

Israel the Magnificent

by Paul G. Humber, 2016

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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ODULjVI1nys>

Archaeology Supports the Bible

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pR9cUgasLAQ>

Israel the Magnificent

Last year, I received from ACLJ¹ these headline words, “ISRAEL THREATENED.” A picture of Benjamin Netanyahu is conjoined, but who or what is “Israel”?

My wife and I visited the land known as “Israel” long ago. At that time, we attended a Baptist church in Nazareth and were invited to a meal after worship. The believers (many being of Arab descent) said that 1948 was significant and believed that the return of Jews to the land in 1948 was somehow in fulfillment of Scripture. With Isaiah



35 in mind, however, I responded that the Scriptures speak of a return in faith, but the response to me at the time was that the Bible says explicitly that the Jews would return to the land in “unbelief”. I asked where, but not even the pastor could tell me where it said that. Guess what! Sometime later I found it in Scofield’s notes!² It is sad when a Bible teacher’s notes are given the weight of God’s Word.

What does the Bible say about “Israel”? The answers may surprise many Bible-believing Christians. Should they/we be giving valuable resources to support the country of Israel if in

¹ American Center for Law & Justice.

² *The Scofield Reference Bible*, Oxford University Press, 1945, p1337, footnote #1 “will have returned to Palestine in unbelief.”

fact the present country has little to do with fulfilled prophecy? Also, does God really have two programs—one for Jews and one for Gentiles? Could it be possible that *Israel the Magnificent* (our title) is none other than Jesus Christ?

There are many biblical passages considered below. Some Christians today seem confused like many first century Jews were. Then, they were looking for a physical kingdom, and many Christians today see the modern state of Israel as a fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Are they right? Jesus said His kingdom was/is not of this world, but many Christians think part of it is of this world. There are passages that support a very different perspective.

For one thing, the Bible is clear that the return from Babylon captivity happened when Cyrus made his decree, when Nehemiah provided leadership in rebuilding the walls, and when the temple was rebuilt.

But what about Daniel 9:24ff and the so-called “great parenthesis,” supposedly between the 69th and 70th week?³ Was this wonderful prophecy in Daniel fulfilled with the First Coming of the Messiah and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD? Is the reader aware that in the Old Testament, Jesus Himself is actually called Israel and that He is also viewed that way in the Gospels? Israel means “Prince with God.” Could it be that “Israel” only derivatively refers to Jacob but that in the fullest sense it refers to the King of

³ See Harry A. Ironside’s *The Great Parenthesis*.

the Creation? Could it be that the One who changed Jacob's name to Israel was and is Himself "Israel the Magnificent"?

We want to look at the Genesis 32 passage in some detail, but first let us see where the Messiah, in the Old Testament (OT), is named Israel.

Consider Isaiah 49:1-6

Verses 1-3 say, "Listen to Me, O islands, and pay attention, you peoples from afar. The Lord called Me from the womb; from the body of My mother He named Me. He has made My mouth like a sharp sword, in the shadow of His hand He has concealed Me; and He has also made Me a select arrow, He has hidden Me in His quiver. He said to Me, 'You are My Servant, Israel, in Whom I will show My glory'".

The very name, Israel, is given to the Messiah Himself. Jesus is Prince with God *par excellence*, and everything called Israel should be seen in the light of Him!

Let us now look even closer at the text. The Lord Jesus was indeed "called ... from the womb; from the body of [His] mother", and Jesus' mouth was indeed "like a sharp sword" (cf. Rev 1:16). He was also a "concealed ... a select arrow" in His Father's "quiver" and was truly God's "Servant, Israel." The Messiah is Israel, and He is indeed the most magnificent Person ever to walk this earth! The Father

revealed most fully His “glory” in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, *Israel the Magnificent*!

But this Isaiah 49 passage becomes even more beautiful as we continue reading. Verse 4 says, “But I said, ‘I have toiled in vain, I have spent My strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely the justice due to Me is with the Lord, and My reward with My God.’”

But this seems problematic. How is it beautiful or good? It is “good” in the sense that Good Friday is “good.” The Lord Jesus, for the joy set before Him, endured the cross. He cried in agony from it to His Father, “Why?” Christians and true Israelis know why *Israel the Magnificent* went to the cross. It was to make little Christs⁴ and little Israels. When a sinner repents and places faith in Jesus, his name is changed from Sinner to Christian (he becomes a miniature Christ). When Jacob encountered pre-incarnate Christ in the Old Testament, he became a little prince with God (a little Israel). Again, note especially that Jacob’s experience with Jesus was intensely spiritual, and the same is true for every real Christian. God is interested in human hearts. This is spiritual. The land we call “Israel” today is physical geography, and Jesus pointed us away from looking to real estate (cf. John 4:21).

It gets better! Isaiah 49:5-6a adds, “And now

⁴ Some might object to “little Christs”, but those who trust Him are His children? See the author’s article about this, <http://www.icr.org/article/18165/>.

says the Lord, who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel might be gathered to Him (For I am honored in the sight of the Lord, and My God is My strength), He says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.’

This is one of the most beautiful passages in the Bible! Hundreds of years **before** *Israel the Magnificent* took on human flesh, we learn of His mission. The Triune God formed the Messiah from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob back to Him. Jesus came to save sinners (Jacobs) and to gather other little princes (other Israels) to Himself. Not every Jewish Jacob (sinner) would wrestle with Jesus, but many would and have. Many would also have their names changed to princes with God (little Israels). God is intensely interested in changing hearts. He is not really interest in land *per se*.

Now appreciate the magnificent panorama the Lord sets before us in the quoted words, “It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

God is not only interested in saving Jews—but Gentiles (“nations”), too. He wants to change Gentile sinners (Gentile Jacobs) into Gentile princes-with-God (Gentile Israels)! Yes, this

was a mystery for a time, but the Apostle Paul proclaimed this very truth. We have been considering the tip of an iceberg, and there is much more to come.

Take a look, for example, at John 1:47, “Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, ‘Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!’” The Lord was saying that Nathanael was an “indeed” (a true) Israelite. In other words, not everyone who is a Jew according to the flesh is one according to the Spirit. Not every Jacob-Jew is an Israel-Jew.

The Apostle Paul confirmed this in Romans 9:6, “For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel.” In other words, not every Jew gets a spiritual heart transplant (cf. Ezekiel 36:26).⁵ This is similar in Christianity; not all professing Christians are true (“indeed”) Christians.

Now, let us turn to the very first use of the term, Israel, in the Bible. It is found in Genesis 32:28. Let us look at the context. In verse 24, it says, “a man wrestled with him until daybreak.” This “man” is the Angel of the LORD, Jesus before becoming Mary’s first baby, and here is Old Testament proof. In Hosea 12:3-4, we read, “In the womb he took his brother by the heel, and in his maturity he contended with God. Yes, he wrestled with the Angel and prevailed.” In this verse we see

⁵ Steve Wohlberg’s article, “The Two Israels” has been helpful in pulling some of these biblical passages together. It is excellent and is in the 2014 *SCP Journal* 38:1-38:2, see <http://www.scp-inc.org/>.

that the Angel was and is God (“he contended with **God**”), i.e. Jesus prior to the first Christmas.

The next verse in Genesis 32 (v.25) reveals a wrestling match between Jacob and *Israel the Magnificent*, who, in the following verse said, “Let me go, for the dawn is breaking.” Jacob, however, sought a blessing from this “man”, and pre-incarnate Jesus asked Jacob (verse 27), “What is your name?” Jacob answered, “Jacob.” The name means *one who supplants*. As the second twin born, he took hold of Esau’s heel, and later, he used deception to take his brother’s birthright. Now this very twin was on his way to meet Jacob. (This was a scary time for Jacob. Giving his name was like confessing who he was, a supplanter.) *Israel the Magnificent* gave him His new name, for in verse 28, we read, “Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed.” Jacob’s striving with the “man” was indeed “with God,” for Jesus is God the Son. Jacob had earlier striven with Esau, and now Esau was on his way. Was it to take revenge?

In the next verse, Jacob asked, “Please tell me your name.” The Lord declined answering at that point, but there are many Names given in Scripture for Jesus—including, as we have seen, Israel (and as we will see later on, “David”).

We note in verse 30 that Jacob said, “I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved.” Not only was his life “preserved”,

but he was given true life in Jesus. This seems to be Jacob's conversion experience; he even was given a new name, *Israel*. Thus, from the very first usage of the word *Israel* in the Bible, it had spiritual significance. We should be very cautious, therefore, before stressing a physical-land meaning.

What about the Land?

Our Maker is Israel, and there is no one or thing (e.g. land) more magnificent than He. Israel is a spiritual title. The Lord's kingdom is intensely *spiritual*—in both Old and New Testaments. In the New Testament, the Lord Jesus said His kingdom was not of this world. All along, the Lord of Glory has been interested in human hearts. He seeks faith. Think of David and Psalm 51, a deep confession of sin. Abraham was preeminently a man of faith in God and God's Word. The Lord Jesus said Abraham rejoiced to see His Day (John 8:56)! Abraham saw Christ through the eyes of faith. The criticism that some Christians "replace" the physical of the Old Testament with the spiritual in the New does not even make sense! The term, *Israel*, since its inception has been spiritual, and there are many more passages right in line with Isaiah 49 and Genesis 32!

The land we call Israel is nothing compared to Christ, *Israel the Magnificent*. The whole earth is not equal to Him. In fact, the entire universe is worth less than one drop of His precious blood shed on Calvary's Cross.

Many Other Passages in Line with Isaiah 49 and Genesis 32!

Let us now look at a very, very important passage. It will not seem too important until you see it referenced in the New Testament. But let us look at it in the context of the Old Testament first. It is Ex 4:22-23. God said, "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, 'Israel is My son, My firstborn. So I said to you, 'Let My son go that he may serve Me'; but you have refused to let him go.'"

Note again; this is not about land. It is about God's son/Son. We know from the New Testament that there is One Unique Son the Father loves, but here God's people are viewed collectively as God's son. Which is it—a people or One Person? We know Jesus is Israel, a Person, and all people "in Him" are sons/daughters, princes with God (true Israels, true Christians). The problem, as we learn from the rest of the Old Testament, is that not all Israel is true Israel. In the same way, not all professing Christians are true Christians.

Notice what the inspired Gospel writer, Matthew, wrote, "So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt. He remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called My Son" (Matthew 2:15, cf. Hosea 11:1).

Was Matthew confused or lying? Absolutely not! What the Holy Spirit is saying through His servant Matthew is that *Israel the Magnificent* is the greatest “Son” to ever come out of Egypt. Yes, His coming out was typified earlier when Israel’s children came out under Deliverer Moses, but even that deliverance 1400 years prior typified the far greater deliverance by Deliverer Jesus, rescuing believers from the Egypts of sin, self, and Satan. Moses came out with a host of little Israels, but Jesus came out to perform a far greater deliverance by virtue of His death and resurrection.

To put it differently, mini-Israel came out of Egypt under Moses, but the Divine-Israel came out of Egypt when Joseph and Mary brought Him out. Matthew was alluding to Hosea 11:1 which says explicitly, “When Israel was a youth I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.” This happened historically (in Hosea’s and our past) but would also happen prophetically (Hosea’s future, our past). All Old Testament trajectories point to Messiah Jesus.

Jesus Christ as a young child, thus, is referred to by Matthew as God’s “Son” (“Israel” in both the Ex 4 and Hos 11 contexts) who came out of Egypt. Many Christians find this passage in Matthew as something of an embarrassment, but they should not. The problem is not that Matthew did not know what he was talking about; the problem is with readers who are malnourished. The entire Bible is about Jesus, as Jesus said, “And beginning with Moses and with all the

prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures” (Luke 24:27). It is not that some parts of the Old Testament are about Christ; rather, every jot and tittle of the Old Testament is about Him. Even Satan points indirectly to Christ, for he was the Giant Goliath that Son-of-David Jesus faced. Jesus crushed Satan’s head (Gen 3:15). Even death points to Israel-the-Magnificent inversely, for He is Life (John 14:6).

Some may think Jude (full son of Mary and Joseph) may have been mistaken when he wrote of his big Brother, “Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.” This is the ESV translation of Jude 1:5, and it is excellent. Some early scribes may have decided to put “Lord” instead of “Jesus” because they saw “Jesus” as existing 1400+ years after the Exodus. However, Jesus has always existed. He said that before Abraham was born, HE IS (“I AM”). Jesus, *Israel the Magnificent*, did indeed save “a people out of the land of Egypt” and “destroyed those who did not believe.” This, too, is spiritual. He saves believers and destroys unbelievers. God has one program throughout human history, and it all centers on Jesus, the Messiah, Israel the Magnificent. Both Old Testament and New Testament people trusted Him. His cross, anticipated in the Old Testament, is God’s ultimate, final, and last word. Repentance at the foot of it and faith in the One who was nailed there for sinners is what is needed, and the Lord is longsuffering and patient. If, however, one

never humbles his heart before Him, he will be destroyed (cf. Lk 13:3). Every animal sacrifice in the Old Testament pointed to Christ’s sacrifice. God’s son, Israel (Jacob descendents) in the Old Testament (OT) failed, but His Son (Israel the Magnificent) in the New Testament (NT), succeeded. Notice the parallels:

Old Testament	New Testament
Joseph had dreams	Joseph had dreams
He went to Egypt	Jesus went to Egypt
God’s son called out	God’s Son brought out
Red Sea baptism	Jordan baptism
40 years in wilderness	40 days in wilderness
Tested, failed	Tested, passed

People, whether Jews or Gentiles, must be in the Messiah, in *Israel the Magnificent*. It is not that the Christian church replaces OT physicality with NT spiritualization. Any and all worthy faith, OT and NT both, is spiritual. It was not outward circumcision that counted, but an internal circumcision of the heart. The Lord is interested in human beings—not so much in physical geography. He wiped it out once with a global flood and will wipe it out again with a global conflagration (2 Pet 3).

What about Romans 9:6-9

These verses say, “But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; nor are they all children because they are Abraham’s descendants, but: ‘through Isaac your descendants will be named.’ That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God,

but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants. For this is the word of promise: ‘At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son.’” This is saying that not every physical descendant of Israel is a true Israelite. According to Jesus, as we saw, Nathaniel was an “indeed” Israelite.

The NIV renders Gal 6:15-16 this way, “Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation. Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule—to the Israel of God.”

In other words, anyone who accepts Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, is part of the “Israel of God.” Not every circumcised Jew was a believing Jew. Lying Jacob himself had to come to faith before being called Israel. The OT prophets also spoke of a Jewish remnant. Many Jews followed after idolatry. The Lord was displeased with these physical Jews; He sought spiritual Jews, those who would repent and believe in their future hope (Messiah).

Evangelicals who criticize Bible teachers who, in their minds, spiritualize OT promises, should listen to Jesus Himself. In John 8:39, some Jews said to Jesus, “Abraham is our father,” but Jesus replied in following verses, “If you were Abraham’s children, then you would do what Abraham did. As it is, you are looking for a way to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. You are doing the works of your own father.”

Jesus was/is saying that physical descent from Abraham (grandfather of Israel) is not the important thing; people must have faith like Abraham. Jesus Himself, therefore, placed spiritual descent from Abraham above physical descent!

Roman 2:25-29

Readers who persist in the belief that the land of Israel is what interests God may need this next passage:

For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law? For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

Wow! “For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly.” The promise of life to the Jew is as old as the patriarchs. The Lord always has been interested in the inner man. Schofield’s bizarre notion of returning to the land of Jacob “in unbelief” is revisionism—a pseudo-replacement theology. Moreover, physical Jews today who disregard the Law are not even Jews. In God’s eyes they are Gentiles. Additionally, the Gentile believer in Jesus is, in God’s eyes, a true Jew—a true Israelite. It’s

not in the physical blood but in the faith-breathing heart. All this is not replacing OT theology; it is affirming it! Any person who thinks people can get into heaven bypassing Christ's cross is on sand.

Philippians 3:2-6

Now let us suppose someone is still not convinced. Well, this next one is a *coup-de-grâce*. Paul wrote:

Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision; for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

Many Jews today cannot even know the purity of their own physical line, but the Apostle Paul was a true-blue physical Jew but said it counted for nothing. Faith in the promised Messiah is what counts. This is true for OT Jews and modern Jews. God has all along had one message, and it can be summed up in one word, Jesus. [As to OT prophecies being fulfilled by Jesus, readers may want to consider getting the book, *400 Prophecies, Appearances or Foreshadowings of Christ in the Tanakh*, sold at various location—including Amazon.com.]

Galatians 3:27-29

If a Christian chooses to hold on to his belief that God is interested in land, I deal with that issue further down; however, please do not miss this Galatian passage from the Apostle Paul:

For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are **Abraham's descendants**, heirs according to promise.

According to the Apostle Paul, I am a Jew, though I have no physical connection as far as I know. In fact, God is no longer interested in differentiating between Jews and Gentiles. There is only one program, and it has been God's program even before Genesis 3:15. Again, in one word, it is Jesus.

Ephesians 2:11-22

I almost feel like apologizing for displaying so many passages that show that what has been called "replacement theology" (by critics) has been the theology of the Bible from Day One.

Others have brought in a different "replacement" theology, stressing the physical land of Israel and putting it in parallel with the deep message of the Bible, even promoting two ways of salvation—one for the Jews and the other for the Gentiles. Jesus predicted the destruction of Jerusalem, which happened a

generation later. It is Gentile and Jewish hearts that are important—not physical land. This next passage is pertinent:

Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” which is performed in the flesh by human hands—remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who made **both groups into one** and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make **the two into one** new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them **both in one body** to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, **and** peace to those who were near; for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

How could the Apostle have stressed more that there is one program. Jews and Gentiles both must fall at the foot of Christ’s Cross—repenting of sin and receiving by faith the Messiah’s precious Garment of Righteousness, the only Robe that will get anyone into heaven.

But Many Jews do Not Believe!

Right, and many Gentiles do not believe. In fact, the Lord spoke of the broad way that leads to destruction. This does not mean that no Jew believes in Jesus. Let us look at Romans 11:1-5:

I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? "Lord, they have killed Your prophets, they have torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life." But what is the divine response to him? "I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal."

Some Jews believe in Jesus as their Messiah today. It is not a majority, to be sure, but we would not expect a majority.

But Won't "all Israel" be Saved?

Yes and no. Yes in the sense the Bible means, but no in the sense that some Christians mean. *All Israel* refers to all Jews and Gentiles alike (whether Old or New Testament) who trust King Jesus for salvation. Old Testament believers looked ahead in faith to the coming Messiah and God's future promises in Him. It does not mean that every single Jew who has walked this planet will be in heaven. Paul was a Jew. 3,000 Jews were converted at Pentecost, and "a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7).

Hosea 1:10-11 Helps Here

It was said above that there are many passages which confirm the consistent theme that God is interested in saving both Jews and Gentiles by faith. Hosea wrote:

Yet the number of the sons of Israel will be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered; and in the place where it is said to them, "You are **not** My people," it will be said to them, "You are the sons of the living God." And the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel will be gathered together, and they will appoint for themselves one leader, and they will go up from the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel.

The true "sons of Israel" will be like "the sand of the sea," but many were born "not" God's people (i.e. Gentiles). However, the total gathering of all of God's people will be huge—a host that no man can number (Rev 7:9), made up of both Jews and Gentiles.

We have confirmation again in Ephesians 3:6-7:

...the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power.

What about 1948?

Was it a fulfillment of prophecy? Many Christians believe so. I have already discussed my experience in Israel in 1971, and Arab Christians then believed Jews were returning

to the land in unbelief. They thought Scripture supported such a notion, but there is not one verse in the entire Bible that supports it—only in Schofield’s footnotes.

The Bible discussed two returns of Jews to the Promised Land. The first occurred under Moses, and we refer to that as the Exodus (from Egypt). A second return occurred many centuries later. Some, like Nehemiah, returned in faith, and Isaiah had predicted such a return in faith (cf. Isaiah 35).

Jeremiah adds his voice, “For thus says the Lord, ‘When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place’” (Jeremiah 29:10). This is an obvious reference to the return from Babylonia captivity—not to a return millennia later—supposedly in 1948. Adding 70 years to the time of Jeremiah’s prophecy does not equal 1948.

But What about Jeremiah 25:5?

Verse 5 talks about land:

Turn now everyone from his evil way and from the evil of your deeds, and dwell on the land which the Lord has given to you and your forefathers from *olam* even to *olam*.

The Hebrew word, *olam*, is given twice. The NASB renders the phrase as “forever and ever,” but a better rendering would be “*from lasting even to lasting*.” The NASB does not seem to reflect any looking back aspect and

mistranslates *lasting* as *forever*. In just a few verses later it refers to a 70-year Babylonian captivity of Israel. How can a land captured by Babylon be a “forever and forever” land given to the forefathers? The Greek Septuagint (*LXX*) renders it as *of old and lasting*. A backwards aspect is given, but English translations even of the *LXX* used the mistranslation (*for ever*) for the future aspect. These translations, however, make it appear that God did not know what He was talking about because Israel did not own the land for many, many centuries following the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Verses 11-12 should put a lid on faith in 1948 as a supposed fulfillment of ancient prophecy:

This whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. ‘Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation,’ declares the Lord, ‘for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it an *olam* desolation.

God said the exile from the land would be 70 years—mentioned explicitly twice in this passage! Those Christians who think that 1948 is the fulfillment of this passage are in error. The Jews did return to the land 70 years later, and God knew exactly what He was talking about. In fact, we can read about the return in the books of Nehemiah and Ezra.

God fulfilled His promise of a return to Israel over 2,000 years ago, and Christians should not be thinking that Jews can be saved differently from non-Jews (Gentiles). Jews and

Gentiles both must look to their only Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, to His blood shed on Calvary's Cross for sin-forgiveness, and to His perfect Robe of Righteousness to be placed over their shoulders by faith for eternal life to be possible for any entering heaven.

Jesus, help us to love You with all our hearts and minds. Help us to make sure translations are right, and help us to trust You for forgiveness of our sins and to trust You for Your Perfection over our shoulders.

What about Ezekiel 37: 24-28?

Ezekiel talks about David, but was not David dead? Here is another example of a surprising Name for Messiah Jesus. Verse 24 says:

My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances and keep My statutes and observe them.

This prophecy looks beyond the Babylonian captivity and the return 70 years later. It looks to a time when the Messiah (this time called "David") would bring the transformation of obedience into the lives of His sheep. Jesus claimed to be that "one shepherd." He was and is "the good shepherd" (John 10:11). He is referred to as "David" because He is David's greatest Son. We could call Him, "David the Magnificent." Verse 25 says:

They will live on the land that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they, and their sons and their sons' sons,

olam; and David My servant will be their prince
olam.

Here again Jesus is referred to as “David.” The Hebrew word, *olam*, is untranslated because *lasting* is a better translation than *forever*. Jesus indeed is their *Lasting* Prince, but this was specifically for the years of His sojourn on earth, in the very land of Jacob. Jesus did not stay in that land “forever”, however, and one day the entire earth will be burned up with fervent heat. It was future from Ezekiel’s perspective and has been fulfilled with Jesus’ first coming. Not only were there followers of Jesus (both Jews and even some Gentiles) in the land when Jesus walked among His people, but many centuries later there are still followers of Jesus in that land. My wife and I met some in 1971 in Nazareth, for example. I believe there are true followers of that *Lasting* Prince even today, in 2016. Verse 26 says,

I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an *olam* covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst *olam*.

Again, the Hebrew word has been left untranslated, but it refers to a *lasting* covenant and a *lasting* sanctuary. *Lasting* can refer to a temporal *lasting* or to an eternal *lasting*. The duration is unspecified, but the context often gives clues as to duration. Here, it is a *lasting* that is without end. The *olam* covenant is a *lasting* one that never ends. The “sanctuary” refers to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and He certainly is unending. Verse 27 says:

My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people.

The Lord Jesus dwelt with His people at the First Christmas, and, after His ascension, dwells with His people in the Person of the Holy Spirit. He is still with His people today (2016)—both in the land of Jacob and regions far beyond the land of Jacob. Verse 28 says:

And the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst *olam*.

Jesus was in the midst of His seven churches in Revelation 2-3 and is in the midst of His people today (all true local congregations). It says “the nations” (Gentiles) “will know.” They will know that the Lord Jesus is the “David” (aka “Israel”) who sanctifies those who are true (believing) Jews and true (believing) Gentiles. All along, Jesus sanctifies people (not property or land). If you are “in Jesus”, then you are part of true Israel, and He is both Israel the Magnificent and David the Magnificent!

Dear Reader,

If you have Jewish background, please, like Jacob of old, wrestle in prayer with the One he wrestled with. Admit your failings and hold on in faith to the One who can give you a new name.

If you are of Gentile background, admit that you have failed, too. Let the Messiah promised to the Jews adopt you into His Family of Faith as a child of Abraham.

You need two things—1) to trust in the only Messiah (His blood can wash away your sins) and 2) to receive by faith His Perfect Robe of Righteousness. Pray to Him even now, asking Him to wash you clean and to clothe you in His Perfection. He is

ISRAEL THE MAGNIFICENT!



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