

Sunday, January 16, 2022 pm

STUDIES IN PREMILLENNIALISM (10)

What About Israel Today?

Will Physical Israel Be Restored?

In our study of premillennialism, we have covered many topics. Throughout we have talked about how God has fulfilled His plans and Jesus is now reigning in His kingdom (spiritual – in heaven). But one of the aspects of this materialistic theory is that Israel is going to be restored to its Davidic glory. In this lesson I want to address this, as we prepare to bring to conclusion our study of this false theory.

Following WW2, on May 14, 1948, the United Nations declared an area of Palestine as “The Republic of Israel.” It was a compromise due to an influx of Jews to that region, following WW1 and the holocaust. Jews purchased land from the Arabs, but such was resented by some of wealthier Arabs of the region. The problem was turned over to the United Nations who divided the land into 2 states – one Jewish and one Palestinian. This was the beginning of modern Israel. Premillennialists used this event to declare the beginning of the fulfillment of the end time prophecies as outlined in Revelation and other prophetic passages. NOTE that the premillennial doctrine had already been in circulation for half a century, but modern “prophets” ran with it and many begin filling in the blanks. Does anyone remember the booklet, “88 Reasons Why The Rapture Will Be In in 1988”? That’s 40 years after the events of 1948. The institution of the nation of Israel at that time by the United Nations is a hot bed topic of premillennialism. In this lesson I want to notice why this is NOT the work of God.

I. Did God fulfill His promise to Abraham? YES!

- a. Paul preached “the hope of Israel” - Acts 28:16-20 the chief of Jews in Rome, 26:6-7 – before Agrippa. What was the hope that Paul preached? It was Jesus Christ is their promised Messiah. Paul was despised and persecuted because, like Jesus, he did not preach a materialistic kingdom of God. He preached Jesus now reigning on His throne in heaven as their king. Question: Would the Jews back then have rejected the modern day “prophets” of premillennialism? Likely not, because they are preaching the SAME false message the Jews of the 1st century WANTED.
- b. The promise to Abraham – What was the promise God made to Abraham?
 - i. Genesis 12:1-7 – here we find 3 promises:
 1. I will make you a great nation – Israel was to become a great nation. A blessing to those who blessed him –
 2. “In you all families of the earth shall be blessed” –
 3. Vs. 7 – “to your descendants I will give this land.
 - ii. Genesis 13:15 – after separated from Lot, the LORD tells Abraham to lift his eyes and look in all directions – “*for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever.*”
 - iii. Genesis 15:18 – God makes a covenant with Abraham. He notes that his descendants would be foreigners in a land for 400 years (their time in Egypt) but then they would return. On the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying: “*To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates—...*” (various nations are named – vs. 19-21).
 - iv. Genesis 17:7-8 – A covenant established that would be an “*everlasting covenant*”; all the land of Canaan promised “*as an everlasting possession.*”
 - v. Genesis 22:16-18, after his offering of Isaac, the LORD promised to multiply his descendants and repeated the seed promise of Genesis 12:3.
 - vi. Exodus 6:2-8, the LORD speaks to Moses after his first encounter with Pharaoh. He acknowledges the promise He made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the covenant He established to give them the land of Canaan. Vs. 8, *And I will bring you into the land which I*

swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the Lord.'"

- vii. So in summary the promise is the 3 fold promise of Genesis 12:1-7.
- c. Has the promise to Abraham been fulfilled?
 - i. Was Israel ever a great nation?
 - 1. Yes. First, the OT history books record God often being with them and delivering them in wonderful (think of what that means) and miraculous ways.
 - 2. Deuteronomy 4:7, *"For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the Lord our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him?"*
 - 3. During the reign of David and Solomon we see their greatness - physically. They were clearly a great nation in that region.
 - a. 1 Kings 4:20 – Judah and Israel as numerous as the sand by the sea in multitude 34
 - b. During the reign of Solomon, numerous nations paid tribute to Israel – 1 Kings 4:21. The greatness of Solomon is seen in his 700 wives and 300 concubines, most of which were very likely associated with alliances.
 - c. 1 Kings 4:34 speaks of men of all nations, from all the kings of the earth came to hear about the wisdom of Solomon. The queen of Sheba praises Solomon. (Sheba was at the southern tip of the Arabian peninsula).
 - 4. Their greatness is further demonstrated in His preserving them until the time of Christ, in spite of their often bad behavior. Numerous other nations came and fell as Israel continued.
 - ii. Did Israel receive the land promised?
 - 1. **Joshua 21:43-45** – notice that he states, *"Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass."*
 - 2. **Joshua 23:14**, as Joshua gives his farewell address he repeats the fulfillment of the promise.
 - 3. **1 Kings 8:56** as Solomon blessed the temple (~1000 years after Abraham, ~450 years after Joshua). He notes that not a word of the promise God made to give His people rest had failed.
 - 4. **Nehemiah 9:7-8** – much later, after Judah's return from Babylon – the restoration of the temple and city, Nehemiah praises God. Notice he says of the promise to Abraham, *"You have performed Your words for You are righteous."*
 - 5. Cities of refuge – Deuteronomy 19 gives instructions AFTER the nations God had cut off and GIVEN to Israel. They were to build cities of refuge – places where those who accidentally killed a fellow Israelite could flee for protection. 6 cities were to be built, 3 on either side of the Jordan – geographically within about a day's journey from anywhere in the land. Joshua 20, after the conquest finds Joshua commanded to appoint these cities. Israel had received their land.
 - iii. What about the borders of the land as described in Genesis 15:18?
 - 1. Note above that in **Joshua 21:43-45** it said that God gave them ALL the land He promised. The latter part of Joshua records some of Israel's failings in accepting it, but that does not change that God fulfilled His promise.
 - 2. Furthermore, the boundaries were expanded under David and Solomon.
 - a. Concerning the territorial boundaries of Israel, consider: 2 Samuel 8:3 – note the word "recover." Can you recover something not possessed before?
 - b. Consider Solomon reign – 1 Kings 4:21, *So Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border*

of Egypt. They brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.
The River is believed to be the Euphrates and the borders of Egypt would be the river of Egypt. Compare this with Genesis 15:18.

- c. According to these texts, God fulfilled His word. And as already noted, it was recognized by both Solomon and Nehemiah.
- iv. Have all nations been blessed by his seed as promised?
 1. The answer is absolutely.
 2. This was the ultimate purpose behind the covenant and promises God made with Abraham.
 3. Numerous passages in the New Testament show Jesus as the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham.
 - a. Recall Paul appealing to "the hope of Israel" in Acts 28:16-20 & 26:6-7.
 - b. Consider Galatians 3:7-9 speaks of the sons of faith of Abraham and notes that God intended to include the Gentiles in his promise to Abraham. He quotes from Genesis 12:3.
 - c. Galatians 3:19-25, Paul follows this up by explaining the purpose of the Law of Moses for Israel was to bring them to Christ. And it was intended to last UNTIL the seed should come. Bear in mind, the Law of Moses was FOR national Israel.
 - d. Galatians 3:26-29 – if we are in Christ, we are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.
 4. In Christ, there is no longer a distinction between Jews and Gentiles –
 - a. Ephesians 2:14-18 – the cross took it out of the way.
 - b. That is emphasized in the New Law – one of the points the Hebrew writer makes as he quotes from Jeremiah 31:31-34. Hebrews 8:7-13 noted the need for a new covenant to replace the old one – a covenant that is made available to EVERYONE!
 - c. The gospel is for ALL – Romans 1:16,17; Galatians 3:27-28
 5. Romans 2:28-29, *For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.* This summarizes the point!

II. **Other considerations related to the Abrahamic promise:**

- a. What about the "everlasting covenant"?
 - i. One of premillennialism's foundations is the claim that God has not fulfilled His promise to Abraham or Israel, because He said it was forever and since after the destruction of Jerusalem (actually after Babylonian captivity) they did not rule the land anymore, then the nation of Israel must be reestablished.
 - ii. First, While the word can mean everlasting as we think of it, it can also mean age lasting – as long as something remains. Consider:
 1. This same word is found in reference to circumcision - Genesis 17:13. Yet at the cross, physical circumcision was done away with – Galatians 5:1-6
 2. And the Levitical priesthood – Exodus 40:15, see Hebrews 7:11ff – Jesus did away with the Levitical priesthood.
 3. Clearly both of these had a specific group in mind – circumcision – the descendants of Abraham, and the Levitical priesthood – the material nation of Israel. Their "everlasting" time has evaporated.
 - iii. Second, consider this: What about after the 1000 years reign of Christ when the world is finally destroyed? (2 Peter 3:10ff) Is that "forever", or for "as long as the earth exists." NOTE

that Israel DID possess the land for about 1500 years (from Joshua to the destruction of the temple in 70 AD), but they threw God's promises back at Him.

- b. Was the land promise conditional?
 - i. Another question that MUST be addressed as we deal with the promise to Abraham and Israel is to address whether or not the promise was conditional.
 - ii. Moses, in Deuteronomy 28-30 warned the children of Israel, as they prepared to inherit their promised land, that they needed to remain faithful to God. If so, He would bless them. If they rebelled, He would punish them – in great detail they are told what would happen if they rejected God. Words like, “consume” (28:21), “perish” (22), “destroyed” (24) are used to describe them. However, in mercy He ALSO promised to restore them IF they repented and returned to Him (ch. 30).
 - iii. Joshua 23:14-16, notice how Joshua warns the people that keeping the land is conditional – they had to remain faithful to Him. The point of Joshua's speech is that he KNEW they were going to rebel. In fact they had already started by FAILING to drive out the rest of the inhabitants that God had commanded them.
 - iv. Rebellion against God became the history of Israel as recorded throughout the rest of the Old Testament. Yet, over and over and over, God would punish them and then bring them back. The murdering of Jesus was the final straw – God was done with NATIONAL Israel, as they had utterly and again rejected God. Jesus even mourned knowing of Jerusalem (and Israel's) fate – Matthew 23:37-39, etc.
 - v. Do you think Abraham has a problem with the way God gave the land to His descendants? Do you think He would argue with God that He has not kept His word yet? I think of his faith in Hebrews 11:13-16, 9-10.
- c. What about the promise of restoration?
 - i. One more issue that needs to be addressed. Premillennialists appeal to passages of scripture that promise restoration. They are found throughout the prophets and other places.
 - 1. Deuteronomy 30 (as previously mentioned).
 - 2. 2 Chronicles 7:14 – the promise of the LORD was that He would heal their land.
 - 3. Many prophets, especially the “major” prophets spoke of future restorations.
 - ii. But all of them, when put into context, had reference to their physical restoration (most of them meaning the return from Babylonian captivity), or perhaps the coming of Jesus (the spiritual fulfillment) that would complete the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham.
 - iii. A study of Deuteronomy 30, 2 Chron. 7:14 and other passages makes the return conditional – it was based upon the “righteous remnant” who would return to God. The Israel of today, has not repented. The majority of Jews in Palestine today are not “Christian”, but seek to conform to the LOM instead (which even they admit they cannot follow because NOT A SINGLE JEW knows his tribal lineage). Thus there is STILL no repentance. Premillennialism says this repentance has to happen before Christ can return. (I say, it is NOT going to happen – TT).

III. Problems with the Israel of premillennialism

- a. It is materialistic – John 18:36, Colossians 3:1-2.
- b. It gives Jews a false hope
- c. It makes God partial toward physical Jews today. Premillennialism implies that at some point God is going to (miraculously) change the hearts of many (not all) Jews to accept Jesus as their Messiah. This is a form of Calvinistic election.
- d. It presents 2 paths to salvation – 1 for the Jewish nation, the other for the rest of us. This flatly contradicts the Bible concerning salvation.

- e. It ignores the purpose of national Israel – to prepare for the worldwide savior – Jesus Christ God’s will for national Israel has been completed. His goal in coming Abraham was NOT primarily about Israel – they were the conduit that accomplished His purpose.
- f. It disregard’s the conditional nature of God’s promise – Israel continually rejected God.
- g. **There is not a single promise of national restoration in the NT.**
In the OT, promises of material return were related to their captivities (Assyrian, Babylonian).
- h. It ignores the 70 AD passages of doom to the nation of Israel – e.g. Matthew 24, etc.

And thus, we can why Israel of today is not proof of the premillennial theory. Furthermore, Israel of today is NOT the Israel of the Old Testament.

And thus we bring to our conclusion addressing the various elements of premillennialism. I will present ONE more lesson next week – a concluding lesson with summary observations, including the seriousness of this false system of doctrine – should it be defended and tolerated? Until then, and as we have noted with each of these lessons – the Lord IS returning. Are you prepared? Think about it!