

Bible Stories for Adults

God's Purpose for Israel

Acts 7; Romans 9-11

Opening

Gathering: Give an example of a situation where someone may have felt left out when others were actually planning or preparing something that included or benefited them.

Today's Focus: God did not choose the Jews in exclusion of the rest of the world, but in order to include the whole world in His plan by the promises and revelations He made through them.

Key Verses: *And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, "Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed."* Acts 3:25

It is too small a thing for you to be My servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth. Isaiah 49:6

Opening Prayer

Lesson

God's Plan to Bring a Savior (Acts 7:1-8)

From what point did Stephen begin his story of God's plan to bring a Savior for the world?

Acts 7:1-4

Was God just looking to bless Abraham or was this part of a greater plan?

Acts 7:5-8

How could Abraham and the patriarchs deal with promises they would never see fulfilled?

Hebrews 11:13-16

A Time of Preparation (Acts 7:9-16)

What had God planned before He would reveal more of His plan to/through Abraham's descendants?

Genesis 15:13-16

Did Abraham's descendants just happen to move to a foreign country or did God get involved?

Acts 7:9-10

How did placing Joseph in a high position in Egypt get these people to move?

Acts 7:11-15

Did they recognize this as their new home or just as a temporary residence?

Acts 7:16

Time to Go (Acts 7:17-19)

What was part of God's reason for this people to spend 400 years in Egypt?

Acts 7:17

How did God bless these chosen people during this time of preparation?

Genesis 47:5-6

How would God get them to leave such a great place that was their home for 400 years?

Acts 7:18-19

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Preparing a Rescuer (*Acts 7:20-29*)

How could someone among these slaves stand up to Egypt and rescue these people?

Acts 7:20-22

How would God get this slave-turned-royalty to leave his lush home and family in the palace?

Acts 7:23-29

How would God prepare this pagan to lead His people in faith?

Exodus 2:15-16, 21

Ruler and Deliverer (*Acts 7:30-38*)

How did God get this prepared leader to leave his comfortable home and go rescue His people?

Acts 7:30-34

How did God further help Moses lead and deliver His new nation from Egypt?

Acts 7:35-36

Did Moses view his role as the completion of God's plan or just a part of it?

Acts 7:37

How did God reveal much more of His plan and will to His new nation through Moses?

Acts 7:38

The People Respond (*Acts 7:39-43*)

How excited were these people to finally receive these great revelations of God's plan and will?

Acts 7:39-41

How did God respond to their reaction to His great plan?

Acts 7:42

By giving them over to their desires, did God give up on His plan for this chosen people?

Nehemiah 9:29-31

What did God eventually do to get their attention?

Acts 7:43

God's Presence Among His People (*Acts 7:44-50*)

What did God use to visually remind these people of His presence and plan?

Acts 7:44-45

How did God change this after the nation was settled and organized?

Acts 7:46-47

How did the people confuse the purpose of God's temple?

Jeremiah 7:3-4, 8-11

But wasn't the temple God's home and a sign that the Israelites were special?

Acts 7:48-50

The Purpose of Israel (*Genesis 12:1-3*)

Weren't the Israelites specially chosen by God to be the people He would save?

Isaiah 49:6

Why hadn't God made this clear to them?

Genesis 12:1-3

Maybe the problem was that God didn't keep this purpose clear to them?

Acts 3:24-26

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Man's Rejection Can't Stop God (*Acts 7:51-8:4*)

Why didn't the people understand the reminders of the prophets?

Acts 7:51-52a

How could Stephen accuse them as being as bad as their forefathers who rejected the prophets?

Acts 7:52-53

How did these Jewish leaders respond to the accusations that Stephen directed at them?

Acts 7:54, 57-58

How did God use their rejection to spread His good news?

Acts 8:1, 4

Not All Israel Are Israel (*Romans 9*)

How did this Saul (Paul) later feel about his Jewish brothers rejecting the Righteous One?

Romans 9:2-3

In what ways had God blessed these chosen people?

Romans 9:4-5

Had God failed by calling the Jews and saying He would bless them to be a blessing?

Romans 9:6-8

Does this mean that many Gentiles (non-Israelites) will be saved while many Israelites will not?

Romans 9:30-33

Zealous Israelites (*Romans 10:1-11*)

Did God reject the Israelites because they weren't zealous for Him?

Romans 10:1-2

How was their zeal wrong?

Romans 10:3-4

Note: Pharisees made a hedge of laws around God's laws so no one would break God's laws

What did Jesus say about the laws of the Pharisees?

Matthew 23:1-4, 13

What is the righteousness of Christ that the Israelites missed that would save them?

Romans 10:8-11

Saving the Israelites (*Romans 10:12-21*)

Aren't God's rules different for the Jew than for the Gentile?

Romans 10:12-13

What is needed before someone can believe in Jesus and be saved?

Romans 10:14-15

What was the Israelites' problem?

Romans 10:16-17

Maybe they didn't believe because no one told them clearly?

Romans 10:18-21

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Rejected Israelites (*Romans 11:1-10*)

Did God then reject the Israelites and change His focus to the Gentiles?

Romans 11:1-4

Why would this remnant be saved? Because they were the most obedient?

Romans 11:5-6

What was the result of Israelites rejecting God's faith in order to pursue righteousness by obedience?

Romans 11:7-10

The True Family Tree (*Romans 11:11-24*)

Is any hope left for these Israelites who have rejected God's grace?

Romans 11:11-12

If Paul was so concerned about his Israelite brothers, then why did he focus his work on the Gentiles?

Romans 11:13-15

How did Paul describe the Gentiles' relation to the righteous family tree of Abraham?

Romans 11:16-21

Is there now any difference between the blessings and curses to the natural vs. grafted branches?

Romans 11:22-24

We All Need His Mercy (*Romans 11:25-36*)

What did Paul say about Gentiles who looked down on Israelites who rejected Christ?

Romans 11:25-27

Is it possible that God has revoked His call to Israelites since they rejected His Savior?

Romans 11:28-29

How is Israel's situation now like that of the Gentiles' past?

Romans 11:30-32

How else can Paul explain this confusing mystery?

Romans 11:33-36

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. What events in your life can God use to fulfill His calling to you?
(*Acts 7:1-8, 9-19, 20-36; 16:1-3; 18:1-4, 18-19, 24-28; 26:4-29; Esther 4:14; Ephesians 2:10; 1 Samuel 1:20, 27-28; 2:11, 21, 26; 3:19-4:1a*)
2. How have you responded to the calling God has given to you?
(*Acts 7:3-4, 30-34, 51-53; 9:1-31; Romans 10:1-3; Exodus 3:1-17; Isaiah 6:8; Jeremiah 1:4-10; Luke 5:27-32*)
3. What spiritual blessings have you received from your ancestors?
(*Romans 9:4-5; 11:25-36; Deuteronomy 4:9; 6:4-9; Joshua 24:2-3, 14-15; 1 Corinthians 4:14-17; Philippians 3:3-7; 2 Timothy 1:5*)
4. How has God reached you with His good news through other people?
(*Romans 9:6-8, 22-24; 10:14-18; 11:11-32; Mark 1:1-8; John 1:35-42, 43-46; Ephesians 1:13-17; 3:1-19; Hebrews 2:1-4*)
5. What stumbling blocks have you encountered in your walk with God?
(*Romans 9:30-33; Ez 14:7; Hosea 5:4-5; Mark 9:42-50; James 3:2; 1 Peter 2:4-8; 1 John 2:9-11*)