



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Eschatology

“The Abrahamic Covenant, part III”

TRANSCRIPT

We are studying in our studies in Eschatology the Abrahamic Covenant in eschatology, and this is the third and the last of our series of messages on the Abrahamic Covenant. Now will you turn with me in your Bibles to Romans chapter 11 and will you listen as I read beginning at the 11th verse through the 27th? Romans chapter 11 verse 11 through verse 27. The apostle is answering the question with which he opens this chapter, “I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid.” And so Romans chapter 11 is an answer to the question, pointing out that God has not cast away his people his rejection of them is not total, nor is it final. In the 11th verse he deals with the question of the finality through verse 27. He says,

“I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness? (He refers of course to the future salvation of Israel.) For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentile, and inasmuch as I am an apostle of the

Gentiles I magnify my office: If by any means I may provoke to jealousy them who are my flesh, and might save some of them.

For if the casting away of them (that is the Jews) be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? (Now he illustrates) For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, the Gentiles wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. (Typical Gentile attitude.) Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them who fell, severity; Israel but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, who are the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant

unto them, when I shall take away their sins.”

The Abrahamic Covenant, the most fundamental of the historical covenants, contains unconditional promises which God made to Israel concerning the land, but this claim is disputed, and that is what we are studying. For example, a well known amillennialist, Professor Oswald Allis, a Calvinist, taught that Israel’s rejection of Jesus Christ canceled their promises and those promises which were Israel’s promises have been inherited by the church. If you have an old Authorized Version Bible with headings over the chapters you probably find that kind of heading in your Bible, because that kind of theology is represented in many of the editions of the King James Version that have chapter and sectional headings.

Albertus Peters, another amillennialist, disagrees with Mr. Allis. He taught that the promises were never intended at all for a national group of Israelites, but rather for a covenanted group -- I’m using his terms -- covenanted group of believers from both Israel and the Gentiles. In other words, for Mr. Peters, Israel as Israel has no claim upon the promises at all.

A third amillennialist, a man who still lives and a very respected Christian man as all three of these men are in fact -- they are genuine Christian men who believe in the authority of Scripture. William Hendrickson believes that Israel is Israel, as we believe Israel is Israel or as people ordinarily take the term Israel to be Israelites, and that Israel inherits her promises which are set forth in Scripture, but she inherits them within the church, the conversion of the Jews to Christianity throughout the age and in large numbers at the end of this age, fulfills those ancient promises made to Israel. There will of course, be no kingdom upon the earth for Mr. Hendrickson, for it was never intended that there should be a kingdom upon the earth. Those promises are to be spiritualized in that sense. But Israel does inherit promises as Israelites, for they are Israelites within the

church and at the conclusion of this age, there will be a great number of them that will come into the body of Christ, and thus they will inherit promises.

If one must make a choice between these options then the last is to be preferred, because Israel’s continuance as a nation is something that the Bible plainly teaches, and I do not see how it is possible for us to escape the clear teaching of the word of God that the Nation Israel shall continue.

Let me ask you to turn with me to Jeremiah chapter 31, and let’s read a few verses verse 35 36 and 37 from Jeremiah 31, in which Jeremiah speaks of the permanence of the Nation Israel. Jeremiah 31 verse 35 through verse 37, page 805 in the new edition of the Scofield Bible. Verse 35 Jeremiah 31.

“Thus saith the LORD, who giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, who divideth the sea when its waves roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: If those ordinances (the sun, the stars, the moon) if those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.”

So the permanence of the Nation Israel is linked with the permanence of this created order in which we find ourselves. The sun, the moon, the stars.

We have considered in some measure the past unconditional promises in our first study. We tried to point out those promises that were given to Abraham in Genesis chapter 12 were confirmed to him in Genesis chapter 15 in that little ceremony in which

God alone passed down between the pieces of the animals in token of the fact that it was he who was guaranteeing that those promises would be fulfilled to Abraham.

Now of course if Abraham is disobedient, and if his seed is disobedient, then those promises may be postponed. They may be delayed in their fulfillment. But so far as the conditions for their fulfillment ultimately are concerned, God has met them, for they depend upon his faithfulness and the fact that he alone passed between the pieces indicates that that covenant that he made with Abraham was an unconditional covenant. So we looked at the past and we saw that.

Then last time we were looking at the present condition of Israel, and we saw from the study of some of the passages some of the claims made both by the amillennialists, and some of the other texts that Israel’s promises or that Israel herself is not disinherited in the present time by unbelief, nor has the church inherited their promises. But rather, those promises still are Israel’s promises.

We were at the close of the hour looking at Galatians chapter 6 verse 15 and 16 and I do want to say just another word or so about that particular passage. Galatians chapter 6 verse 15 and 16. Remember, we were trying to say that there are many of our amillennialist friends who say that here is a text in the New Testament in which the church is called Israel, and since the church is called Israel here, then we are justified in saying that the church has inherited the promises which have been given to Israel. I mentioned last time that there is no passage in the New Testament in which this meaning for Israel is found, but this is one of the two crucial texts -- the other is Romans 9:6. We looked at that. I wasn’t really through with this one so I want to finish up what I was saying last time.

Now Paul is speaking to the Galatian Christians and warning them against Judaizers who are saying to them that it’s not enough to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ in order to be saved, but one must also be circumcised. And the Epistle to the Galatians is a defense of his apostleship, a defense of his doctrine and a defense of the doctrine of

justification by faith, and then also a presentation of true Christian living as being walking by the Spirit.

At the conclusion of the letter he says, saying that because we are in Christ are a new creation, he says, “As many as walk according to this rule (that is, the rule of the new creation) as many as walk with the realization that they have died to the law they have been raised in Christ into newness of life, peace be on them and mercy and upon the Israel of God.” And this is the text that our friends who said plainly says that Israel is a term for the church, for surely, Paul must have the church in view when he says, peace be on them and mercy and upon the Israel of God.

In fact, some of them have translated that second “and” near the end of the verse, and upon the Israel of God as “even” in order to bring this out. Peace be on them and mercy, even upon the Israel of God. I suggested to you last time that there are two explanations of this text not just one that indicate that this is not the meaning of Paul. The first place, out of the many times the scores of times he uses, that the term Israel is used, in the New Testament it uniformly, except these two instances that are debated, refers to Israel as a nation, the national entity of Israel which we recognize as uh the descendants of Jacob.

Now it is possible for us to explain this in this way. After all, not all of the Jewish Christians or not all of the Gentile Christians as the case may be, but particularly the Jewish Christians, not all of the Jewish Christians in the churches of Galatia would have been misled by the Judaizers. There must have been some of them who were not misled by them, and so Paul has them in mind when he says, “As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy and upon the Israel of God.” In other words, all of those who have not fallen the false teachings of the Judaizers, may peace be on them and mercy and upon the Israel of God, and by that term he would refer to the true Israelites who walk according to the principles of grace and are not misled by the legalism of the Judaizers. So Israel of God would be a reference to true Israelites, national Israelites, the

descendants of Jacob converted to Jesus Christ and not misled by the legalism of the Judaizers. That would make very good sense. There is nothing really against that interpretation. It might even be the meaning.

I’d like to suggest to you also another possibility, and the more I study Galatians and the more I study Romans, the more I am convinced that this is really the meaning of Paul. When he says, and as many as walk according to this rule peace be on them and mercy and upon the Israel of God, it is possible for us to translate that second and by “also.”

Technically in Greek we call this the adjunctive sense of and. For example, if I were to say in Greek, the *kai* may mean, and, it may mean, also, it may mean, even. If I say I am going to Dallas and Fort Worth that’s a continuative *kai* Dallas and Fort Worth. If I say I am going to Dallas, I am also going to Fort Worth, that is an adjunctive meaning of and in Greek. That is, I am adding something to that which I have just stated. I can say I am going to Dallas, I am even going to Fort Worth, that’s an ascensive use in which I move from one statement, I ascend a little, and narrow it, and I make a statement that more definitely expands upon the preceding or something like that. Well let’s forget about that because that’s not the force here and think about also.

Now it so happens that over in the Epistle to the Romans in the 11th chapter when Paul is speaking about the future of Israel and the mercy that God is going to show them, he uses the term mercy. In fact, it’s his special term for the blessing that he has for Israel in the future. Let me read a few verses for you. Verse 28. Just after we stopped the Scripture reading it continues, “As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sake: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sake. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy (and of course the mercy is a term for God’s future blessing upon the Nation Israel when the nation shall be

converted) for God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

Now Paul had in his theology a strong tendency to speak of the kingdom of God in the future, and of course he had great love for Israel, and he thought of their future blessing when all Israel would be saved as the mercy of God upon them. Now then if we come back to Galatians chapter 6 and verse 16 and if we translate this verse this way, then we make excellent sense. We can translate, and as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, comma, and mercy also upon the Israel of God. And mercy also upon the Israel of God.

Now what then would he be speaking about? Why he would be saying, as many of you Galatian Christians as walk according to the rule of the new creation, not entangled in Judaistic legalism, peace be on you whether Jew or Gentile, and mercy also upon the Israel of God that shall come to faith in Jesus Christ at the time of the Second Advent. So then, the text becomes still a reference to the Nation Israel, descendants of Jacob. Under either one of these interpretations, the claims of those who say that here Israel means the church, are refuted. We don’t have to hold that. There are other good meanings, and the more I think about this, the more I think that this is an expression of aspiration for, on Paul’s part, for the days when nay when the Nation Israel shall be brought by the mercy of God to faith in him again.

Now then we come to Roman III in our outline which I was uh expounding last week, What is Israel’s status before God today? I want to very quickly run through what I intended to say last week. I think this is a very relevant thing in the light of May 14th, 1948 when the Nation Israel became a nation again. We are certainly seeing in history rapidly moving events. I realize I have tried to say over and over again that we should have sanity in the interpretation of prophecy. There is a great deal of insanity, a great number of statements made by people that are not justified, or they are not made in the proper spirit, and I consider the proper spirit to be just a little tinge of agnosticism so far

as the future is concerned. I remind you again of something I think that I said something about before, but in one of our leading newspapers, *The Wall Street Journal*, there is an article written by one of the I think one of the better editorial writers on that paper. It is entitled, “The Dream of Europe,” and it is a kind of lengthy treatment of the status of the Common Market today.

Now fortunately, I don’t think you can find in any of the tapes that I gave during the time of the talk about the Common Market that there were no prophecies that I made with reference to the fact that this was the fulfillment of prophecy. But I know that if you listen to much prophetic teaching, you were given the impression by many that the Common Market and particularly the ten nations who at one time made up a part of it, that that Common Market was a fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament.

Now of course the ten nations are only nine. One has already left. You do not hear prophetic teachers however, getting up and saying, either I was wrong, or it’s evident that the Lord’s coming is going to be delayed for a long time, because they like to keep you stirred up with sensational kinds of language. That’s what we want to try to avoid.

But nevertheless in spite of this there are significant things that have happened in the last twenty-five or thirty years, and there is no question but the fact that Israel is a nation again is a significant event from the standpoint of holy Scripture. We just need to be careful in our statements concerning it, and we need to admit that we do not really know what the future holds.

Israel is in deep difficulty. They have a second front. They have a military front with the nations that are around about them and now there is a tremendous battle going on in the economic world, and as you know, the Arabs have opened up another economic front in connection with the banks of this world, and they are making every possible effort they can to squeeze the life out of the Nation Israel. If they cannot do it on the military field, they are trying to do it economically. If I were an Arab, I guess and

an unsaved Arab at that, I would not I’m sure have any other ideas than they have. But nevertheless it makes it very difficult for an Israelite.

What is Israel’s status before God today? What does the Bible have to say about it? Will you turn with me to Romans chapter 11 verses 5 and 6, and let me read just a verse or two here. Remember last week I believe we referred to this at the beginning of our study then once again. “Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace.”

Now Paul says that in the present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. The status of believing Israelites is that they are members of the body of Christ the church. They are still Israelites. They are recognized in the church of God as being Israel. They are the Israel of God, if that term refers to Israelites today. They are a believing remnant of Israelites in the church, just as Paul says in verse 1, I also am an Israelite of the seed of Abraham of the tribe of Benjamin. He could say that in a way in which you and I cannot say that.

We can say that we are the children of Abraham because we have believed in our Lord Jesus Christ but we cannot say that we are Israelites. We cannot say that we are of the tribe of Benjamin but the Apostle Paul can. He is in the church a member of the church but also an Israelite. There is in the church of God today a remnant of true Christians, but who at the same time are distinguishable from the Gentiles. They are believing Jews the remnant according to the election of grace.

Alfred Adersheim who wrote the great book on the life of Christ was part of this remnant. Adolph Safer also, who has written a number of very fine books on the word of God; he is a member of this believing remnant. Charles Feinberg who has spoken often here in Dallas and was my teacher of Hebrew for number of years -- a Hebrew man -- he is a Christian Hebrew, a member of this remnant according to the election of grace.

Now it’s an election of grace, and he says it’s by grace, there’s no more works they are truly saved by grace. Augustine said, “Grace unless it’s free is not grace,” and that’s what Paul argues in the very next verse. Otherwise grace is no more grace. So believing Israelites today are members of the body of Christ, but they are distinguishable. They are part of the remnant according to the election of grace.

What about the status of national Israel? What is their status today the nation as a whole which abides in unbelief? Well, according to the word of God, the nation, while preserved in their identity exists under judgment in dispersion. The dispersions are set forth for us in Leviticus chapter 26 verses 1 through 46.

Now I’m going to just ask you to underline in your Bible Leviticus 26 1 through 46 and put a little note or something there to go home and read that chapter. It’s very important. It sets forth hundreds of years before the dispersions, the dispersions that Israel would suffer and also the regatherings. In the story of Israel you may remember there was one sojourning in Egypt which was followed by two dispersions. The Old Testament records the dispersion which took place as a result of the attack by the nation Assyria. It also records the dispersion to Babylonia, and that dispersion was followed by a restoration to the land. And then we know from outside of the history of the word of God that Israel in 70 A.D. was scattered to the four corners of the earth.

In the Old Testament these dispersions are predicted, particularly this last one in this chapter, it is said that it would be world wide and it is said that it would be because of their disobedience to the promises of God, and it is also said that if they will confess their sin, God will remember his covenant with Israel, and he will remember the land and he will restore them to the land. So that Israel today has been scattered to the four corners of the earth by virtue of their disobedience at the time of the cross of Jesus Christ and they abide under the judgment of God.

Matthew chapter 21 verse 43, the passage we looked at last time, says that Israel has had the stewardship of the kingdom taken from them, and it has been given to the

church of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that we who make up the body of Christ are the stewards of the kingdom of God. It is our responsibility to preach the gospel to warn men of the fact that there is coming a kingdom of God, and Israel’s sacred theocratic stewardship has been removed from them because of their disobedience. That is not final of course, but it has been removed from them.

1 Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 16 states that the wrath of God has come upon them to the uttermost. I will read that text for you just to save a little time. 1 Thessalonians 2 and verse 16. Paul writes, “Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.” Now this is the judicial penalty inflicted upon the generation at the time of our Lord because of their rejection of the Lord Jesus.

And finally Romans chapter 11 verse 25 the passage that we looked at in our Scripture reading states that “blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.” So there is general blindness in spiritual things in the Nation Israel. And if you know anything about the spiritual life of the Nation Israel today, the one word that characterizes it is blindness. Of all the peoples on the face of this earth, those who seem to be most blind to the truth of Scripture it is the Nation Israel.

In almost every form of national response to spiritual things, they are disobedient and blind and rebellious and stiff-necked. That’s what the Bible states and surely it is true. Fortunately many of them are now turning to Jesus Christ for which we are thankful, but the nation as a whole is in blindness. We want to talk about the Old Testament promises of future fulfillment so what I want to do is read a few passages particularly for you, as we deal with the Old Testament promises of the future fulfillment of the conditions of the Abrahamic Covenant .

Now I hope you won’t mind if I read a number of passages of Scripture. It’s not because I do not think that you can read you can read, but if we read these together, I make just a comment or two, I think you will see something of the force of the teaching

of the Old Testament only in this way. And first of all I want you to turn with me to Isaiah chapter 11 verses 1 through 11.

Now this is a beautiful picture of Davidic humiliation and Davidic restoration to authority in the coming of the king, the Messiah. Isaiah writes in the first verse, “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:” You can see that the tree of Israel has been cut down to the ground. It’s very much like an oak tree. Have you noticed about oak trees, that if you cut them down, they frequently will spring up with a shoot, and you’ll have another tree, but have you ever noticed that if you cut down a cedar tree, you’ll never have any shoots? There is a reason for this. The cedar trees are designed to represent the Assyrians who in the last days come down, seeking to destroy Israel, but is shattered by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. There will be no resurrection, no restoration.

But in the case of Israel, Israel now abides in humiliation, in dispersion. They do not have the possession of their promises, though they have the title to them. They are like a tree that has been cut down.

“But there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and

faithfulness the girdle of his waist. (This of course is a picture of the reign of the Messiah in the millennial kingdom.) The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the nursing child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder’s den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. (There is worldwide knowledge of God in the kingdom of God with the Messiah ruling righteously in their midst, personally.) And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, who shall stand for an ensign of the peoples; to him shall the nation seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, who shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the coastlands of the sea.”

There will be general restoration of the Nation Israel to the land. There will be the righteous rule of the Messiah in their midst, and the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the face of the earth as the waters cover the sea, and the whole earth shall abide under the rule of the Messiah who has come again.

Calvin and Luther interpreted all of this as symbolical and did not interpret it as being or having a literal fulfillment. Modern interpreters interpret this as literal, but say it

represents only a beautiful dream or a wish, and of course, we are not to expect any fulfillment of it.

In our churches on Sunday morning frequently, many of us have grown up in these churches, frequently we repeat the Lord’s Prayer. Thy kingdom come Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Now this is the supreme fulfillment of that prayer. That’s what that prayer means. Thy kingdom come, the kingdom of God upon the earth. The ironic thing is that many amillennialists pray this prayer in their churches, but it really means, Thy kingdom come in the sense that this Messianic kingdom comes to the face of the earth and the Lord Jesus establishes his kingdom there. Isaiah chapter 11 verses 1 through 11.

Now turn with me to Jeremiah chapter 16 verse 14 through verse 16. Jeremiah 16 14 through 16:

“Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be said, The LORD liveth, who brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, The LORD liveth, who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands where he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers. Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the LORD, (not the kind of fishers that you think however, you men) and they shall fish them; and afterward will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the clefts of the rocks.”

Here is a promise of the restoration of the Nation Israel to the land. In other words, the Abrahamic promises again are said to have a fulfillment. After worldwide dispersion there shall be worldwide restoration at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Turn over to the 23rd chapter of the book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah 23 verses 3 through 8. What I hope you gather from this reading of the passages of Scripture is the plethora of detailed references to the Israelitish return to the land and the fulfillment of those land promises to them which were given to Abram. Jeremiah 23 verse 3,

“And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries to which I have driven them, (he’s talking about this worldwide dispersion in which they are at the present time) I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries to which I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. And I will set up shepherds over them who shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD. Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the earth. In his days, Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall be shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

Jehovah our *tsidkenu*, our righteousness -- that of course is a reference to our Lord Jesus who through his suffering on the cross has made it possible for men to be justified through faith in him.

Thus, he is our justification, our righteousness, and in that day when Israel is restored from all the countries to which they have been driven in the dispersion, they will acknowledge that the Lord Jesus is the only hope of humanity and will themselves proclaim the saving power of his name. That’s gonna be great when those stiff-necked people talk about the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thomas Moore said in *Lalla Rookh*, “Fanatic faith, once wedded fast to some dear falsehood, hugs it too the last.” And those who hold that the promises to Israel shall not be fulfilled just cannot seem to be persuaded by all of these texts of Scripture that God is going to be faithful to his word, not realizing that if he is not faithful to these promises that he gave to Abraham and to Abram’s seed, what assurance do we have that he will be faithful to us in the promises that he has made to us, such as John chapter 3 and verse 16.

Now in the minor prophets, I won’t mention Jeremiah 33:19 through 26 you can read that for yourself, but in the minor prophets I would like to read a passage or so. Amos chapter 9 and verse 11 through verse 15. Amos 9 verse 11. Another promise of final restoration of Israel:

“In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, (that’s parallel with Isaiah chapter 11 verse 1) and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the nations, which are called by my name, saith the LORD who doeth this. Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, all the hills shall met melt. Fertility and abundance and prosperity shall characterize that time. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink their wine; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God.”

That I do not see how anyone could understand that promise in any other way.

Turn over a few pages to Micah. Now I know as I have often said it’s illegal to ask you to turn to the minor prophets, but since you’ve already found Amos there is a possibility you may be able to find Micah. Now when I said turn over I mean turn on for those of you that were turning back, it’s on. Micah chapter 4, page 946 in the approved edition of the King James Version. Micah chapter 4 verses 4 through 7:

“But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree;
and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of
hosts hath spoken it. For all people will walk every one in the
name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the LORD
our God for ever and ever. In that day, saith the LORD, will I
assemble her that is lame, and I will gather her that is driven out,
and her that I have afflicted; And I will make her that was lame
a remnant, and her that was cast off far off a strong nation: and
the LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth,
even for ever.”

Now notice that these promises are made to Israel after they have been disobedient. Their disobedience did not cancel these promises they only delayed the fulfillment of them.

Let’s turn now to the New Testament promises of future fulfillment, and first to Luke chapter 1. Luke chapter 1 verse 46. In spite of disobedience, when we come to the New Testament, we find these promises are still thought to be applicable by the spiritual Christians of the New Testament era. Luke chapter 1 and verse 46. This is Mary’s Magnificat. And we read, I think I shall skip a few verses and just begin reading about verse 53,

“He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; As he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.”

In other words, Mary celebrates the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, and she says that his birth is the fulfillment of the promises that God made to Abraham and to his seed for ever. So she under the inspiration of the Spirit, she says that those Abrahamic promises are still in force and are being fulfilled in the birth of her son the Lord Jesus.

Now turn on to verses 67 and following. This is Zacharias’ Benedictus. And in his Benedictus he says much the same thing. We’ll begin at the beginning, and I want you to notice that Zechariah speaks as one who is filled with the Spirit. Can there be any doubt that what he is saying is God’s word and expresses exactly how he feels? Verse 67 says,

“And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; (Who is that? Why that’s the Lord Jesus of course.) As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, who have been since the ages began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember the holy covenant; The oath which he swore to our father Abraham, That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.”

And again, Zacharias regards these events that have to do with the birth of our Lord Jesus as the fulfillment of the ancient promises that God made to Abraham and swore to him with an oath in the 22nd chapter of the Book of Genesis.

Now turn over to Acts chapter 3 verse 12 through 26. In the meantime, now there has come the cross of the Lord Jesus. Has that canceled the promises that God made to Abraham? The nation or the generation’s disobedience at the time of our Lord, does that mean that the promises are no longer valid? I again won’t read all of this, I’ll read the first couple of verses and then the last couple. And when Peter saw it, this is his sermon his second sermon and the theme of it, according to our note in the Scofield Bible, is the covenants will be fulfilled,

“And when Peter saw it, he answered the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; (and he goes on to detail their disobedience and how in ignorance they had done it as did their rulers. But he calls upon them to repent in the 19th verse. He says) Repent therefore, and be converted, that your sins be blotted out, that (or so that) the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. And he may send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the age began.”

Now he says, in effect, your responsibility at the present time is to repent and be converted, and if you the Nation Israel -- he addresses Israel -- if you repent and are converted then God is going to send his Son from heaven, and he is going to bring about the restitution of all things that the prophets have spoken about since the age began. All of those things that I read in the Old Testament a minute ago all of those things will be fulfilled when Israel turns, because God then will institute the program that will lead to the fulfillment of those ancient promises.

Now notice the 25th verse:

“Ye are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.”

Unto you first, because this covenant still is your covenant, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities. So those promises, even though Israel has been disobedient and has crucified the Son of God, those promises still are Israel’s promises, and they will be theirs if they repent and are converted and have their sins blotted out. That is so convincing, I just sit and sometimes wonder how can anyone have any other interpretation than mine. [Laughter]

Romans chapter 11 verse 11 through 27. I’ll just review some of the things that I said a moment ago when we read through this passage. A few weeks later, after we finish this section on the covenants, I want to give a series of four messages on “The Four Great Texts of the New Testament” that deal with this question of the kingdom, and try to show you beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the premillennial interpretation of the New Testament passages is just as certain as the premillennial interpretation of these Old Testament passages, and this is one of them that I would love for you to really come to

the place where you finally understand it. Romans chapter 11 verse 11 through 27. This is the classic Pauline passage on Israel’s future restoration.

Now in verses 11 through 15 he answers the question, Why have they fallen? Well he says they have fallen because it was in the divine plan that the Gentiles should be saved and God should have mercy, shown them in order that Israel might be provoked to jealousy that there might be worldwide blessing. Then to illustrate, and he gives us the illustration of the olive tree which we’ve read about, the point of which is just as the branches of that tree, the natural branches which is Israel, were cut off because of disobedience, so the Gentiles who are the unnatural branches grafted into the tree may be cut off if they do not continue in unbelief. Because it’s reasonable to think that the natural branches are easier to graft in their own tree than for unnatural branches to be grafted into the tree, and he concludes with the note that this tree really belongs to Israel, and that we inherit that we have a share in the blessings that we enjoy, simply because God in his grace has brought us into the possession of promises that were given to Israel. That’s what he says in verse 24, when he says, How much more shall these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?

The olive tree, my Christian friend, belongs to Israel. Those promises are Israel’s. We share in them. We poor Gentiles that you and I might get in, and ultimately that Israel might be provoked to jealousy because this would be the means of worldwide blessing. We poor Gentiles share in them because in God’s marvelous program he arranged that there should be a time of Israelitish disobedience that you, and I might get in and ultimately that Israel might be provoked to jealousy because this would be the means of worldwide blessing. It’s all right here in Romans 11. We’ll talk about it some time.

Now the prophecy of restoration follows in verse 25 and 26 and 27, and the heart of it is verse 26. And so all Israel shall be saved. All Israel does not mean every single Israelite; it means the nation as a whole. Just as every single Israelite did not reject the

Lord Jesus, so every single Israelite shall not be saved. But the nation as a whole rejected him and the nation as a whole shall be saved. Again we shall talk about that some time when I spend more time on this section on Romans chapter 11.

But what about the land promises? There are some who say, You premillennialists talk about these promises of the land, but in the New Testament there is practically nothing said about the land promises. Does not that show us that the promises regarding the land are to be spiritualized? That we are not to expect a kingdom of God in which we share with Israel life on the land of Palestine or in the millennial land? The land promises are almost missing from the New Testament. All the Old Testament promises -- yes there there’s a great deal of stress on the land there -- but in the New Testament the land promises are not stressed.

Now there’s a lot of force in that. Can you think of any passage in the New Testament that says that we shall reign on the land? There are very few. Why is that? Is it because those land promises are to be spiritualized? No. The answer is quite simple. The New Testament writers understood the Scriptures to be the Old Testament, and if in page after page after page -- one of the writers describing these promises said “The prophets dipped their pen in a rainbow when they described the millennial kingdom on the earth” -- if page after page after page of the Old Testament is full of these glorious promises of what God is going to do, pray tell me how many times does God have to say it in the New Testament?

Why the writers of the New Testament expected their readers and listeners to believe the Old Testament promises. In other words, the New Testament assumes the truth of what the Old Testament taught and moves on from there. That’s why we don’t have all these promises repeated over and over and over again. And in fact, in 2 Peter that’s precisely what Peter says. He says, You ought to believe not only the apostles but the prophets of the Old Testament. It’s part of the word of God. They are there. That kind of distinction is not a distinction that the apostles would have understood at all.

Finally, a note on the history of the land. Here are some facts for you Arabs to remember. Abram was the father of the Hebrews by Isaac and the father of the Arabs by Ishmael. Israel gained the land at the conquest of Canaan not the Arabs. With David and Solomon, Israel became a nation. They became united. Jerusalem was established as their capital. The temple was built.

History establishes nine centuries of Jewish sovereignty over the land. This is expressed beautifully in Israel’s Declaration of Independence. I don’t have time to read it. They have infinitely better claims to that land than we in the United States have for our United States. It is the only land existing on the face of the earth for which there is an impeccable deed. The land of Palestine. The first Arab conquest of the land of Israel took place in 634 A.D. But they never settled the country. Foreign conquerors they were for four centuries.

Then came the Seljuks, the Crusaders, the Mameluks, and for about four hundred years they ranged over the land. Finally, the Ottoman Turks in 1517 took over the land until 1917, and the significant fact is that the land of Palestine was never a national homeland for any people the whole time. God has kept that land for his purposes. There were three hundred thousand people in that land in 1881. There are now as you know two and a half million or more of Israelites there.

Never did Israel totally abandon the land. Israelites have lived in that land down through the centuries. True they dwindled to a very small number. Around 1880 I think there were only twenty-five thousand Jews there. But they have come back. They bought their land from those who were on the land. They bought it with their money; they did not take it. They bought it and ultimately the Nation Israel was formed and came into existence. Ben-Gurion was in this country at one time, and he was challenged in the audience about how the Israelites had come into the possession of the land and how he could justify it, and he is said to have replied to them to him who challenged him, We

were there before you. And they have historical and reasonable title to that land. Our time is up. We must stop. Let’s close in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the assurance of the word of God that Thou wilt perform Thy promises to Abraham and to his seed. We thank Thee that in grace Thou hast included us and we look forward to the brilliant consummation of the program when the knowledge of the Lord covers the face of the earth as the waters cover the seas.

If there should be someone here Lord who has not believed in Jesus Christ, may the faithfulness that Thou dost show to Thy promises move their hearts to trust him who died for sinners and offers life to all who acknowledge their sin and flee to him for refuge.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.