

## VIII. The Doctrine of Israel

### Introduction:

There are three major dispensations: Israel, Church, and Millennium (or Kingdom), which are the subject of major portions of biblical texts. Israel is the dominant Old Testament economy. The other Old Testament dispensations (see dispensational chart at the end of “The Doctrine of the Scriptures,” page 27) are derived from small portions of the Bible and are of minor theological significance. Some truths about the economy I prefer to call “Israel” are covered in “Last Things,” which also covers the Millennium, the promised kingdom for Israel. The Church economy is covered in the “Doctrine of the Church.” Few works single out the dispensation of Israel for doctrinal development, but I have felt it appropriate to include a chapter on the role of that important nation and the economy of that dispensation.

On the Dispensational Chart at the close of “The Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures,” I define a dispensation as follows:

The English word “dispensation” comes from the Greek word *oikonomian*<sup>1</sup> from which we receive our word “economy” (see Luke 16:1-3; 2 Corinthians 9:17; Ephesians 1:10, 3:2, 8, 9; Colossians 1:25; & 1 Timothy 1:4). Each dispensation is an economy under which God places man, or a group of persons with whom He is working, like Israel. In each dispensation man is placed under particular conditions and responsibilities that do not prevail in the other dispensations.

For example, during the dispensation of conscience, man lived before God according to the laws written on his heart, which he failed to obey and suffered the consequences. We still have a conscience, but today the principal order is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which the Church is to practice and teach, making disciples of the Lord and uniting them in local churches.

Dispensations are not means of salvation, but economies designed to bring man to God. In all dispensations, people are saved when they believe and obey the Word of God, a progressive revelation of God’s love and work of Salvation for man, through Jesus Christ.

There is extensive revelation about three dispensations: Israel, Church, and Millennium. Though there are differences in the economies, the Tribulation completes the dispensation of Israel.

Though early in my Christian life I was taught dispensationalism and the distinctiveness of Israel and the Church, it was in 1994 that I obtained a copy of *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, by Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum. That book made me aware that a work on Bible doctrine would not be complete without coverage of the doctrine of Israel. In the introduction, Dr. Fruchtenbaum writes:

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<sup>1</sup> οἰκονομίαν from οἰκονομία

The issue of Israel is one of the major points of division in evangelical theology today. This is true both among Arminians and Calvinists. An evangelical theologian's view of Israel will determine whether he is a Covenant Theologian or a Dispensationalist. It will also determine what kind of Covenant Theologian he is: postmillennial, amillennial, or premillennial. The question of Israel is central for a proper Systematic Theology. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, which contains the first Systematic Theology in Church history, expounds on Israel in the center of his epistle devoting three full chapter (9-11) out of sixteen to this topic. Yet, while there are many Systematic Theologies today which have systematized all areas of biblical truth, none thus far have developed an Israelology as part of their system.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Fruchtenbaum has observed a tendency to neglect Israelology, whereas that nation and the Messiah receive major coverage in God's Book of Words. Even the Church, the current economy, falls far short in scriptural coverage compared to the number of verses that relate to Israel. To understand the nation of Israel, we shall begin at the beginning.

### **A. God's Covenants are basic to Israel's existence.**

The call of Abram and the Lord's covenant with him and the nation of Israel are the foundation to Israelology. The *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* defines a covenant as:

A solemn promise made binding by an oath, which may be either a verbal formula or a symbolic action. Such an action or formula is recognized by both parties as the formal act which binds the actor to fulfill his promise.<sup>3</sup>

This dictionary covers biblical covenants quite thoroughly. Later in the article, in reference to the Abrahamic covenant, the authors have written:

The important fact of this covenant . . . is that no obligations are sworn to by Abraham by oath or other formal act, and other later traditions are equally insistent that it is Yaweh who swore the oath to create of Abraham a nation and give to him the seed and land. The connection of the covenant with circumcision . . . is by no means to be taken as an obligation made binding by the covenant. Rather, it is a "sign" of the covenant . . . and no more an obligation than it was Noah's obligation to put a rainbow in the sky as a sign of Yaweh's covenant . . ."<sup>4</sup>

God entered into a special contractual relationship with Abram, meaning an exalted father, and later changing his name to "Abraham," meaning a father of a multitude. His covenant with Abram was reaffirmed with Isaac, Jacob, the people of Israel, King David, and later through Jeremiah. It was a misunderstanding of these unconditional covenants that caused the Jews in Jesus and Paul's days to think that they had special individual rights before God as His chosen people. It was a misunderstanding of these contracts made by God with the Israelites that caused Augustine and the Catholic Church to adopt

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<sup>2</sup> Fruchtenbaum, Arnold G., *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, © 1989 & 1992, Ariel Ministries Press, page 1

<sup>3</sup> *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Abingdon Press, NY & Nashville, © 1962, Vol 1, page 714

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid* page 718; on this point, the rainbow was not the covenant but a sign of the Noachic Covenant, which is unconditional. God promised, and the fulfillment is solely with Him.

an a-millennial eschatology. Because of their eternal ramifications, it is important to review the elements of these covenants.

### 1. The Abrahamic Covenant is the foundation.

It is first found in Genesis 12:1-3, with reaffirmations in chapters 13, 15 and 17.

Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father’s house, to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.” (Genesis 12:1-3)

In this foundational covenant there were three promised actions made by God to Abram and his descendants. These three benefits are amplified in the Land Covenant,<sup>5</sup> the Davidic Covenant, and the New Covenant, as outlined below:

#### GOD’S COVENANTS WITH ISRAEL

<b>The Three Elements of the Abrahamic Covenant</b>	<b>Future Amplifications of Each Element</b>
<b>1. A National Territory</b> Genesis 12:1 (compare with 13:15-17, 15:18-21, 17:8)	<b>The Land Covenant</b> Genesis 15:18-21, 17:8; Deuteronomy 1:6-8; Joshua 1:3-6 (Numbers 34:1-12 gives the initial boundaries. The covenant gives Israel much more.)
<b>2. A Great Nation and a Son</b> Genesis 12:2 (compare with 12:7, 13:15-16, 17:2, 16, 19, in Hebrew “descendants” is “seed”.)	<b>The Davidic Covenant</b> 2 Samuel 7:4-17; 1 Chronicles 17:1-15; Psalm 89:20-37; & Galatians 3:16
<b>3. Blessings that Overflow to All Humanity</b> Genesis 12:2-3 (note the verse also contains a curse), 18:18, 22:18	<b>The New Covenant</b> Jeremiah 31:27-40, 32:40-44, & Romans 4 (God’s blessings overflow to include the gentile nations. Abraham’s promised seed will bring divine blessings for all humanity.)

<sup>5</sup> Though the title “Palestinian Covenant” has been used for this covenant, the word “Palestine” is really a modern name that has no biblical foundation. The word and its current usage refer to land where the descendants of Ishmael and Esau moved after the Romans expelled and scattered the Jews from the land of Israel. Most Jews do not like their promised land being called “Palestine.” Because of these things, I have refrained from its use.

## 2. The Abrahamic and other covenants that amplify it are unconditional.

God's promise that He would never again destroy life with a world-wide flood (Genesis 9:8-17) illustrates what is meant by unconditional. In Genesis 9, God through a covenant agreement with mankind declared to Noah that He would never again destroy life on earth with water. This covenant is unconditional, which means that the fulfillment of the promise is not contingent upon human behavior. The fulfillment of the contract depends **solely** upon God — a one-sided agreement. There are no conditions placed upon any man or nation that if not fulfilled would limit or void this contract made by God with mankind to never again flood the entire globe.

The same is true with the covenants that the LORD made with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the nation of Israel. In those contracts, which require no human activity to insure their fulfillment, God guarantees the coming of the Messiah and His work that would bring blessings for Israel and all humankind. If the completion of these contracts were conditioned upon the performance of a man or a nation, then, because man always falls short in completing his obligations toward God, the coming of the Messiah would have been very uncertain and probably would have never transpired. The unconditional aspect of these covenants reveals that God knows the frailness of man, that God loves His creation, and that He is willing to fully give of Himself to redeem man from the consequences and slavery of his sins.

Genesis 15 is very important to our understanding of the unconditional aspects of this agreement made by God with Abram. In verse 18 we read that *“the Lord made a covenant with Abram.”* Literally the text says that God “cut a covenant” with Abram. The footnote on verse 17 in the *NIV Study Bible* gives us insight into the culture of the Middle East at that time and into what was transpiring between God and Abram: “In ancient times the parties solemnized a covenant by walking down an aisle flanked by pieces of slaughtered animals (see Jeremiah 34:18-19). The practice signified a self-maledictory oath: ‘May it be so done to me if I do not keep my oath and pledge.’”<sup>6</sup>

Since what God ordered Abram to do, by cutting those animals in half, was really one of the methods used in the ancient Middle East for making a pact, treaty, contract, and covenant, what God did in this encounter with Abram is *very* significant. Causing Abram to sleep or to go into a state where he could see but not act, Yaweh walked alone between those pieces of slain animals. Through doing this, the Lord made the obligation to fulfill the contract entirely His. Man has no obligations. God is one hundred percent responsible to complete the agreement. By divine appointment, Abram did not pass through those parted animals. Abram, the father of the Jewish Nation and its representative at that time, was and is obligated to do absolutely NOTHING to obtain the benefits of God's covenants. The promised title to real estate, the promise of being the father of a large nation, and the promise of eternal blessings for Israel and all of humankind through his “seed” were all made by God regardless of the performance of man.

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<sup>6</sup> *The NIV Study Bible, New International Version, Zondervan Bible Pub., © 1985, page 29, self-maledictory means to pronounce a curse against one's self.*

The text says that Abram, “believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.” Over the centuries of the church-age some have not believed as Abram. There were and are theologians who maintain that because of Israel’s sins, which culminated in their crucifying the Messiah, that God has substituted the Church for Israel. These theologians, going back to Augustine, spiritualize these promises, making the church the full benefactor of them.<sup>7</sup> They maintain that God has abandoned the Jew, at least in national significance, because of their disobedient behavior and violation of God’s purpose (Jeremiah 50:7). However, that nation was the channel for the fulfillment of a very important element of the covenant—the promised “seed” through whom true blessings flow—who Paul states is the “Christ”, the Messiah, in Galatians 3:16. Because of the *unconditionality* of those covenants, James could say before the elders in Jerusalem:

Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name. With this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written, “AFTER THESE THINGS I will return, AND I WILL REBUILD THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID WHICH HAS FALLEN, AND I WILL REBUILD ITS RUINS, AND I WILL RESTORE IT, SO THAT THE REST OF MANKIND MAY SEEK THE LORD, AND ALL THE GENTILES WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME,’ SAYS THE LORD, WHO MAKES THESE THINGS KNOWN FROM LONG AGO.” (Acts 15:14-18; note his reference to the promise to “rebuild” and “restore.”)

If this covenant with Abram, as amplified in the Land, Davidic, and New covenants outlined above, had conditions that placed obligations upon the Israelites, meaning that conditions for the fulfillment of these promises were dependent upon the behavior of a man or a nation, then I ask, “What guarantees would the world have had that the Messiah would ever come to bring our much needed redemption?” That promised “seed” is the Messiah through whom God brings salvation and blessing to a lost world. A passive reading of the Old Testament, the Gospels, and Acts should cause one to conclude beyond any doubt that the Jews failed miserably. Thank God the work of salvation through His Son and the promised blessing for all are a gift from Him. They are not obtained through human works, though some would try to teach to the contrary (Galatians 1:6-8).

The truth of the *unconditionality* of these covenants made by God with Abram, Isaac, Israel, and David is fundamental to understanding God’s plan for Israel and all of Adam’s race through that promised “seed.” When God passed between those slain animal halves, He obligated Himself to fulfill the agreement without any help from Abram or his children. The truths presented here are foundational to our belief in the pre-millennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ—who will one day return to sit on David’s throne, write His laws on the hearts of the remnant of the Jews, establish Israel in the promised land,

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<sup>7</sup> This explains why the Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches have had an unfavorable attitude toward the Jews throughout their history.

make that nation a “kingdom of priests” to all nations, and bless the world with “peace on earth.”<sup>8</sup>

I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the LORD;  
and they will be My people, and I will be their God,  
for they will return to Me with their whole heart.  
(Jeremiah 24:7, see also Ezekiel 17:22-24; 18:39-44)

### **3. These covenants have never been entirely fulfilled.**

In fact, only the part promising the “seed,” meaning the Messiah, has been. Israel has never possessed all of the land; David’s Son has not sat on the eternal throne of King David; and God’s law has not been written on the hearts of the Jews. Therefore, the logical conclusion is that at some future time God will keep every aspect of His promises.

God told Abraham that he would give him the land of his “sojourning” (Genesis 15:8). Abraham traveled from Ur on the Euphrates River, up that river to Haran. From there he crossed over to travel down through Lebanon following the coast of the Great Sea (Mediterranean). He walked all through the land that is presently called Palestine and all the way south to the Nile Delta in Egypt. The Euphrates, Great Sea, and the upper Nile are the boundaries to a very large piece of real estate promised to Abram by God. In all of Israel’s history, that nation has never possessed the complete territory promised. During Solomon’s reign the Jews did control most of it, but they did not possess it for the habitation of the Jewish people. The nations living therein paid Israel tribute. In the future, God will give all of that land to Israel—solely because He made a binding promise: “To your descendants [seed] I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates” (Genesis 15:18).

God told David that his son would sit on his throne forever. Solomon did not fulfill that promise. God was looking beyond Solomon to that promised “seed,” a yet future son of David, Who is also the Son of God (Luke 20:41-44), who will bring peace on earth when He establishes His kingdom on earth. As in the Land Covenant, the fulfillment of this aspect of the contracts is still future.

It was their sinful, disobedient hearts that caused the Israelites to abandon God and His commands, to follow the heathen gods, and to seek to be like the nations around them, completely breaking the Mosaic Covenant, a contract of works. Their disobedience brought about what was predicted in that treaty contracted through Moses—the entire nation being dispersed from the Promised Land and scattered over the face of the earth. God promised that at some future time, He would give Israel a new heart, one that would obey God’s laws and would teach the children to practice the same. We wait for that glorious day when Israel will be a “kingdom of priests” unto God that ministers the grace of God to the peoples of the world. These events are still future. They will come to pass because God entered into unconditional covenants with the Hebrews. We wait for that day when Abram’s seed will bring an eternal blessing to “all the families of the earth.”

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<sup>8</sup> See chapter on “Things to Come.”

Because these are unconditional covenants, the only logical conclusion is that God still has a plan for Israel. The Scriptures testify that the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, will come to earth a second time; He will bring peace and will sit on the throne of David as the eternal King of Israel. (Revelation 19:11-16)

## **B. God had a purpose in calling forth the nation of Israel.**

In the one-sided covenant that God established with Abram in Genesis 12:1-3, it is stated that God through Abram would bless “all the families of the earth.” God chose Abram as His channel through whom He would bless the world by sending the son of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, and David, who would bring blessings to Israel and to the entire human race. This “seed” of the woman of Genesis 3:15, and the “seed” of Abraham, is the Savior of the World, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the coming “Lord of lords and King of kings” (Revelation 17:14 and 19:16).

In his sermon on Mars Hill, Paul stated a very significant observation and truth:

He [God] made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. (Acts 17:26-27<sup>9</sup>)

By calling Abram out of a heathen, idolatrous culture, God stepped into human history. Paul proclaimed that the sovereign Lord is involved in the affairs of men with a purpose in mind—that people everywhere would seek the Creator of their souls, because He is near and easily found.<sup>10</sup> This truth is seen in God’s promise to Abram. Though God promised him a new homeland where he and his children would live, the primary purpose of that “call” was because God had a plan to bless humanity. The Scriptures state over and over again that God desires for all peoples to seek and find Him. The Abrahamic Covenant may well be the background for Paul’s proclamation. God’s desire for the salvation of man was the focus of this covenant and God’s call to Abram.

The historical story of man in Genesis up to the call of Abram is rather bleak. God created man and placed him in a beautiful garden with a perfect wife; and in a very short time man disobeyed God, was expelled from the garden, was told that the soil would produce thorns, and that by sweat and hard work he would eat bread. Man was removed from a blessed relationship with His Creator to being an outcast on a path of death. The next scene is one of Cain murdering his brother. Later Lamech becomes a polygamist and kills a man and feels self-justified in his behavior. The godly line of Seth eventually intermarried with the ungodly. Things go so badly that God destroyed life on earth with a flood, saving life through a God-fearing man, Noah with his family.

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<sup>9</sup> These verses (Acts 17:26-27) open and close my treatment of Calvinism in the Appendix.

<sup>10</sup> Some state that God does things to bring glory to Himself, as though that is His eternal purpose. I have failed to find that motive in the Scriptures. God is unselfish and sacrificial in His relationship with man. See the chapter on Calvinism in the Appendix.

After the flood God told man to spread out and fill the earth, but soon the families of the earth built a tower and worshiped the stars. God confused the languages forcing the people to abandon their project. Out of this sin-sick, ungodly world God separated Abram for a special reason (Romans 9:4-5). The promised “seed” of the women in Genesis 3:15 must appear through someone, and the family of Abram was chosen. God said that the “seed” would defeat Satan and destroy death, bringing salvation to man. That “seed” is the source of blessing promised through Abram. Through Abram, the Creator is again reaching out to man in hopes that “they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him.” This was and remains God’s purpose in calling Abram.

Expanding on the primary purpose behind the Abrahamic Covenant, in Exodus God declared to the Israelites His objective in forming the nation of Israel from the loins of Abram: “Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” (Exodus 19:6, compare with Deuteronomy 26:19 and 1 Peter 2:9, where Peter clearly states the purpose.)

It is obvious that no priest serves for his own personal benefit. Since the nation of Israel was to be a “kingdom of priests” as God’s “own possession among all the nations,” the only conclusion is that they were to be the priests of God unto the nations of the world and not to themselves. Robert Glover has rightly concluded that the Lord’s “aim is that Israel shall serve Him as a kingdom of priests, a nation set apart to prophetic service. But when the priest and the prophet are a nation, the people for whom they minister and to whom they prophesy are the other nations.”<sup>11</sup>

God brought Israel into existence so that as His chosen people they would be a shining testimony to the world of the Lord’s goodness, mercy, love, and blessings. The Hebrews were to be a kingdom of priests to the other nations. God wanted to have a people separated unto Himself so that through them He could reach out to the peoples of the world in hope that all nations would seek Him and find Him so that they might be saved.

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<sup>11</sup> Glover, Robert H., *The Bible and Missions, The Missionary Character of the Scriptures*, Bibliotheca Sacra, electronic edition, Jan 1936, Volume 93, Page 104, Dallas Theological Seminary

## God's Purpose for Israel Illustrated



In chapter 4, Luke records an incident in Nazareth when in the Synagogue Jesus read a prophetic prediction of the Messiah—about Himself—from the scroll of Isaiah. Though Jesus is dealing with the unbelief of Israel, I find it interesting that Jesus cited two Old Testament events when God chose to bless Gentiles in ways He had never done for any Jew. The words of Jesus were accepted until the moment he brought up Gentiles. This angered the Jews of that town causing them to attempt to kill Jesus. Though God had set apart the Jewish nation to be a light to the Gentiles as a kingdom of priests to “all nations,” God’s chosen people had miserably failed in fulfilling the Lord’s purpose in revealing Himself to Abram and promising to make him into a great nation through whom He would bless “all the families of the earth.” In that promise there is far more in view than the Messiah. Genesis 12:1-3 and the related covenants reveal the heart of God. He desires that all peoples seek Him and enter into a relationship with Him. Israel was to be the channel for the coming Savior—but far more. They were called to minister the blessings of God to the lost peoples of the world. They failed God’s calling miserably.

As God in the Garden of Eden sought out Adam and Eve after they had sinned and were in hiding from their Creator, and as God sought to bring Cain to repentance after he had killed his brother, we again see the Lord stepping into human history in an effort to reach out to lost humanity through Abram and his descendents. Through Israel God has sent the Savior, the promised “seed”—the Lord Jesus Christ. He desires for man to seek and find Him and to enter into fellowship with Him. The purpose of God in calling Abram, and through him forming the nation of Israel, was to have a channel through whom He would reach out to the world with His blessings. May the Lord help us in the accomplishing of His purposes in our lives and that of the Body of Christ—the church.

## 1. The Mosaic Covenant and God's Purpose

All the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do!" And Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD. (Exodus 19:8)

God had delivered Israel from Egypt through many signs and miracles. When Jacob (Israel) went to Egypt at God's direction, they were a small band of people. In Egypt the sons of Israel had become a great nation of millions of souls. At Mount Sinai they agreed to enter into a treaty relationship with the Lord. That agreement is called the "Mosaic Covenant."

Unlike the covenant made with Abraham and those that amplify it, this was a conditional covenant, actually a treaty. This agreement is one that places obligations upon the people. It is a covenant of works containing 613 laws that Israel agreed to obey. Blessings are promised for compliance and curses for noncompliance.

The Apostle Paul makes it clear that the Mosaic Covenant with its detailed ordinances and laws, "which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise" (Galatians 3.17). The covenant that God made with Abram and those that amplify it remain in effect. They are unconditional promises, being ratified by God when He alone passed between the divided animals (Genesis 15).

Regarding the Mosaic Covenant, James Rand observes:

Even a cursory analysis of the Mosaic Covenant indicates that there is a vital change from the gracious dealing of God under the Abrahamic Covenant. It is readily apparent that (a) this is a conditional covenant; (b) obedience is an absolute condition of blessing; (c) sin is revealed as sin; (d) God is revealed as not only the God of blessing but as the righteous judge who is swift to mete out punishment; (e) law is now a condition of God's dealings with men; (f) direct communication with God by ordinary men has ceased.<sup>12</sup>

The Mosaic Covenant is with Israel, not all of humanity. It was designed to make Israel distinctively different from the other nations, setting them apart as God's nation of priests that minister the blessings of God to the nations. The blessings of God upon Israel would cause the peoples of the world to come with a hunger to learn about their God.

In his *Systematic Theology*, Dr. Chafer divides the laws of the Mosaic Covenant into three categories:

The Mosaic system was designed to govern Israel in the land . . . . It was in three parts, namely, (a) 'the commandments,' which governed Israel's moral life (Exod 20:1-17); (b) 'the judgments,' which governed Israel's civic life (Exod 21:1-24:11 ); and (c) 'the ordinances,' which governed Israel's religious life (Exod 24:12-31:18 ). These provisions were holy, just, and good (Rom 7:12-14), but they carried a

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<sup>12</sup> Rand, James Freeman, "Old Testament Fellowship with God," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Volume 109, Page 148-151, Dallas Theological Seminary

penalty (Deut 28:58–62) and, because they were not kept by Israel, they became a ‘ministration of death’ (Rom 7:10; 2 Cor 3:7).”<sup>13</sup>

As pointed out in the chapter on “Hermeneutics,” the Ten Commandments were part of this treaty agreement. God placed into the written code those laws that are published in every man’s heart and throughout nature. The Sabbath commands, the dietary commands, worship commands, etc., were designed to set Israel apart from the nations around them. The Israelites were to be a distinctively different people. The Jews’ commitment to obeying these laws would reveal to all nations that they were set apart unto God. God’s blessing upon them would communicate to the world that God is faithful and good. Their disobedience would bring judgment and would reveal to the nations that God is just. The fact that God was long-suffering toward the sons of Jacob shows us the patience of God with sinful man. The promised Messiah, who is that promised “seed,” reveals God’s mercy, grace, and willingness to forgive the sinner.

As recorded in Deuteronomy 11:26-28, God states that compliance with the treaty will bring divine blessing and noncompliance will result in the Lord’s disfavor and judgment:

See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I am commanding you today; and the curse, if you do not listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I am commanding you today, by following other gods which you have not known.

James Rand has summarized the blessings of this treaty as follows:

- (1) The land shall always be fruitful (Lev 26:4, 5; Deut 7:13; 11:14, 15 ).
- (2) The Israelite shall dwell in peace and safety within the land (Lev 26:6).
- (3) The nation shall have victory over their enemies (Lev 26:7, 8; Deut 7:16).
- (4) They shall be blessed above all peoples (Deut 7:14).
- (5) Physical health shall be another blessing (Deut 7:15).
- (6) Longevity of life shall be the possession of Israel (Deut 5:33).
- (7) Jehovah shall be their personal God (Lev 26:12).<sup>14</sup>

To this I would add: (8) Israel and their livestock would enjoy good health.

On the other side, if Israel fails to keep her agreement with God, severe judgments in the form of curses are promised. James Rand supplies us with this summary of the judgments for noncompliance:

- (1) They shall be dispersed from the land (Deut 4:27).
- (2) They shall perish off the land; they shall suffer utter destruction (Deut 4:26).
- (3) Their land shall be made desolate and their cities laid waste (Lev 26:31-32).
- (4) Their land shall be barren of crops (Lev 26:20).
- (5) There shall not be peace and safety in the land; neither shall they have victory

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<sup>13</sup> Chafer, Louis S., *Systematic Theology*, Vol. IV, Dallas Seminary Press, page 18

<sup>14</sup> Rand, *Ibid*

over their enemies (Lev 26:17).

(6) Their land shall be visited by plagues and famine (Lev 26:21, 25, 26).<sup>15</sup>

To this I would add: (7) Israel would become a stench, hated and persecuted by the nations.

As soon as the Decalogue had been issued as the first installment on this treaty they had agreed to keep, the people of Israel broke it by making and worshipping a golden calf. This habit of idolatrous behavior plagued the Jews throughout their history. From 2 Chronicles 36:21, we conclude that from the time they first entered the Promised Land Israel had failed to observe the Sabbath of the seventh year. Jeremiah's prophecy of 70 years and Daniel's prophecy of 70 weeks establish their foundation in the failure of Israel to observe the seventh year Sabbath rest of the land.<sup>16</sup>

As he was approaching Jerusalem, shortly before His crucifixion, the Lord said:

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, "BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!" (Matthew 23:37-39)

Luke records Jesus saying:

When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation." (Luke 19:41-44)

And

. . . they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. (Luke 21:24)

In the historical records, the patience of God with the nation of Israel is evident. They had not kept their side of the treaty for centuries. The culmination of their sin was in the rejection of the Messiah, the son of man and Son of God. In 70 AD Titus, the Roman general, was able to invade the city by setting fires next to the walls. The limestone exploded like popcorn. The Roman military completely destroyed the city, many died, and some escaped fleeing to the four corners of the world. Since then, everywhere they settle they are soon mistreated and forced to run to another country. God said they

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<sup>15</sup> Rand, Ibid

<sup>16</sup> Jeremiah 29:10 and Daniel 9

would pay double for their sin.<sup>17</sup> However, because of the covenant with Abram and those that amplify it, God will again bring Israel to center stage. He will write His law on their hearts as promised in the New Covenant (see above), and Israel will be that kingdom of priests to all nations.

## **2. The Future and God's Purpose for Israel**

On the Cross the Messiah paid the sin debt for Israel. The day is coming when His chosen people will repent and say, "BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!" (Luke 13:35) On that day the Lord will restore her to fellowship, make her a nation of priests to the nations, and abundantly bless her as promised.

Instead of your shame you will have a double portion, and instead of humiliation they will shout for joy over their portion. Therefore they will possess a double portion in their land, everlasting joy will be theirs. (Isaiah 61:7)

Zechariah 9:12

Return to the stronghold, O prisoners who have the hope; this very day I am declaring that I will restore double to you.

Ezekiel 20:33-44

"As I live," declares the Lord GOD, "surely with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out, I shall be king over you. I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out; and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will enter into judgment with you face to face. As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you," declares the Lord GOD. "I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; and I will purge from you the rebels and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they will not enter the land of Israel. Thus you will know that I am the LORD. As for you, O house of Israel," thus says the Lord GOD, "Go, serve everyone his idols; but later you will surely listen to Me, and My holy name you will profane no longer with your gifts and with your idols. For on My holy mountain, on the high mountain of Israel," declares the Lord GOD, "there the whole house of Israel, all of them, will serve Me in the land; there I will accept them and there I will seek your contributions and the choicest of your gifts, with all your holy things. As a soothing aroma I will accept you when I bring you out from the peoples and

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<sup>17</sup> Isaiah 40:2; Hosea 10:10

gather you from the lands where you are scattered; and I will prove Myself holy among you in the sight of the nations. And you will know that I am the LORD, when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the land which I swore to give to your forefathers. There you will remember your ways and all your deeds with which you have defiled yourselves; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for all the evil things that you have done. <sup>44</sup> Then you will know that I am the LORD when I have dealt with you for My name's sake, not according to your evil ways or according to your corrupt deeds, O house of Israel," declares the Lord GOD.

Hosea 14:1-9:

Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God,  
For you have stumbled because of your iniquity.  
Take words with you and return to the LORD.  
Say to Him, "Take away all iniquity  
And receive *us* graciously,  
That we may present the fruit of our lips.  
"Assyria will not save us,  
We will not ride on horses;  
Nor will we say again, 'Our god,'  
To the work of our hands;  
For in You the orphan finds mercy."  
I will heal their apostasy,  
I will love them freely,  
For My anger has turned away from them.  
I will be like the dew to Israel;  
He will blossom like the lily,  
And he will take root like *the cedars of Lebanon*.  
His shoots will sprout,  
And his beauty will be like the olive tree  
And his fragrance like *the cedars of Lebanon*.  
Those who live in his shadow  
Will again raise grain,  
And they will blossom like the vine.  
His renown *will be* like the wine of Lebanon.  
O Ephraim, what more have I to do with idols?  
It is I who answer and look after you.  
I am like a luxuriant cypress;  
From Me comes your fruit.  
Whoever is wise, let him understand these things;  
Whoever is discerning, let him know them.

For the ways of the Lord are right,  
And the righteous will walk in them,  
But transgressors will stumble in them.

Hosea is a story about an adulterous wife named Gomer who violated her marital contract and left the husband who loved her. Eventually Hosea buys her in the slave market, and she is restored to him. Israel violated its contract with God—the Mosaic Covenant. Like Gomer, God's chosen people were unfaithful and abandoned their God and Savior. Though that nation is suffering in her disobedience, the Lord has not forgotten His promise.

Amos is a farmer who the Lord called to preach to Israel. He exposed her sin and predicted her destruction, dispersion, and severe punishment. James, in Acts 15, quoted from Amos 9:11 “In that day I will raise up the fallen booth of David, and wall up its breaches.” Amos concludes his book with great words of hope for that nation from the God who keeps His promises:

Also I will restore the captivity of My people Israel,  
And they will rebuild the ruined cities and live *in them*;  
They will also plant vineyards and drink their wine,  
And make gardens and eat their fruit.  
I will also plant them on their land,  
And they will not again be rooted out from their land  
Which I have given them,  
Says the LORD your God. (Amos 9:14-15)

God has a future plan for the nation of Israel, which is developed further in the tenth chapter, “The Doctrine of Last Things.”

