

## **DID GOD FULFILL EVERY GOOD PROMISE? TOWARD A BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF JOSHUA 21:43–45 (Part 2)**

Gregory H. Harris, Th.D.  
Professor of Bible Exposition  
The Master’s Seminary

*As discussed in Part 1 of the previous edition, some claim that the land promises God made to Abraham were entirely fulfilled with the initial conquest of Canaan. This allegedly means that we should not expect any future fulfillment of the land with Israel. Joshua 21:43–45 is offered as evidence for this view. This understanding, though, does not properly take into account later passages that still affirm the significance of Israel’s land after Joshua. Thus, a proper understanding of the land promises must account for the dimensions of the land as given in the Abrahamic covenant, the affirmation of God’s faithfulness in Joshua, and later passages affirming the importance of the land.*

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Introduction, Purpose, and Format**

In a previous ETS paper on Joshua 21:43–45, five reasons were given to show why both amillennialists and premillennialists have many proponents who believe that these verses are proof that God had already fulfilled all His land promises to the nation of Israel by this time, and thus there is no expectation for any future fulfillment.<sup>1</sup> A summary of the five reasons is as follows:

(1) The virtually unanimous understanding from most theological persuasions is that the nation of Israel never had complete possession of the land boundaries of the Abrahamic covenant, which are approximately 300,000 square miles. The

---

<sup>1</sup> Gregory H. Harris, “Did God Fulfill Every Good Promise? Toward a Biblical Understanding of Joshua 21:43–45.” Annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Atlanta, 2010. A slightly amended published article of the same title can be found in *MSJ* 23, No. 1 (Spring 2012): 55–83. All subsequent references and page numbers will be cited from the *MSJ* article with the shortened title, “Did God Fulfill Every Good Promise?”

recognized area of the land of Israel was only 10,000 square miles, and thus Israel claimed only 1/30<sup>th</sup> of the promised land boundaries.<sup>2</sup>

(2) Not only do the original land boundaries that God granted in the Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 15:18 include the Euphrates River as the northern most part, but also so do subsequent verses from the Pentateuch/Mosaic covenant (Exod 23:31; Deut 1:7 and 11:24). The book of Joshua likewise opens with God including the Euphrates River as part of the land boundaries (Josh 1:4). Joshua would have been aware of or present for all of these additional references. Yet this is the only reference to the Euphrates River that occurs in the entire book of Joshua. Further, no record is given that shows that the twelve spies, which included Joshua, were sent out that far (Numbers 13–14).<sup>3</sup>

(3) The eschatological significance of Leviticus 26, especially 26:40–45, and Deuteronomy 30:1–10 must be considered regarding the promise of God for His future restoration of national Israel back to the land from which He will have dispersed them because of their blatant covenant violations.<sup>4</sup>

(4) In addition to God's opening charge to Joshua that contains the reference to the Euphrates River (Josh 1:1–4), two other extremely significant factors from the book of Joshua show that Josh 21:43–45 does not fulfill the land promises:

- (a) Joshua 13–21, where God disperses the land, must be read as one unit.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 63–64, 70–75. See also Keil of Carl Friedrich Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel*, Commentary on the Old Testament. 10 vols. (reprint; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001), 2:156–57; John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 3d. ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981), 96–97; F. J. Mabie, "Geographical Extent of Israel," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books*. Bill T. Arnold and H. G. M. Williamson, eds. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 318; Charles L. Feinberg, *Israel: At the Center of History and Revelation*, 3d ed. (Portland: Ore: Multnomah, 1980), 168; Ronald B. Allen, "The Land of Israel," in *Israel the Land the People: An Evangelical Affirmation of God's Promises*, ed. H. Wayne House (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998), 17–18, 24. For a more precise and expanded study of the description and dimensions of the biblical land, see Yohanan Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography*, rev. and enlarged ed., trans. by A. F. Rainey (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979), 3–15.

<sup>3</sup> Harris, "Did God Fulfill Every Good Promise?," 70–71. For a detailed analysis of the Abrahamic covenant and various related issues, see Keith H. Essex, "The Abrahamic Covenant," *MSJ* 10, No. 2 (Fall 1999), 191–212, and Cleon L. Rogers, Jr., "The Covenant with Abraham and its Historical Setting," *BSac* (July–September 1970), 241–57. See also Robert Saucy, "The Crucial Issue Between Dispensational and Non-Dispensational Systems," *CTR* 1, No. 1 (Fall 1986), 149–65 for a survey of key interpretational issues between these two groups. See also William D. Barrick, "The Mosaic Covenant," *MSJ* 10, No. 2 (Fall 1999): 213–32 for this and particularly how the ratification of the Mosaic covenant does not annul any of the previous covenant. Additionally see John H. Sailhamer, "The Mosaic Law and the Theology of the Pentateuch," *WTJ* 53 (1991): 241–61.

<sup>4</sup> Harris, "Did God Fulfill Every Good Promise?," 65–70. See also William D. Barrick, "Inter-covenantal Truth and Relevance: Leviticus 26 and the Biblical Covenants," *MSJ* 21, No. 1 (Spring 2010): 81–102; Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 90–91. For an important study on the conditional aspect of God's promises, see an extended discussion by Bruce K. Waltke, "The Phenomenon of Conditionality within Unconditional Covenants, in *Israel's Apostasy and Restoration: Essays in Honor of Roland K. Harrison*, ed. Avraham Gileadi (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 123–39. Likewise see the excellent article by Jeffrey L. Townsend, "Fulfillment of the Land Promised in the Old Testament," *BSac* 142 (Oct–Dec 1985): 320–23.

- (b) God's opening statement in Josh 13:1–7 clearly shows that very much of the land remained yet to be conquered with specific geographical sites included.<sup>5</sup>

(5) Similar markers occur elsewhere in Scripture, including Rom 16:25–27 and Col 1:23 (stating that the Gospel had already gone out into all the nations), that show Josh 21:43–45 to be just a historical marker of God's faithfulness up to that point and not the pinnacle or completion of His covenant faithfulness.<sup>6</sup>

The first article on Josh 21:43–45 used verses only from Genesis through Joshua; this second article deals with subsequent verses from Joshua 21 onward, and this is important because sometimes proponents who believe that the land promises have already been fulfilled also point to 1 Kings 4:20–21 to further support their claim that God has already fulfilled all the land promises for the nation of Israel; therefore, the land promises have no future relevance in prophecy:

Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance; they were eating and drinking and rejoicing. Now Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt; they brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.<sup>7</sup>

Special note is made here that 1 Kings 4:20–21 specifically names the Euphrates River as the northern boundary that God first gave in Gen 15:18. Consequently it is held:

On the surface of things, these verses simply tell us the size of Solomon's kingdom, in terms of both population and geography. His people were countless in number, like the sand on the seashore. His borders stretched from Egypt to Iraq. But to understand fully the significance of these verses, we need to remember the ancient promises of God. The vocabulary of 1 Kings 4—with all its talk of sand by the seashore and kingdoms from Egypt to Euphrates—refers directly and explicitly to the covenant promises that God made to Abraham....Now the promises of the covenant were coming true, to the joy of God's people.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore this conclusion follows by the same author:

The extent of Solomon's dominion was a direct fulfillment of the covenant promises that God once made to Abraham. At the same time he promises Abraham descendants like the stars in the desert sky, God also promised that

---

<sup>5</sup> Harris, "Did God Fulfill Every Good Promise?," 70–75.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 82–83.

<sup>7</sup> All Scripture references used are from the NASB 1971 edition unless otherwise indicated. The use of "Thee" and "Thou" in the Psalms will be changed to modern English usage.

<sup>8</sup> Philip Graham Ryken, *1 Kings*, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2011), 104.

the children of Abraham would have a land to call their own: “To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates” (Gen. 15:18). From Egypt to Turkey, God’s covenant promise was fulfilled in Solomon’s wide dominion.<sup>9</sup>

DeVries reasons regarding 1 Kings 4:20–21: “The promises to the Genesis patriarchs were focused on (1) possession of the land and (2) a prosperous people. Gathered together for comment here are the verses that depict Solomon’s reign as an ideal fulfillment of these very promises.”<sup>10</sup> Alexander concurs:

The promises associated with the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, also set the agenda for the books of Joshua to Kings. The subject of nationhood is particularly prominent in Joshua, Judges and Samuel. Whereas Joshua gives a predominantly positive description of the Israel settlement in the land of Canaan, this process is reversed in Judges due to the recurring apostasy of the Israelites. Only through the divine provision of the monarchy is Israel enabled to gain possession of all the land promised to Abraham. Consequently, during the reigns of David and Solomon the Israelites come to possess the land as far as the boundaries defined in Genesis 15:18–21 (cf. 2 Sam 8:1–14; 1 Kgs 4:21; 9:20–21).<sup>11</sup>

Leithart likewise agrees:

Solomon’s reign not only fulfills the promise to Joshua’s conquest, but also demonstrates Yahweh’s faithfulness to his promises to Abraham. Under Solomon, Israel’s life is a utopia of peace, harmony, safety, and joy. Israel finally becomes as numerous as the sand on the seashore (4:20; cf. Gen 22:17), a description that between Abraham and Solomon applies only to Israel’s enemies, false Israels (Josh 11:4; Judg 7:12; 1 Sam 13:5; 2 Sam 17:11).<sup>12</sup>

Interestingly, some theologians point to both Josh 21:43–45 and 1 Kings 4:20–21 to prove that God has already fulfilled the land promises. Kline writes:

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>10</sup> Simon J. DeVries, *1 Kings*, in *Word Biblical Commentary*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2003), 72.

<sup>11</sup> T. D. Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 279. Brueggemann adds: “Three allusions show that Solomon has fulfilled all the old promises of God made to the ancestors: (a) ‘As many as the sand of the sea’ is an old promise of fruitfulness and fertility bade to the ancestors (Gen. 22:17; 32:17). (b) The boundaries of ‘Euphrates...to the border of Egypt’ voices the boldest version of ‘Greater Israel’ promised by God (Gen 15:18–21), a vision never actualized but the basis of dreams of power, prestige, and security given by the God who keeps promises. (c) The term ‘happy’ refers to exuberant festival celebration.” Walter Brueggemann, *1 & 2 Kings*, in *Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2000), 63.

<sup>12</sup> Peter J. Leithart, *1 & 2 Kings*, in *Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Brazo Press, 2006), 48–49.

Step by step what was included in the promised kingdom land at the first level of meaning was more precisely defined. It was a land to be designated later as Abraham followed the Lord (Gen 12:1); the land of Canaan (Gen 12:7); Canaan extending in all four directions (Gen 13:15–17); the area bounded on the northeast by the river Euphrates and on the southwest by the river of Egypt (Gen 15:18) and comprising the territories of a series of specified peoples (Gen 15:1–21). Subsequent reaffirmations of the promise to the patriarchs after Genesis 15 do not further define these boundaries (cf. Gen 17:8; 22:17; 24:7; 26:3,4; 28:13,14; 35:12; 48:4; 49:1ff.; 50:24). That the territory eventually occupied by Israel fully corresponded with the geographical bounds defined in the promise is explicitly recorded in Joshua 21:43–45 and 1 Kings 4:20,21 (cf. Num 34:2ff.; 1 Chr 18:3; Ezek 47:13–20).<sup>13</sup>

Cox simply states: “The earthly promises to national Israel have been fulfilled.”<sup>14</sup> He further concludes with similar reasoning:

We could summarize these promises concerning the land of Canaan being inherited by Israel, as follows: The land was promised through Abraham; the promise was renewed to Isaac, Jacob, and Moses. It was fulfilled literally through Joshua. Some Bible scholars find the actual fulfillment in Solomon’s day. Compare 1 Kings 4:21 and 5:4 with Genesis 15:18. How sad it is then that some theologians are still arguing that they are yet future! Much of the futurist belief rests on the assumption that God has never given Israel all the land promised through Abraham.<sup>15</sup>

Mathison follows suit saying, “Dispensationalists argue that the Abrahamic covenant has never been fulfilled completely by the physical descendants of Abraham. But is that true?”<sup>16</sup> He further argues for support from both Joshua 21 and 1 Kings 4:

God also promised Abraham that his seed would possess the land of Palestine and more (Gen. 12:7; 13:15, etc.). In Genesis 15:18 we read, “On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, ‘To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates.’” If we compare the promise to 1 Kings 4:20–21, we notice striking parallels. First Kings 4:20 reminds the readers of the promise recorded in Genesis 22:17. Then verse 21 says, “Now Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines and to the border of

---

<sup>13</sup> Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2006), 336.

<sup>14</sup> William E. Cox, *The New-Covenant Israel* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1963), 20.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Keith A. Mathison, *Dispensationalism: Rightly Dividing the People of God?* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1995), 26.

Egypt.” The author of 1 Kings is obviously referring back to the promise in Genesis, which his readers and hearers would know by heart.

There are numerous other passages in the Old Testament that tell us God has already fulfilled the land promises given to Israel (Josh. 11:23; 21:41–45; Neh. 9:21–25). Joshua 21:43–45 explicitly declares that *all* the land that God promised Israel was given to them.<sup>17</sup>

Hanegraaff sees more of a progressive fulfillment of the land promises:

First, the land promises were fulfilled in the fore future when Joshua led the physical descendants of Abraham into Palestine. As the book of Joshua records, “The LORD gave Israel all the land he had sworn to give their forefathers, and they took possession of it and settled there.” Indeed says Joshua, “Not *one* of all the LORD’s good promises to the house of Israel failed; everyone was fulfilled” (Joshua 21:34, 45). Even as the life ebbed from his body, Joshua reminded the children of Israel that the Lord had been faithful to his promises. ‘You know with all your heart that *not one* of all the good promises the LORD your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled, *not one has failed*’ (Joshua 23:14).<sup>18</sup>

Hanegraaff elsewhere states, “the land promises reached their zenith under Solomon—whose rule encompassed all of the land from the Euphrates River in the north to the River of Egypt in the South (1 Kings 4:20–21; cf. Genesis 15:18) . . .”<sup>19</sup> He further concludes:

Solomon, during whose reign the glorious temple was constructed, was equally unambiguous. ‘Not one word has failed of all the good promises [the LORD] gave through His servant Moses’ (1 Kings 8:56). In fact, at the height of the Solomonic kingdom, ‘the people of Judah and Israel were *as numerous as the sand on the seashore*; they ate, they drank and they were happy. And Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River [Euphrates] to the land of the Philistine, as far as the border of Egypt’ (4:20–21).<sup>20</sup>

It could seem on an initial reading that 1 Kings 4:20–21 does indeed support the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant land promises also found in Josh 21:43–45, although this interpretation is far from free of its own problems.<sup>21</sup> However, it is

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 27 [emphasis in the original].

<sup>18</sup> Hank Hanegraaff, *The Apocalypse Code* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 178 [emphasis in the original].

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 178–79 [emphasis in the original].

<sup>21</sup> Townsend, “Fulfillment of the Land Promise in the Old Testament,” 323 writes: “Other passages modify this understanding of 1 Kings 8:65. For example, the Solomonic administrative districts in 1 Kings 4:7–19 did not include the area of Philistia which was within the Promised Land. Confirmation that Philistia was not under direct Solomonic rule is provided in 1 Kings 4:21 (cf. 2 Chron 9:26) which states that ‘Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River [Euphrates] to the land of

the position of this paper that just the opposite occurs: including both passages to show the fulfillment of all the land promises of God does not strengthen their position, only weakens it. As a point of logic, if Josh 21:43–45 totally fulfilled the land promises given by God to the Jewish nation, then 1 Kings 4:20–21 becomes irrelevant to their argument: both passages cannot prove the same fulfillment of the same event centuries removed from one another. In the same way, if 1 Kings 4:20–21 is the fulfillment of all of the land promises, then Josh 21:43–45 becomes irrelevant to their argument. Each passage must stand or fall on the weight of its own merits (or lack thereof).

Subsequent verses should be studied because, after all, if either Josh 21:43–45 or 1 Kings 4:20–21 demonstrates that God has already fulfilled all the land promises for the nation of Israel, then no additional land promises from God would be expected past these two sections of Scripture, especially past 1 Kings 4. However, if Scripture does indeed contain the same promises that God made prior to Joshua 21 or 1 Kings 4, then the theological position that all the land promises have already been fulfilled very much comes into question, and their bearing on interpreting other prophecies must be considered as well.

The purpose of this second article is to continue the present study past Joshua 21 and 1 Kings 4 to see whether or not the Bible gives any evidence that God has indeed fulfilled all the land promises He made. An examination of the following interconnected elements will do this. First, a study will be made of selected Scriptures to see if God made any of the promises regarding Israel and the land after 1 Kings 4, and then determine if these promises are similar to the previous promises God had made.<sup>22</sup> Second, because the Euphrates River occurs as part of the Abrahamic covenant in Gen 15:18 and, as was shown, is cited by those who hold 1 Kings 4:20–21 to be a fulfillment of this promise, examination will be made to see if prophecies made after the time of Solomon's reign directly refer again to the Euphrates River as the northern land boundary.<sup>23</sup> Finally, a comparison will be

---

the Philistines and to the border of Egypt.' There would be no need to mention the Philistines unless they were an exception to Solomon's rule (cf. 4:24). The verse adds that these kingdoms 'brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.' Again the clear indication is that much of the Promised Land was not under direct Israelite sovereignty but was only under tribute. In addition it appears that the Phoenician coastal area above Tyre inhabited by the Sidonians was never included under Israelite rule or tribute." According to Aharoni, "No appreciable changes took place in David's great kingdom during the latter part of his reign.... The kingdom's territory began to shrink remarkably during Solomon's reign" (Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible*, 306–307).

<sup>22</sup> Obviously all related prophetic passages cannot be surveyed in this article. For an excellent article for the future rebuilding of Jerusalem and argument for a literal fulfillment of the land promises in Jeremiah 31 in the future and how these relate to other land promises, see Dennis M. Swanson, "Expansion of Jerusalem in Jer 31:38–40: Never, Already or Not Yet?" *MSJ* 17, No. 1 (Spring 2006): 17–34. Specially see critiques for the "never to be fulfilled" land promises (27–29) and the "realized" or "already fulfilled" land promises (29–32). Based on the specifics given in Jer 31:38–40, Swanson argues that these promises await a future fulfillment at the return of Jesus (32–34).

<sup>23</sup> The southern boundary, while important, will not receive as much focus in this paper because of the subsequent prophecies that specifically relate to the Euphrates River as the northern boundary of the Abrahamic covenant land promises. For matters related to the southern border and matters therein, see Walter C. Kaiser, "The Promised Land: A Biblical-Historical View," *BSac* 138 (1981): 303–05. See also Townsend's superb article, "Fulfillment of the Land Promise in the Old Testament," 324–29.

made from the elements of the Josh 21:43–45 (Part 1) paper to see how subsequent verses relate to these findings.

### **Selected Post-Joshua 21/1 Kings 4 Promises from God for National Israel**

Though not mentioned in the previous article because it contained only verses up to Joshua 21, the ratification of the Davidic covenant and the prophetic revelation of the promised Messiah play more and more into God's unfolding revelation and become included in God's future plans for the nation of Israel.<sup>24</sup> For instance, as God's pending judgment on the ten northern tribes approached because of their habitual covenant disobedience, came this divine promise in Hos 3:4–5: "For the sons of Israel will remain for many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, and without ephod or household idols. Afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king; and they will come trembling to the LORD and to His goodness in the last days." The specifics of this prophecy should by no means be overlooked as it relates to the overall fulfillment of prophecy elsewhere in Scripture.<sup>25</sup> Hosea 5:15 adds: "I will go away and return to My place until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face; in their affliction they will earnestly seek Me." Though the land is not specifically mentioned, the nation of Israel returning to God—and at some time in the future to God's promised Messiah—harmonizes with previous prophecies regarding the Jewish peoples' return to Yahweh in covenant obedience, as was previously seen in the passages of Lev 26:40–45 and Deut 30:1–10.<sup>26</sup> Further:

The point here should be obvious. The call to repentance in the OT, if there was such a call, was to a nation already in covenant relationship with Yahweh. They were viewed as married or as the children of a loving Father (Jer 31:3,

---

Particularly see page 335, footnote 17 for three views and their proponents for the identity of the river of Egypt.

<sup>24</sup> For matters relating to the Davidic covenant, see Michael Grisanti, "The Davidic Covenant," *MSJ* 23, No. 1 (Fall 2012): 233–50. See also John H. Sailhamer, "The Messiah of the Hebrew Bible," *JETS* 44, No. 1 (March 2001): 12–22.

<sup>25</sup> For an excellent article showing the importance of these promises made by God in Hos 3:4–5 and how this specificity of fulfilled prophecy relates to addition miracles of God elsewhere, see Robert C. Newman, John A. Bloom, and Hugh G. Gauch, Jr. "Public Theology and Prophetic Data: Factual Evidence That Counts For the Biblical World View," *JETS* 46, No. 1 (March 2003): 82–92. They conclude the importance of fulfilled prophecy: "Being a kind of miracle, fulfilled prophecy has important ramifications for the wider discussion of miracles" (*ibid.*, 110).

<sup>26</sup> See John A. Jelinek, "The Dispersion and Restoration of Israel," in *Israel the Land and the People: An Evangelical Affirmation of God's Promises*, ed. H. Wayne House (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998) for a well-reasoned presentation of the nature and rationale for judgment and dispersion from Lev 26:14–46 (233–38) and for the spiritual condition of the nation of Israel as necessary for restoration in Deut 30:1–10 (239–40). Jelinek concludes: "The picture that a biblical theology of dispersion and restoration presents is ultimately that Israel is grafted back into God's salvific promises by means of a marvelous intervention of God's own power in their hearts. Then God's promises to Abraham will be fulfilled as promised in both a spiritual and national sense" (*ibid.*, 249). See also George M. Harton, "Fulfillment of Deuteronomy 28–30 in History and Eschatology" (unpublished Th.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1981), for well-reasoned argument regarding God's future faithfulness to the nation of Israel based on God's covenant-keeping word.

9). The turning summoned by the prophets was a return to fellowship with a God with whom they already had a relationship. Failure to return to the Lord would bring temporal judgment.<sup>27</sup>

In Amos 9:8–10, God promised judgment on Israel for her sins, concluding with this summary:

“Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are on the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from the face of the earth; nevertheless, I will not totally destroy the house of Jacob,” declares the LORD. “For behold, I am commanding, and I will shake the house of Israel among all nations as grain is shaken in a sieve, but not a kernel will fall to the ground. All the sinners of My people will die by the sword, those who say, ‘The calamity will not overtake or confront us.’”

As with so many other passages, Yahweh promises that His divine judgment will be followed in the future by His divine blessing of the same people whom He previously had judged, as seen in the verses in Amos that immediately follow:

“In that day I will raise up the fallen booth of David, and wall up its breaches; I will also raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by My name,” declares the LORD who does this.

“Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when the plowman will overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; when the mountains will drip sweet wine, and all the hills will be dissolved.

“Also I will restore the captivity of My people Israel, and they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them, they will also plant vineyards and drink their wine, and make gardens and eat their fruit.

“I will also plant them on their land, and they will not again be rooted out from their land which I have given them,” says the LORD your God (Amos 9:11–15).

It is not within the scope of this paper to argue the related points to show how this prophecy relates to the Davidic covenant and James’ use of Hosea in Acts 15.<sup>28</sup> What is germane to this paper is that God once again promised the nation of Israel a return to the land from which He had removed them, just as He had promised centuries before: “And they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them, they will also plant vineyards and drink their wine, and make gardens and eat their fruit. I will also plant them on their land, and they will not again be rooted out from their

---

<sup>27</sup> David R. Anderson, “The National Repentance of Israel,” *JGES* 11, No. 2 (Autumn 1998): 20.

<sup>28</sup> For a critique of the supersessionists’ position that James’ use of Hosea in Acts 15 indicates a nonliteral fulfillment of an OT text, and for support that this is merely the initial fulfillment, see Michael J. Vlach, *Has the Church Replaced Israel?* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2010), 99–104. See also the strong arguments presented by Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. “The Davidic Promise and the Inclusion of the Gentiles” (Amos 9:9–15 and Acts 15:13–18): A Test Passage for Theological Systems,” *JETS* 20, No. 2 (1977), 97–111.

land which I have given them,' says the LORD your God" (Amos 9:14–15). This harmonizes perfectly with the promises God made in Lev 26:40–45, and with all the other verses so cited that occur long after Solomon's reign in 1 Kings 4.<sup>29</sup>

Centuries later, after God had exiled the northern kingdom, and while God's promised exile of Judah by means of the Babylonians approached, Yahweh still gave many indications of the permanency of the land promises as still being in effect. For instance, in calling the nation to repent, part of the blessing God promised in Jer 7:7 was, "then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever." This again points not only to the future regathering, but also, as becomes clearer, to the promised advent and reign of the Messiah in Jer 23:1–5:

"Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of My pasture!" declares the LORD. Therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel concerning the shepherds who are tending My people: "You have scattered My flock and driven them away, and have not attended to them; behold, I am about to attend to you for the evil of your deeds," declares the LORD.

"Then I Myself shall gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and shall bring them back to their pasture; and they will be fruitful and multiply. I shall also raise up shepherds over them and they will tend them; and they will not be afraid any longer, nor be terrified, nor will any be missing," declares the LORD.

"Behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "When I shall raise up for David a righteous Branch; and He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land."

Feinberg highlights the Messianic significance of this passage:

The formula "days are coming" is a messianic formula; Jeremiah uses it to direct special attention to what is stated. The phrase is used fifteen times in the book. In contrast to the troublous times of Jeremiah's day, there will be a time of blessing ahead. The promise is centered in David in view of the covenant in 2 Samuel 7:8–16.

After Jeremiah has denounced the faithless shepherds of the nation and has predicted the coming of good shepherds, he describes as a climax the incomparable rule of King Messiah, the "Branch." This designation has much in common semantically with "seed" (Gen. 3:15), the Davidic "son" (2 Sam. 7), and the "servant of the LORD" (Isa. 42–53). In each case there is a general reference to a number of individuals, but by a process of strict selection and narrowing down, the seed, the son, and the servant ultimately find highest

---

<sup>29</sup> Kaiser lists Amos 9:15 among four other Old Testament passages (the others being Isa. 61:7–8; Jer. 32:37–41; Ezek. 37:24–26) "acknowledged by even the most adamant opponents of a future restoration to the land" that either implicitly or explicitly promises a restoration to the land forever. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. "The Land of Israel and the Future Return (Zechariah 10:6–12)," in *Israel the Land and the People: An Evangelical Affirmation of God's Promises*, 220–21.

fulfillment in the Lord Jesus the Messiah, “the Seed of the Woman,” “the Son of David,” and “the Servant of the LORD.” The Lord was thus superintending the historical process in such a way that his ultimate choice unmistakably was Jesus of Nazareth (cf. KD).<sup>30</sup>

And in keeping with His previous promises, Jer 25:4–5 once more presents similar promises from God as well as again demonstrating how God viewed the land He had previously given to the Jewish people:

And the LORD has sent to you all His servants the prophets again and again, but you have not listened nor inclined your ear to hear, saying, ‘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 forever and ever.

No indication exists in these texts that Yahweh considered neither His previous promises concerning the land no longer to be in effect, nor to have been fulfilled either in Joshua 21 or 1 Kings 4. In fact, God Himself acknowledged that the land He has previously given “to you and to your forefathers forever and ever” (Jer 7:7, 25:5). If this promise is not taken literally, it would cast suspicion on other uses of “forever and ever” in other multiple passages because this phrase frequently relates to the attributes and activities of God.<sup>31</sup> Those who hold otherwise must answer: what did God mean then about the land promises being “forever and ever” even at this time in the nation’s history, and since these verses occur long after Joshua 21 and 1 Kings 4, exactly when were these divine promises fulfilled, if indeed they already have been fulfilled and therefore have no future relevance?

Not long after the prophecy by Jeremiah, with Judah in exile in Babylon (in perfect keeping with God’s previous promised judgment), came these prophecies in

---

<sup>30</sup> Charles Lee Feinberg, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 162.

<sup>31</sup> All of the following have “forever and ever” as part of their description and would not be reduced or eradicated by those who accept the Word of God as true: God to be blessed forever and ever (1 Chron 29:10; Neh 9:5; Ps 145:1–2, 21; Dan 2:20); God blotted out the name of the lost forever and ever (Ps 9:5); the LORD shall reign forever and ever (Exod 15:18; Rev 11:15); the LORD is king forever and ever (Ps 10:16); the LORD’s throne is forever and ever (Ps. 45:6); the LORD is to be blessed by the peoples forever and ever (Ps 45:17); His own existence/who lives forever and ever (Ps 48:14; Rev 4:9; 10:6; 15:7); God’s lovingkindness (Ps 52:8), precepts (Ps 111:8), and decrees (Ps 148:6) are forever and ever; the LORD established the earth on its foundations so that it will not totter forever and ever (Ps 104:5); the length of time for those in hell (Isa 34:10; Rev 14:11; 22:10); commanded to walk in the name of the LORD forever and ever (Mic 4:5); the shining brightness of the redeemed (Dan 12:3); glory to God in the church (Eph 3:21; 1 Pet 4:11) and glory to our God and Father and Jesus forever and ever (Phil 4:20; 1 Tim 1:17; 2 Tim 4:18; Heb 13:21); God’s glory and dominion/to be worshiped forever and ever (1 Pet 5:11; Rev 1:6; 4:10 5:13; 7:12); and finally, the reign of the redeemed is forever and ever (Rev 22:5). Only Ps 21:4 (“He asked life of You, You did give it to him, length of days forever and ever”) at first may seem questionable as truly “forever and ever,” yet with its listing as part of the royal psalms, this too points ultimately to the reign of the Messiah, so it also should be understood in a literal fashion (see John L. Durham, “The King as ‘Messiah’ in the Psalms,” *RevExp* 81, No. 3 [Summer 1984], 425–30). The only two remaining uses of “forever and ever” are the two land promises given by God in Jer 7:7 and 25:5. From all of the previous uses, great care should be taken before removing/limiting “the forever and ever” land promises that God gave “to you and your forefathers” as well.

Ezek 20:33–44 of God's previous and repeated promise of blessing, beginning with a reminder of the Davidic covenant heir:

“As I live,” declares the Lord GOD, “surely with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out, I shall be king over you.

And I shall bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out; and I shall bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I shall enter into judgment with you face to face. As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you,” declares the Lord GOD.

And I shall make you pass under the rod, and I shall bring you into the bond of the covenant; and I shall purge from you the rebels and those who transgress against Me; I shall bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they will not enter the land of Israel. Thus you will know that I am the LORD” (Ezek 20:33–38).

Osborne's assessment is worthwhile:

The focus shifts in verse 33 from historic rebellion to futuristic regathering as Yahweh continues to engage his interlocutors. Describing a “second exodus,” Yahweh declares to Israel: “I will cause you to come out from the peoples and gather you from the lands among whom you were scattered.” However, such deliverance is described as “judgment.” “I will bring you to the wilderness of the peoples and I will judge you there face to face.” Ironically, however, it is only through face-to-face *judgment* that Israel will be brought into the “obligation of the covenant” (v. 37). Yahweh himself will act with “a mighty hand and an outstretched arm” (vv. 33, 34) reassuring any who might have perceived Israel's unbreakable cycle of sin as a sign of divine impotence. Israel's deliverance and salvation will come through judgment.<sup>32</sup>

Then, in keeping with His previous prophecies such as Hos 3:4–5 and 5:15, God once more promised in Ezek 20:41–44:

“As a soothing aroma I shall accept you, when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered; and I shall prove Myself holy among you in the sight of the nations.

And you will know that I am the LORD, when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the land which I swore to give to your forefathers. And there you will remember your ways and all your deeds, with which you have defiled yourselves; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for all the evil things that you have done.”

---

<sup>32</sup> Rusty Osborne, “Elements of Irony: History and Rhetoric in Ezekiel 20:1–44,” *CTR* 9, No. 1 (Fall 2011), 13 [emphasis in the original].

Then you will know that I am the LORD when I have dealt with you for My name's sake, not according to your evil ways or according to your corrupt deeds, O house of Israel," declares the Lord GOD.

God not only reveals what will take place with Israel in the future and the effect that His grace will have on that nation, but also He reveals how important the fulfillment of these promises will be in vindicating His holy name:

Ironically, when Israel gathers in this future-oriented worship on the mountain of God, the people will be plagued with visions of their past. "And you will remember there your ways and all your ways which defiled you and you will feel disgust before them and all of your evils which you have done" (v. 43). However, there in the midst of Israel's self-perceived shame, Yahweh's actions are grace filled and for the sake of his name. "The future will recapitulate the past," and Yahweh will once again relent from dealing with his people according to what they deserve. "And you will know that I am the Lord when I deal with you on account of my name, not according to your evil ways and your corrupt deeds" (v 44). The chapter concludes by revealing the same divine motivation that lay behind Yahweh's negative and disciplinarian stance toward his people throughout their history—his desire to be known. The irony of these verses reveals the truism that grace, not retribution, often brings the greatest pangs of guilt upon the sinful.<sup>33</sup>

Again, special note should be made of exactly what Yahweh promises in this section of Ezekiel and how these prophecies fit perfectly with previous promises made by God in Lev 26:40–45 and Deut 30:1–10: (1) God Himself will be king over them (Ezek 20:33); (2) God will bring Israel into covenant obedience to Him by means of His rod of judgment on them, purging out the rebels (Ezek 20:34–38); (3) but before doing so, Israel will continue to worship their idols (Ezek 20:39); (4) after God's purging of the nation, all of Israel will serve Yahweh in the land *and* Yahweh will accept them there (Ezek 20:40–43), which means national Israel will once again be in covenant obedience to Him.<sup>34</sup> With the nation of Israel properly walking in covenant obedience, Yahweh's covenant faithfulness is again seen in how He refers to the land and to the nation of Israel's relationship to Himself: "And you will know that I am the LORD, when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the land which I swore to give to your forefathers" (Ezek 20:42), the very land that Yahweh Himself had just a few years earlier referred as "in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever" (Jer 7:7), and for them to "dwell on the land which the LORD has given to you [present generation] and your forefathers forever and ever" (Jer 25:5). Each item harmonizes perfectly with promises previously made by Yahweh; each item gives every indication that God did not consider His promises

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>34</sup> Contra Lyle Eslinger, "Ezekiel 20 and the Metaphor of Historical Theology: Concepts of Biblical History," *JSOT* 81 (1998), 93–125 who traces well Israel's repeated covenant violations before Yahweh, and yet concludes contrary to the teaching of this chapter, "Ezekiel 20 portrays an uneschatological vision of Israel's future" (117).

regarding neither the land nor the nation of Israel already to have been fulfilled by this time.

Later again in Ezek 28:25–26 came these additional prophecies that once more harmonize with what God had repeatedly promised before and after Joshua 21 and 1 Kings 4:

Thus says the Lord GOD, “When I gather the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, and shall manifest My holiness in them in the sight of the nations, then they will live in their land which I gave to My servant Jacob. And they will live in it securely; and they will build houses, plant vineyards, and live securely, when I execute judgments upon all who scorn them round about them. Then they will know that I am the LORD their God.”

In addition to the land promises still being relevant to God at this time in history (“then they will live in their land which I gave to My servant Jacob,” Ezek 28:25), Feinberg emphasizes another tremendously important aspect of God’s promise:

As in numerous other passages of the prophetic Scriptures, when the enemies of Israel were judged by the Lord, her restoration and blessing were foretold. Notice how clearly the contrast was given in the famous prophecy of Isaiah 61:2. Ezekiel predicted the Lord’s agency in the regathering from all the nation of their dispersion, and it will be accomplished in such a manner that the nations will have it plainly shown them that God’s omnipotence has been exerted on behalf of His people Israel. They will no longer be uprooted from their own land but with ease and confidence will live in the inheritance given them by God Himself (cf. Isa. 65:21; Jer. 23:6; Ezek. 34:27; 38:8; 39:26; Amos 9:14–15). It is utterly false and wicked to claim, as some erroneously do, that the land does not belong to Israel, for this is to impugn the clear statements of God. Fifty-four times Ezekiel used the expression or its equivalent: “And they shall know that I am the LORD.” The thought is that all people must ultimately know that the Lord is the source of all blessings, calamities and overturnings of nations, so that His will may be recognized by all men.<sup>35</sup>

After having severely judged the Jewish people, Yahweh once more offers eschatological hope with these promises regarding Yahweh, the people, and the land in Ezekiel 34.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> Charles Lee Feinberg, *The Prophecy of Ezekiel* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), 165. However, it should be noted that while it is the position of this paper to be in agreement with Feinberg’s interpretation of the passage, I would not label those who do not hold this view as necessarily committing a “false and wicked” act. Many godly scholars take the land prophecies to have been already fulfilled.

<sup>36</sup> Contra Samuel L. Adams, “Between Text and Sermon: Ezekiel 34:11–10,” *Interpretation* 62:3 (July 2008), 304–06, who notes Yahweh’s displacement of the Jews from the land for their sins, but

For thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd cares for his herd in the day when he is among his scattered sheep, so I will care for My sheep and will deliver them from all the places to which they were scattered on a cloudy and gloomy day.

And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and bring them to their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the streams, and in all the inhabited places of the land. I will feed them in a good pasture, and their grazing ground will be on the mountain heights of Israel. There they will lie down in good grazing ground, and they will feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel.

I will feed My flock and I will lead them to rest,” declares the Lord GOD. “I will seek the lost, bring back the scattered, bind up the broken, and strengthen the sick; but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with judgment” (Ezek 34:11–16).

Mein offers a cogent summary of these promises for Israel in Ezekiel 34:

If the basic problem is that the shepherds have misappropriated YHWH’s property, the solution to this problem is for YHWH to take back his flock and care for it himself. This he promises to do with spectacular success, turning the whole land of Israel into a secure and prosperous pasture. This is unquestionably a good deal for the sheep, and it is true that in many respects the interests of sheep and owner coincide—health and security are vital for both. However, it should not blind us to the fact that both in the real world and in Ezekiel’s notoriously hierarchical world, the owner’s interests remain paramount.

With all of this in mind, the contradiction between Ezekiel 34 and the tone of Ezekiel’s other restoration oracles begins to resolve itself. It may be better to understand YHWH’s love and compassion for his people (expressions which still remain absent from the text) and more as part of the demonstration of divine might that characterizes the restoration oracles more generally. The logic of the oracle is therefore of a piece of the refrain of ch. 36: “it is not for your sake, O Israel, that I am about to do this, but for the sake of my holy name.”<sup>37</sup>

In keeping with previous prophecies, after judging and refining His people Israel, Yahweh then promises the Messiah’s presence among them in Ezek 34:23–31:

---

severely restricts any eschatological hope by describing Yahweh’s “larger purpose in ch. 34 is to explain that salvation, a return from exile, is available through YHWH the ‘shepherd’” (305). While it is true God will return the Jews to the land, His salvation for them requires a bringing back into covenant obedience to Him, not merely the movement from one land to another.

<sup>37</sup> Andrew Mein, “Profitable and Unprofitable Shepherds” *Economic and Theological Perspective on Ezekiel 34*, *JSTOT* 31, No. 4 (2007), 502.

“Then I will set over them one shepherd, My servant David, and he will feed them; he will feed them himself and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant David will be prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.

And I will make a covenant of peace with them and eliminate harmful beasts from the land, so that they may live securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places around My hill a blessing. And I will cause showers to come down in their season; they will be showers of blessing. Also the tree of the field will yield its fruit, and the earth will yield its increase, and they will be secure on their land. Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bars of their yoke and have delivered them from the hand of those who enslaved them. And they will no longer be a prey to the nations, and the beasts of the earth will not devour them; but they will live securely, and no one will make them afraid. And I will establish for them a renowned planting place, and they will not again be victims of famine in the land, and they will not endure the insults of the nations anymore.

Then they will know that I, the LORD their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are My people,” declares the Lord GOD. “As for you, My sheep, the sheep of My pasture, you are men, and I am your God,” declares the Lord GOD.”

Among other promises within this text, notice should be made of these repeated land promises: “And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and bring them to their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the streams, and in all the inhabited places of the land” (Ezek 34:13), and “they will be secure on their land” (Ezek 34:27).

None of these verses cited (which are only a very small sampling) give any indication that God considered His multiple promises for the land and for the Jewish people fulfilled by Josh 21:43–45 or 1 Kings 4:20. None of these verses give any indication that Yahweh no longer considered the land to be the land that He Himself had sworn to give to the nation of Israel and their forefathers to possess “forever and ever” (Jer 7:7; 25:5). Not only that, but all of these verses are in harmony with God’s previous promises that He would bring the Jewish people back to their promised land at some undisclosed time in the future (Lev 26:40–45). Also in harmony is the promise of the proper spiritual condition of the nation of Israel in Deut 30:1–10, where God promises to bring the wayward Jewish nation back into covenant relationship with Himself and allow them to enjoy all the promises that God had given them—including the land promises—only now expanded to include both Himself and His Messiah.

### **The Significance of the Euphrates River in the Land Promises**

The Euphrates River, whose name means “the good and abounding river,” is approximately 1,780 miles long, considerably longer than its companion stream, the

Tigris.<sup>38</sup> So prominent is the Euphrates in the Bible that it is called by other name designations including “the great river, the river Euphrates,” or simply “the River” (Exod 23:31; Deut 11:24).<sup>39</sup> The Bible contains thirty instances where the word “Euphrates” is specifically used, occurring first as one of the four rivers recorded in the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:14). Of the thirty uses where the word “Euphrates” specifically occurs, five of these are designated as “the great river, the river Euphrates,” with each usage in the Old Testament specifically detailing the land boundaries of the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 15:18; Deut 1:7; Josh 1:4). Joshua would have known about the Gen 15:18 reference, and he was directly involved with hearing the other two designations, especially God’s opening charge to him where again He refers to the land boundaries including the Euphrates River (Josh 1:1–4). The remaining two references of “the great river, the river Euphrates” occur in the New Testament, both of which are in the book of Revelation (9:14; 16:12). With the exception of the two uses in Revelation, the Euphrates River is virtually universally accepted as being the actual Euphrates River in all of the Old Testament instances.<sup>40</sup> Even those who cite 1 Kings 4:21 as their proof text for the fulfillment (“Now Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt”) recognize that the designation “the River” clearly refers to the Euphrates and understand it to be indeed the literal river, and not an allegorical interpretation, and thus it fulfills the Abrahamic land boundary promises.<sup>41</sup>

The accepted universal understanding of “the River” as being the literal Euphrates River is important for two prophecies in particular for the present study and for the promised reign and rule of the Messiah, namely Psalm 72 and Zech 9:9–10. Psalm 72 is a royal psalm, in similar fashion to Psalm 2, celebrating the coronation of the king of Israel, either at the time of his inauguration as king or at the annual festival in which his coronation was celebrated.<sup>42</sup> While the language is such as to apply to any of Israel’s kings, both Jewish and Christian teachers interpret this psalm as messianic, although surprisingly, the New Testament never

---

<sup>38</sup> Carl E. DeVries, “Euphrates,” *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 2:417–18; C. E. Harrington and W. S. LaSor, “Euphrates,” in *ISBE*, gen. ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 2:202–04. See also R. McC. Adams, *Heartland of Cities: Surveys of Ancient Settlement and Land Use on the Central Floodplain of the Euphrates* [1981]; D. H. French and C. S. Lightfoot, eds., *The Eastern Frontier of the Roman Empire*, 2 vols. [1989].

<sup>39</sup> Harrington and Laror, “Euphrates” 202–03; DeVries, “Euphrates,” 417.

<sup>40</sup> See Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8–22: An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1995), 43–44 for reasons to accept the two references used in Revelation as the literal Euphrates on earth and not an allegorized interpretation.

<sup>41</sup> For example Ryken, *1 Kings*, 104; DeVries, *1 Kings*, 72; Leithart, *1 & 2 Kings*, 48–49; Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*, 336; Cox, *The New-Covenant Israel*, 20; Mathison, *Dispensationalism: Rightly Dividing the People of God?*, 26; and Hanegraaff, *The Apocalypse Code*, 178.

<sup>42</sup> Robert G. Bratcher and William David Reyburn, *A Translator’s Handbook on the Book of Psalms*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), 621.

cites Psalm 72 as a messianic psalm.<sup>43</sup> Of significance also is that the subscript of Psalm 72 presents Solomon as the author, although all do not universally hold to Solomonic authorship.<sup>44</sup>

Though it is not within the breadth of this paper to give a full exposition of the entire Psalm, nonetheless, pertinent factors should be noted. For instance, in writing about the righteous rule of the king, the author initially prays in Ps 72:1–7:

Give the king Your judgments, O God, and Your righteousness to the king's son. May he judge Your people with righteousness, and Your afflicted with justice. Let the mountains bring peace to the people, and the hills in righteousness. May he vindicate the afflicted of the people, save the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor. Let them fear You while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations. May he come down like rain upon the mown grass, like showers that water the earth. In his days may the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace till the moon is no more.<sup>45</sup>

Solomon then prays for these divine blessings at the conclusion of Psalm 72:

“May there be abundance of grain in the earth on top of the mountains; its fruit will wave like the cedars of Lebanon; and may those from the city flourish like vegetation of the earth. May his name endure forever; may his name increase as long as the sun shines; and let men bless themselves by him; let all nations call him blessed. Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, Who alone works wonders. And blessed be His glorious name forever; and may the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen” (Ps 72:16–19).<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Walter Kaiser, “Psalm 72: An Historical and Messianic Current Example of Antiochene Hermeneutical *Theoria*,” *JETS* (June 2009), 259. Kaiser adds, “Nevertheless, so clear is the picture of the king described in this Psalm, and so extensive and far-reaching are the boundaries of his reign, not to mention the similarities seen between this psalm and the prophecies of Isa 11:1–5 or Isaiah 60–62 that the case for its being a messianic psalm can hardly be diminished, even when taken solely on its own terms apart from subsequent use or application” (ibid.).

<sup>44</sup> Obviously, it is not within the scope of this paper to argue the authorship of Psalm 72. See Bratcher and Reyburn, who hold: “There is nothing in the text to indicate the identity of the king; the Hebrew title attributes the psalm to Solomon, but there is no certainty that this is historically accurate” (621). See also Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 3 vols., trans Francis Bolton, (n.d. ; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1977), 298–300 for those who hold to Solomon being the author and the subject of the psalm being either himself or the Messiah. “Both are correct” but emphasize the Messianic aspects of this psalm. Further see Kaiser, “Psalm 72,” 262–63 for whether Psalm 72 was authored by Solomon or dedicated to him. This paper holds to Solomonic authorship.

<sup>45</sup> See Walter Houston, “The King’s Preferential Option for the Poor: Rhetoric, Ideology and Ethics in Psalm 72,” *BibInt* (Oct 1999), 341–67, who emphasizes the justice enacted by the one who will ultimately fulfill Psalm 72.

<sup>46</sup> See Ronald E. Clements, “Psalm 72 and Isaiah 60–66: A Study in Tradition,” *PRSt* 28, No. 4 (Winter 2001), 339–41, who argues that the promises God gave to Cyrus (Isa 55:3–5), in no way supplants the Messianic promises God likewise gave in Psalm 72.

Yet included in Solomon's understanding and expectation for the future comes this important prayer item in Ps 72:8: "May he also rule from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth." This is not a prayer for the author himself to reign from those designated boundaries; this well-known designation for the Euphrates River emerges from the original land promises made to the nation of Israel, and they will be fully enjoyed when Messiah reigns. Psalm 72 concludes with the worshipful prayer "and may the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen" (Ps 72:19), attributes fitting only for God, not for Solomon:

The historical event is clearly what is most obviously at hand, for Solomon's reign in some important ways is an adumbration of the glorious rule and reign of the Messiah who is to come. But the historical base and the final fulfillment are linked together not as two separate realities, but as one whole event. The rule and reign of Messiah will indeed be coextensive with the extent of the shining of the sun and the moon. His kingdom will spread from shore to shore as people and realms of every tongue focus on his love and majesty forever.<sup>47</sup>

Obviously, Solomon looked well past his own present reign to some future descendant of David who would fulfill these promises, including Ps 72:8 "May he also rule from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth." It would be hard to argue that if Solomon looked forward to the universal reign of a future descendant how he would in any way apply all of these prophecies to his own life, such as in the last part of the verse where he prayed that this one's reign would be, in keeping with Psalm 2 and other Messianic Psalms, "to the ends of the earth":

These key things, desired by God from David and the line of kings descended from him, are stressed in Psalm 72: justice in the king's rule (72:2–4), the king's rule over the entire kingdom (72:8), and peace in the land and the fullness of harvest under the king's rule (72:16). Solomon, who was the writer of this psalm, also may have written Psalm 127. The "king" (72:1) refers historically to Solomon, but the expansive nature of the prayer (72:8, 11, 17) suggests that the prophetic reference looks to Christ in his kingdom to come. Universal worship of Christ by kings and nations will be characteristic of the messianic kingdom (72:11; cf. Zech. 14:9).<sup>48</sup>

The Euphrates River will be the northern boundary of Israel over which Messiah will reign, but ultimately His reign will extend far beyond this to the very ends of the earth.

In similar fashion, Zechariah offers one final significant promise of the Messiah's reign, among many of the other promises regarding God and Israel, in

---

<sup>47</sup> Kaiser, "Psalm 72," 269–70.

<sup>48</sup> Robert B. Hughes and J. Carl Laney, *Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary*, The Tyndale Reference Library (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 218.

addition to other promises made regarding both the people and the land.<sup>49</sup> It should be noted that these promises came long after Solomon's reign and the writing of Psalm 72, long after the exile and regathering, and in the midst of "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24) when no one reigned on David's throne, and all are once more in complete harmony with what God had previously promised. For instance, after promising that the coming priest/king Messiah will hold both offices (Zech 6:12–13), God once more makes land promises in Zech 8:1–8 which are in perfect agreement with previous promises made by God in such passages as Ezekiel 20, 28 and 34:

Then the word of the LORD of hosts came saying, thus says the LORD of hosts, "I am exceedingly jealous for Zion, yes, with great wrath I am jealous for her."

Thus says the LORD, "I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts will be called the Holy Mountain."

Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Old men and old women will again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each man with his staff in his hand because of age. And the streets of the city will be filled with boys and girls playing in its streets."

Thus says the LORD of hosts, "If it is too difficult in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, will it also be too difficult in My sight?" declares the LORD of hosts.

Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Behold, I am going to save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west; and I will bring them back, and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem, and they will be My people and I will be their God in truth and righteousness."

Barker notes, "The purpose of both sections is essentially the same: In the preceding section Israel was to repent and live righteously after the punishment of her captivity; here, she is to repent and live righteously because of the promise of her future restoration."<sup>50</sup> Feinberg concurs, concluding that this is one of the most comprehensive promises in reference to Israel's restoration and conversion found in prophetic Scriptures:

The directions of east and west stand here representatively for all the earth; it is a world-wide regathering. (Compare Ps. 50:1; 113:3; Isa. 43: 5, 6; Mal. 1:11; Matt. 8:11, 12). In that day Israel will be settled in Jerusalem; they will in truth be the people of God with all covenant privileges in effect (See Hosea 2:19–22).

The return spoken of here cannot be the restoration from Babylonian Captivity, because from the 'west' they could not have been brought back,

---

<sup>49</sup> For matters relating to the structure and divisions of Zechariah, see Meredith G. Kline, "The Structure of the Book of Zechariah," *JETS* 34, No. 2 (June 1991): 179–93, and Ronald W. Pierce, "A Thematic Development of the Haggai/Zechariah/Malachi Corpus," *JETS* 27, No. 4 (Dec 1984), 401–11.

<sup>50</sup> Kenneth Barker, "Zechariah," in *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 7:649–50.

since very few of the Jewish nation had as yet wandered westward. It was only at the second stage of Israel's dispersion, which was brought about by the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Romans, that Israel became in the fullest sense a Diaspora—scattered over all the face of the earth—the majority always found in land more or less to the west of Palestine. Wright maintains that “The promise that all Israel shall dwell in Jerusalem is peculiar . . . Such prophetic statements as that which occurs here (chap. 8:8) are not, of course, to be taken as literal.” Literal promises to Israel like these are peculiar only when the force of similar prophecies in the Word has been vitiated and dissipated by spiritualizing methods of interpretation. It seems as the more inescapable the fact, the more positive the denial of it.<sup>51</sup>

Zechariah 9:9 then presents this prophecy which the Bible so obviously connects with the First Advent prophecy of Jesus (Matt 21:5; John 12:15–16): “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” The verse that immediately follows Zech 9:9 relates to the Second Advent of this same Messiah and is practically identical to the promise made long before in Ps 72:8 and currently remains unfulfilled prophecy:<sup>52</sup>

And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem; and the bow of war will be cut off. And He will speak peace to the nations; and His dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth (Zech 9:10).

Feinberg presents four arguments, that while Zech 9:9 was perfectly fulfilled during the Incarnation, Zech 9:10 must refer to Messiah's Second Advent:

First, there is the testimony of the New Testament, especially our Lord Himself (Matt. 21:4,5; John 12:12–16). Second, the tradition of the Jews, though insufficient in itself, is valuable in conjunction with other proofs. Third, the parallel passages are clear in this direction (Ps. 72; Micah 5:9ff., Hebrew). Fourth, the elements of the prophecy itself are unmistakable. They can only refer to the Lord Jesus Christ who is the only King of Israel, *kat' exochen*. For this King and His rule Israel and all the earth groans this hour.<sup>53</sup>

Note the promised activities of Messiah at His Second Advent: He will cut off the implements of war; He will speak peace of the nations; His dominion will be

---

<sup>51</sup> Charles Lee Feinberg, *God Remembers: A Study of Zechariah* (Portland: Multnomah Press, 1965), 104–105. Feinberg quotes C. H. H. Wright, *Zechariah and His Prophecies* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1879), 184.

<sup>52</sup> For matters relating to dividing Zechariah 9:9–17 into sections, see David J. Clark and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on Zechariah*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 2002), 240–41.

<sup>53</sup> Feinberg, *God Remembers: A Study of Zechariah*, 131.

from sea to sea and from the Euphrates River to the ends of the earth. Just as with the original promises related to the Euphrates River being the northern boundary of the land promises for national Israel, and in keeping with Ps 72:8, appropriately comes this last use of the Euphrates River in the Old Testament, with Messiah reigning on David's throne, and fulfilling the promises of God regarding both the land and His people Israel.<sup>54</sup>

As stated before, in every previous passage where the Euphrates River is designated, the literal interpretation makes perfect sense.<sup>55</sup> If Ps 72:8 and Zech 9:10 are taken allegorically in these passages, the question must be asked as to why these would not be taken as the literal Euphrates River, and if so, why would the Euphrates not be taken allegorically elsewhere.

### **Comparison with Elements from the Joshua 21:43–45 (Part 1) Paper**

The first Josh 21:43–45 paper offered specific reasons why many scholars from virtually all theological camps do not view these verses as showing by any means a complete fulfillment of the land promises of the Abrahamic covenant. This is extremely important because for many so much of the rationale for their interpreting other prophetic texts are predicated on the premise that Josh 21:43–45 and/or 1 Kings 4:20–21 offer indisputable proof texts that God has already fulfilled all the Abrahamic covenant land promises to the nation of Israel. In other words, their interpretation of these two passages greatly affects their interpretation of subsequent prophetic passages, and thus they consider as folly anything other than an allegorical understanding of these promises. However, having shown that the Joshua 21 and/or 1 Kings 4 passages do not prove the fulfillment of the land promises, then other prophecies past these texts must be considered on their own merit. Since the first article dealt with verses up to Joshua 21, comparison can now be made with the Josh 21:43–45 (Part 1) paper to see if the findings there harmonize with or contradict other promises God made with the nation of Israel past Joshua 21.

For instance, initially, as shown in the first article, Yahweh made specific, eternal promises regarding the land and the Abrahamic covenant land promises (Lev 26:40–45), as well as the spiritual conversion He will accomplish for the Jewish people at some point in the future, bringing them back into covenant obedience with Him after He has judged them severely (Deut 30:1–8).<sup>56</sup> With this future spiritual conversion of the nation, they will thus enjoy the fullness of all the

---

<sup>54</sup> These by no means conclude all the prophecies for the return to the promised land for the nation of Israel; several additional verses call for the same thing. For instance, see Kaiser, "The Promised Land: A Biblical-Historical View," 302–12, who notes regarding the future return of Israel to the land: "the sheer multiplicity of texts from almost every one of the prophets is staggering" (309). For those who would see a fulfillment of all the land promises having already taken place, he asks: "why then did Zechariah continue to announce a still future return (10:8–12) in words that were peppered with phrases and formulas of such prophecies as Isaiah 11:11 and Jeremiah 50:19?" (ibid.).

<sup>55</sup> For instance, Clark and Hatton, *A Handbook on Zechariah*, 245–46, acknowledge "the River" is generally understood to be the Euphrates the idealized northern boundary of the Promised Land.

<sup>56</sup> Harris, "Did God Fulfill Every Good Promise?," 65–70.

promised covenant blessings by Yahweh as multiple verses past Joshua 21 and 1 Kings repeatedly promise this same thing. Yet in spite of the multiplicity of other prophetic passages shown, proponents strongly argue just the opposite: “The entitlement of any one ethnic or religious group to territory in the Middle East called the ‘Holy Land’ cannot be supported by Scripture. In fact, the land promises specific to Israel in the Old Testament were fulfilled under Joshua.”<sup>57</sup> For the sake of argument, even if it were true that all the land promises were fulfilled by Joshua 21, then they must answer why the same God gave the same additional promises to the same Jewish people well past Joshua 21, including both Pre-exilic and Post-exilic times and even expanded it to include the reign of the Messiah and the unfathomable blessings associated with His reign.

It is noteworthy that some who look to Joshua 21 for a literal fulfillment of a literal promise that God made also hold that any other promise of God to the nation of Israel post Joshua 21 should not be considered as a literal promise. As before, those who hold such a position would have to explain what then did God mean by making the exact promise that they themselves understood to be literally fulfilled elsewhere but not so in other passages of Scripture. Instead of God viewing the land promises as already being fulfilled, He instead implored the brazenly sinful Jewish people just before the Exile to repent and return to Him, “then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever” (Jer 7:7), and elsewhere warning but declaring, “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 forever and ever” (Jer 25:5). It is hard to argue from these passages, even as late as the time of Jeremiah that “The entitlement of any one ethnic or religious group to territory in the Middle East called the ‘Holy Land’ cannot be supported by Scripture,”<sup>58</sup> since so much Scripture does indeed support this very thing—and does so repeatedly.

Secondly, as previously shown in the first paper, the virtual unanimous understanding by those in all theological camps (Calvin included) that Israel never received all of the land that God promised, partly due from God’s own statements that very much of the land remained yet to be conquered (Josh 13:1–2) and partly due to the size of the territory originally promised (roughly 300,000 square miles) versus that which Israel actually possessed (approximately 10,000), which is only about 1/30<sup>th</sup> of the promised amount.<sup>59</sup> Consequently, using the Josh 21:43–45 passage as a proof text is untenable, such as Mathison does: “There are numerous other passages in the Old Testament that tell us that God has already fulfilled the land promises given to Israel (Josh 11:23; 21:21–45; Neh 9:25). Joshua 21:43–45 explicitly declares that *all* the land promised Israel was given to them.”<sup>60</sup> In spite of

---

<sup>57</sup> This is Affirmation #9 of their doctrinal statement for The Bible Researcher web site, Michael D. Marlowe, editor. (<http://www.bible-researcher.com/openletter.html>). A list of signatories for this open letter is at the bottom of the page.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Harris, “Did God Fulfill Every Good Promise?,” 63–64, 70–75.

<sup>60</sup> Mathison, *Dispensationalism: Rightly Dividing the People of God?*, 27 [emphasis in the original].

God saying that very much of the land remained yet to be possessed and that only a small fraction of the land had been occupied, Cox argues:

Did God keep the promise to Joshua? The futurist cannot allow it . . . We could summarize these promises concerning the land of Canaan being inherited by Israel as follows: The land was promised through Abraham; the promise was renewed to Isaac, Jacob and Moses. It was fulfilled literally through Joshua . . . How sad it is then that some theologians are still arguing that they are yet future! Much of the futurist belief rests on the assumption that God has never given Israel all the land promised through Abraham.<sup>61</sup>

Simply put, Cox states: “The earthly promises to national Israel have been fulfilled.”<sup>62</sup> So, according to Cox’s reasoning, regardless of what other land promises God gives elsewhere in Scripture, these cannot be understood to be literal promises from God but instead should be understood as a concoction of “the futurist.” For instance, as part of his theological rationale, Cox insists that “[t]he theory of futurism concerning Israel is only a comparatively recent teaching, having originated in 1830,”<sup>63</sup> which is not at all true because all of the arguments for this paper are solely derived from the biblical texts that God gave often fifteen hundred years or more before 1830. Furthermore, for most of the biblical citations and with only a very few exceptions, the vast majority of the prophetic texts repeatedly have God Himself as the speaker of the future blessing that He would bring to both the people and to the land. Cox further concludes his book with this strong warning:

If some readers should still hold to the futurist view, it is suggested that they owe it to themselves to attempt to find New Testament scriptures to warrant their acceptance of the *assumptions* listed herein. These after all form the framework for this school of thought. If the assumptions cannot be supported by the Word of God, then it would seem logical to drop this theory.<sup>64</sup>

However, if these “assumptions” are, in fact, the stated Word of God—quite often beginning or containing the phrase, “Thus says the Lord”—and Scripture repeatedly presents them as such, they are neither assumptions nor theory. For instance, and as previously noted, God twice referred to the land that He had given to the Jewish people and their forefathers “forever and ever” (Jer 7:7; 25:5). This is not an assumption but the direct statement from God. So, if “the assumptions” can be supported by God’s Word, then they cease being assumptions, and it would be logical instead to drop Cox’s position that no future exists for the nation of Israel because God has already fulfilled the land promises by Joshua 21 and/or 1 Kings 4.

Finally, the importance of the Euphrates River in not only the original land promises, but as was shown, is considered by some to be additional proof that

<sup>61</sup> Cox, *The New Covenant Israel*, 19–20.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, [emphasis in the original].

coupled with Joshua 21:43–45 and 1 Kings 4:20–21 clearly shows the fulfillment of all the land promises that God had given. Hanegraaff holds such an interpretation in *The Apocalypse Code*.<sup>65</sup> Hanegraaff's statements will be considered because he makes sweeping claims that by reading his book and employing his "Exegetical Eschatology" interpretational principles, that "you will not only be equipped to interpret the Bible for all its worth" (xxvii) but also learn a methodology one should employ in any legitimate Bible study, warning against *eisegesis*, the reading into the biblical text something that simply isn't there."<sup>66</sup> Further, Hanegraaff explains that he is not committed "to any particular method of eschatology" but rather argues for "the plain and proper meaning" of a text.<sup>67</sup> He further instructs that the "plain and proper meaning of a biblical passage must always take precedence over a particular eschatological presupposition or paradigm" (2). Using an acronym "LIGHTS" for his hermeneutical system for studying eschatology, the "L" stands for a "literal understanding" of the biblical text. While this sounds very similar to a premillennial understanding of the text, it is the outworking or application of the hermeneutics that cause the interpretational paths to diverge in diametrically different directions.<sup>68</sup> Hanegraaff often does indeed take "the plain and proper meaning of a biblical passage" (2), which in reality is calling for a literal, grammatical, historical interpretation of the text.

Hanegraaff likewise argues that the scriptural synergy principle is the means of safeguarding sound Bible study, and of course, with the thrust of his book, this would especially relate to eschatological studies:

Finally, the *S* in LIGHTS represents the principle of *scriptural synergy*. Simply stated, this means that the whole of Scripture is greater than the sum of its individual passages. You cannot comprehend the Bible as a whole without comprehending its individual parts, and you cannot comprehend its individual parts without comprehending the Bible as a whole. Individual passages of

---

<sup>65</sup> Hanegraaff, *The Apocalypse Code*, 52, 178–79. Others who hold this same view are Ryken, *1 Kings*, 104, 114; DeVries, *1 Kings*, 72; Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land*, 279; Brueggemann, *1 & 2 Kings*, 63; Leithart, *1 & 2 Kings*, 48–49; Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 336; Cox, *The New-Covenant Israel*, 20; and Mathison, *Dispensationalism: Rightly Dividing the People of God?*, 26.

<sup>66</sup> Hanegraaff, *The Apocalypse Code*, 1 [emphasis in the original]. In the discussion that follows, page numbers from this work will be cited at the conclusion of each quote.

<sup>67</sup> One of Hanegraaff's most astounding claims is, "In the final analysis, my purpose is not to entice you to embrace a particular model of eschatology but to employ a proper model of biblical interpretation" (3). This being written after Hanegraaff excoriates in his prologue anyone who would hold to a future for the nation of Israel, i.e. Zionism, and strongly rebukes those who hold "such unbiblical notions" (xxii) calling it "inflammatory rhetoric" (xxvii). He further warns: "In the pages that follow, you will answer these and a host of other questions by internalizing and applying the principles of a methodology called Exegetical Eschatology . . . In the process you will not only be equipped to interpret the Bible for all its worth but you may well discover that you hold the key to the problem of terrorism in one hand and the fuse of Armageddon in the other" (xxvii).

<sup>68</sup> For instance, the "T" section of his acronym "LIGHTS" is chapter six, "Typology Principle: The Golden Key" (161–203). From these previous statements, in reality what Hanegraaff does is employ an allegorized hermeneutic whenever any text does not meet his preterist theology. This allegorizing of different texts basically undermines a great deal of what he would argue against as a literal approach to the text (his "L" section in the LIGHTS acronym). Hanegraaff does not explain what to do if the "L" (literal principle) and the "T" (typology principle) stand at odds with each other.

Scripture are synergistic rather than deflective to with respect to the whole of Scripture.

Scriptural synergy demands that individual Bible passages may never be interpreted in such a way as to conflict with the whole of Scripture. Nor may we assign arbitrary meanings to words or phrases that have their referent in biblical history. The biblical interpreter must keep in mind that all Scripture, though communicated through various human instruments, has one single Author. And that Author does not contradict himself, nor does he confuse his servants.<sup>69</sup>

Obviously, no book on prophecy can contain every prophetic reference in Scripture, but it would be very enlightening to see how Hanegraaff would, based on the exegetical study he espouses, interpret the promise that God made to the Jewish people regarding giving them the land of Israel “forever and ever” (Jer 7:7; 25:5), as well as for the reign of the Messiah’s northern boundary being the Euphrates River (Ps 72:8; Zech 9:10). Would he argue for *exegesis*, “the method by which a student seeks to uncover what an author intended his or her original audience to understand” (1) and not *eisegesis*, “reading into the biblical text something that simply isn’t there” (1), and that the “plain and proper meaning of a biblical passage must always take precedence over a particular eschatological presupposition or paradigm” (2) Would Hanegraaff employ the Scriptural Synergy principle which “demands that individual Bible passages may never be interpreted in such a way as to conflict with the whole of Scripture” (9)? If Hanegraaff did consistently employ these very hermeneutical principles with the remaining prophecies given past Joshua 21 and 1 Kings 4, he would be a premillennialist in his theology.

Another reason why it would be intriguing to see how Hanegraaff would handle the afore mentioned texts is because *The Apocalypse Code* does contain one reference to Jer 7:3–8 in the Scripture index and does so at the conclusion of “The Typology Principle: The Golden Key” chapter. That Hanegraaff would refer to the Typology Principle as “The Golden Key” of sound biblical interpretation and not the Literal Principle or the Scriptural Synergy principle (“individual Bible passages may never be interpreted in such a way as to conflict with the whole of Scripture”) by the same designation shows that he does not consider these other hermeneutical principles as being of equal importance or value as his typological method. So in summing up his case for interpreting much of prophecy in a typical fashion, Hanegraaff cautions his readers who would not follow his prescribed methodology:

Just as it is a grievous sin to turn a blind eye to the evil of anti-Semitism, so it is a grievous sin to turn a blind eye to the theology that divides people on the basis of race rather than uniting them on the basis of righteousness, justice and equity. Those who presumptuously appeal to the words of Moses—“I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse” (Genesis 12:2)—as a pretext for unconditionally supporting a secular state that

---

<sup>69</sup> Hanegraaff, 9–10.

prohibits the advance of the gospel while simultaneously disregarding the plight of the Palestinians should, according to their own hermeneutical standard, heed the words of the prophet Jeremiah:

This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: “Reform your ways and your actions, and I will let you live in this place. Do not trust in deceptive words and say, ‘This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD!’ If you really change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly, *if you do not oppress the alien*, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods to your own harm, then I will let you live in this place, in the land I gave your forefathers forever and ever. But look, you are trusting in deceptive words that are worthless” (Jer 7:3–8).<sup>70</sup>

Yet even within this quote from Jeremiah, Hanegraaff italicizes the part about “if you do not oppress the alien” and is obviously looking for a literal fulfillment of Jer 7:6. Yet to use his own words, according to his “own hermeneutical standard,” should he not likewise emphasize the passage in this same text where God calls Israel to turn from their sin “then I will let you live in this place, in the land that I gave your forefathers forever and ever” (Jer 7:7)—and look for a literal fulfillment of this promise as well? Yahweh still considered the land that He Himself had given to Jewish people and their forefathers forever and ever, even at that point in their history, and by no means fulfilled by Josh 21:43–45 and/or 1 Kings 4:20–21.

### Conclusion and Significance

Instead of all the land promises being fulfilled by Josh 21:41–43 and/or 1 Kings 4:20–21, the Bible clearly, repeatedly, and persistently presents just the opposite, and does so in a way that beautifully harmonizes with previous prophecies given by God, as in Lev 26:40–45 and Deut 30:1–10. In fact, *nothing* indicates that a fulfillment of these prophecies occurred by the time of Solomon’s life or even up to our present time. Not only are these land boundary promises originally given in the Abrahamic covenant, reiterated in the Mosaic covenant as well as in opening of the book of Joshua, but also the Bible again presents the Euphrates River as the northern boundary for the nation of Israel long after 1 Kings 4. Yet even beyond this, as becomes more evident in the unfolding of God’s revelation, twice the Euphrates River also specifically relates to the Messiah’s reign, first in Ps 72:8, and then centuries afterward in the midst of “the times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24) came the second promise in Zech 9:10 that the Euphrates River will be the northern boundary of Israel for His worldwide rule.

Walvoord, in dealing with the claims made by Allis who argued that God had fulfilled all of the land promises to Israel, summarized accordingly:

According to the Abrahamic Covenant, the land would be completely possessed, and would be permanently possessed as “an everlasting

---

<sup>70</sup> Hanegraaff, 226.

possession” (Gen 17:8). The fulfillment under Solomon breaks down under every requirement. As Allis very well knows, neither David nor Solomon “possessed” all the land for which the boundaries are given with precision in Genesis 15:18–21. At best much of this land was put under tribute, but was never possessed. Further as Allis admits, it was soon lost again, which in no wise fulfilled the promise of permanent or everlasting possession (Gen 17:8). Besides, Allis is quite oblivious to a fact that nullifies his entire argument here. That is that the prophets who lived after Solomon were still anticipating the future fulfillment of the promises of the everlasting possession of the land (cf. Amos 9:13–15) and reiterate in practically all the Minor Prophets the theme song that Israel is to be restored to the land, to be regathered there, and to continue under the blessing of God. While the promises relative to a large progeny may have been fulfilled in Solomon’s day, the promises relative to the land were not.<sup>71</sup>

So harmonious are God’s prophecies regarding the land promises, that if one did not know that an interpretational controversy already exists regarding whether or not the land promises had been completely fulfilled by the time of Josh 21:41–43 and/or 1 Kings 4:20–21, one would never get this from the text because the promises made by God after Joshua 21/1Kings 4 harmonize perfectly—in some case even mirror—the multiple promises that God had previously made. Actually, if anything, the Bible gives even more support past Joshua 21 and 1 Kings 4 regarding the future promises of God and His Messiah who will reign over the entire world (Ps 2:7), which includes the Euphrates River as part of the boundary for the northern part of the nation of Israel. When His reign does occur, as prophecy is fulfilled in the future, indeed will this verse likewise be fulfilled: “plans formed long ago with perfect faithfulness” (Isa 25:1).

---

<sup>71</sup> John F. Walvoord, “Millennial Series: Part 13: The Abrahamic Covenant and Premillennialism,” *BSac* 109 (Jan–Mar 1952): 45. Walvoord cites from Oswald T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1945), 33.