

A Response To Warner's "The Abrahamic Covenant"

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Introduction

I want to begin by expressing my appreciation to Mr. Warner for his willingness to have his views put to the open examination of written debate. Anyone who claims to be teaching the truth of God's word should never fear open and honest examination of what they teach. I believe Mr. Warner's willingness to have his teaching put to such an examination is testimony that he honestly believes that he is teaching the truth. However, the sincere belief that something is true does not make it true (cf. Acts 23:1). It is only found to be so when it is weighed in the balance of inspired Scripture and found to be in harmony therewith. Anything short of this harmony is to come short of the truth.

It is my prayer that throughout the course of this discussion Mr. Warner's resolve would match my own. That being to always be found faithful to God and, when shown to be outside of his word, to humbly submit to the will of God according to the word. If my opponent can make his case from Scripture then I am resolved to humbly submit to God's will and accept that pure doctrine without reservation. I pray that Mr. Warner would be able to honestly echo those sentiments in the event that this examination exposes his position to be man-made innovations not found in holy writ. Will he abandon his Premillennial views once and for all? Will he publish an open repentance and denouncement as publicly as he has taught his views if they are found to be false?

In this response to Warner's opening argument, "The Abrahamic Covenant," I will follow his same outline and make my responses point by point from his statements. However, before I begin a detailed analysis, it is necessary to define the terms of Warner's proposition statement. This is usually done in the opening argument but, for whatever reason, Mr. Warner neglected to do so. Such a defining of terms is necessary so that all are clear on how those terms are being used by both participants in the discussion. If Mr. Warner takes issue with how I have defined the terms then I would invite him to show where my definitions differ from his intended and/or biblical usage, and to give his definitions for clarity sake.

Defining The Terms

The proposition, as stated by Mr. Warner, is as follows:

“The Christian’s hope is not heaven, but the return of Christ to reign over the nations upon the Throne of David in Jerusalem, and to renovate this earth as the permanent inheritance of Jesus Christ and all who are in Him.”

“The Christian’s” - referring to each individual Christian. “Christian” referring to one who has been sanctified by the blood of Christ through obedience to the gospel of Christ (Matt. 28:18, 19; Acts 11:26; cf. 2 Thess. 1:8; Rom. 6:3-5, 17; et. al.). By adding the apostrophe “s” (possessive) the statement is made to refer to that which belongs to the Christian.

“Hope” - in biblical usage it refers to that which the Christian has expectation of receiving and by which faithful endurance is encouraged and/or motivated. The body of Christ resting “in hope” refers to *the expectation* of being resurrected (Act 2:26, 27). In Acts 24:15, “hope toward God” is *the expectation* of the resurrection. In Acts 27:20, “all hope that we should be saved” being “taken away” refers to those on the ship *having no expectation* of being saved from shipwreck. In the above proposition, then, the statement “*The Christian’s hope*” would refer to that which the Christian *has expectation of* receiving by virtue of being a Christian.

“Is not” - stating a negative or opposite. Therefore, Mr. Warner is making the negative statement that the Christian has *no expectation* (no hope) of receiving a place in heaven.

“Heaven” - the eternal habitation of God (Ps. 11:4; Heb. 9:24; et. al.).

“But” - contrasting conjunction. The preceding negative statement, that the Christian has no hope of heaven, is being contrasted with the following positive statement, that the expectation of every Christian is to live on an eternal material earth.

“The return of Christ” - the second coming of Jesus the Christ. “Return” means to come again. It must refer to the second coming because one cannot return to a place one has never been. It must refer to the second coming of Christ because the Bible speaks of only two comings of the Lord. His first coming was foretold in Old Testament Scripture and was fulfilled as recorded in the Gospel Accounts. While the word “return” is not explicitly used, Christ is said to “come again,” meaning once again. Whatever follows in the proposition statement is being said to occur when Christ comes again the second time.

“To reign” - “reign” means to have the rule, hold royal office, rule as king or queen. By saying “to reign” it is either meant that one is in the state of reigning or that upon a certain occurrence one will enter into the state of reigning. For example, “to be king is to reign,” meaning that being king is being in the state of reigning.” Or, “he is coming to reign,” meaning he will enter into the state of reigning upon the occasion of his coming.

It seems clear from the proposition statement that Mr. Warner is saying Jesus will enter into his reign upon the occurrence of his second coming. At this point I must ask Mr. Warner to clarify his position. Does he mean to say that Jesus is not now reigning but will begin to reign when he comes again? Is Christ currently the King of kings and Lord of lords or is he coming to take his place as King of kings and Lord of lords? His answers here would be very much appreciated.

“Over” - in a higher state of authority. That is, “High Priest” as being above, or over, all other priests. “High King” as being above, or over, all other kings.

“The nations” - “nations” means, “a large aggregate of people united by common descent, history, culture, or language, inhabiting a particular country or territory.” In Psalms 47:3; 57:9; 117:1; among others, “nations” is parallel to “people.” So we can understand this statement to mean that when Jesus comes again he will at that time enter into the office of his reign over the peoples of the earth. Of course I will have to wait to see how Mr. Warner answers the questions I posed to him above before I could say with certainty that this is the intended statement.

“Upon” - simply a more formal way of saying “on.” In the proposition statement it is used to say that when Jesus comes again he will at that time take his place “on” the throne of his rule over the nations.

“The Throne” - a “throne” is a ceremonial chair signifying sovereign rule. It is the symbol of the sovereign authority of the one who sits upon it. The addition of the definite article, “the,” would refer to a specific throne, or specific sovereign rulership.

“Of David” - David was the first king of God’s people from the authorized royal tribe of Judah (cf. Gen. 49:10). The genitive “of” makes it possessive, i.e. David’s throne, the throne belonging to David. “David” is used symbolically as the ruler of God’s people. Thus, the throne, symbol of sovereign authority, of David, symbolic for the authorized ruler of God’s people. Unless Mr. Warner is actually referring to the literal chair that the literal historic person named David literally sat upon when he ruled God’s people. I will let him clarify if that is indeed the case.

“In Jerusalem” - the capital of Israel in the Judaeen hills about 20 miles from the Jordan river with a population of about 748,000.

“And” - coordinating conjunction signifying the addition of what follows to what has preceded. In the proposition Mr. Warner has stated that the expectation belonging to the Christian is *not* heaven, i.e. no hope of heaven for the Christian, *but* rather the reign of Christ from Jerusalem *and* what follows in the remainder of the proposition statement.

“To renovate” - restore something to a good state of repair.

“This” - the very one now in hand.

“Earth” - the material, physical planet on which we live, this very one. The third planet from the sun. Also, the surface of the world as distinct from the sky or the sea.

“Permanent” - lasting or intended to last or remain unchanged indefinitely.

“Inheritance” - a thing that is inherited, the act of inheriting. The Bible speaks frequently of “inheritance” (Acts 20:32; 26:18; Eph. 1:18; Col. 1:12; 3:24; Heb. 9:15; 1 Pet. 1:4; et. al.).

“Of Jesus Christ” - the term “Jesus Christ” refers to Jesus as God’s Anointed. “Of” genitive referring to what belongs to the Anointed One. So the inheritance that belongs to Jesus, according to the proposition statement, is this “renovated” earth.

“And all who are in Him” - in addition to this “renovated” earth being the permanent inheritance of Jesus, it is also, according to the proposition statement, the permanent inheritance of all those who are in Him. “Him” referring to Christ. “In Him” referring to those who have “put on,” been put “into Christ” (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3, 4).

I believe this gives us a clear understanding of what Mr. Warner’s proposition means. He is saying that the Christian has *no expectation* of heaven, but rather, the Christian’s hope is the second coming of Christ to begin his reign as sovereign ruler of the peoples of earth and to receive with Christ *this earth restored to its original good working order*. If I have misrepresented the proposition statement in any way then Mr. Warner will have ample opportunity to clarify his position.

The Burden of Warner’s Opening Argument

My opponent has thanked me for agreeing to debate “the very important topic of the Christian’s hope.” However, if you look at the heading for what we are actually debating it is stated, “Premillennialism (Chiliasm) vs. Amillennialism.” From this we can conclude that Mr. Warner believes the tenets of the Premillennialism doctrine to be the Christian’s hope. He says that this hope is “summed up” in the proposition statement. However, the proposition statement says nothing of “millennium,” one thousand, or of what happens before, “pre,” the one thousand year reign of Christ on earth “millennium.”

Rather than explain how his proposition statement applies to Premillennialism, Mr. Warner has made the burden of his opening argument to “prove the last part of the propositional statement, that the Christian’s true ‘hope’ is our Lord’s coming *‘to renovate*

this earth as the permanent inheritance of Jesus Christ and all who are in Him.” In the proposition statement Mr. Warner put the clause *“the return of Christ to reign over the nations upon the Throne of David in Jerusalem”* before the second clause that he set out to “prove” in his opening argument. So, am I to understand that the reign of Christ over the nations will be for one thousand years, a *“millennium,”* and then, after this millennial reign, Christ will “renovate this earth” as the Christian’s eternal abode? Or, am I (and the reader) to understand that the “renovation” will take place upon the return of Christ and his reign “over the nations” will be in this “renovated earth”? I believe Mr. Warner’s clarification here would help us to understand the “eschatology” he is asking us to except as biblical truth.

Since the opening argument was given to “proving” the second part of the proposition statement I will deal with what has been submitted for review. I will show in this rebuttal that Mr. Warner has taken elements of the Abrahamic Covenant out of context, has failed to distinguish between the distinctive elements of that Covenant and has applied New Testament statements concerning the “seed” element of the Covenant to the “land” element of the covenant. When we see clearly what was involved in the Abrahamic Covenant and how each of the elements of that Covenant were fulfilled it will be seen that Mr. Warner’s premise is not in harmony with sound doctrine.

Premillennialism vs. Amillennialism

Let me here define what it is Mr. Warner intends “to expose” as “a blending of Christianity with ancient pagan Greek philosophy and Gnosticism.” I have already given the definition of “Premillennialism” above. Let me say again, it is the doctrine of the thousand year reign of Christ on earth, including what will occur prior to his second coming. Now, what is “amillennial eschatology”? Simply put, *amillennial* means against, “a,” the doctrine of a thousand year, *“millennial,”* reign of Christ on earth. So the real purpose of this debate is to establish which of these positions, *Premillennialism* or *Amillennialism*, is in harmony with Scripture and, thus, expose which is contrary to Scripture.

What Shall Be Our Authority In This Debate?

Mr. Warner expresses amazement that I would take a position contrary to Premillennialist teaching because it was held by “the Christian writers who had close linkage to the Apostles.” So, apparently, Mr. Warner would have me accept his position because it was believed and taught by early “Christian” writers. I would like to ask my opponent to make a clear statement as to what degree of divine authority he believes these early “Christian” writers possessed.

I am well aware of the long history of the Premillennial doctrine. Cerinthus is the first known proponent of this theory in 95 AD. It was also taken up by Papius and Irenaeus

in the second century AD. Perhaps my opponent believes writings such as “The Epistle of Barnabas,” “Shepherd of Hermas” and “Second Clement” to be authoritative inspired writings? Will he quote from these ancient texts as he has quoted from Irenaeus in an attempt to establish authority for his views?

If Mr. Warner so chooses, I am ready and willing to fully discuss the credibility of such sources. However, unless he believes that these writers have inspired authority, I would suggest that we make our case from Scripture and Scripture alone.

Quoting from Irenaeus as a commentator with whom my opponent agrees is one thing, and perfectly fine, but to suggest that his views have some greater weight of authority because of his “close linkage to the Apostles” is quite another matter. “But he was the disciple of Polycarp, the disciple of John,” my opponent will say. Need I introduce you to Judas, the disciple of Jesus? What of his “close linkage” to the Messiah himself? Or what of the “close linkage” of Demas to the apostle Paul (Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:10)? The Ephesian disciples could claim “close linkage” with an apostle (Acts 19:1-6; 20:17-21). However, in just a short time they were in danger of losing their candlestick (Rev. 2:4, 5). Surely “close linkage” is not going to be presented as a source of religious authority in the course of this debate!

Warner’s Methodology

I am in complete agreement with my opponent in so far as he says that “New Testament revelation never contradicts Old Testament revelation.” However, when he goes on to say that being opposed to Premillennialism causes one to “disregard and contradict Old Testament prophecy” I must strongly disagree.

It is here that the reader will find one of the most fundamental differences between those who profess Premillennial views and those who reject such. That difference being the way in which prophecy is handled.

Premillennialists fail to realize, or outright reject, the biblical fact that many prophetic statements have a dual application. That is, they had an immediate, and usually physical, application to the prophet’s immediate audience *and* they had a more far reaching spiritual application to be fulfilled by Christ and/or his church.

The perpetuity of the Davidic dynasty is a prime example of dual prophecy. In 2 Samuel 7, David had purposed to build God a house. God sent the prophet Nathan to tell David that he would not be the one to build the house but his son would build him a house (12, 13). The immediate application of this is clearly Solomon and his work of building the Temple (1 Kings 5:5; 6:12). However, the New Testament gives this its ultimate fulfillment in Christ and the church (cf. Jn. 2:19, 20; Acts 2:29-30; 13:23).

Another interesting example is Matthew's statement in Matthew 2:15. There the apostle quotes from Hosea 11:1 as a prophetic statement of Christ. However, in the context of the original statement it was not a prophetic statement at all. It was a statement of historical fact, God had delivered Israel out of Egypt. In the immediate context, and to the immediate audience, the statement was a reminder of how good God had been to Israel to emphasize the magnitude of their ungrateful rebellion against him. Did Matthew use the statement out of context or twist the Scriptures? Of course not! In his use of this statement in application to Jesus having been called out of Egypt, Matthew shows the typical (as in *tupos*) relationship between Christ and Israel. In this case it is an antithetical type. Just as Israel had gone into Egypt for safety (Gen. 45:7, 10-11), Jesus was taken there for safety (Matt. 2:13-14). Just as God had called his son, Israel, out of Egypt (Ex. 4:22, 23), Jesus, God's Son, was called out of Egypt (Matt. 2:15). However, in antithesis to Hosea's Israel (Hos. 11:1), who responded to having been called out of Egypt by rebelling against God, Jesus would respond by being perfectly obedient to his Father. So Hosea 11:1 finds *dual meaning* in its New Testament usage.

What my opponent fails to acknowledge in his noble statement of harmony between Old and New Testament Scripture is that Old Testament Scripture *must* be understood in light of its New Testament usage. Premillennialism seeks to interpret New Testament Scripture so as to make it comply with Old Testament context. This is reverse to the manner in which proper interpretation is to occur. The Old is subservient to the New, not vice versa.

New Testament writers acknowledged this in revealing the Old to be types and shadows of the New (Heb. 8:5; 10:1; 1 Cor. 10:11). The crucial point of understanding types and shadows is that the type is always subservient (i.e. lesser) to the antitype. The shadow is the lesser to the substance. For example, baptism into Christ is the greater mode of cleansing from sin than was the universal flood of Noah (1 Peter 3:20, 21). We study the Old Testament Scriptures for what they have to teach us, much of it typically, about being the faithful people of God (Rom. 15:4). Not so that we can *manipulate* New Testament Scripture into a subservient role to the context of that which has become obsolete (Heb. 8:13).

Did Abraham believe "the wrong things" when he went out from his fathers house to the land that God would show him? (Heb. 11:8-16). No, of course not! He believed what God told him and he obeyed without reservation. Did he know or understand what the ultimate fulfillment would be to what God promised him? Again, no (1 Pet. 1:10-12).

I believe another great fallacy of the Premillennialist doctrine is in their looking to Old Testament Scripture for any "eschatological" relevance at all. Eschatology deals with "last things." However, the Old Testament prophets were not looking to "last things."

They were looking to the next things, the things of the New Covenant that would bring their own to a close and begin the final stage of human history (Jer. 31:31-34). I would like for my opponent to seriously ponder this question and make his best effort to give it an answer in harmony with his "eschatology." Why would the Old Testament prophets be prophesying the second coming of Christ, or things relating to it, when they were still looking forward to his first coming? Premillennialism does a great disservice to those holy men of old by supposing that they, to a large degree, ignored the next great event of human history - the establishment of the church - and just leapfrogged it in preference to the second coming. I do not believe there is a single Old Testament prophecy yet awaiting fulfillment. They were, every one, fulfilled in Christ and his church (Luke 24:25-27; Eph. 3:10-12). I am sure if I am wrong on this point that my opponent will be quick to point it out.

Now, this is of specific relevance to Mr. Warner's opening argument. He has written a great deal under the title of "The Abrahamic Covenant" in an attempt to establish that this Old Testament Covenant is yet awaiting fulfillment. However, we will see that it was fulfilled both in the immediate physical sense with Old Testament Israel and the ultimate spiritual sense in New Testament Israel.

The Christian's Hope According To Warner

Warner says that Amillennialism "demands that the hope of the Jewish people...was a misplaced (carnal) hope." Is it Amillennial teaching that demands such or the Lord?

The Jews of Jesus day had misapplied many prophecies to fit with their longed for "Warrior King" who would rid Israel of Roman dominion and conquer the nations, restoring Israel to its once "Super Power" status. They applied the prophecies of the "seed" promise to an earthly ruler. They related the "land" promise to earthly dominion. They used the prophecies of Israel's restoration from Babylonian captivity for their being restored to world power. And they saw the promises of the coming King and his Kingdom as applicable to a Warrior King that would carry out all of their misconceptions. Because of their misplaced hope in worldly power they missed the true spiritual application of the coming kingdom.

Where the Jews of Jesus day envisioned a purely physical fulfillment of these things; a purely human descendent of David who would sit on a physical, literal throne on earth and who would rule by military power; modern Premillennialists find themselves in complete agreement with them.

However, Jesus corrected these misconceptions among his countrymen, to their dismay and rejection of him. He challenged their thinking of a purely human descendent of David (Matt. 22:41-46). He refused to be made an earthly king (Jn. 6:15). He told Pilate

that his kingdom was not of this world, i.e. not a physical kingdom (Jn. 18:36). And before my opponent tries to explain this away by saying that Jesus meant his authority to rule was not from earth; notice that Jesus explained what he meant by the way his kingdom would be defended. Men fight wars to protect earthly rulers and kingdoms but Christ's kingdom is spiritual and is defended spiritually (cf. 2 Cor. 10:4, 5; 1 Tim. 1:18, 20).

This idea was so deeply ingrained in their thinking that Jesus even had to deal with this among his own disciples. They held misconceptions, despite Jesus repeated teaching on the matter, right up to the ascension. One of the last things they asked Jesus was if he would restore the kingdom prior to his ascension (Acts 1:6). Jesus told them that it wasn't for them to know the times and seasons of such things but that they would receive the Holy Spirit. He had already told them that when they received the Holy Spirit he would reveal things to them that they were not ready to receive during his ministry (Jn. 16:12, 13). After the Holy Spirit came in Acts 2, they never again expressed any confusion over the nature of the kingdom.

Warner would have Peter and Paul continuing in their misconceptions even after receiving the Holy Spirit's guidance. He presents two passages in an attempt to have these apostles refer to a physical restoration of Israel and a "renovated" earth.

The first is Acts 3:19-22, in which, says he, Peter "confirmed" to the Jews that their expectation of an earthly kingdom and world power was correct. He emphasizes the terms "times of refreshing" and "restoration of all things" as though they are in reference to his proposition. However, Acts 3:19 is a parallel statement to Acts 2:38. Notice:

Acts 3:19

Repent ye therefore, and *be converted*, that your *sins may be blotted out*, when the *times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord*;

Acts 2:38

Then Peter said unto them, *Repent*, and *be baptized* every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the *remission of sins*, and ye shall *receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*.

So, "be baptized" is parallel to "be converted," "sins may be blotted out" is parallel with "remission of sins," and "the gift of the Holy Spirit" is parallel with "times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." So "the gift of the Holy Spirit" is the same thing as "the times of refreshing." Obviously, "the times of the refreshing" is not referring to some future restored earthly kingdom.

Where Mr. Warner would have us believe that the “restoration of all things” refers to when Christ will come to restore Israel, as indicated in his proposition, the passage actually contradicts that notion. It says that Jesus “must” remain in heaven “until the times of restoration of all things.” That is, until the restoration has taken place. The passage doesn’t say that the restoration will occur when he comes again but that when he comes it will have already taken place.

Peter says that the “times of restoration of all things” was “spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets.” One example of the prophetic assurance of the “restoration” is found in Isaiah 49:6, where the servant (Christ) is said to be for the restoration of Israel *and* the Gentiles. Prophetic statements like this refer to the time when both Jew and Gentile would be restored to God in one body (cf. Eph. 2:11-17). So, when Peter made the statement under consideration, *before* the gospel had gone to the Gentiles, he was saying that Christ would come *after* restoration had been made available to all (cf. Matt. 24:14; Col. 1:23). Notice also the parallel between God speaking of the times of restoration by the mouth of all his prophets in verse 21 and “all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of *these days*,” in verse 24. So “the restoration of all things” is parallel to “these days,” which is the Christian Age (cf. 1 Pet. 1:9-12).

Notice also, in this very context, the application that Peter makes from the promise of Abraham (Acts 3:25). He says the promise was realized when Jesus was raised to deliver them from their iniquities (Acts 3:26). So the promise to Abraham, that in his seed would all nations be blessed, Peter says, was realized *first* with the sons of the prophets, the Jews, by Christ making possible *the remission of their sins*. Not by promising some future earthly kingdom.

Next, Mr. Warner attempts to wrest Romans 8:16-25 into conformity with his Premillennial theories. He says that the “hope” in this passage is the “lifting of the curse from...this cursed earth.” I don’t find the word “cursed” in this context anywhere. The only time the word “curse” is even used in Romans is in 12:14, where it’s talking about cursing people. Could he be referring to God’s cursing the land after Adam’s sin? (Gen. 3:17). Was not that curse lifted after the Flood? (Gen. 5:29; 8:21).

Surely, Mr. Warner is not going to say that Paul is *literally* talking about *the physical earth* when he says it has “earnest expectation” and that it “groans.” My opponent prefers to allow Irenaeus to interpret this passage for him. And no wonder, they are both Premillennialists. However, I prefer to allow Scripture to explain itself.

It is not difficult to see how Paul is using a common form of *figurative* personification of the creation as sharing in the suffering and/or glory of its inhabitants. Notice these

several passages where the same kind of personification occurs (Isa. 24:4-7; 30:25, 26; 35:1, 2, 7, 9; Ps. 114; 148). Clearly, the “groaning,” “waiting,” and “hoping,” of the creation here is, likewise, to be understood *figuratively*. So, if Paul is using a *figurative* personification of creation, why should we think that the deliverance of the creation from bondage is *literal*?

Paul is emphasizing the hardships that must be endured by the faithful in this sin-sick world. He says that the things suffered by the faithful are not worthy of compare to the glory that will be revealed in them. To emphasize the degree of the suffering he uses this personification of the earth’s own suffering under the weight of sin. Likewise, to emphasize the hope of the resurrection (v. 23, 24) he includes the personification of the earth’s relief when its purpose as our habitation will have been fulfilled.

Let’s take a closer look at the word my opponent has taken in hand to define. The word “hope” is found 60 times in the KJV New Testament and 68 times in the NKJV New Testament. Since the heading is “The Christian’s Hope,” we will only take those occurrences that specifically relate to that which the Christ has expectation of receiving from God by faithful obedience to Christ.

In Acts 23:6; 24:15; 26:6, 7, Paul uses this term in direct reference to the resurrection from the dead. He uses it repeatedly to refer to the reason for his being persecuted, that is that he was teaching the expectation of the resurrection in Christ.

In Romans 8:24, “saved in this hope” refers to the “redemption of our body” (Rom. 8:23). The “redemption of our body” is a reference to the resurrection. If its not the resurrection then what is it? It is not the redemption from sin because Paul is talking about “sons of God” who are already redeemed. Remember, the context is edification from the knowledge that no matter what we suffer in this world, even if we are killed, we are “more than conquerors” through Christ and this present suffering is not worthy to be compared with the glory that will be revealed in us (Rom. 8:18, 37). Now, what about that glory that will be revealed in us? It shall be revealed when Christ comes to be glorified in His saints (2 Thess. 1:3-12). So the context of the “redemption of our body” fits the context of the resurrection from the dead.

In 1 Corinthians 15:19 Paul says that if “in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.” The point here, in the great chapter of resurrection from the dead, is that we don’t hope in this life but in the life to come after the resurrection. Again, the “hope” here is in reference to the resurrection from the dead. It is used again in 1 Thessalonians 4:13 in direct reference to the resurrection of the dead.

Here are a few more references concerning the Christian’s hope.

Colossians 1:5, "the hope which is laid for you in heaven."

Colossians 1:27, "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

1 Thessalonians 5:8, "the hope of salvation."

Titus 1:2, "in hope of eternal life."

Titus 3:7, "heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

1 Peter 1:3, "begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

While it cannot be said that every reference to "hope" is a direct reference to the resurrection, it is certainly clear that it is the predominant application of the Christian's "hope." When you compare this to Ephesians 4:4, "one hope of your calling," it seems to me that the Christian's hope is to look forward to, with great expectation, the coming of Christ to raise the dead and receive his own (Jn. 5:28, 29; 1 Thess. 4:15-18). I found nowhere, in any of these references, a "renovated" earth for our eternal abode.

The Promise To Abraham

Mr. Warner says that the "hope" is "rooted in the land promise that God gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which still remains unfulfilled." Now, for the Premillennialist doctrine to survive they must have an unfulfilled land promise. If the land promise has been fulfilled then where would be their "hope" of an earthly kingdom? It would vanish, and as it should.

It is absolutely true that Abraham, nor his sons, believed that the land promise was an allegory. They were not supposed to and, indeed, it was not an allegorical promise. I don't believe I have ever heard or read anyone that has tried to make the case that it was or should be understood as an allegorical promise. It seems to me that Mr. Warner is making a charge of mishandling the truth of the land promise that has not been made, not by me anyway. Abraham believed God's promise literally and acted on it literally, as he had to in order to be found faithful (Heb. 11:8-10).

In quoting from Hebrews 11:8, 9, 13, 39 and 40, Warner says that "this very promise was not realized by Abraham in his lifetime, but will be in the future when all of Abraham's seed will inherit that hope together, 'us' being included." I do not recall any mention of a future fulfillment of the land promise in Hebrews 11. Also, where is the word "hope" found in Hebrews 11? Remember, Mr. Warner has expressed the importance of that word in his opening argument and has set out to show us that this "hope" *is not* heaven but the "renovated" earth in fulfillment of the yet unfulfilled land promise.

From Acts 7:2-6, Warner says that since Stephen said the promise was to give the land “to him (Abraham) for a possession” that the only two possibilities to Abraham having not received it himself is that, 1) “God lied to Abraham;” or, 2) “the promise will be fulfilled in the future.” Why does Warner get to say that those are the “only two possible conclusions”? I would like to offer a third, God gave it to Abraham as a possession in his descendants the same way his descendants paid tithes to Melchizedek in Abraham (Heb. 7:9, 10).

Did God lie to Abraham when he conferred that promise to Isaac? (Gen. 26:3, 4). Did God lie to Abraham *and* Isaac when he later conferred the same promise to Jacob? (Gen. 28:13, 14). Did God lie to Abraham *and* Isaac *and* Jacob when Joshua said that God fulfilled *every* promise made to them when they had taken the land of promise? (Josh. 23:14). No! He did exactly what he had promised to do.

The rest of Warner’s quotations can be addressed singularly by demonstrating the elements of the Abrahamic Covenant and how he fails to distinguish between them when addressing the fulfillment of the promises God made to Abraham.

There are three distinct elements of the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:1-3):

1. The Land Promise (Gen. 12:1, 7).
2. The Nation Promise (Gen. 12:2).
3. The Seed Promise (Gen. 12:3).

As we saw with the dual nature of many Old Testament prophecies, these various elements of the Abrahamic Covenant have dual fulfillments.

The Nation Promise was fulfilled in a primary sense by the formation of national Israel as God’s chosen people but its ultimate fulfillment was realized in the establishment of the church, the spiritual nation of promise, the “Israel of God” (1 Pet. 2:9; Gal. 6:16).

The Land Promise was fulfilled in the primary sense when Israel took the land of Canaan (Josh. 21:43; 1 Kg. 4:21) but its ultimate fulfillment would be realized in the kingdom of Christ, the new Jerusalem (Rev. 3:12; 21:2).

The Seed Promise was fulfilled in the primary sense with the birth of Isaac, the son of promise but in the ultimate sense its fulfillment was in the birth of Christ, the spiritual Son of Promise (Acts 3:25-26; Gal. 3:16).

The ultimate design of the Abrahamic Covenant is seen in Galatians 3:8-29, which Warner limits to a literal land promise, which had already been fulfilled. However, Paul

makes the spiritual application abundantly clear in this passage. Notice the following points *of spiritual significance* from the design of the Abrahamic Covenant:

1. The blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant are promised to those who are characterized by the same *quality* of obedient faith as that of Abraham (Gal. 3:8, 9). The gospel, or good news, that was preached to Abraham was the promise that “in thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (Gal. 3:8). The Gentiles were not included in National Israel, but they are “blessed” in the spiritual nation of the church (Eph. 2:14-18).
2. The blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant are ultimately fulfilled in the Messianic Seed, Jesus (Gal. 3:15-22).
3. The blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant belongs to the *spiritual* heirs of Abraham, those who have obeyed the gospel of Christ (Gal. 3:23-29).

Conclusion

I am sure that in our ongoing discussion we will cover the claim that the Christian has no hope of heaven. We will discuss what the Bible says will truly happen to this earth when Christ comes again. And we will see where the Christian’s true inheritance is to be enjoyed.

I anticipate Mr. Warners answers to the questions raised in this response to his claims in “The Abrahamic Covenant.”

Finally, I appreciate the readers careful consideration of what I have presented here. If anything I have written is found to be in error then I will certainly repent and correct my understanding of these things to be found faithful to our Great God and Savior.