

# **IS THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID YET TO BE RAISED UP?**

**Amos 9:11-15**

In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof: and I will raise up its ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the nations that are called by my name, saith Jehovah that doeth this. Behold the days come, saith Jehovah, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring back the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith Jehovah thy God.

A thorough reading of the passage indicates that it is dealing with future promised blessings to the people of Judah, especially the house of David and also to the people of Israel.

The First Promise: The tabernacle of David will be raised up and restored as in the days of old.

The Second Promise: David's kingdom will possess Edom.

The Third Blessing: All the nations called by God's name will share in the victory and blessings of the tabernacle of David.

The Fourth Promise: Is of great agricultural success and abundance of grapes and wine.

The Fifth Promise: God will bring back the captivity of his people Israel and they will build waste cities, plant vineyards and have fruitful gardens.

The Sixth Promise: They will be planted upon their land, and no more plucked up.

It is clear that this passage falls into the category of passages concerning future blessings or an idyllic age.

Four basic interpretations are given concerning this passage.

1. The critic-liberal view.
2. The figurative-spiritualization view.
3. The premillennial-literal view.
4. The conditional-multiple meaning view.

The Critical-liberal view denies the authenticity of this passage and claims that it is an interpolation added over 300 years after Amos, following the Babylonian captivity, by some who expected or hoped to create an expectation for the restoration of the Davidic dynasty. This school of thought simply passes over the passage as they do similar ones by considering it high hopes held by a few Hebrews but which

never achieved fulfillment. It would be cited by the most critical as an example of unfulfilled prophecy.

The Figurative-Spiritualization school of thought deals with the passage in too simple a manner. They regard all of it as figurative and claim that it had as its full meaning, the coming of Christ, the establishment of his church or kingdom, and regard all the promises as reference to spiritual blessings in the church. It is certainly true and clear that the Holy Spirit in guiding Amos had in mind Christ, the establishment of the church, and God's intent for the gospel to go to the Gentiles. This is proved by James citing the passage as having this meaning in Acts 15:13-21.

However, to say that is all the passage meant originally, when uttered by Amos, is to fail to take into consideration the detailed language of the passage and the context in which it is placed. It also fails to recognize a fundamental principle concerning the New Testament use of Old Testament prophecies. When Matthew 2:15 cites Hosea 11:1, "Out of Egypt did I call my son," it is clear that Matthew is using the phrase topologically. In the original context in Hosea 11:1, Hosea's reference is obviously to the exodus of Israel from Egypt. That served as the type, and Christ is the anti-type. Further, the citation in Matthew 2:17,18 concerning Rachel weeping for her children, is clearly a prophecy with a multiple meaning. A close examination of the context in Jeremiah 31:15 makes it obvious that when Jeremiah made the statement he was referring to Rachel weeping for the people of Judah going into captivity. The Holy Spirit, however, had a greater event in mind as well, and was anticipating the slaughter of the innocents. A thorough study of most other fulfilled prophecies, cited in the New Testament, from the Old Testament, will indicate that most of these prophecies had a context and a meaning to the original audience and situation as well as a spiritual one concerning Christ, his church, and other blessings of the Christian age.

It is this failure of the figurative-spiritualization school of thought to take seriously, the Old Testament context which causes the premillennial-literal school to reject in general, the spiritualization or amillennial approach to prophecy. Further, the failure of the figurative-spiritualization school to take seriously the Old Testament context of prophecies give a basis for the critical-liberal school's low estimate of the scholarship of the Christian community.

Premillennial-literal school of thought. In this case there is closer harmony between the amillennial view and the premillennial view that in most similar passages. This is due to the fact that James does cite the passage in Acts 15. While some premillennialist may try to interpret the reference to raising up the tabernacle of David, as referring to the second coming of Christ and establishing his kingdom upon the earth for a thousand years, this is not the view expressed by their best

scholars. J. Barton Payne, in his exhaustive work, Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy, says of verse 11, “The reference must be to His first coming; for Acts 15:16 emphasizes that it is this event which enables the Gentiles, from the Apostolic period onward, to seek God.”

However, Payne and other premillennialists do reject the amillennial-spiritualization interpretation of verses 13 through 15. The premillennialists contend that there has been no literal fulfillment such as this, but that God’s prophecy cannot be broken. Therefore, there must be a literal fulfillment of these promises and that fulfillment will be in the millennial kingdom.

The premillennialist, by insisting on a literal fulfillment of every promise and prophecy made in the Old Testament, even after Christ has come and died, and after he comes the second time, requires ridiculous and unscriptural things to be in the millennial kingdom. They insist that there will be a literal temple, the restoration of Jewish festivals, and the restoration of animal sacrifices, and many other trappings of the Old Testament system. This is clearly in contradiction to the teaching of plain passages in the New Testament. Their system of interpretation of prophecy is clearly so full of problems that it causes thinking people to reject the entire system of Christianity.

The Conditional-multiple meaning approach offers the solution to the passages containing promises of future blessings. Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28, and especially Jeremiah 18:1-12, establish clearly the principle of the conditional nature of God’s promises and his prophecies, concerning the Hebrew nations and other nations. A careful study of the book of Jeremiah as a whole indicates that repeatedly, his prophecies were expressed in a conditional manner. If the people would repent and serve the Lord, they could stay in their land, be blessed, and prosper, but if they continued in sin, they would go into captivity. Jonah’s prophecy to Nineveh, “Yet forty days, and the city of Nineveh shall be destroyed,” contained no expressed condition, but Jonah knew it was conditional, and so did the people of Nineveh. They repented, and God repented and did not destroy them.

Micah’s prophecy in Micah 3:12, concerning Jerusalem being destroyed and plowed as the field and being a heap of rocks, is cited in Jeremiah 26:16-19 as an unfulfilled prophecy. However, no one was happier that it was an unfulfilled prophecy than God and Micah. The threat was uttered in the hope that it would be an unfulfilled prophecy by motivating the people of Jerusalem to repent. It had its desired effect. Hezekiah heard Micah and led the people in a great repentance and God spared the city.

God made many promises of future blessings to the Hebrew people, but many of these prophecies could not be fulfilled because the Jewish people did not do the

things necessary to bring about the fulfillment. No one is sadder that they could not be fulfilled than God and Christ. as described in Matthew 23 Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem and stated he would have saved and delivered her if the people would have accepted him, but because they did not accept him, her house was left unto her desolate. Jesus then proceeded to give his great prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem.

Had the Hebrew people of the period of the captivity and the post captivity really returned and been faithful to God and served him according to the law, there is no way we can know how blessed the Hebrew nation would have been. However, they did not meet the conditions. In captivity they sinned, when they returned they sinned, and their sins are described in the books of Haggai, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi. Further, the New Testament shows the results of their additional sins during the inter-testamental period and of their sins during the time of Christ and ultimate rejection of him. As a result, instead of being able to bless the Hebrew nation, God was forced to curse them again, and to leave their house unto them desolate and to bring the destruction that came in A.D. 70. Christ's words, then, in Matthew 24 and 25, completely obliterate all of the promises concerning the physical Hebrew kingdom. God has no further obligation to restore a Jewish kingdom, restore the Jews to their physical homeland or any other such thing. Paul, in Romans 11 makes it clear that the Jews stand and fall by the same principles upon which Gentiles stand and fall. Both may stand by faith and obedience and both will fall by disbelief and disobedience.

Thus, Amos 9:11-15 had a literal meaning to the original audience. It meant that if the Southern Kingdom would be faithful and righteous, God would make strong and powerful the dynasty of David and give them victory over their enemies and to all who would join with them in following God. It meant that they could receive the same kind of agricultural blessings promised in Leviticus 26, and Deuteronomy 28. It further meant that if the Northern Kingdom of Israel would return to God and serve him, they, too, could have many great blessings of the kingdom.

However, the Holy Spirit had in mind an even greater promise and an unconditional one. Regardless of whether the Hebrew people were righteous or not, God had an overriding plan before the foundation of the world to send his son into the world that men might be saved by him. This promise was never conditioned by man's behavior. Also God had planned before the foundation of the world and had promised to Abraham that he would bless all the people of the earth. Thus, he would make his gospel available to Gentiles as well as Jews. These aspects of the prophecy are cited by James as being fulfilled in Christ, in his kingdom and in God's desire for

the gospel to go unto the Gentiles.