

Introduction

F.F. Bruce was a wonderful Bible scholar who used to teach theology at the University of Manchester in England.

He has written many good commentaries on the Bible.

He said this;

“Difficult texts and Bible passages are hard for two reasons.

First there are those passages which are difficult because of differences in culture and time. They are hard to understand without having their social and historical backgrounds explained.

Second there are those that are all too easily understood but that challenge the ways we think and act.”

Mark Twain is reported as saying that it wasn't the parts of the Bible that he didn't understand that bothered him **but those parts that were perfectly clear.**

When it comes to studying the Bible about Israel and God's promises to them as a people group, that includes the land and them as a nation, it is easy to get influenced through Gentile glasses and fail to see what is clearly taught by God on this subject.

We must remember that the Bible is God's word, and when Paul was writing to Timothy the New Testament as we know it had not been written.

(2 Tim. 3: v. 16 in N.L.T.)

¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.

God has written the Old Testament part of the Bible, through His servants, they were all Jewish in culture and origin.

The Bible is a Jewish book, available to the Gentiles for their benefit.

The Old Testament was written in **Hebrew for God's people**, therefore we must understand **Hebrew and Jewish culture to understand it.**

The New Testament was also written **by mainly Jewish people**, but **first recorded in Greek**, therefore we need to understand **New Testament Greek**, which is a very rich language.

Why am I telling you all this?

Well the subject we are about to study is very important.

Although God wrote the passages that we will study, the human authors were all Jewish, and part of **God's Covenant promises to His special people.**

Therefore we need to put on **Jewish glasses to understand this series.**

If we don't then our vision will only be **through Gentile eyes.**

If we only uses Gentile glasses, we will only see things from a Gentile point of view.

If we do this, I believe we will miss God's full Revelation to us from His word, the Bible.!!!

Without these Jewish glasses, the Revelation from God's word will give us **what we want to see through our Gentile eyes, and what we want it to do for us as Gentiles.**

It will make Christianity a Gentile Religion, where we are happy to accept Jews if they conform to our rules and regulations, culture and understanding of the Bible.

So what I want to do in this series is to **discover what God is teaching in His word about His promises to the Jewish Nation, and for the land of Israel.**

In other words, **Has the "Church" replaced "Israel" concerning God's promises?**

Sadly there is a very strong drift today in America and the U.K. to teach what is called **"Replacement theology"** and now called **"Super-Sessionism"**

The **four primary theological arguments** that these people use to promote their beliefs are as follows.

1. The New Testament teaches that the national Israel has been permanently rejected as the people of God.
2. The New Testament application of Old Testament language to the church shows that the church is now the new Israel.

3. Unity between Jews and Gentiles rules out a future role for national Israel.
4. The church's relationship to the new covenant indicates that the church alone inherits the covenants of national Israel.

This basically says that God has replaced Israel and the Jewish Nation with the Church and that there is **no longer a purpose for Israel as a nation, people and a land that they call Israel.**

I hope that as we expose God's word over 4 sermons that you will make up your own mind on the subject. **I do not wish to humanly persuade you on what I believe.**

You must believe for yourself based upon the **evidence of God's word only!!!**

The study is a four part series.

Part one is only the Old Testament promises that God has made to His chosen people and the prophecies that God made through His prophets concerning His chosen people.

Part two and three will be a study of **Romans Chapter 9-11.** In this study we will see what Paul teaches on the subject, and finally in **part 4** will look into the book of Revelation to see what **John was taught by God concerning His chosen people's future, after the second coming of Jesus.**

This will complete the picture.

Study No. 1, **part one – God's Promises to Abraham**

The first thing we need to do is to read the main texts that relate to God's promises to Abraham.

Gen. Chapter 12: v. 1-3.

The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the **land that I will show you.** ² **I will make you into a great nation.** I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. ³ I will **bless those who bless you** and **curse those who treat you with contempt.** **All the families on earth will be blessed through you.**"

We must not forget that it was **God's initiative that chose Abram,** later to be called Abraham, to leave his present land and go to a specific place.

God made three specific promises here.

1. I will make you into a great nation.
2. All the families on earth will be blessed through him.
3. Those people who supported Abraham and His descendants would be blessed, and those people who treated Abraham and his descendants badly would be cursed or judged by God.

There is nowhere in the New Testament where these promises have been cancelled by God.

In fact as we will see later, in spite of rebellious Israel, and God's punishment to them, God honoured His promise through a remnant of His obedient people.

At this time in history all important promises and covenants were ratified in a special way.

Both parties who agreed to a covenant had to **cut animals in half and walk together through them as a visual sign that they would honour this covenant,** or else they could be cut in half in the same way that the animals had been done.

Now we need to read Genesis Chapter 15: v. 1-19.

Some time later, the LORD spoke to Abram in a vision and said to him, "Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your reward will be great."

² But Abram replied, "O Sovereign LORD, what good are all your blessings when I don't even have a son? Since you've given me no children, Eliezer of Damascus, a servant in my household, will inherit all my wealth. ³ You have given me no descendants of my own, so one of my servants will be my heir."

⁴ Then the LORD said to him, "No, your servant will not be your heir, for you will have a son of your own who will be your heir." ⁵ Then the LORD took Abram outside and said to him, "Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That's how many descendants you will have!"

⁶ **And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith.**

⁷ Then the LORD told him, “I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans **to give you this land as your possession.**”

⁸ But Abram replied, “O Sovereign LORD, how can I be sure that I will actually possess it?”

⁹ The LORD told him, “Bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” ¹⁰ So Abram presented all these to him and killed them. Then he cut each animal down the middle and laid the halves side by side; he did not, however, cut the birds in half. ¹¹ Some vultures swooped down to eat the carcasses, but Abram chased them away.

¹² As the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a terrifying darkness came down over him.

¹³ **Then the LORD said to Abram, “You can be sure that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land, where they will be oppressed as slaves for 400 years.** ¹⁴ But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and in the end they will come away with great wealth. ¹⁵ (As for you, you will die in peace and be buried at a ripe old age.) ¹⁶ After four generations your descendants will return here to this land, for the sins of the Amorites do not yet warrant their destruction.”

¹⁷ **After the sun went down and darkness fell, Abram saw a smoking firepot and a flaming torch pass between the halves of the carcasses.** ¹⁸ So the LORD made a covenant with Abram that day and said, “I have given this land to your descendants, all the way from the border of Egypt to the great Euphrates River—
¹⁹ the land now occupied by the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites,

There are two important things that we need to note in this chapter.

1. Abraham didn’t pass through the cut animals in the covenant ratification. This is important, because it was only God’s responsibility to honour His covenant promise. There was no human side to the honour of this covenant. It was God’s initiative and God’s responsibility to honour this covenant.
2. The land that God had designated was **clearly identified**. Please see a slide which identifies the land. There is also a slide that shows the land that **present Israel occupies today**.

Read Genesis 17: v. 7-8.

⁷ “I will confirm my covenant with you and your descendants after you, from generation to generation. This is the **everlasting covenant**: I will always be your God and the God of your descendants after you. ⁸ And I will give the **entire land of Canaan, where you now live as a foreigner, to you and your descendants. It will be their possession forever, and I will be their God.**”

Note that these verses point out that the covenant that God makes with His people concerning the land is an **“everlasting covenant”** Everlasting means **“Everlasting”**

Next we need to note that there was a **human responsibility to obey the terms of the covenant.**

Genesis 17: v.9-14.

⁹ Then God said to Abraham, “Your responsibility is to obey the terms of the covenant. You and all your descendants have this continual responsibility. ¹⁰ This is the covenant that you and your descendants must keep: Each male among you must be circumcised. ¹¹ You must cut off the flesh of your foreskin as a sign of the covenant between me and you. ¹² From generation to generation, every male child must be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. This applies not only to members of your family but also to the servants born in your household and the foreign-born servants whom you have purchased. ¹³ All must be circumcised. Your bodies will bear the mark of my everlasting covenant. ¹⁴ Any male who fails to be circumcised will be cut off from the covenant family for breaking the covenant.”

In Genesis Chapter 22 God tested Abraham’s faith by asking him to sacrifice his son.

Gen. 22: v. 1-2.

Some time later, God tested Abraham’s faith. “Abraham!” God called. “Yes,” he replied. “Here I am.”

² “Take your son, your only son—yes, Isaac, whom you love so much—and go to the land of Moriah. Go and sacrifice him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will show you.”

This was only a test which Abraham passed, and God provided a ram for the sacrifice instead of Abraham’s son Isaac.

It was after this that we read the following words;

Genesis Chapter 22: v. 15-18.

¹⁵ Then the angel of the LORD called again to Abraham from heaven. ¹⁶ “This is what the LORD says: Because you have obeyed me and have not withheld even your son, your only son, **I swear by my own name** that ¹⁷ I will certainly bless you. **I will multiply your descendants beyond number, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore.** Your descendants will conquer the cities of their enemies. ¹⁸ And through your descendants **all the nations of the earth will be blessed—all because you have obeyed me.**”

The information that we learn in these verses is not new but it is made clear that a very great nation would come from Abraham’s descendants that would be **countless.**

We now need to go back to Gen. 15: v. 13-16.

¹³ Then the LORD said to Abram, “You can be sure that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land, where they will be oppressed as slaves for 400 years. ¹⁴ But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and in the end they will come away with great wealth. ¹⁵ (As for you, you will die in peace and be buried at a ripe old age.) ¹⁶ After four generations your descendants will return here to this land, for the sins of the Amorites do not yet warrant their destruction.”

After 400 years, through Moses and the ten plagues of Egypt, God rescued His chosen nation who were now about 2-3 million people.

God introduced 10 commandments for the nation of Israel to obey and set up a Tabernacle in the desert for the people to follow a sacrificial system. God’s presence was with His people.

Through their lack of faith, the nation had to wander in the desert for 40 years, and eventually, through Joshua, the conquering of the promise land began.

It is important to note that Jesus, in his **pre-incarnate form was involved in supporting Joshua in the conquering of this land which was chosen by God and promised to Israel.**

Joshua Chapter 5: v. 13-15.

¹³ When Joshua was near the town of Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with sword in hand. Joshua went up to him and demanded, “Are you friend or foe?”

¹⁴ “Neither one,” he replied. **“I am the commander of the LORD’s army.”**

At this, Joshua fell with his face to the ground in reverence. “I am at your command,” Joshua said. “What do you want your servant to do?”

¹⁵ The commander of the LORD’s army replied, “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did as he was told.

Most Bible scholars identify “**the commander of the Lord’s army**” as Jesus”.

It is clear that Jesus supported the conquering of the land for God’s future purposes, and to fulfill God’s promise concerning the land.

Through not following all of God’s instructions, the whole land was not officially conquered.

Nevertheless God did help Joshua to conquer most of the land indicated by God and **Israel as a nation settled in the land.**

It was God’s purpose for this nation to be a **witness to others in nations around them.**

Sadly through disobedience to the 10 commandments, the nation of Israel was judged by God and taken captive by another nation. In spite of this, **God always preserved a remnant of His people.**

Through God’s prophets, He gave hope to His people. **The hope was for their restoration as an obedient people, and a restoration as a nation, and a land to live in.**

Let us now look at some of these prophecies. (all in N.L.T.)

Isaiah Chapter 49 v. 1-26.

Listen to me, all you in distant lands!

Pay attention, you who are far away!

The LORD called me before my birth;
from within the womb he called me by name.

² He made my words of judgment as sharp as a sword.
He has hidden me in the shadow of his hand.

I am like a sharp arrow in his quiver.

³ He said to me, "You are my servant, Israel,
and you will bring me glory."

⁴ I replied, "But my work seems so useless!
I have spent my strength for nothing and to no purpose.

Yet I leave it all in the LORD's hand;
I will trust God for my reward."

⁵ And now the LORD speaks—
the one who formed me in my mother's womb to be his servant,
who commissioned me to bring Israel back to him.

The LORD has honored me,
and my God has given me strength.

⁶ He says, "You will do more than restore the people of Israel to me.
I will make you a light to the Gentiles,
and you will bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."

⁷ The LORD, the Redeemer
and Holy One of Israel,
says to the one who is despised and rejected by the nations,
to the one who is the servant of rulers:

"Kings will stand at attention when you pass by.
Princes will also bow low
because of the LORD, the faithful one,
the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

⁸ This is what the LORD says:
"At just the right time, I will respond to you.
On the day of salvation I will help you.
I will protect you and give you to the people
as my covenant with them.

**Through you I will re-establish the land of Israel
and assign it to its own people again.**

⁹ I will say to the prisoners, 'Come out in freedom,'
and to those in darkness, 'Come into the light.'
They will be my sheep, grazing in green pastures
and on hills that were previously bare.

¹⁰ They will neither hunger nor thirst.
The searing sun will not reach them anymore.
For the LORD in his mercy will lead them;
he will lead them beside cool waters.

¹¹ And I will make my mountains into level paths for them.
The highways will be raised above the valleys.

¹² **See, my people will return from far away,
from lands to the north and west,
and from as far south as Egypt."**

¹³ Sing for joy, O heavens!
Rejoice, O earth!

Burst into song, O mountains!
 For the LORD has comforted his people
 and will have compassion on them in their suffering.

¹⁴ Yet Jerusalem says, "The LORD has deserted us;
 the Lord has forgotten us."

¹⁵ **"Never! Can a mother forget her nursing child?
 Can she feel no love for the child she has borne?
 But even if that were possible,
 I would not forget you!**

¹⁶ See, I have written your name on the palms of my hands.
 Always in my mind is a picture of Jerusalem's walls in ruins.

¹⁷ Soon your descendants will come back,
 and all who are trying to destroy you will go away.

¹⁸ Look around you and see,
 for all your children will come back to you.

As surely as I live," says the LORD,
 "they will be like jewels or bridal ornaments for you to display.

¹⁹ "Even the most desolate parts of your abandoned land
 will soon be crowded with your people.
 Your enemies who enslaved you
 will be far away.

²⁰ The generations born in exile will return and say,
 'We need more room! It's crowded here!'

²¹ Then you will think to yourself,
 'Who has given me all these descendants?
 For most of my children were killed,
 and the rest were carried away into exile.
 I was left here all alone.
 Where did all these people come from?
 Who bore these children?
 Who raised them for me?'"

²² This is what the Sovereign LORD says:
 "See, I will give a signal to the godless nations.
 They will carry your little sons back to you in their arms;
 they will bring your daughters on their shoulders.

²³ **Kings and queens will serve you
 and care for all your needs.
 They will bow to the earth before you
 and lick the dust from your feet.
 Then you will know that I am the LORD.**
 Those who trust in me will never be put to shame."

²⁴ Who can snatch the plunder of war from the hands of a warrior?
 Who can demand that a tyrant let his captives go?

²⁵ But the LORD says,
 "The captives of warriors will be released,
 and the plunder of tyrants will be retrieved.
 For I will fight those who fight you,
 and I will save your children.

²⁶ **I will feed your enemies with their own flesh.
 They will be drunk with rivers of their own blood.
 All the world will know that I, the LORD,
 am your Savior and your Redeemer,
 the Mighty One of Israel."**

Jeremiah 31: v. 31-37.

³¹ “The day is coming,” says the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah.

³² This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant, though I loved them as a husband loves his wife,” says the LORD.

³³ **“But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel** after those days,” says the LORD. “I will put my instructions deep within them, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ³⁴ And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they need to teach their relatives, saying, ‘You should know the LORD.’ For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will know me already,” says the LORD. “And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins.”

³⁵ It is the LORD who provides the sun to light the day
and the moon and stars to light the night,
and who stirs the sea into roaring waves.

**His name is the LORD of Heaven’s Armies,
and this is what he says:**

³⁶ **“I am as likely to reject my people Israel
as I am to abolish the laws of nature!”**

³⁷ This is what the LORD says:

**“Just as the heavens cannot be measured
and the foundations of the earth cannot be explored,
so I will not consider casting them away
for the evil they have done.
I, the LORD, have spoken!**

Ezekiel 37: v. 12-14.

¹² Therefore, prophesy to them and say, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: O my people, I will open your graves of exile and cause you to rise again. Then I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³ When this happens, O my people, you will know that I am the LORD. ¹⁴ I will put my Spirit in you, and you will live again and return home to your own land. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken, and I have done what I said. Yes, the LORD has spoken!’”

Zephaniah 3: v. 8-10.

⁸ Therefore, be patient,” says the LORD.

“Soon I will stand and accuse these evil nations.
For I have decided to gather the kingdoms of the earth
and pour out my fiercest anger and fury on them.
All the earth will be devoured
by the fire of my jealousy.

⁹ “Then I will purify the speech of all people,
so that everyone can worship the LORD together.

¹⁰ My scattered people who live beyond the rivers of Ethiopia
will come to present their offerings.

Zechariah 14: v. 1-21.

Watch, for the day of the LORD is coming when your possessions will be plundered right in front of you! ² I will gather all the nations to fight against Jerusalem. The city will be taken, the houses looted, and the women raped. Half the population will be taken into captivity, and the rest will be left among the ruins of the city.

³ **Then the LORD will go out to fight against those nations, as he has fought in times past.** ⁴ **On that day his** feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem. And the Mount of Olives will split apart, making a wide valley running from east to west. Half the mountain will move toward the north and half toward the south. ⁵ You will flee through this valley, for it will reach across to Azal. Yes, you will flee as you did from the earthquake in the days of King Uzziah of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all his holy ones with him.

⁶ On that day the sources of light will no longer shine, ⁷ yet there will be continuous day! Only the LORD knows how this could happen. There will be no normal day and night, for at evening time it will still be light.

⁸ On that day life-giving waters will flow out from Jerusalem, half toward the Dead Sea and half toward the Mediterranean, flowing continuously in both summer and winter.

⁹ And the LORD will be king over all the earth. On that day there will be one LORD—his name alone will be worshiped.

¹⁰ All the land from Geba, north of Judah, to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem, will become one vast plain. But Jerusalem will be raised up in its original place and will be inhabited all the way from the Benjamin Gate over to the site of the old gate, then to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's vineyards. ¹¹ **And Jerusalem will be filled, safe at last, never again to be cursed and destroyed.**

¹² And the LORD will send a plague on all the nations that fought against Jerusalem. Their people will become like walking corpses, their flesh rotting away. Their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. ¹³ On that day they will be terrified, stricken by the LORD with great panic. They will fight their neighbors hand to hand. ¹⁴ Judah, too, will be fighting at Jerusalem. The wealth of all the neighboring nations will be captured—great quantities of gold and silver and fine clothing. ¹⁵ This same plague will strike the horses, mules, camels, donkeys, and all the other animals in the enemy camps.

¹⁶ **In the end, the enemies of Jerusalem who survive the plague will go up to Jerusalem each year to worship the King, the LORD of Heaven's Armies, and to celebrate the Festival of Shelters.** ¹⁷ **Any nation in the world that refuses to come to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of Heaven's Armies, will have no rain.** ¹⁸ If the people of Egypt refuse to attend the festival, the LORD will punish them with the same plague that he sends on the other nations who refuse to go. ¹⁹ Egypt and the other nations will all be punished if they don't go to celebrate the Festival of Shelters.

²⁰ On that day even the harness bells of the horses will be inscribed with these words: HOLY TO THE LORD. And the cooking pots in the Temple of the LORD will be as sacred as the basins used beside the altar. ²¹ In fact, every cooking pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the LORD of Heaven's Armies. All who come to worship will be free to use any of these pots to boil their sacrifices. And on that day there will no longer be traders in the Temple of the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

You don't need me to tell you that these prophecies are yet to be fulfilled and they are dependent on a land called Israel and a nation of Israel as God's chosen people.

As we close part one of this series, we need to ask and answer a number of questions in our own hearts.

1. Do you believe the Bible is God's word to all peoples for all times and that it is 100% truth as written to people and nations in their historical context?
2. **Do you believe that God keeps his promises?** This is important because if we do not believe this, then what about our own Salvation and the promises God has made through His word to us personally?
3. Do you believe that the Old Testament writings have made very clear promises to Israel as a nation, as a people, and concerning the land that they are to live in?
4. **Do you believe that God has specific plans for nations and that He can sovereignly direct events of history to fulfil His plan for these nations?**

If you have answered **YES to the above questions**, then there is nothing in Romans 9-11 which we will look at next that will discredit or explain away your conviction.

The next session is a lot harder to understand and needs to be explained in a very simple way.

Please pray for me as I study these chapters in Romans.