

## 17 – Dispensations 14: The Land Covenant

*GIBS Dispensations*

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Deuteronomy 30, okay? Tom S. and Rick G. went to the Moody Pastor's Conference a few years ago. While he was there in one of the general sessions as they bring in all kinds of speakers, they brought in a man who was not a dispensationalist. Now, Moody is historically a dispensational school but increasingly are moving away from it, and even for speakers they bring in, they bring in big names whether they are dispensational or not, and they brought in a guy and I had mentioned his name, who took Deuteronomy 30, which we're going to read, and directly applied it to the church and he said the reason God isn't blessing your church is you're just not obeying. You're not obeying enough and that's why you're not being blessed, and he took Deuteronomy 30, which we'll look at what it says, and then try to apply that to the church.

Now, going back to the Abrahamic covenant, we noted in verse 1 of Genesis 12, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you." Keep in mind that the land is very prominent in these covenantal promises made to Israel, in the sense that without the land, a lot of these things just would never make sense. In Genesis 15, remember he said, "To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates." So there again we see the mention of the land. Again we've noted conditional verses, unconditional promises, and this is an unconditional covenant here, the Abrahamic covenant, and also as it relates to the land. Again in God's covenantal program, again, the land covenant, we've got the Davidic covenant, we've got the new covenant, you've got the Mosaic covenant. Again they ultimately, the three unconditional covenants will find fulfillment in the kingdom to come.

A title deed to the land has already been given to Israel as we're going to see, but it will be enjoyed by Israel. And as I've said before, you can own something but not live in it. You can own a building but not live in it and Israel owns the land but they are not living in it in the fullness of it at this time. You could likely use the illustration: imagine a multi-leveled multi-room apartment building that you own but you're only living in two rooms of the 60 rooms. Israel is living in a few rooms of the apartment. They own it but they're not living in all of it at this point, but they will one day in the future.

Question: what is the biblical significance of the holy land? How does it relate to God's eschatological plan? This is where the land covenant comes in. We begin in Deuteronomy 30:1.

1 Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you,

So he's, again, acknowledging there is going to be the fifth cycle of discipline where God drives them from the land of Israel to foreign areas which happened in the Assyrian captivity and then later in the Babylonian captivity and then in 70 AD.

2 and you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, 3 that the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you. 4 If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. 5 Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. 6 And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. 7 Also the LORD your God will put all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you. 8 And you will again obey the voice of the LORD and do all His commandments which I command you today. 9 The LORD your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land for good. For the LORD will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers, 10 if you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, and if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Let me pause for a minute. How would you ever apply that to the church? How would you ever do that? You say, "You know, the reason..." I mean, you basically get the prosperity Gospel out of this. Verse 9, "The LORD your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land for good." And so forth. I mean, how would you ever apply that to the church? But they did it.

So the thing we want to emphasize at this point is just the promise of the land. In Joel 1:6 he says, "For a nation has come up against My land." Notice what does God call Israel? He calls them "My land." Joel 3:2 in the context of the day of the Lord, "I will also gather all nations, And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat...On account of My

people, My heritage Israel." And what does he call it again? "My land." So you see, while the earth is the Lord's in the fullness thereof, he has a particular possession of land related to the nation of Israel. Isaiah 14:25 God promises to "break the Assyrian in My land."

That kind of reminds me, was it Harrison Ford, I think it was in the movie "Air Force One," where they tried...remember, the Soviet breakup, the Soviet's take over the plane. (unintelligible) Was it called "Air Force One"? I don't think so, was it? What's that? No.

And remember, when the guy, he throws the guy out the airplane and he says, "Get off my plane!" This is kind of what God is saying here. "Get out of my land!" Jeremiah 2:7, "when you entered, you defiled My land." Jeremiah 16:18, "they have defiled My land." Notice the description that's used of Israel, "My land," the land of Israel.

Ezekiel 36:5 in the context of the promise of the new covenant for Israel and judgment for her enemies, "I have spoken...against the rest of the nations...who gave My land to themselves...in order to plunder its open country." Ezekiel 38:16 in the context of the endtime battle, Gog and Magog, "It will be in the latter days that I will bring you against My land." 2 Chronicles 7:14 in the context of the dedication of Solomon's temple, "My people...their land." So again we see 2 Chronicles 7:20, "I will uproot them from My land."

So we see over and over again this concept of this piece of land that God owns and that he has given to Israel for an everlasting possession which was initially promised in the Abrahamic covenant but is reinforced, reiterated in the land covenant.

Now, the priority of the land promise. Again, it points out that the very first thing that's mentioned in verse 1 of Genesis 12, "Go forth from your country and from your relatives and from your father's house to the land which I will show you." The first thing he mentions. In Genesis 15 again, "On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham saying, To your descendants I have given this land from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates."

You know, what a nation needs is obviously it needs a land with boundaries that helps define the nation and where they live. What are the boundaries of Israel's covenant land? Well, Walter Kaiser, who's an Old Testament buff, but isn't, you know, dispensational, at least where we're at, thinks it's 10,000 square miles. Charles Feinberg, who was a dispensational Old Testament scholar who is now with the Lord, wrote an excellent commentary on Jeremiah and such, and believes it's 300,000 square miles and the majority of you among dispensationalists hold that view as well, that the land is 300,000 square miles, the land that is owned by, that is promised to Israel.

Now, again, the boundaries of the Promised Land, there they are. Modern day Israel owns that amount, okay? So here's the boundaries, here is what they own, and what does the UN want them to do and most of the countries want them to do? Give away more for peace, and I think they would do it if they thought it would work, but they know it won't work and so it's never worked before, why would it work again? Why would it cause the

Palestinians and others like Iran, that is for the destruction of Israel and will settle for nothing than total extermination, why would giving them some more land actually accomplish anything? So one thing Netanyahu knows is that the land belongs to Israel.

Now, interesting, this was not only this covenant that was made to Abraham but it was reaffirmed with Isaac. We saw this in Genesis 17 already when God said, "No, Sarah. Your wife shall bear you a son and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant with his descendants after him." And part of that covenant is that land promise.

Genesis 26:2-5, "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father...I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed." This promise was also reaffirmed with Jacob. Genesis 28:13-15, "I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth...and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Notice, just what was said in Genesis 12. "Behold, I am with you ...and will bring you back to this land." So notice again the promise.

The priority of the land promise and note the Palestinian or land covenant. The land promise is reiterated through a separate land covenant. In other words, the separate land covenant reiterates again what was made earlier. Deuteronomy 29, now that's the chapter before, if you look there, verse 1, "These are the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with," who? "The children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which He made with them in Horeb." By the way, Horeb is another name for, what? What mountain? Mount Sinai. Mount Horeb is Mount Sinai. What covenant was that? Mosaic law.

Deuteronomy 30:5, "Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers." 2 Samuel 7:10, which is part of the Davidic covenant, "Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more." That place is the land of Israel. That's why in the context of the future reign of Christ, he says, "Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations wherever they have gone, and I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land, and I will make them one nation in the land, from the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be king over them all, then they shall be my people and I will be their God. David, my servant, shall be king over them. Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob, my servant, where your fathers dwelt and they shall dwell there, they, their children and their children's children," for how long? Again, "forever. And my servant David shall be their prince forever."

So, again, we see this land covenant is emphasized in the Davidic covenant, it's emphasized in the land covenant, it's emphasized in the Abrahamic covenant, it's even

going to be emphasized in the new covenant. "Behold, I will bring them from the north country and gather them from the ends of the earth. A great throng shall return there." Where is there? To the land, Jeremiah 31:8. "There is hope in your future," says the Lord, "that your children shall come back to their own border." Again, a reference to the land. "Set up signposts. Make landmarks. Set your heart toward the highway, the way in which you went. Turn back to these your cities." Jeremiah 31:21. Jeremiah 31:23, "They shall again use this speech in the land of Judah and in its cities, when I bring back their captivity."

So, again, we're seeing all these verses in each of the covenants: Abrahamic, land, Davidic, and new. There is a mention of the land. It's a very prominent factor in all of the covenants. Joel 2:18, "Then the LORD will be zealous for His land, And pity His people." And Joel 2 is going to be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. Joel 2, "Fear not, O land; Be glad and rejoice, For the LORD has done marvelous things!" In Joel 2, later he says, "And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh... That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, As the LORD has said, Among the remnant whom the LORD calls." Literal places in the land.

If you look at the new covenant as it is set forth, by the way, when you think of the new covenant, when we cover this, we'll look at it, think of Ezekiel 36 and Jeremiah 31. Those are the two key passages, okay? In Ezekiel 36, note the context again. You've got the new covenant, chapter 37, the valley of dry bones; 38 and 39, you've got Gog and Magog, the battle; in chapters 40 through 48, you've got the millennial vision, what it's going to be like in the millennial kingdom including the temple. And you're going to see, again, that the land is emphasized throughout this.

In the perpetuity of the land promise, by the way, what does "perpetuity" mean? Yeah, it will go on forever and ever, right? Perpetuity of the land promise. Even the announcement of Jesus' birth in Luke 1, let's just go there quickly, okay? Luke 1 because these verses are not stated for us. Luke 1:30, "Then the angel said to her," Mary, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS." Question: should we interpret "Son" literally? Should we interpret "Jesus" literally? To interpret "name" literally? "He will be great," should we interpret that literally? "And [He] will be called the Son of the Highest," should we interpret that literally? "And the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David," should we interpret that literally? "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever," should we interpret that literally? "And of His kingdom there will be no end," should we interpret that literally? You see, that's why we come to the conclusions we do because we don't think you should interpret some of them literally and others of them spiritually.

In the early ministries of Jesus and John the Baptist, remember he said, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," not the kingdom which is heaven, but the kingdom which comes from heaven. What kingdom did he have in mind? A literal, earthly kingdom. Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." How

do we understand earth? We mean in earth. The later teaching of Jesus Christ as well emphasizes earth, land, literal kingdom. The Olivet Discourse, Jesus again refers to things that would cause us to conclude he's talking in a literal sense about a literal fulfillment to ethnic Israel about a future kingdom on the earth, and nothing less. In the ascension, remember, the question is raised, "Shall you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" What kingdom did they have in mind? The kingdom predicted in the Old Testament, the kingdom preached by John the Baptist, the kingdom preached by Jesus Christ. The kingdom that a Jew would definitely view, not some spiritual kingdom but a literal, earthly, Israelitish, political, ethnic kingdom on earth. And even the clear teaching of Paul in Romans 9, especially that chapter, "All Israel will be delivered." And even the second coming of Jesus Christ in Revelation 19, 20 and 21, he literally comes back to the earth. He literally sets up his kingdom on the earth and so forth.

So the present state of the land promised. Now, this is all bonus and extra. I'm going to move very quickly through this for time sake. But as you know, Israel's was out of the land for years and years and hundreds of years, and one of the great desires was to finally have a land again for the Jews. And the Jews, really, are exhibit A of the fulfillment of prophecy because there has never been a nation like them in which they have been scattered and still maintained their ethnicity. For example, today when you're in the United States and you meet somebody, you know, some will say, "Well, who are you?" I don't say, "Well, I'm half-Slovakian." I don't do that. You're American. You're distinguished. Wherever you came from, that's been melted, right? This is the melting. But even in our land, a Jew is still a Jew. He's a Jew. They are so unique in that sense, there's never been anyone like them that's maintained their ethnicity over all the obstacles and years and issues, but God said they would.

So as you think of the rise of the modern Zionist movement, Peter Herzl is very very reputable and renowned. He wrote "The Jewish State" back in 1896 and he was kind of the Martin Luther King Jr. of the Zionist movement. He had a dream that Israel would be back in the land. That was his desire. Herzl convened the first Zionist World Congress in 1897 in Basel, Switzerland, Herzl put forth what he called the Uganda Plan that, again, set forth, tried to set forth in motion the possibility of Israel having their own national boundaries and a land again.

I'll let you read some of this other stuff. This famous quote after the conference, Herzl notes in his personal diary in Basel, "I found the Jewish state. If I said this out loud today, I would be answered by universal laughter. Perhaps in five years, certainly in 50 everyone will know about it." Kind of interesting, huh? 1897, do your math, 50 years, 1947, right?

Then there is the Balfour Declaration, November 2, 1917. It says, "His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country." That was the Balfour

Declaration. Very important historically. The only problem is Britain fudged on it and they largely fudged because of Lawrence of Arabia. Ever hear of Lawrence of Arabia? What did he do? He helped Britain win the war but he wasn't a Jew, he was an Arab, and to show him favor and kind of repay him, they slighted the promise to the Jews.

Then after WWII, you see again you've got all these holocaust survivors and they look for a place of refuge they considered pledged to them as a Jewish homeland in the WWI, and as a result, the British who controlled Palestine received pressure from Arab states to limit Jewish immigration, Jewish/Arab clashes intensify and the British turn the problem over to the United Nations. So you've got that situation developing. The United Nations on November 29, 1947 votes to partition Palestine into Jewish and Arab states with Jerusalem in an international zone. The Palestinians reject the plan. What else is new? May 15, 1947, Jewish settles in Palestine declare the state of Israel and the subsequent war with neighboring Arab states, Israel annexes territory set aside for the Arab Palestinian state, leaving only East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza strip in Arab hands.

Now, what's really incredible here back in 1948, now you probably know this, in fact, I should really make a note of this. There are two things I'd like to give you. You know that when the United Nations basically agreed to and declared that Israel was a nation in itself, you know that that day, I think it was 5 or 6 Arab nations declared war on them. They didn't have a military. They didn't have anything. They tried to exterminate them but they didn't win. The Jews, they took a little more of the land as a result, and then in 1956, Israeli troops invade the Sinai Peninsula after Egypt nationalizes the Suez Canal. They are joined by British and French troops and withdraw only under pressure from the United States and the Soviet Union. So they keep winning these wars. You know, they get attacked, they win the war, and they take more land, and then they're told, "You've got to give it back," after the other people attack them.

So you've got all these things, '56, '73, '79, '81, '85, '87, '93, 2000. Again, these are all, you have these powerpoint slides, is that right? You don't have these? Okay.

Okay, let's at least try to wrap this up before we're done. The long and short of it is this as far as what we just went through: is they've had a long difficult struggle. I mean, they own this piece of land, it's the size of New Jersey, and their enemies are between, let's see, how close are they? Between Duluth to Ashland. That's how close. Tell them, destroy them, exterminate them. Not a lot of time to react and yet they exist. In fact, in some ways they are safe, well, they're a lot safer than Chicago.

Prophetic implications of the land promise. Here we go. Israel must be converted as a nation. Israel must be converted as a nation. Israel must be regathered from a worldwide dispersion and installed into her Promised Land. In other words, they have to be converted as a nation to know the Lord. They have to be regathered from their worldwide dispersion and installed into her Promised Land. Now, it's only been recently, students, that there's actually more Jews living in Israel than outside of Israel. That's only been true recently. There used to be more Jews in Brooklyn than there was in Israel. Israel must

witness the judgment of her enemies. Israel must receive all the blessings of the promised kingdom, including the land. Has this happened yet? Well, obviously no, which means? Stuff we know is going to happen in the future.

The stage is being set. You see, I don't believe that the return of the Jews to the land in 1948 was a fulfillment of prophecy but I think they need to be in the land to fulfill prophecy. That's an important distinction. There is talk of rebuilding the temple. Again, all these things are in place. Antisemitism is on the rise. The northern powers are hostile towards Israel. The rise of pluralism and one world religion is going on. The formation of the European Union is there. The rebuilding of Babylon is transpiring. So the stage is clearly being set. Rabbi Heschel says this, "The love of the land was due to an imperative, not to a sentiment. There is a covenant and an engagement of the people to the land. To abandon the land would be to make mockery of all our longings, prayers and commitments. To abandon the land would be to repudiate the Bible." This is a rabbi that understands.

Here's Dr. Hickson's close. The long and the short of it is simply this, God has promised Israel a land. He's promised it to Abraham, Isaac, to Jacob, to his descendants forever. They own the land. They don't totally possess the land and it won't happen until Christ returns again, but that land promise is an unconditional promise. It will happen. It will happen one day and it will happen when Jesus Christ returns. In the meantime, "I will bless them that bless Israel. I will curse them that curses Israel," and we need to respect that.

Questions? I know you're all done. You're more tired than I am and I've just traveled all over the world. Go ahead, Mark.

Mark. With the boundaries of the land and the two guys that you mentioned with the different interpretations of the 10,000 square miles versus 300,000 square miles, the maps that you normally show, which of those or is it somewhere in between those represented? I know that one with the pink of the land and the blue of the present, you show....

Dennis. The pink one is the 300,000.

Mark. Okay.

Dennis. The 300,000.

Okay, well let's pray and go home, okay?

*Our Father, thank you again for your word. Thank you that we have a secure place in the future not only in heaven but in the Promised Land if we know Christ as our Savior. Thank you again that your word is true. May we not shift in light of theological systems or even in the change of circumstances worldwide. For people like Scofield and Chafer and others, to believe that there would be a literal nation of Israel in a literal land in 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910, and so forth, when there was no hope in sight of that happening*

*before 1948 is just a reflection of how they took you at your word even though they did not see how that could potentially happen, and we know that even 1948 isn't a fulfillment but it is necessary for the fulfillment, and that Israel does have a land today and even if they were to be expelled from that land, there would be a land in the future for them to have because you made them a promise and you always keep your promises. So we thank you, once again, for this. We pray that we would view Israel in light of these promises and remember that you will bless them that bless Israel, you will curse them that curses Israel. And we have so much to be thankful for how you have worked through your promises to Israel in that we even have a Messiah, a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. So we thank you for all of this and we pray that you give us safety as we travel home now. In Jesus' name.*