

THE PROMISES TO ABRAHAM

Text:

Introduction:

- I. Should the U.S. **protect** and **defend** the modern nation of Israel at all costs? Many dispensationalists believe it should
 - A. *Jerry Falwell*: “God has raised up America in these last days for the cause of **world evangelism** and for **the protection of His people, the Jews**. I don’t think America has any other right or reason for existence than those two purposes.” (Bold emphasis added, quoted in Allan Turner, “Why Dispensationalism?,” *The Wendell Ave. Bulletin*, Oct. 21, 1994, 21:42)
 - B. *Jerry Falwell*: “To stand against **Israel** is to stand against **God**.” (Bold emphasis added, quoted in Allan Turner, “Why Dispensationalism?,” *The Wendell Ave. Bulletin*, Oct. 21, 1994, 21:42)
 - C. *A pro-Israeli Kansas journalist*: “As a gentile American, as a Christian who considers loyalty to God above all human commitments, if the choice ever comes between **loyalty to an American government** and **loyalty to Israel**, I have no choice. **I must stand by Israel**.” (Bold emphasis added, quoted in Allan Turner, “Why Dispensationalism?,” *The Wendell Ave. Bulletin*, Oct. 21, 1994, 21:42)
- II. The reason these men have made those statements is because they believe that **God has not completely fulfilled His covenant promises to Abraham** regarding the nation of Israel and the Promised Land
 - A. *Charles C. Ryrie*: “Since the covenant has **never been fulfilled in history**, if language means anything at all, **it must have a future fulfillment**.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Basis Of The Premillennial Faith*, 53)
 - B. *J. Dwight Pentecost*: “Because of an anticipated future **literal fulfillment**, certain facts present themselves concerning Israel’s future. (1) First of all, Israel must be **preserved as a nation**. (2) Israel must have a **national existence** and be **brought back into the land** of her inheritance. Since David’s kingdom had definite geological boundaries, and those boundaries were made a feature of the promise to David concerning his son’s reign, **the land must be given to this nation** as the site of their national homeland. (3) David’s son, the Lord Jesus Christ, must **return to the earth, bodily and literally**, in order to **reign over David’s covenanted kingdom**. The allegation that Christ is seated on the Father’s throne reigning over a spiritual kingdom, the church, simply does not fulfill the promises of the covenant. (4) A **literal earthly kingdom** must be constituted over which the returned Messiah reigns. (5) This kingdom must become an **eternal kingdom**. Since the **‘throne’, ‘house’, and ‘kingdom’** were all **promised to David in perpetuity**, there must be **no end to the Messiah’s reign** over David’s kingdom from David’s throne.” (Bold emphasis added, *Things To Come*, pp. 114-115, quoted in Rodney Miller, *The Lion & the Lamb On Planet Earth*, p. 112)
 - C. *John Walvoord*: “The Abrahamic Covenant required that **Israel continue as a nation forever** in order to fulfill the **“everlasting covenant”** (Gen 17:7) and in order to have the land as **“an everlasting possession”** (Gen 17:8). All the facts discussed previously, to the point that Israel **continues** as a nation forever, **possesses** the land

forever, is **not disinherited**, is **not supplanted** by the church, and that Israel's basic covenants are dependent upon **God's faithfulness** alone for fulfillment, combine to require **Israel's restoration** after these centuries of dispersion and chastening. The conclusion that Israel has a **future restoration** is based upon these facts along with the voluminous testimony of the prophets concerning Israel's coming golden age."
 (Bold emphasis added, *Millennial Series*, n.p.)

III. **Premillennialism** is the speculative view that Christ will return to earth to sit on **David's throne** and rule the world from **Jerusalem** for **one thousand years**

A. The theory says that:

1. Israel is to be **reborn as a nation** in unbelief
2. The temple is to be **rebuilt**
3. As a nation they will be **restored to Palestine** in fulfillment of the land promise made to Abraham
4. Jesus will return to **convert** them and **rule** among them on David's throne in Jerusalem for one thousand years

IV. I believe these concepts are **seriously flawed**, because I am convinced that the Bible teaches that:

- A. God has **fulfilled all His promises** to national fleshly Israel
- B. He has **scattered and destroyed** them as a nation
- C. They will **never be restored** to their former glory as a national people of God

V. We need to talk about **God's Promises To Abraham** because they are key factors in the eschatology of premillennialists, especially dispensationalists

Body:

I. **GOD MADE THREE GREAT PROMISES TO ABRAHAM**

A. **The Land Promise** (Gen. 12:1)

1. God repeated this promise to **Abraham** (Gen. 12:7; 13:12, 14-15; 15:7, 18; 17:7-8)
2. Later this promise was repeated to **Isaac** (Gen. 26:3-4) and **Jacob** (Gen. 28:4, 13; 35:12; 48:4b)

B. **The Nation Promise** (Gen. 12:2)

1. God repeated this promise to Abraham and told Abraham that his descendants would be as:
 - a. The **dust** of the earth (Gen. 13:16)
 - b. The **stars** of the heavens (Gen. 15:5)

c. The **sand** on the seashore (Gen. 22:17)

2. Later this promise was also repeated to **Isaac** (Gen. 26:4a, 24) and **Jacob** (Gen. 28:3, 14a; 32:12; 35:11; 46:3; 48:4a)

C. **The Messianic Promise** (Gen. 12:3)

1. This promise was repeated to **Abraham** on at least two other occasions (Gen. 18:18; 22:18)

2. Later this promise was also repeated to **Isaac** (Gen. 26:4b) and **Jacob** (Gen. 28:14b)

3. In this promise, God looked beyond **fleshly national Israel** to a blessing that would extend to all **families** and **nations** of the earth

II. **GOD HAS FULFILLED THESE THREE GREAT PROMISES TO ABRAHAM**

A. I want to discuss the fulfillment of these promises to Abraham in **reverse order**, because we will spend more time talking about the fulfillment of **the land promise** than the other two

B. **The Messianic promise** was fulfilled when **Jesus came and died on the cross** Acts 3:24-26; 13:32-33, 37-38; 26:6-7, 22-23; (cf. Gal. 3:8-9, 14, 16, 18-19, 26-29)

1. When Jesus came as the **Savior** and shed his blood, He was a **blessing** to all men, because He made **redemption** possible for all

2. This is certainly the **most important** of the three promises that God made to Abraham, but since there is **little misunderstanding** about the fulfillment of this promise, we will not tarry here

C. The **nation promise** was fulfilled when God made Israel a **great nation** in Egypt

1. God promised Jacob that Israel **would become** a great nation in Egypt (Gen. 46:3)

2. Israel **did become** a great nation in Egypt (Ex. 1:7, 9, 12; Dt. 4:34; 10:22; 26:5; 2 Sam. 7:22-24; Heb. 11:11-12)

3. Israel was adopted as **God’s nation** at Sinai (Ex. 19:6; cf. Dt. 1:10-11; 1 Ki. 3:8)

4. Later revelation affirms that the **specific language** of the nation promise was fulfilled while the Israelites were in Egypt and afterwards

The Nation Promise Was Fulfilled		
Promise	Fulfillment	
Gen. 12:2; 18:18; 46:3	Great Nation	Ex. 19:5-6; Dt. 4:6-8; 26:5; 1 Ki. 3:8
Gen. 13:16; 28:14	Dust of the Earth	2 Chr. 1:9

The Nation Promise Was Fulfilled		
Promise		Fulfillment
Gen. 15:5; 18:17; 22:17; 26:4; Ex. 32:13	Stars of Heaven	Dt. 1:9-11; 10:22; 28:62; Heb. 11:12; Neh. 9:23
Gen. 17:2; 22:17; 26:24; 28:3; 48:4	Multiply Exceedingly	Ex. 1:7
Gen. 22:17; 32:12	Sand on Seashore	1 Ki. 4:20; Heb. 11:11-12

5. So, the nation promise was **fulfilled**

D. The **land promise** was fulfilled when Israel **conquered the land** of Canaan

1. Many passages indicate that **the land promise would be fulfilled** when the Israelites entered Canaan and took the land
 - a. While the Israelites were in **Egyptian bondage**, God promised them that He would bring them out of Egypt and **give them the land** that He had promised (Ex. 6:4-8)
 - b. While the Israelites were encamped at **Mt. Sinai**, God told Moses that he was to teach Israel His law “that they may observe them in the land which **I am giving them to possess**” (Dt. 5:31)
 - c. When the Israelites **left Sinai**, Moses told his father-in-law that they were “setting out for the place of which the Lord said, **‘I will give it to you’**” (Num. 10:29)
 - d. Throughout their **wilderness wandering**, YHWH repeatedly referred to the land “which **I am giving** them/you to possess” (Dt. 12:1, 10; 17:14; 25:19; 26:2; 27:3; 28:8)
 - e. While the Israelites were encamped on the **Plains of Moab**, God told them to **go in** and **possess** the land that He had promised to them (Dt. 1:6-8)
 - f. Moses **commissioned Joshua** to be the next leader in Israel, he urged him to “be strong and of good courage” because he would cause Israel to **inherit the land** that God had promised to the patriarchs (Dt. 31:7)
 - g. Later God told Joshua that the Israelites would **divide the land** as an inheritance that He had promised to give to their fathers (Josh. 1:2-6; cf. Dt. 11:22-25)
 - h. Stephen declared that the **time** for the land promise’s fulfillment **drew near** when “the people **grew and multiplied** in Egypt” (Acts 7:17)
2. Several passages indicate that **the land promise was fulfilled** when the Israelites entered Canaan and took the land
 - a. The historian tells us that Joshua took **the whole land** and God gave it to them as **an inheritance** (Josh. 11:16ff, 23)

- b. The historian tells us that the Lord gave the Israelites **all the land** that He had promised to give to the patriarchs (Josh. 21:43-45)
- 1) God **gave** Israel all the land He had promised their fathers
 - 2) Israel **possessed** all the land God had promised their fathers
 - 3) Israel **dwelt** in all the land God had promised their fathers
 - 4) *Franklin Puckett*: “Now, if there is any part of the promised land which Israel did not **receive, possess, and dwell in**, this Scripture is **not true**. But, if the passage is **true**, they **received every foot of ground** that God had promised. If they **received** it, the promise was **fulfilled**; and if the promise was **fulfilled**, premillennial **claims** regarding it are **false**. One cannot believe the Bible and premillennialism at the same time.” (Bold emphasis added, “The Land Promise,” *The Preceptor*, August 1952, 1:10:n.p.)
 - 5) Objection: The land promise was not completely fulfilled because at this time there was still **much land to be possessed** (Josh. 13:1-6; 23:4-5, 13; Jdg. 1:19, 21, 27, 28, 32; 2:20-23; cf. Josh. 3:10 & Jdg. 3:5)
 - a) Response: The inspired historian says that God gave Israel **all the land**. Will we believe God or man? “Indeed, let **God be true** but **every man a liar**” (Rom. 3:4)
- c. Joshua said that God had **done all** that He had promised to do (Josh. 23:14-16)
- d. Joshua let His people depart “**each to his inheritance**” (Josh. 24:28)
- e. In the time of the Judges when the Israelites cried out to God because of the oppression of the Midianites, God sent a prophet to remind them that He had brought them up out of Egypt, delivered them from their oppressors, and had **given them their land** (Jdg. 6:9)
- f. When Solomon dedicated the temple, he declared that God had **given Israel the land** (1 Ki. 8:40, 56)
- g. Many years later, Jehoshaphat affirmed that **God had given the Israelites the land** that He had promised Abraham (2 Chr. 20:7)
- h. And still later, Levites living in the days of Nehemiah declared that **God had kept the covenant** that He had made with Abraham (Neh. 9:7-8, 23-25)
- i. The psalmist asserted that **God remembered His covenant** with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Psa. 105:8-13, 42-45)
- j. Jeremiah declared that **God fulfilled this promise** to Abraham (Jer. 32:21-23)

- k. Stephen declared that God **drove out** the Gentiles from Canaan (Acts 7:44-45)
- l. Paul declared that when God destroyed seven nations in Canaan, “He **distributed** their [Israel’s] land to them by **allotment** (Acts 13:19)
- m. The **six cities of refuge** established in Israel prove that the land promise was fulfilled
 - 1) *Major Premise*: Six cities of refuge **would be appointed** if all the land were given (Dt. 19:1-3, 7-10; cf. Num. 35:9-14)
 - 2) *Minor Premise*: Six cities of refuge **were appointed** (Josh. 20:1-9)
 - 3) *Conclusion*: Therefore, all the land was **given**
- 3. In light of these scriptures, how can anyone deny that God **fulfilled His promise** to Abraham’s seed to give them a land for an inheritance?

III. GOD ALSO MADE OTHER PROMISES ABOUT THE PROMISED LAND

- A. God promised His people that **if they sinned**, they would be **driven out of the land** (Lev. 26:27-39; Dt. 4:23-28¹; 8:19-20; 28:15ff, 63-68; 29:24-28; 30:17-20; Josh. 23:11-16; 1 Ki. 9:3-9; Jer. 16:11-13)
- B. God promised that they would be **deported to Babylon for 70 years** (Jer. 25:11-13; 29:10-14; Dan. 9:1-2; Zech. 1:12)
- C. God promised that if and when His people **repented** and **returned** to Him, He would **restore them** to the land (Lev. 26:40-45; Dt. 4:29-31; 30:1-10; Isa. 14:1-3; Isa. 54:7-8; Jer. 16:14-15; 27:22; 29:10-14; 30:3, 18; 31:8-10, 17, 23-25, 27-28; Ezek. 20:33-34, 40-44; 28:25-26; 36:8-15; Hos. 11:11)
- D. God promised that **only a remnant** would return to the land (Isa. 10:20-25; Jer. 23:3; Mic. 2:12-13)
- E. God promised that Israel would **not be destroyed** (Lev. 26:40-45; Dt. 4:29-31)
- F. God promised His people that, unlike the nations around them, they would be **preserved as a people** (Jer. 4:27; 5:18; 30:11; 46:28)
- G. God promised to **restore a glorious remnant of grace** to the land under the Messiah
 - 1. *Anthony A. Hoekema*: “A great many passages in the Psalms and prophets (e.g., Ps. 72:1-20; Isa. 2:1-4; 11:1-9, 11-16; 65:18-25; Jer. 23:5-6; Amos 9:11-15; Mic. 4:1-4; Zech. 14:1-9, 16-21) predict that the people of Israel will at some future time once again be **regathered** in the land of Canaan, will enjoy a time of **prosperity** and **blessing**, will have a **special place of privilege** above other

¹ Italicized references are especially clear and helpful in my judgment.

nations, and will live under the benevolent and perfect rule of their **Messiah**, the descendant of David.” (Bold emphasis added, 188)

IV. GOD HAS KEPT THESE OTHER PROMISES ABOUT THE PROMISED LAND

- A. God’s people **sinned** and “**broke the everlasting covenant**” (Isa. 24:5; Jer. 32:32), and God eventually **drove them out** of the land
1. **The tribes in Transjordan** (Reuben, Gad, & ½ Manasseh) were conquered by Hazael in ~**838 BC** (2 Ki. 10:32-33)
 2. **Portions of northern and eastern Israel** (Naphtali, Galilee, & Gilead) were conquered by Tiglath-pileser III, and their inhabitants were deported to Assyria in **733 BC** (2 Ki. 15:29)
 3. **The northern kingdom of Israel** went into **Assyrian Captivity** in **722 BC** (2 Ki. 17:5-6, 22-23)
 4. **The southern kingdom of Judah** went into **Babylonian Captivity** in stages
 - a. **605 BC**: Jehoiakim and certain noble youths were deported, including Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego (2 Ki. 24:1; 2 Chr. 36:5-7; Dan. 1:1-7)
 - b. **597 BC**: Artisans and the upper-class were deported, including Ezekiel (2 Ki. 24:10-16; 2 Chr. 36:9-10; Ezek. 1:1-3)
 - c. **586 BC**: The general populace was deported (2 Ki. 25:1-12; 2 Chr. 36:15-21)
 - 1) Note: There were other **minor deportations** as well (Jer. 52:28-30)
- B. God’s people remained in **Babylonian Captivity for 70 years** (Dan. 9:1-3; Zech. 1:12; 7:5)
1. This Exile allowed the land to “**rest and enjoy its sabbaths**” (Lev. 26:34-35, 43; 2 Chr. 36:20-21)
 - a. This made up for the **Sabbatical years** that had not been observed in the preceding centuries
- C. After His people repented, **God restored a remnant** to the land in stages (Psa. 85:1; 126:1)
1. **536 BC**: The **first group** returned under **Joshua** and **Zerubbabel** (2 Chr. 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1ff; Neh. 1:8-10)
 2. **458 BC**: The **second group** returned under **Ezra** (Ezra 7:1-10; 9:13-15)
 3. **444 BC**: The **third group** returned under **Nehemiah** (Neh. 2:1-11)

4. The **return of the remnant** from Babylonian Captivity to the Promised Land was understood by those involved as **the fulfillment** of God’s promises to restore His people to the land

Promise Of Return To The Land	Fulfillment In Remnant’s Return
Lev. 26:40-45	Neh. 1:8-9; Dan. 9:1-19
Dt. 4:27-31	
Dt. 30:1-5	
Jer. 25:11-14	2 Chr. 36:20-21; Dan. 9:1-2
Jer. 29:10-14	2 Chr. 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-3
Jer. 30:3	

5. These promises were connected with the **return of the remnant** from Babylonian Captivity, not:
- a. The return of the Jews to Palestine in **1948**
 - b. The return of the Jews to Palestine in **some future millennium**
- D. The Jews have been **preserved** as a people (cf. Acts 2:5)
- E. The **remnant** that returned to the Promised Land from Babylonian Captivity **did not become a nation** like the one that was deported from the land
- 1. First, it was **only a remnant** that returned (Isa. 10:21-23)
 - 2. Second, the temple that was rebuilt **did not equal the magnificence** of Solomon’s temple (Hag. 2:1-3; Zech. 4:8-10)
 - a. Note: God promised to fill this temple with **a glory** that would surpass its former glory (Hag. 2:6-9)
 - 3. Third, the remnant returned to the land without the **ark of the covenant** (Jer. 3:16)
 - 4. Fourth, the remnant dwelt in the land without a **king** or **prince** (Hos. 3:4-5)
- F. God has preserved a **remnant of grace** under the Messiah (cf. Rom. 9:27; 11:1-7)
- 1. Note: This will be discussed in detail below

V. **ANSWERING OBJECTIONS**

- A. I want to briefly consider some **common objections** that are often raised to suggest that **God has not yet fulfilled the land promise** to Abraham
- B. Objection: “Abraham **did not personally inherit** the land that God promised him”
 - 1. Explanation:
 - a. The land promise was made to **Abraham** and his descendants (Gen. 13:15; 17:7-8), **Isaac** and his descendants (Gen. 26:3-4), **Jacob** and his

descendants (Gen. 28:4, 13; 35:12), the **patriarchs** and their descendants (Dt. 1:8; 11:9)

4) Note: The term “**descendants**” is literally “**seed**” [singular]

- b. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob **did not personally inherit** the Promised Land (Acts 7:5; Heb. 11:13-16)
- c. Therefore, the land promise is **unfulfilled**
- d. *Jerome H. Smith*: “[T]he promise was **made personally to Abraham** that he would **himself inherit the promised land**, but **Abraham himself never personally possessed the land** God promised to him. It is for this reason that God, who cannot lie, must **resurrect Abraham** and **bring him personally into the promised land** in order for the Abrahamic Covenant to be fulfilled.” (Bold emphasis added, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, 1244-1245)
- e. *Jerome H. Smith*: “[T]he question is not, **did Israel possess the land**, but **did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**, to whom the promise was personally given and confirmed, **personally receive or experience the fulfillment?** The answer to this question is **absolutely not**, as Scripture plainly declares.... **Fulfillment must take place, therefore, in the future, in the land of Israel, upon their resurrection from the dead**.... Jesus did not come to change, replace, redefine, or abrogate the Old Testament covenants and promises, but to confirm them....” (Bold emphasis added, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, 265)
- f. *John R. Rice*: “Was Abraham there when Joshua took the children of Israel into that land? **Did Abraham, possess it, live on it?** The New Testament in Hebrews 11:8-13 says they looked for another city, not for cities then on the land, and Abraham lived in tents all his life and **died in faith not having received the promise**. Now was that fulfilled? **God’s promise to Abraham has not yet been fulfilled!**” (Bold emphasis added, Oliphant-Rice Debate, 37)
- g. *John R. Rice*: “I admit that generation moved to Palestine, but **what about Abraham, Jacob, and Isaac, to whom God promised to give the land?** Yes, the Jews moved to Palestine. God fulfilled His promise to that generation of Israel, but that was not the same as His promise to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. But what about the Lord’s promise to them? They are heirs of the same promise and **they died without having received it.**” (Bold emphasis added, Oliphant-Rice Debate, 34)

2. Evaluation:

- a. Chart: “Abraham Didn’t Inherit”
- b. The OT delineates the **recipient(s)** of the land promise in various ways:
 - 1) **Abraham** [“you”] (Gen. 12:1; 13:17; 15:7; Acts 7:3)

- 2) **Abraham's descendants** ["your descendants"] (Gen. 12:7; 15:13-16, 18; 24:7; 2 Chr. 20:7; Neh. 9:8)
 - 3) **Abraham and his descendants** ["you and your descendants"] (Gen. 13:14-15; 17:7-8)
 - 4) **Isaac and his descendants** ["you and your descendants"] (Gen. 26:3-4)
 - 5) **Jacob and his descendants** ["you and your descendants"] (Gen. 28:4, 13; 35:12)
 - 6) **The patriarchs** (Gen. 50:24)
 - 7) **The patriarchs' descendants** ["your descendants"] (Ex. 6:8; 13:5; 32:13; 33:1; Dt. 1:21; 4:1; 6:3; 12:1; 27:3; 28:11; 31:7; 34:4)
 - 8) **The patriarchs and their descendants** ["them and their descendants"] (Ex. 13:11; Dt. 1:8; 6:10, 18; 7:13; 8:1; 11:9)
- c. None of God's three great promises to Abraham were **fulfilled within his lifetime**, nor could they have been
- 1) It would have been **impossible** within Abraham's lifetime for his descendants to multiply to be like the **stars** in the heavens and the **sand** on the seashore (Gen. 22:17)
 - 2) When Abraham asked, "Lord God, how shall I know that **I will inherit it?**" (Gen. 15:8), God explained that the land promise would be fulfilled after his descendants were **strangers in a foreign land for 400 years** and after his **death** (Gen. 15:13-16)
 - 3) When God told Abraham, "And in **you** all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 12:3; cf. 18:18), other OT passages make it clear that this meant in **Abraham's seed** (Gen. 22:18; 26:4; 28:14), and the NT makes it plain that this promise was not fulfilled in **Abraham personally**, but in his **greatest descendant Jesus** (Acts 3:25-26)
- d. Moses clearly shows that **Abraham received** the fulfillment of the land promise through the **possession** of the land by **his descendants**, the Israelites (Gen. 15:7-16)
- 1) God promised to **give** Abraham the land to inherit (Gen. 15:7)
 - 2) Abraham asked God **how he would know** that he would inherit the land (Gen. 15:8)
 - 3) God instructed Abraham to bring Him **five different animals** divided in half, except the birds (Gen. 15:9)
 - 4) Abraham **followed** these instructions (Gen. 15:10-11)

- 5) A **deep sleep** fell upon Abraham (Gen. 15:12)
- 6) God spoke to Abraham and made **several promises** to him (Gen. 15:13-16)
 - a) Your descendants will be **strangers** in a foreign land
 - b) Your descendants will **serve** them
 - c) Your descendants will be **afflicted 400 years**
 - d) The afflicting nation will be **judged**
 - e) Your descendants will **come out** with great possessions
 - f) Abraham would **go** to his fathers and be **buried**
 - g) In the fourth generation, Abraham's descendants would **return to Canaan**
- 7) It should be obvious that these promises are **God's answer to Abraham's question**, "Lord God, how shall I know that I will inherit it?" (Gen. 15:8)
- 8) Furthermore, later that same day God made a **covenant** with Abraham, promising to **give his descendants the land** from the river of Egypt² to the Euphrates river (Gen. 15:18-21)
- e. Several other OT passages show that the **land promise** that God made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would be fulfilled when the **Israelites possessed the land** (Dt. 9:5; 19:8; 26:15; 28:11; 30:20; 31:7; 34:4; 2 Chr. 20:7; Neh. 9:8)
 - 1) Illustration: When Jesus promised to **come to His apostles** (Jn. 14:18), He meant that He would come to them through the **coming of the Holy Spirit** (Jn. 14:26)
 - 2) When God promised to **give Abraham the land**, He meant that He would do that through **Abraham's descendants**
- f. When Stephen made his defense, he explained that the **time of fulfillment** for the land promise (Acts 7:3-7) drew near when the people **grew and multiplied in Egypt** (Acts 7:17)
 - 1) How could this statement be **true** and the land promise to Abraham remain **unfulfilled**?

² See Steve Rudd, "Three Promises to Abraham Fulfilled" for a discussion about whether the "river of Egypt" is the Nile or the Wadi el Arish, <https://www.bible.ca/d-3-promises-to-abraham.htm>.

C. Objection: “The land promise was an **unconditional promise** that God made to Abraham (Gen. 12:1, 7; 13:14-15, 17; 15:7, 16, 18-21; 17:7-8)

1. Explanation:

- a. **No conditions were stipulated** when God first gave the land promise to Abraham; therefore, this promise must be **fulfilled unconditionally**
- b. *Charles C. Ryrie*: “Premillennialism insists that all the provisions of the Abrahamic Covenant must be fulfilled since **the covenant was made without conditions**. Much of the covenant has already been fulfilled and fulfilled literally; therefore, what remains to be fulfilled will also be fulfilled literally.” (Bold emphasis added, *Basic Theology*, 530)
- c. *Charles C. Ryrie*: “The original promises given to Abraham were given **without any conditions whatsoever**.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Basis Of The Premillennial Faith*, 2005, 47)
- d. *Charles C. Ryrie*: “The **unconditional character of the Abrahamic covenant** is the **crucial issue** in making the Abrahamic covenant a basis for premillennialism. If the covenant is **unconditional**, then the national aspect of it **must yet be fulfilled**, and **premillennialism** is the only system of interpretation which makes a place for a **national future for Israel** in which she **possesses her land**.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Basis Of The Premillennial Faith*, 2005, 46)
- e. *John Walvoord*: “Premillennarians hold that the Abrahamic Covenant is a declaration of God’s intention which is **not conditional** upon the obedience of individuals or nations for its fulfillment -- **an unconditional plan** of God.” (Bold emphasis added, *Millennial Series*, n.p.)
- f. *John Walvoord*: “It has been previously shown that the Abrahamic covenant is **basically unconditional**, though the present enjoyment of it by an individual or nation may have **certain conditions**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Millennial Series*, n.p.)

2. Evaluation:

- a. Despite dispensationalists’ claims to the contrary, there were **conditions** attached to God’s promises to Abraham
 - 1) Abraham had to **leave** his homeland (Gen. 12:1-3)
 - a) Does anyone believe that God would have **fulfilled His promises** to Abraham if Abraham had **refused to leave** his home in Ur of the Chaldees ?
 - 2) Abraham had to **keep the covenant of circumcision** (Gen. 17:1-2, 8-14)

- 3) God knew that Abraham would command his children after him to **keep the way of the Lord** so YHWH could **fulfill His promises** to Abraham (Gen. 18:19)
 - 4) God promised that He would **fulfill** His promises (nation, land, & Seed) to Abraham because he **obeyed** His command to offer Isaac as a burnt offering (Gen. 22:16-18)
 - 5) God promised Isaac that He would **keep His promises** (land, nation, Seed) and **fulfill His oath** to Abraham because Abraham had been **obedient** (Gen. 26:3-5)
 - 6) The writer of Hebrews clearly shows that Abraham received God's **blessings** only after he **obeyed** God (Heb. 11:8-10, 17-19)
- b. Furthermore, God's promises are often **conditional** whether conditions are **explicitly stated** or not (cf. Jer. 18:7-10)
- 1) God promised that **Eli's house** would walk before Him forever, but that promise was later revoked because of disobedience (1 Sam. 2:30-36)
 - 2) God promised to **overthrow Nineveh** in 40 days, but that promise was revoked after the Ninevites repented (Jon. 3:4-10)
 - 3) God promised to **plow Jerusalem like a field** during the reign of Hezekiah (Mic. 3:12), but that promise was revoked when Judah repented (Jer. 26:16-19)
 - 4) God sent Jeremiah to warn his people of their coming judgment in the hope that they would **repent** and the judgment could be **averted** (Jer. 26:1-6)
 - 5) God's promises to **bless** the righteous and **punish** the wicked are contingent upon their response to His warnings (Ezek. 33:12-16)
- c. Finally, conditions were certainly **added later** in God's subsequent instructions and commandments to Israel ([See III. A. above](#))
- 1) Israel's **reception** of the land was **conditioned** upon **obedience** (Gen. 18:18-19; *Dt. 4:1; 6:10-19; 8:1; 11:8-9; 30:19-20; Jer. 11:1-5*)
 - a) Note: Although some have argued that Israel's **reception** of the land was **unconditional**³, this does not appear to me to be correct
 - 2) Israel **received** the land, despite her **failure** to keep the covenant, because of God's **grace** and **mercy** (*Dt. 9:4-6; Ps. 136:21*)
 - 3) Israel's **retention** of the land was conditioned upon **obedience** (*Lev. 18:24-30; 26:27-39; Dt. 1:40; 4:23-28, 40; 8:19-20; 28:15ff, 58-68;*

³ Hamilton, "Promises to Abraham," 178, 186, 188; Roberts, "The Prophets," 18.

29:9, 24-28; 30:17-20; Josh. 23:11-16; 1 Ki. 9:4-9; 2 Ki. 21:7-8; 1 Chr. 28:6-9; Jer. 7:3-15; 16:10-13; Neh. 1:8-9)

- 4) Israel **broke** the everlasting covenant (Isa. 24:5; Jer. 11:6-10)
- 5) As a result, God **brought calamity** upon His disobedient people, and they were **deported** off the land (Jer. 11:11-17)

D. Objection: “**Israel never occupied the territory of the Greater Land Promise**”

1. Explanation:

- a. God promised that Israel would possess territory that stretched from the **river of Egypt** to the **Euphrates river** (Gen. 15:18-21; cf. Ex. 23:31; Dt. 1:6-8; 11:24; Josh. 1:4)

Text	Southern Border	Northern Border
Gen. 15:18	River of Egypt	Great River, River Euphrates
Ex. 23:31	Red Sea	The River [Euphrates]
Dt. 1:6-8	Plain [<i>Araba</i>] & South [<i>Negeb</i>]	River Euphrates
Dt. 11:24	Wilderness	River Euphrates
Josh. 1:4	Wilderness	River Euphrates
1 Ki. 4:21	Border of Egypt	The River [Euphrates]
1 Ki. 8:65	Brook of Egypt	Entrance of Hamath
2 Ki. 24:7	Brook of Egypt	River Euphrates
2 Chr. 7:8	Brook of Egypt	Entrance of Hamath
2 Chr. 9:26	Border of Egypt	The River [Euphrates]
Isa. 7:18	Rivers of Egypt	Land of Assyria
Isa. 27:12	Border of Egypt	The River [Euphrates]
Jer. 2:18	Waters of Sihor	Waters of the River [Euphrates]

- a. *Charles C. Ryrie*: “Premillennialists understand that the promise of the Abrahamic Covenant giving to Abraham’s descendants the land from the **river of Egypt** to the **River Euphrates** has **never been fulfilled** but will be fulfilled in the coming millennial kingdom (Gen. 15:18).” (Bold emphasis added, *Basic Theology*, 523)
- b. *Charles C. Ryrie*: “Though the nation Israel **occupied part of the territory promised** in the covenant, she has **never yet occupied all of it** and certainly **not eternally** as the covenant promised. Therefore, there must be a time in the future when Israel will do so, and for the premillennialist this will be in **the coming millennial kingdom**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Basic Theology*, 530)
- c. *Charles M. Neal*: “It is a scriptural and historic fact that Abraham and his seed have **never occupied the promised land in the fulness of its limits**. In fact, they never entered but a portion of it when they came out of Egypt....**This larger land of promise will be re-allotted to restored and converted Israel**, according to the promise and covenant made unto the fathers....” (Bold emphasis added, *Light in a Dark Place*, 55, quoted in the *Neal-Wallace Debate*, 324)

- d. *George N. H. Peters*: “Some indeed (*Horne’s Intro.* vol. 2, p. 12) think that in David’s and Solomon’s reign this was the extent, but others more accurately narrow their dominion in actual possession. Whatever may be the fact in reference to past fulfillment, three things are very evident, (a) that **a portion was not held by the Jews, excepting by a precarious tributary arrangement**; (b) that **it was only thus possessed for a short time, and hence is in no way commensurate with the promise**; (c) that **the predictions relating to the future take it as a matter of course that at the future restoration this will be effected**, seeing that all the covenant promises are *then* to be realized” (*Theocratic Kingdom*, vol. 2, p. 144).” (Bold emphasis added, quoted in Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, 367)
- e. Dispensationalists argue three fundamental points:
- 1) Israel did not **possess all** the promised land
 - 2) Israel did not **occupy all** the land but was paid a tribute (cf. 1 Ki. 4:21)
 - 3) Israel’s possession was **not permanent**

2. Evaluation:

- a. God promised to **give a land** that encompassed the borders of the “Greater Land Promise” (Dt. 1:7-8; 11:22-25; Josh. 1:1-6)
- b. When Joshua declared that **all the land was given** to Israel (Josh. 21:43-45; 23:14), that statement itself is *prima facie* evidence that the Greater Land Promise was fulfilled
- c. When God delimited the borders of the Promised Land, its southern border included the **brook of Egypt** (Num. 34:5) and its northern border included the **entrance of Hamath** (Num. 34:8) – the **borders** of the “Greater Land Promise”
- d. When the Israelites **settled** in the Promised Land, they **dwelt** in the territory delimited by the borders of the **Greater Land Promise**
 - 1) The southern border of **Judah’s territory** included the **Brook of Egypt** (Josh. 15:4, 47)
 - 2) The **Reubenites** settled as far as the entrance of the wilderness this side of the **River Euphrates** (1 Chr. 5:9)
- e. David [~1011-971 BC] **restored** the border at the Euphrates (2 Sam. 8:3 // 1 Chr. 18:3)
 - 1) One cannot **restore** a border that did not **previously exist**
 - 2) Question: Does the “he” refer to David or Hadadezer? It refers to David (1 Chr. 18:3)

- f. Solomon [~971-931 BC] **ruled over** the territory of the “Greater Land Promise” (1 Ki. 4:20-21, 24-25 // 2 Chr. 9:26; 1 Ki. 8:65 // 2 Chr. 7:8)
 - g. Jeroboam II [~793-753 BC] **restored** the border at the Euphrates (2 Ki. 14:25)
 - 3) One cannot **restore** a border that did not **previously exist**
 - h. The existence of the **six cities of refuge** proves that all the land was given
 - 1) *Major Premise*: Six cities of refuge **would be appointed** if all the land were given (Dt. 19:1-3, 7-10; cf. Num. 35:9-14)
 - 2) *Minor Premise*: Six cities of refuge **were appointed** (Josh. 20:1-9)
 - 3) *Conclusion*: Therefore, all the land was **given**
- E. Objection: “The land was promised ‘**forever**’ in an ‘**everlasting covenant**’ as an ‘**everlasting possession**’ (Gen. 13:14-17; 17:7-8; 1 Chr. 16:16-18; Psa. 105:9-11; Isa. 60:21).”
- 1. Explanation:
 - a. *Charles C. Ryrie*: “Its crucial issues in relation to premillennialism are two: (1) Does the Abrahamic Covenant promise Israel a **permanent existence as a nation**? If it does, then the Church is not fulfilling Israel’s promises, but rather Israel as a nation, has a future yet in prospect; and (2) does the Abrahamic covenant promise Israel **permanent possession of the promised land**? If it does, then Israel must yet come into possession of the promised land, for she has **never fully possessed it** in her history. “ (Bold emphasis added, *The Basis Of The Premillennial Faith*, 2005, 43)
 - b. Chart: “Land Promised Forever”
 - 1) God promised to **give** the land to Abraham and his descendants “**forever**” (Gen. 13:14-17; Jer. 25:5)
 - 2) God said that Abraham’s descendants would **inherit** the land **forever** (Ex. 32:13; Josh. 14:9)
 - 3) God’s covenant with Abraham and his descendants was an “**everlasting covenant**” (Gen. 17:7, 13, 19; 1 Chr. 16:16-18; Psa. 105:9-11)
 - 4) God promised the land to Abraham and his descendants as an “**everlasting possession**” (Gen. 17:8)
 - 5) God promised that Israel would possess the land **under David** “**forever**” (Isa. 59:20 & 60:21; Ezek. 37:19ff, 25-28)
 - c. But that promise has **not been fulfilled**

- 1) Abraham was a **stranger** and a **sojourner** in the land of Canaan (Gen. 23:4)
 - 2) God gave him **no inheritance** in the land (Acts 7:5)
 - 3) Abraham lived in Canaan as “**in a foreign country**” (Heb. 11:9)
 - 4) The patriarchs died “**not having received the promises**” (Heb. 11:13)
- d. Therefore, this “forever promise” must yet **be fulfilled**

2. Evaluation:

- a. “Forever” (*olam*) means for a **very long time**, not necessarily in **perpetuity** or for **eternity**
 - 1) God said His anger against Judah would **burn forever** (Jer. 17:4); but God also said He would **not keep His anger forever** (Psa. 103:9; Isa. 57:16; Jer. 3:12; Mic. 7:18)
 - 2) Jesus’ throne is “**forever and ever**” (Heb. 1:8); but His kingship will **end** at the Second Coming (1 Cor. 15:24-28)
 - 3) If we interpret these statements in the **strictest literal way**, the Bible **contradicts** itself; but there is **no contradiction** because “**forever**” doesn’t always mean **in perpetuity**
 - 4) Chart: “Forever”
- b. “Forever things” can **cease**
 - 1) Chart: ““Forever Things’ Can Cease”
- c. Furthermore, God promised Israel that her **retention** of the land “**forever**” was conditioned upon **her obedience** to the commandments of God (1 Chr. 28:8; cf. Ezra 9:12; Psa. 37:29; Jer. 7:3-7)
- d. He also promised that Israel’s **disobedience** would result in her being **cast off “forever”** (*Dt. 28:45-46*)
 - 1) If “**forever**” (*olam*) means **in perpetuity**, then to be consistent, dispensationalists should apply this term to **Israel’s exile** from the land
- e. God said that wicked Israel would experience an **everlasting** reproach and a **perpetual** shame (Jer. 23:39-40)
- f. Finally, if the land promise “**forever**” means **in perpetuity**, without any conditions or qualifications, then:
 - 1) Any **break or disruption of possession** (as was the case during the Babylonian Captivity and after the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70) would necessarily nullify the fulfillment of the promise

- 2) Possession of the land by the Jews during the alleged **millennial reign** of Christ will not fulfill the promise

F. Objection: “The remnant that returned to the Promised Land following the Babylonian Captivity did not include the **ten ‘lost tribes’** of Israel”

1. Explanation:

- a. Since the **ten “lost tribes”** of Israel **did not return** from exile, the land promise has not been **fulfilled** for them

2. Evaluation:

- a. The so-called “lost tribes” are **not mentioned in the Bible**
- b. The southern kingdom of Judah included **people from other tribes**
 - 1) The inheritance of the tribe of **Simeon** was within the territory of the tribe of Judah (Josh. 19:1-9)
 - a) Note: When Jacob blessed his sons, he said of Simeon and Levi, “I will **divide** them in Jacob And **scatter** them in Israel” (Gen. 49:5-7)
 - 2) When the kingdom divided after the death of Solomon, the southern kingdom of Judah included the tribes of **Judah** and **Benjamin** (1 Ki. 12:21-24 // 2 Chr. 11:1-4)
- c. Later there were **infiltrations** from the 10 northern tribes into the kingdom of Judah
 - 1) After Jeroboam I set up **calf worship** in Dan and Bethel, the **Levites** throughout the land came to Judah and Jerusalem (2 Chr. 11:13-14)
 - 2) After the Levites left their homes, the faithful from “**all the tribes of Israel**” came to Jerusalem to sacrifice (2 Chr. 11:16-17)
 - 3) Some from **Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon** joined the kingdom of Judah after the reforms of Asa (2 Chr. 15:9)
- d. Some of the people from a few of the northern tribes took part in the **reforms** of **Hezekiah** (2 Chr. 30:1-2, 11, 18; 31:1) and **Josiah** (2 Chr. 34:6-9)
- e. After the deportation of Israel to Assyria, **some of the people were left in the land** (Amos 5:1-3)
- f. Jeremiah prophesied that the **house of Judah** and the **house of Israel** would **return** from the land of the north to the Promised Land (Jer. 3:18)

- g. Ezekiel prophesied that the **stick of Judah** and the **stick of Ephraim** would be joined together into **one stick** which symbolized the combination of Israel and Judah into **one nation** in the land (Ezek. 37:15-22)
 - h. The decree of Cyrus was to **all Israel** (Ezra 1:3)
 - i. Settlers in Jerusalem after the return from Exile included the children of Judah, Benjamin, **Ephraim**, and **Manasseh** (1 Chr. 9:2-3)
 - j. There were **12 leaders** of the returning remnant (Ezra 2:23; Neh. 7:7)
 - k. **“All Israel”** dwelt in their cities (Ezra 2:70)
 - l. **12 male goats** were offered as a sin-offering **“according to the number of the tribes of Israel”** (Ezra 6:17)
 - m. **12 bulls** and **12 male goats** were offered for **“all Israel”** (Ezra 8:35)
 - 1) *John Humphries*: “Ezra makes the point that in the post-exile celebrations of the nation of Israel, sacrifices were made, indicating that **all twelve of the tribes were represented as being back in the land** (Ezra 6:17; 8:35; cf. 2:70). At this time, Ezra refers to this ‘**all Israel**’ as the ‘**remnant**’ of Israel (Ezra 9:8). The **faithful remnant** was the **true Israel** of God.” (Bold emphasis added, 242)
 - n. “The heads of the fathers’ *houses* of **Israel** in Jerusalem” (Ezra 8:29)
 - o. The terms **“Jew”** & **“Israelite”** became **synonymous** during the Exile (Ezra 4:2, 12, 23; 6:7-8, 14, 16-17; Neh. 1:2, 6; 2:10, 16)
 - p. **Anna** was from the tribe of **Asher** (Lk. 2:36)
 - q. On the day of Pentecost, Jews from **“every nation under heaven”** had gathered in Jerusalem (Acts 2:5)
 - 1) Some were Parthians and **Medes** (Acts 2:9), and when the northern kingdom of Israel was deported by the Assyrians, they were placed in **“the cities of the Medes,”** among other places (2 Ki. 17:6; 18:11)
 - r. Paul mentioned the **“twelve tribes”** in his defense before Agrippa (Acts 26:7)
 - s. James wrote to “the **twelve tribes** which are scattered abroad” (Jas. 1:1)
 - t. Modern Jews are the **posterity of all the tribes**, not just Judah
 - u. So, there really are no **“lost tribes”** of Israel
- G. Objection: “The remnant had **no king** after they returned to the land; therefore, the restoration promises were not fulfilled.”
1. Explanation:

2. Evaluation:

- a. God **promised kings** for Israel (Gen. 17:16; Dt. 17:14-15; 1 Sam. 2:10)
- b. Israel's demand for a king was an **act of rebellion** against YHWH (1 Sam. 8:5-9)
- c. God granted their request in **His anger** and took him away in **His wrath** (Hos. 13:11)
- d. None of **Coniah's descendants** would prosper on David's throne (Jer. 22:24-30)
- e. Zedekiah's turban & crown would be **removed "until He comes whose right it is"** (Ezek. 21:25-27)
- f. Israel would be **without a king** for many days (Hos. 3:4)
- g. Afterward Israel would return and seek YHWH and **David** their king (Hos. 3:5)
- h. God said, "**I will be your king**" (Hos. 13:9-10)
- i. So, it was **God's plan** that following the Babylonian Exile, His people would be **without a king** until the Messiah came

H. Objection: "God promised that **the Messiah would rule over Israel in the land**, and that has not been fulfilled"

1. Explanation:

- a. The OT prophets clearly and repeatedly foretold a **return** to the land and/or a **dwelling** in the land under the **Messiah**
 - 1) Under the **Branch** (Isa. 11:1ff, 6ff, 10ff, 16; Jer. 23:5-8; 33:14-26)
 - 2) Under the **Servant** (Isa. 49:5-6, 8-12)
 - 3) Under the **Redeemer** (Isa. 59:20-21; 60:21-22; 61:1-7)
 - 4) Under the **King** (Jer. 23:5-8; cf. Zech. 9:9-10)
 - 5) Under "**David**" (Jer. 30:3, 7-11; 33:10-26; Ezek. 34:11-13, 23-24, 27-31; 37:11-14, 18-28; Hos. 3:4-5)
 - 6) Under **one Head** (Hos. 1:10-11; 2:21-23)
 - 7) Under the **King of Israel** (Zeph. 3:14-20; cf. Zech. 9:9-10; 14:9-11, 16-21)
 - 8) When the **new covenant** is established (Isa. 54:2-3, 7, 10-12; Jer. 31:16-17, 23-25, 27-28, 31-34, 35-40; 32:37-44; Ezek. 34:13ff, 23-31; 37:12, 14, 21-26)

- 9) When the **Spirit is poured out** (Ezek. 36:22-38; 39:25-29)
 - 10) When the **tabernacle of David is rebuilt** (Amos 9:11-15)
 - a) This cannot refer to **the remnant that returned** to the land after the Babylonian Captivity because those people have been **repeatedly “pulled up from the land”**
 - 11) When a remnant **returns a second time** (Isa. 11:11-16)
 - a) This second remnant cannot be **the remnant** that returned from Babylonian Captivity in the days of Zerubbabel, Joshua, Ezra, and Nehemiah
 - b) This second remnant would return **during the righteous reign of the Messiah** (Isa. 11:1-5, 10-11)
 - 12) After the **remnant had already returned** to the land of Canaan (Zech. 2:6-13; 3:9-10; 8:4-8; 10:6-12)
 - a) The first group **returned** from captivity under Zerubbabel and Joshua (~536 BC) **before** Zechariah began to prophesy (520-518 BC)
- b. There are other prophecies that foretell a **return** and/or a **dwelling** in the land
- 1) Obadiah [845 BC ?] prophesied **deliverance** on Mt. Zion (Obad. 17, 21)
 - 2) Joel [830 BC] prophesied that **Judah would abide forever** (Joel 3:16-21)
 - 3) Isaiah [739-686 BC] prophesied that Israel would **be gathered** (Isa. 27:12-13; 42:16; 43:5-9)
 - 4) Micah [735-700 BC] prophesied that Israel would enjoy **peace** and **security** in the land (Mic. 4:1-7)
 - 5) Ezekiel [593-571 BC] prophesied that the land of Israel would **blossom** and **bloom** and be **reinhabited** by her people (Ezek. 36:6-12)
 - a) Note: The geographic boundaries of the land described by Ezekiel match the boundaries of the **“greater land” promise** (Ezek. 47:15-17, 19-20; Num. 34:3-5, 7-9)
 - 6) Zechariah [520-518 BC] prophesied **a time of idyllic conditions in the land** (Zech. 8:4-8)
- c. None of these prophecies have been **literally fulfilled**
- d. Therefore, they will be literally fulfilled in **the millennium**

- 1) *Hal Lindsay*: “God **unconditionally promised** Abraham’s descendants a literal **world-wide kingdom** over which they would rule through **their Messiah** who would reign upon King David’s throne....” (Bold emphasis added, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, 165)
- 2) *John MacArthur*: “The ultimate fulfillment of God’s land promise to Abraham (cf. Ge 12:7; 15:7; 17:8) will occur during **Christ’s millennial reign on earth** (cf. Joel 2:26, 27).” (Bold emphasis added, Comment on Amos 9:15, *The MacArthur Study Bible*)

2. Evaluation:

- a. **Time constraints** will not allow me to discuss these prophecies in **detail**, but hopefully I can say a few things in a general way that will be **helpful**
- b. First, some OT prophecies were fulfilled when **the remnant returned** to the Promised Land
 - 1) Under **Zerubbabel & Joshua** (2 Chr. 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1ff; 9:13-15; Neh. 1:3, 8-10; Hag. 1:12-15)
 - 2) Under **Ezra** (Ezra 7:1-10; 9:13-15)
 - 3) Under **Nehemiah** (Neh. 2:1-11)
 - 4) But the fulfillment when the remnant returned from Babylonian Captivity often **blends** with a greater **spiritual fulfillment** under the Messiah
 - a) *Phil Roberts*: “It is usually **quite impossible to sort out** which elements of such prophecies pertained primarily to the **physical restoration to the land** and which elements pertained to the **Messianic age** itself. Indeed, I would maintain that **the same prophecies were usually fulfilled on both levels**. First, in a partial and limited way, there was a **fulfillment in the physical realm** in the redemption of the nation from Babylon and in the restoration of the people to their land. But that Old Testament fulfillment was but a prelude to and perhaps even a type of the **fulfillment on a spiritual level** in Christ and his work of redemption.” (Bold emphasis added, 28)
 - b) *John Humphries*: “The prophets looked at matters that were **close at hand**, but then immediately focused on **future events** as though they were **all to blend one into another**. It is as if one is looking at a **distant mountain range**.... **One mountain** is nearer to the viewer, with a **taller mountain** in the more distant background. As one looks at the mountains, they **blend together** in the viewer’s eyes. From the viewer’s perspective, **one cannot see the valley in between** that separates the two mountains. The mountains **‘telescope’** together. In other words, in our model, the **nearer mountain** illustrates **the return from Babylon**. The valley in

between (unseen) represents the **waiting for the Messiah**. Finally, the **big mountain** in the background pictures **the Messiah** as he arrives (in the latter days, Hos. 3:5) to bless the nation -- indeed, all the nations (Jer. 3:17; Isa. 2:1-4).” (Bold emphasis added, 25-26)

- c) *John Humphries*: “The return from exile and the blessings of the Messiah **blend together**, as the prophets looked at times horizon....” (Bold emphasis added, 243)
- c. Second, there is obviously an **elapse of time** between the return of the remnant and “David” the king
- d. Third, the NT shows that some of these prophecies were being “**spiritually fulfilled**” through the **preaching of the gospel** in the **apostolic age**
- 1) Paul and Peter claim that **Hosea’s prophecies** (Hos. 1:10-2:1, 21-23) were being fulfilled in the **conversion of the Gentiles** (Rom. 9:22-26; 1 Pet. 2:9-10)
 - 2) James declared that **Amos’ prophecy** (Amos 9:11-15) was being fulfilled in the **conversion of the Gentiles** (Acts 15:13-17)
 - a) Chart: “The Tabernacle of David”
 - b) This tabernacle [or temple] is **the church** (1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:19-22)
 - 3) Paul claimed that **Isaiah’s prophecy** (Isa. 11:10-16) was being fulfilled in the **first-century church** (Rom. 15:5-12)
 - a) Paul argues that Jesus became a **servant to the circumcision** for two reasons: (Rom. 15:8)
 - 1] To **confirm the promises** made to the fathers
 - 2] So that the **Gentiles might glorify God** for His mercy
 - b) Then he shows that the Gentiles’ glorification of God was the **fulfillment of OT prophecy**
 - 1] He quotes **2 Sam. 22:30 // Ps. 18:49** (Rom. 15:9)
 - 2] He quotes **Dt. 32:43** (Rom. 15:10)
 - 3] He quotes **Psa. 117:1** (Rom. 15:11)
 - 4] He quotes **Isa. 11:1, 10** (Rom. 15:12)
 - a] The **root** of Jesse is **Jesus** (cf. Mt. 2:23; Acts 13:22-23; Rev. 5:5; 22:16)
 - b] The **Spirit** of the Lord (Isa. 11:2) rested upon **Jesus** (cf. Mt. 3:16 // Mk. 1:10 // Lk. 3:22; Jn. 1:32; Acts 10:38)

- c] Jesus slays the wicked with the **rod of His mouth** (Isa. 11:4; cf. 2 Th. 2:8; Rev. 19:15)
- d] The **Root** of Jesse is the **banner** to the people (Isa. 11:1, 10, 12)
- c) In this prophecy, the expression “**in that day**” ties all of its various elements together
- 1] Chart: “Isaiah 11:6-12”
 - 2] Chart: “In That Day”
- d) Again, Paul is arguing that the **Gentiles’ glorification of God** was the **fulfillment** of Isaiah’s prophecy
- e) **When** were the Gentiles glorifying God? In **Paul’s day** and age
- 1] *Homer Hailey*: “According to Paul (Rom. 15:12), **this verse is fulfilled in Christ now**; the Gentiles now have hope. Therefore, **he is reigning or ruling now**, and if he is ruling now, the scene depicting harmony among animals pertains to **the present time under Christ**, not to some future period. The passage finds its fulfillment in the **conversion of sinners since Pentecost**. If the whole passage is **not now fulfilled** in Christ, then the Gentiles have **no basis of hope**.” (Bold emphasis added, 124)
- f) Therefore, this must mean that:
- 1] All the elements of this prophecy were being **fulfilled in the apostolic age**
 - 2] This prophecy does not refer to **some future millennium**
 - 3] The language of this prophecy must be **interpreted figuratively** rather than literally
- g) Isaiah’s prophecy (Isa. 11:6-10) depicts in vivid figurative language the **peaceful nature** of Christ’s kingdom
- 1] The harmony described here occurs “**in all My holy mountain**” (Isa. 11:9)
 - 2] YHWH’s holy mountain is **spiritual Zion** (Isa. 2:1-4)
- h) Isaiah’s prophecy foretells a **second recovery of God’s remnant** “in that day” (Isa. 11:11-14)
- 1] God recovered His remnant the **first time** when **~50,000 Jews** returned from Babylonian captivity under Zerubbabel and Joshua (Ezra 2:64-65)

- 2] God will recover His remnant a **second time** in the day that the **Branch** is a **banner** to the nations (Isa. 11:10)⁴
- a] The remnant of God's people will be **gathered** from wherever they have been scattered (Isa. 11:11-12)
 - b] Israel and Judah will be **reconciled** to one another (Isa. 11:13)
 - c] Israel and Judah will **subjugate former enemies** [Philistia, the people of the East, Edom, Moab, & Ammon] (Isa. 11:14)
 - d] **Obstacles** to this regathering symbolized by the Red Sea and the Euphrates river will be removed (Isa. 11:15)
 - e] A (spiritual) **highway** will be constructed to facilitate this (spiritual) **return** (Isa. 11:16)
 - 1] This highway is the **Highway of Holiness** (Isa. 35:8-10)
 - f] The remnant is "**all Israel,**" that is the **true Israel**
 - 1] *Major Premise:* God promised to restore the "**faithful remnant**" to the land (Isa. 10:20-23; Jer. 3:11-18; 23:1-8)
 - 2] *Minor Premise:* God promised to restore "**all Israel**" to the land (Jer. 30:3; 46:27-28)
 - 3] *Conclusion:* The "**faithful remnant**" is "**all Israel**" (Jer. 31:7; Ezra 2:70 & 9:8; Neh. 1:1-3 & 8-10; Zech. 8:6-8, 11-13)
 - 4] *John Humphries:* "Jeremiah refers to them as '**all the families of Israel.... my people**' and in the same context calls them '**your people, the remnant of Israel**' (31:1, 7). They constituted the '**remnant**' to be gathered from captivity (31:8). Ezekiel also points out that God will '**purge the rebels from among**' the nation, and yet refers to the resulting remnant as '**all the house of Israel, all of them**' in the land serving the Lord (Ezek. 20:38, 40). Ezra makes the point that in the post-exile celebrations of the nation of Israel, sacrifices were made, indicating that all twelve of the

⁴ Although Anthony Hoekema argues that the first return was of the Israelites from Egypt and the second was the return of the remnant from Babylon (*The Bible and the Future*, 206), this interpretation ignores the contextual connection with the Branch "in that day" (Isa. 11:11).

tribes were represented as being back in the land (Ezra 6:17; 8:35; cf. 2:70). At this time, Ezra refers to this ‘**all Israel**’ as the ‘**remnant**’ of Israel (Ezra 9:8). The **faithful remnant** was the **true Israel** of God.” (Bold emphasis added, 242)

g] The apostle Paul claimed that he was a **part of a righteous remnant** Rom. 11:1-6

1} Chart: “The Jew And The True Jew”

4) Paul identifies the “**acceptable time**” when YHWH **gathers** Israel and Judah and **assists** His Servant (Isa. 49:5-6, 8-12) as the **Messianic age** (2 Cor. 6:1-2)

e. Fourth, some of these prophecies should be **interpreted in a similar manner** because they are linked in some way to **the new covenant**

New Covenant	Dwell In Land
Covenant of peace (Isa. 54:10)	Isa. 54:2-3, 5-8, 11-14
Everlasting covenant (Isa. 55:3-4)	
Everlasting covenant (Isa. 61:8)	
New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34)	Jer. 32:36-42
Everlasting Covenant (Jer. 32:40)	Jer. 32:36-42
Everlasting Covenant (Ezek. 16:60-63)	
Covenant of Peace (Ezek. 34:23-25)	Ezek. 34:13-22, 25-31
Covenant of Peace (Ezek. 37:24)	Ezek. 37:12, 14, 21-22, 25
Everlasting covenant (Ezek. 37:26)	Ezek. 37:12, 14, 21-22, 25

- 1) Who can doubt that the “**covenant of peace,**” the “**everlasting covenant,**” and the “**new covenant**” are the same **covenant**?
- 2) If that is true, then several OT prophecies foretell a **return** and/or **dwelling** in the land in the time of the **new covenant**
- 3) The NT clearly reveals that the new covenant is **now in effect**, and it came into **effect at the cross**
 - a) The fruit of the vine in the Lord’s Supper represents Jesus’ **blood of the new covenant** (Mt. 26:28 // Mk. 14:24 // Lk. 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25)
 - b) The apostles were **ministers of the new covenant** (2 Cor. 3:6)

The Two Covenants (2 Cor. 3:1-18)	
Old Covenant	New Covenant
Epistle in ink (3)	Epistle by the Spirit (3)
Tables of stone (3, 7; cf. Ex. 31:18; Dt. 4:13)	Tables of flesh (3)
Old covenant (14)	New covenant (6)

The letter kills (6)	The spirit gives life (6)
Ministry of death was glorious (7)	Ministry of spirit more glorious (8)
Ministry of condemnation had glory (9)	Ministry of righteousness exceeds in glory (9)
PASSING AWAY (11, 13)	Remains (1)

- c) The Christians in Galatia were **children of the freewoman** under the **new covenant**, not children of the bondwoman under the old (Gal. 4:21-31)
- d) Jesus is the **Mediator of a better covenant** (Heb. 8:6-13)
- e) Jesus became the Mediator of the new covenant when He **died** as its **testator** (Heb. 9:15-17)
- f) It was possible for first-century Christians to sin willfully and thereby count the **blood of the covenant** by which they were sanctified a **common thing** (Heb. 10:26-29)
- g) Christians **have come** to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant (Heb. 12:22-24)

1] *Donald Guthrie*: “Here only is the covenant described as **new** (*neas*) in the sense of ‘**recent**’ instead of **new** in the sense of **character** (*kainē*), as in 8:8, 13 (from LXX) and 9:15.” (Bold emphasis added, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Hebrews*, 15:264)

4) Therefore:

- a) These prophecies are being **fulfilled now** in the time of the new covenant⁵

1] *P. Chase Sears*: “In Romans the apostle Paul argues that **the blessings of the new covenant are a present reality in the church**, shared by both Jews and Gentiles. These blessings include: (1) **the gift of the Spirit** (Rom 2:29; 5:5; 7:6; 8:2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 23, 26; 14:17; 15:13, 16, 19, 30; cf. Joel 2:28-29; Isa. 44:3; Ezek 11:19; 36:26-27); (2) **the circumcision of the heart** (Rom 2:5, 29; cf. Jer 31:33; 32:39, 40; Ezek 11:19; 36:26, 27); (3) **the ability to obey the Law** (Rom 2:26-27; 3:27-31; 8:1-4; 13:8-10; cf. Jer 31:33; Ezek 36:27); and (4) **the forgiveness of sins** whereby God’s people would be justified (Rom 2:13; 3:24, 26, 28; 4:5, 6, 9 5:1, 9; 6:7; 8:30; 9:30; 10:10; cf. Isa 53:11; Jer 31:34; Ezek 36:25).” (Bold emphasis added, 11-12)

⁵ This is a “sticky wicket” for dispensationalists. In what appears to me to be a rather desperate attempt to “get around” this difficulty, John Walvoord posits two new covenants: one for Israel to be fulfilled in the millennium and the other for the church which is fulfilled in this present age (*Millennial Series*, n.p.).

- b) These prophecies must be interpreted “**figuratively**” or “**spiritually**”
 - c) This “land” must be a “**spiritual**” land
- f. Fifth, some of these prophecies should be **interpreted in a similar manner** because they are linked to “**David**” [the Messiah]

“David” = Messiah Dwell In Land	
Jer. 23:5	Jer. 23:6-8
Jer. 30:9	Jer. 30:3, 10
Jer. 33:15, 26	Jer. 33:11-18
	Jer. 34:13-17, 25-31
	Jer. 36:8-12, 24-38
	Jer. 37:12-14
Ezek. 34:23-24	Ezek. 34:13-22, 28-29
	Ezek. 36:6-12, 24-
Ezek. 37:24-25	Ezek. 37:12, 14, 21-22, 25
Hos. 3:4-5	Hos. 11:11; 12:9; 14:7

- 1) If:
- a) “David” is a reference to the **Messiah** (Jer. 23:5; 30:9; Ezek. 37:24; Hos. 3:5)
 - b) Jesus is the **Messiah** (Dan. 9:25-26; Jn. 1:41; 4:25-26; cf. Lk. 1:31-33)
 - c) Jesus was the **good Shepherd** when He walked among men (Jn. 10:11, 14, 16; Heb. 13:20) and is still such now (1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4; Rev. 7:17; cf. Mic. 5:1-6)
 - d) Jesus is **ruling and reigning** as the Messiah now (Jn. 18:33-37; Col. 1:13; Eph. 5:5; Rev. 17:14; 19:16)

Jesus Has Fulfilled Psalm 110	
Psalm 110	Jesus
Lord Said To My Lord (1)	Mt. 22:41-45
Sit At Right Hand (1)	Mk. 16:19; Acts 2:29-36; 5:31; Eph. 1:20-23; Heb. 1:3-4, 13; 8:1; Rev. 3:21
Till Make Enemies Footstool (1)	Acts 2:34-35; Heb. 10:12-13; 1 Pet. 3:22
Rod Of Strength Out Of Zion (2)	Rev. 2:26-27; 12:5; 19:15
Rule In Midst Of Enemies (2)	1 Cor. 15:24-27; Heb. 10:12-13
People Shall Be Volunteers (3)	Rev. 22:17
Priest Forever After Order Of Melchizedek (4)	Heb. 5:5-10; 6:20; 7:15-17, 20-21, 24, 26-28; 8:1

- e) Jesus will rule and reign until the **Second Coming** (1 Cor. 15:24-28)
- 2) Then:
- a) The remnant's dwelling in the land under "David" must be **fulfilled now** in the **Messianic age** (not in some future millennium or in the eternal state)
 - b) These prophecies must be interpreted "**figuratively**" or "**spiritually**"
 - 1] If "**David**" (Jer. 30:9; Ezek. 34:23-24; 37:24-25; Hos. 3:5) didn't really mean David but **Jesus** (cf. Isa. 9:6-7; Lk. 1:32-33)⁶
 - 2] If "**Egypt**" (Hos. 7:16; 8:13) didn't really mean Egypt but **Assyria** (Hos. 9:3)
 - 3] If "**Elijah**" (Mal. 4:5) didn't really mean Elijah but **John the Baptist** (Mt. 17:10-13; Lk. 1:16-17)
 - 4] Why couldn't the "**land**" (Ezek. 37:25-28) not mean the literal Promised Land but the **spiritual Promised Land**?
 - c) Old covenant **language** (Jer. 33:17-18, 21-22) is used to describe new covenant **conditions**
 - 1] Illustration: Cars = "horseless carriages"
 - 2] Illustration: Computers = Typewriters connected to TV screens
 - 3] *Jim McGuiggan: "The picture [in Isaiah 11, ksk] is being painted in ISAIAH'S day in the colors of the day! Is that surprising? Israel's truth under the Messiah (in Ezek. 40-48) is painted in terms of a **rebuilt temple, sacrifices for sin, circumcision as law, new moons and sabbath observance.** Is that surprising? **How else would it have been painted in the OT** which would have made sense to the beaten Jew without having to have written a NT in the OT? The same truth holds here. Victory under the Messiah described as victory over present enemies and tormentors (14-15)." (Isaiah, 117)*

⁶ Because of his commitment to "literal interpretation," Charles Ryrie opines: "David will apparently be a regent in the millennial kingdom. A number of prophecies speak of David's important place in the kingdom (Jer. 30:9; Ezek. 37:24-5). Apparently David, who with other Old Testament believers will be resurrected at the second coming of Christ, will act as a prince under the authority of Christ, the King." (*Basic Theology*, 593). However, other dispensationalists believe that "David" refers to Christ in these passages.

- 4] Even some dispensationalists **accept** this kind of explanation
- a] “The reference to sacrifices is **not to be taken literally**, in view of the putting away of such offerings, but is rather to be regarded as a presentation of the worship of redeemed Israel, in her own land and in the millennial temple, **using the terms with which the Jews were familiar in Ezekiel’s day.**” (Bold emphasis added, *New Scofield Bible*, 888, quoted in Hoekema, 304)
- d) **Spiritual blessings** are described in **physical terms** (cf. Isa. 11:6-9; Jer. 31:12; Ezek. 34:25-29; 36:29-30, 33-38; Hos. 2:21-23; Joel 3:18; Zech. 8:4-5; 9:17)
- e) The “**land**” of “**David**” must be a “**spiritual**” land, and Christian’s dwell in it “**already but not yet**”
- 1] Already:
- a] The meek will inherit **the earth** (Mt. 5:5; Psa. 37:11)
- b] “**Jerusalem above**” is the mother of us all (Gal. 4:25-26)
- c] Christians sit with Christ in **the heavenly places** (Eph. 1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12)
- d] Christians have their **citizenship in heaven** (Phil. 3:20)
- e] Christians have come to **Mount Zion** and the **heavenly Jerusalem** (Heb. 12:22-24)
- 2] Not yet:
- a] Abraham would be **heir of the world** (Rom. 4:13)
- b] A **Sabbath-rest** awaits the people of God (Heb. 4:9)
- 1} God **refused** to allow the wicked wilderness generation of Israel to **enter** into His rest (Psa. 95:10-11; Heb. 3:7-11, 16-19; cf. Num. 14:22-23, 30)
- 2} God’s rest was **offered again** in the time of David (Psa. 95:7b-11), so this means Joshua did not lead Israel into God’s rest when they settled in Canaan (Heb. 4:8)
- 3} Therefore, there remains a **Sabbath rest** for the people of God (Heb. 4:9)
- 4} Our hope is laid up for us in **heaven** (Col. 1:5)
- 5} Our hope is an **anchor** of the soul which enters the **Presence** behind the veil (Heb. 6:19)

- 6} Jesus, our **forerunner**, has entered the **Presence** behind the veil (Heb. 6:20) – **heaven** itself (Heb. 9:24)
- c] Abraham waited for the “**city**” made by God (Heb. 11:10)
- d] The patriarchs looked for a **heavenly country** (Heb. 11:13-16)
- e] Christians seek **the city** that is to come (Heb. 13:14)
- f] Christians have an **incorruptible inheritance** that is reserved in heaven (1 Pet. 1:4)
- g] Christians look for **new heavens and a new earth** (Isa. 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1)
- 3] I’m not at all sure about this, but I wonder if the land of Canaan was a **type of Christ**. In other words, is Christ the **antitype** of the “land” that the OT prophets foretold?
- a] **Adam** was a type of Christ (Rom. 5:14; 1 Cor. 15:21-22)
- b] The **ram** for Isaac was a type of Christ (Gen. 22:13-14)
- c] The **lamb** was a type of Christ (Jn. 1:29)
- d] The **Passover** was a type of Christ (1 Cor. 5:7)
- e] The **high priest** was a type of Christ (Heb. 5:1-10; 8:1-6; 9:6-12, 23-28; 13:11-13)
- f] The **scapegoat** was a type of Christ (Lev. 16:8-10, 20-22 & Isa. 53:6, 11-12; Jn. 1:29; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 9:28; 1 Pet. 2:24)
- g] The **feasts**, the **new moon**, and the **Sabbaths** were types of Christ (Col. 2:16-17)
- h] **Melchizedek** was a type of Christ (Heb. 7:1-3)
- i] **David** was a type of Christ (Ezek. 34:23; 37:24 & Jn. 10:1-16)
- j] The **bronze serpent** was a type of Christ (Jn. 3:14-15; cf. Num. 21:4-9)
- k] The **temple** was a type of Christ (Jn. 2:19-21)
- l] If God’s promised blessings for Israel under the old covenant were **in the land** (Dt. 7:13; 28:8-13), and if God’s promised blessings under the new covenant are in

the “land” (Isa. 19:18-25; Jer. 23:6-8; 32:37-41; 33:14-18; Ezek. 34:25-31), and if all spiritual blessings are “in Christ” (Eph. 1:3), is it farfetched to believe that **Christ is the “land”** for Christians, the new Israel of God (Gal. 6:16)?

f) All of the promises to Abraham had both a **physical** and a **spiritual** fulfillment

1] Chart: “A Double Fulfillment”

g. Sixth, some of these prophecies should be **interpreted in a similar manner** because they contain the **same kind of “Messianic language”** as the aforementioned prophecies, or they are **linked** in some way to **other Messianic prophecies**⁷

1) *Thesis*: If the NT indicates that some of the prophecies that foretold a return to the land under the Messiah were being “**spiritually fulfilled**” in the **apostolic age** and other prophecies contain **similar language**, then they should be interpreted in a **similar way**

Messianic Language		
Ezek. 37	OT	NT
Put Spirit in you (14)	Joel 2:28-32	Acts 2:16-21
One nation & one king (22)	2 Sam. 7:12-16	Acts 2:22-36
Cleanse them (23)	Jer. 31:31-34	Heb. 8:6-13
My people & their God (23)	Hos. 2:21-23	Rom. 9:22-26
David shall be king (24)	Hos. 3:5	Lk. 1:31-33
One shepherd	Ezek. 34:23	Jn. 10:1-16
Dwell in land (25)	Jer. 23:6; 33:16	Heb. 11:10, 13-15
David prince forever (25)	Dan. 7:13-14, 27	Mt. 26:64
Covenant of peace (26)	Jer. 31:31-34	Heb. 8:6-13
My tabernacle with them (27)	2 Sam. 7:12-16	Jn. 1:14; Rev. 21:3

2) See **Appendix A** for a more detailed presentation of this argument

I. Objection: OT prophecy should be **interpreted literally**, and amillennialists **abandon** this fundamental principle of interpretation

1. Explanation:

- a. *Hal Lindsey*: “The **real issue** between the amillennial and the Premillennial viewpoints is whether prophecy should be **interpreted literally** or **allegorically**.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, 176, quoted in Jim McGuiggan, *The Kingdom of God and the Planet Earth*, 48)
- b. *John Walvoord*: “There is a growing realization in the theological world that **the crux** of the millennial issue is the question of *method* of

⁷ This argument may not always be valid because the same language can mean different things in different contexts, but I believe it is almost always valid.

interpreting Scripture. Premillenarians follow the so-called ‘**grammatical-historical’ literal interpretation** while amillenarians use a **spiritualizing method.**” (Bold emphasis added, *Millennial Series*, n.p.)

- c. *John Walvoord*: “The debate between premillenarians and amillenarians hangs to a large extent upon the **principles of interpretation** of Scripture which each group employs...In principles of interpretation **the crux** of the controversy is revealed.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Millennial Kingdom*, 124, quoted in Jim McGuiggan, *The Kingdom of God and the Planet Earth*, 48)
- d. *John Walvoord*: “The interpreter of prophecy has, therefore, no more warrant to **spiritualize prophecy** than any other area of theology.” (Bold emphasis added, *Millennial Series*, n.p.)
- e. *Oliver B. Greene*: “**Every prophecy and promise of the first coming** of the Lord Jesus Christ was **literally fulfilled to the letter**. The prophecies which speak of his first and second comings are often found in the same verse – even the same sentence. How can we accept as **literal the prophecies of his first coming** and then **spiritualize the prophecies concerning his second coming?** (Micah 5:2; Zech 9:9; 11:2, 13; 12:10; 13:7 Psa 16:10; 22:16, 18; 34:20; 35:11; 41:9; 69:21; Isa 50:6; 53:8-9, 12; Hosea 6:2; Matt 26:31, 60, 67; 27:7-10, 34-35; Luke 1:30-35; John 13:18; 19:31-36).” (Bold emphasis added, *The Second Coming of Jesus*, 313-316, quoted in Brooks, 31)

2. Evaluation:

- a. First, not every prophecy of Jesus’ Incarnation was “**literally fulfilled to the letter**”
 - 1) John the Baptist was not a literal **road builder** (Isa. 40:3-4; Mt. 3:1-5)
 - 2) **Elijah** did not literally return (Mal. 4:5-6; Mt. 17:10-13)
 - 3) **Bulls, lions, and dogs** did not literally surround Jesus at Calvary (Psa. 22:12, 16)
 - 4) Etc.
- b. Second, and most importantly, some OT prophecies should be **interpreted figuratively** because that is the way the **inspired writers** of the NT interpret them ([See V. H. 2. d. above](#))
- c. Third, some OT prophecies should be **interpreted figuratively** because a **literal interpretation** results in a **contradiction** with other passages

You Can’t Have It Both Ways	
Mountain of Jehovah’s house established (Isa. 2:1-4)	Every mountain leveled (Isa. 40:3-5)
Gentiles in the temple (Isa. 2:3; Zech. 14:16)	No Gentiles in the temple (Joel 3:17; Ezek. 44:9; Zech. 14:21)

You Can't Have It Both Ways	
Wild animals at peace (Isa. 11:6-9)	No wild animals (Isa. 35:9; Ezek. 34:25)
Edom a burning pitch (Isa. 34:9-10)	Edom inhabited by animals (Isa. 34:11)
Sodom flourishing (Ezek. 16:53-59)	Sodom suffering eternal fire (Jude 7)
Fortified cities (Ezek. 36:35)	Cities without walls, gates, and bars (Ezek. 38:10-12; Zech. 2:4)
Jews dwelling in the land of the fathers (Ezek. 37:25)	Habitation of the new earth (2 Pet. 3:10-13)

- f. Fourth, some OT prophecies should be interpreted figuratively because a **literal interpretation** results in **absurdities**
- 1) Will the mountains literally break forth in **singing** and the trees **clap** their hands? (Isa. 55:12-13)
 - 2) Are the ancient nations of **Philistia, Edom, Moab, and Ammon** to be revived? (cf. Isa. 11:11-16)
 - 3) Is ancient **Assyria** going to be restored? (cf. Isa. 19:18-25; Mic. 5:2-7)
 - 4) Is there really going to be a **river of blood** as high as the horses' bridles for **1600 furlongs** [200 miles] (cf. Rev. 14:20)
 - 5) Will Gog and Magog ride **horses** and fight with **ancient weapons**? (cf. Ezek. 38:4; 39:9)
 - 6) Will Israel really **burn weapons for 7 years**? (cf. Ezek. 39:9-10)
 - 7) Will it really take **7 months** for **all of Israel** to **bury the bodies**? (Ezek. 39:11-16)
 - 8) Will Israel literally **milk the breast of kings**? (Isa. 60:15-22)
 - 9) Will **200 million** march on Israel **without water**? (Rev. 9:16; 16:4, 12)

Conclusion:

- I. God has **kept His promises** to Abraham and his descendants
- II. From a Biblical and prophetic viewpoint, **modern Israel is of no consequence nationally**
 - A. Chart: "Biblical Israel Vs. Modern Israel"
 1. *Charles C. Ryrie*: "The Jewish state of Israel established in Palestine today is **not the fulfillment** of prophecies concerning the nation Israel in the prophetic Word. Israel is constituted as a nation in God's sight even while in dispersion, and the fact that a portion of the Jewish people have constituted themselves a political entity does not make this portion the nation of prophecy. Fulfillment of

the prophecies requires the **regathering** of **all Israel**, their **spiritual rebirth**, and the **return of Christ**. Present-day Israel, though doubtless a forerunner of and a preparation for the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning Israel as a nation in the future, is characterized only by a **partial return in unbelief.**” (The Basis of the Premillennial Faith, 2005, 93-94)

- B. This doesn't necessarily mean that the U.S. should **abandon Israel as an ally**
 - 1. There may be **very good political reasons** to support and defend Israel
 - 2. But there are **not religious reasons** (despite the claims of dispensationalists) to do so

- III. The NT looks to **no future restoration for the Jews as a nation**, but only to **redemption in Jesus Christ** for those who will trust and obey Him, whether Jew or Gentile (Rom. 1:16; 11:1-6, 25-27)

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Appendix A:

Similar Messianic Language In Prophecies Concerning The Promised Land⁸

Messianic Language	OT Approximation	NT Connection
Obad. 17-21 (~845 BC)	Joel 2:28-32	Acts 2:1-4, 16-21, 36-42; Rom. 10:13
	Num. 24:15-19	Rev. 22:16
	Isa. 11:1, 6-9, 10-16	Lk. 1:31-33; Rev. 5:5; 22:16; Rom. 15:7-12
	Amos 9:11-15	Acts 15:15-18
Joel 3:1, 16-21 (~830 BC)	Isa. 49:1-13	Rev. 1:16; 2:12, 16; 19:15; Lk. 2:32; Acts 13:47; 26:23; 2 Cor. 6:2; Rev. 7:16-17
	Jer. 31:12-14, 23-25, 31-34	Heb. 8:6-13; 13:20
	Joel 2:28-32	Acts 2:1-4, 16-21, 36-42; Rom. 10:13
	Amos 9:11-15	Acts 15:15-18
	Psa. 2:6-7	Acts 2:22-36; 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 5:5
	Isa. 8:18	Heb. 2:13
	Isa. 11:1, 6-9, 10-16	Rom. 15:7-12
	Hos. 2:21-23	Rom. 9:22-26; 1 Pet. 2:9-10
Zech. 14:8	Rev. 21:6; 22:1, 17	
Hos. 1:11 (~750-725 BC)	Isa. 11:1, 6-9, 10-16	Lk. 1:31-33; Rev. 5:5; 22:16; Rom. 15:7-12
	Isa. 56:7-8	Mt. 21:13; Mk. 11:17; Lk. 19:46; Jn. 10:16
	Jer. 31:10, 31-34	Heb. 8:6-13; 13:20; 2 Cor. 6:16; Rev. 21:3
	Ezek. 34:23	Jn. 10:1-16; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4; Rev. 7:17
	Ezek. 37:21-28	Lk. 1:31-33; Rev. 5:5; 22:16

⁸ These prophecies are arranged roughly in chronological order. I have followed the dates suggested by Homer Hailey in *A Commentary on the Minor Prophets*, pp. 19-21. Although I tried to be as careful and yet as thorough as possible, I have likely omitted some “connections” that I should have included and perhaps included some that I should have omitted. Hopefully, this chart will be a helpful reference resource.

Messianic Language	OT Approximation	NT Connection
Hos. 3:5 (~750-725 BC)	Isa. 11:1, 6-9, 10-16	Lk. 1:31-33; Rev. 5:5; 22:16; Rom. 15:7-12
	Ezek. 34:23	Jn. 10:1-16; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4; Rev. 7:17
	Ezek. 37:21-28	Lk. 1:31-33; Rev. 5:5; 22:16
Isa. 14:1-2 (~740-700 BC)	Isa. 2:2-3; Mic. 4:2	Acts 2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 8:6; 9:31; 18:8, 10
	Isa. 60:3-5	Rev. 21:24
	Isa. 66:18-24	2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1; Mk. 9:48
	Hag. 2:6-9	Heb. 12:22-29
	Psa. 68:18 [?]	Eph. 4:8
Isa. 27:12-13 (~740-700 BC)	Isa. 11:1, 6-9, 10-16	Lk. 1:31-33; Rev. 5:5; 22:16; Rom. 15:7-12; Heb. 12:22-24
Isa. 43:5-8, 19-21 (~740-700 BC)	Isa. 11:1, 6-9, 10-16	Lk. 1:31-33; Rev. 5:5; 22:16; Rom. 15:7-12; Heb. 12:22-24
	See Mic. 4:1-7	
Isa. 49:2, 6-13, 18-23 (~740-700 BC)		Rev. 1:16; 2:12; 19:15; Lk. 2:32; Acts 13:47; 26:22-23; 2 Cor. 6:2; Rev. 7:16-17
	Jer. 31:10, 31-34	Heb. 8:6-13; 13:20
	Isa. 11:1, 6-9, 10-16	Lk. 1:31-33; Rev. 5:5; 22:16; Rom. 15:7-12
Isa. 54:1-13 (~740-700 BC)		Gal. 4:27
	Isa. 11:1, 6-9, 10-16	Lk. 1:31-33; Rev. 5:5; 22:16; Rom. 15:7-12
		Rev. 21:18-21; Jn. 6:44-45
Isa. 52:1ff, 6-10 (~740-700 BC)	Note: Isa. 52:13-53:12 is obviously Messianic	Rom. 10:13-16
		2 Cor. 6:17; Rev. 18:4
Isa. 55:1-5, 12-13 (~740-700 BC)		Rev. 21:6; 22:17; Acts 13:34
	Jer. 31:31-34	Heb. 8:6-13; 13:20
	Amos 9:11-15	Acts 15:15-18
Isa. 56:7-8 (~740-700 BC)		Mt. 21:13; Mk. 11:17; Lk. 19:46; Jn. 10:16
Isa. 60:3-5 (~740-700 BC)	See Mic. 4:1-7	Lk. 1:78-79; Rev. 21:23-25; 22:5

Messianic Language	OT Approximation	NT Connection
Isa. 61:1-9 (~740-700 BC)	Isa. 11:1-5	Mt. 11:2-6; Lk. 4:16-21; 7:19-23; Acts 4:27; 10:38; 26:18
	Amos 9:11-15	Acts 15:15-18
	Jer. 31:31-34	Heb. 8:6-13; 13:20
Isa. 62:1-12 (~740-700 BC)	Amos 9:11-15	Acts 15:15-18
	Isa. 11:1, 6-9, 10-16	Lk. 1:31-33; Rev. 5:5; 22:16; Rom. 15:7-12
Isa. 65:8-10, 17-25 (~740-700 BC)	Isa. 11:1, 6-9, 10-16	Lk. 1:31-33; Rev. 5:5; 22:16; Rom. 15:7-12
	Amos 9:11-15	Acts 15:15-18
Isa. 66:18-23 (~740-700 BC)	Isa. 11:1, 6-9, 10-16	Lk. 1:31-33; Rev. 5:5; 22:16; Rom. 15:7-12
Mic. 2:12-13 (~735-700 BC)	Mic. 5:2	Mt. 2:1-6; Jn. 7:42
Mic. 4:1-7 (~735-700 BC)	Gen. 49:1, 10	Mt. 2:2 [?]; Rev. 22:16
	Num. 24:14, 17	Rev. 22:16
	Isa. 2:2a	Acts 2:16-17; Heb. 1:1-2;
	Isa. 2:2b; 2 Sam. 7:12-16	Acts 2:22-36
	Isa. 2:2c	Mt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15-16
	Isa. 2:3a	1 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 3:6; 10:21
	Isa. 2:3b	Jn. 6:44-45
	Isa. 2:3c	Lk. 24:44-48; Acts 1:8
	Isa. 2:4a	Jn. 5:22, 27; Mt. 25:31-34; Acts 17:30-31
	Isa. 2:4b; cf. Isa. 11:6-10	Rom. 15:7-12; Jn. 18:36; Eph. 2:14-17
	Dan. 2:28-44	Mt. 4:17; Mk. 1:14-15
	Hos. 2:18, 21-23	Rom. 9:22-26; 1 Pet. 2:9-10
	Isa. 35:1-10	Mt. 11:2-6; Lk. 7:19-23
Zeph. 3:14-20 (~630-625 BC)	Psa. 2:6-7	Acts 2:22-36; 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 5:5
	Isa. 9:6-7	Eph. 2:14; Lk. 1:31-33; Jn. 1:49; Rev. 19:16
	Isa. 11:1, 6-9, 10-16	Lk. 1:31-33; Rev. 5:5; 22:16; Rom. 15:7-12
Jer. 23:3-8 (~626-586 BC)	Isa. 11:1, 6-9, 10-16	Lk. 1:31-33; Rev. 5:5; 22:16; Rom. 15:7-12
	Psa. 2:6-7	Acts 2:22-36; 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 5:5
	Isa. 9:6-7	Lk. 1:31-33; Jn. 1:49; Rev. 19:16
	Dan. 7:13-14, 27	Mt. 26:64; Mk. 14:62; Lk. 21:27; Rev. 1:13; 14:14

Messianic Language	OT Approximation	NT Connection
Jer. 24:4-7 (~626-586 BC)	Isa. 11:1, 6-9, 10-16	Lk. 1:31-33; Rev. 5:5; 22:16; Rom. 15:7-12
	Jer. 31:23-25, 31-34	Heb. 8:6-13; 13:20
Jer. 30:3, 7-11, 18-22 (~626-586 BC)	Isa. 11:1, 6-9, 10-16	Lk. 1:31-33; Rev. 5:5; 22:16; Rom. 15:7-12
	Psa. 2:6-7	Acts 2:22-36; 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 5:5
	Isa. 9:6-7	Lk. 1:31-33; Jn. 1:49; Rev. 19:16
	Dan. 7:13-14, 27	Mt. 26:64; Mk. 14:62; Lk. 21:27; Rev. 1:13; 14:14
	Hos. 2:21-23	Rom. 9:22-26; 1 Pet. 2:9-10
Jer. 31:1-14, 16-17, 23-28 (~626-586 BC)	See Mic. 4:1-5	
	Amos 9:11-15	Acts 15:15-18
	Jer. 31:31-34	Heb. 8:6-13; 13:20
Jer. 32:37-44 (~626-586 BC)	Hos. 2:21-23	Rom. 9:22-26; 1 Pet. 2:9-10
	Jer. 31:31-34	Heb. 8:6-13; 13:20
Jer. 33:6-18 (~626-586 BC)	Jer. 31:31-34	Heb. 8:6-13; 13:20
	Isa. 11:1, 6-9, 10-16	Lk. 1:31-33; Rev. 5:5; 22:16; Rom. 15:7-12
	Psa. 2:6-7	Acts 2:22-36; 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 5:5
	Isa. 9:6-7	Lk. 1:31-33; Jn. 1:49; Rev. 19:16
	Dan. 7:13-14, 27	Mt. 26:64; Mk. 14:62; Lk. 21:27; Rev. 1:13; 14:14
Jer. 50:3-5, 19-20 (~626-586 BC)	Jer. 31:28-34	Heb. 8:6-13; 13:20
Ezek. 11:16-20 (~593-570 BC)	Jer. 31:31-34	Heb. 8:6-13; 13:20
	Hos. 2:21-23	Rom. 9:22-26; 1 Pet. 2:9-10
Ezek. 16:53, 60-63 (~593-570 BC)	Jer. 31:31-34	Heb. 8:6-13; 13:20
Ezek. 28:25-26 (~593-570 BC)	See Jer. 23:3-8; 32:37-44	
Ezek. 34:11-16, 23-31 (~593-570 BC)		Jn. 10:1-16; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4; Rev. 7:17; Rev. 5:5; 22:16
	Psa. 2:6-7	Acts 2:22-36; 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 5:5
	Isa. 9:6-7	Lk. 1:31-33; Jn. 1:49; Rev. 19:16

Messianic Language	OT Approximation	NT Connection
Ezek. 34:11-16, 23-31 (~593-570 BC)	Dan. 7:13-14, 27	Mt. 26:64; Mk. 14:62; Lk. 21:27; Rev. 1:13; 14:14
	Hos. 2:21-23	Rom. 9:22-26; 1 Pet. 2:9-10
	Isa. 55:3	Acts 13:34
	Jer. 31:31-34	Heb. 8:6-13; 13:20
	Amos 9:11-15	Acts 15:15-18
Ezek. 36:22-38 (~593-570 BC)	See Jer. 23:3-8; 32:37-44	
	Joel 2:28-32	Acts 2:1-4, 16-21, 36-42; Rom. 10:13
	Jer. 31:31-33	Heb. 8:6-13; 13:20
	Hos. 2:21-23	Rom. 9:22-26; 1 Pet. 2:9-10
	Amos 9:11-15	Acts 15:15-18
Ezek. 37:14, 21-28 (~593-570 BC)	Joel 2:28-32	Acts 2:1-4, 16-21, 36-42; Rom. 10:13
	2 Sam. 7:12-16	Acts 2:22-36
	Psa. 2:6-7	Acts 2:22-36; 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 5:5
	Isa. 9:6-7	Lk. 1:31-33; Jn. 1:49; Rev. 19:16
	Dan. 2:28-44	Mt. 4:17; Mk. 1:14-15
	Dan. 7:13-14, 27	Mt. 26:64; Mk. 14:62; Lk. 21:27; Rev. 1:13; 14:14
		Jn. 10:1-16; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4; Rev. 7:17; Rev. 5:5; 22:16
	Jer. 31:31-34	Heb. 8:6-13; 13:20
	Hos. 2:21-23	Rom. 9:22-26; 1 Pet. 2:9-10; Rev. 21:3
	Isa. 55:3	Acts 13:34
See Jer. 32:37-44		
Ezek. 39:25-29 (~593-570 BC)	Joel 2:28-32	Acts 2:1-4, 16-21, 36-42; Rom. 10:13
	Hos. 2:21-23	Rom. 9:22-26; 1 Pet. 2:9-10
Zech. 2:10-13 (520-518 BC)	See Mic. 4:1-5	
Zech. 3:8-10 (520-518 BC)	Isa. 11:1, 10-16	Lk. 1:31-33; Rev. 5:5; 22:16; Rom. 15:7-12
	See Mic. 4:1-5	
	Jer. 31:31-34	Heb. 8:6-13; 13:20

Messianic Language	OT Approximation	NT Connection
Zech. 6:12-15 (520-518 BC)	Isa. 11:1, 10-16	Lk. 1:31-33; Rev. 5:5; 22:16; Rom. 15:7-12
	See Jer. 23:5; 33:15-18	
	Psa. 110:1-2	Mt. 22:44; 26:64; Mk. 12:36; 14:62; 16:19; Lk. 20:42-43; 22:69; Acts 2:34-35; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:13; 8:1; 10:12-13; 12:2
	Psa. 110:4	Heb. 5:5-10; 6:19-20; 7:1-3, 14-17, 20-21
Zech. 8:1-8, 21-22 (520-518 BC)	See Mic. 4:1-5; Isa. 65:17-25	
	Jer. 31:31-34	Heb. 8:6-13; 13:20
	Hos. 2:21-23	Rom. 9:22-26; 1 Pet. 2:9-10
Zech. 9:9-17 (520-518 BC)		Mt. 21:1ff; Mk. 11:1ff; Lk. 19:29ff; Jn. 12:13ff
	See Mic. 4:1-5	
		Eph. 2:17
	Psa. 72:8	Mt. 28:18
	Jer. 31:12, 31-34	Mt. 26:28; Mk. 14:24; Lk. 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; Heb. 8:6-13; 10:29; 13:20
	Isa. 11:10-16 [?]	Rom. 15:7-12
	Amos 9:11-15	Acts 15:15-18
Zech. 10:1, 6-10 (520-518 BC)	Amos 9:11-15	Acts 15:15-18
	Isa. 11:1, 10-16	Lk. 1:31-33; Rev. 5:5; 22:16; Rom. 15:7-12
	See Ezek. 34:11-16, 23-31	
Zech. 14:1-21 (520-518 BC)	Isa. 11:1, 10-16	Lk. 1:31-33; Rev. 5:5; 22:16; Rom. 15:7-12
	Joel 2:28-32	Acts 2:1-4, 16-21, 36-42; Rom. 10:13
		Jn. 4:10-14; 7:37-39; Rev. 22:1
	Psa. 72:8	Mt. 28:18
	See Mic. 4:1-5	

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