

The Promise of Land

“The righteous will inherit the land and dwell in it forever” Psalm 37:29

In the Old Testament few issues are as important as that of the promise of the **land** to the patriarchs and the nation Israel. In fact, "land" is the fourth most frequent topic with regards 'rights and duties' in the Hebrew Torah. The Old Testament is most insistent on the fact that **land** was promised to the patriarchs as a "gift" by God Himself - a place where their descendants would reside and rule as a nation. It was an important part of the Abrahamic covenant.

So solemn was this covenant, with its gift of the **land**, that **Genesis 15:7-21** depicts God alone moving between the halves of the sacrificial animals after sunset as *"a smoking furnace and a flaming torch"* (verse 17). Therefore God obligated Himself, and only Himself, to fulfil the terms of this oath. Abraham was not asked or required to bind himself to this pledge. The total burden for the delivery of the "gift of the land" fell on the divine Provider. As if to underscore the permanence of this arrangement, **Genesis 17:7,13** and **19** stress that this was to be ***"an everlasting covenant."***

In dealing with the Year of Jubilee, Leviticus 25:23 declares that the Owner of the land is none other than the Lord. Indeed God is also the Giver of whatever the land yields (Deuteronomy 6:10-11). Hence, one of the central biblical declarations about the **land** is that it is the **"gift of God"** to His people. Eighteen times the Book of Deuteronomy refers to the *"promise of the land"*, and all but three of these eighteen references emphasise the fact that God gave it to His people. God's desire to give **land** to His children has not changed!

What's more, the **land** that God gives is *"a good land"* (**Deuteronomy 1:25, 35; 3:23; 4:21-22; 6:18; 8:7, 9:6**), *"for it was filled with brooks, springs, wheat, barley, grapes, vines, figs, pomegranates, olives, honey, iron and copper."* Yet what God gave He then termed 'an inheritance'. It was *"the good land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance"* (**Deuteronomy 4:21; 4:38; 12:9; 15:4; 19:10; 20:16; 21:23; 24:4; 25:19; 26:1**). Therefore, the Owner of all lands (Psalm 24:1) allotted to Israel the land of Canaan as their "special inheritance." As a child of God you too have a "special inheritance," and this inheritance is directly related to **land**. Whether you have received your inheritance or not - it is still yours!

Remember, your inheritance remains as a "gift" even when the actual possession of the **land** is lagging behind the promise of God. An identical problem can be found by comparing the various provisions for "rest" in the place that the Lord had chosen to "plant" His people. Whereas Israel had not yet come to the "resting place" and to the inheritance of their land, by the time Joshua had completed his administration... *"The Lord had given them rest on every side, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers... And not one of the good promises which the Lord had made to the house of Israel failed. They all came to pass"* (**Joshua 21:44-45**).

So what is the key to receiving your inheritance? FAITH. The "gift of land" that God has provided may be lagging behind His promises, but your faith will ensure that you take full possession. You need to have the same faith the Abraham had. *"He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was*

strengthened in faith, giving glory to God” (Romans 4:20). Receiving God’s promise of land will take faith, even though it is your rightful inheritance! *“Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all” (Romans 4:16).*

For the apostle Paul, not one of the previous promises has changed - especially not the promise of the land. *Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said: “Fellow Israelites and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me! The God of the people of Israel chose our ancestors; he made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt; with mighty power he led them out of that country; for about forty years he endured their conduct in the wilderness; and he overthrew seven nations in Canaan, giving their land to his people as their inheritance” (Acts 13:16-19).* Since, in this instance, the Old Testament has an authority equal to that of the New Testament, the permanency and directness of the **promise of land** to God’s people cannot be contravened by anything allegedly taught (or not taught) in the New Testament. Our special inheritance under the New Covenant includes **land**.

In Mark 4, when Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tested... *“The devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, “All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.” Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve’.”* I am convinced that *“the kingdoms of the world and their glory”* must comprise of the land they occupy. Therefore, when we take possession of God’s “gift” of **land**, we plunder the devil’s kingdoms and devastate their glory. If only the church would wake up to this fact.

The passion of every believer's heart should to be for the Kingdom of God to come on Earth. That is not just a prayer for the return of Jesus. It is a prayer that the will of God will be done on Earth today by us taking the rightful **dominion** of the Earth for God through the demonstration of His Will through us. Right at the beginning, God gave man dominion over everything that moves on the earth. Man was created to subdue that which the earth housed. Note the earth is made up of land and sea however man abides on the **land**. So how can we have dominion unless we take possession of the land?

This story from the life of Joshua gives us the perfect picture of the commitment we must have if we are to accomplish great things for the Kingdom of God. It also lets us know why we so often fail to accomplish those great things. *“Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you” (Joshua 1:3).* The idea was simple, God gave Joshua the land but he had to go and claim it for himself. Any amount he claimed he could have. If he ended up with nothing it was only because he would not possess that which God had ‘already’ given him. Joshua’s choice was to stand on the side of Jordan and observe or rise up to the challenge - step by step!

When it comes to the possession of physical land the most important lesson we can learn from Joshua is this.... The amount and size of **land** you possess is entirely up to you! *“Wherever your foot shall tread”* is placing the responsibility for the measure and dimensions with you. The size of the land you possess is determined by how much you are prepared to claim (by faith)! “Stepping” is a deliberate and forceful action

on your part. If you don't have the "gift" of **land** God has promised His people, start right now by taking the first step of faith - start declaring that it is your "special inheritance."

Observe, although the land was promised it would not come without a formidable challenge. There would be people poised to stand between what God has *promised* and life in the wilderness. Yet God promised Joshua that no man would be able stand against him. Just as He had been with Moses, He would also stand with Joshua. But if the **land** is filled with challenge it is also filled with the prospect of victory. It is the prospect of victory upon which God focuses Joshua's attention, not the enormity of the challenge. He is promised that, *"No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you"* (**Joshua 1:5**).

Cornerstone is just about to cross over and possess the **land** the Lord has given us. And as with Joshua, God wants us to focus on the victory. Think of the souls that are going to come into the kingdom because of our new building. Think of the needs that are going to be met in the local community. Think of the influence we are going to have in Elmbriage, the surrounding area, and even this nation. We are about to enter the greatest time in the history of this church. We are crossing over!