

Lesson #3: Promises to Abraham

Introduction: The theory of premillennialism demands the restoration of the Jews to Palestine and the reconstruction of the Jewish system. Rex Turner states, "Their doctrine is to the effect that the Israelites are to be restored to Canaan land, the city of Jerusalem and the temple are to be rebuilt, that national Israel is to be reinstated, and that the Gentiles will come bowing as subvients unto the receptive Israelites." All this is to begin at return of Christ just prior to His alleged one thousand years' reign.

Whether or not the land promise has been fulfilled is a very important matter. If the land promise is NOT fulfilled, then: the Old Testament prophecies are false, the prophets are not reliable, the prophecies are yet to be fulfilled, and the Jews can put confidence in the flesh (Ph. 3:3), and God respects the Jews above all others (Rm 2:11; Ac. 10:34-35). If the land promise IS already fulfilled, then: the prophecies are true, reliable, and worthy, both Jew and Gentile are one in Christ (Ga. 3:27-29), and we need not look for a future fulfillment.

God promises Abraham three things (Ge. 12:1-3): Abraham would have many descendants, this nation would own and occupy a land, and a universal blessing will come to all mankind, out of Abraham's line (the Jews). In Genesis 15:9-17, God ratifies His covenant with Abraham. In the way this is done, God places sole responsibility for the covenant upon Himself. That is, there was nothing Abraham could do or fail to do that would void the covenant God made. Also in this passage, the boundaries are set for the land that the Jews will eventually occupy. For a detailed list of the boundaries, see Deuteronomy 34. Other passages that deal with the promise of land: Deuteronomy 30:3-5 and Ezekiel 20:42-44.

Premillennial Position:

- "Since the Church does not fulfill the promises of the Abrahamic covenant, Israel herself must fulfill them at a future date. Since only premillennialism has a place for the future fulfillment, it must be the correct system of interpretation" (Ryrie p. 70).
- "The church is unique in the plan of God and separate from His plan for Israel. While the church partakes of the spiritual promises of the Abrahamic Covenant as fulfilled through Christ, Israel, not the church, will fulfill her national destiny as a separate entity after the Rapture and Tribulation and during the Millennium" (Tim LaHaye, Charting the End Times, p.48)
- "The question as to whether the Abrahamic covenant is conditional or unconditional is recognized as the crux of the whole discussion of the problem relative to the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant. When it has been determined that the Abrahamic covenant is an unconditional covenant made with Israel, and therefore cannot be either abrogated or fulfilled by people other than the nation of Israel, it is seen that Israel has promises regarding a land and a seed which determine the future program of God" (Things to Come, Pentecost, J. Dwight, Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House, 1964, p.75).

Questions for Discussions (Biblical Position):

1. The Land promise:
 - a. What was the extent of the land promise (Ge. 15:18-21)?
 - b. Was God going to give Abraham's decedents this land? Was it conditional (Ge. 15:13-17)?
 - c. Did God Fulfill the land aspect of the promise to Abraham by giving Israel all the land (Jos. 21:43-45)?

- d. Did Israel possess all of the Promised Land (1 Ki. 4:20-21)?
 - e. After it was given, was the retention of the land conditional? If so, on what condition (Dt. 28)?
2. The Nation Promise:
 - a. Did God fulfill the national aspect of the promise to Abraham by the children of Israel becoming a nation (Ex. 19:5-8)?
 - b. After the children of Israel became a nation, was their continued existence conditional (Dt. 28; 30:19-20)?
 3. The Seed Promise:
 - a. What type of blessing did God have in mind when He made the Seed promise (Ga. 3:8)?
 - b. Was the promise only for physical Israel (Ga. 3:14)?
 - c. Who was the Seed (Ga. 3:16)?
 - d. Has the seed aspect of the promise to Abraham been fulfilled (Ga. 3:29)?
 - e. Is the reception of this blessing through Christ, the Seed, conditional (Ga. 3:26-27)?
 4. If the promises made to Abraham have been fulfilled, what effect does that have on the doctrine of Premillennialism?

Conclusions:

1. The promises of God throughout time are all conditional upon our faith and obedience to His Perfect Law of Liberty (Ge. 15:6; 17:1-2; 18:19; 22:18; Jm. 1:26-27; Re. 1:10).
2. The land promise and prophecies of the restoration of Israel have been fulfilled.
3. It is serious to adopt theories that infer God has not kept His word when He shows He gave the promise and kept it. The theory casts reflection on inspiration of Bible, integrity of God, denigrating to new covenant of Christ, raises false/misguided hopes based on error, leads people to ignore truth regarding Christ/church and the way of salvation (2 Pt. 3:9).
4. If the Jews and all others want hope today, they must look to the New Testament and the present kingdom of Jesus Christ not to the false teaching of premillennialism.