

The Promise

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In the sermon that I gave on February 9th ([Understanding Bible Terms](#)), at the end of the sermon I gave everybody some homework. Anybody do their homework? I actually got a number of e-mails, suggestions and comments—it was fascinating—people went home and said, let's see, what is this? I went to Hebrews 11 and I emphasized in the faith chapter that the word “promise” or “promises” is used six times. In Hebrews 11, if I can go to verse 39, I want to give a specific reference today.

Hebrews 11:39 *And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise,*
40) *God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. (NKJV)*

It says they died not having received the promise. So then I asked, what is the promise? And I gave a hint. It's not the resurrection, because what are you going to say, they died not having been resurrected? That doesn't work. It's not salvation because you can't say they died not being saved. That doesn't work either because these are examples of people who received salvation and forgiveness and who remained faithful. So I'm going to give you the answer to the promise, at least as I've understood it, up front, but then I want to walk through in my sermon how it lays out in scripture. For a number of listeners, it was obvious to them where the reference would be. In Hebrews 11, if we go back to verse 8, it says,

Hebrews 11:8 *By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. (NKJV)*

By faith. You'll find throughout the sermon today, if you just look through the context, those who received the promise, received it by faith, ultimately. Again, there are different levels of that, but ultimately that's how they received the promise.

9) *By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country ... (NKJV)*

Notice that there are levels of promises. The land of promise was a promised land; it's that simple, but it goes beyond that, as we'll see.

9 continued) *... dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;*
10) *for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. (NKJV)*

So what is the promise? The promise is the city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God—that's the ultimate promise. That's what they look to. Now we look to the resurrection but that's only a step in the promise. We look to salvation, that's a step in the promise. What is the promise? The promise is that we are going to dwell with God. We are going to be with Him.

It's interesting because the Bible shows that God works with man in two distinct types of relationships, and those relationships are related. One relationship is based on works and the other relationship is based on faith. Each of those relationships is described in the Bible with a promise. The promise or the relationship based on works is not to salvation, and we see that laid out with Israel in the blessings and curses. They had a covenant with God and the purpose of their covenant was they were to obey God. When they obeyed God, God said He would bless them. But if they disobeyed God, then God would curse them.

It was a physical relationship, to a degree, and their promise was effectively what we would call the Old Covenant—I'm almost going to quit calling it that because I'm getting so sensitive to the question, does the Bible use that term? It says New Covenant, well then, there's an old one. You know what, if there's a first resurrection, there's a second one, and that's true, but you can mix that up, and all I can say is, it's the covenant with Israel, I know that. Old Covenant is okay, I'm not going to say you can't use it, but I'm just saying, in my terms, so that I can at least communicate, I want you to know what I'm referring to. The relationship based on works is what we would call the Old Covenant, and God's response in that relationship was one of blessings and curses. The promise that describes that relationship is this: I will be your God and you will be My people. That's the promise.

The relationship based on faith is what we would understand to be described by the New Covenant. It includes forgiveness of sin. The Old Covenant did not include the forgiveness of sin in the relationship. The New Covenant does. It is portrayed by the Tree of Life, as the opportunity for salvation, and it is to salvation. So the New Covenant is for forgiveness of sin to salvation, the Old Covenant is in a relationship of obedience, blessings and curses, and not to salvation. The promise related to the relationship based on faith is that I will be a Father to you and you will be My children. Those relationships are staggered, so to speak; they are related. They exist oftentimes side by side in terms of whom God is working with and what His relationship is to each one, but those are the promises then that I believe lay out a relationship on works and a relationship based on faith.

Adam and Eve had access to the Tree of Life and they sinned, so we have said their access to the Tree of Life was cut off. In fact, I've had people tell me that in the last week or two. I say, okay, let's think about that. Who was one of their sons—Abel. Well, Abel was righteous. Hebrews 11 mentions Abel as well, which means he had access to the Tree of Life. So I would like to look at access—access to Adam and Eve was cut off—and instead of it being like a bank vault where nobody gets in, it's more like a gated community where you have to have permission to enter. So I would say Abel had

permission. Did he go into the garden? The Bible doesn't say that, that's not the point. The point is, Abel was of faith and he was righteous, and he's listed in Hebrews 11. He had access to what is portrayed by the Tree of Life. So access wasn't actually cut off, it was restricted, because it says they guarded the way. When a way is guarded, it can be said that this one may pass, but this other one cannot. It changes it just a little bit. Notice Hebrews 11 then, in regard to Abel. Abel gave a sacrifice, Cain gave a sacrifice. I've heard this over and over, one offered a better sacrifice because it was an animal, it wasn't grain; one offered his best, the other one didn't. You can say what you like, but what does the Bible say was the difference between the two sacrifices? It's in verse 4.

Hebrews 11:4 *By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice ... (NKJV)*

By faith. The relationship of faith is to salvation, the relationship of works is not. So we see in Hebrews 11 that the difference was that Abel had a relationship to God where he believed God, and it was a relationship based on faith, and that resulted in a more excellent sacrifice. If we then go back to chapter 4 of Genesis (and now I want to read the account), we'll see something else, and I hadn't actually noticed this before. In Genesis 4, verse 1, it says,

Genesis 4:1 *Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the LORD."*

2) *Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.*

3) *And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD.*

4) *Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering,*

5) *but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. (NKJV)*

Hebrews tells us that Abel's offering was based on faith. We can clearly see from the account that Cain's offering was not—it was not based on faith. So God made a distinction. Notice in verse 6.

6) *So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?"*

7) *If you do well, will you not be accepted? [If you obey Me, will you not be blessed?]*

8) *And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. [And you know that if you don't obey Me, you're going to be cursed.] (NKJV)*

So here in the account in Genesis, you can begin to see, at least by implication, that there is a difference between the relationship based on faith—Abel—and the relationship based on works—Cain—but Cain didn't do well, and he sinned and he became angry, and then he murdered his brother. So even with Cain, God said, if you do well, isn't it going to go well for you? Won't I bless you? So Cain could have been

obedient, even without faith, and he would still have been blessed—won't it go well for you? Well, it didn't go well; he didn't obey and he certainly didn't have faith. It's interesting, I begin to look at the relationships then as they extend down through the record of scripture. Let's look at the promise then in relationship to Abraham. I think we've been a little restrictive in what we believed it was that God was willing to do and what He intended to do. Genesis 15:4.

Genesis 15:4 *And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir [I don't have the time to go back and lay out the whole context, because it's not actually important to my point, but it will follow] but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir."*

5) *Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."*

6) *And he believed in the LORD ... (NKJV)*

He had faith. So this relationship now has the potential of salvation because it's based on faith. He believed in the LORD.

6 continued) *... and He accounted it to him for righteousness. (NKJV)*

There you have Abraham, the father of the faithful; his example then is very important. He had an offer of salvation and he's in the record as having remained faithful to the end. Now in Genesis 17:1, notice then how this promise is going to lay out to the descendants of Abraham. God is going to make them a promise.

Genesis 17:1 *When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.*

2) *And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly."*

3) *Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying:*

4) *As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations.*

5) *No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations.*

6) *I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you.*

7) *And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. (NKJV)*

That which was offered to Abraham God also offers to his seed. What was offered to Abraham? Well, because Abraham responded in faith, he had salvation. So then this now is going to be offered on down through the lineage of Abraham, but remember, there are two levels of this. The physical actually leads to the spiritual, ideally. Think about our own calling and conversion—those who are older and have an experience of

coming out of the world. (It's a little different if you're growing up inside the body of the ecclesia.) The first thing God has to do is get your attention. Then He has to prove to you that He exists. Then He begins to work with you, sometimes in miraculous ways, dramatic ways—healings, interventions, certain benefits, blessings—to prove to you He exists, to get your attention. When you're older and you have faith and you now trust God, then the perfection process includes something on a slightly different scale. It includes patience and endurance, and the fact is, sometimes God then has to back up a little bit and let you walk through the struggle, in faith, waiting for the answer, waiting for the intervention, waiting for the promise.

So what you see here is the physical oftentimes is offered as the point where God says, here I am, I'm your God, you'll be My people—and He works with them. If they begin to respond in faith then God can bring them to the step where salvation is made available. So this is a promise to Abraham and it begins to be passed on down. Mr. Armstrong looked at the covenant with Abraham and he broke it into two parts. He said there's race and there's grace. We wouldn't use the exact same terms today, but the fact is, I like the way that he made the distinction. He said, there is a promise of forgiveness, which is grace, but there is a promise of physical blessings—blessings and curses, actually—which is race. So there's land, there are descendants, there's prosperity, there are crops, but then there are the relationships to salvation, and of those, Abraham would not have said, I've got an Old Covenant here and I've got a New Covenant here; no, he only had a covenant. Those elements were together in one place.

When we go on down the line, those things begin to split out because we see a covenant with Israel where they physically only related to God as a people. But then we see the lineage of those who look to Christ ultimately and we see salvation being offered. It's often made me wonder if those covenants don't come back together into the Millennium, the way God had them in the beginning with Abraham. Therefore you are going to have a blessing and cursing relationship, right next door to our salvation relationship, at the same time. That's the way it would have been in the beginning. So we think of something that started with Israel, it started with Abraham—well, frankly, it started in the Garden of Eden and God began to make that distinction.

Let's go on down to the promise as it then arrives at the time of Israel. Exodus 6:2. When you follow the account down, you'll see that the promise to Abraham went to Isaac, and Isaac embraced it eventually and was converted, as we use that term. Then it went to Jacob and he received salvation, and then it went down to Joseph and he received salvation—those accounts are in the text. But when you get down to Israel, they weren't that interested so they didn't come as a body, but don't imagine that it's not as if no option were there. Joshua had an option, Caleb had an option because they believed God, thinking, we can do this, when they spied out the land. God said so—let's just go; they'll be our bread. Everybody else says, no, it won't work, it can't happen, God just brought us out here to kill us anyway, and He's just going to send us over there to be punished. God then responds, the most I can do for you is I'll bless you if you obey Me and I'm going to punish you when you don't, to try and get your attention, but Caleb and Joshua, they're in a different category—they believe Me.

If Israel could have believed God, then I believe the promise to Abraham would have continued in a different way, but we only have the record of what happened. Again, there are two elements and two kinds of relationships here. You start by relating to God as He proves who He is and gets your attention, and then at some point you begin to trust Him. If you never come to trust God, then salvation cannot be an element of the promise because it has to be by faith.

Exodus 6:2 *And God spoke to Moses and said to him: "I am the LORD.*

3) I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name LORD [Yahweh] I was not known to them.

4) I have also established My covenant with them ... (NKJV)

So that covenant then passed on down, one by one through the family lineage.

4 continued) ... to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers.

5) And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. (NKJV)

It's not a different covenant, it's the one He made with Abraham and He passed it down. Now Israel has an option for the covenant.

6) Therefore say to the children of Israel: 'I am the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. (NKJV)

God the Father is the Redeemer, Jesus Christ is the redemption, and that distinction is clear in scripture.

7) I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. (NKJV)

There's the promise. Look, I'll be your God and you be My people and I'll tell you what to do, and I want you to obey Me. The implication is if you would just believe Me and have faith then how much more could We do?

7 continued) ...Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

8) And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the LORD.' " (NKJV)

So the promise is in relationship to the covenant made with Abraham. It's interesting, we have the Old Covenant, the sacrifices, we have the temple, and yes, the covenant with Israel at Sinai. Let's recognize that that was an extension of the covenant that was made with Abraham, but God is now narrowing it down. Notice in Jeremiah 7 (and this is fascinating because we've referenced this scripture, Jeremiah 7:21, over the years), God sent Moses to Israel, and notice what is not part of the initial agreement.

Jeremiah 7:21 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat meat. (NKJV)

He's basically saying, you're just wasting your time.

22) *For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices.*
23) *But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people.* (NKJV)

God's offer to Israel, out of bondage, was not that you can have a temple with sacrifices, and slay lambs, and I'll be pleased. He's saying, I'll be your God and you be My people, and sacrifices weren't included. So what did God have to do? They would not obey Him, they would not trust Him. I'm not saying it wasn't part of His plan, as an option, but the fact is, it wasn't required in the beginning; it had to be added, and it gave them some way that He could operate with them where they could simply deal with God in terms of obedience. God said, do it on the first of the month, do it on the holy days, here's how you do it, do it with a lamb, do it in this way, cut it all up, put on these clothes, take them off, wash your hands. He gave them all kinds of things to do so that they could walk through them—here's your checklist, just do what I say and I will bless you. They wouldn't even hardly do that. It says in Jeremiah, clearly, that that wasn't what God required of them in the beginning.

We need to learn to separate what God says from what we say about what God says. The history of the church of God has been to mix the two, and it has been abused. Just say it over and over again, after you've said that God the Father is the architect about 100 times, until there's no longer any question. Well, that's not the analogy; analogies aren't proof. You've got to be careful with analogies. Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God, so does Jesus Christ have wool? That's not the point. The point is something beyond that. Exodus 14 then, I'm not turning there, but just as a reference, Israel is brought out of their captivity, they go out with boldness. The King James says *with a high hand*. Some translations say they went out defiantly, triumphantly—hooray, you know—and excited and hopefully determined in their progress. Unfortunately, going forward, they just didn't do that well. Four times before Sinai they cried out, accusing God of bringing them out into the wilderness to die. Can you imagine? Like as if God just enjoyed torturing people. He just brought us out here for His pleasure and, I'm sorry, you must be a terrible God because we're just being abused. It's amazing. God could not get Israel to respond in faith. The ten spies say, we're sorry, we can't do it; God says to do it—we can't do it, it won't work. Joshua and Caleb said, it will work, so they alone were blessed; the rest of that generation of Israel was cursed as a result. Exodus 19 then, going back to the covenant that God then offers. Even after four times of Israel saying, we don't believe in You, we're not going to trust You, we can't, You're just out here to abuse us, God says, well, okay, I gave you My word, I gave My word to Abraham, and I'm going to keep My word. So then in Exodus 19, verse 3,

Exodus 19:3 *And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel:*

4) *"You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.*

5) *Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. (NKJV)*

This is after all the disobedience. God made a promise, and He's going to fulfill the promise. He's making the offer still.

6) *And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'* (NKJV)

Does that sound like just blessings and curses and a physical relationship? It says right there, you'll be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

6 continued) *... These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."*

7) *So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the LORD commanded him.*

8) *Then all the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do." So Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD.*

9) *And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I come to you in the thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever." (NKJV)*

He wanted them to believe, but Israel would not believe. They would agree to something but they would not fulfill it. Now go back, it says *a kingdom of priests and a holy nation*. Where in the rest of scripture are those terms used? Revelation 1 and Revelation 5, and it's the same reference. The wording depends on the translation. Revelation 1 and 5 both have slight variations of *Jesus Christ has made us kings and priests to His God and Father*. We're now talking spiritual Israel, and the NIV says, *a kingdom and priests*; the NLT says, *a kingdom of priests*. Effectively, as best as I understand, the meaning of the Hebrew and the Greek is the same. What Christ did with spiritual Israel is what God is offering physical Israel. They refused. They just wouldn't have anything of it in any way. So go down to Exodus 24; again, we see these stipulations being laid out.

Exodus 24:3 *So Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the judgments. [God gives him additional instructions, some time passes and now Moses goes back.] And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the LORD has said we will do."*

4) *And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel.*

- 5) *Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD.*
- 6) *And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar.*
- 7) *Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient." (NKJV)*

We'll do what You say. This is even just the physical relationship here, this isn't conversion now that is in place.

- 8) *And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, "This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words." (NKJV)*

Again, it just seems like the contest here never ceases, it continues on. Let's go to Exodus 25 now and I want to walk a little bit through Exodus to show the progression of God's fulfilling of His promise. Because the physical part of the promise is I will be your God and you will be My people. Then the part that actually follows that is I will dwell in your midst. God wants to dwell with His people. As a Father He wants to dwell with His children. So He actually dwells in us, as temples, in this day, but the time comes when we're part of His family in the same place. This is not a deadbeat Dad, who is busy off somewhere, misses the wedding, can't afford to be at the birth, and then He's busy on business somewhere else while somebody else raises the family. It's not like that. He wants to be together. On a physical relationship He offers to be in the midst of His people; in a spiritual relationship He's actually going to be with His children ultimately in the end. Exodus 25, verses 1 and 2.

Exodus 25:1 *Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:*

- 2) *"Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering. (NKJV)*

Go on down to verse 9 and again I'm having to walk through parts of this a little more fully; let's go to verse 8.

- 8) *And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.*
- 9) *According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it. (NKJV)*

My wife has asked, why did God include all of these details in the Bible? Then she replies, as far as she understands it's because it all matters—everything matters. When someone asks, what difference does it make, it makes a big difference. It makes a difference because God said so—are you going to do what He said? In our case, will we believe what He promised and will we relate to Him in that fuller way? In Exodus 26:31, He's now talking about an element of this relationship that He's going to maintain with Israel within the temple system.

Exodus 26:31 *“You shall make a veil woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen. It shall be woven with an artistic design of cherubim.*

32) You shall hang it upon the four pillars of acacia wood overlaid with gold. Their hooks shall be gold, upon four sockets of silver. (NKJV)

What difference does it make?—God said so. Do what I said, there’s a reason. You might not learn it today but who knows, we might learn it tomorrow.

33) And you shall hang the veil from the clasps. Then you shall bring the ark of the Testimony in there, behind the veil. The veil shall be a divider for you between the holy place and the Most Holy. (NKJV)

God says, I’m going to dwell in your midst and access to Me is going to be limited. It’s limited to the way I say. Not the way you say, the way I say. So it’s a little different here, it’s behind the veil, but it’s a physical relationship based on works where God deals with Israel in terms of blessings and curses. Why?—because they refused to believe Him, they refused to have faith, so this is the entry-level covenant that He is willing to offer them. Exodus 40, here’s God’s presence now.

Exodus 40:34 *Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.*

35) And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

36) Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would go onward in all their journeys.

37) But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not journey till the day that it was taken up.

38) For the cloud of the LORD was above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys. (NKJV)

They wouldn’t obey God, they didn’t trust Him but they could see He was there and the consequences of relationship were going to be rather direct and immediate. Let’s go to Leviticus 16. What difference does it make? (What an amazing question.) As Terry Swagerty has said, nobody ever asks that question at their baptism. Why do you have to be in the church thirty, forty years, before that question comes back to mind?

Leviticus 16:1 *Now the LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered profane fire before the LORD, and died;*

2) and the LORD said to Moses: “Tell Aaron your brother not to come at just any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat. (NKJV)

The difference is, it could be your life. In a physical case, it could be your physical life. In a spiritual case, your spiritual life. The difference is, that’s what God said to do.

So He put Himself in the middle of His people but because they wouldn't trust Him and He couldn't offer them the relationship to salvation, because they wouldn't believe in Him, He offered them a relationship of obedience and He cut them off from Him and said, here's how you will approach Me and you will approach Me in no other way. With God behind the veil, Israel had a relationship with Him based on works—blessings and curses—I will be your God, you will be My people, I will dwell in your midst but here are the rules. Here's how that's going to have to take place.

It's interesting that if we go to the New Testament, 2 Corinthians, Paul is now taking references to the relationship in the Old Testament and he's applying them to the relationship in the New Testament, "Testament" simply being the terminology used for the scripture. At some point if we have to make up all words that are different then we're not going to know where to even turn, but we'll do the best we can, at least I will. In 2 Corinthians 6:14, notice this. Paul is teaching the Corinthians the difference between cleanness and uncleanness, righteousness and unrighteousness, holiness and a lack of such.

2 Corinthians 6:14 *Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?*

15) *And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?*

16) *And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God.* (NKJV)

Now this is different. When God was in the temple, He had a veil between Him and Israel, and it was a relationship based on works. But when the church is the temple and God is dwelling in the midst of His children—begotten children—then the relationship is based on faith, and salvation is now being offered. Notice what Paul refers to as the example and the proof of the point that he wants to make.

16 continued) ... *As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people."* (NKJV)

I have a New King James and at the end of *they shall be my people*, there's a small letter "b" and if you go down to the bottom where the notes are, it will say Leviticus 26, Jeremiah 32, Ezekiel 37. Where it's a direct quote, the translators can say, this is a direct quote. Where it's an inference, they give you something to consider as an inference, so the notes at the bottom aren't necessarily the inspired text, the scriptures are the text, but they're just saying, look, this reference comes from these places. So let's go back to these places and let's look at what those references would be. Let's start with Leviticus 26; I just want to read the references that were given in relationship here. Leviticus 26 is a chapter about what?—Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28—blessings and curses. We're very familiar with them. Leviticus 26:11.

Leviticus 26:11 *I will set My tabernacle among you, and My soul shall not abhor you.*

12) *I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people.* (NKJV)

So that's the first reference the translators give in relationship to what Paul was addressing, what the editors believed, and I think it's valid that we can look at these references in this way. So Paul is using the physical relationship to Israel in the Old Testament as an example or reference to understand the relationship God has with spiritual Israel in the New Testament. Paul changed it a bit because in 2 Corinthians 6, he says, I will dwell in them. It didn't say that back in the Old Testament, but Paul has extended this and says, here is where this goes and here is where we are today.

Let's look at Jeremiah 32, that was the second one that was offered. Again, these are for consideration. These are references given by the translators but they're good references.

Jeremiah 32:36 *“Now therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city of which you say, [Jeremiah goes through the destruction of the Jews and the captivity and various things] ‘It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence:*

37) *Behold, I will gather them out of all countries where I have driven them in My anger, in My fury, and in great wrath [this is the promise of the restoration of Israel to their land]; I will bring them back to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely.* (NKJV)

Did Judah come back to Israel and dwell safely? Not really. Tobiah ended up living in the temple, having an apartment in there. I remember hearing a sermon one time, someone said just don't make any noise, don't make any noise in the temple. My answer was, that's how Tobiah got to have an apartment there in the first place. Nobody made any noise. I bet there was some noise when they tossed him out on his ear. I bet you there was noise then.

38) *They shall be My people, and I will be their God;* (NKJV)

This is not the restoration of Judah to the land of Israel prior to the time of Jesus Christ. This is a millennial promise. You're looking all the way down the line to what the intent is, that *they shall be My people, and I will be their God,*

39) *then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them.*

40) *And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me.*

41) *Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul.’* (NKJV)

This goes beyond simply the restoration that had to be done in order to prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ.

So now, Ezekiel 37 was the other reference, and it's easy enough to go back and forth here. I think I'm reasonably hopeful of being able to get through my notes but as I've always said, with an outline at least you know where I wanted to go. If I had made my order, I could have got there; you can finish any study of the scriptures that I missed.

Ezekiel 37:21 *"Then say to them, "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone [that has not happened yet], and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; (NKJV)*

The restoration of Israel at the beginning of the Millennium. There is scripture after scripture describing this event.

22) and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; (NKJV)

King David, okay? Jesus Christ is a King, God the Father is a King. Go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, you're going up to worship God the Father in His house during the Millennium, who is the King over them all.

22 continued) ... they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. (NKJV)

That's where the sticks have been put back together.

23) They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God.

24) "David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; (NKJV)

We'll go down to verse 26, in the middle.

26) ... I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. (NKJV)

This is the Millennium, this is not Herod's temple.

27) My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people. (NKJV)

We see an ongoing relationship where there is a physical existence with blessings and curses, where sacrifices can be offered, the temple exists and God is behind the veil,

and we see it during the Millennium, it's in the book of Ezekiel. I hope to be able to cover at least part of that today, hopefully as much as I need. Then we also have salvation, and when Paul is talking, he's not talking about, let's all go off from our sacrifices, he's saying you are the children of God, God is in the midst of you already, in your minds and in your hearts.

Go back to 2 Corinthians; there is a second part to this, 2 Corinthians 6.

2 Corinthians 6:17 *Therefore "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you."*

18) *"I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty."* (NKJV)

That's a step up, and this is the relationship that was offered to Abraham, confirmed to Isaac, to Jacob, and coming up to Israel, the kingdom of priests and a holy nation, but they said, we don't want that. So Jacob and Caleb, they wanted it. It's something David wanted, right? God said, okay, we're going to do this now, through you, and we're going to go as far as it can. Obviously in the end God gets His way. If you go to verse 18, at the end of my reference, in the New King James, there's a little "a" and if you go down and see what the reference is, it says that 2 Samuel 7 is in relationship to this. Again, that's not inspired, but I think it's helpful. So let's look at 2 Samuel 7. It helps me a little bit to see what it actually says. In doing that sometimes I have to go past the point of wondering, what did somebody tell me it said, and just try to clean that up and see, what are the words in my Bible? God is talking now to David; David wants to build the temple for God; God says you're not doing that, that's not the right place.

2 Samuel 7:12 *"When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.*

13) *He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.*

14) *I will be his Father, and he shall be My son.* (NKJV)

This is the reference that I believe is being referred to by Paul, and he's using it for spiritual Israel—they are the temples in whom God is dwelling. God says here, to Solomon, I'll be a Father to you and you be My son, and here is a promise to David of the continuance of the kingdom.

14 continued) *If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men.*

15) *But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you.* (NKJV)

Saul could have continued, too. He did not trust God, he did not obey God and God removed him, said this was conditional. Saul lost his opportunity.

16) *And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.” ’ ” (NKJV)*

Again, if you'll just obey Me, if you'll just trust Me, then I will take care of you.

17) *According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.*

18) *Then King David went in and sat before the LORD; and he said: “Who am I, O Lord God? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far?*

19) *And yet this was a small thing in Your sight, O Lord GOD; and You have also spoken of Your servant's house for a great while to come. Is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD?*

20) *Now what more can David say to You? For You, Lord GOD, know Your servant.*

21) *For Your word's sake, and according to Your own heart, You have done all these great things, to make Your servant know them.*

22) *Therefore You are great, O Lord GOD. For there is none like You, nor is there any God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears.*

23) *And who is like Your people, like Israel, the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people, to make for Himself a name—and to do for Yourself great and awesome deeds for Your land—before Your people whom You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, the nations, and their gods?*

24) *For You have made Your people Israel Your very own people forever; and You, LORD, have become their God. (NKJV)*

This is a promise that will extend to the nation if they will simply turn and obey. There were moments when people turned and obeyed God and He turned and blessed them. They never consistently continued; only a very few were actually willing to look to God and to trust Him. But those, I believe, are the references Paul is citing when he quotes from the Old Testament. If you don't go to the Old Testament, you don't know what the New Testament is all about. There's no way. I had a friend of mine describe that it's like coming into the middle of a movie. When I was a kid, you could do that. You could arrive late to a theater, in the middle of a movie, and sit there as long as you wanted; you could see it through until the end, then you would stay and watch the beginning, and then you had the whole movie. Well now you have to leave. My point is you have to see the whole movie and the whole movie is the basis of the Old Testament.

I want to take the promise now into the book of Ezekiel. I'm down to maybe ten minutes. You have your notes. Ezekiel 11—I took out Jeremiah, I threw that away, I took out Zechariah, threw that away because I had too much. I'm going to have to maybe throw away some of Ezekiel as well but I will do what I can. Maybe I can slightly trim the way I'm trying to reference this. Ezekiel 11:17, talking about the restoration of Israel. The restoration of Israel is the Kingdom of God, that's where the promise is ultimately going to be fulfilled.

Ezekiel 11:17 *Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I will gather you from the peoples, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel."*

19) *Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh,*

20) *that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God. (NKJV)*

When you do that physically it is a covenant of blessing and curses, of works, not to salvation. When by your obedience you begin to trust God and have faith in Him and he offers you access to His Spirit, it is now a covenant of faith to where salvation is available. The physical is intended, I believe, to lead to the spiritual. It's a stepping stone, it's a way to open that door to a relationship so that the relationship at some point then deepens and God is able to take you further. Ezekiel 36, going down, in this case verse 24.

Ezekiel 36:24 *For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land.*

26) *I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. (NKJV)*

Ezekiel 37 then states, you will be My people, I'll be your God, David will be your king. So there is a consistency there, but let me just go forward because I'm watching the time, and I need to slow back down and just try to finish. Ezekiel 40 through 48 is the restoration of temple worship during the Millennium. So Ezekiel 40 is important as the beginning of that, and in verse 1, it says,

Ezekiel 40:1 *In the twenty-fifth year of our captivity, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was captured, on the very same day the hand of the LORD was upon me; and He took me there.*

2) *In the visions of God He took me into the land of Israel and set me on a very high mountain; on it toward the south was something like the structure of a city. (NKJV)*

Notice the city is not named and he is on a very high mountain, being portrayed at a time when temple worship is restored to Israel, which is during the Millennium. So what is this high mountain? Remember in Ezekiel 28, when God is addressing Satan, He says, you were on the holy mountain of God. Well, that's not talking about the earth, that's talking about God's throne. It's actually talking about Mount Zion. Look at Hebrews 12; let's address that in Hebrews 12:18, just for context here.

Hebrews 12:18 *For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest,*

19) *and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore.*

22) *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem ... (NKJV)*

So it describes Jerusalem—the heavenly Jerusalem—as Mount Zion, portrayed in scripture as a spiritual mountain. If we go back then to Ezekiel 40:2, all of a sudden, he's brought up to a very high mountain and he looks southward at something that's kind of like a city but it's not actually distinct and laid out in that same way. Notice then the message of Ezekiel in chapter 43. God is now describing, in verse 6,

Ezekiel 43:6 *Then I heard Him speaking to me from the temple, [this is all part of these visions that are being laid out] while a man stood beside me.*

7) *And He said to me, "Son of man, this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever. (NKJV)*

This is the restoration of temple worship. God says, I'm going to go back and dwell in the midst of My people, and we can see in the context that He actually goes back behind the veil for physical Israel. He's not behind the veil for spiritual Israel. So think about when God was behind the veil with Israel, the Ark isn't His throne, the Ark is his footstool, and God was above the Ark. So, in that relationship, did God have to leave His throne in heaven for His presence to be in the temple on the earth? Some people think in those terms, I don't believe that at all. That's just not how this works. So let's go then into the time of temple worship. Does that mean if God's presence is in the tabernacle during the Millennium that somehow He can't be in Mount Zion on His throne? Where is Mount Zion? It's heavenly Jerusalem. It's what in the Bible is portrayed as New Jerusalem. So the fact is He's on His throne but He has His presence also portrayed. If He chooses to speak face to face and is immediately there present, that's God's choice, but we can't take God and kind of make Him into our image of understanding. So this plays out, we have temple worship described, in Ezekiel 47 we have healing waters coming from the sanctuary. Think about Revelation 22 then look at Ezekiel 48. You remember I said the name of the city was not given, but, in the very last verse of the book of Ezekiel, after all of these details, it says,

Ezekiel 48:35 *All the way around shall be eighteen thousand cubits; and the name of the city from that day shall be: THE LORD IS THERE." (NKJV)*

That's the way it's described. So God is going to be there. There's going to be physical people and a physical relationship with God, offering sacrifices at the temple. There are going to be spiritual people—sons and daughters of God that are part of His family who are dwelling with God in His family according to the promise. So God works with man in two distinct types of relationships. Works and faith can be a description; Israel, spiritual Israel; Old Covenant and New Covenant; blessings and curses versus forgiveness; Jerusalem, New Jerusalem; His people versus His children; their God and their Father—all of those are different ways in which those same two things are described. So if I can get to Isaiah 24, that's where I'll wrap up and hopefully I will squeeze right off the end here. This isn't that long because I gave a sermonette. I used up all of my time on

the sermonette, so actually I'm under time—maybe not. Isaiah 24—this is to me where this can be connected.

Isaiah 24:1 *Behold, the LORD makes the earth empty and makes it waste, distorts its surface and scatters abroad its inhabitants.* (NKJV)

Day of the LORD. Verse 17.

17) *Fear and the pit and the snare are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth.*
18) *And it shall be that he who flees from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit, and he who comes up from the midst of the pit shall be caught in the snare; for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth are shaken.* (NKJV)

It's talking about the destruction of the tribulation, the Day of the LORD, and these events that follow. Verse 21.

21) *It shall come to pass in that day that the LORD will punish on high the host of exalted ones [the demons], and on the earth the kings of the earth [meaning the Babylonian system].* (NKJV)

They're going to be brought down together; He'll destroy Babylon and He'll bind and punish the demons.

22) *They will be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit [the abyss, as it's prophesied], and will be shut up in the prison; after many days [after the Millennium when Satan is loosed] they will be punished.* (NKJV)

It fits perfectly with the prophetic order as we've understood it.

23) *Then the moon will be disgraced and the sun ashamed;* (NKJV)

I think that's probably more a reference to Israel being humbled than it is heavenly signs because Revelation 12 [verse 1] uses that terminology; Genesis 37 [verse 9] also uses that terminology. But notice what it says,

23 continued) *... For the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion [Heavenly Jerusalem] and in Jerusalem ...* (NKJV)

—in a physical way, too. God is going to be on His throne in Mount Zion and He's going to reign in Jerusalem, and His presence will be in the temple, before His elders, gloriously. The physical and spiritual relationships have always been in place and they will certainly be in place going forward. My intent with this sermon, if I get back to it some day, is that part two will include many of the scriptures that I left out in part one. Thank you.