

The Tale of Two Jerusalems

Closing Statement

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Preterism's "Mystical" Hermeneutics

Frost takes offence at my using the term "mystical" to describe his interpretive method. But, that is precisely what it is. Webster's defines "mystical" as; ***"having a spiritual meaning or reality that is neither apparent to the senses nor obvious to the intelligence."*** Frost prefers the term "*spiritual*" to describe his methodology. But, Frost is using the biblical term, "*spiritual*," and giving it a pagan spin, meaning (hidden, mystical, secret, occult, non-tangible, or non-literal). The word "*spiritual*" in the Bible is not used in this manner. It usually just refers to the things of the Spirit of God as opposed to the things of fallen man. The biblical word "*spiritual*" says NOTHING about whether something is literal or non-literal, tangible or intangible. "*Literal*" vs. "*spiritual*" interpretation is a false dichotomy. Frost gives the impression that these are opposites and are mutually exclusive. For him, the literal words of Scripture are not meant to be understood using normative language skills and attention to context, as we do with any other speech. Rather, Frost believes that the plain meaning of the text is often misleading, and the real message of the Bible is hidden.

Frost uses Jesus' statement, "*I am the door*," to justify his mystical interpretations. This was just a metaphor, meant as an illustration, easily recognizable by the hearers as referring to "the WAY." Such figures of speech are very common in all languages, and the Scriptures are no exception. But, figures of speech are NOT a license to disregard the normal meaning of language in favor of mysticism. Frost's interpretive methodology goes far beyond the recognition of metaphors, because the meanings he places on Scripture are "*NOT apparent to the senses nor obvious to the intelligence.*" They are **contrary** to the normal use of language, both literal and metaphorical.

The Abrahamic Covenant

Frost's interpretation of the Abrahamic Covenant was certainly was NOT "*apparent to the senses nor obvious to the intelligence*" of Abraham or any of the patriarchs! If Frost is correct, Abraham was a fool for leaving Ur, seeking out the "*promised land*," and for thinking that the actual land in which he settled was one day going to be his and his offspring's inheritance forever! When all the patriarchs hoped by faith for this same promise, they were all badly mistaken. Many passages confirm that the Old and New Testament saints understood the Abrahamic Covenant in a literal sense, and placed their faith in this same hope of everlasting inheritance in the land God promised Abraham.

The Abrahamic Covenant According to:

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"And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness. And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, **to give thee this land to inherit it. ... Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.**" (Gen 15:6-7,18). "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. 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" (Gen 17:7-8). "And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again. The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, **Unto thy seed will I give this land**; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence." (Gen. 24:6-7)

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"And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of: **Sojourn in this land**, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and **unto thy seed, I will give all these countries**, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father" (Gen 26:2-3).

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"And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: **the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed**; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen 28:13-14). "And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; **and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession**" (Gen 48:4).

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"Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and **all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever**" (Ex. 32:13).

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"Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into **this land, wherein ye now dwell**. And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: **yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him**, when as yet he had no child" (Acts 7:4-5).

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"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. ... 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. (Rom. 4:3,13). "By faith Abraham, when he was called **to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance**, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith **he sojourned in the land of promise**, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. ... These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the [land]" (Heb 11:8-9,13).

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"God was tabernacling with his people, the Body of Christ, the Temple of God, Jesus/David ruled over this kingdom ... The people God had called out, ... were gathered together under the clouds of heaven. ... They were brought to the holy of holies with Christ, and appeared before the Father in Christ. ... This is the "better" land that Abraham desired. This is the "inheritance of the saints." Not dirt. Not gold. Not silver, but God Himself!"

What is so striking about the above passages is that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did not receive ANY part of the promised inheritance while they were still alive. It is equally clear that the very land in which Abraham sojourned, would eventually be the promised everlasting inheritance, from the Nile River in Egypt to the Euphrates river in Iraq. The only possible way for God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to be fulfilled, is after the resurrection of their bodies, and the restoration of the nation of Israel to the land. Unless that literally occurs, God is at best a cruel trickster, and at worst a liar.

Abraham: "Man of Faith?" Or "Naive Fool?"

Paul held Abraham up as THE epitome of the "man of faith." Paul encouraged all believers to model the faith of Abraham, without which no one will receive the inheritance. But, **Abraham believed God literally**, and went to live in the land he would afterward receive for an inheritance! This shows that true "faith" is taking God at His word. If Abraham did not believe God LITERALLY, he did not "believe God" at all! His actions prove the QUALITY of his faith! If Frost is correct, Abraham was actually the epitome of the naive fool! Rather than Scripture saying, "*And Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness*" (Gen. 15:6 & Gal. 3:6), Frost's preterist Bible says, "*and Abraham misunderstood God, thinking He actually meant what He said, but God overlooked his childish stupidity and carnal thinking.*" I submit to you that Frost's mystical interpretation of the promises of God actually substitutes a counterfeit "faith." And since "*without faith it is impossible to please God*" (Heb. 11:6), Christians who embrace preterism are in great danger of "*having believed in vain*" (1 Cor. 15:2). Notice when Paul stated, "*without faith it is impossible to please God,*" he immediately used Abraham as the example of the kind of faith that pleases God. "***By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise***" (Heb 11:8-9). I submit to you, dear reader, that a "mystical" kind of "faith" is not the biblical "faith" that pleases God, but is a counterfeit. Faith is not valid unless the OBJECT of our faith is biblical.

Paul's Allegory of the Two Jerusalems

Frost thinks that with this single allegory, Paul overturned the entire "*hope of Israel*" held by the faithful Jewish people for two thousand years! He scoffs at the prospect of Israel's second diaspora being almost 2000 years. But why not? How long was it in Frost's preterism that Abraham had to wait for the supposed mystical fulfillment of the promise in AD70? The Abrahamic Covenant was made around 2080 BC. Why is an alleged 2150 year delay in the fulfillment of the covenant not a problem for Frost, yet a 1933+ year second Jewish diaspora is supposedly a problem for futurists?

The fact is, the Abrahamic Covenant is being fulfilled progressively over thousands of years. It's fulfillment began in Genesis, with the birth of Isaac, the child of promise. But, there are two major parts to the covenant. The first dealt with God's making of Abraham a great nation, which would inherit the promised land forever. The second part dealt with the promise of one of Abraham's offspring (Jesus) being the conduit through which all the Gentile nations would also be blessed. In Gal. 3, Paul shows how this part of the

covenant was being fulfilled in his day. But, he does NOT imply that the portion relating to the inheritance of the land has been nullified, or transferred to someone else, or is to be understood mystically as some cosmic reality.

Frost writes, *"Only those Jews, Gentiles and Diasporic Israelites who followed that rule are the true 'Israel of God.'"* This statement displays a gross misunderstanding of Paul's teaching regarding Israel. Nowhere did Paul equate Gentile believers as being part of "Israel." In the Bible, "Israel" is always Israel, the nation consisting of Jews by birth. And the Gentiles are always Gentiles. BOTH the ***Israel of God*** and the ***Gentiles [nations] of God*** together form the ***Church of God***. By redefining the word "Israel" with a mystical meaning, Frost is skewing Paul's teaching. *"The Israel of God"* is the believing part of the nation of Israel, Jews with the faith of Abraham. It is NOT the whole *body of Christ*, nor is it the whole *nation of Israel*. This fact is proven from the grammar of Gal. 6:15-16. *"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and [kai - also] upon the Israel of God."* Paul declares "peace" and "mercy" to all who walk according to this rule. That is, the whole Church. But, he then says, *"also [kai] upon the Israel of God"* making a clear distinction between the whole *body of Christ* and the *"Israel of God"* a sub-group within the Body of Christ. Therefore, part of Israel (the believing remnant) is also a part of the Church. Likewise, the Gentile portion of the Church has been "grafted in" to the blessings of Abraham, as Paul stated in Rom. 11. But, that does not make them "spiritual Jews." They are "spiritual Gentiles" from those other nations that would be blessed through Abraham's seed. Saved Jews are "spiritual Jews."

God promised Abraham that he would multiply his physical seed as the stars of heaven (Jews). But there is more to Father Abraham than just the physical seed, and the nation of Israel coming from his loins. *"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"* (Gen. 17:5). This is a reference to God's twofold promise, *"Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, AND all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him"* (Gen 18:18). These are TWO distinct promises. The first involves the physical seed that came from Abraham's loins, through Isaac and Jacob, and the twelve tribes. The second promise indicates that Abraham will become the father of many other Gentile nations. The first is a promise of offspring by BIRTH (Israel); the second by ADOPTION (Gentile nations).

*"Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that **they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.** 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**"* (Gal 3:6-8). Pay close attention to the part of the Abrahamic Covenant that Paul said was fulfilled by the Gentiles being saved. It was NOT the part about the offspring by birth, that came through Isaac and Jacob. It was the part of the promise that through one of Abraham's offspring, all the OTHER nations (Gentiles) would be blessed. Therefore, the Gentile believers become the adopted Gentile children of Abraham by faith, while in no way becoming "Jews" or "spiritual Israel." Abraham is

both the father of the nation of Israel, and also the father of the believing remnants of ALL the nations of the earth through adoption. Paul continued to show that when God said, "*in **thy seed** shall all the [Gentile] nations be blessed,*" He used the singular "*seed*" and not the plural "*seeds,*" meaning ONE of Abraham's offspring [a Jew] would cause all these Gentile nations to be blessed. "*The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ*" (Gal. 3:16 NIV).

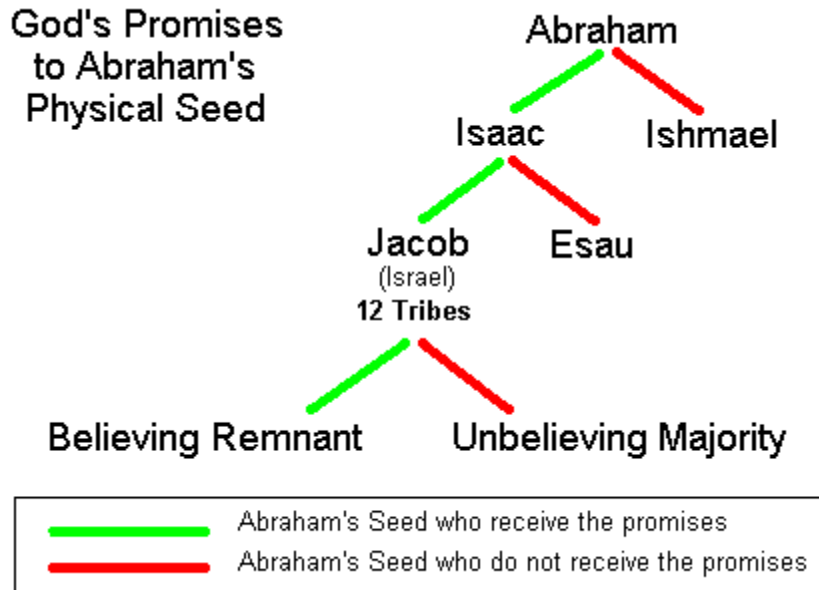
In chapter 3, Paul did not seek to contrast "physical Israel" with the "Body of Christ." Rather, he contrasted **the Abrahamic Covenant** with **the Mosaic Covenant**. Paul's whole point was to show that the Abrahamic Covenant (which includes the PERMANENT land promise) depended on FAITH and not WORKS. In contrast, the Mosaic Covenant, which came 430 years later, has nothing to do with the Abrahamic Covenant (Gal. 3:17). It was temporary (v. 19), and depended on WORKS. The land promises associated with the Mosaic Covenant were CONDITIONAL (see Deut. 28-29).

The problem facing the Galatians was the influence of the Judaizers who insisted that the Mosaic Covenant was eternal, and therefore salvation was through the Law. This whole book was meant to counter that argument. The distinction Paul made in his allegory in chapter four, using Ishmael and Isaac, was NOT between "physical Israel" and the "body of Christ," which Frost thinks is "spiritual Israel." Paul stated clearly that his contrast was between "***the two covenants***" (Gal. 4:24). This begs the question, WHAT two covenants? The answer is in chapter three. Paul's contrast was between **the Abrahamic Covenant** (based on faith and including the EVERLASTING land inheritance), and **the Mosaic Covenant** (based on works, with only a CONDITIONAL inheritance as long as Israel obeyed the Law).

The Gentiles are NEVER called "Israel" in Scripture. The unbelieving part of Israel was and is being cut off because of unbelief. Israelites who were not of the FAITH of Abraham were no longer a part of the Abrahamic Covenant, because inheritance in this covenant demands FAITH. By their clinging to the Mosaic Covenant with self-righteous works, they removed themselves from the Abrahamic Covenant. They were represented by Ishmael in Paul's allegory. The believing part of Israel, as well as the Gentile nations adopted into Abraham who placed their hope in the promise God made to Abraham and the coming Jerusalem built by God, are represented by Isaac.

Paul used precisely the same allegory in Romans 9. "*I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for **my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:** Who are [present tense] **Israelites;** to whom pertaineth [present tense] the adoption, and the glory, and the **covenants,** and the giving of the law, and the service of God, **and the promises;** Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For **they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.** That is, **They which are the children of the flesh,** these are not the*

God's Promises
to Abraham's
Physical Seed



children of God: but **the children of the promise are counted for the seed**" (Rom 9:1-8).

This passage does NOT replace Israel with the Church. Notice that the whole list of benefits, including the covenants, belong to the physical seed -

Israel. Paul's illustration was to equate "Isaac," who was the child of promise, with the believing part of Israel. The implication is that Ishmael represents the unbelieving part. Paul's

main point is that NOT ALL the natural descendants of Jacob (whom God renamed "Israel") are children of the Abrahamic promise. Notice, the passage does NOT enlarge or replace "Israel" with non-Jews, but removes the unbelieving part from the true Israel that will inherit the Abrahamic promise. Both Ishmael and Isaac were Abraham's sons by birth. But, the promise flowed through Isaac, bypassing Ishmael. Isaac also had two sons. But, the promise flowed through Jacob to the 12 tribes, bypassing Esau. Yet, all these were sons of Abraham. Paul merely carried this concept one step further. Of the 12 tribes descended from Jacob (Israel), only those Israelites who have the "faith of Abraham" are the children of promise. In paraphrase, Paul said, "Not all of those who are descended from Israel (Jacob) are 'Israel.'" The Gentiles are not in view in this verse at all.

Paul continues in the same theme in chapter 11. *"I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For **I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.** God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also **there is a remnant [of the tribes of Israel] according to the election of grace.** And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. What then? [All] Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but **the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded**" (Rom 11:1-7).*

Paul's point here is the same. He speaks of the division of Israel into two camps, **the believers who will go on to inherit the covenants and promises (as Isaac & Jacob), and the unbelievers who are cut off from the covenants and**

promises (as Ishmael and Esau). Paul continues in this chapter with the Olive Tree parable, which absolutely devastates Frost's preterism. Why? Because it proves that at some point in the future, even the surviving UNBELIEVING part of Israel WILL be restored. The whole nation of Israel turn to Christ at once, at His coming in power and glory, after a time of great tribulation. The whole surviving nation of Israel will be converted in a single day, when they *"look on Him whom they have pierced."* "All Israel" does not mean every Jew who ever lived. It refers to a national collective repentance and faith of the whole surviving nation at a single crisis in history — the coming of Christ back to earth.

Frost insists that physical Jews will NEVER inherit the Abrahamic promise. But, not only is that totally contrary to God's promise to Abraham, but it is NOT what Paul said! *"But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman"* (Gal 4:29-30). Frost's mistake is to assume that the words *"born after the flesh"* means natural descendant (which he equates with Jews), in contrast to some mystical *"spiritual Israel"* of his own invention. But that interpretation flies in the face of Paul's point and God's promise to Abraham! Both Isaac and Ishmael were physical descendants of Abraham! In what way was Ishmael *"born after the flesh"* and Isaac was not? Certainly there is no difference in the physical birth process. Both were tangible human beings. The phrase *"born after the flesh"* refers to childbirth as merely the result of sexual intercourse, as opposed to the SUPERNATURAL childbirth of Isaac to Sarah decades after *"it ceased to be with Sarah according to the manner of women."* Isaac was the physical child of promise. Ishmael was the physical child of illicit sex. The distinction being drawn by Paul is NOT between physical and mystical descendants. It is between two kinds of physical descendants, those who hold by faith to the Abrahamic promise (trusting in God to keep His promise), as opposed to those who clung to the Mosaic Covenant (relying on the self-righteous works of the Law).

Paul acknowledged that the children of the bondwoman were currently in possession of Jerusalem built by men. The earthly Jerusalem existed when Abraham went to sojourn in the promised land. Abraham met Melchisedec, king of Salem — the ancient city of Jerusalem. Yet, Abraham did not place his hope of inheritance in the man-made city, but the one that will be built by God. In Paul's allegory, "Isaac" was looking for the city built by God, when the land in which he lived would be restored and given to him as an inheritance. When Paul said, *"cast out the bondwoman"* and that her children will never possess the inheritance with the free woman, he meant that Jews holding on to the man-made Jerusalem, Temple, and the Law through works could never inherit the promises to Abraham. These demanded faith alone. Their ejection from the land in AD70 was a part of this casting out. But the true sons of Abraham, both by birth and adoption, will inherit the promises literally when the Messiah returns to assume His rightful place upon the Throne of David.

See my article, [2 Peter 3 & The Day of the Lord](#) for an answer to Frost's argument regarding the burning of the earth.