



## Key Scripture Passage

### Genesis 3:17-24

17 And to Adam he said,  
“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife  
and have eaten of the tree  
of which I commanded you,  
‘You shall not eat of it,’  
cursed is the ground because of you;  
in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;  
18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;  
and you shall eat the plants of the field.

19 By the sweat of your face  
you shall eat bread,  
till you return to the ground,  
for out of it you were taken;  
for you are dust,  
and to dust you shall return.”

20 The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. 21 And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

22 Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” 23 therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. 24 He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

## Commentary on This Week's Text

When we began our study of Genesis, we emphasized that Genesis is about grace, that the book of Genesis, far from being a faded page from antiquity, actually breathes living grace and represents an incredible picture of the gospel. We saw how that the first eleven chapters, especially, give us the primeval (universal) history of the world by relating five stories that all have the same fourfold structure. The five stories are: the fall, Cain, the sons of God marrying the daughters of man, the flood, and the tower of Babel.

And the four-part structure by which they are told is: 1) sin, as sin is initially described; 2) speech, as there is a speech by God announcing the penalty for sin; 3) grace, as God brings grace to the situation to mitigate the misery caused by sin; and 4) punishment, as God punishes sin. Here in chapter 3, the story of the fall, the pattern runs like this: sin (v. 1-13, esp. v. 6, which

describe the temptation, the sin, and God's confrontation of the sinners); speech (v. 14-19, which quote the judgment oracles of God to the snake, the woman, and the man); grace (v. 20 and 21, mainly v. 21, which records the mitigating grace of God); and judgment (v. 22-24, which describe the exile from the garden).

Thus God's amazing grace looms prominent in the fall. And in fact we have already seen that there have been flashes of grace in the Sin and Speech sections of the story. On the occasion of Adam's sin God did not destroy him but graciously engaged the fallen man in conversation. Also, the ensuing judgment speech to the snake and to the woman shone with grace. God cursed the snake, but the curse also contained the "first gospel," or *protoevangelium*, indicating that the woman's seed would crush the serpent's head, while the serpent would strike his heel (Gen. 3:15). God's judgment on Eve's fundamental roles as wife and mother meant that nothing in life would satisfy her apart from God himself. This perpetual discomfort in life was a grace insofar as it would drive her to God. Now as we take up the remainder of God's speech and move on to the concluding punishment, grace will shine ever brighter, amazing, astounding, abounding grace that would extend to the moment of its dispensation to all eternity.

### **Judgment and Grace**

God was explicit about the reason for his judgment oracle to Adam: "And to Adam he said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, "You shall not eat of it," cursed is the ground . . ." (v. 17a). God cursed the ground because Adam obeyed his wife. (Here "listened to" is an idiom meaning "obey.") Thus the curse fell because Adam abdicated his headship as he, in passive self-interest, observed the tempting of his wife and her eating without even voicing an objection. He was not fooled as she was but knowingly and willfully hearkened to her voice and partook (1 Timothy 2:14). That is why God cursed the earth and judged Adam.

#### *Judgment*

The judgment oracles regarding Adam continue in the parallelism of Hebrew poetry:

Cursed is the ground because of you;  
in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;  
thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;  
and you shall eat the plants of the field.  
By the sweat of your face  
you shall eat bread,  
till you return to the ground,  
for out of it you were taken;  
for you are dust,  
and to dust you shall return.

Here, as the commentator Derek Kidner notes, we must observe that in the same way that "the woman's punishment struck at the deepest root of her being as wife and mother, the man's strikes at the innermost nerve of his life: his work, his activity, and provision for sustenance" The "pain" that verse 17 describes as Adam's lot is the same word twice used for the woman's "pain" in verse 16. Both of them would experience perpetual pain in the centers of their existence. Ironically, the very ground that had been such a source of joy when Adam cared for the garden now became the source of his ongoing pain. The earth became an enemy.

Note that work itself was not cursed. Work, in fact, had been a gift from God (Genesis 2:15). God's curse was upon the ground. God's oracle anticipated Adam's expulsion from the garden, when the man would have to battle "thorns and thistles" to "eat the plants of the field." This applies to all work involved in human culture. Painful toil will assault every soul who attempts to produce in this world. We may imagine exceptions such as royalty or the super-rich. But even the rich are made for work. Even the bored, indescribably wealthy royalty of Europe and the princes of oil-rich Middle Eastern nations know they are not meant to do nothing. Nevertheless, anyone who works to produce in this world knows pain and frustration. This condition is irrevocable. It is for "all the days of your life" (v. 17), "till you return to the ground" (v. 19). No repentance will remove the curse on the ground. Only death can provide a respite. So all men submit to what Henri Blocher calls "the law of the dust"

### *Grace*

But even grace shines here. For apart from God, no man's work, no man's achievements, fully satisfy, whether it be as a farmer or artist or craftsman or executive or teacher, regardless of his accomplishments. That from which we seek fulfillment is a perpetual source of pain. The gift of work is good, but it is covered with thorns. Writing from the perspective of life apart from God, the writer of Ecclesiastes reflects: "What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun? A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever" (Ecclesiastes 1:3-4). "And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil. Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 2:10-11). Today, both creation and the children of God groan as with birth pains for the dawning of a new day (Genesis 3:15-16). And this groaning paradoxically confirms the hope of God's children. Final and full liberation for Adam and the earth will come in Christ at the end of the age (Romans 8:19-22). Our groaning is a very real kind of grace because our hope is sure and eternal.

### **Mitigating Graces**

#### *Adam's faith*

Now the first two parts of the "Sin, Speech, Grace, and Punishment" structure of the story are complete, and in verse 20 mitigating grace begins to glow as Adam exhibits faith by renaming his wife. "The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living" (v. 20). "Eve" means "life" or "life-giver." Adam named his wife Life because she would become the mother of all the living! Adam was able to do this because he had a very precise awareness of the overall significance of God's words to his wife. Adam had listened closely to God's speech to his spouse. He understood that one of her offspring would crush the head of the snake (v. 15). He knew that his wife's pain in childbearing meant that a people would follow. Indeed, the tense Adam used to declare his faith is called the prophetic perfect, indicating that her becoming the mother of all the living "is as good as done." Adam's declaration was an overwhelming shout of hope. The name Eve celebrates the survival of the human race and victory over death. The reformer Philip Melancthon called Eve "the seal of grace." Certainly Adam's hope yielded a prophetic glimpse of grace.

#### *Graced Garments*

Now God performed an act of mitigating grace: "And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them" (v. 21). It is clear that this is a sovereign work of God, conceived and executed by God alone. It is a work that Adam and Eve would never have

conceived of because it involved the unprecedented taking of life. Their self-made attempts to cover themselves in inadequate fig-leaf loincloths were replaced by clothing made by God. They had attempted to cover themselves, but this covering was from God. God's provision here of robes of animal skin both recognized their sin and was an act of grace.

Marcus Dods, the nineteenth-century Scottish preacher and scholar, and principal of New College, Edinburgh University, makes these remarkably penetrating observations: "It is also to be remarked that the clothing which God provided was in itself different from what man had thought of. Adam took leaves from an inanimate, unfeeling tree; God deprived an animal of life, that the shame of His creature might be relieved. This was the last thing Adam would have thought of doing. To us, animal life is cheap and death familiar, but Adam recognized death as the punishment of sin. Death was to early man a sign of God's anger. And he had to learn that sin could be covered not by a bunch of leaves snatched from a bush as he passed by . . . but only by pain and blood. Sin cannot be atoned for by any mechanical action nor without expenditure of feeling. Suffering must ever follow wrongdoing. From the first sin to the last, the track of the sinner is marked with blood. . . It was made apparent that sin was a real and deep evil, and that by no easy and cheap process could the sinner be restored. . . Men have found that their sin reaches beyond their own life and person, that it inflicts injury and involves disturbance and distress, that it changes utterly our relation to life and to God, and that we cannot rise above its consequences save by the intervention of God Himself, by an intervention which tells us of the sorrow He suffers on our account."

God's action here in ancient history was a gracious foreshadowing of his ultimate sovereign provision for sin. Certainly the first couple would have only understood this in faint principle. But the foundation was mightily laid. Later no Levitical priest could read this passage without making the connection with atonement because the skins of the animals slain in sacrifice were given to the priests for their use (Leviticus 7:8). The divine provision was a telling illustration of the method of grace in response to sin and its consequences. God covers sin and its fallout. The biblical picture of justification is the gift of the robe of righteousness (Zechariah 3:4; Matthew 22:11; Luke 15:22). Believers are described as clothed with Christ (Galatians 3:27). In a passage on the wedding of the Lamb and his bride, we read how God's righteousness produces the saints' righteousness: "It was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints" (Revelation 19:8). This is grace abounding! This is again the gospel according to Genesis.

### **Exile and Grace**

Verse 22 records divine deliberation as God dialogues with himself (as he had done in 1:26): "Then the LORD God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil'" (v. 22a). What Satan had promised Eve had become partially true. Man had become like God. But the couple's likeness to God was not glorious, as they had supposed, but shameful. They had sought moral autonomy, the power to decide what was right and wrong apart from God and his word. And all humanity has done this ever since. Henri Blocher writes: "The word implies the achievement of autonomy in a certain way. But only in a certain way, for the father of lies only ever speaks the truth by perverting it. In reality, the autonomy is illusory, a mere, pitiful ape-ing of God." Because God is sovereign, man's supposed autonomy is an illusion. He cannot escape the lordship of God. "The crazy little god with his absurd pretensions is not God and never shall be. All he can do is die," writes Blocher. In fact, he is dead. He died when he sinned, becoming "dead in . . . trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1) and utterly sinful (Romans 3:9-18). Adam and Eve's bodies were alive, but they were dead. As residents of the garden, they could

have eaten from the tree of life and perpetuated their bodily existence indefinitely. Thus the garden would have become Hell on earth, populated with the undying dead — forever living and forever dead.

### *Exile*

As Gordon Wenham notes, God forestalled this inevitable “next step toward self-divinization by his own preemptive first strike.” Therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life” (v. 23, 24). The couple were exiled forever from the garden. Cherubim were stationed at the east side of the garden. A flaming sword, representing the justice and holiness of God at work in his judgments, flashed to and fro (Jeremiah 47:6; Ezekiel 21). Adam, the garden’s caretaker, was now excluded, like a thief, never to enter it again. The exile was terrible, but it was also a grace. The garden had been the Holy of Holies of God’s presence, the original divine space. Adam and Eve had lived gazing on God’s face as he walked in the garden. They had breathed the air of God’s presence. Now it was impossible. For them, their new state must have been like life without oxygen. They were perpetually short of spiritual breath. They could never get enough of God. Eve found pain at the very center of her domestic existence, and so did Adam in all his labors, all the days of his life. They fought. Their children fought. They saw a son violently die by the hand of his brother. After Eden, they were never truly at home again. But Adam’s 930 years and the long years of Eve’s life were a grace. There was plenty of time to seek God and to proclaim his word. Did they do so? Very likely they did, because the desire for God and his presence must have become more dear with the centuries. If they did, there awaits them the garden of the eternal city where the tree of life will continually grant its fruit to all who believe (Revelation 22:2, 14, 19). They will again see the face of God.

### **Ultimate Grace**

The Bible (from the garden of Eden to the ultimate garden in the Holy City at the end) is a story of grace. The garden as a holy space, together with the tabernacle and temple with their successive Holy of Holies and the ultimate city of God, form an exquisite spiritual unity. The continuity between the garden and Israel’s future tabernacle and temple are apparent to the observant reader for several reasons: 1) Both the garden and the tabernacle/ temple were filled with the special presence of God. 2) Both featured cherubim; the garden had cherubim guarding its entrance, and in the tabernacle and temple the curtains of the Holy of Holies featured embroidered cherubim. There were also sculpted cherubim above the mercy seat (Exodus 25:18-22; 36:35; 37:7-9). In the later temple a huge sculpted pair of cherubim stood guard in the inner sanctuary of the temple (1 Kings 6:23-28). Significantly, the language used in Genesis 3: 24 (God “placed” the cherubim on the east side of the garden) is particularly associated with God’s camping in the tabernacle among his people (Exodus 25:8). Even the mention of the east side of the garden is associative, because the entrances of the tabernacle and temple were from the east. 3) God’s provision of garments for Adam and Eve, which covered them fully, parallel the full garments required of the priests who served in the tabernacle. Kenneth Mathews says: “Since the garden narrative shares in tabernacle imagery, it is not surprising that allusion to animal sacrifice is found in the garden too. Through an oblique reference to animal sacrifice, the garden narrative paints a theological portrait familiar to the recipients of the Sinai revelation who honored the tabernacle as the meeting place with God.”

In the tabernacle and temple, access to God’s presence came only by the shedding of blood and the mediation of a priest (Leviticus 16). As we know, this tabernacle/temple system pointed

to Jesus Christ. John 1:14 says, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt [literally, “tabernacled”] among us.” Jesus saw himself as the fulfillment of the tabernacle and the temple. In the very next chapter of John’s Gospel Jesus said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (v. 19). Jesus saw his own body as the temple, and the resurrection as proving his authority (v. 22). Finally Revelation 21: 22 tells us that God himself is the temple (21: 3). When Jesus died on the cross, the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51). Access into the presence of God no longer required sacrifice or a priest or a temple — because Jesus was at once the sacrifice, the priest, and the temple. This is the argument of Hebrews 6-10. Hebrews 9:11-12 alludes to all three aspects: “When Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.” Listen to Hebrews 6:19-20: “We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.”

Christians, the amazing reality is this: We have access to the presence of God, which was first experienced in the holy space of the garden, then in the Holy of Holies of the tabernacle and temple, and all this comes through the work of Jesus Christ! In fact, all true believers are presently in heaven (in a manner of speaking of course, think “already, but not yet”): “[God] raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6-7). Now that is access! For Adam and Eve (and us), there is no going back to the garden. But through Christ, the second Adam, these realities lie ahead of us, as seen in these excerpts from the book of Revelation: “And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God” (Revelation 21:2-3). “And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb” (Revelation 21:22-23). “Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever” (Revelation 22:1-5).

The gospel has always been this: “That Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). “In accordance with the Scriptures” means “according to the Old Testament Scriptures” and naturally takes us to Genesis 3:15-16, the initial prophecy that Jesus would crush Satan’s head by his death and resurrection. “In accordance with the Scriptures” takes us to the flash of grace in 3:21, where God took the life of animals to provide clothing to cover Adam and Eve’s sin and shame. The exile itself was a grace, because the only way future generations could get access into the presence of God was through shed blood and the offices of a priest. Access to the presence of God was lost in the garden and then was only possible for the priest who entered the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle and the temple. But now

it is possible through the person of Jesus Christ, who is at once priest, sacrifice, and temple. If you want to have your sins forgiven and receive the robe of righteousness, the only way is through the blood of Jesus. This great gospel was announced in the beginning in Genesis and is consummated in the end in Revelation. All of Scripture points to the gospel in Christ. If you are apart from Christ, you are lost; if you are in Christ, you have life. Indeed, if you are a believer, Christ, the priest, sacrifice, and temple, is in you. And ultimately you are going to see the garden and the tree of life and the face of God and live forever in his presence. If you want the gift of eternal life, there is only one thing to do. You must say in your heart,

“Not what these hands have done;  
Can save this guilty soul.”  
(Horatius Bonar).

You must simply believe the great, ravishing reality that “Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). This is the gospel. Do you believe it? If you do, congratulations because you have received access to the holy presence of God! In fact, in an instant you were redeemed and seated in heaven and in heavenly places in him. He is your priest, your temple, and your Savior.

## Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Study

- What is the 4-part pattern that we see in all of the stories from these first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis? How does this story of the fall follow that pattern?
- Recalling from last week (if it was scheduled for you to be in the guide last week), what was God’s declaration of punishment upon Eve and yet how was it still full of grace?
- What is the object of God’s curse in this week’s text? Does God curse work? What does that tell us about the role of work in the life of men, and how is God’s punishment of making work more difficult even still full of grace?
- We see that the punishment shared by both Adam and Eve is expulsion from the Garden. There are a number of reasons why this happened, list as many as you can think of and think about why God would preemptively exile them from the Garden?
- What is the ultimate and overarching grace that this passage points towards? All in terms of access to God’s presence, forgiveness of sins, and the restoration of all things when Christ returns?

## Family Catechism and Scripture Memory

New City Catechism Question: *“What does God require in the first, second, and third commandments?”*

Answer: ***“First, that we know and trust God as the only true and living God. Second, that we avoid all idolatry and do not worship God improperly. Third, that we treat God’s name with fear and reverence, honoring also his Word and works.”***

Scripture Memory Verse: *“Fear the LORD your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name. Do not follow other gods, the gods of the peoples around you.”*

Song of the Week: *“But God”* - The Village Church

## Weekly Unreached People Group

Every week, in this space, we highlight an unreached people group somewhere in the world. Please consider spending some portion of your prayer and reading time during the course of the week praying for the highlighted group. Pray that their hearts would be softened, that the Lord would provide laborers to take them the good news of the Gospel, and that they would come to know the glory of that Gospel and of Christ himself and be saved. Pray also that your own heart would be softened for the reality of the nearly 6,000 people groups that have not heard the Gospel and consider what part the Lord is calling you to play in fulfilling our common command to be about making disciples of all nations. (Source: The Joshua Project - [joshuaproject.net](http://joshuaproject.net))

This week’s unreached people group are the **Spanish Jews of Israel**

<b>Population</b> 40,000	<b>% Christian</b> 0.30%	<b>% Evangelical</b> 0.10%
<b>Largest Religion</b> Ethnic Religions (99.7%)	<b>Main Language</b> Ladino	<b>Progress</b> Very Few Believers

### Introduction / History

Until 1948, Jews formed the largest non-Muslim minority in Iraq and Iran. The Jewish communities fared well over the centuries until Islam was declared the official religion. Since that time, they have been isolated and have experienced much discrimination and persecution. Sometimes they were forced to "convert" to Islam. With the formation of the Israeli nation in 1948 and the Iranian Revolution in 1979, large numbers of Jews have left Iraq and Iran. The few who remain continue to suffer from an anti-Semitic atmosphere.

When considering the Jewish lifestyle, many see Israel as the sparkling jewel on the ring of nations in the Middle East. Having been a minority for almost 2,000 years, the present population of Israel is now mostly Jewish. The stream of immigrants into Israel began in the 1880's with the national and cultural revival known as "Zionism." The trickle of immigrants became a flood when the nation of Israel was established in 1948.



### **What Are Their Lives Like?**

Language is one of the distinguishing features among Jews of this region. While Hebrew and Aramaic are the common languages of prayer, sacred and legal matters, the Jews are quite at home with local languages and dialects. Farsi (the Iranian language) and Arabic are the everyday languages of most of the Jews outside Israel. Within Israel, Jews may speak fluent Yiddish (a German dialect with Hebrew elements), Russian, Yudi, Ladino, or any number of other languages learned in their countries of origin or from their immigrant parents.

Most of the Israeli Jews live in cities. Attempts to start new towns and populate rural areas have been difficult. In fact, such attempts have often become scenes of ethnic unrest between Jews and Palestinians. Most of the Jews who live in rural areas are part of the well-known kibbutzim (collective farms or settlements in Israel).

Israeli leaders wanted to see all immigrants integrate into one Jewish people. However, the different immigrant groups of the past have now become the ethnic groups of today. Along with the ethnicity, a class society has developed. "A person's ethnic background may shape his or her occupation and standard of living." The "Oriental Jews," those of African-Asian descent, are concentrated in the lower strata of society.

Unlike many Jewish communities outside Israel, extended families do not play an important part in the lives of the Israeli Jews. Rather, the nuclear family is the most important unit. Because education is highly valued in Israeli society, schools are free and compulsory up to the tenth grade. Most Jews view mandatory service in the Israeli army as a crucial part of the transition into adulthood.

The decline in Judaic studies in school seems to be a result of the crisis in Israel's Jewish identity. Many religious laws written into social law are no longer being enforced, such as businesses observing the Sabbath or the prohibitions against selling pork. Although all of the holidays on the Jewish religious calendar are celebrated, they have a greater social than religious value to most Israelis. On the other hand, there has been a cultural renaissance of Hebrew and Jewish studies and arts, particularly in dance, literature, music, and theater.

### **What Are Their Beliefs?**

Rabbinical Judaism is the dominant religion of Jews in this region, and the officially recognized institutions are Orthodox. Rabbinical Judaism replaced the temple with the synagogue, the priesthood with the rabbi, and the sacrificial ceremony with the prayer service. Emphasis was placed on study of the Torah (Hebrew name for the first five books of the Bible), the growing need for national restoration in the Promised Land, and the function of this world as preparatory for the world to come. However, approximately two-thirds to three-fourths of the Israeli Jews are non-observant. Jews who consider themselves to be religious can be simply divided into the Orthodox (traditionalists) who adhere to the traditional beliefs and practices, and the Moderns, who may hold to traditional beliefs but no longer strictly observe the practices. The holy places are maintained by the state and the religious councils and rabbis are state employees.

### **What Are Their Needs?**

The Jews have a wonderful understanding of their connection with the Abrahamic covenant. However, they also have a history of rejection of Jesus Christ as Messiah, the one who has fulfilled that covenant.

Throughout their history, the Jews have been discriminated against and persecuted. They need to experience emotional healing and forgiveness. Pray that as the Gospel is shared with them, it will not be viewed as anti-Semitic, but rather as the fulfillment of what God promised humanity through Abraham centuries ago. Also pray for a spiritual hunger among the Jews who view their "Jewishness" as an ethnic identity and have no religious affiliation.

### **Prayer Points**

- \* Ask the Lord of the harvest to send forth loving Christians to work among the Jews of Israel and Iran.
- \* Ask the Holy Spirit to grant wisdom and favor to the missions agencies that are focusing on the Middle Eastern Jews.
- \* Pray that the Jewish people will understand that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah.
- \* Ask the Lord to soften the hearts of the Jews towards Christians so that they might hear and receive the message of salvation.
- \* Pray that God will grant Jewish believers favor as they share their faith in Christ with their own people.
- \* Pray that strong local churches will be raised up among the Middle Eastern Jews.