

God's Gracious Covenant With Israel: The Foundation For Worldwide National Covenanting #9

Hebrews 4:9-11
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We have now considered biblical warrant from both the New Testament and the Old Testament for not only the restoration of Israel to Christ as a Christian NATION, but also the restoration of the LAND to Israel as a Christian NATION. We have observed that Israel is still externally and federally "holy" to God as a covenanted NATION (Romans 11:16) by way of God's election and everlasting covenant with her through her fathers (Romans 11:27-30; Genesis 17:7) despite the fact that she is presently God's enemy due to her rejection of Christ and the Gospel (Romans 11:28). So likewise, the LAND that was a gift and sign of that everlasting covenant with Israel as a NATION is an everlasting possession (Genesis 17:8) freely bestowed upon her in which she will safely dwell as a Christian NATION when she repents and is ashamed of her sin against Christ, receives the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and renews her covenant as a Christian NATION to be the Lord's people together with many Christian NATIONS in the world at that time. And so will be fulfilled the prophecy of Paul in Romans 11:25-26 that the fullness of the Gentiles or NATIONS shall come into the Visible Christian Church and all Israel shall be saved and likewise brought into the same Visible Christian Church.

Although I believe this is the teaching of Scripture, I do not want to pretend as if there are no objections offered by those in the Reformed camp (some who are postmillennialists like me). Thus, I would like to briefly respond to some of these objections in the sermon this Lord's Day.

I. **Objection #1. Since the Land of Canaan was a type of heaven (according to Hebrews 11:16), it has been realized by Christ's death and abolished with all other Old Testament types and shadows (Hebrews 10:1).**

A. First, when we speak of a "type" or of someone or something be "typological", what do we mean?

1. A type is an outward representation of a greater more significant truth. For example, Adam is a type of Christ in that Adam points to one (namely, Christ) who stood as a greater covenant head for man. Adam as the first man failed to keep the Covenant of Works and in so doing plunged not only himself but all his posterity by ordinary generation into sin and death. Christ as the second man (1 Corinthians 15:47) and as the last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45) fulfilled all righteousness as the covenant head for His elect posterity which the first Adam failed to do for his posterity, and Christ saves His elect posterity by means of the Covenant of Grace.

2. In addition to a type being an outward representation of a greater more significant truth, a type is always predictive and therefore realized in the future. For example, the sacrifices of the Old Testament were typical of the one final sacrifice of Jesus Christ which ended all such Old Testament sacrifices (Hebrews 10:1). Patrick Fairbairn notes these very distinctive qualities about types when he states, "Every type was, so far, a prophecy, that **under the form of sensible things**, and by means of present outward relations, it gave a promise of other things **yet to come**, corresponding in design, but higher and better in kind" (*The Interpretation Of Prophecy*, Patrick Fairbairn, Banner of Truth Trust, p. 93). Likewise, Milton Terry notes, "[A] type is essentially **a prefiguring of something future from itself**" (*Biblical Hermeneutics*, Milton S. Terry, Zondervan Publishing House, p. 336).

3. When the type is **fully realized** (not partially realized), there is no need for it to continue, for the reality to which the type pointed renders the type useless, insignificant, and without purpose. When you have the full and complete body and person, why would you be content with or want the mere shadow of that body or person? A type that is continued after the **full realization** would simply weaken and cheapen the reality by looking to the type rather than to the **full realization**, and even leads to superstition in clinging to the type rather than letting go of the type and clinging to the **full realization**. Let's move on to make some observations now that we have considered what a type is.

B. I do not deny that the **Land of Canaan** was typical of heaven—I affirm it. It seems to me that this is clearly taught in Hebrews 11:16, where the earthly **Land of Canaan** promised to Abraham pointed to the greater promise of a heavenly country and a heavenly city which Abraham by faith would inherit (along with all those who have the faith of Abraham). So as we consider the **Land of Canaan** as typical of heaven, we can certainly see that the **Land** was an outward and sensible sign of a greater and future promise to be **fully realized in heaven**. However, can it be said that the type has been **fully realized** for ALL of God's people? It certainly can be said that it has been partially realized for those in both the Old Testament and in the New Testament who have died and entered into that heavenly country of which the **Land of Canaan** was a type. But the **full realization** of the glories of heaven is yet to be realized for ALL of us who are still alive. Thus, the picture and promise of the **Land of Canaan** yet holds out to us who trust alone in Christ an inheritance reserved for us heaven.

1. Thus, dear ones, if (according to this objection) the **Land of Canaan** must pass away as a promised Land to Israel as a NATION

when SOME of God's people enter into that heavenly country to which the Land of Canaan was a type, then we must conclude that the Land of Canaan ceased to serve as a type to any of God's people after Abraham died. For Abraham himself entered into the heavenly realization of that earthly type of Canaan when he died. Is it not obvious that the **Land of Canaan** continues to serve as a type of heaven to God's people who are yet living until ALL of God's people (without exception) have crossed the Jordan River of death and entered that heavenly land by faith in Christ alone? Thus, until ALL of God's elect are brought into that heavenly land, there is no biblical principle that would forbid the **Land of Canaan** from continuing to function as a type of heaven (even when Israel as a future Christian NATION dwells safely in it).

2. Actually, the very fact that God will keep His everlasting covenant with Israel to save them as a NATION and will cause them to dwell safely as a Christian NATION in the LAND will have the unfathomable benefit of assuring God's people throughout the world that the Lord is faithful and will bring ALL His elect into the promised land of heaven to enjoy peace and safety from temptation, sin, death, tears, sorrow and suffering forevermore. In other words, rather than taking us back to reinstitute all of the Old Covenant ceremonies etc., the restoration of Israel as a Christian NATION to her LAND will turn the hearts of all Christians to trust Christ, to hope for that heavenly land, and to love Christ's appearing in glory after the millennium when the type of Canaan will be **fully realized** in heaven for ALL of God's elect.

3. Moreover, it should be noted that though the **Land of Canaan** may be a type of heaven, the promise upon which the actual **Land of Canaan** depends is not typical but is rather moral. For the promises made to Abraham and to his seed in their generations in the Abrahamic Covenant are moral—it is an “everlasting covenant.” Covenanting with God and God with Israel through her fathers is not

typical or ceremonial, but is rather a moral relationship that is based upon the Third Commandment (“Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain” Exodus 20:7) and is a covenantal relationship that continues into this present New Covenant age according to Paul (Romans 11:16, 27-30). I would submit that the promise of the Land to Abraham and to his seed in their generations as an “everlasting possession” (Genesis 17:8) is as moral (and not typical or ceremonial) in nature as the promise to be Abraham’s God and the God of Abraham’s seed in their generations (Genesis 17:8). For both the promise of spiritual blessings to Abraham’s seed in their generations and the promise of the **Land of Canaan** to Abraham’s seed in their generations are founded upon the same “everlasting covenant”.

C. I would like to illustrate what I have said using another example of a type in the Old Testament which type continues to exist until the end of time because the **full realization** of it has not yet come for ALL of God’s people. In this passage of Scripture we shall see that the earthly Sabbath was a rest for God and man that pointed in its **full realization** to our glorious heavenly rest (Hebrews 4:9-11).

1. In Hebrews 4, the Holy Spirit uses the concept of “rest” as short-hand for our free salvation purchased by Christ from the works and curse of the Law (Hebrews 4:3). The **full realization** of that rest for God’s people is heaven itself (Hebrews 4:10-11; 2 Thessalonians 1:7; Revelation 14:13). There are two Old Testament types of that heavenly rest mentioned in Hebrews 4: (1) The rest of God in instituting the Sabbath wherein He rested from His works of creation (Hebrews 4:4); (2) And interestingly, the rest in Canaan from the bondage and persecution of Pharaoh in Egypt (Hebrews 3:15-19; Hebrews 4:8). I say “interestingly”

because here in Hebrews 4 the **Land of Canaan** appears as a type of heaven alongside of the **Sabbath** as a type of heaven.

2. The inspired prophet states in Hebrews 4:9 that even now there remains a “rest”, literally “a Sabbath-keeping” (σαββατισμὸς) to the people of God. I submit that this “Sabbath-keeping” of Hebrews 4:9 is not a reference to that heavenly rest mentioned earlier in the chapter and mentioned immediately after in Hebrews 4:10, for whenever the heavenly rest is intended throughout Hebrews 4, a different word for rest is used (κατάπαυσις or some other form of the same word). What the Holy Spirit is saying here in Hebrews 4:9 is that though the heavenly rest of salvation has been denied to those who did not exercise saving faith in Jesus Christ, the promise of entering that heavenly rest is still promised to all who come by faith in Christ (Hebrews 4:6-8). In fact, God has even left to God’s people an earthly Sabbath-keeping as a type and promise of the future eternal rest in heaven (Hebrews 4:10). This earthly “Sabbath-keeping” in the New Covenant age is called “the Lord’s Day” (Revelation 1:10), “the first day of the week” on which Christ was raised and met with His disciples (John 20:1,19-29), and is the same “first day of the week” on which the Christian Churches gathered to worship the Lord (Acts 20:7-12; 1 Corinthians 16:2).

3. Let’s bring this first objection to a conclusion. The earthly **Sabbath** is a type of heaven and yet the earthly **Sabbath** remains in the New Covenant age of Jesus Christ rather than being abolished. So likewise the **Land of Canaan** is a type of heaven and yet the **Land of Canaan** remains in the New Covenant age of Jesus Christ rather than being abolished. As long as the type (whether the **Sabbath** or the **Land of Canaan**) is not **fully realized** for ALL of God’s people in heaven, it continues to point God’s people to the certain promise of heaven to come.

II. Objection #2. The promise of the Land of Canaan in the Old Testament is enlarged in the New Testament to encompass the whole world, thus indicating that God is finished with any particular promises that relate to the Land of Canaan and is rather fulfilling those same promises to the New Israel in the whole world. There are three New Testament passages that we shall very briefly consider: Romans 4:13; Matthew 5:5; Ephesians 6:3.

A. **Romans 4:13:** “For the promise, that he should be **the heir of the world**, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.”

1. When Paul uses the word “world” (κόσμος), does he mean the geographical world or the nations of the world? Is Paul referring to geography or people in the context of Romans 4?

2. I submit that Paul does not have geography specifically in mind in speaking of Abraham being the heir of the world, but rather people or rather nations of the world. For the promise that Abraham should be heir of the world is a few verses later stated in another way: “As it is written, I have made thee **a father of many nations**” (Romans 4:17). This, I submit, is one and the same promise with that found in Romans 4:13. In fact, the meaning of the word “world” in this context is made clear by the use of the same word in Romans 11:12 where it is used in parallel with “Gentiles” (which may also be translated as “Nations”): “Now if the fall of them be **the riches of the world**, and the diminishing of them **the riches of the Gentiles**; how much more their fullness? Therefore, I submit that Romans 4:13 does not do away with the **Land of Canaan** as a moral promise to Israel by enlarging it to mean the whole world.

B. **Matthew 5:5:** “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit **the earth.**”

1. It is noted from this beatitude given by Christ that the original promise in Psalm 37:11 had in view a blessing for the meek in Israel who would inherit the **Land of Canaan**, but Christ now alters and enlarges the original promise to include the earth. Thus, it is objected that the **Land of Canaan** no longer is a promised LAND to Israel.

2. Because the Church of Christ in the New Covenant age is no longer limited to primarily Israel, but is grafting Gentiles and Gentile Nations into the same olive tree (i.e. Visible Church), the promised blessing upon the meek is no longer limited to those who are Israelites living in the **Land of Canaan**. Since the promised blessing upon the meek is a Gospel blessing, wherever the Gospel goes (whether to Israel or to the Gentile Nations), this promised blessing upon the meek accompanies it (which will be fully realized in the millennium when the fullness of the Gentile Nations comes in and all Israel is saved, Romans 11:25-26). I submit that this Gospel promise applied as much to the Ninevites that were converted under the preaching of Jonah as to the Jew living in Israel even during the Old Testament period. Thus, even during the Old Testament era, this Gospel blessing followed the Gospel wherever it was preached. Because God chooses in His most gracious plan to extend to the many Gentile Nations promised blessings to be more fully realized in that future millennial age neither denies nor contradicts the promises of the **Land of Canaan** made to Israel as a NATION.

C. **Ephesians 6:3:** “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on **the earth.**”

1. It is similarly objected that the Apostle enlarges and extends the promise for obedience beyond the borders of Israel to the borders of the earth, implying (according to this objection) that the promise of the **Land of Canaan** no longer applies to Israel.

2. In the original commandment (as found in Exodus 20:12 or Deuteronomy 5:16) the promised reward for obedient children in Israel (to whom this moral commandment was originally given) pertained to the **Land of Canaan**. But as previously noted, wherever the Gospel goes and changes the hearts of people to cheerfully submit to those who have lawful authority over them (whether in the home, Church, or state), the promised reward of obedience likewise follows. A moral commandment (like the Fifth Commandment) is not limited to Israel (though it was in the original context given to Israel). Again, nothing here either denies or contradicts the promise of the **Land of Canaan** to Israel as an “everlasting possession” in the “everlasting covenant” made with Abraham and his natural seed in their generations. The Lord can certainly fulfill His promise of the **Land of Canaan** to Israel while at the same time blessing those with long life upon the earth who willingly submit themselves by means of the Gospel to God and all lawful authority appointed by Him.

III. Objection #3. The New Testament makes it clear that there is no longer a distinction between Jew and Gentile in a passage like Galatians 3:28. Thus, there cannot be distinctive blessings given to Israel as a NATION in this New Covenant age.

A. When the Holy Spirit states through Paul that there is neither Jew nor Greek in Christ, the same Spirit also teaches that there is neither male nor female in Christ. Are we then to understand that there are no distinctions between the sexes? To the contrary, there are distinct duties God gives to men as opposed to women in marriage (Ephesians 5:22-28)

and in the Church (1 Timothy 2:11-12) with corresponding blessings for faithfulness. Thus, it should be clear that Paul is not saying that all distinctions between Jews and Gentiles or between men and women have been removed in Christ.

B. What Paul is teaching by inspiration of the Holy Spirit is that Jews and Gentiles, men and women, bond and free, are all equally members of the Church of Jesus Christ and as such are all entitled to the same spiritual blessings and privileges of being united to Christ. This I firmly believe as stated in previous sermons. Israel as a **Christian Nation** will hold no exalted position or status over the other Christian Nations of the world. Israel will be grafted into the same olive tree (i.e. the same Visible Christian Church) as the many other Christian Nations that come to Christ when the fullness of the Gentiles comes in and all Israel is saved (Romans 11:25-26). The fact that Israel has been promised a particular LAND by God as an “everlasting possession” neither denies nor contradicts the oneness Jews and Gentiles have in Christ. For there may be oneness in Christ, and yet distinct material blessings that God bestows on Christians and Christian Nations. How God chooses to bless Christians and Christian Nations is not uniform—one mold does not fit all. God sovereignly blesses as He chooses (to some God graciously gives more to others God graciously gives less of this world’s material blessings). And because He chooses to bless Israel with the LAND that He promised to her does not deny that Jew and Gentile are one in Christ. As we noted from Matthew 5:5, God also promises that the meek shall inherit the whole earth as well in that glorious millennial period of Gospel blessing. Thus, though God will fulfill His promise to Israel as a Christian NATION in causing her to repent, trust Christ, and to dwell safely in the LAND promised to her, God will also give to other Christian Nations a land in which to safely dwell (as for example, Egypt in Isaiah 19:18-25).

IV. Objection #4. But the promise of the LAND to Israel is never specifically mentioned in the New Testament. That means that God does not intend to fulfill that promise to Israel.

A. We do not find it explicitly stated in the New Testament that infants were baptized, that women came to the Lord's Supper, that the Sabbath is no longer to be observed on the seventh day but rather on the first day, that bestiality is forbidden, or even that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God. All of these are, however, true and though not explicitly stated may be inferred by good and necessary deduction from the whole Bible. Good and necessary inferences are as moral and obligatory as explicit moral precepts and promises. Paul deduces from the fact that the ox is not to be muzzled while it is threshing that ministers are to be financially compensated for their Gospel work (1 Timothy 5:18). That good and necessary deduction of Paul is as obligatory upon God's people as an explicit command to provide for faithful ministers.

B. Likewise, the case for the **Land of Canaan** being restored to Israel as a Christian NATION is based upon the good and necessary deduction that Israel as a NATION is externally and covenantally "holy" (Romans 11:16), on the basis of her national election and calling by God (Romans 11:28-29), and on the basis of the covenant God made with the fathers (Romans 11:27-29). Therefore, the "gifts" and the "calling" of Israel as a NATION are irrevocable. One of the "gifts" so clearly associated with the election and calling of Israel is the LAND which God promised to her as an "everlasting possession" (Genesis 17:7-8). I submit, such an argument by good and necessary inference is just as warranted as an

explicit mention in the New Testament of the **Land of Canaan** to be given to Israel as a Christian NATION.

Dear ones, I conclude by saying that there is no sound reason for denying the promise of the LAND to the future converted Christian NATION of Israel. In fact, I submit that in God's fulfillment of this promise, we are all the more thrust upon the faithfulness of God to fulfill all His promises to undeserving sinners like you and me. If a Christ-rejecting and a Christ-hating nation will be restored to the Lord and blessed with such spiritual and material blessings because of God's covenant with her, will the Lord desert and abandon any of you who have been brought to Christ by the Covenant of Grace? Dear ones, all of the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ (2 Corinthians 1:20). What is the grace that you need in your life right now? It is promised to you in the Covenant of Grace. There would be no hope if there was not a promise made to all who hear the Gospel of Christ. However, as the Spirit of God states in Hebrews 4, many fell short of the promise of rest in the Land of Canaan because of unbelief. So likewise those who hear the promise of eternal rest in heaven through faith in Jesus Christ (to which the promise of Canaan points) and will not embrace Christ and the promise of rest for themselves will suffer forever in hell. How gracious, dear ones, is our God to keep before us the promise of this everlasting rest in heaven in our weekly Sabbath-keeping and in the restoration of the **Land of Canaan** to Israel as a Christian NATION.

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