an endless array of terrorists who attempt to blow them at every opportunity.

They have a very, very clear and well-established monument to their 2,000 years of suffering. It is the Wailing Wall. The Wailing Wall is the partial western wall of the temple, Herod's temple.

The story of Israel's desolation in the destruction of the temples. They build one, it's destroyed. They build another, it's destroyed. They build another it's destroyed.

This temple, which Jesus prophesied was destroyed by Titus in 70 A.D.

Even though the modern state of Israel was founded in 1948, it's still a beleaguered people. They suffer relentless threats and assaults from the people around them even now. All this suffering can be traced back, all the way back, to Deuteronomy 27 and 28 where God promised, "You obey me; I'll bless you. You disobey me, I'll curse you."

There are plenty of nations in the world that have suffered. They are not the only people that experienced genocide. They are not the only people that get massacred. They aren't the only people that have been persecuted.

It's just shocking in their case because they are the people of God.

God said Israel my first born!  
My chosen people  
Apple of My eye!

**How could God forsake them?**