

IS THE
MODERN
STATE OF ISRAEL
BIBLICALLY ENTITLED
TO
THE LAND OF PROMISE?



'Inquire for the Old Paths.' Jer. 6:16.

BIBLE STUDENTS'

TRACTS.



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IS THE MODERN STATE OF ISRAEL BIBLICALLY ENTITLED TO THE LAND OF PROMISE?

A Scriptural examination of the Abrahamic promise, the New Covenant, and the condition of faith

FEW questions in contemporary Christian discussion carry greater political and moral weight than this one: does the modern State of Israel occupy the land of Palestine by divine right? The claim is made with considerable confidence in certain quarters—by Evangelical Christians and politicians on both sides of the Atlantic, and by public figures who invoke the Abrahamic promise *as though it were a title deed requiring no further conditions*. Scripture, examined carefully, tells a rather different story.

The argument that follows is not a political one, though it has unavoidable political implications. It is a Scriptural one. The question being addressed is straightforward: on the basis of what the Bible actually teaches, do the present occupants of the land—the majority of whom do not recognise Jesus Christ as Messiah—have a valid covenantal claim to it? And the answer, it will be argued, is that they *do not—not yet*, and not until certain clearly defined Scriptural conditions are met.

This article argues that, according to Scripture, covenantal entitlement to the land is inseparable from *faith in Christ*—and, in due course, participation in the New Covenant. Central to this argument is a distinction *the Scriptures themselves draw*: the Abrahamic promise, made to the one seed which is Christ, finds fulfilment in two distinct classes of heirs—one heavenly, one earthly—developed in sequence.

PHYSICAL DESCENT IS NOT ENOUGH

The foundational question is whether physical descent from Abraham confers entitlement to the promises God made to his seed. Many assume it does. But St. Paul addresses this directly in Romans 9, and his answer is unambiguous. Significantly, St. Paul does not simply state a theological proposition here—he *mourns*. He expresses deep, personal sorrow over his kinsmen according to the flesh, and the reason for that sorrow is theologically precise:

'I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. . . For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children. . . That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.'

—(Romans 9:2, 6-8)

If ancestry alone guaranteed blessing, there would be nothing to grieve over. St. Paul mourns precisely because it does not. His kinsmen, to whom belonged *'the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises'* (Romans 9:4), are—in their condition of *unbelief—not counted* as children of the promise and therefore *not heirs* of what was promised.



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The identity of the true seed is then made explicit in Galatians:

'Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.'

—(Galatians 3:16)

The distinction is precise and deliberate: St. Paul does not say 'seeds', as of many, but 'seed', as of one—and that one seed is Christ. All participation in the Abrahamic promise, *whether heavenly or earthly* in its expression, flows through *this one seed alone*. Fleshly descent from Abraham, however extensive, does not constitute membership of that seed—*only union with Christ* does.

'And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.'

—(Galatians 3:29)

This is the consistent testimony of Scripture—and it was expressed with equal clarity by Pastor Russell:

"Fleshly Israel lost this, the cream or choicest part of the covenant—the spiritual. . . 'Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it.'"

Pastor C. T. Russell—*Zion's Watch Tower*, 1909 (*Be Ye Not Forgetful Readers*)

Shallieu's commentary on Romans 11 reinforces the same point, noting what was at stake for Israel had they remained faithful:

"There were two promises to the Jew: a natural promise and a spiritual promise. . . had the Jews been faithful, God would have made of them 'a kingdom of priests' (Exod. 19:6)."

Frank Shallieu—*New Testament Studies*, Romans 11

It is worth pausing to anticipate an objection here. Some argue that St. Paul's use of 'seed' in Galatians 3:16 applies specifically to the spiritual promises—justification by faith and the gift of the Spirit—but leaves the land promise intact as a separate, unconditional grant to ethnic Israel operating on different terms. On this reading, the spiritual and territorial promises are treated as two distinct tracks, with faith governing the former and ethnicity governing the latter.

This distinction, however, finds no support in St. Paul's own handling of the matter. St. Paul speaks throughout Galatians 3 not of separate categories of promise but of 'the promises' and 'the promise' as a unified whole (Galatians 3:14, 16, 17, 18, 29). He makes no distinction between a spiritual promise governed by faith and a territorial promise governed by descent. Moreover, in Romans 4:13 St. Paul explicitly frames the scope of the Abrahamic inheritance in the broadest possible terms:

'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.'

—(Romans 4:13)

This extends rather than limits what the promise encompasses, grounding the whole of it in faith. The attempt to carve out the land promise as a separate track immune from the conditions St. Paul applies to the rest is therefore an imposition upon the text rather than a conclusion drawn from it.



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That Abraham himself received the promise through faith, not through the flesh, is established by St. Paul in Romans 4:

‘Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham.’

—(Romans 4:16)

The promise was secured by grace and received by faith—and those who inherit it do so on the same basis. St. Paul is equally explicit in Galatians 3:18:

‘For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.’

—(Galatians 3:18)

It is sometimes argued that the land grant to Abraham was unconditional and therefore irrevocable—that because God alone passed between the pieces in Genesis 15 whilst Abraham slept, the covenant required nothing of Abraham’s descendants and cannot be forfeited. This argument, however, conflates two distinct things: the unconditional nature of the promise made *to Abraham personally* and the conditions attached to the *inheritance of that promise* by his seed.

St. Paul makes this plain: the children of the flesh are not the children of God—it is the children of the promise who are counted for the seed (Romans 9:8). The unconditional nature of the grant to Abraham is therefore entirely consistent with the conditional nature of its inheritance by his seed—and those conditions **require faith in Christ**. As Russell observed:

“God’s promise. . . is most absolutely a covenant and binding agreement. . . he bound his promise with an oath. . . The Covenant, that was confirmed. . . before of God in Christ, the Law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.”

Pastor C. T. Russell—*Zion’s Watch Tower*, R1909 (*The Abrahamic Covenant Not the New Covenant*)

A further objection frequently raised in defence of unconditional support for the modern State of Israel draws on God’s words to Abraham in Genesis 12:3—*‘I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee’*—and related passages such as Numbers 24:9, Psalm 122:6, and Zechariah 2:8, which speak of blessing Israel and of touching God’s people as touching the apple of His eye. These verses are regularly invoked as a divine mandate requiring Christians and nations to support the modern State of Israel politically and militarily, and as a warning that those who criticise or oppose it risk bringing a curse upon themselves.

This application, however, cannot survive the argument already established in this article. The blessing and cursing promises are addressed to *the covenantal Israel*—the Israel that stands in a living, recognised relationship with God. They presuppose precisely what the article has demonstrated the modern State of Israel does not presently possess: *covenantal standing before God*. A people who are, by St. Paul’s own testimony, broken-off branches, outside the covenant, not counted as the seed, and not children of the promise (Romans 9:6-8; 11:17-20) cannot simultaneously be the Israel to whom these covenantal blessings and protections are addressed. To invoke Genesis 12:3 or Psalm 122:6 in defence of the present State is therefore to assume the very thing that must first be proven—that this State stands in the covenantal relationship those passages presuppose—and that assumption, as this article has shown, is without Scriptural foundation.



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The blessing of Abraham flows through Christ and to those who are in Christ (Galatians 3:14). It will flow through a restored, believing, New Covenant Israel when that nation is grafted back in and recognises Christ as its Messiah. Until that time, there is no Scriptural obligation—and *no Scriptural basis*—for treating the modern secular State of Israel as the recipient of covenantal protection or the object of covenantal blessing.

The Abrahamic promises—including *the promise of land*—belong in the first instance to Christ. Only those who belong to Christ are counted as Abraham's seed and heirs. **Fleshly descent, in and of itself, confers nothing.**

St. Paul's language in Ephesians 2 makes this point with particular force. He describes Gentiles before Christ as *'without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world'* (Ephesians 2:12). The irony the present situation presents is that this is now precisely the condition of unbelieving Israel itself—strangers from the covenants of promise, without the Mediator of those covenants, and therefore without the covenantal standing the promises presuppose. The condition that once defined Gentile exclusion now defines the exclusion of those who reject Christ, regardless of their ethnicity. Russell observed this levelling of the distinction between Jew and Gentile with equal clarity:

"The Apostle is addressing Christians—converts from heathen nations—Gentiles, and is showing that the difference, in God's estimation, between Jew and Gentile, has now ceased. The Jew once had special favour, brought about by the typical sin offerings, though it was only typical of the real favour with God, which the gospel church enjoys — brought about by the better sacrifice and the better covenant than the law."

Pastor C. T. Russell—*Destroying the Enmity*, R503–504

Russell made the conditional nature of the inheritance equally plain elsewhere, stating that faith was the indispensable divine condition—not descent:

"To the twelve tribes of Israel, the natural seed of Abraham, pertained originally the great promise of God made to Abraham. By natural heredity, then, God's offer or proposition to bless the world belonged to fleshly Israel, as the divine instruments, if they would comply with the divine conditions. But one of the divine conditions was that they should have the faith of Abraham, and should not be considered the promised seed of Abraham without that faith, since Abraham was to be the Father of the Faithful."

Pastor C. T. Russell—*Blessing God and Cursing Men*, R2442–2443

This point—that exclusion from the covenants is defined by being without Christ rather than by ethnicity—was developed at length by Joseph Moffitt in the same journal:

"Before Christ came the descendants of Israel, called 'the Circumcision', had a polity or citizenship of their own, but the other nations of the earth, called 'the Uncircumcision', had neither part nor lot in the matter. Before Christ came the Circumcision were under 'covenants of promise,' but the Uncircumcision were 'strangers and foreigners' to all that they contained. . . Without the Christ all men are without 'the hope' in the world."

Joseph Moffitt—*One Hope*, R1434–1435 (*Zion's Watch Tower*)

THE ALLEGORY OF HAGAR AND SARAH

St. Paul reinforces this principle in Galatians 4 through the allegory of Hagar and Sarah. Hagar's son, born of the flesh, was not the heir. Sarah's son, born through promise, was.



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The application is unmistakable:

'Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.'

—(Galatians 4:30)

'Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.'

—(Galatians 4:28)

It is Christians—Jew and Gentile alike, **united by faith in Christ**—who are the children of promise. Not the Jewish nation in St. Paul's day in their unbelief, and not, *by the same reasoning*, the unbelieving inhabitants of the modern State of Israel. Russell stated the typological significance of this allegory with equal precision:

"As years rolled by, and no child came, they began to look for a fulfilment in some other way, and Hagar takes the place of a wife and bears a son, who apparently is to be the heir. So the original promise of God meant Christ, but He was not born until 'due time', and in the meantime 'The Law' was given from Sinai, apparently taking the place of the covenant, and under the law covenant a fleshly seed was developed—fleshly Israel. But the Abrahamic covenant had not failed, and after the Hagar covenant had borne fleshly Israel (typified by Ishmael), the true seed of Abraham and heir is born, under the first (or Sarah) covenant; i. e., Christ Jesus and the members of His body—spiritual Israel."

Pastor C. T. Russell—Zion's Watch Tower, 1909 (*Be Ye Not Forgetful Readers*)

CHRIST AND JOHN THE BAPTIST ON LINEAGE

Both John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ addressed this question directly, rebuking those who rested on Abrahamic ancestry as a guarantee of divine favour:

'Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.'

—(Luke 3:8)

'If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. . . Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.'

—(John 8:39, 44)

These are not mild qualifications. Christ told certain Jews plainly that being of Abraham's loins did not make them Abraham's children in any spiritually significant sense. The vine metaphor of John 15 extends the principle universally:

'I am the vine, ye are the branches. . . without me ye can do nothing. . . Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.'

—(John 15:5-6)

Disconnected from Christ, no branch—*whether Jewish or Gentile*—can bear fruit or inherit blessing. Fleshly Israel in unbelief *cannot presently participate* in the promises.



THE ROLE OF THE LAW AND THE LESSONS OF HISTORY

The Law was never intended to annul the Abrahamic promise—St. Paul states this explicitly in Galatians 3:17. It was added to demonstrate Israel’s incapacity to meet God’s righteous standard in their own strength, and to make plain the consequences of persistent unbelief. The history of Israel is, in this respect, deeply instructive: **disobedience led to expulsion from the land; restoration was always conditional upon repentance and faith.**

Christ himself wept over Jerusalem and foretold its destruction as a direct consequence of Israel’s rejection of him (Luke 19:41-44; Matthew 24:1-2). His lament in Matthew 23 is particularly striking:

‘O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.’

—(Matthew 23:37-39)

The parable of the wicked husbandmen (Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12) reinforces the same truth. The reason for Israel’s casting off is made explicit in what immediately follows—Christ’s application of the rejected cornerstone prophecy of Isaiah 28:16:

‘Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.’

—(Matthew 21:42-44)

The same cornerstone prophecy is taken up by St. Paul in Romans 9:33—‘Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed’—**making faith in Christ** the explicit dividing line between those who stumble and those who do not. Israel stumbled at Christ through unbelief and was broken off; the believing remnant of Jews, and the Gentiles grafted in, did not.

St. Peter then identifies precisely who constitutes this new nation to which the Kingdom was given:

‘Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people. . . Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God.’

—(1 Peter 2:7-10)

This holy nation, this royal priesthood, is the heavenly class of Abraham’s heirs—the Little Flock, the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16)—drawn from both faithful Jews and Gentiles, united by faith in Christ the cornerstone. It is to this spiritual nation that the Kingdom was transferred, not to any earthly political entity.

The destruction of the Temple and the dispersion that followed were the historical confirmation of Israel’s casting off—though not, as St. Paul insists, a final or irrevocable rejection. Christ’s use of the



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word ‘till’ in Matthew 23:39 is crucial in this regard—it points forward to a future moment of national recognition, as St. Paul makes clear in Romans 11:26–27. Russell stated the temporary character of this casting off plainly:

“We should think not of Israel as being cast off forever, but merely disfavoured of God for a limited period—during the time of the calling and approving and acceptance of the elect number of spiritual Israel, whose first members were gathered from the Jewish nation and whose completeness is to be made up from amongst the Gentiles.”

Pastor C. T. Russell—*Zion’s Watch Tower*, 1909 (*The Seed of Abraham and Its Work*)

BROKEN BRANCHES AND THE CONDITIONS FOR RESTORATION

Romans 11 is the pivotal passage on this matter. St. Paul insists that God has not cast away His people—that they have not stumbled beyond remedy. The natural branches have been broken off; the Gentiles have been grafted in. But the broken branches can and will be grafted back in:

‘And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again.’

—(Romans 11:23)

Shallieu’s exposition of the olive tree passage illuminates the mechanics of this grafting:

“Gentiles, the branches of the wild tree, were grafted into the cultivated tree to replace the broken-off Jewish branches. . . . Because only a remnant, a small number of Jews, accepted Jesus as Messiah, God sent out the call to Gentiles to fill up the predestined number of 144,000 [and] thus grafted Gentile branches into the natural olive tree to fill up the number. The Gentiles were not to boast against the Jewish branches, for they did not bear the root, but the root bore them.”

Frank Shallieu—*New Testament Studies*, Romans 11

St. Paul stated the condition for re-grafting plainly: **they must cease to abide in unbelief.**

‘Jews can be re-engrafted during the Gospel Age, but they will definitely be re-engrafted in the future.’

Frank Shallieu—*New Testament Studies*, Romans 11:24

He then looks forward to the glorious culmination of this process:

‘And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.’

—(Romans 11:26–27)

It is worth observing carefully what St. Paul says here: *‘this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.’* **The grafting back in of fleshly Israel is not a separate act from the New Covenant—it is the New Covenant.** The two are the same event described from different angles, and this is where the thread connecting the Abrahamic promise to its ultimate fulfilment becomes fully visible.

It should be noted that ‘all Israel’ in Romans 11:26 is interpreted differently by some commentators, who read it as referring not to fleshly Israel but to the full number of spiritual Israel—the complete elect Church. On this reading, ‘all Israel shall be saved’ is a reference to the completion of the 144,000 rather than to a future national restoration of fleshly Israel. The context of Romans 11, however, makes the fleshly Israel interpretation the more natural and compelling one. St. Paul’s entire argument in Romans 11 is built around the olive tree metaphor—natural branches broken off, wild branches grafted in, and natural branches capable of being grafted back in again. The subject throughout is fleshly Israel



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in its national condition of unbelief and its future restoration. To read ‘all Israel’ in verse 26 as suddenly switching reference to spiritual Israel would be to abandon the thread St. Paul has been developing consistently throughout the chapter. Moreover, St. Paul’s quotation in verses 26–27—*‘There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob’*—uses ‘Jacob’ as a direct reference to the natural descendants of the patriarchs, not to the Church. Shallieu’s commentary confirms this reading precisely:

“When the fullness of the Gentiles is brought in—that is, after the Church is complete and in glory—‘all Israel’ (the Holy Remnant) will be saved.”

Frank Shallieu—*New Testament Studies, Romans 11*

Russell expressed the same understanding:

“[When] this elect number of Spiritual Israel is complete, God’s favour will return to Natural Israel, ‘Jacob,’ and then ‘All Israel shall be saved’—recovered from the blindness and stumbling which came upon them when God thrust them aside until first Spiritual Israel should be gathered. The Apostle explains that then God will fulfil his promise to Israel: ‘For this is my Covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.’”

Pastor C. T. Russell—*Zion’s Watch Tower, R1909 (The Seed of Abraham and Its Work)*

The salvation of ‘all Israel’ is therefore *not* a reference to heavenly glory or eternal life in the spiritual sense—it is the recovery of fleshly Israel from the blindness and rejection into which they fell as a nation when they stumbled at Christ at his first advent. That blindness, which has persisted for nearly nineteen centuries, will be lifted only when the elect class has been completed and the full number of the Gentiles has come in. At that point God’s favour will return to fleshly Israel, and they will be *the first nation* to receive blessing under the new order that will then prevail—sharing in the very earthly blessings they expected when they were broken off, received back not to heavenly glory but to the earthly portion of the Abrahamic promise.

The double provision of the Abrahamic covenant—one class heavenly, one earthly—will then find its complete expression, with spiritual Israel already glorified and fleshly Israel restored to favour through the New Covenant mediated by Christ. Both classes of heirs were foreshadowed in the promise God confirmed to Abraham after his supreme act of faith:

‘That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.’

—(Genesis 22:17)

The stars of heaven and the sand of the seashore—the *heavenly and the earthly classes*, both sharing in the *one promise* made to Abraham, both finding their fulfilment *through Christ the seed*.

Shallieu identifies this dual imagery explicitly:

“The Abrahamic Covenant has two seeds: (1) a natural seed that is likened to the sand of the seashore, and (2) a spiritual seed that is compared to the stars of heaven.”

Frank Shallieu—*New Testament Studies, Romans 11*

Russell likewise observed:

“God intends to recognize two seeds of Abraham, the one heavenly, like unto the stars of heaven; the other earthly, like unto the sands of the seashore. The attempt of the Law Covenant to bring forth the natural seed first was



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abortive—a failure. First must come the spiritual Christ, Head and Body, partaker of the divine nature, heir of all things. Then God's favour will return to natural Israel."

Pastor C. T. Russell—*Zion's Watch Tower*, R1909 (*The Three Great Covenants*)

Until that time, the vast majority of Jews—whether in Israel or elsewhere—remain in the condition St. Paul describes: broken-off branches, outside the covenant, not counted as the seed. Indeed, as St. Paul states plainly:

'What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.'

—(*Romans 11:7*)

They are, as he tenderly notes, *'beloved for the fathers' sakes'* (*Romans 11:28*), and God has *not abandoned* His ultimate purpose for them. But to be *'beloved'* is not the same as being *presently* entitled to *the land and the promises* made to Abraham's seed. Their present occupation of the land requires a *different explanation entirely*.

PROVIDENCE, APPROVAL, AND MORAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Before examining the conduct of the nations, it is worth establishing the Scriptural standard by which Christians are to evaluate such matters. The Christian's citizenship is not earthly but heavenly—*'For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ'* (*Philippians 3:20*). Their warfare is not carnal—*'For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds'* (*2 Corinthians 10:4*). They are called to be at peace with all men as far as it lies within them (*Romans 12:18*), to love their neighbours and even their enemies (*Matthew 5:44*), and to remain politically neutral, owing allegiance to no earthly state or power. It is precisely this standard that makes the invocation of Scripture to justify military aggression and the mass killing of civilians so deeply troubling—and it is against this standard that the conduct of the nations must be measured.

A necessary distinction must be drawn at this point between God *permitting* events and God *approving* them. Jehovah has always been willing to use unrighteous nations as instruments for the outworking of His purposes—to punish, to discipline, to drive events toward their appointed end. It is entirely possible that the return of the Jewish people to the land is, in this sense, providentially arranged—a preparation for the final act, when the New Covenant will find its full expression in a restored and believing nation. But **permission is not endorsement, and being used as an instrument is not the same as being divinely sanctioned.** Russell drew this distinction explicitly in his examination of Israel's history of suffering:

"While God has permitted these afflictions and persecutions to come as a penalty for their national crime of rejection of the gospel and crucifixion of the Redeemer, he will nevertheless in due time reward the constancy of their faith in his promises, to which they have so long and so perseveringly held. God foreknew their pride and hardness of heart, and foretold it as well as the evils which have come upon them; and no less pointedly has he foretold a departing of their blindness and the ultimate fulfilment to them of all the earthly promises declared long ago to Abraham."

Pastor C. T. Russell—*Thy Kingdom Come* (*Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. III), Chapter VIII



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The application of that distinction to the modern State of Israel is made plain by Shallieu's commentary on Ezekiel 37, which identifies exactly where the current return stands in God's prophetic programme:

"Skin shows statehood, recognition as a nation from man's standpoint (from 1948 on). . . but there was no breath in them. . . even today there is still no breath. The nation cannot get the peace it wants. . . . Hence, although Israel was formed earlier, the nation will not live until the 'breath' is imparted, a stage still future."

Frank Shallieu—*Old Testament Studies*, Ezekiel 37

Statehood, then, is not the same as covenantal life. The modern return to the land is preparatory, not the fulfilment:

"The real regathering as one nation is taking place now and will continue in the future, after Jacob's Trouble."

Frank Shallieu—*Old Testament Studies*, Ezekiel 37

Thus, the modern State of Israel does not stand in an approved relationship with God. Nor does its primary sponsor, the United States of America. Both nations carry an enormous weight of blood guilt—the result of decades of military aggression, civilian casualties, and the funding and prosecution of wars whose pretexts have repeatedly proved false or fabricated. The United States has been in a near-constant state of war since its inception, responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of civilians across the globe. The callousness with which such casualties have been regarded by those in power was perhaps *nowhere more starkly expressed* than in the words of Madeleine Albright, who, when confronted with the estimate that half a million Iraqi children had died as a consequence of US sanctions, replied that the price was, in her view, worth it.

The State of Israel's conduct has been no better—and quite possibly considerably worse—all funded by billions of dollars in American military aid. Such hostility as has developed in the region toward these two nations has not sprung up from nowhere. One would have to be remarkably naive to imagine that the peoples of the Middle East are targeted simply for being Jewish, or that decades of aggression, dispossession, and destruction have produced no legitimate grievance. The portrayal of all resistance as antisemitism, and of Israeli and American conduct as *mere self-defence*, is a simplification that serves an *agenda* rather than the truth.

The United States, in its long-standing effort to preserve global pre-eminence, has repeatedly directed pressure toward the allies of its principal strategic rivals—Russia and China—often advancing policies under pretexts later shown to be unfounded or exaggerated. At times, this pressure has extended even to its own allies, including NATO members, who have been threatened with economic or political consequences for failing to align with Washington's strategic priorities. The weapons of mass destruction once alleged to be held by Iraq were never found. Iran had complied with its nuclear non-proliferation commitments before those agreements were unilaterally abandoned, and the terms initially presented to it thereafter—requiring the dismantling of its missile programme, the curtailment of its naval capacity, and the cessation of all uranium enrichment—amounted to a demand for strategic defencelessness, with no meaningful reciprocation.

It is also worth recalling that it is the United States alone that has literally made fire come down out of heaven—having dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Rev. 13:13). That same nation, and its closest ally, continue to prosecute conflicts that result in the mass killing of civilians, including women and children, whilst invoking Scripture to justify what Scripture plainly does not justify. The



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politicians and public figures who do so are compounding a *moral wrong* with something that borders on blasphemy (Jeremiah 23:16-17, 25-26).

Scripture is not silent on what awaits those who shed innocent blood (Genesis 9:5-6). Both nations will face recompense in due course.

“But yet one more wave of anguish must pass over that chastened people; for, according to the prophet, the final conflict of the battle of the great day will be in the land of Palestine. . . great will be the distress of defenceless Israel. ‘Alas!’ . . . ‘for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.’ . . . In the midst of the trouble God will reveal himself as Israel’s defender as in ancient times, when his favour was with them nationally. Their extremity will be his opportunity; and there their blindness will be removed.”

Pastor C. T. Russell—*Thy Kingdom Come (Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. III), Chapter XI*

Shallieu identifies who the survivors of that time will be, and what the message at the end of the age must contain:

“The Jewish survivors of Jacob’s Trouble will be those who lift holy hands and hearts to Jehovah. The message at the end of the age must tell of the coming holocaust and then encourage the Jews to seek Jehovah.”

Frank Shallieu—*Old Testament Studies, Zephaniah 3:16*

The present dispensation is not the end of the story. Yet beyond that coming judgment lies a purpose that has been in view since God first spoke to Abraham.

THE ABRAHAMIC PROMISE AND THE NEW COVENANT

This is perhaps the most important thread in the entire argument, and the one most frequently overlooked. When God made His promise to Abraham in Genesis 12, He declared: ‘*in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed*’ (Genesis 12:3). St. Paul identifies this declaration in Galatians as nothing less than the gospel preached beforehand:

‘And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.’

—(Galatians 3:8)

Shallieu observed that this promise was never confined to one age:

“The Abrahamic Covenant applies to all three ages—Jewish, Gospel, and Millennial. It has brought light to the nation of Israel and to Christians, and it will bring light to the world in the Kingdom.”

Frank Shallieu—*New Testament Studies, Romans 11*

The mechanism by which that blessing reaches all families of the earth is the New Covenant, inaugurated through Christ’s shed blood:

‘This cup is the new testament* in my blood, which is shed for you.’

—(Luke 22:20)

* Or ‘covenant’—God’s new agreement through Christ, replacing the old Law Covenant.



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‘And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.’

—(Hebrews 9:15)

The New Covenant is not a departure from the Abrahamic promise; it is *its fulfilment*. And it is worth noting to whom that covenant was promised—not to the Gentiles, but to the house of Israel and the house of Judah:

‘Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. . . I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. . . for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.’

—(Jeremiah 31:31, 33-34)

Russell stated this distinction with particular force:

“Not a single statement of Scripture identifies the New Covenant with the Gentiles. On the contrary, it is Israel’s New Covenant given to displace the Old or Law Covenant. . . ‘Behold the days will come, saith the Lord, when I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not according to the Covenant which I made with them when I took them by the hand and led them out of the land of Egypt.’”

Pastor C. T. Russell—*Zion’s Watch Tower*, R1909 (*The Three Great Covenants*)

Fleshly Israel is not bypassed by the New Covenant; **they are its primary addressees**. But they must enter it on exactly the same basis as everyone else—through faith, through the forgiveness of sins, and through the writing of the law upon the heart. There will be a Holy Remnant of Jews who will recognise Jesus Christ during the Time of Jacob’s Trouble (Jeremiah 30:7), as foreseen in Daniel 12:1, and Zechariah 12:10, and this will precipitate their entry into the New Covenant:

‘And they shall look upon [him] whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.’

—(Zechariah 12:10)

Shallieu’s commentary on Malachi gives one of the fullest accounts of what that moment of recognition will involve:

“Jacob’s Trouble will start when Gog and Magog are seen coming down and approaching Jerusalem. The Jews will experience real fear, knowing that the situation is hopeless from a natural standpoint. The conversion of the Holy Remnant has to be a greater experience than one like that of a drowning man who emotionally calls on God without a depth of consecration. Many Jews believe Jesus is a false Messiah, and some Orthodox Jews will even spit when his name is mentioned. For such individuals to see that Jesus truly is the Messiah will bring great fear, mourning, weeping, and contrition. That will be the conversion—when they recognize Jesus and realize the holocaust is God’s judgment coming on them to cleanse them. Not only is Israel, the land, being prepared but also the people, the Holy Remnant.”

Frank Shallieu—*Old Testament Studies*, Malachi 3:6 (1992, with excerpts from 1971)



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Shallieu's Ezekiel commentary captures the nature of this moment vividly:

"After Jacob's Trouble, the Holy Remnant will consecrate, turn to the Lord. God will pour out His spirit—the spirit of grace and of supplications—upon the Holy Remnant (Zech. 12:10). The process will start with repentance and a mourning for Jesus as for an only son. At that time, they will know that God is God, that He has opened their graves and saved them."

Frank Shallieu—*Old Testament Studies*, Ezekiel 37

Their grafting back in and their entry into the New Covenant are *one and the same moment*. And it is from that point—with Israel restored, faithful, and in covenant relationship with God through Christ—that the broader Abrahamic promise finds its full earthly expression.

"When the Kingdom is established, God will infuse breath, or spirit, into Israel, and the nation will LIVE under the New Covenant with POWER."

Frank Shallieu—*Old Testament Studies*, Ezekiel 37

Through a faithful, New Covenant Israel, under Christ's heavenly mediatorial kingship during the Millennial Kingdom, the blessing promised to all families of the earth flows outward to the nations. This is what Zechariah foresaw:

"Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you."

—(Zechariah 8:23)

The Gentiles taking hold of the skirt of a Jew in that future age is *not a picture of political affiliation*—it is a picture of the nations streaming toward a restored, faithful Israel through whom the blessing of Abraham, now fully expressed in the New Covenant, reaches all families of the earth. The Abrahamic promise, the New Covenant, the grafting back in of Israel, and the blessing of the nations are not separate things; they are *one continuous purpose moving toward its appointed fulfilment under Christ*.

CIRCUMCISION, THE LAW, AND THE NEW STANDARD OF HEIRSHIP

One further consideration seals the argument against any claim based on fleshly lineage. The original covenant with Abraham required circumcision as its token and seal. Yet St. Paul is unequivocal that physical circumcision is now *nothing* (1 Corinthians 7:19)—what matters is the circumcision made without hands, the circumcision of the heart (Colossians 2:11). The Law within which circumcision was incorporated has been done away with in Christ:

"Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances."

—(Ephesians 2:15)

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."

—(Colossians 2:14)



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Russell's exposition of this passage draws out its full significance for the relationship between Jew and Gentile:

"Not only did he settle fully the original claims of the Law violated by Adam, which condemned both Jew and Gentile, but he did even more for us Jews; he removed from us the galling yoke of the Law covenant under which we could never have attained life, and has offered us life as a gift or favour. Thus both the original curse or enmity between God and us Jews, as well as the secondary enmity or curse of our Law, which, as a partition, formerly separated us from you Gentiles; this was all taken away, so that both you and we may now have access to God through him who, by his blood—by his cross—destroyed all curse or enmity."

Pastor C. T. Russell—*Destroying the Enmity*, R503–504

The Law was not merely a legal code that was set aside—it was specifically the partition wall that separated Jew from Gentile, and Christ's removal of it placed both on identical footing before God. Thus, if even the fleshly sign of the covenant [circumcision] has been superseded, fleshly lineage alone cannot be the basis of covenantal entitlement.

What now qualifies a person as Abraham's heir is faith in Christ and his shed blood:

'For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.'

—(Romans 2:28–29)

CHRIST THE SEED—AND THE TWO CLASSES OF HEIRS

This distinction between the two classes sharing in the one Abrahamic promise—one heavenly, one earthly—is essential to understanding how that promise is ultimately fulfilled. The heavenly class—the Church, the Little Flock (Luke 12:32), the 144,000 (Revelation 14:1) drawn from both faithful Jews and Gentiles—is being developed first, during this Christian age, securing the *choicest* portion of the Abrahamic promise as joint heirs with Christ, sharing His heavenly inheritance as kings and priests (Romans 8:17; Revelation 1:6; 5:10). St. Paul completes this picture in Ephesians 2:19–22, where he describes those united to Christ—drawn from both Jew and Gentile—as no longer strangers and foreigners but members of the household of God:

'Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.'

—Ephesians 2:19–22

The household of God is not constituted by ethnic descent but by union with Christ the cornerstone—the very stone which the builders of natural Israel rejected (Matthew 21:42). Membership of that household, and the inheritance it carries, belongs to those who are built upon him. It is this heavenly class, built from both faithful Jews and Gentiles into one body, that constitutes the spiritual seed—the stars of heaven portion of the Abrahamic promise—being developed first, before the earthly class follows.



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Moffitt stated this plainly:

“The ‘household of God’ is no longer composed exclusively of Israelites, but of those out of every nation; and its one foundation is occupied by Israelites and non-Israelites alike.”

Joseph Moffitt—*One Hope*, R1434–1435 (Zion’s Watch Tower)

The question then is when that completed household will have been fully constituted—and St. Paul gives the answer directly:

‘For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.’

—(Romans 11:25)

Shallieu identifies precisely what St. Paul means by that fulness:

“The expression ‘until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in’ means after a sufficient number of Gentiles have made their calling and election sure to complete the 144,000.”

Frank Shallieu—*New Testament Studies*, Romans 11

The earthly class will follow: at the close of this age, the broken-off natural branches will be grafted in again, sharing in the richness of the same root promise as earthly branches (Romans 11:7–8).

The earthly inheritance of these fleshly descendants will not be confined to those Israelites living at the time of restoration. The faithful of ancient Israel—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the prophets and others commended in Hebrews 11, referred to as the Ancient Worthies—will share in it through resurrection. These received not the promise in their lifetime, as St. Paul makes clear:

‘And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.’

—(Hebrews 11:39–40)

Their perfecting awaited the completion of the heavenly class. But they were promised a *better resurrection*—raised not gradually as the remainder of mankind will be over the course of the Millennial Age, but to *instantaneous human perfection*, as a reward for their proven faithfulness (Hebrews 11:35). In this sense they will constitute *the firstfruits on the earthly plane*, the natural counterpart to the heavenly firstfruits of the 144,000. Abraham himself, to whom the land was promised, will inherit it in his own person—raised to life in the age to come to share in the very blessings he was shown in faith but did not receive in his lifetime.

The basis of their resurrection, and of their claim to share in the earthly inheritance, is the Abrahamic Covenant of Grace—not the Law Covenant, and not yet the New Covenant—as Russell observed:

“Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and others before the Law Covenant were not bound by it, yet were not in the fullest sense justified to life until the Abrahamic Covenant had been established at Calvary. Their faith, then, entitled them to a share in the merits of that sacrifice. . . These in due time will come forth to a life resurrection, not because of their relationship to the Law Covenant, under which they lived, nor because of their relationship to the New Covenant, of which some of them knew nothing, but because of their relationship to and faith in the original (Sarah) Covenant of Grace.”

Pastor C. T. Russell—*Zion’s Watch Tower*, 1909 (*The Three Great Covenants*)



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Russell made the same point with still greater specificity in his examination of the restoration promises, noting that Abraham himself has never yet possessed a foot of the promised land—and must therefore receive it in the future, in his own person:

“Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with Daniel and all the holy prophets, will be ‘made perfect’—awakened from death to perfect manhood, after the Gospel Church has been glorified (Heb. 11:40); and they will constitute the ‘princes in all the earth’ (Psa. 45:16), the earthly and visible representatives of the Christ, the spiritual, invisible ruler. To Abraham as well as to his seed the land of promise was given for an everlasting possession; and he must receive it in the future, for as yet he has never possessed a foot of it.”

Pastor C. T. Russell—*Thy Kingdom Come (Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. III), Chapter VIII*

Their resurrection to earthly perfection is not, however, for themselves alone. Through them the blessing flows outward—first to Israel, then to all nations:

*“The blessing coming to the Ancient Worthies will not be for themselves alone, but be passed on by them in turn to **all** who will come to the faith and obedience of Abraham. Undoubtedly at first this class will consist chiefly of the natural Israelites, but later. . . it will consist of many people, of many tongues, and of many nationalities.”*

Pastor C. T. Russell—*Zion’s Watch Tower, R1909 (The Seed of Abraham and Its Work)*

Shallieu’s Ezekiel commentary confirms the earthly seat of that government:

“When the ‘breath,’ or spirit, enters, the earthly rulers of God’s government will be the Ancient Worthies, the ‘princes in all the earth,’ who will have their headquarters in Jerusalem.”

Frank Shallieu—*Old Testament Studies, Ezekiel 37*

Together, though in profoundly different ways, these two classes of heirs will become the instruments through which all the families of the earth are blessed—the **heavenly class as Ministers and Ambassadors of the New Covenant under Christ their Head†**, and the **earthly class as its earthly beneficiaries under Christ the Mediator**.

*“Our only relationship to the New Covenant is that the Father drew us to Jesus and Jesus covered us with his robe of **righteousness** and thus made it possible for us to be called to joint-fellowship with himself in the ‘better sacrifices,’ participation in the ‘cup’ of suffering and death—the blood of the New Covenant—for the sealing of the New Covenant for Israel, under which all the families of the earth will get a blessing.”*

Pastor C. T. Russell—*Zion’s Watch Tower, R1909 (The Three Great Covenants)*

It must be noted, however, that the New Covenant’s full application to the restoration of Israel is *not yet operative*, for the completion of the Church—the full number of Gentiles, the remaining members of the 144,000—has not yet come in, as St. Paul’s statement above makes explicitly clear.

*“The New Covenant is yet future. . . it is consequently after the gospel age when they are pardoned freely for Christ’s sake, and restored to the condition of sinless perfect manhood, that the new covenant comes into force. **And** to this thought agree the words of Paul [Rom. 11:27], ‘This is my [new] covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins.’. . . The New [Law] Covenant promised to Israel, in which their sins will be cancelled and remembered no more, comes at the close of the Gospel Age and not at its beginning.”*

Pastor C. T. Russell—*Zion’s Watch Tower, R1909 (Be Ye Not Forgetful Readers)*

† Christ serves as Advocate for the Church while its members remain in the flesh (1 John 2:1; Romans 8:34). Once glorified and reigning with him, he is no longer their Advocate but their Head—and they rule together as kings and priests under his headship (Revelation 5:10; 20:6).



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Only once that fulness is complete will the partial blindness be lifted from Israel; the Holy Remnant, recognising Christ as their Messiah, will then enter into the New Covenant, which will find its full earthly expression in a restored and believing nation.

JEW, GENTILES, AND THE EARTHLY INHERITANCE

Ezekiel 37 provides further prophetic confirmation that the true reunification of Israel—encompassing both the house of Judah and the house of Ephraim, the two sticks joined into one—is not yet fulfilled. The present State of Israel does not fulfil this condition: it is not a unified twelve-tribe nation under one king. The regathering that is currently taking place is preparatory—the bones, sinews, flesh, and skin of Ezekiel’s vision—but the breath of covenantal life, and the unity it brings, remains a future event. As Shallieu observed:

“One king shall be king to them all.’ This statement about Israel’s having one king is proof the prophecy is still future in its primary fulfilment, for following the return in 536 BC, Zerubbabel was their governor. Also, most of the returnees were from Judah, whereas this prophecy equally stresses the second stick, that is, Israel, the ten tribes.”

Frank Shallieu—*Old Testament Studies*, Ezekiel 37

St. Paul makes clear in Ephesians 2 that Gentiles, once ‘aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world’ (Ephesians 2:12), have been made nigh by the blood of Christ, reconciled in one body through the cross, fellow-citizens with the saints. The scope of the earthly inheritance that awaits the restored fleshly descendants of Abraham is therefore *not confined to Israel alone*. All those outside the Little Flock—both Jew and Gentile—require faith in Christ and entry into the New Covenant; neither inherits apart from Him. The earthly inheritance will be shared by a restored, believing Israel—then a blessing nation—and the faithful Gentile nations who shall be joined to them during and after the Millennial Kingdom (Zechariah 2:10-13; Isaiah 2:2-5). As the Psalmist declared, and as the Lord Himself confirmed, the meek shall inherit the earth (Psalm 37:11; Matthew 5:5). The wicked will not. *Ethnic identity is irrelevant to that determination.*

“The next primary event will be the salvation of the world of mankind with the Jewish seed and with Jerusalem as the capital.”

Frank Shallieu—*New Testament Studies*, Romans 11

Isaiah 56 confirms that in the times of restitution (Acts 3:21), the sons of the stranger who join themselves to the Lord will be brought to His holy mountain—a house of prayer for all peoples (Isaiah 56:6-8). These are not pictures of the present State of Israel. They are pictures of a future, faithful remnant and the nations drawn toward it through the outworking of the New Covenant—the fulfilment of that promise made to Abraham that in his seed all families of the earth shall be blessed. Moffitt captured the true scope of that promise with precision:

“The one part of the promise covers every individual of the Israelitish nation, and the other part of the promise covers every individual of all the other nations of the earth without exception, past, present, or future.”

Joseph Moffitt—*One Hope*, R1434–1435 (Zion’s Watch Tower)

Russell elaborates the order in which that fulfilment unfolds:

“Thus will the original Covenant have its amplified fulfilment; first, in The Christ, the spiritual Israel; secondly, under the New Covenant with Israel after the flesh; and through these bless all the families of the earth, so that



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all the willing and obedient may gradually attain to the standards of the children of God. . . Thus Abraham, ‘the father of the faithful,’ will become under the New [Law] Covenant the ‘father of many nations’—a multitude, as the sand of the sea.”

Pastor C. T. Russell—Zion’s Watch Tower, R1909 (*The Three Great Covenants*)

CONCLUSION: NO INHERITANCE WITHOUT CHRIST

The argument set out above may be summarised as follows. The natural, fleshly descendants of Abraham who do not have faith in Christ are not, at this time, Abraham’s seed or heir’s in the covenantal sense. *They are not children of the promise. They have not been grafted back in. They have not entered the New Covenant. They have no valid Scriptural claim to the land historically associated with Israel and Judah or to any other element of the Abrahamic inheritance—not because of their ethnicity, but because, in their present state of unbelief, they do not meet the conditions Scripture itself lays down for heirship.*

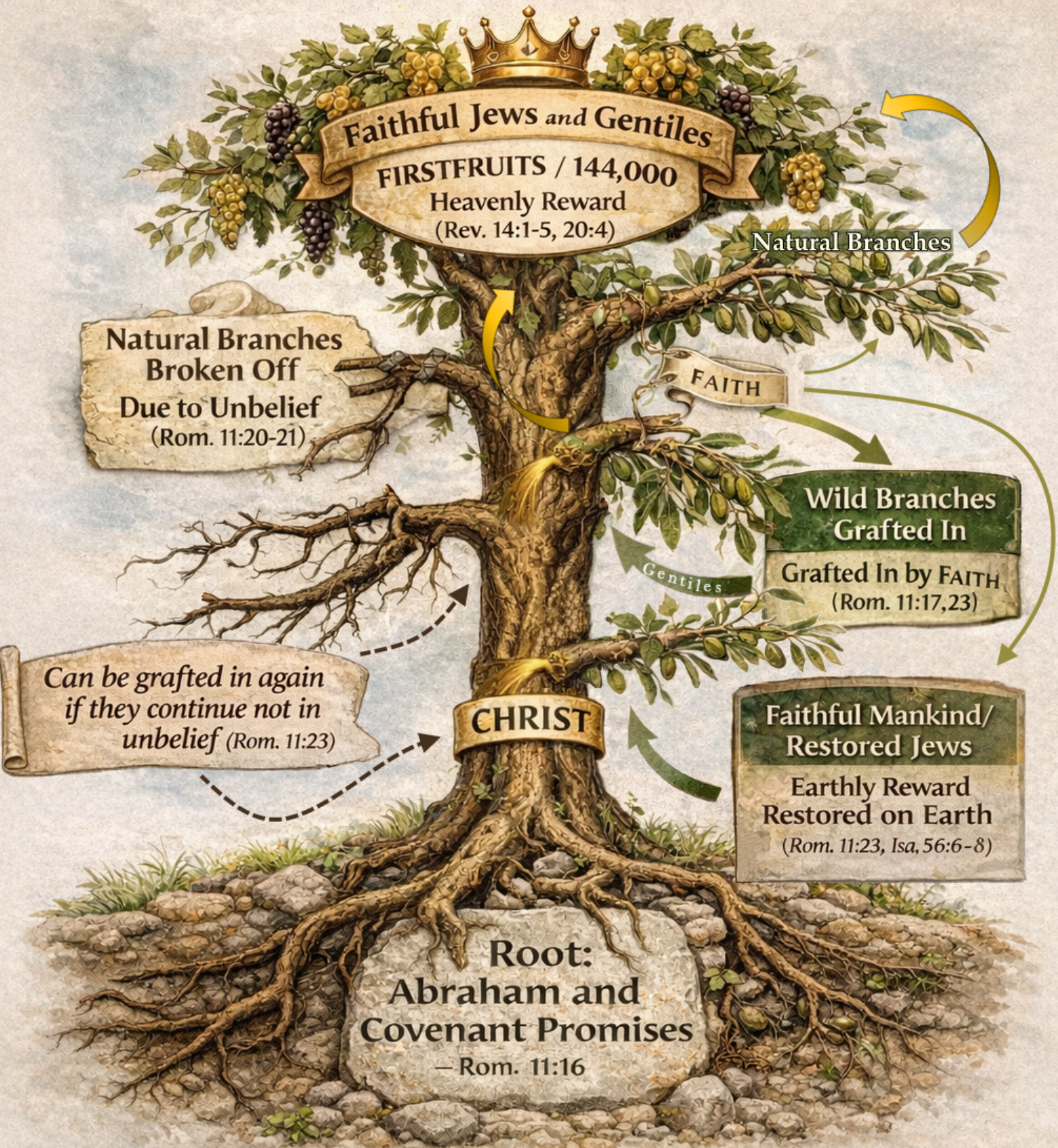
This will change—and Scripture promises that it will—when the Holy Remnant recognises Christ as Messiah, mourns for the one they pierced, and enters the New Covenant through faith, in fulfilment of Romans 11:26-27, Daniel 12:1, and Zechariah 12:10. At that point the Abrahamic promise will find its full earthly expression: a restored, faithful Israel in New Covenant relationship with God, through whom the blessing promised to all families of the earth will flow to the nations during Christ’s Millennial reign—as Zechariah 8:23 so beautifully anticipates. The land, the covenant, the blessing of the nations—all of it flows through Christ, the seed, and the New Covenant he has inaugurated.

Those Christians—Evangelical, Zionist in disposition, or otherwise—who cite Scripture to justify the present conduct of the State of Israel and its political backers are applying covenantal promises conditionally reserved for believing heirs to a people who, in their current broken-off condition, are not heirs at all. The present State of Israel does not fulfil the Scriptural conditions for divine approval or covenantal entitlement. The only Israel deserving of the hope and expectation of the faithful Christian is the nation state that will be established when Christ is fully recognised by His people as their Messiah and King—in fulfilment of Amos 9:11, Acts 15:14-17, and Romans 11:25-26.

Without Christ, there is no inheritance—spiritual, heavenly, or earthly. That principle applies to Jew and Gentile alike, and no political arrangement, *however powerful*, changes it.



The Olive Tree: Gentiles Grafted in by Faith - Natural Branches Broken off Due to Unbelief



“Remember, it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you.”
 — Rom. 11:18

*Gal. 4:22-31 (Hagar allegory)
 **John 15:1-6 (Vine metaphor)