

The Promised Land (Psalm 37; Jeremiah 31–33)

We come now to verses 9–11 of Psalm 37. We've covered the first eight verses, which describe the peace that God gives to the righteous. We're picking it up now this morning at verse 9, so read with me 9–11: “For evildoers will be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord, they will inherit the land. Yet a little while and the wicked man will be no more; and you will look carefully for his place and he will not be there. But the humble will inherit the land and will delight themselves in abundant prosperity.”

These three verses constitute the second section of this psalm that we are looking at, seeing another thing that God gives to the righteous, namely a promise of a glory and a grace that is to come. You see it in verse 9, the righteous will inherit the land, and verse 11, “the humble will inherit the land.” And this promise of a land that is to come and the inheritance in that land is the central promise of this entire psalm. There are a number of promises in the psalm, but this one is repeated in various ways throughout the psalm. You see it mentioned in verse 3, the land mentioned in verse 3: “Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness.” Just notice there that they were already living in this land, and they were to live there and to enjoy the allotment that God had given to them and to cultivate faithfulness, meaning that they were to live faithfully in the land that God had given to them. That's verse 3. There is a command there to dwell in the land.

But then the rest of the references to the land in this psalm all are references to inheriting the land. And I'm just going to let you—I just want your eyes to sort of glance at each of these references as we work our way through them.

Look at verse 9: “Evildoers will be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord, they will inherit the land.”

Verse 11: “The humble will inherit the land and will delight themselves in abundant prosperity.”

Look at verse 22: “For those blessed by Him will inherit the land, but those cursed by Him will be cut off.”

Verse 29: “The righteous will inherit the land and dwell in it forever.”

Verse 34: “Wait for the Lord and keep His way, and He will exalt you to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off, you will see it.”

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So there are six references there to the land, and one way of dividing this psalm is to break the psalm up around the references to the land in all of these verses that you have just looked at. That's one way of dividing the psalm. In the passage that concerns us for this morning, or at least will briefly, in verses 9–11, you see that it is mentioned twice.

And I want you to notice something about the structure of verses 9–11. Notice in verse 9, there is a promise regarding the wicked in the first line of that verse, and then there is a promise regarding the righteous in the second line of the verse. “Evildoers will be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord, they will inherit the land.” And then notice that verse 10 elaborates on the promise or the statement regarding the wicked in the first line of verse 9. Verse 10 says, “Yet a little while and the wicked man will be no more; and you will look carefully for his place and he will not be there.” So all of verse 10 is an elaboration on the statement in the first phrase of verse 9. And then verse 11 elaborates on the second line of verse 9. “But the humble will inherit the land and will delight themselves in abundant prosperity” (v. 11).

So now the question is this. What is this that is being promised? What was the land promise? What is it referring to? What is intended by this promise? Is it symbolic? Is it metaphorical? Who enjoys this? Has this already happened? Is this going to happen in the future, and if so, what is it going to look like? Will we share in this or is this something that was just for the Jews, just for Israel? How should we understand this promise? Now because or since, I should say, this promise of the land is mentioned all the way through this psalm, it would behoove us at the beginning of this psalm to sort of make the case and frame an understanding of what the author has in mind with all of these references throughout the rest of the psalm. That way we'll just sort of lay the groundwork for this and build the foundation of what is this land promise so we can understand that, and then we can just refer back to this sermon over the course of the next couple weeks, however long it takes us to work through the rest of the psalm, as we sort of refer back to what again was the land promise. So that's what we're doing today.

Now as you might suspect there are a number of different ways that the promise of the land was interpreted. I'm going to give you four possible interpretations, four of what I think are five, and I'm going to briefly critique each one of these. First, some people could suggest that this land promise refers to the Israelites entering the land under Joshua. Entering the land under Joshua. That the righteous would inherit the land. Now,

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if that is the case, then that means that all of the promises that are mentioned in Psalm 37 have already been fulfilled even in David's day, but it can't be referring to Joshua coming into the land and conquering the land since this was written four hundred years after that, and all of the references to this are yet future events. "They *will* inherit the land" (v. 9). The wicked *will* be cut off. So I don't think it is referring to what happened in Joshua's day. It can't be something past since it is promising something that is yet future. And you notice from verse 3 that the people to whom David was writing in his day are commanded in verse 3 to dwell in the land, meaning they were already there. It was already a reality for them.

Second, some have suggested that the references to the land here in the psalm are merely references or promises of security and provision, security and provision. In other words, they are symbolic of God's protection of the nation, of the righteous, and sort of metaphors or similes, a symbol of God's provision in the land, His abundant provision in the land, and His protection of the Jews in the land. In fact, this is John Calvin's interpretation of the verse. He says this—now keep in mind Calvin wrote in longer sentences than we are used to thinking today. You could never get this in one tweet. So I'm going to give you this. I'll kind of briefly pause to explain what it is that Calvin is saying. Calvin says this:

Moreover, I have just now and on several other occasions stated the sense in which this everlasting habitation upon the earth, which is here promised to the righteous, is to be understood, namely that although they are surrounded by the troubles and changes which occur in this world, yet God preserves them under His wing. And although there is nothing lasting or stable under Heaven, yet He keeps them in safety as if they were sheltered in a secure haven.

That was one sentence. Now what Calvin is saying is that the sense in which we are to understand this everlasting habitation of the earth that is promised is simply to be understood as God preserving the righteous under His wing and keeping them in safety.

Calvin goes on to say this: "And finally, they enjoy in addition to this that inward peace of mind which is better than a hundred lives and which is therefore justly regarded as a privilege surpassing in value and importance all others."

Now I don't disagree with Calvin that God protects His people or that God provides for His people or gives peace of mind to His people or graciously blesses His people in that way. I don't object to that at all. But he's simply saying that the land promise is a

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promise of God's preservation, of God's safety and provision for them in the land, and that this is a promise that God would give them peace of mind. So it's simply a symbol for God's provision, protection and peace.

Now I would suggest to you that if that is what the psalmist meant, the psalmist could have said that. In other words, he could have said, "God is our refuge, He is our protector, He is our shield." And in fact, other psalms do say that, don't they? You can drop your book of Psalms open to almost any psalm and read it and you will see a psalmist referencing those very things. So if that's what the psalmist intended, if that's what David meant by the promise of the land, he could have been far clearer than he was. Other passages do say that, but this psalm describes them dwelling in the land and inheriting it forever.

A third possible interpretation is that this promise was that they would live in the land for the duration of their lives and that as long as they were not unfaithful and were not wicked, that they would not be expelled from the land like they were in Babylon. In other words, the promise is: to the righteous, God will let you live in the land, but if as a nation or as a people you turn from the Lord, then He will kick you out of the land just as He did four hundred years after the psalm was written when the Jews disobeyed and they were kicked out of the land and exiled in Babylon. In other words, their obedience would secure their time in the land and they would not be driven out in exile. Some people say that that's what is being promised here.

Except they were in the land and they were commanded to live there, and if that's what it is referring to, then the wicked would have enjoyed the exact same blessing since the wicked were prospering at this time. And if this is just a reference to them not suffering under exile, then the wicked could live alongside the righteous and live and dwell in the land and enjoy the same promise. In other words, that interpretation nullifies the promise because the wicked then get to enjoy the same thing—that is, to stay within the national borders of Israel and live in that land. The wicked, in fact, prospered in that same land and died and were never driven out until four hundred years later when Babylon came in and drove the entire nation out.

And in fact, it would turn the promise on its head since four hundred years later when the wicked were rebellious and the nation did rebel, there was a remnant of righteous in the land and they were actually driven out of the land, weren't they? Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-nego, Jeremiah, Daniel, they were all exiled from the land. And so what does this promise mean to them if we're just talking about dwelling in the physical land

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of Israel? They were righteous men who were, in fact, not allowed to dwell in the land and live in it in peace and safety since they were exiled along with the rebellious Jews of their day.

Fourth, it has been suggested that this is a promise that the righteous will enjoy success in the land. In other words, the righteous will enjoy the prosperity in the land and delight themselves in the abundant prosperity of the land that is provided. But in fact, the wicked were having the same success. Verse 7 says, “Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way.” In other words, the wicked were prospering. So if this is just a promise that the righteous will prosper, then what do we do with the fact that the wicked were prospering in the land as well? This seems to be a suggestion, this seems to be a promise that there is coming something that the wicked do not enjoy. In other words, whatever is intended in this promise, it cannot be something that the wicked also enjoyed and experienced. Whatever the land promise is, it cannot be something that the wicked enjoyed or experienced since throughout the psalm the distinction is made between the righteous and the wicked. And the promise is that the wicked will be cut off and the righteous would inherit this thing. So the wicked are cut off and they are no more and the righteous inherit the land. In other words, the wicked don't get this thing that is promised, which means that it cannot refer to just living in the land of Israel within the national boundaries since the wicked enjoyed that. It can't be referring to simply prosperity in the land at that time since the wicked were enjoying that.

Some have suggested that it's possibly speaking of Heaven. I don't think it excludes Heaven. I think Heaven is part of the fulfillment of this promise, not all of the fulfillment of this promise, but it is part of it. But that interpretation would understand the land simply to be a picture of ultimate Heaven. But if that is true, then referring to it as the land seems a bit confusing at best and misleading at worst. If the author wanted to describe Heaven, he could have said Heaven. There was language for that, like Asaph uses in Psalm 73:25 when he says, “Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth.” So if this is referring to Heaven, if the land promise is referring to Heaven, then it seems the author could have just said the righteous are promised Heaven and left it at that. But there's actually no place in the psalm where the land is equated with Heaven, so it can't be that.

The Jews knew what this meant. The psalmist uses the term *land* six times in the psalm to describe a promise, something that the righteous would receive that the wicked will

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be cut off from and never receive. The promises are yet to be realized even in David's day regarding the land. So that means that in David's day when he wrote Psalm 37, there was something to happen to the land, something about the land promise that was yet to be fulfilled that the wicked would never enjoy. That can't be physically dwelling inside the national boundaries. It has to be something beyond that, something greater than that because the wicked would be cut off.

So let's look for a moment at the features of the promises all the way through Psalm 37. We're just going to observe and go back to each one of these six references and just observe, look what it is that is promised, and then we're going to jump into another Old Testament passage to say, "What was the land promise describing? What did the author have in mind?" Let's begin at verse 3. Psalm 37:3: "Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness." Now does this reference to the land refer to Heaven? Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. Is the author describing Heaven in verse 3? Dwell in Heaven and cultivate faithfulness. Do good and trust in the Lord in Heaven. Is that what he's describing? Verse 3 is not describing Heaven. Obviously they were not in Heaven. He's not commanding the saints who were in Heaven to dwell in Heaven. And so I would suggest to you that it is hermeneutical gymnastics of the worst sort to suggest that the reference to land in verse 3 has a completely different meaning than the reference to the land in the rest of the psalm. You can't seriously suggest that the reference to the land in verse 3 refers to the physical land of Israel, the actual real estate in the Middle East promised to Abraham and his descendants, but that every subsequent reference to the land in the rest of the psalm refers to a spiritual reality, not a physical one, and to Heaven and not actually the land of Israel.

Psalm 37:9 says, "Evildoers will be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord, they will inherit the land." So the wicked don't get this. They're removed. They're cut off. Look at verse 11: "The humble will inherit the land and will delight themselves in abundant prosperity." So whatever the promise is, it involves not the wicked but the righteous enjoying and delighting themselves—same word used as in verse 4 where it says, "Delight yourself in the Lord." It involves the righteous delighting themselves, reposing themselves, lavishing themselves in abundant prosperity. Look at verse 22: "For those blessed by Him will inherit the land, but those cursed by Him will be cut off." In other words, the land is for those whom God blesses, and those whom God curses have no part or portion in the land.

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Verse 29: “The righteous will inherit the land and dwell in it forever.” So this possession, whatever is meant here, is a possession that is everlasting and eternal, a forever possession. Not one that ends when you die, not one that can end if the wicked rebel and you are cast out of the land. This is an ongoing, eternal, everlasting possession. They will dwell in it forever, so this can't be referring to just this life. Verse 34: “Wait for the Lord and keep His way, and He will exalt you to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off, you will see it.” So this inheriting of the land involves an exaltation for the righteous. So it can't be spiritual. It can't be a metaphor. It's not symbolic of something else. He's describing here actually inheriting the land of Israel in a state or a condition that they did not yet enjoy.

Now other than the command in verse 3, every reference describes something that is future. You'll notice it's used nine times. This will happen, this will happen, this will happen. There's a phrase that describes the future condition of this nine times in the psalm, and verse 3 is the only place where it is a command and not promising something future. So while they lived in the land along with the wicked, there is a future land promise for the righteous that involves an eternal dwelling, abundant prosperity, exaltation, and the complete removal of the wicked from the land. This land then is not a spiritual reality but the very land that they lived on and the very land that they called their own, given to them by Yahweh. That is what they were to dwell on and cultivate faithfulness in while they looked forward to the fulfillment of a promise and a condition of that land that was yet to come.

So, now that we've sort of laid out the parameters of what is promised in Psalm 37, turn now back—turn now forward, I should say, to another Old Testament book, Jeremiah. The book of Jeremiah, chapter 31. We're going to spend the rest of our time this morning in Jeremiah 31 because we want to understand, what did the Jews—what were they promised? What did they understand the blessing of the land to refer to? We're going to actually spend the rest of our time in Jeremiah 31, 32, and 33. And you're going to wonder, If you can cover that much Scripture on one Sunday, how come you can't do that every Sunday? It's not because we're not going to go into detail, but there's just so much there to read and to take in because there are three chapters there that deal with this reality. So today we're going to look at those three chapters, Jeremiah 31, 32, 33, and then next Sunday we're going to come back to Psalm 37 and work our way through verses 9–11.

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Now Jeremiah wrote this after David in Psalm 37. One of the reasons that I chose to go to the book of Jeremiah was simply to establish some promises that came not during the time of David and not before the time of David but something that actually happened after the time of David toward the close of the Old Testament era. So you're talking about Jeremiah writing four, five hundred years BC, but four hundred years after David. So you have Joshua conquering the land. Several centuries go by. David writes the psalm describing the blessing of this land that is to come. Four more centuries go by. And Jeremiah starts talking about this land and the promise that God has made concerning this land. So we're going after David's time, after the time that God gave the covenant to David, which I'm just going to read so you can be reminded of what God promised to David in 2 Samuel 7:11:

11 The Lord also declares to you that the Lord will make a house for you.

12 When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom.

13 He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

14 I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men,

15 but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you.

16 Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever. (2 Sam. 7:11–16 NASB)

Now that's the promise that God made to David.

Now fast-forward four hundred years to the time of Jeremiah, and you are approaching the end of the Davidic kingdom, the Davidic monarchy. The kingdom is in ruins. The house of David and the kingdom of Israel was a hollowed-out shell of its former self. The nation was in ruins. They had committed iniquity, and God was judging them for their sin. God had promised to set a descendant on David's throne and that David's house, David's kingdom, and his rule would reign, would exist and continue, through that son forever. An everlasting kingdom is promised to the descendant who would take David's

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throne. And yet in Jeremiah's day, the question was if the house of David is broken down and Israel is about to be invaded by Babylon, as Jeremiah was prophesying, and they were going to be destroyed and that was the end of the Davidic monarchy, then what do we do with God's promises to David that said He would establish his throne forever? You see the dilemma? God promised this to David, and yet here's what we see with our eyes. This is coming to an end. Have the promises of David failed?

That, by the way, is the issue that the psalmist wrestles with in Psalm 89 where he asked himself that very question. What do we do with the promises of God to David? And the psalmist goes back again and again to this foundational truth: God promised it to David. He swore this to David. He will keep His word. Don't understand how it's going to happen. Don't understand how this is going to unfold, but that's where we stand. We have to stand there because God has promised it.

So Jeremiah 31 is the Lord speaking to Jeremiah, telling him about a new covenant that is to come. Now there are some who would say that the establishment of the new covenant and the passing away of the old covenant means that the people to whom the promises of David were given, that that has changed and that now those promises are fulfilled in us, the church, in a different way than what was promised. What we're going to see in these next three chapters and most of the passages that are in here is that there is no way that you can interpret those promises to anybody other than national Israel. It was made to national Israel, and therefore God is going to keep His Word to the Jews just as He said He would do it because that is what God does. He keeps His word.

So Jeremiah 31, let's pick it up at verse 31. And we're going to read through this. I'll stop periodically to make some comments. I want you to observe some things that tie in with Psalm 37 as we work our way through it. Verse 31:

31 "Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,

32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the Lord. (Jer. 31:31–32 NASB)

I want you to notice there that He contrasts the new covenant with the Mosaic covenant, the one that was made at Sinai when He brought them out of Egypt, and He says this new covenant is not like that one. The new covenant is an unconditional

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covenant. It's not conditioned upon their obedience like the Mosaic covenant was, and the Mosaic covenant did not have promises of land attached to it, it had promises attached to the nation that stipulated their dwelling in the land and their worship in the land. And now in Jeremiah's time, they were being punished as a nation for their disobedience to that former covenant. And so now on the brink of the destruction of the nation by Babylon coming in and judging them, God says, "I'm going to make a new covenant." With whom? With Gentiles? No. With different peoples? No. With Israel. This covenant is with the nation of Israel.

Verse 33:

33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

34 They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the Lord, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (Jer. 31:33–34 NASB)

So this covenant involves redemption, forgiveness, the payment of sin, the forgiving of iniquity. It also involves—everyone with whom this covenant is made at this time that fulfills this—"They will all know Me." In other words, all of the participants of the new covenant, they know God. You do not have unbelievers in the new covenant. You don't have children who are in the new covenant who are unbelievers. You don't have pagans attached to the church who are part of the new covenant. They're not inside the new covenant. Everybody in the new covenant knows the Lord. This is one of the things that makes it superior to the Mosaic covenant. In the Mosaic covenant, you had a nation full of people, most of whom could be pagans and not Yahweh worshippers at all, whose disobedience would bring judgment and chastisement upon the nation. But in the new covenant, everyone in the new covenant knows the Lord. It's a superior covenant.

This covenant does not involve setting aside national Israel. It is, in fact, a covenant with national Israel, the new covenant, a covenant with national Israel. Jeremiah 31:35: "Thus says the Lord, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; the Lord of hosts is His name." And this is what He says, verse 36:

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36 “If this fixed order departs from before Me,” declares the Lord, “then the offspring of Israel also will cease from being a nation before Me forever.”

37 Thus says the Lord, “If the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out below, then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done,” declares the Lord. (Jer. 31:36–37 NASB)

So how certain is the fulfillment of this promise? It is absolutely certain because Israel's national existence is guaranteed by God until His word to national Israel is fulfilled. National Israel was promised things that require their existence, and therefore Israel will never cease to be. They are promised a future Davidic kingdom, a future king, a place, and a future in the land. And even though they were being exiled, or right on the edge of being exiled when Jeremiah writes this, God gives them a promise regarding the land. Look at verse 38:

38 “Behold, days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when the city will be rebuilt for the Lord from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate.

39 The measuring line will go out farther straight ahead to the hill Gareb; then it will turn to Goah,

40 And the whole valley of the dead bodies and of the ashes, and all the fields as far as the brook Kidron, to the corner of the Horse Gate toward the east, shall be holy to the Lord; it will not be plucked up or overthrown anymore forever.” (Jer. 31:38–40 NASB)

These are the promises that relate to the rebuilding of the nation and the city. And notice that there are specific geographical features that are mentioned in the text. Specific geographical features of the land are mentioned in the text.

Now the covenant is introduced in chapter 31, but its details are repeated and elaborated on over the course of the next two chapters. Now in chapter 32, and we're going to skip over this, verses 1–15, Jeremiah is imprisoned for prophesying about the Babylonian captivity. The king and the people didn't like Jeremiah calling out their sin or mentioning the fact that the Chaldeans were virtually at the gate and ready to conquer their land. And so they threw Jeremiah in prison, and there the Lord instructed Jeremiah to buy a piece of property in the city and to call the title deed and that piece of property “witness” for the sake of being a testimony to the nation that God would bring His

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people back into that land at some point in the future. And so Jeremiah does that. Look at chapter 32, verses 25–27: “You have said to me, O Lord God, ‘Buy for yourself the field with money and call in witnesses’—although the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans. Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying, ‘Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?’”

Now stop for just a moment right there, and I want you to hear that with Jeremiah's ears. He is in prison. Babylon is at the gate. The Davidic monarchy is virtually at its end, not entirely, but virtually at its end. The nation has been destroyed. There's no hope. They're being conquered. God has been prophesying through Jeremiah, “Your destruction is certain. It is here. I'm giving you to Babylon. It is a done deal. I'm going to bring you back, but it's a done deal.” If you're living in Jeremiah's day, you would have been asking the same question that they were asking in Psalm 89. What about the promises to David? You promised David something.

So now here, verse 27:

27 “Is anything too difficult for Me?”

28 Therefore thus says the Lord, “Behold, I am about to give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans and into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he will take it.

29 The Chaldeans who are fighting against this city will enter and set this city on fire and burn it, with the houses where people have offered incense to Baal on their roofs and poured out drink offerings to other gods to provoke Me to anger.

30 Indeed the sons of Israel and the sons of Judah have been doing only evil in My sight from their youth; for the sons of Israel have been only provoking Me to anger by the work of their hands,” declares the Lord.

31 Indeed this city has been to Me a provocation of My anger and My wrath from the day that they built it, even to this day, so that it should be removed from before My face,

32 because of all the evil of the sons of Israel and the sons of Judah which they have done to provoke Me to anger—they, their kings, their leaders, their priests, their prophets, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

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33 They have turned their back to Me and not their face; though I taught them, teaching again and again, they would not listen and receive instruction.

34 But they put their detestable things in the house which is called by My name, to defile it.

35 They built the high places of Baal that are in the valley of Ben-hinnom to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech, which I had not commanded them nor had it entered My mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin. (Jer. 32:27–35 NASB)

Now that is the sin and iniquity for which the nation was being judged. And this is a description of the judgment that was going to befall the nation. So now the question is, Is Israel's sin a cause of God abandoning His word to David? The answer to that is no. It's not.

Verse 36:

36 Now therefore thus says the Lord God of Israel concerning this city of which you say, "It is given into the hand of the king of Babylon by sword, by famine and by pestilence."

37 Behold, I will gather them out of all the lands to which I have driven them in My anger, in My wrath and in great indignation; and I will bring them back to this place and make them dwell in safety.

38 They shall be My people, and I will be their God;

39 and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me always, for their own good and for the good of their children after them.

40 I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me.

41 I will rejoice over them to do them good and will faithfully plant them in this land with all My heart and with all My soul.

42 For thus says the Lord, "Just as I brought all this great disaster on this people, so I am going to bring on them all the good that I am promising them.

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43 Fields will be bought in this land of which you say, 'It is a desolation, without man or beast; it is given into the hands of the Chaldeans.'

44 Men will buy fields for money, sign and seal deeds, and call in witnesses in the land of Benjamin, in the environs of Jerusalem, in the cities of Judah, in the cities of the hill country, in the cities of the lowland and in the cities of the Negev; for I will restore their fortunes," declares the Lord. (Jer. 32:36–44 NASB)

He's promising there to restore them to that land, to make with them this everlasting covenant. You can notice there the same language that we looked at back in Jeremiah 31. I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me. I will make with them an everlasting covenant. I will give them one heart and one way that they may fear Me. They will dwell in safety. There will be security. This is what God was promising to Israel, and He is reiterating the promises through Jeremiah to a disobedient people who was going into exile. Is anything too difficult for Me? Wondering about what I'm going to do with the promises of David? Don't worry about it. I'll bring them back into this land, and I'm going to give them everything I have promised to them. What God ultimately promised to David, all of it is going to be given to that nation. God will keep His word, every last syllable of His word, exactly as He has promised to do it.

Jeremiah 33:1:

1 Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the second time, while he was still confined in the court of the guard, saying,

2 "Thus says the Lord who made the earth, the Lord who formed it to establish it, the Lord is His name,

3 'Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'

4 For thus says the Lord God of Israel concerning the houses of this city, and concerning the houses of the kings of Judah which are broken down to make a defense against the siege ramps and against the sword,

5 'While they are coming to fight with the Chaldeans and to fill them with the corpses of men whom I have slain in My anger and in My wrath, and I have hidden My face from this city because of all their wickedness:

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6 Behold, I will bring to it health and healing, and I will heal them; and I will reveal to them an abundance of peace and truth.

7 I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel and will rebuild them as they were at first.

8 I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and I will pardon all their iniquities [notice that this covenant, this promise, involves salvation] by which they have sinned against Me and by which they have transgressed against Me.

9 It will be to Me a name of joy, praise and glory before all the nations of the earth which will hear of all the good that I do for them, and they will fear and tremble because of all the good and all the peace that I make for it.'

10 Thus says the Lord, 'Yet again there will be heard in this place, of which you say, "It is a waste, without man and without beast," that is, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate without man and without inhabitant and without beast,

11 [What will they hear?] the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who say, "Give thanks to the Lord of hosts, for the Lord is good, for His lovingkindness is everlasting"; and of those who bring a thank offering into the house of the Lord. For I will restore the fortunes of the land as they were at first,' says the Lord." (Jer. 33:1–11 NASB)

So there is promised destruction. And there is promised restoration. And lest we think that all of this is just to be spiritualized and fulfilled in the church, look at verse 12:

12 Thus says the Lord of hosts, "There will again be in this place which is waste, without man or beast, and in all its cities, a habitation of shepherds who rest their flocks.

13 In the cities of the hill country, in the cities of the lowland, in the cities of the Negev, in the land of Benjamin, in the environs of Jerusalem and in the cities of Judah, the flocks will again pass under the hands of the one who numbers them," says the Lord. (Jer. 33:12–13 NASB)

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Notice all of the markers of land. These are the promises that related to the land of Israel.

Now some might object and say, OK, but after the time of Jeremiah, after the Babylonian captivity, when Ezra came back and Zerubbabel came back and Nehemiah came back and they reformed the people, rebuilt the temple and rebuilt the wall, and the people gathered back into the land of Israel and four hundred years went by and the Jews were back in the land and that's where they were at when Christ came four hundred years after they were restored, doesn't that fulfill all the promises of that return? Look at verse 14: "Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, 'when I will fulfill the good word which I have spoken concerning the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time. . .'" here's what's going to happen. So how will you know when ultimately these promises have been fulfilled? Verse 15:

15 In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch of David to spring forth; and He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth.

16 In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell in safety; and this is the name by which she will be called: the Lord is our righteousness.

17 For thus says the Lord, "David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel;

18 and the Levitical priests shall never lack a man before Me to offer burnt offerings, to burn again grain offerings and to prepare sacrifices continually."
(Jer. 33:15–18 NASB)

So what is going to happen when that promise is fulfilled? A Branch from David's line will rule and reign with justice and execute righteousness on the earth. Judah will be saved, Jerusalem will dwell in safety, and Jerusalem will be called "the Lord our righteousness." Why? Because God promised David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel. Not on God's throne, on the throne of the house of Israel. In other words, the promise would be fulfilled exactly as God gave it when this Son of David rules and reigns over the house of Israel.

So there is a gathering of Israel and a blessing on the land that came when the Jews returned from captivity to the physical land of Israel, but there was no national salvation of the Jews. Jerusalem was not called the city of righteousness. There was no rule and reign of the Son of David. Christ didn't even come for another four hundred years. So

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therefore, in those days, when God fulfills the word of this promise, the new covenant, it is going to involve those things, and those things have never happened, which means that the fulfillment of this blessing ultimately we are still waiting for.

Look at verse 19:

19 The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying,

20 “Thus says the Lord, ‘If you can break My covenant for the day and My covenant for the night, so that day and night will not be at their appointed time,

21 then My covenant may also be broken with David My servant so that he will not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levitical priests, My ministers.

22 As the host of heaven cannot be counted and the sand of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me.”

23 And the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying,

24 “Have you not observed what this people have spoken, saying, ‘The two families which the Lord chose, He has rejected them’? Thus they despise My people, no longer are they a nation in their sight.” (Jer. 33:19–24 NASB)

Notice there that the Lord now is addressing people in Jeremiah's day who were saying because God has done this to His people, God has rejected His people and that there are no more fulfillment of these promises, that they're not a nation (v. 24), He has rejected them, God despises His people.

Verse 25:

25 Thus says the Lord, “If My covenant for day and night stand not, and the fixed patterns of heaven and earth I have not established,

26 then I would reject the descendants of Jacob and David My servant, not taking from his descendants rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But I will restore their fortunes and will have mercy on them. (Jer. 33:25–26 NASB)

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There were some in Jeremiah's day who were questioning whether God had rejected His people because of their disobedience, and God's answer and Jeremiah's answer is, "No, I made a promise to David, and I will fulfill it just as I said I would."

If you want to, you can turn back to Jeremiah 23. I'm going to read you a passage there from this. Jeremiah 23:3:

3 "Then I Myself will gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and bring them back to their pasture, and they will be fruitful and multiply.

4 I will also raise up shepherds over them and they will tend them; and they will not be afraid any longer, nor be terrified, nor will any be missing," declares the Lord.

5 "Behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; and He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land.

6 In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely; and this is His name by which He will be called, 'The Lord [or Yahweh] our righteousness.'

7 Therefore behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord, "when they will no longer say, 'As the Lord lives, who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of Egypt,'

8 but [instead they will say], 'As the Lord lives, who brought up and led back the descendants of the household of Israel from the north land and from all the countries where I had driven them.' Then they will live on their own soil." (Jer. 23:3–8 NASB)

That's the promise. Sounds a lot like Psalm 2:8–9: "Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware." That's when it will be fulfilled. That's when the promises will be fulfilled.

So that first return to the land, did they return from Babylon? They did. Did God gather them back into the land? He did, four hundred years before Christ came. But David's throne was not established, nor his monarchy revived. There certainly has not been an everlasting kingdom since the day that they were gathered in. There was no national

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salvation for Israel when they came back from Babylon. Jerusalem did not enjoy peace, prosperity, and security, and in fact, they were plundered by their neighboring nations for the next four hundred years, not knowing anything of the peace that they thought that they should have been enjoying. Jerusalem was not made righteous, the nation did not turn in obedience, and the Spirit of God did not come to dwell in the hearts of Israelites and make them walk in His way. What's the proof of that? They crucified their Messiah. That's the proof of that. Therefore their gathering back into the land in Nehemiah's day was not at all the fulfillment of these promises that Jeremiah mentions.

There is yet a return to the land that will be accompanied by the salvation of Israel, the rule of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem over Judah and Israel. There will be peace, there will be security, and there will be prosperity in the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ that is to come.

Now, I am two-thirds of the way through what I had and our time is up. I'm going to close with two passages from the book of Ezekiel. You can turn there if you want. And I will edit this sermon on the fly here as we try and land this plane. Ezekiel 36:22:

22 Therefore say to the house of Israel, “Thus says the Lord God, ‘It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went.

23 I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord,” declares the Lord God, “when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight.

24 For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land.

25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

26 Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

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28 You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God. (Ezek. 36:22–28 NASB)

Now that is everything that we just went through in three chapters in Jeremiah in one little paragraph in Ezekiel. And in hindsight, we could have just gone to that passage right there, but I wanted you to see how Jeremiah lays all of that out so thoroughly and so repetitively, making the case over and over again. God will redeem Israel. He will bring them into that land. He will give them that land in a glorified state, and their King will rule in that land. And this will result in the salvation of national Israel, and the Spirit of God will come to live within their hearts and make them to walk in His ways.

Ezekiel 36:29:

29 “Moreover, I will save you from all your uncleanness; and I will call for the grain and multiply it, and I will not bring a famine on you.

30 I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the produce of the field, so that you will not receive again the disgrace of famine among the nations.

31 Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and your abominations.

32 I am not doing this for your sake,” declares the Lord God, “let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel!”

33 Thus says the Lord God, “On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places will be rebuilt.

34 The desolate land will be cultivated instead of being a desolation in the sight of everyone who passes by.

35 They will say, ‘This desolate land has become like the garden of Eden; and the waste, desolate and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited.’

36 Then the nations that are left round about you will know that I, the Lord, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted that which was desolate; I, the Lord, have spoken and will do it.”

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37 Thus says the Lord God, “This also I will let the house of Israel ask Me to do for them: I will increase their men like a flock.

38 Like the flock for sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts, so will the waste cities be filled with flocks of men. They will know that I am the Lord.” (Jer. 36:29–38 NASB)

These are the land promises. Salvation promises, kingdom promises, David's Son reigning promises, promises of safety, security, blessing. And that passage that we just read sounds like a lot of prosperity, doesn't it? The wicked will be cut off, but the righteous will delight themselves in abundant prosperity when they inherit the land. That is what the land promise is about. It's not fulfilled in this age, it is fulfilled when Christ returns and takes His rightful seat on David's throne in Jerusalem and He begins a rule and a reign that will go through that millennial kingdom all the way into the new heavens and the new earth and it will go on everlastingly forever and ever.

And the righteous will enjoy abundant prosperity, peace, safety, security, and grace in that day. And the wicked will be cut off. They will not see it because they will be removed from the earth before that reign begins. That is what we are waiting for. That is the glory that is in store for us. That is what was promised to Israel, that's what the Jews were expecting, and that is what Psalm 37 is telling us to wait for. Yes, the wicked, they flourish now. Yes, they enjoy prosperity now. Yes, they spread themselves like a luxuriant tree by rivers of water and everything looks great for them now. But there is a time when they will be cut off and then the righteous will enjoy and delight themselves in abundant prosperity when the righteous step into that land.

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