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The Sermons of Dr. S. Lewis Johnson

Eschatology

“The Palestinian Covenant”

TRANSCRIPT

We are continuing our series of studies in the covenants, which is part of our study of Eschatology. And our topic is “The Palestinian Covenant and Prophecy.” And our passage that we want to look at in the Bible is Deuteronomy chapter 29 and chapter 30.

First of all, a few words of introduction to the Palestinian Covenant and Prophecy. The basic Biblical promises are those of the Abrahamic Covenant. And the story of the Bible is the record of the path along which Israel moves toward their fulfillment.

Now, I have referred already to the passage in Luke chapter 1 in which Mary gives her famous Magnificat which concludes with: “He hath helped his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed forever.” It is evident from this statement that Mary made that she considered the birth of our Lord to be the means by which God was helping Israel, and by which he was fulfilling the promises to Abraham and to his seed forever.

In other words, the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is looked at as the foundational stone of the completion of the Abrahamic promises. God promised Abram, in the Abrahamic promises, a seed; he promised him a land; and he promised him a royal line. He would have successors who would be children of faith as he. He would have a

land upon which he and his seed should live. And he would also have a king, and that this king would ultimately be king over all the nations of the earth.

Now, the story of Israel is related specifically to these Abrahamic promises. And you know in the story of the five books of Moses, Israel came up to the land, refused to go into the land by reason of disobedience, wandered in the land for forty years having been given the law of Moses, and then ultimately, near the end of their discipline of the forty years in the wilderness, they journeyed to the borders of the land and there they hesitated while Moses gave them some final instructions. When they had come out of Egypt, they had been typically redeemed by blood and by power from bondage in Egypt. All of this was designed of course to represent, in pictorial fashion, the salvation that we have through the Lord Jesus Christ.

At Mount Sinai I remember as we studied last week, God proposed another covenant which the nation accepted. They accepted this covenant out of a sense of false understanding of their own character and the character of God. The aim of that covenant, in the mind of God, was to give them instruction concerning sin. By means of the Mosaic Covenant, sin was intensified, it was increased. In other words, through the coming of the covenant, there was stirred up within Israel the remnants of the sin that was in their hearts.

It was not simply designed to give them the knowledge of sin. They knew of the facts of sin before the coming of the Mosaic covenant. What it was designed to give them was a sense of the knowledge of sin in its horrible character before God, to increase the sin in the sense that it stirred up that which is latent in their hearts. And further, it was designed to instruct with reference to righteousness, giving to the Israelites an understanding of the will of God. This, we said last time, was something that the Abrahamic Covenant did not do. The Abrahamic Covenant had given them promises, but the Abrahamic Covenant had provided within its promises no means by which they should come to the knowledge of their sin, which was a necessity for their entrance into

the blessing that would come through the Lord Jesus. Remember last time, I said that God had approved their acceptance of the proposal of the Mosaic Covenant, but also Moses had expressed a desire that evidently came from God that: “O that they would have had a heart to have obeyed the word of God.”

The second aim of the Covenant of Moses was to give instruction concerning national order and life. And so, as a result of the giving of the covenant of Moses, we have in that covenant the Ten Commandments; we have the civil and ceremonial laws, the laws by which Israel was to be governed; and thus the law served that purpose as well. In the New Testament, we read that the law was a schoolmaster until the time of Christ. And so God taught Israel with reference to her sin, with reference to national order and life. And also in the ceremonial aspects of the law, Israel was given instruction concerning the coming Savior.

This Sinaitic Covenant, which we studied last week, we have said was a conditional covenant. That is evident by its inauguration. In contrast to the Abrahamic Covenant, which was inaugurated by a sacrifice in which God alone took the primary part, Israel simply received the benefits of the promises. In the case of the Sinaitic Covenant, remember in Exodus chapter 24, verses 6 and 8: “When the animal is slain, the blood is sprinkled both upon the people and upon the book.” -- sprinkled upon the book, in token of the fact that Israel assumes responsibilities to obey or rather that God has assumed responsibilities in accordance with his revelation, sprinkled upon the people in token of the fact that they have assumed responsibilities to obey. So that the Mosaic Covenant is conditional; it is dependent upon the obedience of the children of Israel. The Abrahamic Covenant is unconditional; it depends totally upon the faithfulness of God.

The original Mosaic Covenant was broken immediately. In the 32nd chapter of the Book of Exodus, while Moses is still in the Mount, Israel is on the ground breaking the Mosaic Covenant. Israel did not understand her heart, and she did not understand the holiness of God, and so that covenant was quickly broken.

After the discipline of the forty years, as I mentioned earlier, Israel finally reaches the borders of the land of Canaan in the land of Moab. And there in Moab, just before entrance into the land, Moses calls upon the nation to make a new beginning. And the Palestinian Covenant is the result of that call to Israel to make a new beginning. It illustrates, in a way, God’s concern over Israel’s preservation, that he would again call them to account, in the light of the Mosaic Covenant, renew that covenant as they entered into the land. I think it is an evidence of God’s concern over Israel’s preservation.

The famous Hamann of Königsberg in Germany who has been called the sage of the north, *der magus des nordens*, once said concerning Israel, “To me, the wonder of all wonders and the most unmistakable proof of a divine providence and rule, a miracle greater than Noah’s Ark, or Lot’s wife, or the burning bush is the Jew.” We will see in these two chapters that this maintenance of the identity of Israel in the midst of her unbelief is a token of the faithfulness of God to his promises.

Sometime ago I read Bruce Mazlish’s book *The Riddle of History*. Professor Mazlish is from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the book is treatment of the philosophies of history of men such as Vico, Voltaire, Condorsay, Kant, Hegel, Comte, Marx, Spengler, Toynbee, Freud. And in this particular book, it’s startling that in the index there is no reference to the Nation of Israel at all. It is a striking thing to me that men would attempt to write a philosophy of history and exclude the dealings of God with Israel. For really, these dealings are the secret of God’s dealings with human history. I must say for Professor Mazlish, there a few incidental references here and there in this very significant book to Israel. But of course, there was no treatment whatsoever of the significance of Israel in history.

Well, now we want to come to, first of all, the renewal of the Sinaitic Covenant. Deuteronomy chapter 29, verse 1 through verse 29. Now, I hope you will not mind, but I am going to read this entire chapter, Deuteronomy in chapter 29, verse 1 through verse 29. This is the renewal of the Sinaitic Covenant, the renewal of the broken covenant

made on Mount Sinai. Called the Mosaic Covenant, called the Sinaitic Covenant, the Palestinian Covenant is its renewal. Now beginning with the first verse:

“These are the words of the covenant, which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant (that is in addition to the covenant) which he had made with them at Horeb. (Now, Horeb is the Deuteronomic name for Mount Sinai.) And Moses called unto all Israel, and said to them, Ye have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; The great trials which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles. Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day. And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes have not become old upon you, and thy shoe has not become old upon thy foot. (Inflation was unknown.) Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine or strong drink: that ye might know that I am the LORD your God. And when you came unto this place, Sihon the king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, came out against us unto battle, and we smote them: And we took their land, and gave it for an inheritance unto the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. (Remember these tribes are those that settled on the east side of the river.) Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do. Ye stand this day all of you before the LORD your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, and thy sojourner who is in thy camp from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water: That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the LORD thy God, and into his oath, which the LORD thy God maketh with thee this day: That he may establish thee today for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, (and notice carefully the following words for they link the Mosaic, Sinaitic, and Palestinian renewal with the covenant made to Abraham.) as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to

Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; but with him who standeth here with us this day before the LORD our God, and also with him who is not here with us this day. (So you can see this covenant is not made simply with a generation, it is made with Abraham and his seed.) For ye know how we have dwelt in the land of Egypt; and how we came through the nations which he passed by; And ye have seen their abominations and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which were among them. Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that bareth gall and wormwood. And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book, shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven. And the LORD shall set him apart unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law: So that the generation to come of your children who shall rise up after you, and the foreigner who shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the LORD hath laid upon it; And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass growth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath: Even all the nations shall say, Wherefore hath the LORD done this unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out the land of Egypt: For they went and served other gods, and worshiped them, gods whom they knew not, and whom he had not given unto them. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against this land, to

bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book: And the LORD rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day. The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.”

The renewal of the Sinaitic Covenant, this renewed covenant is commonly called the Palestinian Covenant. Since Israel was at this moment on the point of finally entering into the land, it’s to be expected that Moses would speak of matters governing Israel’s relationship to the land. And that is what is, perhaps, the chief subject of the Palestinian Covenant; it is Israel’s relationship to the land. And it sets forth the regulations for Israel’s possession of this Promised Land.

Notice the 13th verse: “That he may establish thee today for a people unto himself and that he may be unto thee a God as he hath said unto thee and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, and to Isaac, and to Jacob.” And then in chapter 30, verse 20: “That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and thou mayest obey his voice and that thou mayest cleave unto him for he is thy life and the length of thy days and that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, to give them.”

Now, let’s review what we have been saying for a moment about Israel and the possession of the land. We can see from this that the relationship of the Sinaitic covenant to the Abrahamic covenant is very close, in fact, I think we could say, and in a kind of paraphrase, that the Sinaitic Covenant or this Palestinian Covenant, in fact, both of them, but particularly this Palestinian Covenant is a covenant that governs Israel’s possession of the land. The Abrahamic Covenant guaranteed Israel title to the land that was promised to Abraham. The Palestinian Covenant conditions Israel’s possession of the land, and does it until Israel comes to the experience of the truth of divine mercy in the last days.

The reason that Israel today is not in her land in full possession of that promised to Abraham is because Israel is still a nation in disobedience and under the judgment of God.

Now, of course we do see a few who have gone back the land of Palestine, but they hold a very small portion of the land that was promised to Abraham and in no way can this be regarded as the fulfillment of these promises that were made to Abraham. Israel shall not possess the totality of the land until Israel as a nation comes to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and comes into right relationship to God. For while the title to the land belongs to her, the possession is regulated by her obedience to the will of God.

Let me illustrate it by a familiar illustration which I think I’ve already used once before. Let’s imagine that one of your children has graduated from school and you want to give him a car, but he is a minor. Let’s assume he is sixteen years of age. He’s under eighteen, anyway. You buy a car. You put the car in the name of you minor, your son, but you lay down some parental rules. And the rules are simply this: the car is yours. It’s in your name, but the use of this car is conditioned by your obedience to the laws of our state. If you are arrested for speeding more than once, then the possession of that which is yours by title will be taken from you until such time as you have satisfied me that you intend to obey the laws of the land.

It is in a similar relationship that Israel stood to the land. The land had been promised to her, but the land promises were conditional promises related to Israel’s obedience to God, not the title of them, the possession of them.

Now, of course, we know from the teaching of Scripture that the time is coming in the future when God will bring Israel to faith and trust in Jehovah, and then, of course, they shall enter into the possession of their land which is theirs by title. The reason that God may say that it is certain that Israel shall possess her land is because it is certain that God shall transform the heart of the nation. That is why.

Now, as you notice through this chapter and, particularly as you read on into the next chapter, and as you read the closely related chapter in Leviticus chapter 26, you discover that throughout all of this discipline into which Israel is brought as a result of her disobedience, she preserves her national entity. This is one of the miracles of human history that Israel has preserved her national entity in spite of the fact that she has been, in the fifth or sixth of the divine disciplines, sent to the four corners of the earth

Now, at this point I want you to turn with me over to Leviticus chapter 26. In Leviticus chapter 26, after the giving of the Mosaic law, Moses is given a parallel chapter. It was given much earlier that this Palestinian Covenant, and the Palestinian Covenant is related to what we read here, but in Leviticus chapter 26 we read of the cycles of discipline into which Israel would be sent if she disobeys the Law of Moses.

Now, I’m not going to read this entire chapter. It happens to be one of the real long ones in the Book of Leviticus, 46 verses. I want you to notice the headings in your Bible. If you have a Scofield Bible, that will tell the story. You’ll notice in the 3rd verse, in the Scofield edition, we have conditions of blessing, if you walk in my statutes and keep my commandments and do them, then I will give you rain in due season and the land shall yield her increase and the trees of the field shall yield her fruit. Then after having said that he would walk among them and be their God and he would set his tabernacle in their midst, for he is the Lord their God who brought them forth out of the land of Egypt that you should not be the slaves of the Egyptians, and I have broken the bands of their yoke and made you go upright. He warns them in a series of warnings of the things that are going to happen if they turn away from him. And there are these warnings of chastisement which are very specific. In fact, there are six cycles of discipline. The first chastisement, distress, verse 16 and 17; the second chastisement, drought in the land; the third chastisement, beasts shall disturb them; the fourth chastisement, they shall be affected by disease; the fifth chastisement, famine; and the sixth, dispersion to the four corners of the earth. Will you notice the 32nd verse:

“And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies who dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the nations, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye are in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her Sabbaths. (That has been fulfilled in large measure down through the centuries since that time that Israel was sent away from the land in 70 A.D.) As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it. And upon them who are left alive of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth. And they shall fall one upon another, as it were before a sword, when none pursueth: and ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies. And ye shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. (Six million of them were consumed by Hitler’s Deutschland.) And they who are left of you shall pine away in their iniquity and in your enemies' lands; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them.”

Now, the significant thing about this is the fact that in spite of all of this discipline that has come upon them, in spite of the fact that they have been sent into the four corners of the earth, Israel still maintains its national entity. Israel is a country. It is a group of people who dwell alone. Individually, they have moved in the midst of Gentile societies and nations and kingdoms, but they have remained apart. It is part of God’s concern and care over the nation.

I know that we are seeing in our day some unusual things that are happening in connection with the Nation Israel. It is true in the United States of America that there is great deal of intermarriage. I noticed an article in *Time* magazine in which it was stated

that one-third of all Jewish marriages are now mixed marriages. That’s an amazing thing in the light of what we find in the word of God. But then, of course, God has never said in his word that every single Israelite would be preserved distinct. He has said that he would preserve the nation in its distinctness, and that is what he has done.

David Barron, in one of his books on Biblical prophecy in Israel, has these words, “There is a river in the ocean, writes an American writer. In the severest droughts, it never fails, and in the mightiest floods it never overflows, the Gulf of Mexico is its fountain, and its mouth is in the Arctic seas. It is the Gulf Stream. There is in the world no other such majestic flow of waters. Its current is more rapid than the Mississippi or the Amazon, and its volume more than a thousand times greater. Its waters as far out from the Gulf as the Carolina coasts are of an indigo blue. They are so distinctly marked that their line or junction with the common seawater may be traced by the eye. Often one-half of a vessel may be perceived floating in Gulf Stream water while the other half is in common water of the sea. So sharp is the line and such the water of affinity between those waters and such the reluctance, so to speak, on the part of those of the Gulf Stream to mingle with the common water of the sea. This curious phenomenon in the physical world has its counterpart in the morrow. There is a lonely river in the midst of the ocean of mankind. The mightiest floods of human temptation have never caused it to overflow, and the fiercest fires of human cruelty, though seven times heated, have never caused it to dry up. Its fountain is in the gray dawn of the world’s history, (the Abrahamic promises.) And its mouth is somewhere in the shadows of eternity. It too refuses to mingle with the surrounding waves and the line which divides its restless billows from the common waters of humanity is also plainly visible to the eye. It is the Jewish race.”

Now, having cited this, Mr. Barron goes on to say, “If when traveling onboard a vessel crossing the ocean, you took a handful of water and scattered it on the sea, if the drops of water as they fell from your hand instead of becoming immediately absorbed in

the ocean continued to stand out separately and prominently on its surface, what would you say? This is what has happened to Israel. After all, they are a mere handful scattered on the great ocean of humanity. But instead of being absorbed in the ocean as we should have expected, judging from a knowledge as to what is happened to other expatriated nations, the Jews, after being in such a condition for millenniums, continue to exist as a separate nation.” And then he cites Balaam’s famous prophecy, “A people dwelling alone and not reckoned among the nations, truly this miracle is kept up only by the power of God.”

I dare say that in the years to come when the Vietnamese have come to this country and have been integrated into our society, if we should have a lengthy period of history, ultimately we should reach the time when the Vietnamese would be amalgamated into the society of the United States of America. But the Jews have remained as a people that dwell alone. They are separate. It is one of the evidences of the fact of God’s care and concern in their preservation that the Abrahamic promises may be fulfilled.

Coming to the 30th chapter, the condition of restoration, repentance. Now, I want you to notice the outstanding features of the divine appeal as it is found in Deuteronomy 30. And again, I hope you do not mind, this is really what you need, I’m going to read the first ten verses of Deuteronomy chapter 30:

“And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, to which the Lord thy God hath driven thee,”

Now, you can see that this Palestinian Covenant presupposes what we have just read in Leviticus chapter 26. It presupposes that there will be a time of discipline and dispersion to the four corners of the earth, but there are conditions for restoration to the nation in its ultimate dispersion. Verse 2,

“And shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; That then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion on thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, where the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from there will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from there will he fetch thee: And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. And the Lord thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them who hate thee, who persecuted thee. And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the Lord, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day. And the Lord thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers: If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.”

Moses here unfolds in great detail the condition of restoration which is repentance and the resultant things that God is going to do even though Israel has been driven into the four corners of the earth for their disobedience. It is evident of course from this that God regards these Abrahamic promises as still being valid promises for the nation Israel.

Now, what are the outstanding features of this divine appeal? Well, the first thing I want you to notice is the fact that there is such a thing as divine retribution: “And it shall come to pass when all these things are come upon thee.”

Now, the divine retribution or the divine judgment, however, is intended to provoke in Israel a meditation over the things that have happened to them. As a matter of fact, this is divine grace. It is the grace of God to discipline Israel to send them into the four corners of the earth that finally they might reflect upon the fact that they do not enjoy the promises that God has given them in the Scriptures, and might perhaps come to the conviction that in some way their attitude toward him is the reason for their judgment. That’s the first feature, the divine grace of retribution.

Second, in verse 1 he says: “And thou shalt call them to mine among all the nations to which the Lord thy God hath driven thee.” The remembrance in exile. As they reflect upon the discipline which has come over them and call the facts to mind that is the first step toward restoration to the land.

Now, those six cycles of discipline which we saw in Leviticus chapter 26, have as their purpose then that Israel might call to mind the condition in which they find themselves.

Now then third, he says in the second verse: “And shalt return unto the Lord thy God.” That of course is repentance. Notice the 10th verse: “If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law. And if thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thine heart, with all thy soul.” In other words, repentance is the condition for restoration of the Abrahamic promises.

Will you turn back to the 4th chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy, the 4th chapter, and we have a similar situation. This is the same kind of message. In fact, Deuteronomy chapter 29 and 30 is a kind of summary of Deuteronomy 1 through 27.

He says in the 25th verse of Deuteronomy 4:

“When thou shalt beget children, and children’s children. And ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves and make carved image or the likeness of

anything that shall do evil in the sight of the Lord thy God to provoke him to anger. I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land, where until ye go over the Jordan to possess it. Ye shall not prolong your days upon it but shall utterly be destroyed and the Lord shall scatter you among the nations and ye shall be left few in number among the nations where the Lord shall lead you. And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. But if from there -- if from there thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart, with all thy mind. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; (For the Lord thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them.”

In other words, if from the place of their dispersion, if from the place of their divine judgment, if in the midst of their discipline, they shall turn to the Lord, then God shall remember the Abrahamic Covenant and reinstall them into the possession of their land.

So we have retribution. We have remembrance. We have repentance. If from there that is why there is no hope at the present time of Israel of being restored to her possessions, for there is no evidence whatsoever of any kind of repentance whatsoever on the part of the Israelis in the land of Israel today. Until we begin to see the evidences of repentance there can be no entrance into the promises of God. There is no calling to mind, so far as I know. There is no reflection upon the divine discipline that they have been exposed to down through the centuries.

As a matter of fact, in many of the statements that come from Israel there is an evident pride in what they have been able to accomplish. Now, I must say, humanly speaking, I admire what they have done, but spiritually there is no evidence whatsoever

of any repentance at all. And thus, there is no possibility at the present time of any restoration to the possession of the land promised them by Abraham. As a matter of fact, that statement in the fourth chapter suggests that it is only through tribulation that they shall finally come to repentance and true remembrance that will lead to the possession of their promises concerning the land.

Verse 30: “When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days,” that is evidently when God the Father works in the heart of Israel as produces the necessary repentance that will bring them to the possession of their promises.

But, the fourth feature, when they do come to repentance then there shall be the return of the Lord. Verse 3: “That day then the Lord their God will turn thy captivity and will have compassion upon thee and will return.” I assume that that statement is a reference to the Second Advent to the Lord Jesus. He will return.

And fifthly, the fifth feature, regathering: “And gather thee from all the nations where the Lord thy God scattered thee.” Now, I want you to turn over to the New Testament to Mark chapter 13. I look at Mark chapter 13 only because we ordinarily turn to Matthew chapter 24 and 25 for the Olivet Discourse, but Mark also has an account of this discourse. And this discourse is our Lord’s foreview of future history. And remember they had asked him concerning the Second Advent. And in our Lord’s answer he states in verse 24, Mark 13: “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give its light, And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.”

That is what Deuteronomy means where it says “and will return,” and Deuteronomy added “and will gather thee from all the nations,” and here we read: The son of man shall come in the clouds with great power and glory, and then shall he send his angels, and he shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost

part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.” This our Lord’s interpretation of this Palestinian Covenant and the conditions for restoration and also the specific stages in the restoration that follows Israel’s return to our Lord in repentance and faith.

In verses 6 through 8 of Deuteronomy 30, he speaks of how he is going to remake them in grace: “And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart.” The source of the repentance and the source of the heart love of Israel, which is the beginning of God fulfilling this program of return in restoration of their promises, the source of it all is the circumcision by God of the heart of Israel. “And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.”

Now, this circumcision of the heart is the transformation of the heart from its rebellion into its attitude of trust and faith in the Lord Jehovah, and this is accomplished by the Lord. This is why we talk in the Bible about salvation being of the Lord. And Israel’s salvation is also of the Lord. It is produced when in the heart of Israel, at God’s time, humanly speaking, as they are scattered to the four corners of the earth in the Great Tribulation under divine discipline, he out of his great mercy at the precise point in his program, the fullness of time in that sense, he begins to work in the heart of the nation to circumcise their hearts so that they love the Lord thy God with all their hearts.

Now, that is grounded, of course, in the New Covenant. And I want you to turn with me now, and let’s read a few passages in the Old Testament that have to do with this New Covenant. We’ll deal with it in more detail later. But turn with me to Ezekiel chapter 36, verse 24 through 28. Ezekiel chapter 36, verse 24 through verse 28. Now, the great chapter in the Bible on the New Covenant is Jeremiah chapter 3. Jeremiah 32 is also one of the great chapters concerning the New Covenant. But the Ezekiel chapter is also important. And we read in Ezekiel chapter 36 in verse 24:

“For I will take you among the nations and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. And a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. (This is what he means in the Book of Deuteronomy by circumcising their hearts.) And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my ordinances, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.”

In other words, the sixth step is God’s remaking of Israel out of his grace. And out of his initiative again notice that in Ezekiel, it is God’s sprinkling of clean water upon them that begins this total program.

Now, finally the seventh of these outstanding features in Deuteronomy chapter 30, verses 9 and 10: “And the Lord thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers:” In other words, there is going to be great rejoicing on the part of God as a result of what he has accomplished in the heart of Israel and in the fulfillment of the New Covenant to them. This is again parallel with what he states in Jeremiah chapter 32 in verse 41 after speaking about regathering and the New Covenant and giving them one heart and one way that they fear the Lord.

And he states in Jeremiah 32:41: “Yea, I will rejoice over them in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul.” So the picture is very plain from the Old Testament. Abraham was given promises concerning the land. The possession of those promises was regulated by the

Mosaic and the Palestinian Covenants. Faith is the condition for the enjoyment of the title to the land which is theirs by virtue of divine promise.

Now, that is a picture that is reflected in the New Testament as well. I want you to turn with me now to Romans chapter 11, and let me read just a couple of verses, verses 23 and 24, in order that you may see that this same view of the doctrine of Israel and the land is found in the Apostle Paul. Now, he does not mention the land here, but he mentions Israel’s re-grafting into their own olive tree. And we read in verse 23, he’s warning the Gentiles -- he’s warning you people sitting in this auditorium -- he’s warning Gentiles that if they do not abide in faith, they may be cut off because his dealings with Gentiles is not a permanent deal. So the 23rd verse: And they also -- Let me read verse 22:

“Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them who fell, (Israel) severity; but toward thee, (Gentiles) goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. (Now, we know of course that we shall not continue in his goodness. This age will end in apostasy.) And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, (That is if they call to mine in the lands to which the Lord has driven them, if they turn with all their heart, if they turn to the Lord,) if they abide not still in belief shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree:”

In other words, if God breaks all the rules of horticulture and takes a wild sod and grafts it into cultivated stock, then how much more likely is it that he will graft the cultivated sod back into the tree again? So that’s what he says at the end of the verse. -- how much more shall these, (Israelites) who are the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

You see the tree, which is representative of the Abrahamic Covenant made and confirmed to the fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, these are promises that belong to

them. The natural branches have been cut off, unnatural branches of Gentiles have been grafted in. That’s all you are. Contrary to nature, in pure grace you have been allowed to participate in the blessing of the olive tree, you Gentiles.

But if this is true, if Israel does not abide in unbelief, she shall be grafted in again. This is her own olive tree. Paul’s offertory argument. Much more, he loves that kind of argument in the Epistle to the Romans, is an unanswerable argument. In other words, the only thing that stands between Israel and the possession of her land promises, which God made to Abraham, the only thing on the divine level is Israel’s response in faith. Now, we know from the prophecies, from the divine level -- did I say divine a minute ago? On the human level, it is faith. On the divine level, we know that the word of God prophesized that Israel shall not turn, she shall enter into the tribulation period, that she’ll only be at the end of the tribulation period when our Lord comes from heaven. And they look upon him whom they’ve pierced that the nation shall be born again in a day and shall enter into the possession of their promises, but the only thing that hinders them from the human standpoint is their faith in the Lord Jesus.

Well, Deuteronomy chapter 30 concludes verses 11 through 20 with an appeal for decision. Moses must have been a good preacher. He said he didn’t have much of a voice, but he certainly knew how to make the application. And that’s what he does in the remaining verses of the Palestinian Covenant, which I want to read now:

“For this covenant for which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very near unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.”

This is an appeal of memorable simplicity and sublimity someone had said. And he first speaks of the word of faith as Paul describes it in Romans 10 when he uses this passage in the New Testament. The one thing that stands between Israel and these blessings is their response to the commandment.

Now, it’s necessary, in order to understand this, that you note the difference between commandments and commandment. Because in verse 11, when he says, “for this commandment which I command thee, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off,” is singular. Whereas in the preceding verse we read, if thou shall hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God to keep his commandments, those are the Mosaic statutes, they are plural in number. But notice what follows, “and if thou turn to the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul,” that’s the singular commandment, for this commandment that is to turn unto the Lord with all thy heart the response of faith. It’s not hidden from thee. It’s not far from thee. It is just as simple as a heart trust in the Lord God. It is nothing more than reliance upon what another will do for us. So Moses begins by saying it’s all very simple, this decision. It’s the decision of faith. It’s the decision of trust. And then he calls the witness of heaven to the covenant oath. And let’s finish reading verse 15:

“See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his ordinances, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land to which thy goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I declare unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, to which thou passest over the Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both

thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”

One might obviously say at this point or ask, “What has caused such worldwide dispersion as we find in the history of Israel today?” As a result of apostasy in the Old Testament period, Israel was sent down into Babylon for seventy years of captivity. Seventy years of captivity in Babylon because of apostasy. But now they have been sent to the four corners of the earth and this discipline has lasted for almost two thousand years. If apostasy of the people and the worship of idols may bring only a seventy-year period of discipline in Babylon, what great national crime has been committed that means that they should be sent to the four corners of the earth?

There is no explanation for this other than the fact that they have shouted as a nation concerning our Lord Jesus Christ who is the Messiah of Israel, “His blood be on us and on our children.” Their great national crime is the crime of the rejection of the Lord Jehovah himself, and his crucifixion at the hands of the Jews and the Romans in the first century. Moses says in Leviticus: “If they shall confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers with their trespass (singular) their trespass which they trespassed against me that they also have walked contrary to me and that I have walked contrary unto them, then I will remember my covenant with them and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember, and I will remember the land.” Thus the great controversy between Israel and Jehovah is the Lord Jesus Christ. That, of course, is the great controversy between the Lord Jehovah and us Gentiles, too. Time is up. Let’s close in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the grace of God that moved in our hearts to settle the controversy. And we do pray, O God, that to the glory of Thy name

thou will accomplish Thy purposes in accordance with Thy plan, that we shall have occasion to magnify the grace of our great God when he circumcises the heart of that rebellious nation and in grace brings them to the foot of the cross of Jesus Christ.

We look forward to that day. Our hearts are warmed by the anticipation of the entrance into the great grace blessings which enjoy of that great multitude. Glorify Thy name.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.