

**Reading: Genesis 13:12-18****Introduction**

I wonder how many people have either said or heard the following exaggerations and overstatements...

- I am so hungry I could eat a horse!
- I am so busy I have a million things to do today including a tonne of housework!
- That person is as skinny as a toothpick!
- If I've told you once, I've told you a million times!

In life there are many things we can overstate and exaggerate; however when it comes to God's promises to Abraham and their relevance to the subject of the end-times it is hard to overstate their importance!

- Just as a large motorway can have three lanes for a person to choose from and once chosen that lane will determine the person's final destination;

So how a person understands God's promises to Abraham – will in many ways – determine that person's final end-time view.

I therefore encourage you to listen, study and carefully contemplate...

**God's Promises to Abraham**

For in many respects, the relevance and importance of these promises to the subject of the end-times cannot be overstated.

**1) The Revelation of God's Promises to Abraham**

Look with me again at Genesis 13:15, *"For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever."*

According to Scripture, the LORD gave Abraham two promises:

- The Promise of a Land; and
- The Promise of a Seed

Scripture reveals more detail regarding each of these promises.

Regarding...

**A) The Promise of a Seed**

Scripture reveals two things:

**a) The Seed becomes a great nation – innumerable as the stars of the sky and the dust of the earth**

- Gen 13:16, *"I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered"*
- Gen 15:5, *"Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be."*

**b) The Seed blesses others**

- Genesis 22:18, *"in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed"*

Regarding...

**B) The promise of a Land**

Scripture reveals two details:

**a) The Land is Physical**

- Genesis 15:18, "*Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates*"

These are physical descriptions and therefore the land is clearly physical.

## b) The Land is Eternal

- Genesis 13:15, "*all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever*"

If the seed of Abraham will possess the land forever then the land itself must be eternal.

Having noted the Revelation of God's Promises to Abraham, note with me secondly...

## 2) The Discussion of God's Promises to Abraham

While there can be some variation, there are three general ways in which people differ with one another on the understanding of God's promises to Abraham.

### A) View One – The Physical-Temporal View

According to this view, "***God Promises Abraham that he and his physical descendants will dwell in the temporal land of Canaan***"

The argument for this is simple:

- God promised Abraham a seed
- That seed was Isaac, then Jacob, then the 12 sons of Jacob and the 12 tribes of Israel.
- Now through these 12 tribes of Israel God is making a great nation in this world

After all, does Scripture not speak of the physical descendants of Abraham living in the land of Canaan as the promise God made to Abraham?

- For example, in Deuteronomy 6:1-2 the LORD gives the children of Israel a summary of His Law, namely they are to "fear the LORD" their God. In Deuteronomy 6:3 the LORD declares, "*Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey.*"

God clearly speaks in this verse that the promise given to Abraham...

- Is of his physical descendants – the Jews; and
- Of the Jews living in a literal land – the land flowing with milk and honey, which according to Genesis 15:8 is given a very specific border!
  - o In Genesis 15:18 the LORD promises "*Genesis 15:18, "Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates".* These are literal boundaries and therefore implies a literal piece of ground.

According to this view:

- The literal land of Canaan belongs to the Jewish people – not to anyone else but to the Jewish people.
- The specific borders mentioned of the land of Canaan are to be understood as the River Nile (the river of Egypt) and the River Euphrates. According to history, the children of Israel have never possessed this territory and so the literal land of Canaan must still be given to the Jewish people before the end of the world and the commencement of eternity.

This is the first view... "***God Promises Abraham that he and his physical descendants will dwell in the temporal land of Canaan***"

The second view is different...

### B) View Two

It believes that ***God promises Abraham that he and his spiritual descendants will dwell in the eternal land of the New Heaven and Earth***

- This view does not deny God speaks of Abraham's physical descendants as his seed
- Nor does this view deny that God speaks of Abraham's physical descendants dwelling in the land of Canaan.

However, what this view holds to is that these temporal promises of God to Abraham were but an object lesson pointing Abraham toward an eternal and far greater reality!

Turn with me to Galatians 3:16. The apostle Paul speaking, he says by the Holy Spirit, *“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.”*

Quoting God’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 22:18, *“in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed”* the Holy Spirit says in Galatians 3:16 that the seed is not primarily the many physical descendants of Abraham but ultimately one physical descendent, Jesus Christ.

According to this second view, *Who then is this great nation that is innumerable as the stars of the sky and the dust of the earth? It is all those who believe into Jesus Christ.*

The apostle makes this clear...

- Galatians 3:7, *“Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.”*
- Romans 9:8 says, *“They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed”*

Oh yes God would give Abraham many physical descendants but it was a promise of something far greater – an innumerable amount of people – OT and NT, Jews and Gentiles – who would believe into Jesus Christ and be saved. After all, is this not why the LORD promised...

- Genesis 12:3, *“in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed”* and,
- Genesis 17:5 and Romans 4:16-17, *“Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.”*

So according to this second view:

- *The promise of a seed* is Jesus Christ – it is not seeds as of many, but one seed – Christ Himself
- *The promise of an innumerable people* are all those will believe in the LORD Jesus Christ – not just of the Hebrew people but those from every tribe, tongue and nation.

### **What about the promise of the land?**

According to this second view God’s promise of the land is ultimately the new heaven and the new earth. The reasons for this are as follows:

**Firstly, the LORD promised Abraham that he himself would get the land of Canaan but yet Scripture tells us Abraham didn’t get the land of Canaan:**

- For example, in Genesis 13:15 the LORD promises Abraham, *“all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever”*
- But yet, in Acts 7:2-5, Stephen being filled with the Holy Ghost says *“Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession”.*

How can God promise to give Abraham the land of Canaan for his possession and yet not give it to him? According to this view the answer is simple – God’s promise to Abraham was primarily about something far greater than the temporal land of Canaan – it was the eternal land of the new heaven and earth!

Notice with me...

**Secondly, what the Scripture says Abraham was actually looking for from God.**

- In Hebrews 11:9-10 the apostle Paul says, *“By faith he (that is Abraham) sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”*

This passage makes it clear Abraham was never looking for God to give him the temporal land of Canaan – for he was a stranger in it, not a possessor of it. Instead Abraham was looking for God to give him the eternal land whose builder and maker is God: described in Hebrews 12:22 as *“the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem”*.

- In Romans 4:13 the apostle Paul said the promise God gave to Abraham in Genesis was that Abraham *“should be the heir of the world”* not simply one portion of the world.

But not only did Abraham look for a heavenly city, Scripture tells us that other believers in the OT also looked for a heavenly city- even though they actually dwelt in the land of the temporal Canaan.

- In Hebrews 11:13-16 we read regarding the OT saints, *“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.”*

Here we see...

- That the OT saints who actually dwelt in the land of Canaan are said to have not received the promise of the Abraham.
- Like Abraham these OT saints are described as strangers and pilgrims on this earth because they believed by faith that God’s promise to Abraham and them was one that was afar off, namely, a heavenly country

So according to this second view God’s promise of a land to Abraham is primarily a promise of an eternal new heaven and earth...after all...

- This is what Abraham is said to have looked for
- This is what other OT saints are said to have believed the promise of God to Abraham to have been and to have looked for by faith
- This is what Abraham is said to receive – Romans 4:13

And one final point...

- This is the only accurate way to interpret the words of Genesis 13:15 when the LORD promised Abraham, *“all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever”*. God’s promise of a land was an eternal promise not a temporal promise!

So far today we have looked at two views:

- Both views believe God gave Abraham a promise of an innumerable seed that would be a blessing to the world
  - View One teaches this Seed is the Hebrew people and the Hebrew people alone
  - View Two teaches this Seed is ultimately Christ Jesus
- Both views believe God gave Abraham a promise that he would inherit a literal and eternal land
  - View One teaches this Land is the temporal land of Canaan and nothing more
  - View Two teaches this Land is ultimately the whole world in the eternal New Heaven and Earth

There is a third view:

### **C) View Three – The Dual View**

This view holds that **God has promises for both Abraham’s physical and spiritual descendants as well as promises for a temporal and eternal land:**

- This view holds that God will give the physical descendants of Abraham the temporal land of Canaan according to the reasons already stated in View 1

- This view also holds that God will give the spiritual descendants of Abraham (Jew and Gentile, OT and NT) the eternal New Heaven and New Earth.

Some may think this is just a combination of the above two views, but it is not: it is different from them:

- It differs from View One because this third view teaches the Seed is Christ and those who are in Christ – not the Hebrew nation.
- It differs from View Two because this third view teaches the promise of the land is not pictorial but temporal!

So far we have seen the Revelation and the Discussion of God's promises to Abraham.

Notice now with my thirdly,

### 3) The Implications of God's Promises to Abraham

This is where the rubber hits the road and you and I begin to see the relevance and significance of God's promises to Abraham in everyday life.

For example, how you understand God's promises to Abraham will determine...

#### A) Who you believe the land of Palestine belongs to today: the political nation of Israel or the Palestinians?

According to View 1 – the land of Palestine belongs to the physical descendants of Abraham and they should get it now! The reason for this is that according to View 1 no condition is placed on God's promise to Abraham and his biological descendants to receiving God's promise of the land.

People today – including believers – should practically and even financially support the nation of Israel getting the full inheritance of their land.

According to Views 2 and 3 – the land of Palestine belongs to the physical descendants of Abraham. However there is no expectation that this land will be enjoyed by them while they are living in rebellion against God and refusing to turn from their sin and put their trust in Jesus Christ as the Saviour of men.

The reason views 2 and 3 believe there is to be no expectation of the Jews enjoying the fullness of the land today is because the temporal promise of God to Abraham is not unconditional as View 1 maintains, but it is conditional upon faith and obedience.

Many verses make this clear:

- ❖ For example, there are verses such as Deuteronomy 6:17-18 which make it clear the children of Israel cannot expect to enter the land without obeying the LORD's will and ways.
 

*Deuteronomy 6:17-18, "Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee. And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the LORD: that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers".*
- ❖ There are verses such as Deuteronomy 30:17-18 and Joshua 23:16 which make it clear that the children of Israel cannot expect to remain in the land without obeying the LORD's will and ways. In fact God says He will remove them from the land if they draw away from Him and worship other gods.
  - In Deuteronomy 30:17-18 the LORD warns the children of Israel, "...if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, *and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it.*"
  - Joshua 23:16, "When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you"
- ❖ That said, there are verses such as 1 Kings 8:33-34 and Psalm 105:8-11 which make it clear the temporal land of Canaan is always available to the children of Israel if they repent from their sins and turn to the LORD for forgiveness in Christ.

- 1 Kings 8:33-34, "When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee in this house: Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers."
- Psalm 105:8-11, "He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word *which* he commanded to a thousand generations. Which *covenant* he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, *and* to Israel *for* an everlasting covenant: saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance"

So today, according to views 2 and 3 the Jews may have been given a promise of the temporal land of Canaan – but while they are living in rebellion against God's covenant and rejecting God's Messiah they can have no Biblical expectation of it.

This means the focus for believers today is not to seek the Jews receive the physical land, it is that the Jews repent from their sins and receive Christ as their Saviour. This is what is most important.

Before I move on, I would like to address something that is most important.

Because of their understanding God's promise to Abraham there are some today who think that because the land of Palestine belongs to Israel it is therefore their obligation and right to support Israel no matter what Israel says and does! They also believe it is right to run down the Palestinian nations in their support of Israel.

- After all, to some, the Hebrew people are God's chosen people and they are more important than any other nation.

But observe a number of points with me:

- In Psalm 45:7 we are told, God "lovest righteousness, and hateth wickedness"; and in Romans 13:1-3 we are told that God has ordained governments to be a terror and judge to those who do good and a protection to those who do good.

Men and women,

- What matters is not what group a person belongs to – Israeli or Palestinian
- What matters is whether a person or a group is doing what is right
- It is wrong to support one group without condition – whether this be Israelis or Palestinians
- It is wrong to support any person or group in its rebellion against God's will and ways – whether this be Israelis or Palestinians
- All nations are to be governed equally and fairly by God's commandments and standards of justice.

So when you and I seek to support any nation, make sure we support holiness and godliness, nothing else!

- After all, Jesus Christ has not only died for the Jew, He has died for the Gentile!
  - o Imagine a Palestinian Christian walking into a church prayer meeting where people are praying for the Palestinians to be wiped out and Israel to get her land. It would make that Christian feel like they are a nobody just because of where they were born and brought up. This is not right! Furthermore, it makes your brother and sister in Christ to be of lesser importance than an unregenerate Israeli!
- Furthermore, in 1 John 5:1 we read, "every one that loveth Christ that begat – loveth him also that is begotten of Christ"
  - o That is, we are to love Christ and all that are His – including His children who are from the Israeli nation or an Arab nation!

In summary – should we support Israel or Palestine? We should support whoever is right at that time according to God's Word. The criterion for what is right in the Middle East should be equally applied standards of justice and mercy among nations. Our relation to Jews and Palestinians should be to love them and treat them with mercy and justice, as we do all others. Yes, anti-Semitism is sin, but it is also a sin to unquestionably reject the rights of Palestinians.

How you understand God's promises to Abraham will also determine...

### **B) If the Land of Palestine is relevant today to the timing of the second coming of Christ?**

According to Views 1 and 3 the Hebrew Nation and the Land of Canaan is of great relevance. To these views...

- Eternity cannot begin until Jesus Christ has given the physical land of Canaan to the physical descendants of Abraham
- Eternity cannot begin until Jesus Christ has greatly blessed the descendants of Abraham...
  - o Making them to multiply greatly in number so they are like the stars and the sand; and
  - o Making them to be a blessing from this land to the whole world

According to View 2 however the Hebrew Nation and the Land of Canaan have no great significance with regard to the timing of the second coming of Christ.

- While Romans 11 makes it clear God is still saving the physical descendants of Abraham and will do so until the end of time; yet the temporal land of Canaan was only an object lesson; a picture pointing Abraham and his descendants to the far greater hope and reality of eternal glory in Jesus Christ.
- Furthermore, Scripture makes it clear that God's temporal promises to Abraham have been fulfilled in the OT – further showing that these temporal promises were only a means to an end – a pointer to the greater eternal reality to be found in Christ!

This second view makes the following observations...

**a) In Genesis 13:16 and 15:5 God promised Abraham his Seed would become a great nation – innumerable as the stars and the sand**

Scripture makes it clear the temporal picture of this promise has been fulfilled!

- Gen 46:3, *“And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation”*
- Deuteronomy 1:10, *“The LORD your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude”*
- Deuteronomy 10:22 *“Thy fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and ten persons; and now the LORD thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude”*
- Hebrews 11:11-12, *“Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable*

Is it important today for the child of God to look for the nation of Israel to multiply greatly? No.

- It has already been fulfilled!
- And it is only to be a picture pointing ultimately to the reality of Christ and those in Christ.

**b) In Genesis 15:8 God promised Abraham the land of Canaan – “from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates”**

Scripture contains many clear verses which shows us that this temporal picture of God's promise has been fulfilled.

- Joshua 11:23, *“So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes”*
  - o Joshua 23:13-14, speaking to the children of Israel at the end of his life, Joshua says *know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you. And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.”*
- Joshua 21:43-45, *“And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass”*
- (Very soon after Joshua 21) Judges 2:1-2, *“And an angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I sware unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you. And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this?”*
  - o It is true that Israel may not have driven the enemies off every part of the land but as Judges 2:1-2 makes clear, this does not mean God did not fulfil His part of the promise and give Israel the land.

- For example, God may promise you and I victory over a certain sin in this life but if we don't gain that victory it is not because God hasn't been faithful!
- In Nehemiah 9:23-27a, we are told regarding the children of Israel, the LORD multipliedst (them) as the stars of heaven, and broughtest them into the land, concerning which thou hadst promised to their fathers
  - The children of Israel who have returned from Babylon – after being taken off their land, now confess their sin before the LORD in prayer. Speaking of their ancestors, they pray, “Their children also multipliedst thou as the stars of heaven, and broughtest them into the land, concerning which thou hadst promised to their fathers, that they should go in to possess it. So the children went in and possessed the land, and thou subduedst before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and gavest them into their hands, with their kings, and the people of the land, that they might do with them as they would....(v26) Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs, and slew thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to thee, and they wrought great provocations. Therefore thou deliveredst them into the hand of their enemies”
- In Deuteronomy 19:7-9 Moses told the children of Israel to make three cities of refuge when they enter the land of Canaan. If God then gives them all the land which He promised to Abraham and to Isaac and Jacob, the children of Israel were then to add three cities more.
  - According to Joshua 10:7-9 we are told the children of Israel made six cities of refuge. Why? Because they knew God had given them all the land!
    - Deuteronomy 19:7-9. “I command thee, saying, Thou shalt separate three cities for thee. And if the LORD thy God enlarge thy coast, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, and give thee all the land which he promised to give unto thy fathers; If thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them, which I command thee this day, to love the LORD thy God, and to walk ever in his ways; then shalt thou add three cities more for thee, beside these three”
- In Nehemiah 9:7-8 the children of Israel declare that the LORD is righteous. Why? Because He made a covenant promise to give the children of Israel the land of Canaanites and hast performed it.
  - Nehemiah 9:7-8, “Thou art the LORD the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; And foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous”

According to this second view...

- There is no need to wait for God to give the physical descendants of Abraham the temporal land of Canaan. Why?
  - The temporal land was only a picture of a greater reality; and
  - God has already fulfilled the temporal picture .

**Views 1 and 3 will immediately interject at this stage and say, But what about the physical boundaries?**

God promised in Genesis 15:8 to give the children of Israel the land of Canaan “from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates”. At no time in all of history has the children of Israel owned all the land from the river of Euphrates to the river Nile.

View 2 responds with the clear words of Scripture already quoted. If God says the children of Israel got all the land, they got all the land – end of question.

However, for those who would like a further explanation, it may be contained by observing the following, namely, God never promised to give the children of Israel the land of Canaan from the river of Euphrates to the river Nile. God never mentioned the river Nile – He only ever mentioned the river of Egypt: a river which many believe refers to the river Sihor/Shihor which is referred to in Scripture!

Observe the following possible points:

**The promise in Genesis 15:18 is unto a river smaller than Euphrates**

Genesis 15:18 says carefully... “the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:” Note...

- The Nile is equal or larger than the Euphrates in size.
- If the Nile was meant Genesis 15:8 would read,
  - “from the great river, the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates”; or



- “from the two great rivers, the river of Egypt as far as the river Euphrates”; or
  - “from the river of Egypt as far as the river Euphrates”
- But if a smaller river was meant, such as the river Sihor, the text would read exactly as it does.

*Scripture elsewhere explains God’s promise in Genesis 15:18 to be to the boundary of Egypt, and Sihor is the border of Egypt*

- Look at Numbers 34:5 and Ezekiel 47:19 compared with Joshua 13:3 Note that the promise is unto the border of Egypt:
  - Numbers 34:5, “the border shall fetch a compass from Azmon unto the river of Egypt, and the goings out of it shall be at the sea”
  - Ezekiel 47:19, “And the south side southward, from Tamar *even* to the waters of strife *in* Kadesh, the river to the great sea. And *this is* the south side southward”
- Note that Sihor is at the border of Egypt and divides Egypt from Canaan
  - Joshua 13:3, “Now Joshua was old *and* stricken in years; and the LORD said unto him, Thou art old *and* stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed. This *is* the land that yet remaineth: all the borders of the Philistines, and all Geshuri, from Sihor, which *is* before Egypt”

*According to Scripture, David and Solomon possessed ground up to Euphrates and Sihor.*

- They possessed up to the River Euphrates as seen by 2 Samuel 8:3 we read how David “went to recover his border at the river Euphrates.”
- They possessed up to the River Sihor as seen by 1 Chronicles 13:5, 1 Kings 4:21 and 2 Chronicles 9:26
  - 1 Chronicles 13:5, “David gathered all Israel together, from Shihor of Egypt even unto the entering of Hemath”
  - 1 Kings 4:21, “Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt”
  - 2 Chronicles 9:26, speaking of Solomon, we read, “he reigned over all the kings from the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt”

*The Hebrew Term for the “river of Egypt” in God’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 15:18 is NEVER used of the Nile – in fact God always uses a completely different Hebrew word when referring to the Nile which is exclusive to it!*

Nowhere else in scripture is the Nile alluded to as the boundary, but we do find in 11 places the brook/river of Egypt is referred to as the southern boundary

- The term Nahar (Genesis 15:8) is only used in Scripture to refer to the border God promised Israel. Yet it is never used for the Nile. Instead, the term “ye’or” is normally used for the Nile, therefore implying a difference .
  - "Nahar" (Strong's 5104) is used 98 times in Scripture and is never once used of the Nile River. It is the term used again and again to refer to the river/stream that was at the southern border of Canaan.
  - "Ye'or" (Strong's 2975) is used 57 in Scripture and is used exclusively of the Nile river.
  - Why would God use a completely different term in Genesis 15:8 than He normally does for the Nile River if indeed He was referring to the Nile River?
  - “Nachal” (Strong's 5158) is used used of both the brook of Egypt and Euphrates in 2 Ki 24:7

*The language of Scripture indicates in verses like Exodus 3:17, 33:1, Deuteronomy 6:22-23 and 11:10-11 that the children of Israel had to leave Egypt to enter promised land, but if the Nile was the boundary of the promised land then the children of Israel were already living in the promised land while in bondage in Goshen.*

- Exodus 3:17 "I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.”
- Exod 33:1, “And the LORD said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I swear unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it”

- Deut 6:22-23 "And the LORD shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes: And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers"
- Deuteronomy 11:10-11 "For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs: But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven"

Men and women...your understanding of God's promises to Abraham will determine your reading of the rest of Scripture:

- Does the Hebrew Nation need to own fully the land of Canaan before eternity commences or does it not? Only if the Hebrew people have never fully gotten the land!

Your understanding of God's promises to Abraham will also determine...

### C) ***If you believe the physical nation of Israel is more important than any other nation in this world***

#### ***According to Views 1 and 3 – yes!***

- Eternity cannot commence until God's temporal promises to them has been fulfilled.

#### ***According to View 2 – no!***

According to this view the NT declares there to be no distinction between Jew and Gentile just those who are saved and those who are lost:

- Galatians 3:26-29, "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*"
- In Ephesians 2 the apostle Paul speak to Gentiles who now believe in Christ...
  - o In v13 he says that they are no longer aliens from Israel, but are part of God's people.
  - o In v16 he says saved Jews and Gentiles make up one body;
  - o In v19 he says saved Jews and Gentiles are fellow-citizens of the household of God;
  - o And in 3:6 he will say that saved Jews and Gentiles have the same inheritance in the LORD

We have seen...

- The Revelation of God's promises to Abraham;
- The Discussion of God's promises to Abraham; and
- The Implications of God's promises to Abraham

Let me close by noting

### **4) One Spiritual Application of God's promises to Abraham**

#### ***An application that all views agree on – namely, God keeps His promises!***

In Genesis 15:7-21 we read that when God made this promise with Abraham God made His presence to pass between animals that had been cut in two. In doing this God was declaring a curse on Himself if He failed to keep His promise to Abraham.

Men and women, for a long time it looked like God's promises would not come to pass of a seed through Saran:

- Abraham was elderly
- Sarah was barren/infertile
- Isaac didn't come for many years
- Children were in slavery in Egypt for many years
- Pharaoh chased them to the Red Sea
- Enemies would meet them in wilderness

BUT – God kept His promise! God will always keep His promises!

Speaking of Abraham the apostle Paul said in Romans 4:18 "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. "

Men and women...

- Has God given you a promise? Family? Loved one? Work? Service? Help? Strength? Usefulness? Forgiveness?

Be encouraged, God keeps His promises!

- He keeps His promises in time
- He keeps His promises in eternity!
  - o What was it encouraged Abraham in the midst of trials? He looked for a city whose builder and maker was God (Hebrews 11:10).
  - o Child of God today, the LORD Jesus Christ tells you and me in Luke 10:20 to "rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."
    - Like a runner – keep your eyes on the finish line:
    - Seeing Christ face to face and knowing Him perfectly
    - Loving Christ with all your heart
    - Praising and Serving Him with no hindrances!
    - This will encourage you to go on

Child of God remember the words of Sarah...

- God is faithful that promised!

Will you cling to those promises today and claim them for God's glory, your good and the good of those around you?