



THE PROMISED REST

E. J. Waggoner



The Promised Rest by E.J. Waggoner
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Preface

This booklet has been lifted out of the larger work by Elder E.J. Waggoner called *The Everlasting Covenant*. This is from Chapter 35 entitled *The Promised Rest*.

Apart from the many vital lessons it provides it gives to us a correct framework for understanding the Israelite conquest of Canaan which is simply a practical application of the two covenants correctly understood and taught by Elder Waggoner.

Elder Waggoner taught that the Two Covenants are two experiences of the Christian walk. He wrote to Butler in 1888:

Justification by faith is an individual, and not a national, matter. Seventh-day Adventists often speak of the great light which "we as a people" possess. But "we as a people" will derive no benefit from that light unless we as individuals possess it in our own hearts. I repeat, justification by faith is something that each individual must experience for himself. Thousands who lived at Christ's first advent knew nothing of this experience, while thousands who lived long before He came, were actually brought to Christ for pardon, and they received it. Abel was counted righteous through faith; Noah was heir of the righteousness which is by faith; and Abraham actually saw Christ's day, and rejoiced in it, although he died 2,000 years before the first advent. And this most positively proves that the apostle, in the third chapter of Galatians, is speaking of individual experience, and not of dispensational changes. There can be no Christian experience, no faith, no justification, no righteousness, that is not an individual matter. People are saved as individuals, and not as nations. E.J. Waggoner, *The Gospel in Galatians*, (1888) p 32,33.

Ellen White endorsed Waggoner's view leaving no excuse for the brethren who rejected it:

Since I made the statement last Sabbath that the view of the covenants as it had been taught by Brother Waggoner was truth, it seems that great relief has come to many minds.--Letter 30, 1890, p. 2. (To W. C. White and wife, March 10, 1890.) {9MR 329.3}

The direct implication of this reality is that whatever Christ teaches in the New Testament is equally true in the Old. When Christ says my kingdom is not of this world and my servants do not fight, it led Waggoner to conclusions such as this:

When Christ commands His followers not to fight, and warns them that if they do they shall perish, He is not introducing a new order of things, but simply leading His people back to first principles. Ancient Israel affords an illustration of the fact that they who use the sword shall perish with the sword; and, although the Lord bore long with them, and made many concessions to their weakness, and has borne still longer with us, He wishes us to avoid their errors. All the things concerning them "are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." (1 Cor 10:11). – Everlasting Covenant p. 420

Thus, a correct understanding of the Covenants opens the door to a correct understanding of the Character of God. As Waggoner writes a little earlier in the chapter

Indeed, the reason why they did not gain full possession of the land was because of that unbelief which made the sword necessary; for it is absolutely impossible that the heavenly country which God promised Abraham can ever be gained by men with swords or guns in their hands. The first experience of Moses demonstrated this. There was no more need for Israel to fight in the days of old than there is for us; for "when a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Prov 16:7) and we are absolutely forbidden to fight. Everlasting Covenant p. 420

If we can grasp the truth of the two covenants, then we can see it was never God's intention for sin to continue for 6000 years. Israel might

have stepped across the Jordan and commenced to expand the rest given to them to the whole world. But Israel refused to enter into the rest which is simply the presence of God. Christ was saying to them back there “ Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28. The Gospel preached to us was also preached to them. (Heb 4:2).

May we comprehend the treasure that has been provided us in the writing of Elder Waggoner and his book, the Everlasting Covenant. May we discern its implications and may our understanding of the Gospel come into harmony with the 1888 understanding of the Covenants.

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"My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Ex. 33:14.

It was with these words that God encouraged Moses to lead the people of Israel forward after they had so grievously sinned in making and worshipping the golden calf.

In our study of the rest that God promised His people, it will be well to remember that the promise here recorded is identical with that in Matt. 11:28. **Rest was promised, and could be found, only in God's presence, which was to go with His people.** So Christ, who is "God with us," (Matt 1:23) and who is with us "all the days, even to the end of the world," (Matt 28:20) says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." **The rest that was offered to the children of Israel in the desert, is the very same rest that Christ offers to all mankind, rest in God, in the everlasting arms--for the only begotten Son "is in the bosom of the Father."** (John :18) "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." (Isa 66:13)

But God always was and is everywhere present; why then do not all people have rest?--For the simple reason that as a general thing men do not recognize His presence, nor even His existence. Instead of taking God into account in all the affairs of life, most people live as though He did not exist. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him; for He that cometh to God must believe that He is." (Heb 11:6). This shows that the general inability to please God, and so to find rest, arises from practical unbelief that He exists.

Proof of God's Presence

How can we know that God exists?-- Ever since the creation of the world, the invisible things of God, namely, His eternal power and Divinity, have been clearly revealed in the things that He has made (See Rom. 1, 20). so that those who do not know Him are without excuse. It is as Creator that God reveals Himself, for the fact that He creates marks Him as the self-existent God, and distinguishes Him from all false gods.

"The Lord is great, and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols; but the Lord made the heavens." (Ps 96:4,5) "The Lord is the true God, He is the living God, and an everlasting King. . . . The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. He hath made the earth by His power, He hath established the world by His wisdom." (Jer 10:10-12).

"My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth." (Ps 121:2) "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth." (Ps 124:8)

Now since rest is found only in God's presence, and His presence is truly known and appreciated only through His works, it is evident that the promised rest must be very closely connected with creation.

Rest and Inheritance Inseparable

The rest and the inheritance were always associated together in the promise. When the children of Israel were being instructed in the wilderness, they were told: "Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes. For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the Lord your God giveth you. But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the Lord your God giveth you to inherit, and when He giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety; then there shall be a place **which the Lord your God shall choose to cause His name to dwell there." (Deut 12:8-16).** So also Moses said to the tribes that had their lot on the east side of Jordan: "The Lord your God hath given you this land to possess it; ye shall pass over armed before your brethren the children of Israel, all that are sons of power.

But your wives, and your little ones, and your cattle . . . shall abide in your cities which I have given you; **until the Lord have given rest unto your brethren, as well as unto you**, and until they also possess the land which the Lord your God hath given them beyond Jordan." (Deut 3:18-20).

The rest and the inheritance are really one. Our inheritance is rest, in the place of the weariness that sin brings. In Christ, who is "God with us," we find rest, "in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him that worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." (Eph 1:10-14) The Holy Spirit is the first-fruits of this inheritance, until the purchased possession is redeemed. "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance." (Ps 16:5). **He is both our rest and our inheritance; having Him, we have all.**

The Rest was Given with The Land

We have already seen the children of Israel in the land of promise; the land, and therefore the rest, was theirs, for we read this statement of what was true in the days of Joshua:--

"And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which He sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers; and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass." (Joshua 21:43-48).

But if we should stop here, we should fall into grave error. Passing by one chapter, we come to the record of what Joshua told "all Israel" and their elders, their judges, etc., "a long time after that the Lord had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about." (Joshua 23:1,2). After reminding them of what the Lord had done for them, he said:--

"Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea westward. And the Lord your God, He shall

expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land, as the Lord your God hath promised unto you.

The Heathen Not All Driven Out

"Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left; that ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them; but cleave unto the Lord your God, as ye have done unto this day. For the Lord hath driven out from before you great nations and strong; but as for you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day. One man of you shall chase a thousand; for the Lord your God, He it is that fighteth for you, as He hath promised you.

"Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God. Else if ye do in anywise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you; know for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you.

Yet God's Promises Had Not Failed

"And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth; and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing had failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof. Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the Lord your God promised you; so shall the Lord bring upon you all evil things, until He have destroyed you from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you. When ye have transgressed the covenant of the Lord your God, which He commanded

you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which He hath given you." (Joshua 23:4-15)

In this portion of Scripture we have further evidence that the inheritance is the promised rest. We are plainly told that God had given Israel rest, and that this talk occurred a long time after that; yet in that very talk they were told the conditions upon which they might surely have the rest, and upon which the enemies that were still in the land would be driven out. It all depended on Israel's faithfulness to God. If they should go back from serving the Lord, and go after other gods, then they were to know for a certainty that God would no more drive out the remaining nations from before them, but those nations should continually harass them, and the Lord would utterly destroy them from off the face of the land which He had given them.

A Seeming Paradox

Now how could the children of Israel be said to have rest from all their enemies, and to have the land in possession, when those enemies were still in the land, and there was a possibility that the enemies might drive them out, instead of being driven out? The Scriptures themselves afford the answer. For instance, when all the kings of the Amorites threatened the Gibeonites, who were in league with the Israelites, the Lord said to Joshua, "Fear them not; for I have delivered them into thy hand." (Joshua 10:8). What did Joshua then do?--He went and took them. He did not doubtingly say, "I don't see any evidence that the Lord has delivered them into my hands, for I haven't them;" neither did he foolishly say, "Since the Lord has given them into my hand I can disband my forces and take my ease." In either case he would have been overcome, even after God had given him the victory. By his activity, Joshua showed that he really believed what the Lord said. Faith works, and continues to work.

In like manner the people were told that God had given them the victory, while at the same time they stood outside the high walls and

barred gates of Jericho. It was true that God had given them the victory, and yet it all depended on them. If they had refused to shout, they would never have seen the victory.

Peace in the Midst of Tribulation

In Christ we have the rest and the inheritance; but in order to be made partakers of Christ we must "hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." (Heb 3:14) Jesus says, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33) Yet in the very same talk He said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." (John 16:27) What! peace in the midst of tribulation? Yes; for take notice that He says, "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." To have tribulation, and yet not be troubled; to be in the midst of danger, and yet have no fear; to be in the heat of battle, and yet enjoy perfect peace,—truly this is giving in a far different way from what the world gives.

Warfare already Accomplished

Listen to the message which the prophet Isaiah was commissioned to give to Israel when they were passing through the most trying experiences, a message that is for us even more than for the men who lived when it was spoken: "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God. Speak ye to the heart of Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned." (Isa 40:1,2)

Glorious assurance! The warfare is accomplished, the battle ended, the victory won! Shall we conclude therefore that we may safely go to sleep? By no means; we must be awake, and make use of the victory which the Lord has won for us. The conflict is against principalities and powers (Eph. 6:12), but Jesus has "spoiled principalities and powers," and made a triumphant show of them (Col. 2:15), and has been raised to sit in heavenly places, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come;" (Eph 1:20,21) and God has also raised us up with Him, to sit with Him in the same heavenly places

(Eph. 2:1-6), equally high above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.

We may, therefore, and certainly ought to say, from the heart, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Lessons from the Psalms

David understood and rejoiced in this victory when he was hunted like a partridge on the mountains. At one time he was hiding in a cave in the wilderness of Ziph, and the Ziphites came to Saul and treacherously revealed his hiding-place, and said, "Now, therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of thy soul to come down; and our part shall be to deliver him into the king's hand." (1 Sam 23:15-20) Yet David, knowing all this, took his harp and composed a psalm of praise, saying, "I will freely sacrifice unto Thee; I will praise Thy name, O Lord, for it is good. For He hath delivered me out of all trouble." (Ps 54:6,7) Read the entire Psalm, including the introduction. So he could sing, "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear." (Ps 27:3)

The third Psalm, with its expressions of confident trust in God, and its note of victory, was composed while he was exiled from his throne, fleeing before Absalom.

We need so to learn the twenty-third Psalm, that it will not be mere empty words when we say, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over."

The Strong Man Overcome

The victory that hath overcome the world is our faith. Oh, that we could realize and ever bear in mind the fact that the victory is already won, that Christ, the Mighty One, has come upon the strong man, our adversary and oppressor, and has overcome him, and taken from him all his armour wherein he trusted, so that we have to fight only with a conquered and disarmed foe. The reason why we are overcome is that we do not believe and know this fact. If we know it, and remember it,

we shall never fall; for who would be so foolish as to allow himself to be taken captive by an enemy without armour and without strength?

How many of the blessings that God has given us are lost simply because our faith does not grasp them. How many blessings has He given us?--"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." (Eph 1:3) "His Divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue." (2 Peter 1:3) And yet, notwithstanding the fact that all things are ours (1 Cor. 3:21), we often act as though we had nothing. A man, a professor of religion and a leader in the church, once said when these texts were repeated to him for his encouragement, "If God has given me all these things, why don't I have them?" There are doubtless many who will read their own experience in this question. The answer was easy; it was because he did not believe that God had given them to him. He couldn't feel that he had them, and therefore he didn't believe that he had them; whereas it is faith that must grasp them, and a man cannot hope to be able to feel a thing that he does not touch. The victory is not doubt, not sight, not feeling, but faith.

They Could not Enter In

The Israelites were in possession of the land; not one word of God had failed; He had with Himself given them all things; but they did not appreciate the wondrous gift, and so received the grace of God in vain.

They were at least nominally faithful to God during the life of Joshua, but after his death "the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim; and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger. And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.

"And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and He sold them

into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil, as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them; and they were greatly distressed."

God told them that because of their disobedience He would not drive the nations out from before them, but that their enemies should remain and be as thorns in their sides. (Judges 2:1-15)

Thus we see that although God gave them rest, they did not enter into it. **It was therefore as true of them as of those who fell in the wilderness, that "they could not enter in because of unbelief."**

Our Position

"Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them; but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." (Heb 4:1,2) **We are in the world in precisely the same situation that ancient Israel was, with the same promises, the same prospects, the same enemies, the same dangers.**

There are no foes upon whom we may use ordinary weapons of warfare, although the followers of the Lord are assured that they shall suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12), and that they shall be hated by the world, with a hatred that will not stop short of death (John 15:18, 19; 16: 1-3); nevertheless "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal." In this, however, our case is in no wise different from that of Israel of old.

Physical Force Always Fails

Their victory was to be had only by faith, and, as we have already seen, **if they had been truly faithful, there would have been no more need of their using the sword to drive out the Canaanites than there was to use it for the overthrow of Pharaoh and his hosts. Indeed, the reason why they did not gain full possession of the land was because of that unbelief which made the sword necessary; for it is absolutely**

impossible that the heavenly country which God promised Abraham can ever be gained by men with swords or guns in their hands. The first experience of Moses demonstrated this. There was no more need for Israel to fight in the days of old than there is for us; for "when a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Prov 16:7) and we are absolutely forbidden to fight. The possessions that men gain by fighting are not the possessions that God gives. Indeed, they are really not possessions at all, since they cannot possibly be held, as the history of the world proves. Alexander and Napoleon long since lost all that they seemed to have gained by war. The latter, like many others, lost his seeming possessions even before he died.

The Commandment from the Beginning

When Christ commands His followers not to fight, and warns them that if they do they shall perish, He is not introducing a new order of things, but simply leading His people back to first principles. Ancient Israel affords an illustration of the fact that they who use the sword shall perish with the sword; and, although the Lord bore long with them, and made many concessions to their weakness, and has borne still longer with us, He wishes us to avoid their errors. All the things concerning them "are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." (1 Cor 10:11).

The Promise of Canaan

But we must go a little further, and see that our situation is precisely that of ancient Israel, and that the same rest and inheritance which God gave them, and which they foolishly allowed to slip from their hands, is ours, provided we "hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Fortunately the evidence is very simple and plain, and we have already considered the most of it at some length. Let us refresh our minds with the following facts.

Canaan is a land which God gave to Abraham and to his seed "for an everlasting possession." (Gen 17:7,8) It was to be an everlasting possession for both Abraham and his seed. But Abraham himself had

not so much as a foot-breadth of the land in his actual possession (Acts 7:5), and none of his seed had it either, for even the righteous ones among them (and only the righteous are Abraham's seed) "all died in faith, not having received the promise." (Heb 9:13,39)

Therefore, as previously shown, the possession of the land involved the resurrection of the dead at the coming of Christ to restore all things. By the resurrection of Christ, God has begotten us unto a lively hope, "to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Peter 1:3-6)

A World-Wide Kingdom

But the possession of the land of Canaan meant nothing less than the possession of the whole world, as we learn by comparing Gen. 17:7, 8, 11, and Rom. 4:1-13. Thus: circumcision was the seal of the covenant to give Abraham and his seed the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession. But circumcision was at the same time a sign or seal of righteousness by faith; and "the promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham or his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." That is to say, that which sealed to Abraham his right to the possession of the land of Canaan, was the seal of his right to the whole world.

In giving to him and his seed the land of Canaan, God gave to them the whole world. Not of course "this present evil world," for "the world passeth away;" and Christ gave Himself for us that He might deliver us from it and its destruction; but "we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Peter 3:13) It was not the temporal possession of a few thousand square miles of land tainted by the curse, that God promised to Abraham and to his seed, but the eternal possession of the entire earth freed from every vestige of the curse. The promise is "sure to all the seed" only through the faith of Christ. Christ is the seed, and we are heirs through Him. He cannot give us what He

Himself does not possess, and He never had any possession on this earth. It is "the world to come" that is put in subjection to Him; and that is what He gives us.

Even though it were true that the little territory of Canaan constituted the whole of the promised inheritance, still it would be true that the Israelites never had it; for the promise which God confirmed was to give Abraham and his seed the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, that is, Abraham must have it for an everlasting possession, and his seed must also have it for an everlasting possession. But they all died, and in time even the country itself passed into the hands of other people. **No temporal dwelling in Palestine could possibly fulfill the promise. The promise still remains to be fulfilled to Abraham and to all the seed.**

The New Earth

The rest is the inheritance; the inheritance is the land of Canaan; but the possession of the land of Canaan means the possession of the whole earth, not in its present state, but restored as in the days of Eden. Therefore the rest which God gives is inseparable from the new earth: it is rest which the new earth state alone can give, rest found only in God; and when all things are restored, then God in Christ will absolutely and without hindrance fill all things, so that everywhere will there be complete rest.

Since rest is found only in God, it is most evident that the children of Israel did not enjoy the rest and the inheritance, even while in Palestine, for although "He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents, yet they tempted and provoked the Most High God, and kept not His testimonies; but turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers; they were turned aside like a deceitful bow. For they provoked Him to anger with their high places, and moved Him to jealousy with their graven images," so that "God greatly abhorred Israel." (Ps 78:56-59)

A Heavenly Country

Remember that it was an heavenly country that Abraham looked for. Nevertheless, the promise of God to give him and his seed (including us, if we are Christ's, Gal. 3:16,29) the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, will be fulfilled to the very letter.

When the Lord comes for His people to take them to Himself, to the place which He has prepared for them (see John 14:3), the righteous dead will be raised incorruptible, and the righteous living ones will likewise be changed to immortality, and both together will be caught up "in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thess 4:16,17; 1 Cor 15:51-54) The place to which they will be taken is the free Jerusalem above, "which is the mother of us all" (Gal. 4:26); for that is where Christ now is, and where He is preparing a place for us.

A few texts may be quoted to show this fact more clearly. That the heavenly Jerusalem is the place where Christ is now "in the presence of God for us," is evident from Heb. 12:22-24, where we are told that those who believe are now come to Mount Zion, unto "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," "to God the Judge of all," and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant." Christ "is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens," (Heb 8:1) and from this throne, it will be well to remember, proceeds "the river of water of life." (Rev 22:1)

A Heavenly City

This city, the New Jerusalem, the city which God has prepared for those of whom He is not ashamed, because they seek an heavenly country (Heb. 11:16), is the capital of His dominions. It is the "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (verse 10), for which Abraham looked. In the twenty-first first chapter of Revelation we find a description of those foundations, where we also find that the city will not always remain in heaven, but will descend to this earth with the saints who have reigned in it with Christ for a thousand years after the resurrection. (Rev. 20). Of the descent of the city we read:--

"And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I

heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write; for these things are true and faithful. And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death."

From Isaiah 49:17-21 we learn that the believing, righteous ones, the children of the New Jerusalem, constitute the adornment which the city has when it comes down prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. So we see that the saints of God go at once to the New Jerusalem, when Christ comes for them, and then return with it to this earth, when the time has come for the cleansing of the earth from all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, and for the renewing of all things as at first.

The City Brought Down

But to what spot on this earth will the city descend? Speaking of the time of the destruction of the wicked, the prophet Zechariah says:--

"Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee by the valley of My mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azel; yea, ye shall flee like as ye fled

from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah; and the Lord my God shall come, and all the holy ones with thee. And it shall come to pass in that day that the light shall not be with brightness and with gloom; but it shall be one day which is known unto the Lord; not day, and not night; but it shall come to pass that at evening time there shall be light. And it shall come to pass in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the eastern sea, and half of them toward the western sea; in summer and in winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall the Lord be One, and His name One." (Zech 14:3-9 r.v.)

Thus we see that when God brings back the captivity of His people, He brings them to the very spot of earth that He promised to Abraham for an everlasting possession--the land of Canaan. But the possession of that land is the possession of the whole earth, not for a few years, but for eternity. "There shall be no more death." It was this glorious inheritance that the children of Israel had in their grasp when they crossed the Jordan, and which they faithlessly allowed to slip. If they had been faithful, a very short time would have sufficed to make the name and the saving power of God known in every part of the earth, and then the end would have come. But they failed, and so the time was lengthened, until our day; but the same hope has been the one thing ever before the people of God. So we may look forward to the possession of the land of Canaan with as much earnestness as did Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses, yea, and David also, and all the prophets, and with the same confident hope.

Restoration of Israel

With these few outlines well fixed in mind, the reading of the prophecies both of the Old and the New Testament will be a delight, for we shall be spared much confusion, and many seeming contradictions will be seen to be plain. When we read of the restoration of Jerusalem, so that it will be the joy and praise of the whole earth, we shall know that the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven, to take the place of the old. If a city on this earth is burnt entirely to the ground, and men build a new city on the same site, the city is said to be rebuilt, and it is

called by the same name. So with Jerusalem, only the city is rebuilt in heaven, so that there is no interval between the destruction of the old and the appearance of the new. It is as though the new city sprang at once from the ruins of the old, only infinitely more glorious.

So also when we read of the return of Israel to Jerusalem, we know that it is not the return of a few thousand mortals to a mass of ruins, but the coming of the innumerable, immortal host of the redeemed to the ever new city where their citizenship has long been recorded. Mortal men will not rebuild the city with brick and stone and mortar, but God Himself will rebuild it with gold and pearls and all manner of precious stones. "When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory." (Ps 102:16) He says to Jerusalem, "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children." (Isa 43:13) These are the stones in which her children take pleasure. (Ps. 102:14).

Here will be rest, perfect eternal peace. The promise is, "in righteousness shalt thou be established; thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear; and from terror; for it shall not come near thee." "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks." God Himself will be with His people for evermore, "and they shall see His face," and therefore they will have rest, for He said, "My presence," literally, My face, "shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."

Why will men nullify all these glorious promises, by reading them as though they taught merely the temporal possession of a ruined city on this old sin-cursed earth? It is because they limit the Gospel, not realizing that all the promises of God are in Christ, to be enjoyed by none except those who are in Christ, and in whom He dwells by faith. Would that God's professed people might speedily receive "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation" in the knowledge of God, that the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened, that they might "know what is the

THE PROMISED REST

hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints," and that it is to be gained only by "the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places." (Eph 1:17-20)

THE PROMISED REST

Elder Waggoner sets forth the simple reality of accepting the truth of the two covenants as two experiences for all followers of God. The words of Jesus to His disciples are the same principles God desired Israel to understand which led Waggoner to state:

“If they [Israel] had been truly faithful, there would have been no more need of their using the sword to drive out the Canaanites than there was to use it for the overthrow of Pharaoh and his hosts. Indeed, the reason why they did not gain full possession of the land was because of that unbelief which made the sword necessary; for it is absolutely impossible that the heavenly country which God promised Abraham can ever be gained by men with swords or guns in their hands. The first experience of Moses demonstrated this. There was no more need for Israel to fight in the days of old than there is for us; for "when a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Prov 16:7) and we are absolutely forbidden to fight. – Everlasting Covenant p. 420”

What a revelation, Israel’s use of the sword was an act of unbelief in the promises of God! Let us ponder its implications