

The Land Given to Israel

Here's an interesting question: just how much land did God give to the Israelites? We see in Genesis chapter 17 that God gave them the entire land of Canaan:

Genesis 17:4: "As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

6 And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

This passage, however, does not define any boundaries. We can see in verse 8 that the land was given to Israel "for an everlasting possession", which is a topic I've extensively explored elsewhere. But just how large a territory did this represent?

We can find part of the answer in Genesis 15:

Genesis 15:18: "In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:"

Here God answers the question in very explicit terms: the Israelites were given all the land that was east of the Nile and west of the Euphrates river. This is quite a lot of territory and include parts of modern Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and the entire Sinai Peninsula. The promised territory is roughly 1500 miles wide. That verse doesn't tell us how far north or south the territory goes, but we at least have some east-west boundaries to work with.

To put this into perspective: modern Israel currently covers 8000 square miles. At its narrowest point the country is less than *ten miles wide*. The territory that God promised to give Abraham, however, is *125 times larger*!

How will they get this territory? God will give it to them. Currently this land is occupied by the enemies of Israel, who are plotting to destroy her from off the face of the Earth. In the near future they will form a large coalition and launch a major war against her, which was prophesied in Psalm 83. God will then judge the nations that attempted to destroy her and will give Israel their land.

Ultimately, however, Israel will probably not possess this entire territory until the Lord returns. I believe these will be the boundaries of Israel during the Messianic Kingdom, but that is a subject for another time.