

Why God Reclaimed the Land of Israel from Desolation to Bounty

[Note: The following article takes the reader through an excerpt of Dr. David Reagan's newest book titled Israel in Bible Prophecy: Past, Present & Future.]

Before the children of Israel entered the Promised Land, God spoke a series of stern warnings to them through Moses, their leader and prophet. The warnings are recorded in Deuteronomy 28-29.

These chapters constitute God's Land Covenant with the Jewish people. In this covenant, God made it clear that although He had given the Jewish people an everlasting title to the land, their enjoyment of it would depend on their obedience to the laws He had given them in the Mosaic Covenant.

The Hope of Blessings

The Land Covenant begins with promises of blessings if they are obedient (Deut. 28:1-2):

1. *"Now it will be, if you will diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I am commanding you today, then the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth."*
2. *"And all these blessings will come on you and overtake you if you listen to the voice of the Lord your God."*

Moses then proceeded to enumerate the blessings in detail. They included such things as agricultural abundance, defeat of enemies, financial prosperity and abundant rain (Deut. 28:3-13).

The Warning of Curses

But then, Moses started issuing warnings about curses that would come upon them if they were disobedient to the Lord (Deut. 28:15ff). The variety of these curses was breathtaking—cities in chaos, youth in rebellion, an epidemic of divorce, confusing governmental policies, defeats by their enemies, rampant disease, drought leading to crop failures, foreign domination and even exile to a foreign land.

Moses concluded the list with a detailed explanation of what would be the ultimate judgment of God should they become entrenched in rebellion and refuse to repent (Deut. 28:64-67). In summary, the ultimate punishment the Jewish people would receive for willful and unrepentant rebellion against God's Word would be ejection from their land, their scattering worldwide, and their persecution wherever they went.

The Curse on the Land

Nor would that be all. Moses further stated that God would put a curse on their land, and as a result of that curse, the land would become filled with diseases and plagues (Deuteronomy 29:22). The land itself would become *"a burning waste, unsown and unproductive, and no grass grows there"* (Deut. 29:23).

The curse would be so terrible that when foreigners came to visit the land, they would cry out, *"Why has the Lord done such to this land? What does the heatedness of this great anger mean?"* (Deut. 29:24).

And the answer will be: *"Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers ... For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods which they did not know and which He had not given to them. The anger of the Lord burned against this land, bringing on it all the curses that are written in this book. The Lord rooted them out of their land in anger and in wrath and in great indignation"* (Deut. 29:25-28).

The Promise of Hope

Fortunately for the Jewish people, Moses did not leave it there. He continued on to speak some words of hope. He assured them that if they were ever scattered all over the world, a day would come when God in His compassion would *“overturn [their] captivity”* by regathering them to their homeland (Deut. 30:3). *“If any of you are driven out to the outmost parts of heaven, from there will the Lord your God gather you, and from there He will get you”* (Deut. 30:4).

The prophet Ezekiel picked it up from there, prophesying what would happen to the land when the Jewish people were regathered to it (Ezek. 36:34-35):

“The desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all who pass by. They shall say, ‘This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden. And the waste and desolate and ruined cities have become fenced and inhabited.’”

Prophetic Fulfillment

What an incredible panorama of future events that have been fulfilled precisely in detail!

After the Jewish people occupied their Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua, they immediately began to stray from God’s Word. They violated God’s command not to intermarry with the pagan peoples of the land. As they did so, they began to worship the false gods of these peoples.

God responded by sending prophets to call them to repentance. When they refused to repent, God began to afflict them with the very curses that Moses had outlined in his warnings. Finally, just as Moses had prophesied, they were taken into exile, first the northern kingdom of Israel (722 B.C.) and then the southern kingdom of Judah (586 B.C.).

After God allowed the Jews of the southern kingdom to return from their Babylonian captivity, they persisted in their rebellion, consummating with the rejection of the Messiah whom God had sent to them.

It was at that point that God allowed the Romans to destroy Jerusalem in A.D. 70, including the Jewish Temple. This resulted in their ejection from the land and their worldwide scattering, a process that was accelerated after the Second Jewish Revolt in 132-136 AD.

Over the next 1,800 years, the Jews were literally scattered to the four corners of the earth, in fulfillment of Moses' prophecy. And in further fulfillment of prophecy, they were persecuted wherever they went, and their homeland became utterly desolate.

The Nature of the Promised Land

Keep in mind that their homeland was one of great abundance when the Jewish people entered it some 1,400 years before the time of Jesus (Deut. 8:7-9). Moses further characterized the land as being very different from the arid land of Egypt because it *"drinks from the rain of heaven"* (Deut. 11:10-11). Moses also described it as *"a land for which the LORD your God cares; the eyes of the LORD your God are always on it, from the beginning even to the end of the year"* (Deut. 11:12).

Ezekiel affirmed this evaluation of the land many years later when he wrote that God swore to the Jewish people that He would bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land *"flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands"* (Ezek. 20:6-7, 15).

The Desolation of the Land

Yet just as prophesied, this glorious land became *"a haunt of jackals"* and *"a heap of ruins"* (Jer. 9:11).

Rainfall diminished, trees were cut down, topsoil eroded and excessive sedimentation in the valleys resulted in water-logging and the creation of swamps. With swamps came an outbreak of malaria which weakened the population and led to the abandonment of villages and formerly cultivated land.

The land became repugnant, and during the 1800 years the Jews were exiled from it, no one really desired it. It became a deserted wasteland, and Jerusalem became an incubator of disease. By the beginning of the 19th century, it was a place people avoided, except for the most fanatical Christian pilgrims—like the Russians who would walk all the way to the Holy Land and die there.

A Strange Miracle

In a book published in 2007, an American Orthodox Jewish Rabbi named Menachem Kohen, asserted that the greatest miracle performed by God during the past 1800 years was one that occurred daily in the land of Palestine – namely, little or no rain. He refers to it as a “recurring miracle.” And he asserts that this miracle of drought was for the purpose of fulfilling prophecies in Deuteronomy 28 which read: *“The LORD will make the rain of your land powder and dust”* (Deut. 28:24).

Additionally, Rabbi Kohen contends that this recurring miracle of God was for the purpose of protecting the Jewish homeland from occupation by foreign Gentiles. In other words, God purposefully made the land desolate so that it could be preserved for the Jews when He would regather them in the end times—at which time the land would be reclaimed.

Dr. David Reagan serves as the founder and director of Lamb & Lion Ministries, a Bible prophecy teaching ministry established for the purpose of proclaiming the soon return of Jesus. He hosts the internationally broadcast television program, *Christ in Prophecy*. Dr. Reagan is a lifelong defender of the right of the Jewish people to their homeland. He is

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If you enjoyed reading this excerpt from Dr. Reagan's newest book titled Israel in Bible Prophecy: Past, Present & Future, consider ordering your copy today!

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