

Premillennialism in the Old Testament (Part 1)

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I. The Basis for the Belief in the Messianic Kingdom

Premillennialists have often been criticized for basing their belief in a Millennium entirely on one passage of Scripture, Revelation 20. Because it is found in a book well noted for its high use of symbols, they say it is foolish to take the one thousand years literally. But that is hardly a valid criticism. To begin with, while it is true that the Book of Revelation uses many symbols, it has already been shown that the meaning of all those symbols is explained either within the Book of Revelation itself or elsewhere in the Scriptures. Furthermore, never are years used in a symbolic way in this book. If they are symbolic, the symbolism is nowhere explained. The mention of 1,260 days, 42 months, and 312 years are all literal and not symbolic. Hence, there is no need to take the one thousand years as anything but literal years. The desire to spiritualize the text always places the burden of proof on the interpreter. Without objective proof it will result in a subjective interpretation.

It is, of course, true that the figure of one thousand years is only found in Revelation 20. But it is recorded six different times in this one text, and if repetition tries to do anything, it certainly endeavors to make a point. While it is true that the millennium (that is, one thousand years) is found only in Revelation 20, the belief in the Messianic Kingdom does not rest on this passage alone. In fact, it hardly rests on it at all. The basis for the belief in the Messianic Kingdom is twofold.

First: there are the unfulfilled promises of the Jewish covenants, promises that can only be fulfilled in a Messianic Kingdom. Second: there are the unfulfilled prophecies of the Jewish prophets. There are numerous prophecies of the Old Testament that speak of the coming of the Messiah Who will reign on David's Throne, and rule over a peaceful Kingdom. There is a great amount of material in the Old Testament on the Messianic Kingdom, and the belief in a Messianic Kingdom rests on the basis of a literal interpretation of this massive material.

The only real contribution that the Book of Revelation makes to the knowledge of the Kingdom is to disclose just how long the Messianic Kingdom will last--namely one thousand years--for which the term Millennium is used. This is the one key truth concerning the Kingdom that was not revealed in the Old Testament.

It is in light of this that it is possible to understand why so much of the book is spent on the Great Tribulation and so little on the Millennium. While much of the material in Revelation 4-19 is found scattered in the pages of the Old Testament, it is impossible to place these events in chronological sequence using only the Old Testament. The Book of Revelation provides the framework by which this can be done. A great portion of the Book of Revelation was used to accomplish this goal.

On the other hand, all of the various features and facets of the Messianic Kingdom have already been revealed in the Old Testament. It portrays the general characteristics of life in the Kingdom, which do not raise the problem of an order of sequence. Hence, there was no reason to spend a great deal of time on the Messianic Kingdom in the Book of Revelation. Most of what was needed to be revealed was already known from the Old Testament.

However, there were two things about the Messianic Kingdom which were not revealed in the Old Testament. The first was the length of the Messianic Kingdom. While the Old Testament prophets foresaw a long period of time of a peaceful messianic reign, they did not reveal just how long this would last. To answer this question, the Book of Revelation states that it will be exactly one thousand years. A second thing that was unknown from the Old Testament prophets was the circumstances by which the Kingdom would come to an end and how this would lead into the Eternal Order. This is also revealed by the Book of Revelation. These two items are all that Revelation 20 added to the knowledge of the Messianic Kingdom. The belief in a Messianic Kingdom does not rest on this passage, but is based on the numerous prophecies of the Old Testament prophets.

The first basis for the belief in a coming Kingdom rests on the four unconditional, unfulfilled covenants God made with Israel. These covenants are unconditional and so rely solely on God for their fulfillment and not on Israel. They are also unfulfilled, and since God is One Who keeps His promises, they must be fulfilled in the future. They can only be fulfilled within the framework of

a Messianic Kingdom or a Millennial Kingdom. More will be said about these covenants later, but the main points will be summarized here.

The first of these is the Abrahamic Covenant, which promised an eternal Seed developing into a nation that will possess the Promised Land with some definite borders. While that nation--the Jews--continues to exist, never in Jewish history have they possessed all of the Promised Land. For this promise to be fulfilled, there must be a future Kingdom. Besides, the possession of the Land was not merely promised to Abraham's seed, but to Abraham personally when God said, to you will I give it, and to your seed for ever (Gen. 13:15). For God to fulfill His promise to Abraham (as well as to Isaac and Jacob), there must be a future Kingdom.

The second covenant is the Palestinian Covenant, or Land Covenant, that spoke of a worldwide regathering of the Jews and repossession of the Land following their dispersion. While the dispersion has already occurred and is in effect today, the regathering and repossession of the Land still awaits fulfillment in the future. This, too, requires a future Kingdom.

The Davidic Covenant is the third covenant, and it promised four eternal things: an eternal house (dynasty), an eternal throne, an eternal kingdom, and one eternal Person. The Dynasty became eternal because it culminated in a Person Who is Himself eternal: Jesus the Messiah. For that reason the Throne and Kingdom will be eternal as well. But Jesus has never yet sat on the Throne of David ruling over a Kingdom of Israel. The reestablishment of the Davidic Throne and Messiah's rule over the Kingdom still awaits a future fulfillment. It requires a future kingdom.

The last of these covenants is the New Covenant, which spoke of the national regeneration and salvation of Israel, encompassing each individual Jewish member of that nation. This, too, awaits its final fulfillment and requires a future kingdom.

It is the extensive prophetic writings, as well as all of these covenants, that provide the basis for the belief in a future Messianic Kingdom, and not merely one chapter of a highly symbolic book. Unless they are understood literally, they lose all meaning in the context in which they are found. To allegorize such a vast amount of material is to render a major part of the Bible meaningless. To summarize, the basis for the belief in a Messianic Kingdom is twofold: the unfulfilled promises of the Jewish covenants, and the unfulfilled prophecies of the Jewish prophets.

II. General Characteristics of the Messianic Kingdom

A great many of the Old Testament prophets directed their attention to the details of the Messianic Kingdom, providing an overall, comprehensive picture of life during that time. This section will be concerned with those passages dealing with the general characteristics of the Messianic Kingdom that will be true for both Jews and Gentiles alike.

A. Isaiah 2:2-4

In this passage, Isaiah describes one of the major characteristics of the Messianic Kingdom, that of universal peace. While differences between nations will arise, such differences will no longer be settled by military conflicts, but only by the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. Even the art of warfare will be forgotten.

B. Isaiah 11:6-9

The universal peace described in the earlier passage will extend even to the animal kingdom. All animals will return to the Edenic state and become vegetarians (vv. 6-7). The oldest of enemies, man and snake, will be able to live in compatibility in that day (v. 8), for the knowledge of God will permeate throughout the entire world, affecting man and animal alike (v. 9).

C. Isaiah 65:17-25

This passage begins with the announcement of the creation of new heavens and a new earth (v. 17). These new heavens and new earth are not to be confused with those of Revelation 21-22.

The latter describes the new heavens and new earth of the Eternal Order, while the Isaiah passage describes those of the Messianic Kingdom which will be a renovation of the present heavens and earth. Those of the Revelation are not a renovation, but a brand new order. Hence, for the Millennium, there will be a total renovation of the heavens and the earth. The fact that the term create is used shows that this renovation will be a miraculous one, possible by God alone. The result of this renovation will be a continuation of many things of the old order and a number of new things. A good example of the old and the new is to be seen in what the Scriptures say about the Land of Israel. Israel will also undergo the renovation process. Some things of the old order will remain, such as the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea. But a number of things will be brand new, such as the exceeding high mountain (the highest in the world) in the center of the

country. Following this announcement of new heavens and a new earth, there is a description of the millennial Jerusalem (vv. 18-19). The millennial Jerusalem will be studied in detail in chapter 19, Israel in the Messianic Kingdom.

Verse 20 is especially significant, for it discusses life and death in the Kingdom. This verse teaches several things. First: there will no longer be any infant mortality in the Millennium; everyone who is born in the Kingdom will reach a certain age. Second: the specific age at which one may die is the age of one hundred. With infant mortality removed, everyone born in the Millennium will live at least until his hundredth year of life. Because of the prolongation of life in the Millennium, those who die at the age of one hundred will be considered as having died young. Third: this verse limits the people dying at the age of one hundred to those who are sinners; namely, unbelievers, as only they would be considered accursed. So, then, death in the Kingdom will be for unbelievers only. Comparing this passage with what is stated about salvation in other passages, the entire concept of life and death in the Kingdom can be summarized as follows. When the Kingdom begins, all natural men, both Jews and Gentiles, will be believers. The Jews in their entirety will be saved just prior to the Second Coming of the Messiah. All unbelieving Gentiles (goats) will be killed during the seventy-five day interval between the Tribulation and the Millennium, and only believing Gentiles (sheep) will be able to enter the Kingdom. However, in the process of time, there will be birth in the Kingdom of both Jews and Gentiles. These newly born, natural people will continue to inherit the sin nature from their natural parents and will also be in need of regeneration. Although Satan is confined, thus reducing temptation, the sin nature is quite capable of rebelling against God apart from satanic activity. In time, there will be unsaved people living in the Kingdom in need of regeneration. As in the past, the means of salvation will be by grace through faith and the content of faith will be the death of Messiah for sin and His subsequent resurrection. Those born in the Kingdom will have until their hundredth year to believe. If they do not, they will die in their hundredth year. The unbeliever will not be able to live past his first century of life. However, if they do believe, they will live throughout the Millennium and never die. Thus, death in the Millennium will be for unbelievers only. This is why the Bible nowhere speaks of a resurrection of millennial saints. This is why the resurrection of the Tribulation saints is said to complete the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6). It is also clear from the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34 that there will be no Jewish unbelievers in the Kingdom; all Jews born during the Kingdom will accept the Messiah by their hundredth year. Unbelief will be among the Gentiles only and, therefore, death will exist only among the Gentiles.

Verses 21-24 continue to describe life in the Kingdom as a time of personal peace and prosperity. It will be a time of building and planting. He who builds and plants is guaranteed the enjoyment of the labors of his hands, for many of the effects of the curse will be removed (vv. 21-22a). Life will be characterized by longevity (v. 22b), absence of calamity and turmoil (v. 23), and instantaneous response from God (v. 24). As in Isaiah 11:6-9, the animal kingdom will be at peace with each other and with man (v. 25).

D. Micah 4:1-5

The first three verses of this passage are the same as those found in Isaiah 2:2-4 that speak of the Mountain of Jehovah's House becoming the center of attention to the world's Gentile population, the Kingdom being characterized as a time of messianic teaching, and the absence of war as universal peace permeates the entire Kingdom. Micah adds that the Kingdom will be a time of personal peace and prosperity (v. 4), with Israel's total allegiance being to God (v. 5).

Summary

To summarize the general characteristics of the Messianic Kingdom, it will be a time of universal and personal prosperity and peace between man and man, between animal and animal, and between man and animal, with many (but not all) of the effects of the curse removed. It will be a time characterized by truth, holiness and righteousness, with justice continually being dispersed from Jerusalem. It will be a time of labor in building and planting, with guaranteed results and promised enjoyment of these labors.

Premillennialism in the Old Testament (Part 2)

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III. The Government of the Messianic Kingdom

The Messianic Kingdom will be administered through an absolute monarchy with a definite chain of command and lines of authority. The absolute monarch will be the Person of Jesus the Messiah. The delegated authority will be split into two branches: a Jewish branch of government and a Gentile branch, each in turn having a chain of command.

This section will be concerned with various Scriptures that speak of the system of government in the Kingdom as far as the Old Testament is concerned.

A. The King: The Lord Jesus the Messiah

That the Messiah is to sit upon the Throne of David and rule in a kingdom over Israel with a dominion extending over all the Gentiles is the clear teaching of the Old and New Testaments. The Davidic Covenant upon which the physical reign of the Messiah is based will be discussed in the next chapter. In this chapter, only those passages that develop the Davidic Covenant and those that speak of the Messiah as king over a literal kingdom will be dealt with.

1. The Establishment of the Throne

That it is in the program of God to set up His Son as the King in Jerusalem is the clear teaching of Psalm 2:6-8. Although the Throne of Messiah will be established in Jerusalem, His dominion will not stop at the border of Israel, but will extend throughout the entire earth with every Gentile nation falling under His domain.

The Messiah's ruling upon the reestablished Throne of David and ruling over a kingdom is the theme of Isaiah 9:6-7. A child is born into the Jewish world Who is a Son of the House of David upon Whom the reins of government will rest (v. 6a). Yet names are given to this child that can only be true of God Himself (v. 6b). The eternality of the Davidic Dynasty, Throne, and Kingdom is assured, for it rests in the God-Man. As to His humanity, He is a descendant of David. As to His deity, He is eternal and so is His Throne. With these facts clearly established, Isaiah proceeds to describe the establishment of the rule of the Messianic King. The government that will be set up will increase in authority and in peace, and there will be no end to the Throne of David or of the rule of the Messiah, for it is the God-Man Who will establish it and Who will uphold it. It will be characterized by justice and righteousness forever. The guarantee that it will be so established is the burning zeal of God, a zeal that will continue to burn until the Kingdom is realized. Because God's zeal intends to perform it, it will surely come about.

To this statement, Isaiah 16:5 adds:

And a throne shall be established in lovingkindness; and one shall sit thereon in truth, in the tent of David, judging, and seeking justice, and swift to do righteousness.

As if to reiterate his previous statement, Isaiah declares again that a throne will surely be established on the basis of God's loyal love. The One sitting on the Throne will be a member of the House of David Who will be characterized by truth. He will be the King and Judge, ensuring that justice is carried out--a justice springing from the righteousness of the King.

Very similar to Isaiah are two prophecies found in Jeremiah. The first is Jeremiah 23:5-6. Again, there is a descendant of David Who will sit on David's Throne. Yet this descendant is called Jehovah our righteousness, so the One sitting on David's Throne is none other than the God-Man. And because it is the God-Man, His reign will be characterized by wisdom, justice, and righteousness. It is in Him that the security of Israel will lie.

The second passage is Jeremiah 33:14-17. Beginning with the reaffirmation of God's intention to fulfill His covenant with David (v. 14), Jeremiah restates the basic points of his statements in 23:5-6 (vv. 15-16). Under no circumstances will the House of David be allowed to become extinct (v. 17). The rest of Jeremiah 33 continues to reaffirm God's intention to fulfill all the conditions of the Davidic Covenant, and these passages will be dealt with in the next chapter.

Though the Throne of the Messiah is to be established in Jerusalem, the reign of the Messianic King will extend over the entire earth, according to Zechariah 14:9. In that day, Zechariah points out, the Messiah will be the head of the world and will be considered by all humanity to be the one God.

2. The Character of His Reign

A number of passages portray the characteristics of the reign of the Messianic King. One major characteristic, stemming from the absolute monarchy that will exist, is that He will rule with a rod of iron. This iron-handed rule is rooted in Psalm 2:9 and will be a necessity due to the fact that nations will exist and the people populating them will still have their sin nature. It has already been pointed out in the previous chapter that, after the first generation, there will be unbelievers

present in the Kingdom. The natural outworking of this sin nature will have to be restrained. The Kingdom will not be a democracy, but an absolute monarchy. The reign of the Messianic King will be a strict one, and the righteous and just laws emanating from Jerusalem will have to be obeyed. The beginning of His reign will be marked by a procession of the King into the millennial Jerusalem described in Psalm 24:7-10.

An extended treatment of the character of His reign is in Psalm 72:1-19. This entire Psalm describes the reign of the righteous King. His reign will be characterized by justice, holiness, and righteousness so that the innocent will receive justice, while the guilty will be condemned (vv. 1-7). The extent of His domain will clearly be universal and international (vv. 8-11). It will extend from sea to sea, a reference to the western (Mediterranean Sea) and eastern (Dead Sea) boundaries of the millennial Israel. Furthermore, it will extend from the River, that is, the Euphrates, which is the prophesied northern boundary of the restored Jewish State. One would expect the next phrase to describe the southern boundary as the "brook of Egypt," but instead, the Psalmist writes unto the ends of the earth. The point being made is that although the Throne is set up in the Land of Israel, as seen by the mention of the western, eastern, and northern boundaries, the rule will not be confined to Israel alone. It will overflow the boundaries of Israel, reaching to the ends of the earth (v. 8). His friends and enemies alike will do obeisance to Him (v. 9), and all other kings among the nations will subject themselves to His authority (vv. 10-11). Because He will rule with a rod of iron and in justice, holiness and righteousness, any and all injustices against the righteous will be severely rectified, and the righteous will be exalted (vv. 12-15). His reign will be further characterized with an abundance of productivity (v. 16). All will be blessed in the King and they will bless Him, for He is the eternal God-Man (vv. 17-19).

Isaiah 11:1-5 provides yet another description of the character of His reign. Isaiah begins by describing the origin of the King, namely that of the House of David (v. 1). He is endowed with the fullness of the Holy Spirit depicted by the sevenfold manifestations of the Spirit of God (v. 2). This endowment of the fullness of the Holy Spirit is demonstrated in the five results mentioned in verses 3-4. Finally, the King and His reign are characterized by righteousness and faithfulness (v. 5).

So, the Lord Jesus will be both the King of Israel and the King of the world. Under His absolute authority and monarchy there will be two branches of government established, the Gentile branch and the Jewish branch.

B. The Jewish Branch of Government

1. David: The King and Prince

The absolute monarchy of the Messiah will extend to Israel as well as to the Gentile nations. But directly under the Messianic King, having authority over all Israel, will be the resurrected David, who is given both titles of king and prince. He will be a king because he will rule over Israel, but he will be a prince in that he will be under the authority of the Messiah. Just as all the Gentile nations will have kings, so will Israel. The difference is that the Gentile kings will all have their natural bodies, while David will have his resurrected body.

There are several passages that speak of David as being king over Israel and prince under King Messiah, such as Jeremiah 30:9. Not only will Israel in the future serve Jehovah their God, but they will also serve David their king.

Another passage is Ezekiel 34:23-24. When the restoration of Israel comes, it will no longer be in the form of two kingdoms with each one having their own king. They will be a reunited nation with only one head, and that head will be the resurrected David, who will serve as their prince. So while Jehovah will serve as their God and absolute King, David will serve under Him as God's prince over Israel.

Later, in Ezekiel 37:24-25, Ezekiel reiterates the fact that they will have David to function as the king of Israel. He is to be their prince and shepherd. Under his guidance, Israel will be able to keep the righteous commandments of God. The Land will be restored to them as well as David their king.

One final passage that points to this aspect of the government of the Millennium is Hosea 3:5.

Making the same points as Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Hosea states that in the future restoration, Israel will not only be subservient to Jehovah their God, but also to David their king.

While all these passages are often explained as actually referring to David's greater Son, nothing in the text indicates that David is to be taken symbolically. If the prophets wanted to refer to the

Messiah in connection with David, they used terms such as "Root of Jesse," "Branch of David," "Son of David," or "Seed of David." None of these expressions are used here. The text simply states, David. In keeping with literal interpretation, it is best to take the text as it reads, meaning the literal David, who, in his resurrected form, will function as the king over Israel and as a prince in subjection to the King of the world. It is in this sense that David will serve both as king and prince. From the viewpoint of Israel, David will be their king ruling over them. But from the viewpoint of the Messiah, David will be a prince.

2. Princes

In addition to the already-specified positions of government, there is the mention of other rulers simply entitled as princes. One such passage is found in Isaiah 32:1. The king reigning in righteousness will be the Lord Jesus. Along with Him there is the mention of princes who will be in positions of authority and just in character.

A second passage is Ezekiel 45:8. The entire context of this passage (Ezek. 40-48) will be discussed in the next chapter. But for now, it should be noted that, once again, there is the mention of princes who are in positions of authority in the Millennium. Unlike princes in the past, these will not be characterized by oppression. Involved in their authority will be the partitioning of the Land of Israel into its twelve tribal divisions.

The resurrected Zerubbabel, mentioned in Haggai 2:20-23, will very likely be among these princes. The time of Zerubbabel's exalted position will be after the shaking of the heavens and the earth (vv. 20-21) and the destruction of the invading armies (v. 22). Both of these will occur at the Second Coming. It is after these events that Zerubbabel is promised an exalted position (v. 23) which will make him as close to God as a signet ring is to a king. Zerubbabel has been chosen for an exalted position in the Kingdom and will apparently be among the princes mentioned by the other two prophets. Zerubbabel is also of the House of David.

3. Judges and Counselors

Another group of rulers in the Kingdom will be the judges and counselors mentioned in Isaiah 1:26. This position of authority will be particularly related to the City of Jerusalem. These rulers will be responsible for the dispensing of justice in a judicial sense, and there will be no perversion of this justice.

4. Israel Over the Gentiles

The final link in this chain of command in the Jewish branch of government is that Israel is to become the head over the Gentiles. More will be said on this in the next chapter, but mention of it must be made here.

The fact that Israel is to become the head of the Gentiles was part of God's promises to Israel in the Book of Deuteronomy. One such passage is Deuteronomy 15:6.

The leadership over the Gentiles is to be part of Israel's reward for obedience in Deuteronomy 28:1.

Such obedience and headship awaits Israel's national regeneration. This promise is reiterated in Deuteronomy 28:13.

Besides the statements found in the Law of Moses, the Prophets also described Israel's future headship over the Gentiles. One such passage is Isaiah 14:1-2.

For Jehovah will have compassion on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the sojourner shall join himself with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the peoples shall take them, and bring them to their place; and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of Jehovah for servants and for handmaids: and they shall take them captive whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.

The Gentiles will not only conduct the Jews back to the Land of Israel, but they will be possessed by Israel. They will become servants to Israel. Similar passages are found in Isaiah 49:22-23 and 61:6-7.

The rod of iron that will characterize the rule of the government in the Kingdom will be implemented through various spheres and positions of authority.

Premillennialism in the Old Testament (Part 3)

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IV. Israel in the Messianic Kingdom

Israel within the period of the Messianic Kingdom is a major theme of the Old Testament Prophets. Indeed, it was the high point of Old Testament prophecy and every writing prophet with the exception of Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Malachi had something to say about it. The latter two did make reference to the Second Coming and the Tribulation, which, in the wider context of the Prophets, implied a kingdom to follow. To spiritualize and allegorize away such a great amount of Scripture is to confuse the whole science of interpretation. There is no reason to spiritualize any of these prophecies any more than there is reason to do so to those prophecies dealing with the First Coming of the Messiah such as the virgin birth, the birth in Bethlehem, His death, or His physical resurrection, etc.

Because of the amount of revelation available on Israel in the Messianic Kingdom, this chapter will be divided into eight major divisions: First, the four facets of the final restoration of Israel; second, other characteristics of Israel's final restoration; third, the Millennial Mountain of Jehovah's House; fourth, the Millennial Temple; fifth, the millennial system of priesthood and sacrifice; sixth, the millennial river; seventh, the Millennial Israel; and eighth, the Millennial Jerusalem.

A. The Four Facets of the Final Restoration of Israel

There are four primary facets to Israel's final restoration, with each being based on a specific covenant. Each of these covenants are fully developed in later prophetic revelation. This section will survey each covenant as it relates to Israel's final restoration along with the prophetic development of these covenants.

1. The Regeneration of Israel

a. The Basis: The New Covenant

The first facet of Israel's final restoration is the national regeneration of Israel. The timing of this regeneration has already been discussed in Chapter 14, The Campaign of Armageddon and the Second Coming of Jesus the Messiah. This section is concerned with the development of that motif. The basis of Israel's final regeneration is the New Covenant, in Jeremiah 31:31-34.

The announcement of the New Covenant begins with a declaration that it will be a Jewish covenant, for it will be made with both houses of Israel (v. 31). It will be in sharp contradistinction with the older Mosaic Covenant (v. 32). Of the five Jewish covenants, the Mosaic was the only conditional one. Although God had been faithful in keeping His terms of the covenant, Israel had not been so faithful, resulting in the Mosaic Covenant's being broken. For while the Mosaic Covenant showed the standard of righteousness which the Law demanded, it could never impart to the Jew the power to keep it. But that problem will be rectified in the New Covenant (v. 33) through regeneration, which will provide the internal power necessary to meet and to keep the righteous standards of God. The result of the New Covenant will be a total national regeneration of Israel (v. 34). Jewish missions and Jewish evangelism will not be needed in the Messianic Kingdom because every Jew will know the Lord, from the least to the greatest. The sins of Israel will be forgiven and forgotten. While there will be Gentile unbelievers in the Kingdom, there will not be Jewish unbelievers in the Kingdom. To a man, all the Jews will believe. There will be no need to tell a Jew to "know the Lord" because they will all know Him.

It is upon this New Covenant that the first facet of Israel's restoration, the regeneration of Israel, is based.

b. The Prophetic Development

That Israel was to undergo a national regeneration is not confined to the words of the New Covenant alone. Some passages were already discussed under the Campaign of Armageddon. But there are many others. Isaiah 29:22-24 makes a promise to the patriarch Jacob. Although for most of Jewish history Jacob would have been ashamed of the waywardness of his descendants, when the national regeneration comes, he will have much to be proud of.

Another passage is Isaiah 30:18-22. According to this particular passage, the regeneration will be a result of the judgments of the Great Tribulation, which will be God's discipline upon the nation of Israel in order to correct them. It will be by way of the judgments of the Tribulation that Israel will come to a saving knowledge of her Messiah.

Later, in Isaiah 44:1-5, the prophet wrote that it was God Who chose Israel from the very beginning (vv. 1-2), and Israel has yet to become the chosen vessel which she was ordained to be. God will pour out His Spirit upon the entire nation (v. 3) with the result that Israel will begin to

bear fruit (v. 4) and will remain ever loyal to her God (v. 5). Later in this chapter, in verses 21-23, Isaiah emphasized the removal of Israel's sins.

Israel's everlasting salvation and freedom from shame is emphasized in Isaiah 45:17.

The two other Major Prophets also spoke of this final regeneration. Jeremiah 24:7 records that when God regenerates Israel, He will give them a heart to know the Lord. With this regenerated heart, they will be able to return to God with an undivided heart. At the time of Israel's regeneration, her sins will no longer be found, according to Jeremiah 50:19-20.

Ezekiel also emphasized that future regeneration of Israel in Ezekiel 11:19-20. At the time of Israel's regeneration, they will be given a new heart and a new spirit as their human spirit will be reborn (v. 19). The result of this work of God on the heart and spirit of man will be an ennoblement to walk in and to keep the righteous standards of God.

Later, Ezekiel 36:25-27 repeats aspects stated earlier and then adding some more information of his own, Ezekiel further describes the coming regeneration. All of Israel's sins will be cleansed (v. 25). A regenerate heart and spirit will be given so that Israel can walk in newness of life (v. 26). Furthermore, the Holy Spirit will indwell the Jews so that they will be empowered to walk in the commandments of the Lord (v. 27).

The regeneration of Israel is also a prominent theme in the Minor Prophets. Hosea, who spoke a great deal about God's punishment for Israel's sins, did not fail to speak of Israel's regeneration. One such passage is Hosea 1:10-2:1. Though judgments will decimate the ranks of Israel, nevertheless, the time will come when Israel will increase tremendously in population (v. 10a). Even though for a long period of time they were Lo Ammi (not my people), they will once again become Ammi (my people), the people of God (v. 10b). When the reunification comes, they will be God's people who have obtained God's mercy (1:11-2:1).

Hosea not only begins his book with Israel's regeneration, but he also ends with it in Hosea 14:4-8. Israel's backslidings will all be thoroughly healed (v. 4), for only then will Israel receive the manifold blessings of God (vv. 5-7). All worship of other gods will cease when the regeneration comes (v. 8).

That this regeneration of Israel will be a result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is the point of Joel 2:28-32. Once the Holy Spirit is poured out on all Israel, then they will call upon the Name of the Lord. God will respond to that call by delivering and saving them.

The national regeneration of Israel will result in the total forgiveness of Israel's sins, according to Micah 7:18-20. God's loyal love for Israel will cause Him to pardon and to pass over the sins of Israel when He will return to them in all compassion (vv. 18-19). He will do so on the basis of the Abrahamic Covenant (v. 20), especially as it is developed in the salvation aspect of the New Covenant.

Another prophecy that spoke of Israel's regeneration is Zephaniah 3:9-13. Throughout the dispersion, the Jews will begin to call upon the Name of the Lord. It is important to note that regardless of where the Jews are, they will respond, so that the regeneration will indeed be total.

2. The Regathering of Israel

a. The Basis: The Land Covenant

The second facet of the final restoration of Israel is the regathering of Israel from all over the world. This is based on the Land Covenant of Deuteronomy 29:1-30:20. Traditionally, this covenant has been known as the Palestinian Covenant, for it largely concerns the Land that for centuries was called Palestine. It was an appropriate term at the time it was coined, and even Jews called the Land "Palestine." This is now an unfortunate term for two reasons. First: it was a name given to the Land by the Roman Emperor Hadrian after the second Jewish revolt under Bar Cochba (A.D. 132-135) for the purpose of erasing any Jewish remembrance of the Land as part of his policy to "de-judaize" the Land. Second: due to the historical events in the Middle East in the twentieth century, the name is associated more with Arabs than with Jews. For these reasons (and others), the author prefers to call it "the Land Covenant." However, it should be noted that in other writings it is still called the Palestinian Covenant.

The passage begins with a clear statement that the Land Covenant is distinct and different from the Mosaic Covenant (29:1). The former is eternal and unconditional, while the latter is both temporal and conditional. Moses then records in summary form the forty years of wilderness experience leading up to the point of being about to enter into the Promised Land (29:29). But before entrance into the Land can occur, another covenant needs to be made in order to warn

them of things to come (29:10-13). They are warned against turning away from the Lord (29:14-21). Then the passage proceeds to state that they will do exactly that, resulting in the dispersion out of the Land into the Gentile nations to endure a long period of many persecutions (29:22-29). But this dispersion out of the Land is not going to be permanent, because eventually there will be a regathering, as described in Deuteronomy 30:1-10.

After the long period of persecution described in chapter 29, there will ultimately be the regeneration of Israel as the people return to the Lord (vv. 1-2). Following the regeneration of Israel will be the regathering from all over the world (v. 3), so that even if Jews should be found in the uttermost parts of the heavens, they will nevertheless be returned (v. 4) and brought back into the Promised Land (v. 5). But this regathering will occur only after the regeneration of Israel (v. 6), at which time the punishments previously applied to Israel will now be applied to the Gentiles (v. 7). Although curses may fall on the Gentiles, there will only be blessings for Israel (vv. 8-9) because they will totally return to the Lord (v. 10). The Land Covenant ends with some further admonitions, warnings and promises (30:11-20).

b. The Prophetic Development

The regathering of Israel, following the regeneration, is another high point of prophetic revelation to be found in many of the Prophets. In Isaiah 11:11-12:6, the final regathering is described as the second of two worldwide regatherings of Israel. Although many commentators identify the first regathering as the return from the Babylonian Captivity, that could hardly be described as a worldwide regathering. The first regathering is the one in unbelief prior to the Great Tribulation, and this has been happening since 1948. The first regathering is in unbelief in preparation for judgment. The regathering described in this passage is the second one (v. 11a), in faith in preparation for the millennial blessings. This regathering is not merely local, from the nations of the Middle East (v. 11b), but from all over the world (v. 12). Isaiah then goes on to develop certain characteristics of Israel's final regathering. First: the unity between Israel and Judah will be restored (vv. 13-14). Ephraim's envy of Judah will cease (v. 13), an envy that developed over the placing of the House of God in Judah (Ps. 78:9-11, 67-68). This unity will enable them to overcome their opponents (v. 14). Second: the final regathering will be accompanied by miracles (vv. 15-16). The tongue of the Egyptian Sea, the Gulf of Suez, will dry up, while the Euphrates will be smitten and split up into seven smaller streams so as to make it easy to cross. As a highway was made for Israel at the Exodus, there will likewise be one again in the final regathering.

Immediately after the Exodus, Israel sang the song found in Exodus 15:1-18. In the same way, after the final regathering, Israel will sing the song found in Isaiah 12:1-6. The song is in two stanzas. In the first stanza (vv. 1-3) Israel gives a thanksgiving to God for turning away anger (v. 1). They now realize that salvation is in Jehovah (v. 2) Who has poured out the waters of salvation freely (v. 3). In the second stanza (vv. 4-6) they wish to make known God's deeds to all the world, so they give thanks (v. 4), sing (v. 5) and shout out loud of God's goodness (v. 6). Later, in Isaiah 27:12-13, the emphasis in this passage is on the totality of the regathering, for every Jew one by one will be brought back into the Land of Israel. As in the previous Isaiah passage, the key locality of the regathering will be from the Middle East nations since, as a result of the fall of Israel in the middle of the Tribulation, the majority of the Jews will be located in this vicinity and it is here that they will have suffered the most. And so the Jews will be taken one by one out of Egypt and Assyria (modern Iraq). Jews are still to be found in various Arab countries suffering tremendous persecutions. But in the regathering they will be rescued from the land of their enemies. The regathering will be from all over the world, but with special emphasis on the Middle East nations.

The magnitude of the final regathering of Israel is described in Isaiah 43:5-7. As far as locality is concerned, the regathering will be worldwide, and to emphasize the fact, all four points of the compass are mentioned (vv. 5-6). Then the magnitude is illustrated by the usage of three words: created, formed and made (v. 7). These three words were used interchangeably in the creation account of Genesis 1-2. Hence, from God's perspective, the final regathering will be on the magnitude of the original creation.

The comparative magnitude of the final regathering with previous works of God is something Jeremiah also pointed out. In Jeremiah 16:14-15, it is compared with the Exodus. Throughout Jewish history, the Exodus has been considered the high point of Jewish history, but after the

final regathering this will change (v. 14). In the future it will be the final regathering of the Jews that will become the high point of Jewish history (v. 15).

Later, in Jeremiah 23:3-4, the prophet stated that from all over the world the Jews are to be regathered into the Land, where they will produce much fruit (v. 3). Furthermore, God will provide righteous leaders who will feed the people with righteousness, justice, and understanding (v. 4).

Then there is another comparison with the Exodus in Jeremiah 23:7-8.

One other passage in Jeremiah that speaks of the regathering is found in 31:7-10. Following the regeneration of Israel (v. 7) all the Jews will be regathered, regardless of their state of health and regardless of their location (v. 8). There will be no hindrances whatsoever to the regathering (v. 9), for the same One Who was able to scatter them will also be able to regather them (v. 10).

Ezekiel picked up the same motif in Ezekiel 11:14-18. The same God Who scattered Israel (v. 14-16) has every intention of regathering them back into their own Land (v. 17) so that regenerate Israel can cleanse the Land of all pollution (v. 18).

Later, the prophet restated this doctrine in Ezekiel 36:24:

For I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all the countries, and will bring you into your own land.

The Minor Prophets were not remiss in speaking of the regathering. One such prophecy is in Amos 9:14-15. The emphasis of Amos is on permanency. Israel is to be regathered in order to rebuild the Land (v. 14). In the final regathering, God will plant them in the Land so that they will never again be uprooted and dispersed out of the Land (v. 15).

The Prophet Zephaniah, whose whole theme was one of judgment, closed his book with a promise of the final regathering in Zephaniah 3:18-20. The judgment meted out against Israel is the result of her sins (vv. 18-19). These judgments will not have a destructive effect, but a corrective one. Once correction takes place, the regathering will indeed occur, and the final regathering will cause Israel to be a name and a praise among the Gentile nations (v. 20).

The final prophet of the Old Testament to speak of the regathering is Zechariah, in 10:8-12. As Zechariah portrayed the final regathering, he saw it in terms of hissing, which is the call of a shepherd for his sheep (v. 8a). The regathering will be a result of the redemption and regeneration of Israel (vv. 8b-9). While the regathering is to occur from around the world, there will be a special emphasis upon the Middle East nations (vv. 10-11). Once all the Jews are regathered, they will never again depart from the Lord (v. 12).

Premillennialism in the Old Testament (Part 4)

Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum

3. The Possession of the Land

a. The Basis: The Abrahamic Covenant

The third facet of the final restoration of Israel is the possession of the Land, encompassing two aspects: its total boundaries and its productivity. The basis for this facet is the Abrahamic Covenant, as found in various passages of the Book of Genesis. There are too many to cite them all. Therefore, only those passages that deal with the Land aspect will be cited. The very beginning of the Abrahamic Covenant is in Genesis 12:1-3.

At the time that the covenant was initially made, Abram was simply told to leave for a land that God would show him. At this point, Abram is promised only to be shown a land and nothing more. When he arrived in the Land, God again revealed Himself to Abram in Genesis 12:7. In this verse, the promise is stated in such a way that it is Abram's seed that is to possess the Land. So from this passage alone, it might be concluded that Abram himself was never to possess the Land.

But that is not the case, as another passage on the Abrahamic Covenant makes clear, in Genesis 13:14-17. Although for the time being the area of grazing was divided between Abram and Lot, ultimately all the land that Abram could see is to be possessed by him (vv. 14-15). The promise is clearly made that the Land is to be possessed by Abram personally as well as by Abram's seed. Yet Abram died having never possessed any part of the Land, except for a few wells and a burial cave which he had to purchase with good money. In order for God to fulfill His promise to Abram, two things have to occur. Abram must be resurrected, and the Land must be restored to Israel. Since Abram's seed is to possess the Land as well, the population of Israel will greatly increase

at that time (v. 16). Abram was then directed to walk throughout the Land in order to get to know it very well, for some day he will possess it (v. 17).

In the above passage, Abram was told that all the land he could possibly see would be possessed by him, but no exact boundaries were given. Later, however, as God signed the covenant, the exact boundaries were given, in Genesis 15:12-21. At the time of the signing and the sealing of the Abrahamic Covenant, God spelled out the future history of Abram's seed prior to their initial possession of the Land (vv. 12-16). Then God signed and sealed the covenant (v. 17) and declared what the boundaries of the Land will be (vv. 18-20). The borders are to extend from the Euphrates River in the north to the River of Egypt in the south. There is no problem with the identity of the Euphrates in the north, but there has been some confusion over the identity of the River of Egypt. Some have identified the River of Egypt as being the same as the Brook of Egypt mentioned in other passages. Both have at times been identified with the Nile River, making it the southern border. But none of these suppositions are correct. First of all, the Brook of Egypt and the River of Egypt are not the same. The latter refers to a continuous flowing river, while the former is a wadi, a dry river bed that only has water in it periodically during the rainy season. The words for river and brook are two different Hebrew words, also forcing one to keep the two distinct. The Brook of Egypt is the modern Wadi-el-Arish running south to north in the central Sinai Peninsula. Just as the River of Egypt is not the same as the Brook of Egypt, neither is it the Nile River. If that were the case, the Jews would have already been in the Promised Land before they ever left Egypt. Rather, it refers to one of the "fingers" of the Nile River. As the river flows from the south to the north before reaching the Mediterranean Sea, it enters an area known as the Nile Delta, where it breaks up into a number of fingers or branches. The most eastern branch or finger was the one known as the River of Egypt. Today, the River of Egypt is along the line of the modern Suez Canal. Hence, according to this passage, Israel's southern boundary is to extend down to about where the Suez Canal is today. This raises some questions concerning consistency with other passages. In this passage, the southern boundary is given as the River of Egypt, while the passages in the Prophets, when dealing with the Jewish settlement of the Land in the final restoration, give the southern boundary as the Brook of Egypt. This is not really a contradiction. The difference is simply between the extent of possession and control as over against the extent of actual settlement. In the final restoration of the Land, Israel will possess all the way south to the River of Egypt and will control down to the area of the modern Suez Canal. But as far as where the Jews will be living, the actual boundary of this settlement will only extend as far south as the Brook of Egypt or the modern Wadi-el-Arish.

After Abraham, the covenant is reconfirmed through Isaac in Genesis 26:2-5. Isaac is commanded to stay in the Land and not to leave it (v. 2), for it is to Isaac and to Isaac's seed that the Land will be given (v. 3). It should be noted that the promise is not merely to Isaac's descendants, but to Isaac himself, requiring Isaac's future resurrection and possession of the Land. As for Isaac's seed, it will be greatly increased in population (v. 4). It is to Isaac and not Ishmael, or to the six sons of Keturah, that the Abrahamic Covenant is reconfirmed (v. 5). After Isaac, the Abrahamic Covenant is reconfirmed to Jacob in Genesis 28:13-15. It is to Jacob and not to Esau that the covenant is now reconfirmed (v. 13a). The promise is made that the Land will be given to both Jacob and to Jacob's seed (v. 13b). So again the possession of the Land is not a promise to the seed only, but to the individual Jacob as well. For this reason Jacob must also be resurrected and possess the Land. As previously, the seed will be greatly multiplied at that time (v. 14). As for Jacob himself, who was now departing from the Land, God will bring him back in his own lifetime (v. 15).

So then, it is on the Abrahamic Covenant, which is reconfirmed through Isaac and Jacob and then to all of Jacob's descendants (Gen. 49), that the third facet of Israel's final restoration is based.

b. The Prophetic Development

This third facet of Israel's final restoration, the possession of the Land, was further developed in both the Law and the Prophets. As far as the Law is concerned, it is found in Leviticus 26:40-45. Following the regeneration of Israel (vv. 40-41) God will fully carry out the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant concerning the Land (v. 42). On the basis of the Abrahamic Covenant He will restore to them the Land that has lain desolate for so long (vv. 43-45).

In another part of the Law, the possession of the Land is also part of the Land Covenant, in Deuteronomy 30:5.

The prophets of Israel developed this facet even further in both the Major and Minor Prophets. Among the Major Prophets, Isaiah 27:12 states that the first aspect (the borders of the Land) is brought out. The northern (Euphrates River) and southern (the Brook of Egypt) boundaries are possessed for the first time in all of Israel's history. Israel will be able to settle in all of the Promised Land.

In another passage, Isaiah 30:23-26, the second aspect (increased productivity of the Land) of the third facet is stressed. The Land will be well watered and will produce abundant food both for men and animals (vv. 23-25). Furthermore, there will be a tremendous increase of light, with the moon shining as brightly as the sun, while the light of the sun will be increased seven times what it is today. It will be a time of total healing of all physical infirmities (v. 26).

As for the deserts of Israel, Isaiah 35:1-2 states:

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon: they shall see the glory of Jehovah, the excellency of our God.

Isaiah later brought out the productivity aspect again in 65:21-24. With the possession of the Land of Israel, not only will the Jews be able to build houses and plant vineyards and crops (v. 21), but they will also enjoy the work of their hands, for no enemy will take it from them (vv. 22-23). They will enjoy it until a ripe old age.

Another Major Prophet, Jeremiah, also stressed the greater productivity of the Land in the final restoration. In Jeremiah 31:1-6 he wrote that because of God's everlasting love for His people (vv. 1-3), He intends to restore and build them again (v. 4). Once again for Israel there will be a time of plenty (v. 5), and the hills of Ephraim will echo with the call to come and worship God in Jerusalem (v. 6).

Later in the same passage, Jeremiah returned to the theme in 31:11-14. After the redemption of Israel (v. 11), they will be restored to the Land, which will produce an abundance (v. 12), giving joy to all the inhabitants of the Land (vv. 13-14).

After Jeremiah, the next Major Prophet, Ezekiel, picked up the motif of the possession of the Land and stated in Ezekiel 20:42-44. Israel is to be brought back into their land in accordance with the promises of God to the forefathers in the Abrahamic Covenant (v. 42). Israel will turn away from her sins of the past and will detest them (v. 43) and now serve God alone (v. 44).

Later, Ezekiel 28:25-26 adds that following its regeneration and regathering, Israel will then possess the Land in accordance with the Abrahamic Covenant (v. 25). The security in which Israel will live and enjoy the works of her hands is then emphasized (v. 26).

The security aspect along with the element of increased productivity is the theme of Ezekiel 34:25-31. Since there will no longer be any wild beasts in the Land, Israel will be able to enjoy the Land in total security (v. 25). The rains will come in their proper time and in proper amounts (v. 26), increasing the productivity (v. 27a). Not only is Israel to be secure from the wild beasts, but also from all her enemies of the past (vv. 27b-28). None will come to destroy the crops (v. 29). In every way Israel will be rightly related to God and will be His peculiar possession (vv. 30-31).

Nor is this the end of the subject, as the prophet continued in Ezekiel 36:8-15. In spite of years of desolation, the Land is to be tilled again (vv. 8-9) and populated for the inhabitants of the Land will be greatly increased (vv. 10-11). Israel will again possess the Land (v. 12), and the production of the Land will be tremendous (vv. 13-15).

Later in this passage, the prophet further elaborated in Ezekiel 36:28-38. Ezekiel declared that Israel will again possess the Land (v. 28) as a result of her regeneration (v. 29). The reproach of Israel will be removed (v. 30), and Israel will detest her past sins (v. 31). It is not for Israel's glory (v. 32) that the regeneration (v. 33) and the tilling and rebuilding of the Land (vv. 34-35) will occur, but it is for God's own glory among the nations (v. 36). As for Israel, the population will increase and the desolate places will be rebuilt (vv. 37-38).

The repossession of the Land is also promised in the Minor Prophets, such as in Joel 2:18-27. God will be jealous for His Land (v. 18), and this burning jealousy will bring about a great productivity in the Land (v. 19). The Land will be secure from any further invasions (v. 20), and it will produce abundantly (vv. 21-22). The rains will come at the proper seasons and in proper

amounts (v. 23), causing a tremendous amount of surplus in their storages (v. 24) and recuperation from all previous losses due to pestilences (v. 25). Israel will never again be shamed (v. 26), but will have a special relationship to God (v. 27).

Later, in Joel 3:18, the prophet declared that there will be an abundance of water in the Land.

The increased productivity of the Land is again pointed out in Amos 9:13.

To summarize, for the first time in Israel's history, she will possess all of the Promised Land while the Land itself will greatly increase in its productivity and be well watered, all on the basis of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Premillennialism in the Old Testament (Part 5)

Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum

4. The Reestablishment of the Davidic Throne

a. The Basis: The Davidic Covenant

The fourth facet of the final restoration of Israel is the reestablishment of the Davidic Throne. This is based upon the Davidic Covenant, found in two passages of Scripture: II Samuel 7:11b-16 and I Chronicles 17:10-15.

In essence, then, the Davidic Covenant promised four eternal things: an eternal Dynasty, an eternal Kingdom, an eternal Throne, and an eternal Person. The eternality of the Dynasty, Kingdom, and Throne are guaranteed only because the Seed of David culminated in the Person Who is Himself eternal.

The Messiah holds three offices: prophet, priest, and king. However, He does not function in all these offices simultaneously. Rather, the functioning of these three offices is to be carried out in a chronological sequence. During His ministry on earth at His First Coming, Jesus functioned in the office of a prophet. But this ceased at the time of His death. Since His death and resurrection, and until He returns, He is functioning in the office of a priest. This duty will cease at the Second Coming. Jesus has never yet functioned in the office of a king. For Him to do so, there must be the reestablishment of the Davidic Throne upon which He will sit to rule as King over Israel and King of the world. This duty will begin at the Second Coming.

b. The Prophetic Development

While this facet of Israel's final restoration has not been as fully developed as the others, it has not been totally ignored. Some of the prophetic developments, such as Jeremiah 23:5-6 and Isaiah 9:6-7, have already been discussed in Chapter 17, General Characteristics of the Messianic Kingdom, on the government of the Messianic Age. But besides these, there are several other passages, such as Psalm 89:3-4. In this passage God states that He has made an eternal covenant with David (v. 3), including the establishment of an eternal dynasty and an eternal throne (v. 4).

The eternality of the Dynasty and the Throne is restated later in the same Psalm, in verse 29. Still later, verses 34-37 state that the continuation of the covenant is not dependent upon David or upon his descendants, but upon God's character (v. 34). Since God does not lie, the covenant is sure to stand (v. 35). For that very reason, the eternality of the Dynasty and the Throne is assured (vv. 36-37).

Another prophetic passage is Jeremiah 33:17-26. The emphasis in this passage is clearly on the eternality of and the impossibility of breaking the Davidic Covenant. Under no circumstances will the House of David ever become extinct (vv. 17-18), for the Davidic Covenant is both unconditional and eternal (vv. 19-21). Ultimately the seed of David will be greatly multiplied (v. 22). The reestablishment of the Davidic Throne will be the antidote to the poisonous teaching that God no longer intends to fulfill His covenants with Israel (vv. 23-26). God is not through with Israel (vv. 23-24), but will fulfill every promise of the Davidic Covenant (vv. 25-26a) and the Abrahamic Covenant (v. 26b).

One other passage in the Old Testament is Amos 9:11-12. When the Kingdom is established, the ruins of the House of David will be repaired, and the Davidic Throne will again exercise all the glory of the days gone by (v. 11). But in addition to all the glory of the past, the authority of the reestablished Davidic Throne will extend to all the Gentile nations (v. 12).

The promises that God made to Israel have not been rendered null and void. Israel is yet to enjoy all the promises of the four unfulfilled unconditional covenants, each of which points respectively to the four facets of Israel's final restoration.

B. Other Characteristics of Israel's Final Restoration

Besides the various features mentioned in the passages dealing with the covenants and their prophetic developments, other passages develop additional characteristics which may or may not necessarily be connected with any specific covenant. Some of these other characteristics that will be true at the time of Israel's final restoration will be dealt with in this section.

1. Reunited as a Nation

One of the other major features of the final restoration is that Israel will be reunited as a nation, never to be divided into two separate kingdoms again. This is mentioned by Jeremiah 3:18. The key passage for this characteristic is found in the Vision of the Valley of Dry Bones of Ezekiel 37:1-23. Ezekiel is first commanded to prophesy over the dry bones scattered all over the valley (vv. 1-6). When he does, the bones all come together with sinews and skin, and then the breath of life is given to them so they become alive again (vv. 7-10). As God interprets the Vision of the Valley of Dry Bones (vv. 11-17), these bones are said to represent the whole House of Israel, which has become spiritually dead and dispersed (v. 11). Yet God will regather them, and they will again possess the Land (vv. 12-13). At the time of the regathering and possession of the Land, Israel will be regenerated by the Spirit of God so as to have a living and right relationship (v. 14). Then the prophet continues, in Ezekiel 37:15-23. Ezekiel is commanded to take two sticks, and on one stick he is to write Judah and on the other Joseph, and then put the two sticks together so they become one stick in his hand (vv. 15-17). The interpretation of the miracle is that the two kingdoms will some day be reunited into one nation (vv. 18-20). When the regathering of Israel comes (v. 21), they will not be regathered into two nations, but into only one, for they will be under one King in one Kingdom (v. 22). At that time they will be thoroughly cleansed of their sins, which were the root cause of the original division (v. 23).

2. The Center of Gentile Attention

A second major characteristic of Israel's final restoration is that they will become the center of Gentile attention. A number of passages speak of this, such as Isaiah 14:12. After Israel's regeneration and restoration (v. 1a), Gentiles will align themselves with Israel in order to worship the God of Israel (v. 1b). In fact, as Israel is being regathered, not only will this be accomplished with the help of angels, but the Gentiles will be conducting the Jews back into the Land (v. 2a). Finally, the Gentiles will be possessed by Israel and will become the servants of Israel (v. 2b). A similar statement is made in Isaiah 49:22-23. Again, the regathering of Israel is said to be with the aid of the Gentiles, who will conduct the Jews back into the Land (v. 22). At that time, the Gentiles of every social stratum will become the servants of Israel (v. 23a), and Israel will never again be shamed by them (v. 23b).

According to Isaiah 60:1-3, the reason why Israel will become the center of Gentile attention is due to the fact that the Shekinah Glory will abide over Israel.

Isaiah 61:4-9 states that when the regathering takes place, Israel will rebuild all the desolate cities of the Land (v. 4). At that time, the Gentiles will become servants to Israel, and will feed the flocks and plow the fields (v. 5). As for Israel, they will be the ministers of the Word to the Gentiles (v. 6a) and will receive the wealth of the Gentiles for their enjoyment (v. 6b). Israel will never again be shamed by the Gentiles, but rather they will receive a double portion of all blessings and possessions (v. 7). This will be the result of the New Covenant (v. 8). The Jews will be known among the Gentiles, and all the Gentiles will acknowledge that it is the Jews who have been especially chosen by God for special blessings (v. 9).

Isaiah's contemporary, Micah, also had something to say in this regard in Micah 7:14-17. Israel is to be regathered in order to possess the Land (v. 14), and this regathering will be accompanied by miracles (v. 15). When the Gentiles see this, they will cease reproaching the Jews and will have a reverential fear of the Jews. They will then submit to the God of Israel (vv. 16-17).

That Israel's final restoration will cause the Jews to become the center of Gentile attention was also revealed in Zephaniah 3:20.

Finally, in Zechariah 8:23, the prophet stated:

Thus says Jehovah of hosts: In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all the languages of the nations, they shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.

In the past, when ten Gentiles grabbed the clothes of the Jew, it was for other reasons than to say, Let us go with you, for we have heard God is with you. At the time of the final restoration, the

Jews will no longer be reproached. Instead, Jews will be treated with reverential respect, for they will be known as the ministers of God.

3. Righteousness, Holiness, Peace, Security, Joy, and Gladness

Another feature of Israel's final restoration combines the various characteristics of righteousness, holiness, peace, security, joy, and gladness. Righteousness and peace are the primary characteristics in Isaiah 32:16-20; holiness, peace, security, and joy are emphasized in Isaiah 35:5-10, things that will earmark the time of Israel's regathering; joy and gladness are stressed in Isaiah 51:3; joy and peace in nature and man are highlighted in Isaiah 55:12-13; and in Isaiah 61:10-11, the emphasis is on the righteousness aspect.

C. The Millennial Mountain

At the time of the Second Coming of the Messiah, the Land will undergo some tremendous geographical and topographical changes. One of the key changes in the Land of Israel will be the rise of a very high mountain that will become the highest mountain of the world. On top of this mountain the Millennial Temple and the Millennial Jerusalem will stand.

There are several passages that speak of this Millennial Mountain of Jehovah's House. One such place is Isaiah 2:2-4. This clearly states that the mountain upon which Jehovah's House will stand will be the highest of all the mountains, and by far the most exalted (v. 2a). All the nations will move toward it in pilgrimage in order to learn the ways of God because the Law of the Millennial Kingdom will emanate from this mountain (vv. 2b-3). This will result in worldwide peace because differences among the nations will be settled by the Word of the Lord that will come from the Mountain of Jehovah's House (vv. 3b-4).

Later, in Isaiah 27:13, the prophet pointed out that this high mountain will become the center of Jewish worship.

But not the Jews only, for Isaiah 56:6-8 points out the fact that this great Mountain of Jehovah's House will become a place of prayer for all peoples, Jews and Gentiles alike:

By means of the Gentile nations, the people of Israel will be brought and regathered to the Mountain of Jehovah's House, according to Isaiah 66:20.

Isaiah's contemporary, the Prophet Micah, also spoke of this great Mountain in Micah 4:1-2 with words that are similar to, or quoting, Isaiah's.

The Mountain of Jehovah's House will be exalted above every mountain and hill (v. 1), and the law of God will proceed from this mountain (v. 2).

The prophet who received the most revelation regarding the Mountain of Jehovah's House was Ezekiel, who first introduced it in Ezekiel 17:22-24, which describes the mountain of the height of Israel as a place of lush greenery and vegetation.

Later, in Ezekiel 20:40-41, the prophet declared that the mountain will serve as the center of Jewish worship in the Kingdom. After Israel's regeneration and regathering, she will worship the Lord in this high, lofty, and holy mountain.

Only in the closing chapters of his book does Ezekiel give the details of what this very high Mountain of Jehovah's House will be like, in three different places: Ezekiel 40:1-4; 45:1-8; and 48:8-20.

After announcing that the high mountain is to be fifty miles square (v. 8), Ezekiel begins to describe the northern section. This northern section will be twenty miles by fifty miles and will be inhabited by priests, for in the very center of this section, the Millennial Temple is to stand. The priests who are to occupy this area around the Temple are the descendants of Zadok, because that segment of the Tribe of Levi remained faithful while the rest went astray. The central section will also measure twenty miles by fifty miles. This area will be reserved for the rest of the Tribe of Levi, those Levites who did not belong to the line of Zadok. The southern section is to measure ten miles by fifty miles, in the middle of which the Millennial Jerusalem is to be built. Jerusalem will be in the very center of this southern section and will measure ten miles by ten miles. The two remaining portions of the southern section, east and west of Jerusalem, will each measure ten miles by twenty miles, and will be for the purpose of growing food for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Jerusalem will not belong to any particular tribe but will be inhabited by members of all the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

Premillennialism in the Old Testament (Part 6)

Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum

D. The Millennial Temple-Ezekiel 40:5-43:27

In Ezekiel 37:26-28, Ezekiel prophesied that God's Sanctuary will be placed in the midst of Israel. There is a great expansion and elaboration of these few verses in Ezekiel 40:5-43:27.

E. The Millennial System of Priesthood and Sacrifice-Ezekiel 44:1-46:24

These three chapters of Ezekiel are concerned with the various laws regulating the millennial system of priesthood and sacrifice. While there are similarities with the commandments of the Law of Moses, there are also some marked differences. For this reason, the millennial system of priesthood and sacrifice must not be viewed as a reinstitution of the Law of Moses, which ended permanently and forever with the death of the Messiah. During the Messianic Kingdom, a whole new system of law, Kingdom Law, will be instituted. There will be no reinstitution of any previous code of law.

To summarize, there will be a sacrificial system instituted in the Millennium that will have some features similar to the Mosaic system, along with some brand-new laws. For that very reason, the sacrificial system of the Millennium must not be viewed as a reinstitution of the Mosaic system, because it is not. It will be a brand-new system that will contain some things old and some things new, and will be instituted for an entirely different purpose.

A common argument against taking these verses literally is the question as to why such a system would be necessary, since the Messiah has already died. If the death of the Messiah was the final sacrifice for sin, how could these animal sacrifices provide an expiation for sin? Therefore, some say, these chapters of Ezekiel must not be taken literally. But if not, Ezekiel gives a lot of detail that would suddenly become meaningless. Furthermore, if all that detail is intended to be symbolic, the symbols are never explained. So the non-literalist is forced to be subjective in expounding them and must resort to guesswork, and for that reason have come up with a large variety of contradictory views. The literal approach is the safest method to gain understanding of these passages.

F. The Millennial River-Ezekiel 47:1-12

All together there are three passages that speak about the Millennial River. One of these is this Ezekiel passage, which depicts the river as beginning in the Temple Compound and eventually making its way south to the Dead Sea. The entire Ezekiel passage is summarized in Joel 3:18. According to Joel, the Millennial River will originate at the Temple building itself.

The point of origin is further described in Ezekiel 47:1-2. From the front part of the Temple, by the threshold of the door and the right side of the Altar which will stand in front of the Temple, the Millennial River will gush out, first leading east until it passes the eastern gate and then heading south toward the Dead Sea.

It will not flow directly from the Temple to the Dead Sea, but will first flow to Jerusalem, as depicted in Zechariah 14:8. While the river will begin in the Temple and initially flow eastward, it is clear from this passage that it will flow southward to the City of Jerusalem, where it will be divided into two branches. The western branch will flow down the mountain and empty into the Mediterranean Sea. The eastern branch will flow into the Dead Sea. The branching out of these waters toward the areas designated for growing food on both sides of Jerusalem will provide the necessary water for the growth of the crops.

Since the eastern branch empties into the Dead Sea, the character of the Dead Sea will change. It will begin swarming with life, as prophesied in Ezekiel 47:8-10.

G. The Millennial Israel-Ezekiel 47:13-48:29

For the first time in Israel's history, the Jews will possess and settle in all of the Promised Land, and it will again be subdivided into the twelve tribal divisions. But these tribal divisions will be different than those described in the Book of Joshua.

H. The Millennial Jerusalem-Ezekiel 48:30-35

Ezekiel closes the final section of his book with a short description of the Millennial Jerusalem, adding details not found elsewhere in the Prophets. All four sides of the city are described, along with the gates and their names. The city gates will all be named after the twelve sons of Jacob. The north side (vv. 30-31) will measure ten miles (v. 30), and the three gates will be named Reuben, Judah, and Levi (v. 31). The eastern side (v. 32) will measure ten miles (v. 32a), and its gates will be named Joseph, Benjamin, and Dan (v. 32b). The southern side (v. 33) will measure ten miles (v. 33a) with its three gates named Simeon, Issachar, and Zebulun (v. 33b). Finally, the western side (v. 34) will also measure ten miles (v. 34a) with its gates named Gad, Asher, and

Naphtali (v. 34b). The total measurement of the city will be ten miles square (v. 35a), and Jerusalem's name will be changed to Jehovah Shammah, which means Jehovah is there (v. 35b). Since the Messianic God-Man will personally reign from this particular city, the city will not only fulfill its name of Jerusalem (the city of peace), but also Jehovah Shammah (Jehovah is there). For this same reason the city will also be called Jehovah our Righteousness, according to Jeremiah 33:16.

While Ezekiel gives only a short description of the Millennial Jerusalem, other characteristics of the Millennial Jerusalem are to be found in other parts of Scripture. The Psalms in particular took delight in describing and characterizing the Millennial Jerusalem. One such passage is Psalm 48. Verses 1-3 describe it as the residence of the God of Israel.

In verse 8, it is God Who will establish the city.

Because it is God Who will establish Jerusalem, Jerusalem will be known as the City of God, according to Psalm 87:1-7.

The peace that will characterize the Millennial Jerusalem as a result of the reestablishment of the Davidic Throne is described in Psalm 122:1-9.

The building up of Jerusalem at the time of the regathering of Israel is the point of Psalm 147:2-3. Since it is God Who is rebuilding Jerusalem, it will be characterized by strength as well as peace, in Psalm 147:12-14.

It is from this city that the Kingdom Law will emanate, according to Psalm 147:15-20:

A number of the prophets of Israel also revealed other features and characteristics of the Millennial Jerusalem. Among the Major Prophets is Isaiah, who, in 1:26-27, described the Millennial Jerusalem as being characterized by holiness, justice, and righteousness.

Later, in Isaiah 4:3-6 holiness is what is going to characterize the establishment of Jerusalem (v. 3), for all of Jerusalem's previous sins will be purged by God's justice and refining fire (v. 4).

Hence, over the entire Mount Zion will be the visible form of the Shekinah Glory (vv. 5-6).

In Isaiah 14:32, Jerusalem will serve as the place of security for the afflicted people.

Later, Isaiah 33:20-24 describes the Millennial Jerusalem. Quietness and security will characterize Jerusalem in that day (v. 20), for Jehovah in the Person of the Messiah will dwell in this city (v. 21a). It will be a city of many streams and waters, but without any ships of war ever sailing in them (v. 21b). The Messiah in the midst of the city will serve as the Judge, Lawgiver, King, and Savior (v. 22), and so Israel's sins will be totally forgiven (vv. 23-24).

The holiness and freedom of Jerusalem is emphasized in Isaiah 52:1-2. Jerusalem in that day will become the Holy City, and nothing unholy will ever enter into it (v. 1). It will be further characterized by freedom, for the Times of the Gentiles will be no more, and never again will Jerusalem be subject to bondage (v. 2).

In Isaiah 52:7-10, there is good news that is to be declared to Jerusalem. The good news for Jerusalem is that Messiah will reign in Zion (v. 7), and the Jews will be regathered to Jerusalem (v. 8). Jerusalem will be built all over again, for God will redeem the city (v. 9) and salvation will characterize it (v. 10).

Jerusalem is to become the center of worldwide Gentile attention, according to Isaiah 60:10-14.

The Gentiles, who will be the servants of Israel, will also be used in building up the Millennial Jerusalem (v. 10). The twelve gates named after the twelve sons of Jacob will be continually open, never to be closed throughout the Kingdom (v. 11a). The Gentile nations and kings will bring their tribute through these gates (v. 11b), for failure to do so will bring swift judgment (v. 12). The Gentile nations who in the past afflicted the City of Jerusalem will now bow in submission to its authority (vv. 13-14).

A rather detailed description is in Isaiah 62:1-12. The Millennial Jerusalem will be characterized by brightness and righteousness (v. 1). Her righteousness will be recognized by all the nations of the earth (v. 2a). At that time Jerusalem will be given a new name (v. 2b), the one mentioned in Ezekiel 48:35: Jehovah Shammah. Jerusalem will be further characterized by beauty (v. 3), never again to be forsaken or desolated by God (v. 4a), for the city itself will be God's joy and delight (vv. 4b-5). To make sure that these promises will some day be fulfilled, angelic messengers have been placed upon the walls of Jerusalem whose entire ministry consists of reminding God of His promises to make Jerusalem the joy and praise of the whole earth (vv. 6-7). The inhabitants of Millennial Jerusalem are promised that they will enjoy the fruit of their labors, for the results of their labor will never again be taken away by their enemies (vv. 8-9). The declaration is made that

the redemption and salvation of Jerusalem is assured, because God is One Who keeps His promises (vv. 10-12).

Joy and rejoicing will be prominent characteristics of the Millennial Jerusalem in Isaiah 65:18-19.

Peace and comfort along with joy are features of the city, in Isaiah 66:10-14.

Though Isaiah is the primary Major Prophet describing the Millennial Jerusalem, other Major Prophets spoke of it as well. In Jeremiah 3:17 the reestablished Davidic Throne will be situated in Jerusalem, making it the center of Gentile attention.

It will also be a center of Jewish attraction, in Jeremiah 31:6.

The increased size of Jerusalem, its holiness and its indestructibility are the points of Jeremiah 31:38-40.

The peace and joy that will return to Jerusalem is described in Jeremiah 33:9-11. The joy, peace and glory of Jerusalem will attract the Gentile nations from afar (v. 9). All the former desolations of Jerusalem will be forever forgotten (v. 10), for the streets of Jerusalem will bustle with the noise of joy and gladness, and with the happy voices of brides and bridegrooms (v. 11).

Scattered among the Minor Prophets are more references describing the Millennial Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is to be characterized by holiness and security only because God Himself will dwell in her, according to Joel 3:17.

It is from Jerusalem that God will reign over the regathered Israel in Micah 4:6-8.

In Zephaniah 3:14-17, Jerusalem is to shout for joy and gladness (v. 14), for the city will be redeemed (v. 15a). God Himself will dwell in the city (vv. 15b-17) and reign over the inhabitants of the city.

Of all the Minor Prophets, Zechariah had the most to say concerning the Millennial Jerusalem. In the very first chapter of his book, in Zechariah 1:14-17, the prophet reported a promise God made that He has every intention of choosing Jerusalem in spite of desolations afflicted on her by the Gentiles.

Zechariah 2:1-5 is an elaboration of the promise made in Zechariah 1:14-17, in which God promised that He will choose Jerusalem and rebuild her. Now, in Zechariah 2:1-5, the promise is developed. Jerusalem will indeed be rebuilt to a size far greater than ever before (vv. 1-2). The rebuilt city is portrayed as a city without walls (vv. 3-4). It does not state that there will be no walls, as if to contradict other passages studied in this chapter. It simply says as without walls. The purpose of walled cities was for protection and security. However, the Millennial Jerusalem will not need a wall for the purpose of protection or security, since the Messiah Himself will dwell in her midst. The purpose of Jerusalem's wall will not be for protection, but for beauty. The reason the wall will not be needed for security is because on one hand God will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, while on the other hand the Shekinah Glory in the form of fire will surround the city (v. 5).

The point is restated in Zechariah 2:10-12. God, in the Person of the Messiah, will indeed dwell in Jerusalem (v. 10). For this reason, Jerusalem will be the center of worldwide Gentile attention (v. 11). From His throne in Jerusalem, the Messiah will reign over all Israel and the Holy Land (v. 12).

Another graphic description of the Millennial Jerusalem is in Zechariah 8:1-8.

God's special jealousy for Jerusalem (vv. 1-2) will cause Him to return to Jerusalem to dwell in her midst (v. 3a). At that time Jerusalem will become the city of truth upon the Mountain of Jehovah's House (v. 3b). The city will be inhabited by the very young and the very old (vv. 4-5). The very young will be those who will be born in the Kingdom, while the very old will indeed be very old, for many will be several hundred years of age in the closing centuries of the Millennium. The Millennial Jerusalem will be a marvelous work that only God can do (v. 6). Once the Millennial Jerusalem is established, it will be inhabited by the Jews regathered from all over the world (vv. 7-8).

Jerusalem becoming the center of worldwide Gentile attention is the point of Zechariah 8:20-22.

The unique situation of Jerusalem in the Kingdom is described in Zechariah 14:9-11. The Messiah will be King in the city (v. 9), and the geography of the Land will be greatly altered so that Jerusalem can be enlarged and exalted on the Mountain of Jehovah's House (v. 10). Only then will Jerusalem become truly the city of peace and live in total security (v. 11).

Finally, the holiness that will characterize Jerusalem will extend to the very bells upon the horses, and to the pots and pans in the kitchens, according to Zechariah 14:20-21:

In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, Holy Unto Jehovah; and the pots in Jehovah's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holy unto Jehovah of hosts; and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and boil therein: and in that day there shall be no more a Canaanite in the house of Jehovah of hosts.

The golden age of Jerusalem is yet to come.

Premillennialism in the Old Testament (Part 7) (Conclusion)

Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum

V. The Gentiles in the Messianic Kingdom

A. General Characteristics

The Gentiles who survive the Judgment of the Gentiles for their treatment of Israel are the ones who will enter and populate the Gentile nations in the Millennium. These are the sheep Gentiles who, because of their faith shown by their pro-Semitism, will be able to participate in and populate the Kingdom.

Much has already been said about the place of the Gentiles in the Kingdom in the previous chapters relating to the government, the Church, and Israel in the Kingdom. This chapter will be concerned with those passages that deal exclusively with the place of the Gentiles in the Kingdom, as a good number of passages in the Major and Minor Prophets speak to this point. Of the Major Prophets, Isaiah is the key. In Isaiah 11:10, the Messiah will be the center of Gentile attraction.

According to Isaiah 14:1-2, they will be possessed and be the servants of the people of Israel. While on one hand the Gentiles will be subject to the King Messiah, they will also receive justice from the King in Isaiah 42:1.

At that time, in a special way, the Messiah will become the light to the Gentiles, according to Isaiah 49:5-7. The calling of the Messiah is not only on behalf of Israel to regather the scattered nation (v. 5a), but also to be the light and the salvation to the Gentiles (v. 6b). So at the time of the final restoration of Israel, the Messiah will be manifested in the most complete sense as the light to the Gentiles, and all the kings of the Gentiles will worship Him (v. 7).

A more extensive passage is Isaiah 56:1-8. At the time of the setting up of the Kingdom, there may be some feeling among the sheep Gentiles that, because of the exalted position of Israel, the Gentiles will be excluded from receiving the benefits of Millennial Temple worship (vv. 1-3). But this will not be the case, for the Temple ministry will be open to all Gentiles who are rightly related to the King. Under no circumstances will they be excluded either because they are Gentiles or because they are mutilated (vv. 4-5). It is then and only then that the House of God will be called truly a house of prayer for all nations (vv. 6-7). When will that be? At the time of Israel's final regathering (v. 8).

That the Gentiles are to have a place in the Millennial Temple worship is also taught in Isaiah 66:18-24. The Shekinah Glory, which will be especially manifested in the Kingdom, will be seen by many of the Gentiles (v. 18), and those who do see it will set off to travel among the Gentiles who have not seen it to tell them of it (v. 19). At the same time, Gentiles will be used to conduct the Jews back into the Land of Israel (v. 20a), and they will be brought to the Mountain of Jehovah's House in order to worship (v. 20b). Furthermore, from among these Gentiles, God will choose some to serve as priests in the Temple (v. 21). Not only is Israel the eternal nation, but the faithful among the Gentiles will also be eternal (v. 22), and they will have a place of worship in the Temple for the Sabbath and new moon offerings (v. 23). As for the unfaithful among the Gentiles, their dead bodies and the suffering of their souls will be visible throughout the Kingdom (v. 24), illustrating for one thousand years God's grace to the faithful and His severity to the lost. Besides these general characteristics, there are some specific elements that need to be dealt with.

B. The Obligation

Of the various feasts and celebrations and festival offerings of the Millennium mentioned by Ezekiel, there is one feast, the Feast of Tabernacles, that will be obligatory for all Gentile nations according to Zechariah 14:16-19.

All the Gentile nations that will populate the Kingdom will be obligated to send a delegation to Jerusalem in order to worship the King at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles (v. 16). It may be

at this time that the Gentiles will pay their obligatory tribute to the King (Is. 60:11). Though the Gentile observation of the Feast of Tabernacles will be mandatory, not every nation will necessarily be willing to obey. Therefore, if at any time a nation should fail to send a delegation, the rains will be withheld from them for that year (v. 17). As an example of the punishment, Zechariah mentions the case of Egypt (vv. 18-19). Should Egypt fail to send a delegation, there will be no rain for Egypt. Using Egypt as an illustration of a reluctant nation to keep the Feast of Tabernacles is especially significant, for originally the Feast of Tabernacles was inaugurated as part of a memorial festival of the deliverance of Israel from the Egyptian Bondage. But regardless of what nation may fail to obey this mandate, the punishment will be the same for all.

C. The Arab States

Another specific area the Scriptures deal with is the Arab states. In determining the place of the Arab states in the Kingdom, it should be viewed from the backdrop of the Arabs' perpetual hatred against the Jews. Two principles will be used to determine the future of the individual Arab states: first is the history of their anti-Semitism; second is how closely these individual Arab states are related by blood to Israel. Ultimately, peace will come between Israel and the various Arab states, but it will come in one of three forms: First, by means of occupation; second, by means of destruction; or third, by means of conversion. It is necessary to deal with the various Arab states individually to get a clearer picture.

1. Lebanon

Peace will come between Israel and Lebanon by means of occupation. This is not so much explicitly stated by Scripture as it is derived from certain facts contained in the Scriptures. As stated in the previous chapter, Ezekiel 47:13-48:29 gives the boundaries of the nation of Israel in the Messianic Kingdom. The tracing of the northern boundary will show that Israel will encompass all of modern-day Lebanon. From this fact, it can be deduced that in the Kingdom, Israel will occupy and possess all of Lebanon, and it will be settled by some of the northern Jewish tribes. Lebanon was always part of the Promised Land, but it was the part that Israel never possessed. In the Messianic Kingdom, there will be no nation called Lebanon, but it will be part of Millennial Israel. Peace will come between Israel and Lebanon by means of occupation.

2. Jordan

Modern Jordan comprises the ancient countries of Edom, Moab and Ammon. Since God does not have the same future for each individual segment of Jordan, they will need to be studied individually.

a. Edom : Southern Jordan

It is Edom, or southern Jordan in particular, that the prophets were concerned about. Several passages disclose that peace will come between Israel and southern Jordan by means of destruction: Ezekiel 35:6-9; Jeremiah 49:7-13; 19-20; Obadiah 5-9; 17-21; Ezekiel 25:12-14. Edom, or present-day southern Jordan, is to suffer desolation, and the destruction of all descendants of Esau will come by means of the people of Israel. Only via total destruction will peace come between Israel and southern Jordan. As with Lebanon, there will not be a nation called Edom in the Messianic Kingdom.

b. Moab: Central Jordan

As for Moab, present-day central Jordan, it, too, will suffer destruction (Jer. 48:1-46), but it will not be total. Those who survive will come to repentance and a remnant of Moab will return, according to Jeremiah 48:47.

Peace will come between Israel and central Jordan by means of a partial destruction that will lead to a national salvation of Moab. Thus, there will be a saved nation called Moab in the Messianic Kingdom.

c. Ammon: Northern Jordan

Concerning Ammon, or modern northern Jordan, it will also suffer a partial destruction and become a possession of Israel, in Jeremiah 49:1-2.

As with Moab, it will not be a total destruction and those who survive will turn to the Lord for a remnant of Ammon will also be found in the Kingdom, according to Jeremiah 49:6.

Thus, peace comes between Israel and northern Jordan by means of a partial destruction, followed by conversion, and there will be a saved nation called Ammon in the Kingdom.

To summarize, peace will come between Israel and the three parts of Jordan by means of destruction, but not all to the same degree. In the case of Edom or southern Jordan, the

destruction will be total, and there will not be a nation of Edom in the Kingdom. The Edomites are descendants of Esau, the twin brother of Jacob, and so Israel and Edom were the closest blood relationship. In the cases of Moab or central Jordan and Ammon or northern Jordan, the destruction will be partial. There will be a Moab and an Ammon in the Kingdom, with both subservient to Israel. Both these nations are descendants of Lot, the nephew of Abraham and, thus, more distantly related by blood.

3. Egypt

Peace will come between Israel and Egypt initially by means of destruction and later by means of conversion. A comprehensive story of Egypt's future is given in Isaiah 19:1-22. In verses 1-10, the Prophet Isaiah described the punishment of Egypt because of her sins. Egypt will be characterized by civil war, desolation, and famine. In verses 11-15, the prophet stated that the root cause of Egypt's devastation is her leaders who have led Egypt astray. Under the dictatorships of Farouk, Nasser and Sadat, Egypt went to war against Israel on four occasions, resulting in heavy losses for Egypt and wrecking its economy. Out of all this, there developed a fear in Egypt of Israel, as prophesied in Isaiah 19:16-17.

Never in ancient history has this been true; Egyptian forces passed through the Land of Israel freely, even in the days of Solomon. Only since 1948, and especially since the Six Day War, have the Egyptian forces evidenced the fear portrayed in this passage. There has been a fear and dread in Egypt of Israel ever since that time. With Egypt's having lost four wars against Israel with heavy casualties, the fear is deeply rooted. Prophetically, today is still the period of Isaiah 19:16-17.

But eventually peace will come between Israel and Egypt. Initially, the peace is a political one, when the Hebrew language will be spoken in Egypt by five cities, according to Isaiah 19:18. In Isaiah's day, the language of Canaan was the Hebrew language. Exactly how this prophecy will be fulfilled remains to be seen.

This in turn will slowly give way to Egypt's conversion, in Isaiah 19:19-22. An altar to the God of Israel will be built as a sign and a witness of the power of the God of Israel to save the land of Egypt (vv. 19-20a). Egypt will be greatly oppressed by the forces of the Antichrist and his cohorts (Dan. 11:42-43), but God will save Egypt from the domination of those oppressors (v. 20b). The Egyptians will realize that Allah, the Moslem god, cannot save them, but only Jehovah, the God of Israel. This will lead to a national conversion of Egypt. Egypt will know the Lord and will worship the God of Israel with oblations, sacrifices, and vows (v. 21). The same God Who brought about their destruction will also bring about their regeneration and their healing when they turn in faith to Him (v. 22).

In conjunction with the latter days of the Tribulation and the Campaign of Armageddon, there will be the national conversion of Egypt. In this manner, they will take their place in the ranks of the sheep Gentiles. It should be noted that Egypt will be one of the nations that will move against the Antichrist in Daniel 11:40.

Nevertheless, because of Egypt's longstanding hatred of Israel, in the outworking of the cursing principle of the Abrahamic Covenant, Egypt will suffer a desolation that will be similar to that of Edom, according to Joel 3:19. The sin of Egypt is the same as that of Edom: mistreatment of the Jews, and so punishment will come. With Edom, it will be total and permanent (desolation and wilderness). But with Egypt, it will be total yet temporary (desolation but not a wilderness). In fact, the desolation of Egypt is to last only for the first forty years of the Kingdom, as recorded in Ezekiel 29:1-16. Ezekiel is commanded to prophesy against Egypt (vv. 1-2) and predict the coming dispersion of the Egyptians from their land (vv. 3-5) because of their long history of mistreatment of Israel (vv. 6-7). The land of Egypt will suffer a period of total desolation (vv. 8-10), which will last for forty years (vv. 11-12a), and the Egyptians will be scattered all over the world like Israel was before her (v. 12b). But after the end of the period of forty years, the Egyptians will be regathered (v. 13) and brought back into their land (v. 14). Though Egypt will become a kingdom again, it will never be a powerful one (v. 15). Nor will Israel ever again be guilty of placing her confidence in Egypt (v. 16), but will trust in the Lord their God. As for the lowly kingdom of Egypt, it will also be required to observe the Feast of Tabernacles (Zech. 14:16-19). In summary, peace will come between Israel and Egypt by means of conversion. Only when the Egyptians worship the same God as Israel, through Jesus the Messiah, will peace finally come. For the first forty years of the Kingdom, the land of Egypt will be desolate and the Egyptians will

be dispersed all over the world. But afterwards, the Egyptians will be regathered, becoming a kingdom again.

4. Assyria: Northern Iraq

Ancient Assyria is today comprised of modern northern Iraq, another implacable Arab enemy of modern Israel. But peace will come between Israel and northern Iraq by means of conversion, according to Isaiah 19:23-25.

Verse 23 describes an economic unit that will encompass Egypt, Israel and Assyria. The famous highway of the ancient world known as the via maris has ceased to function ever since 1948, when Israel became a state. In 1948 Egypt and Syria closed their borders, making the highway inoperable. However, in the Kingdom, when peace will be restored, all borders will be open, and the highway, a symbol of economy, will be restored between these Middle Eastern states. The means by which this will occur is conversion (vv. 24-25). Not only will Egypt undergo a conversion experience, but so will the ancient area of Assyria. Assyria will become a blessing in the earth and will receive a blessing from God. The three former enemies will now have a spiritual unity as well as an economic and political one. God declares Egypt will be my people, Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance. This spiritual unity will be the basis for the other unities. So peace will come between Israel and Assyria (northern Iraq) by means of conversion. When this happens, there will be economic, political, and religious unity, because they will all worship the same God.

5. Kedar and Hazor: Saudi Arabia

Peace will come between Israel and Saudi Arabia by means of destruction. This is taught in Jeremiah 49:28-33. The passage describes the total devastation of Saudi Arabia by war until the inhabitants are scattered and dispersed all over the world. As for the land itself, Jeremiah 49:33 states that the land of Saudi Arabia will be a perpetual desolation throughout the Kingdom, and the residents will be dispersed everywhere. While Egypt's desolation and dispersion will only last forty years, for Saudi Arabia it will last for all of the one thousand years.

So peace will come between Israel and Saudi Arabia via destruction.

6. Elam: Persia or Iran

Although Persia or Iran (ancient Elam) is not an Arab state but a Persian one, its future will be examined here because it shares the same religion (Islam) with the Moslem Arabs.

Peace will come between Israel and Iran by means of destruction, according to Jeremiah 49:34-39. In verses 34-38, Jeremiah described the destruction of Elam, with the inhabitants being completely dispersed all over the world. But then verse 39 declares that the destruction of Iran will be partial, and the dispersion will be temporary. Eventually the inhabitants will return and resettle Iran. The future of Iran is similar to that of Egypt, but the length of time they will be in dispersion is not revealed.

So peace will come between Israel and Iran via destruction, dispersion, and then a conversion and a return. There will be a saved nation of Elam (Persia or Iran) in the Kingdom.

D. The Two Desolate Spots of the Kingdom

As has been shown in previous sections, during the Messianic Kingdom the entire world will be fruitful and very productive; the whole earth will be characterized by beauty. Nevertheless, there will be two desolate spots of burning pitch and burning brimstone throughout the period of the Kingdom: Babylon and Edom. (Egypt will be desolate only in the sense of non-habitation, and that for only forty years, Saudi Arabia will be desolate throughout the Kingdom, but also only in the sense of non-habitation).

1. Babylon: Southern Iraq

The first of these two desolate spots will be the former world capital of the Antichrist: Babylon. Several passages make this point, one of which is Isaiah 13:20-22.

The uninhabitable ruins are described as similar to Sodom and Gomorrah in Jeremiah 50:39-40. Later, Jeremiah emphasized the totality and completeness of Babylon's desolation in Jeremiah 51:41-43.

Throughout the Kingdom period, no man will even so much as pass by the ruins of Babylon, something that is hardly true today.

Not only is Babylon to be a desolate waste throughout the Kingdom, it will also be a place of continual burning and smoke throughout the Millennium, according to Revelation 19:3.

It is obvious that the animal inhabitants, as we know them, mentioned in Isaiah 13:20-22 and Jeremiah 50:39-40, cannot live in a place of continual burning pitch and brimstone and so there cannot be literal animals. What they actually are is explained by Revelation 18:1-2. This place of continual burning and smoke will be a place of confinement for many demons during the Kingdom period. It is clear from Revelation nine and other passages that demons have animal-like features, and this is what the animals of the Isaiah and Jeremiah passages actually represent. In fact, the Hebrew word translated as wild goats refers to demons in goat form.

2. Edom: Southern Jordan

The second desolate spot in the Kingdom will be Edom. This is also pointed out by several of the prophets, such as Isaiah 34:8-15. The reason for Edom's becoming a perpetual desolation is their sins against Israel (v. 8). Like Babylon, it is to become a place of continual burning and smoke (vv. 9-10), inhabited by various foul birds and animals, and characterized by confusion (v. 11). It will be totally uninhabited by men (v. 12) and will be habitable only by the animals mentioned (vv. 13-15). Yet these animals as we know them cannot live in a place of burning pitch and burning brimstone. Two clues in this text show that these are not literal birds and animals. Again, the word translated wild goats actually means "demons in goat form." The word translated night-monster means "night demons." Like Babylon, Edom will also be an abode of demons.

Another prophecy, in Jeremiah 49:17-18, puts the emphasis on totality, for no human will inhabit the land of Edom or even pass through it. Like Babylon, the desolation will be similar to that of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The reason for such massive destruction in Edom is amplified by Ezekiel 35:10-15. Because of Edom's glee over the fall of Israel and Judah, the punishment must come (vv. 10-13). So while the whole earth is beautified and rejoicing, Edom will be a desolation (v. 14). The calamities, which fell on Israel and over which Edom rejoiced, will now fall on Edom in a more severe way (v. 15).

Finally, Joel 3:19 states:

Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence done to the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land.

Egypt's desolation will be limited to only forty years. As for Edom, because of her unique violence against Israel, her desolation will be permanent and last throughout the Kingdom.

Throughout the Millennial Kingdom, while the whole earth is beautified and blossoming as the rose, the two areas of Babylon and Edom will be places of continual burning pitch and burning brimstone. The smoke will rise and be visible for the entire one thousand years. While Satan will be confined in the Abyss, his demons will be confined in Babylon and Edom. These two places will be the abode of demons for the entire Kingdom period.

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