

APPENDIX

THE SPIRITUAL (NEW HEART) AND THE PHYSICAL (LAND)

Some thoughts on Hebrews. There is no question that Hebrews focuses on the spiritual aspects of the New Covenant. This is, of course, where the a-millennialist focuses. He relates the symbolic Old Covenant to the spiritual of the New Covenant. Is this correct? It is true that the sacrifices, the tabernacle, the altar, the holy of holies, and even Moses were but 'types' of the things to come, the spiritual things that Jesus would bring in. But does this negate the physical promises, that is, was there a physical, but greater, counterpart to the physical of the Old Testament? The author of Hebrews recognizes this entirely.

Telling a Jew about the importance of the land is something like writing a book to my children, telling them to enjoy life, to laugh, to play? It doesn't need to be written. In fact, perhaps they should be writing it to me, since they seem to do so well at it. But if I were to write a book about playing responsibly, then I would write about sharing toys, and laughing at wholesome jokes, not dirty ones, and picking up when you're done. And this is exactly what we experience when we survey the books on playing for children. No one tells the child how to enjoy himself, since he knows precisely how to do that. The books tell the child what he doesn't know so well, politeness, etc.

Well these Hebrew Christians really knew the Old Testament like the back of their hands. They already knew that the revelation through angels (Old Testament) was a great thing. They already knew that Moses should have been listened to. They already had confidence in the Abrahamic Covenant, the land promises, the king, the subjection of the earth. He hardly needed to teach them those things. What they had missed was the fact that the king, who they couldn't see visibly as a king in the "here and now", was also high priest, who had to die, and open up the Holy place, and eliminate the pictures and bring in the real relationship with God through the true High Priest.

Thus, the whole book is about a revelation which demonstrates Christ as a High Priest. Only periodically is there a reference to the king/millennium promises, and those simply as a part of the argument which moves into High Priest.

Hebrews 2 states that the One who was to subject all things to Himself has not done so yet, for He first had to become a High Priest, proceed down to earth, become like His brethren in all things and then re-ascend into heaven to operate as High Priest at the heavenly tabernacle.. It is clear that all things, i.e., the earth and everything in it, is not subjected as yet.

Hebrews 6 refers to the first unchangeable thing as the oath (Genesis 22) to Abraham (which they counted on thoroughly) to show them that there was another oath to Christ as the order of Melchizedek (which they were ignorant of) and this was as sure as the first oath which they counted on.

Now what does it mean that Abraham was looking for a heavenly city? It's like this. The problem with the Jews of that day is that they were looking for a Messiah who would come and force the literal kingdom by throwing out the Romans and raising up Israel. There was only one problem, Israel's heart wasn't changed. They were the same people that they were in Kadesh-Barnea. They wanted all the goodies, without changing their hearts. Clearly there must be a heart change before the kingdom can come in. Thus the kingdom in one's heart is the spiritual aspect of the kingdom, the new heart, without the literal kingdom. Some day they will both be brought together.

The author of Hebrews deals with that heart change. Jesus has brought in that heart change, done all the work, finished the payment for sin, put the Spirit within believers, the whole New Covenant. All that had to be done in the spiritual realm, not the physical. That, quite simply is something we cannot see. This is the problem with the Hebrews, everything was physical. But he explains that this is not physical but heavenly, spiritual. But that surely does not negate the physical kingdom, land promises. Only that they are two aspects, which are brought together only when the new heart precedes the new land. Thus did Abraham look for a physical (only) city? In no way. He recognized that he must have the spiritual (heavenly) element. This cannot be more plain than the spiritual heavenly Jerusalem in the city of Jerusalem in the Millennium.

If Abraham was not looking for a physical earthly city, then why did he leave his land and go to Canaan? And why was he told that his people would see this land after he died? Would someone think that the first entry into the land was the final entry at the land? Or that the rejection of Christ was the final rejection of the land? Neither is true, for the land promise to Abraham was clear. But what was also clear is that it would not come without Israel accepting their Melchizedek. Israel has rejected Him and thus must wait until that day to receive their physical kingdom.

It is interesting to talk to Jews in Israel today. There is no expectation that they will not be ultimately in the land. They fight for a kingdom even today, and plead for others to help them repopulate the land and bring it to fruitfulness that they assume is the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises. And when they die, they do not assume they will be forever in heaven, which is clear because of all the graves on the Mount of Olives. They want to be the first to be bodily resurrected when Messiah returns (Zechariah 14) to save them and enter the earthly kingdom centered in Jerusalem.

Thus, the view that there is only heaven and earth is done away with is primarily a western non-Biblical view. Even pagans believe there is some immaterial afterlife. Only the Bible believes that there is a bodily resurrection through the means of a resurrected Christ into an earthly Jewish kingdom that ministers to Gentiles throughout the earth (Revelation 22:1—22:5).