

MCLEAN BIBLE CHURCH
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>> LON SOLOMON: You know, a great theologian was once asked, how can you be so sure God exists? And barely hesitating, he answered: The Jews, and he's right. The continuation of the Jewish people down through the centuries is miraculous, pure and simple. No other people in history has ever been scattered throughout the world for 2,000 years and survived as a people except the Jewish people. No other people in history have ever lost their home land for 2,000 years and ever gotten their home land back except for the Jewish people. And no other language in history has ever died out as a living spoken language and then been revived as a living spoken language except for Hebrew.

In short, the Jewish people are a historical anomaly by every stretch of the imagination; they shouldn't even exist. And yet miraculously, they do. And why do they exist? How do we explain their survival? Well, it's very simple. The Bible says that God isn't finished with the Jewish people yet.

Now, we've been talking about this for the last several weeks, growing out of our verse-by-verse study of the book of Genesis. Today we want to conclude our discussions about the Jewish people and the Promised Land by focusing not on the miracle God has done in causing the Jewish people to survive, but rather on the miracle that God has done in restoring the Jewish people to their land.

So just before we dig in, a tiny bit of review. In our message last week we saw three things. Number one, we saw that because of their rejection of Christ, God has moved the Jewish people off stage for now.

We saw, number two, that God has placed the church center stage in his dealings for mankind right now. And we saw number three, one day all of this is going to change, God is going to remove the church from the world at the rapture and he's going to restore the Jewish people to center stage and fulfill every promise that he ever made to them. We call this theological understanding of the Bible dispensationalism. And one of the most fundamental of all these promises that God made to the Jewish people is found in Genesis Chapter 15, where God promised Abraham unconditionally that he would give the land of Canaan to Abraham's descendants as a permanent possession, as an eternal possession from the Nile River to Euphrates river. We have a map up so you can see what an enormous land grant this really is. And folks, we must understand that with the exception of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the rebirth of the modern state of Israel is one of the most miraculous things God has ever done since the creation of the world.

This is what we want to talk about today, the rebirth of the modern state of Israel. So let's begin by going back and looking and seeing what the Bible has to say on this topic. As we've seen in the book of Genesis, God promised to give the land of Canaan to Abraham's descendants through His one specific son, Isaac, and one specific grandson, Jacob. And we know that after the exodus from Egypt under the leadership of Joshua, God gave the Jewish people part of the land grant that he had promised them. But the Jewish people were incorrigibly disobedient and unfaithful with idolatry and disobedience to the Bible. And finally, culminating in their rejection of the Messiah. And so God decided to eject them from the Promised Land.

This happened in 135 A. D. under Roman emperor Adrianne, where he sent all the Jews out of the land of Israel and made it a capital punishment by death for any Jewish person to be found within the boundaries of the Holy Land.

What's interesting is God had predicted all of this in the Bible. Ezekiel 36:17, when the house of Israel was living in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their deeds. Therefore, God said, I will pour out my wrath on them and scatter them among the nations and disperse them throughout the lands.

It's also interesting that the Lord Jesus himself told us that this was going to happen. He said, Luke 21:20, when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is at hand and there will be great distress upon the land, Israel, and wrath on this people -- the Jewish people -- and they will fall by the edge of the sword -- watch -- and be led captive unto all the nations.

This is the way it was. For 1800 years. But you know, God also predicted in the Bible that one day at the end of the age, he was going to rectify all of this, he was going to regather his people from all over the world and he was going to restore them to the land of Israel. Listen to the Bible.

Jeremiah 16:14, behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when it will no longer be said as the Lord lives who brought the Israelites out of Egypt, but rather as the Lord lives who brought the Israelites from all the countries where he had banished them. For I will restore them to their own land which I gave to their fathers. Ezekiel 37:21, thus says the sovereign Lord, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations where they have gone and bring them into their own land, and they shall live on the land that I gave to Jacob my servant -- they, their sons and their sons' sons -- what's the next word? Forever.

Amos 9:14, I will restore my people, God says, and they will rebuild their ruined cities and live in them; I will plant them on their land, and they will never again be rooted out from their land which I have given to them, says the Lord.

And finally, Ezekiel 36:22, therefore say to the house of Israel, thus says the sovereign Lord, it is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of My holy name. For all the nations will know that I am the sovereign Lord, for I will prove myself mighty in their sight. And God, how will you do that? For I will take you from the nations and gather you from every land, and bring you back into your own land... I, the Lord, have spoken it, and I will do it.

So let's look now at history. And see exactly how the Lord did it. It all begins in 1895 in France. A Jewish captain in the French army named Alfred Dreyfus was arrested for treason. He was later proved innocent. And as he was led to trial, angry mobs lined the street chanting death to the Jews, death to the Jews. There was in Paris at the time covering the trial a Jewish journalist named Theodore Herzl, and he was shocked to see this Christian anti-Semitism erupt in France. The country of the enlightenment. And he concluded on the spot that the only hope for protecting the Jews against this Christian anti-Semitism, which was always lurking under the surface in Europe, was for the Jews to have a country of their own. He called this position Zionism. Herzl died in 1894, but not before he excited lots of people about this idea of Zionism, about the Jews have their own home land. He excited a man named Chaim Weizmann, he held a meeting with Balfour, a deeply committed Christian.

After several meetings with Weizmann, Balfour did the most amazing thing, in 1917 as serving as foreign secretary of Great Britain he got the British cabinet to agree to the following policy. I quote: His majesty's government, fused with favor, the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use its best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this objective. End of quote.

We call this document the Balfour declaration. And we must understand that it was historically unprecedented. This is the first time in 1800 years that any nation on earth has committed itself to a national home land for the Jewish people. This was miracle No. 1 that Great Britain would agree to do this.

Five weeks later the nation of Great Britain conquered Palestine, led by general Allenby, they marched through the streets of Jerusalem. They now controlled Palestine. And in 1922, the newly formed league of nations miraculously endorsed the Balfour Declaration, saying, and I quote, Great Britain should place the country -- that is of Palestine -- under such political, administrative, and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home. End of quote.

This is miracle No. 2. Not only now do we have a country endorsing a home land for the Jewish people, now we have the league of nations representing the entire world endorsing a home land for the Jewish people. Never happened in 18 centuries.

You say, wow, Lon, looks to me like the rebirth of Israel is a slam dunk, it's a done deal. Well, folks, nothing is as easy as it looks. You know what I'm saying? And there was a problem. The problem were the Arab peoples that were living in Palestine. They didn't like this. They revolted against this. They held general strikes. They attacked British targets in Palestine. They wore the British down with constant violence and strikes over years. And finally in 1939 Great Britain issued the infamous white paper which cancelled all Jewish immigration into Israel. Remember when this is, 1939.

Just before Hitler breaks out onto the Jewish people. And this white paper capitulated to every Arab demand against the Jews. Winston Churchill was incensed. He said, and I quote, this is a breach, it is a violation of our pledge, it is the abandonment of the Balfour declaration, and it is the end of the vision, the hope and the dream. End of quote. But you know what I love about God?

I love one thing about God so much, and that is God finishes what he starts. Don't you love that about God?

And so unable to quench the growing violence in Palestine, the British government finally decided to punt. And in 1947, it announced that it was pulling out of Palestine altogether and giving the conundrum of Palestine to the newly formed United Nations.

Well, in what may be the only case where the United Nations has ever supported Israel, in November 1947 the United Nations voted to partition Palestine and create the modern state of Israel.

Now it's not just an idea. Now it's just not something that we're hoping to do. Now the world has said, this is reality, the Jewish state is created. This was miracle No. 3.

On May 15th, 1948, Israel proclaimed its independence and immediately 300 million Arabs declared war. Five Arab nations, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq, all five simultaneously invaded the tiny country of Israel. Israel survival was hanging by literally a thread. They needed a friend really badly. And that friend showed up in the

person of president Harry S. Truman. Now, initially president Truman was not very -- in a very receptive mood when it came to sigh I don't knowism and forming a Jewish state. There were two reasons why. Number one, all of his advisors were urging him, because of political considerations and because of oil considerations to side with the Arab nations as a matter of fact, his Secretary of State George Marshall got so worked up about it that he told Truman that if Truman recognized the Jewish state, he was not only going to vote against Truman in the next election -- this is one of his cabinet members -- but he was going to campaign against Truman in his -- in the next election.

Besides that, the second reason that Truman wasn't very receptive at first was that he had already had Zionist groups visit him. And one -- they came in and they lectured him, condescendingly. And one rabbi even took his fist and beat on the desk in the oval office, for goodness sake, and pointed his finger and yelled at president Truman. Made Truman so angry that he forbid, he banned all Zionist groups from the White House until further notice. I would call that not being in a receptive mod. What do you think?

But miraculously, Truman agreed to meet with Weizmann, in the early months of 1948. And by the end of the meeting Truman had agreed that if Israel declared its independence, America would recognize the modern state of Israel.

Folks, that's miracle No. 4. That President Truman's mind was changed so radically and that he committed himself, America would be the first country to recognize Israel. But there's one more miracle to go.

And that is on May 15th, 1948, a mere 11 minutes after Israel declared her independence, President Truman officially recognized the state of Israel, making America the first nation ever to do so.

But nonetheless, Israel was being invaded by five countries. And 300 million Arab peoples and yet they survived, thanks to the recognition of the American government and thanks to the help that the American government subsequently provided. If you can imagine this, that tiny little state fought off five countries and three representing -- representing 300 million people, and survived. My gosh, there's miracle No. 5 for you. And so America has been the strongest supporter and staunchest defender of the nation of Israel for the last 65 years, praise the Lord. Amen? Praise the Lord. Applause)

But you know, I don't want you to miss the fact that President Truman was deeply affected personally, emotionally by all this. In 1949 the first Prime Minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, and the first chief rabbi of Israel came to the White House and thanked him for his support. And the Chief Rabbi of Israel said, God put you, speaking to President Truman, in your mother's womb so you could be the instrument to bring about the rebirth of Israel after 2,000 years. And then the rabbi read the words of Persian kin Cyrus from 539 B.C., where in Ezra Chapter 1, Verse 2, he said the Lord God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and charged me to build a house in Jerusalem. The rabbi turned to Truman and said to the people of Israel, Mr. President, you are the modern King Cyrus.

And at this president Truman began to sob. And collapsed into weeping so much so that David Ben-Gurion said he had to take the president in his arms and hold him until he pulled himself together and composed himself.

Let's summarize. What did we learn today? Well, we've learned that the birth of the modern state of Israel in 1948 was not an accident. It was not a coincidence. And it was not a lucky break. It was the fulfillment of God's unconditional eternal, sovereign, unbreakable promise to Abraham and his descendents. And as we've seen today, it only happened because God did miracle after miracle after miracle. He took an utterly powerless group of people, his people, the Jewish people, living in ghettos, with no centralized leadership, with no financial power, with no legislative power, with no military power, with no political power, with no diplomatic power, and God did something for them that has never happened in the history of the world. Why did God do this?

He told us. Ezekiel 36, it is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I'm about to act -- God said -- but for the sake of my holy name. So the nations will know that I am the Lord, for I will prove myself mighty in their sight, for I will take you from the nations, and gather you from every land, and bring you back into your own land. Praise the Lord.

Now, I do want to say one word of balance before we go on. And that's this: That we understand that what we have today is unbelieving Israel in the land. Which means that all of Israel's actions are not godly. Which means that all of Israel's actions are not biblical. Which means that we do not automatically support every action that the nation of Israel takes. But friends, what we do support is Israel's right to exist and to own the land of Canaan as their God-given entitlement going all the way back to the book of Genesis. Amen? That's what we support. All right. (Applause) Lon that brings us to our most important question of the day. And you all know what that is.

Right? At Prince William, Loudoun, at Bethesda, and all around the world, on the edge here.

>> LON SOLOMON: Everybody okay?

All right. I know it's like -- you know, pouring a lot of hay on you, but you're okay. So prove it to you that you're okay. Come on everybody.

One, two, three.

>> ALL: So what?!

>> LON SOLOMON: Oh, yeah. You say, Lon, you know, I was sort of interest -- that was sort of interesting. But -- and by the way, Lon, are we ever going to talk about gentiles again here? And the answer is yes, we are. And you say, and Lon, what does any of this have to do with my life? I mean, I get no connection with this.

Well, let's talk about that for a second. Because that's the question we should be asking. Our question should be what does the rebirth of the nation of Israel teach us as followers of Christ spiritually?

And the answer is that it teaches us there is a totally sovereign God who is running the universe. As we just saw. In the history of Israel, that God was sovereign over everything that happened to this nation, for 1900 years. Some good things happened, some not so good things happened. But at the end of the day, God had ultimate sovereign control of the entire thing and made sure it all fit into his perfect plan for the Jewish people and for their nation.

Now, what exactly do we mean when we say God is sovereign?

Friends, what we mean is that God wields a power that cannot be overruled, that cannot be overcome, and that cannot be resisted. 297 times the Bible says this about God. Here are a couple of examples. Psalm 135:5, the Lord is great and sovereign before all; whatever the Lord

pleases, He does. Isaiah 46:10, my purposes shall be established, says God. And I will accomplish my good pleasure.

Daniel Chapter 4:35, God does according to his will with the host of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth. And no one can ward off his hand.

And finally, Daniel 221, I love this Verse, it is he, God, who sets kings up and who takes kings down. Friends, to say that God is sovereign is to say that he is actively running everything in the universe. According to his personal pleasure, according to his personal will, according to his personal plan and R and that regardless whether you and I understand it or not, regardless whether you and I can explain it or not, every minute detail and happening and event that is taking place in our lives and in our country and in our world is fitting perfectly into God's good and design plan for the universe. That's what it means to say that God is sovereign.

And as followers of Christ, it's important that we believe this. Not just in our head, but it's important that we really believe it in our hearts. So here's the bottom line for the day. Folk, whether it comes to our personal life or our financial life or professional life or family life or our medical life, or the future of our nation or the future of this world, as followers of Christ -- listen to me -- the only way that you and I can stay spiritually steady, the only way that you and I can maintain biblical and spiritual equilibrium with all that this world throws at us, the only way that we can keep the joy of our salvation -- Psalm 51 -- is for us to rest in the sovereignty of God.

Let's bow our heads together p with our heads bowed, let me remind you of what the Bible says about David. That after his so many city of Ziklag was invaded while he was away and destroyed and all the people carried off, the Bible says 1 Samuel 30, that David when he came back and saw this, he encouraged himself in the Lord. How do you do that?

Because when it comes to the things that are upsetting us and the things that are scaring us and the things that are shaking our foundations, that's exactly what we came to do: How do you do this?

David did it very simply, by acknowledging God's sovereignty over what had happened, by surrendering to God's sovereignty over what had happened. Finally, by then resting in God's sovereignty over what had happened.

And my friends, for you today, for me today, for all of us, we all need to do this. We all need to encourage ourselves in the Lord. There are things in every one of our lives that are scaring us and upsetting us and shaking our foundations. We need to do what David did. We need to take those things, acknowledge, surrender to, and then rest in God's sovereignty over them all. Knowing that whether we understand it or not, it's all fitting in to God's perfectly designed plan for our lives.

So I want to give you a moment right now to do that. Take those things in your life, acknowledge, surrender to, rest in the sovereignty of God over those things.

And let them go.

Lord Jesus, some of us just prayed about finances, some of us just prayed about medical situations, some of us just prayed about our children. Or our parents. Some of us prayed about promotions we weren't given, praises we didn't get, jobs that we've lost, relationships that we're in.

Lord, I don't know, there's 1,000 things we could have prayed for. But these are things that are going in a way we don't want them to go, that are upsetting us and shaking our foundations. And today what we need to do is, as David did, is to encourage ourselves in you, we need to take these things and nail them to the cross. And thereby, not only acknowledge your sovereignty over them, but to surrender to it, rest in it, and let them go.

Knowing that in some way they all fit into your perfect plan. And with we do that, you replace our anxiety with peace. And so, Lord Jesus, do that for us today. For every one of us here. Restore to us the joy of our salvation. That the enemy saps from us when he tries to convince us to be sovereign in the world instead of you.

Do a work in each much our hearts and encourage us in the Lord today. And we pray these things in Jesus' name. What did God's people say?

Amen. Hey, have a great -- and listen, next week we're going to talk about the gentiles. So we'll see you then. God bless you. God bless you.

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