

# When Israel Finally Receives All of the Promised Land

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As I'm sure most of you are aware, the Feast of Tabernacles pictures the period of the millennium. The thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ, where Christ will reign over the Earth, assisted by the Firstfruits. Satan will be bound and not able to affect mankind, and the Earth's population will enjoy a wonderful utopian period for 1,000 years. This also pictures the time when the nation of Israel will finally receive all of the land that was promised to Abraham as a part of Abraham's covenant.

Because as we're going to see today in the sermon, when God made this promise to Abraham in Genesis 15, He gave him what you might call two different definitions of the Promised Land. He gave him the ultimate definition of the Promised Land -- what they will actually receive in the millennium -- all of the land between the Nile River and the Euphrates River. But He also specifically defined a much smaller region of land, which as we're going to see today is really more focused on the area that they actually inherited historically when the Israelites conquered the Promised Land.

So, we're going to look at this subject in more detail today and see how God's going to fulfill this, and ultimately give the nation of Israel all this land between the Nile and the Euphrates in the coming millennium. So, if you'd like a title for this sermon, it's:

## When Israel Finally Receives All of the Promised Land

So, to start off with, let's turn over to Genesis 12, to God's initial interaction with Abraham. It's in Genesis 12, and we'll start reading in verse 1.

**Gen 12:1** *"Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. 2) I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3) I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."* (NKJV)

Now, you're probably aware of the fact that there's a lot more packed into the promises made here in these 3 verses than just this specific area of land, but that's what we're going to focus on today. But just notice here in verse 1, all it gives in terms of details at this point is "a land that I will show you." He doesn't really give him a definition of what land He's talking about. But if you'll turn over to Genesis 15, this is the point where Abraham has already journeyed to the land of Canaan. And now they're actually making the covenant. We're going to pick up here in verse 18. And I want you to notice here the definitions that God gives to Abraham to define this land that He's talking about.

**Gen 15:18** *"On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying:*

*“To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates—” (NKJV)*

See, He's saying, from the Nile to the Euphrates is what He's referring to. But then, He gets more specific starting in verse 19.

*“19) the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, 20) the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, 21) the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.” (NKJV)*

Now, at first glance, when you look at this -- I know what I assumed for much of my life reading over this -- is you assume that what He's defining here in more detail in verses 19 through 21 is just basically defining all the people that live in this area between the Nile and the Euphrates, and it's just another way of saying the same thing. Actually, if you map this, you'll realize that's not really the case. What He's defining there is a subset of the greater area. Because just to give you an idea of what this would entail, because you can pull this up on Google today and look at maps and see what I'm referring to here. But if you define it in terms of the rivers, now that's very easy to map. Because if you just look at a map of the Middle East, you can look where the Nile River is and look where the Euphrates is.

What you're going to see in between there -- and I will just use the modern-day nation names to define this -- this would include the eastern part of the nation of Egypt, including all of the Sinai Peninsula. It would also include a good northern chunk of modern Saudi Arabia. And then, if you go north from there, it would be the modern nation of Israel today -- that little sliver of land there between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River. And it would also include Lebanon, and then the whole nation of Jordan today, and then about half the nation of Syria, and Iraq as well. Because the Euphrates River runs right through those nations. It would be that entire area.

Now if you map out where these individual peoples lived at the time, what you're going to see is that's a much smaller area. That's primarily getting at the area where the nation of Israel is today on a map, between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. And also, a chunk of the modern day nation of Jordan on the eastern side of the Jordan River. That focused area right there is really what this is getting at. Because if you go on Google and you just map out ancient Israel -- what areas that they actually occupied -- you'll see that's really what it's focused on. It's really focused on that area, west of the Jordan River and a chunk of Western Jordan -- the nation of Jordan today, just on the other side of the river. The whole expanse between the Nile and the Euphrates, they never occupied all that territory.

Because what we'll see here is if you turn over to Exodus 3, this is the burning bush account where God basically tells Moses He's got a job for him and gives him his marching orders to go lead the Israelites out of Egypt. But notice when He specifies the Promised Land of where He's sending them, He gives him this more narrow definition. He specifically defines this narrower region and doesn't at this point mention the

broader region of the Nile to the Euphrates. This is in Exodus 3, and let's start reading in verse 7.

**Ex 3:7** *"And the LORD said: 'I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. 8) So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.'" (NKJV)*

See, He's focused on this much more narrow region. And again, if you just do a search on Google with these names to see on a map what that's going to look like. Now, different sources will have a little bit different boundary lines of where they put it. But again, just to generally summarize it, what you're going to see is this is primarily the area from the Mediterranean Sea up to just a little bit east of the Jordan River. And it doesn't extend all the way out to the Euphrates or all the way over to the Nile. It's a much more narrower portion there.

In fact, oftentimes when the Promised Land is spoken of in the Bible, you'll see it referred to as the "land of Canaan". Now, if you map that, you're going to see that's specifically between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. Now, the Canaanites didn't have all of that area there. There are some other peoples involved there as well. But again, just summarizing, that's the area between the Jordan and the Mediterranean. And you'll see oftentimes, that's the focus because when the Israelites initially left Egypt and got up to the edge of the Promised Land and spied out the Promised Land, that's specifically where the spies were sent. It says they were sent to the "land of Canaan".

We're also going to see a little bit later that when Moses was punished for his actions in Numbers 20 -- we won't take the time to turn there, but you might be familiar with that story where God gave Moses instructions to speak to a rock to then to have water come out of it to basically, give the Israelites something to drink. In this situation that played out there, Moses lost his temper and he struck it, the rock, rather than speaking to it. His punishment for that was being kept out of the Promised Land. What he's specifically kept out of -- as we're going to see here a little bit later -- is again, specifically that area in between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. Because He's allowed to get right up to the edge there at Mount Nebo, right on the edge of the Jordan River.

But just to notice this, turn over to Numbers 13. This is the story where they actually were spying out the Promised Land. When they made their first attempt to go to the Promised Land and then got sentenced to 40 years wandering in the wilderness because of their lack of faith. Now notice here in verse 1, again, specifically the area where they were sending the spies.

**Num 13:1** *"And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2) 'Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel; from each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a leader among them.'" (NKJV)*

And notice again, it specifically mentions the “land of Canaan”. And if you map this, this is specifically between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. Basically, what you would see on a map today as the nation of Israel. But now jump down to verse 17.

**Num 13:17** *“Then Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said to them, “Go up this way into the South, and go up to the mountains, 18) and see what the land is like: whether the people who dwell in it are strong or weak, few or many; 19) whether the land they dwell in is good or bad; whether the cities they inhabit are like camps or strongholds; 20) whether the land is rich or poor; and whether there are forests there or not. Be of good courage. And bring some of the fruit of the land.” Now the time was the season of the first ripe grapes.”* (NKJV)

So, you can see here what they're specifically focused on is the “land of Canaan”, as I mentioned, between the Jordan and the Mediterranean.

Now let's also turn over to Deuteronomy 32. Because as I mentioned, we won't look at the story in Numbers 20, but that's the situation where Moses doesn't follow God's instructions as He gave it to him. And as a result, he gets punished. And his punishment is being denied being able to see the Promised Land. But what I want you to see is specifically the area that he was denied from seeing.

Because another interesting thing to notice in all of this, if you think about the ultimate definition of the Promised Land from the Nile River to the Euphrates, from the moment that the Israelites begin their journey out of Egypt, as soon as they left Egypt and get east of the Nile, they're in that area. And their entire 40 years of wandering in the wilderness is in the greater definition of the Promised Land. They're in that area the entire time. Mount Sinai is in that region. And in all of the areas where they were wandering during those 40 years, it's all in that region.

Where they weren't during all that 40 years is in the land of Canaan. In other words, west of the Jordan River. See that's where the main focus was because, again, that's where they were going to occupy and start their existence in the Promised Land. Just to notice this over in Deuteronomy 32. I'm going to pick up here in verse 48.

**Deu 32:48** *“Then the LORD spoke to Moses that very same day, saying: 49) “Go up this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, across from Jericho; view the land of Canaan, which I give to the children of Israel as a possession; 50) and die on the mountain which you ascend, and be gathered to your people, just as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people; 51) because you trespassed against Me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah Kadesh, in the Wilderness of Zin, because you did not hallow Me in the midst of the children of Israel. 52) Yet you shall see the land before you, though you shall not go there, into the land which I am giving to the children of Israel.”* (NKJV)

Now, if you map this, he's at Mount Nebo. It says "across from Jericho". What you're going to see if you pull this up on Google is it's right around the greater Dead Sea area. It's on the eastern side of the Jordan. It's in the modern-day nation of Jordan. Not that far east of the Jordan River. So, he's clearly in the region between the Nile and the Euphrates. And again, even in the area that the Israelites ultimately occupied, once Joshua then conquered all of the area. This is part of what they conquered. What he's specifically denied access to is what's west of the Jordan River. And just to see this, where this actually occurred, turn over now to chapter 34, and we'll pick up in verse 1.

**Deu 34:1** *"Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is across from Jericho. And the LORD showed him all the land of Gilead as far as Dan, 2) all Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, 3) the South, and the plain of the Valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. 4) Then the LORD said to him, 'This is the land of which I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants.' I have caused you to see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there.' 5) So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. 6) And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day."* (NKJV)

What you see here is -- as I mentioned when I started this sermon -- God gave Abraham, you might say, two different definitions of the Promised Land. He gives him the greater area of the Nile to the Euphrates, but then He defines this much smaller region. And again, this is obviously where the focus of the Promised Land was for them. Because as I mentioned, as soon as they headed out of Egypt and their entire 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, they're in between the Nile and the Euphrates. They're in the ultimate definition of the Promised Land the entire time. They just had to wait 40 years to be able to occupy the area there primarily between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River.

Because see, God had a purpose in starting off with this smaller definition of the Promised Land with the ultimate goal of them occupying all of this area. And one of the primary reasons for this is because they didn't have a population at that time that would be large enough to occupy and maintain this huge area. And to see this, turn over to Exodus 23. We'll see here that God directly states this to them. This is Exodus 23:27.

**Ex 23:27** *"I will send My fear before you, I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come, and will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. 28) And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before you. 29) I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. 30) Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land."* (NKJV)

See, this was a planned strategy from the beginning that they would start with a smaller area and then slowly expand throughout this land as the population grew. If you turn over to Deuteronomy 7, we'll see this stated again. It's Deuteronomy 7, we're going to start reading in verse 20.

**Deu 7:20** *"Moreover the LORD your God will send the hornet among them until those who are left, who hide themselves from you, are destroyed. 21) You shall not be terrified of them; for the LORD your God, the great and awesome God, is among you. 22) And the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you little by little; you will be unable to destroy them at once, lest the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. 23) But the LORD your God will deliver them over to you, and will inflict defeat upon them until they are destroyed."* (NKJV)

So, you see that this was the strategy all along to start with the smaller definition of the Promised Land, and then slowly expand to all the rest of it. But the reason that this never got fulfilled and they never expanded into all of this area is because this wasn't really what you might call a "blank check" promise. This was part of a covenant agreement. And you'll understand later why I'm referring to this as a "blank check". But this wasn't a promise that they were going to get this land regardless of how they behaved, and that God was obligated to give this to them regardless of their behavior. No, this was part of a covenant agreement. And their obedience was one of the conditions that they had to meet to be able to, not only expand to all this land, but to even maintain their existence in the land that they had. And to see this, turn over to Deuteronomy 11, and we'll start reading here in verse 22.

**Deu 11:22** *"For if you carefully keep all these commandments which I command you to do—to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and to hold fast to Him— 23) then the LORD will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess greater and mightier nations than yourselves. 24) Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the River Euphrates, even to the Western Sea, shall be your territory."* (NKJV)

Now, the "Western Sea" there, He's referring to the Mediterranean Sea.

*"25) No man shall be able to stand against you; the LORD your God will put the dread of you and the fear of you upon all the land where you tread, just as He has said to you. 26) Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: 27) the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today; 28) and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known."* (NKJV)

Because, again, these were conditional promises. Again, it was part of a covenant agreement, and their part of this covenant agreement is they had to obey. God wasn't promising them that they were owed this land regardless of how they behaved, and

regardless of how they lived their lives. No, He was saying, if you steadily and consistently obey Me, then I'm going to fulfill this and give all of this to you, and you're going to expand upon all of this land.

And to see this in a little more detail, turn over to Leviticus 26. Now you might be familiar with the fact that this is oftentimes referred to as a “blessings and cursings” chapter. Deuteronomy 28 is structured very much the same way. They're parallel chapters. And what you'll see if you read through both of these chapters -- which we're not going to take the time today to go through both of them in that kind of detail. But you'll see the first half of these chapters refer to all the wonderful blessings that the Israelites would receive if they consistently obey. And then, you'll see in the second half of it, He tells them if they don't obey, here's all the curses that they're going to get. Here's all the bad things that are going to happen.

And if you read through all the curses, they start off small, and they just get worse and worse because God's turning up the heat. And He basically says it's just going to keep getting worse if you don't obey. And then you're eventually just going to get evicted out of the land completely, if you just insist on continuing to disobey. Which as we know is what actually happened to them. So, pick up in verse 14 here, and notice what's going to happen if they choose to consistently disobey.

**Lev 26:14** *“But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments, 15) and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant, 16) I also will do this to you: I will even appoint terror over you, wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. 17) I will set My face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you.” (NKJV)*

Now skip down to verse 31.

**Lev 26:31** *“I will lay your cities waste and bring your sanctuaries to desolation, and I will not smell the fragrance of your sweet aromas. 32) I will bring the land to desolation, and your enemies who dwell in it shall be astonished at it. 33) I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste.” (NKJV)*

So, notice He's telling them, not only will you not be successful in taking all of this land, you're going to get kicked out of it. And you're going to lose all of this if you consistently misbehave. Which we know is what they did.

And see, this concept not only applies to what happened historically with ancient Israel when they were taken into captivity, it's something that's going to be fulfilled again before the return of Christ. So, turn over to Ezekiel 36. We'll see here where Ezekiel refers to their historical, being taken into captivity. We'll start reading in verse 16.

**Ezek 36:16** *“Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 17) “Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own ways and deeds; to Me their way was like the uncleanness of a woman in her customary impurity. 18) Therefore I poured out My fury on them for the blood they had shed on the land, and for their idols with which they had defiled it. 19) So I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the countries; I judged them according to their ways and their deeds. 20) When they came to the nations, wherever they went, they profaned My holy name—when they said of them, “These are the people of the LORD, and yet they have gone out of His land.”” (NKJV)*

See, eventually they got evicted, and the reason they got evicted from the Promised Land was their misbehaving. Their continual disobedience to God. See, this principle still applies because as we know, back in the 20th century, in the 1940s, there was a portion of the Israelites that got restored to the land. It became a nation, a political entity again. But the book of Zechariah tells us they're going to get taken into captivity again, and for the same reasons. So, turn over to Zechariah 14:1.

**Zech 14:1** *“Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, And your spoil will be divided in your midst. 2) For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; The city shall be taken, The houses rifled, And the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.” (NKJV)*

So, notice this happens again in the future. Now, the reason I point this out is because this gives us some important principles that we can learn from today, before we look at the future fulfillment of the millennium. And the reason I refer to that is, if you pay attention to the news at all or discussions that you see on social media and such today, you're probably aware of the fact that the modern-day state of Israel is oftentimes a very controversial subject. Lots of arguments get presented around the very existence of the modern-day nation of Israel, around their relationship with the United States, and the conflicts that they have with the nations around them.

And if you pay attention to these conflicts, you generally tend to see one of two extreme reactions that people tend to have. One is that the people on you might say the left side of this that are basically looking at the modern-day nation of Israel and they think its very existence is illegitimate. They deny any connection between God's promises in the Bible and the existence of that nation, and just basically demonize everything about it. What you also tend to find is, the other side of this argument is on the other extreme. Because they go all the way in the other direction and basically say, if you believe in the Bible and you believe in God, you just have to unconditionally support everything about this nation, and you can't question anything. You can't ask any questions. You can't even suggest that they might misbehave in any way or be at fault for any of the conflicts that they have. You just have to give them unconditional support.

In fact, they'll even pull up Genesis 12, where God's specifically talking to Abraham, and they'll twist that scripture and say if you want to be blessed by God, you just have to unconditionally support Israel. Because if you don't unconditionally support them and just don't ask any questions, God's not going to bless you. So, if you want to be in good graces with God, you just have to support everything the government of Israel does. What this does is paint a picture that God's promises to Israel regarding this land was a blank check. That it was an unconditional promise, and they're just guaranteed this land, and it doesn't matter how they behave. Doesn't matter if they obey God. It doesn't matter if they're in the right in all the conflicts they have because they're Israel, and that just gives them a blank check. That is just simply not what the Bible teaches.

The Bible teaches that it's a covenant agreement. And yes, God promised them this land if they obey. If they consistently obey, they get this land. And if they don't obey, not only does God not support them, He promises to curse them. So, again, we should take that into consideration when we look at this subject today. Because again, if we just look at what Zechariah tells us is going to happen here in the probably not too distant future, possibly in our lifetimes, maybe later, we don't know. But we know for sure God's going to cause them to be overrun by the beast power and be taken into captivity.

God's track record on the subject tells us the story. He only allows that when He's tired of them misbehaving. When He's been very patient and tolerated their misbehavior for a very long time, and He's finally just had enough, and then He allows them to go into captivity. That's God's consistent track record throughout the Bible. So, if we look at that subject today, we need to make sure that we're looking at it from a balanced point of view and realize Israel is promised the land, again, if they obey. That doesn't mean that we have to blindly support them in everything and never ask any questions and never use any discernment in looking at the subject.

But as I mentioned at the beginning of this sermon, there's coming a time here in the millennium after Christ's return, when Israel's going to be restored to the land. And they're actually going to receive all of the Promised Land this time. Everything from the Nile to the Euphrates. And to see this prophesied, let's turn over to Ezekiel 37. The second half of Ezekiel 37 here tells us about not only this restoration, but it's also the reunification of Israel. Because you're probably familiar with the story that, after the reign of King Solomon -- in fact, as a result of Solomon's sins and his disobedience with God -- part of the punishment was God stripped away the northern 10 tribes and had them separated from the nation of Judah. And from that time forward, there was the nation of Judah and the nation of Israel. And they were separate entities, ruled by separate kings and taken into captivity at different times.

What the book of Ezekiel here, in chapter 37 tells us is during the millennium, God's going to reunite them back together, and He's going to restore them to the land. And the reason it's going to work this time, and the reason that they're going to be able to inhabit all of this land, is because they're actually going to obey Him. And to see that, pick up in Ezekiel 37, here in verse 15.

**Ezek 37:15** *“Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 16) “As for you, son of man, take a stick for yourself and write on it: ‘For Judah and for the children of Israel, his companions.’ Then take another stick and write on it, ‘For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel, his companions.’ 17) Then join them one to another for yourself into one stick, and they will become one in your hand. 18) “And when the children of your people speak to you, saying, ‘Will you not show us what you mean by these?’— 19) say to them, “Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Surely I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will join them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand.” ’ 20) And the sticks on which you write will be in your hand before their eyes. 21) “Then say to them, “Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; 22) and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. 23) They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God. 24) “David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. 25) Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children’s children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever. 26) Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. 27) My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 28) The nations also will know that I, the LORD, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.” ’ ” (NKJV)*

See, not only will they be reunited together and restored in the land, as you can see here, they're actually going to be obedient to Him. See, this is why it's going to be successful this time. And why they're going to be able to inhabit all of the land. It's because they're actually going to obey God. Because, at this point, He's going to address the fundamental problem that caused them not to succeed in their previous covenant.

And to see what I'm referring to, turn over to Deuteronomy 5. In Deuteronomy 5 here, a lot of this chapter is Moses recounting the Mount Sinai account. The original account is in Exodus 20, where God gave them the Ten Commandments, and then they make the covenant. Moses is basically recounting this story to the Israelites here, in the latter part of the 40 years of their wandering in the wilderness. But notice here in verse 28, God's reaction and a statement that He makes to Moses after the people all agree to obey. Because God knew, knowing their heart, that they weren't going to ultimately be

successful, that it would just be a matter of time before they would go astray. This is Deuteronomy 5:28.

**Deu 5:28** *"Then the LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me: 'I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They are right in all that they have spoken. 29) Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!'"* (NKJV)

See, He knew, knowing human nature, that they had a heart problem. He could give them His instructions of His law. He could show them all these miracles. He could try to set them up for success in this wonderful Promised Land and try to make everything good for them. And being fundamentally flawed as carnal human beings with the influence of Satan, they were just ultimately going to wind up failing. They were going to wind up going astray. See, during the millennium, God's going to actually address this problem, and that's why this is going to be successful. And to see this, turn over to Ezekiel 36, and we'll pick up here in verse 24.

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

Again, this is telling us the same thing that we read in the latter part of chapter 37, God bringing them all together and restoring them in the land. But notice the next several verses. Now, He's addressing the heart problem. This is the issue that caused them to not be successful and to get evicted from the land historically.

*"25) Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26) I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27) I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. 28) Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God."* (NKJV)

See, they're going to continually dwell in the land and be successful because they're obeying Him. Now let's dig into a little more detail of what exactly He's saying here by changing their hearts. Because in my experience -- all of my life in the Church of God -- these couple of verses here typically get misinterpreted, and we come away with a false conclusion that's not exactly what Ezekiel's trying to tell us here. Because the conclusion that's always been asserted most of my life in the Church of God is that a "heart of flesh" is synonymous with a converted heart with the Holy Spirit. Because the Bible also refers to conversion as having the commandments written on your heart. And that's obviously referring to conversion with the Holy Spirit. But this doesn't say that. This says a *"heart of flesh"*.

And see, we also have to consider that the timing here is obviously at the beginning of the millennium. When did Jesus Christ Himself tell us that the Holy Spirit would be made available to all mankind? Now, keep your finger here in Ezekiel 36. Let's turn over to John 7. And let's notice when Christ Himself announced that the Holy Spirit would be made available to all of mankind. This is in John 7:37.

**John 7:37** *"On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38) He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"* (NKJV)

Now, we don't have to guess in any way whatsoever what He's referring to because verse 39 is just going to very directly tell us.

*"39) But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."* (NKJV)

So, Christ Himself made a big deal out of specifically announcing on the Eighth Day, the Last Great Day, that the Holy Spirit would be made available to all of mankind. Now, if it's made available to all of mankind at the beginning of the millennium, isn't Christ about a week late making this announcement? Shouldn't He have made it on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles if that's what it applied to? But yet He skipped the entire Feast of Tabernacles and did it on the Eighth Day. He must have had a reason for that.

If we just notice the fact that our traditional interpretation of these verses in Ezekiel 36 -- and you probably want to be turning back over there because we're about to dissect this in more detail -- we have a direct contradiction with Christ's own statements. But now let's notice the wording now in greater detail and pay attention. And when we dig in here, we'll see that's not exactly what Ezekiel is getting at here. He's not referring to conversion. Because notice here again in verse 26.

**Ezek 36:26** *"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh."* (NKJV)

Notice they're flesh to start with. And He's saying, I'm taking the stone out of your flesh. And what are you left with? Your "heart of flesh". Now, is He taking the stone out of their already converted heart and just leaving them with their conversion? That doesn't really make sense, does it? So, just to shed a little light on this, the word "flesh" there is translated from the Hebrew word "basar". It's Strong's # 1320. And the definition I'm going to read to you comes from The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the Old Testament by Warren Baker and Eugene Carpenter. He defines it as:

*"A masculine noun whose basic meaning is flesh.....It is also used of the animal body....the human body....and human frailty."*

Let's notice another scripture where this word is used just to help clarify what we're talking about here. Turn over to Jeremiah 17. And we'll see another verse here that uses this exact word, and we'll see obviously that "flesh" is not referring to conversion. It's kind of the opposite. It's Jeremiah 17:5.

**Jer 17:5** *"Thus says the LORD: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man And makes flesh his strength, Whose heart departs from the LORD. 6) For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, And shall not see when good comes, But shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, In a salt land which is not inhabited. 7) "Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, And whose hope is the LORD. 8) For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit." (NKJV)*

So, you can see here when it's referring to depending on your "flesh", it's not referring to a converted heart with the Holy Spirit. It's depending on our own physical abilities. That is what it's referring to here. But now think about what Ezekiel was saying in Ezekiel 36. He says He's going to take the stone out of your "flesh", and then you'll just be left with "flesh". Remember, what is it that gives us a heart of stone? That's Satan's influence. That's the spiritual battle that we have to fight. And to see that, turn over to Ephesians 2, and we'll start reading in verse 1.

**Eph 2:1** *"And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2) in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3) among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others." (NKJV)*

So, again, what makes us children of wrath and hostile to God? Satan's influence and the influence of his demons. And see, this is what makes obeying God so difficult and so impossible when we don't have God's Holy Spirit. And just to see this further emphasized, turn over to chapter 6 and verse 12.

**Eph 6:12** *"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (NKJV)*

See, that is what makes it impossible for us to be successful as carnal human beings. Even just obeying the letter of God's law, even under the best of circumstances, which is what He tried to give ancient Israel. He set them up in their own land where they could be away from pagan nations. And He set them up with an infrastructure already provided for them, and with leadership there for them and gave them His law. He tried to give them every advantage and yet they still didn't succeed. Why is that?

Because they have to fight a spiritual battle, and they're fighting a spiritual battle with physical means. So, they're basically bringing a knife to a gunfight, and they're going to lose. But we have to remember, when we're talking about the millennium -- that's what Ezekiel 36 is addressing there -- taking this heart of stone away from them. What else is going to happen during the millennium? Turn over to Revelation 20. We'll see here the source of the stony heart is removed because it's Satan's influence. It's Revelation 20:1.

**Rev 20:1** *"Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2) He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3) and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while."* (NKJV)

We won't take the time to read from verse 7 on down, but that's when Satan is released again. That's during the Eighth Day period. But during the thousand-year millennium, Satan is removed. As we read there in Ephesians, he is the source of this spiritual battle. He is the one that gives us the heart of stone. So, just think about it. If you take flesh and blood mankind, and you remove the source, the spiritual evil source, that gives them a heart of stone, what would they be left with? A heart of flesh. It would be exactly what's on the page. He's taking out of their flesh the stony heart and leaving them with a heart of flesh.

Now, that's not a heart that's converted with the Holy Spirit. That's a heart that doesn't have the influence of Satan and his demons. But now, turn back over to Ephesians 36. Let's unpack another statement here that's often misunderstood. Ezekiel 36, and this time we'll pick up in verse 27.

**Ezek 36:27** *"I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them."* (NKJV)

Now, the beginning of that sentence there certainly sounds like He's saying, "I'm going to convert them and put the Holy Spirit within them." But let's also keep in mind that the word "within" there can also be translated "in your midst". In fact, if you look in Young's Literal Translation, you'll see that's how they translate this verse. In fact, just to give you the Hebrew word here, it's transliterated into English as "qereb". It's Strong's # 7130, and the definition I'm going to read to you is from The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the Old Testament by Warren Baker and Eugene Carpenter. And he defines it as:

*"A masculine noun meaning midst, middle, interior, inner part, inner organs, bowels, inner being."*

Let me also give you another example from another scripture that the New King James translates exactly the same way. It uses the words "spirit within", but the context is going to make it painfully obvious to us what he's referring to. Turn over to Isaiah 63, because we'll see here where this same type of statement is made, but it's in the

context of ancient Israel and Moses leading the Israelites through the Red Sea. And we know at that timeframe, He wasn't offering salvation and the New Covenant to ancient Israel. We know that's not the case. Pick up here in Isaiah 63:11.

**Is 63:11** *"Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, saying: 'Where is He who brought them up out of the sea With the shepherd of His flock? Where is He who put His Holy Spirit within them,'" (NKJV)*

Notice that's worded in the New King James here exactly the way Ezekiel 36 is, but let's just keep reading the context.

*"12) Who led them by the right hand of Moses, With His glorious arm, Dividing the water before them To make for Himself an everlasting name, 13) Who led them through the deep, As a horse in the wilderness, That they might not stumble?" (NKJV)*

The context here is obviously referring to Moses leading the Israelites through the Red Sea, in their journey out of Egypt. And we know for a fact they weren't offered the Holy Spirit and salvation at that time. So, obviously, He's referring to putting His Spirit "in their midst". God's presence is there. He's leading them from the cloud. He's there in the tabernacle, when they come to sacrifice and to worship Him. His Spirit is working with them. But He's not giving them conversion at that time.

See, that's what Ezekiel is referring to there when He refers to a "heart of flesh". Because again, it's not a heart of conversion. It's a heart of flesh with Satan's influence - the stony influence -- removed, and His Spirit is working with the people, but it's not offering conversion.

See, this is why when you look at the details of the promises of the millennium, what do you see? A physical temple, a Levitical priesthood. You see the sacrifices. You see all of the elements of Old Covenant Israel because it's an Old Covenant environment. Again, if you want to study these subjects in more detail, there are sermons and even study papers addressing this on my website that'll go into this in a lot more detail than I'm going to cover today.

Turn back over to Ezekiel 37, because if you remember, I mentioned before that one of the reasons that God started off giving the Israelites the Promised Land -- in this more narrower definition, primarily focusing on the area that's literally the nation of Israel today. The land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. And He focused on the land of Canaan and even gave them a little east of the Jordan River -- part of what's now modern-day Jordan. And that's the area that they occupied, but they didn't take all of the area between the Nile and the Euphrates. He even directly told them, "I'm not going to give you all of this at once because you don't have the population to be able to manage this."

See, what's going to happen during the millennium is now they're going to have a population large enough to manage all of this. Because you see, when the millennium gets going, we're not just dealing with the survivors of the Day of the LORD. God's going to resurrect all of mankind, all those who haven't had their opportunity at salvation, who now get their chance going forward. He's bringing all of them back to life. And Ezekiel 37 specifically tells us of the time when He's resurrecting all the house of Israel. As this chapter tells us, "the whole house of Israel". He's resurrecting all of them and placing them in the land. Now they have a population big enough to warrant all of this land.

So, now we're going to read through the first half of the chapter here from verse 1 through verse 14. But also, pay attention to something else as we read through this, because this is going to help us when we get to verse 14. Notice how many times as we read through this you see the words "breath" or "breathe" in English. Now, the reason I point that out is there's a Hebrew word that's "ruah". It's basically "ruah" or "ruach" depending upon which lexicon that you look at. But basically, it's a Hebrew word that can be translated as "breath" or "breathe". It can also be translated as "spirit". Because in Hebrew they use one word that can encompass all of those meanings, and context is what defines which meaning is correct.

Now in English we separate them, and when we refer to "spirit" that's a different thing for us than "breath" or "breathe". But in Hebrew they lump it all together into one word. Now the reason I point that out is we're going to see that there is a translation error in verse 14, and that causes some confusion. But just pay attention to that as we read through this. Now starting in chapter 37 in verse 1.

**Ezek 37:1** *"The hand of the LORD came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones."* (NKJV)

Now, the word "spirit" there in verse 1, that's "ruah" as well. But that's obviously correctly translated as "spirit" because again it's referring to God's Spirit and Ezekiel receiving a supernatural vision to see all of this. So, obviously "spirit" is the correct translation. But as you're going to see, as we read through this, all the other times are obviously referring to "breath" or "breathe" because the context makes that obvious.

*"2) Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed they were very dry. 3) And He said to me, 'Son of man, can these bones live?' So I answered, 'O Lord GOD, You know.' 4) Again He said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! 5) Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: 'Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. 6) I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the LORD.' ' ' 7) So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. 8) Indeed, as I looked, the*

*sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them. 9) Also He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath, "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.' " " 10) So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army. 11) Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!' 12) Therefore prophecy and say to them, "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. 13) Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves.' "*  
(NKJV)

Now notice the whole emphasis as we've seen "ruah" here. It's repeatedly translated as "breath" or "breathe" numerous times through those verses. Because the whole focus here is these dry bones, and they're being resurrected and brought back to life. The breath of life is being put into them. That's been the context all the way up to this point. But now pay attention to verse 14.

*"14) I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken it and performed it," says the LORD.' "*(NKJV)

Now think about what it's saying here. Now, it's translated "spirit" here in New King James, but think about this. Does it make sense that God's going to give them the Holy Spirit, then bring them back to life after He's converted them when they weren't even alive yet? And then He's going to give them a place to live? Does that make sense? Or does it make more sense that He's putting the breath of life in them, and then they come back to life, and then He gives them a place to live?

See, obviously, the translators here should have put "breath" here rather than "spirit" because that's really what He's referring to here. Because see, He's basically resurrecting all of the Israelites throughout history -- who haven't had their chance at salvation yet -- and they're all being brought back together. This results in a huge population. See, now you have a population that can fill up the land between the Nile and the Euphrates, and they can all dwell in this land.

Now let me address one other common misunderstanding here as well. If you've been in the Church of God for any length of time, you're probably familiar with the fact that this resurrection here in Ezekiel 37 in the first half of this chapter oftentimes gets referred to with the term "second resurrection". Now, just to emphasize my point here, try to find that term "second resurrection" or the other term that we've made up, "third resurrection". Find those in the Bible anywhere. You'll be searching for the rest of your life. They're made-up terms. They're not in the Bible.

Now I'll only briefly address this subject today. There is a study paper and a sermon on my website that'll go into this in a lot more detail for you if you're interested. But where this comes from is Revelation 20 does refer to the term "first resurrection". We unfortunately made the assumption that was establishing a numerical order, and therefore, if you have "first", then "second" and "third" made sense. But what you'll see if you study that subject is the Greek word there for "first", it can also mean the "primary", the "first in honor", or in "rank". Because what it's really getting at in that chapter is "first resurrection" is just another way of saying "resurrection to eternal life". And so, it's not establishing a numerical order.

We unfortunately have misunderstood the term "rest of the dead" as well. And see, that is the whole reason why people look at this chapter and then try to put this resurrection in the Eighth Day period. Because just read through the latter part of chapter 36, and then what we've already read of chapter 37. Everything about the context here is the beginning of the millennium and God restoring Israel to the land. Obviously, this resurrection fits at the beginning of the millennium, not during the Eighth Day period.

But what you can see when you put all this together and understand this correctly is this is foretelling for us of the time when Israel will finally receive all of the Promised Land. Because as we saw in the beginning of this sermon, when God made His covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15, He ultimately promised him all of the land between the Nile River and the Euphrates River. Again, a huge area of the Middle East. Up to this day, Israel has never received all of that. At the most that they've occupied what today is Israel and part of Lebanon and part of Western Jordan today. That's about the most that they've ever historically been able to occupy in all of their history.

We can look forward to the time here after Christ's return when this is going to be fulfilled. When Israel will be able to inherit all of this land. And even more so than that, they will be able to faithfully obey God. They will have Satan's influence removed, their heart of stone taken out of them, so they will have a heart of flesh. In the Eighth Day period, they'll have the opportunity to receive God's Spirit and have His commandments written upon their heart. But during this period, they'll have a heart of flesh, and they'll be able to faithfully obey God and to finally inherit all of the Promised Land.