

## **CLASS 4: THE PROMISED LAND**

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- I. Prayer
- II. Purpose of Today's Class: to understand...
  - A. [Show schedule, timeline]
  - B. ... the promise of a land.
  - C. ... the unconditional nature of ownership.
  - D. ... the conditional nature of occupancy.
  - E. ... the scattering and gathering of Israel.
  - F. ... lack of Christian understanding.
- III. Confusion within the Ranks of Christianity
  - A. CHRISTIANS MUST ANSWER: concerning the recreation of the nation of Israel in 1948, after more than 1500 years without a homeland, and ongoing crisis over the land and status of Jerusalem:
    - 1. Is it a historic coincidence? A distraction unrelated to the pages of the bible? Has the church replaced Israel as the "people of God" since the rejection of Jesus by the Jews leaving the nation of Israel without any significant role in God's plans?
    - 2. OR - a clear sign that God is working in history to bring His promises to fulfillment? Promises which remain valid to the nation of Israel and which will not find fulfillment in the church?
  - B. Christian Views of the "Promised Land"
    - 1. According to W. D. Davies (Gospel and the Land), the theme of land is displaced in Christianity by the person of Jesus Christ. The NT "personalizes 'holy space' in Christ, who, as a figure of History, is rooted in the land ... but as Living Lord ... is also free to move wherever he wills" (p. 367). The promise of land continues to play a role in NT thought, but it takes on an eschatological dimension. It becomes a symbol of the eschatological society in time and eternity.<sup>1</sup>

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NT New (Neues, Nouveau) Testament

<sup>1</sup> Bromiley, Geoffrey W. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2001, c1979-1988.

2. By the land of promise he signifies the spiritual land of which this was a figure.<sup>2</sup>
  3. Thus the heavenly Canaan is sure to all the seed, because it is what *God, who cannot lie, has promised.*<sup>3</sup>
- C. Countless plain promises of God in the OT swept aside by a 'mystical' interpretation.
- D. The nature of promises
1. God created language
  2. God created man's brain
  3. Language and understand are therefore sufficient to communicate the meaning God intends
  4. The normal understanding of the recipients is part of any promise
  5. OT type vs. NT antitype  
an OT type or promise may be *extended* or *applied* to a situation or group in the NT, but this does not retroactively change its factual meaning in the OT

#### IV. The Promise of a Land<sup>4</sup>

- A. Also called the Palestinian<sup>5</sup> covenant [OVERHEAD FROM CLASS 2]
- B. Restatement of aspects of the Mosaic covenant prior to entering the promised land
- C. Development of land aspect of unconditional Abrahamic covenant – ownership is unconditional, possession is conditional
1. [overhead of unconditional covenants]
  2. Gen. 13:14-17 – to Abraham and to his seed forever
  3. Gen. 15:18 – from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates
    - a) Not the Nile  
The river of Egypt was most probably what became known as the Wadi El Arish, the southern border of Judah.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Geneva Bible on Eze. 47:15.

<sup>3</sup> Henry, Matthew. *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible : Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*, Eze 47:13. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996, c1991.

<sup>4</sup> Ge 15:7; Ge 15:18; Ge 26:4; Ge 35:12; Ex 3:8; Ex 3:17; Ex 6:4; Ex 12:25; Ex 13:5; Ex 13:11; Ex 32:13; Ex 33:1; Eze 37:14; De 1:8; De 29:1; De 29:9; De 29:12; De 29:1; De 32:52; Jos 21:43; Jos 23:5; 1Ch 16:18; 1Ch 17:9; Ps 105:11; Isa 60:21; Jer 11:5; Jer 16:15; Am 9:15; Ac 7:5

<sup>5</sup> Name given to land by the Roman Emperor Hadrian after the second Jewish revolt under Bar Cochba (A.D. 132-135) for the purpose of erasing any Jewish remembrance of the land as part of his policy to "de-judaize" the land. [Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology*, 581]

4. Gen. 26:4 – repeated to Isaac
5. Gen. 35:12 – repeated to Jacob/Israel.
6. Ex. 32:13; 33:1 – Moses reminds God of land promise after golden calf.

**D.** THE KORAN – Sura 5:20

"Remember Moses said to his people: 'O my People! Call in remembrance the favour Of Allah unto you, when He Produced prophets among you, Made you kings, [722] and gave You what He had not given To any other among the peoples. O my people! enter The holy land which Allah hath assigned unto you, And turn not back I gnomiously, for then Will ye be overthrown, To your own ruin.'"

**V.** Occupancy Conditioned on Obedience<sup>7</sup>

**A.** The nature of conditional obedience in relation to unconditional promises:

"What is unconditional is that God will fulfill the covenants to Israel. On the other hand, not every last Jew, ethnically speaking, will receive the benefits of those promises. Individual blessing under the promises is always conditioned upon obedience to the God who made the covenant. So, the particular Jews who experience the blessings of Israel's promises are those who form the believing remnant of Jews throughout history. Unconditional promises guarantee that some Jews will experience covenanted blessings; through their obedience we learn who is of that believing remnant."<sup>8</sup>

**B.** Deu. 29:24-28 – nations see Israel scattered due to disobedience

**C.** Deu. 30:17-20 – possession of land not prolonged

**D.** Jer. 7:3-7 – amend your ways and I will cause you to dwell in this place

**VI.** Promises of Scattering (Diaspora) on Disobedience

**A.** The phenomenon of the Wandering Jew

**B.** Deu 29:23-28 – cast into another land due to disobedience

**C.** Deu 28:49-50, 63-67 – plucked off land and scattered worldwide, no rest while scattered

**D.** 1K. 9:6-9 – disobedient Israel to be a proverb and byword among all peoples

**E.** [overhead – timeline]

**F.** The dispersion of the Northern Kingdom to Assyria (722 B.C.)

**G.** The dispersion of the Southern Kingdom to Babylon (605 B.C.)

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<sup>6</sup> MacArthur, John Jr. The MacArthur Study Bible. electronic ed., Ge 15:18. Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997.

<sup>7</sup> De 28:63; 1Ki 9:7; 2Ch 33:8; Jer 7:4-7; 45:4

<sup>8</sup> John S. Feinberg, "Systems of Discontinuity," *Continuity And Discontinuity* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1988), pp. 79-80.

H. Other dispersions [overhead – Jews in the Diaspora]

VII. Promise of Gathering

A. Lev. 26:40-45, Limit to judgment upon acceptance of guilt.

1. Mat. 23:36-39 – Jesus sets forth the same requirement
2. Zec. 12:9-10 – the repentance for slain Messiah (cf. Rev. 1:7)

B. Stage 1: In Disobedience

1. "...in 1918 [before the establishment of the state of Israel], the Philadelphia Prophetic Conference adopted a statement of prophetic faith. The first article read: We believe that there will be a gathering of Israel to her land in unbelief, and she will be afterward converted by the appearing of Christ on her behalf." <sup>9</sup>
2. Eze. 20:33-36 – assimilation not allowed, gathered in unbelief, rebels purged
3. Eze. 36:20-28 – profaning His name, gathered and then regenerated (part of fulfillment of the New Covenant – spiritual regeneration of the nation)
4. Eze. 38:8; 39:7 – Gog comes against gathered and unbelieving Israel
5. Jer. 30:3-11 – gathered, time of Jacob's trouble, none like it, he shall be saved
  - a) Zec. 12 – nations come against Judah and Jerusalem (must be gathered for this to occur)
6. Eze. 37:1-8 – reassembled nation, but without breath

C. Second Stage: In Obedience

1. Deu. 30:1-6 – recall promises and curses, obey, gathered, regenerated
2. Isa. 11:1-12,15 – millennial context, a second time, from all nations, dry up Euphrates and gulf of Suez
3. Eze. 37:1-14,21-23 – regenerated (covered in more detail next session)

D. Eclipses Egyptian Exodus

1. Jer. 16:14-15 – gathered from the land of the north [direction of Babylonian attack] and all the lands
2. Jer. 23:5-7 – context is the millennial kingdom

VIII. Unfulfilled

A. Apparent fulfillment?

1. Jos. 21:43-45 – apparent fulfillment by Joshua (**1400** B.C.)?

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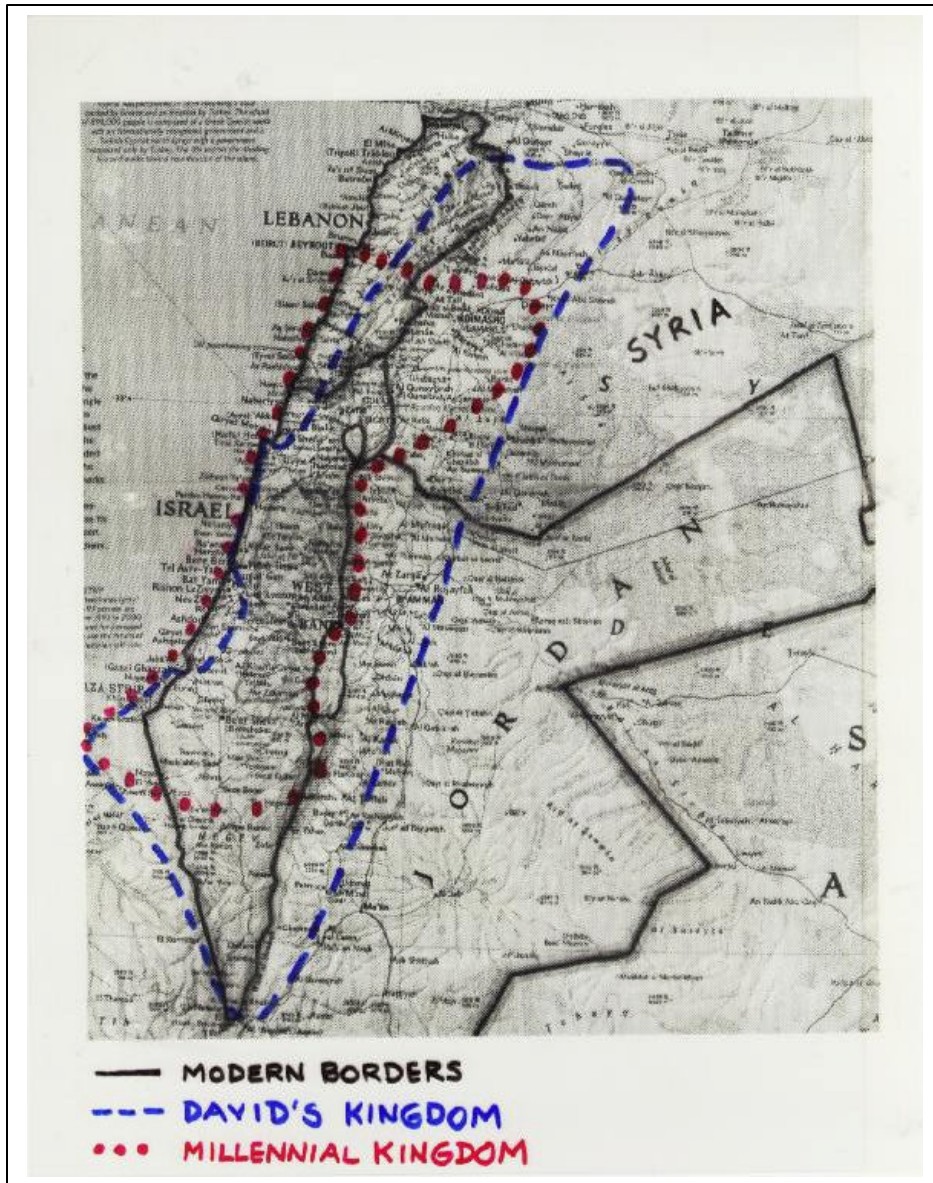
<sup>9</sup> Ice, Thomas and Demy, Timothy. *When the Trumpet Sounds*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1995., p. 23.

2. 1K. 4:21 – apparent fulfillment by Solomon (**1000** B.C.)?
  3. Fulfilled in return from Babylonian Captivity (**539** B.C.)?
- B.** Not fulfilled
1. Prophecies given hundreds of years after Joshua and Solomon.
    - a) Amos 9:8-15 (**760** B.C.)
  2. Prophecies continue after return from Babylon (**539** B.C.).
    - a) Zechariah (**520-470** B.C.)
      - (1) Zec 8:7-8 – saved from east and west, brought to Jerusalem
      - (2) Zec 10:6-10 – whistle and gather them
  3. Throughout the prophets predictions have in view events yet future (tribulation and millennial kingdom).
    - a) Zec. 12; 14 – God defeats all the nations who attack Israel/Jerusalem (presupposes Israel is in the land)
  4. Prophecies state permanent possession and complete obedience brought about Sovereignly by God.
    - a) Amos 9:8-15 (**760** B.C.) – no longer shall they be pulled up from the land

IX. Borders<sup>10</sup>

A. Gen. 15:18; Num. 34:2-12

B. Eze. 47:13-23 - Millennial Fulfillment [overhead]



<sup>10</sup> Ge 13:15; 15:18; Ex 23:31; Nu 32:33; 34:2; De 1:7; 3:12-17; 11:24; 34:1-4; Jos 1:4; 13:1,7-8; 22:4; 2Sa 8:3; 1Ch 5:9; 18:3; 2Ch 9:26; Ps 105:11; Eze 47:13-23

**Dauids Kingdom Borders:** Radmacher, Earl D., Ronald Barclay Allen, and H. Wayne House. *The Nelson Study Bible : New King James Version*. Includes index., 2 Sa 24:10. Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers, 1997.

**Millennial Kingdom Borders:** Walvoord, John F., Roy B. Zuck, and Dallas Theological Seminary. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures, Eze 47:15*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985.

- C. CAUTION AGAINST: desire of overlaying the land over current geo-political borders
  - 1. Difficulty of establishing biblical names and landmarks with modern locations.
  - 2. Israel was dispossessed by God because of disobedience.
  - 3. Israel is being gathered (while apostate).
  - 4. Fulfillment will not come in entirety until obedience - until God turns away ungodliness from Jacob.
  - 5. Israel, like any other nation, is made up of sinners and does not deserve *unconditional* support.
- D. Yet...
  - 1. Foolhardy to fail to recognize God's promises to Israel, both concerning the land and Jerusalem.
    - a) Unfulfilled prophetic passages indicate God will vindicate the nation and their capital against those who fail to understand His promises.
      - (1) Isaiah 49:14-16 - Jerusalem inscribed on God's palms
      - (2) 1 Kings 11:36 - Jerusalem chosen by God, His name there
      - (3) Isaiah 62:6-7 - give Him no rest until he makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth [this is not the New Jerusalem]
      - (4) Zechariah 12:1-8 - Jerusalem to be a cup of drunkenness and stone of self-inflicted damage
      - (5) Joel 3:2(-17) - Nations to be judged for scattering Israel and dividing up God's land
  - 2. A wise and Godly nation will support Israel's right to the land and to Jerusalem else risk being on the wrong side of God's work in history.
- X. Owned by God
  - A. Lev. 25:23 - land not to be sold, land is "Mine"
  - B. Ps. 83:12 - referred to as the "pastures of God"
  - C. Joel 1:6; 3:2 - called "My Land"
  - D. Joel 3:2 (NKJV) I will also gather all nations, And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; And I will enter into judgment with them there On account of My people, My heritage Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; They have also divided up My land.
  - E. Joel 3:2 - Aspects are yet future
    - 1. fulfilled portion  
As Jehoshaphat overthrew the confederate foes of Judah, namely, Ammon, Moab,

&c. (Ps 83:6–8), in this valley, so God was to overthrow the Tyrians, Zidonians, Philistines, Edom, and Egypt, with a similar utter overthrow (Joe 3:4, 19). This has been long ago fulfilled;

2. unfulfilled portion  
but the ultimate event shadowed forth herein is still future, when God shall specially interpose to destroy Jerusalem's last foes, of whom Tyre, Zidon, Edom, Egypt, and Philistia are the types. As "Jehoshaphat" means "the judgment of Jehovah," *the valley of Jehoshaphat* may be used as a *general* term for the theater of God's final judgments on Israel's foes, with an allusion to the judgment inflicted on them by Jehoshaphat. The definite mention of the Mount of Olives in Zec 14:4, and the fact that this was the scene of the ascension, makes it likely the same shall be the scene of Christ's coming again: compare "this same Jesus ... shall so come *in like manner* as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Ac 1:11).<sup>11</sup>

## XI. Implications

- A. The land promise was understood to be literal and will be fulfilled literally.
- B. The land is owned ultimately by God, was given to Israel, but final possession is conditional on her spiritual regeneration.
- C. The diaspora of the Jews observed in history is not the slightest surprise to the student of history armed with scriptures – it is copiously predicted.
- D. The gathering of Israel and occupancy of the land is as sure as her dispossession and scattering—for God has said it.
- E. Christians who fail to grasp these points will likely find themselves unwittingly opposing God. Christians who oppose Israel's right to the land and to Jerusalem as its sole capital are at great risk:
  1. How sure are they that God is through with Israel?
  2. What if the return underway is part of Israel's restoration prior to prophetic events—as many believe Scripture describes?
  3. Are they willing to be found in opposition to God's movement in history? Ultimately, with they contribute toward the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (Joel 3:2 cf. Zec. 12; 14)?
- F. Clarence Larkin writing in 1920 (prior to Holocaust and 28 years before Israel recreated)
  1. "From these scriptures we see that the Jews have not been supplanted by either the Gentiles or the Church, and when the time comes they will again become a

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<sup>11</sup> Jamieson, Robert, A. R. Fausset, A. R. Fausset et al.; A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary., Joe 3:2. Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997.

nation. We indulge in no idle and profitless speculations when we attempt to forecast the future of the Jewish People. All we have to do is to gather together and place in their logical order what the Holy Spirit through the Prophets, has foretold. The method is as simple as the result is sure."<sup>12</sup>

**XII.** Prayer

The Gathering of the Jews and conflict over the promised land and Jerusalem are the prelude to prophesied events leading to the return of Israel's Messiah. Is He your Messiah too? Shouldn't you be prepared?

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<sup>12</sup> *Rightly Dividing the Word*