

“The Promise of Land”

Genesis 12.1,7 / Romans 4.13-17

Studied Genesis 1-11 / 3 more sermons / 3 fold Promise to Abe / 4000 years ago

21st Century LAND IS A PASSIONATE ISSUE -

Central Asia / BORDER DISPUTES between “stans”

India and Pakistan – million troops on their borders with Kashmire

People groups – KURDS and UIGHURS struggle for their own homelands

Land of Abe – FIGHTING BETWEEN DESCENDENTS – sons of Isaac & Ishmael

Gen 1 - 11 / SERVE AS INTRODUCTION TO STORY OF SALVATION

GOD SEEN AS CREATOR AND JUDGE / MAN IMAGE BEARER & SINNER

11 chapters / thousands of years / millions of people

4 GREAT EVENTS - Creation / Fall / Flood / Tower of Babel

REST OF BOOK - 4 PEOPLE - Abe, Isaac, Jacob/Israel, Joseph

PEOPLE IN RELATION TO GOD - history of salvation / HIS story

GOD'S REVELATION IS BOTH PERSONAL AND PROPOSITIONAL

JOHN STOTT "Some folk who have no taste for either history or geography may ask rather impatiently why God did not give us a simple set of dogmas (doctrines) to believe and rules to obey. Why did he have to reveal Himself in rather remote historical and geographical context, so that we have to struggle to understand the context before we can grasp the revelation? The answer is that the living God is a personal God, who made us as persons in His own image and insists on treating us as persons He has made. So that the whole process of revelation has been the self disclosure of a Person to persons

Amazing CONDESCENSION OF GOD - spoke to REAL PEOPLE in REAL LIFE

BIBLE IS NOT- long list of IDEAS// "The Thoughts of Chairman Mao Zedung”

BOOK OF HISTORY / GEOGRAPHY / CULTURES / PEOPLE / NATIONS

Background & CONTEXT MUST BE UNDERSTOOD TO UNDERSTAND GOD

ABRAHAM - Begins STORY OF SALVATION / COVENANT OF GOD

GOD CONCERNED FOR WHOLE WORLD - ch. 1 / ALL NATIONS - ch. 10

CALL OF ABRAHAM- 3 tremendous PROMISES - land, children, blessing

REST OF ENTIRE BIBLE - all the way to Book of Revelation

PROCESS OF GOD BRINGING PROMISES TO FULFILLMENT - IN CHRIST

1. God's Promise of Land / 2. The Possession of the Land / 3. God's Pilgrim in the Land

1. God's Promise of Land

The LAND BELONGS TO GOD The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it Psa 24:1

a. The Promise ASPECT OF GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

12:7 LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land."

WORD "LAND" - 4th MOST FREQUENTLY USED NOUN IN OLD TESTAMENT
PROMISE - 12 MORE TIMES IN BOOK OF GENESIS - TO ISAAC AND JACOB

Genesis 17:8 The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God."

GENESIS ENDS w/ INSTRUCTIONS OF JOSEPH TAKE BONES BACK TO LAND

500+ yrs. PROMISE RENEWED TO ISRAEL IN CAPTIVITY THROUGH MOSES
Deut 1:8 See, I have given you this land. Go in and take possession of the land that the LORD swore he would give to your father -to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob-and to their descendants after them

MOSES HIMSELF DID NOT SET FOOT IN THE LAND - SAW IT FROM MTN.
Gospel in Picture – LAW cannot take into Promised Land – only SAVIOR - Joshua

b. The Purpose Israel OCCUPIED LAND / GOD is LANDLORD / CONDITIONAL PROMISE

LAND = STAGE FOR THE DRAMA OF GLOBAL REDEMPTION
Israel – A Righteous Nation – A city set on a hill that can not be hidden

MOSES to Israelites who Entered Land - Deut 6:18 Do what is right and good in the Lord's sight, so that it may go well with you and you may go in and take over the good land that the LORD promised on oath to your forefathers,

Deut 4:25-27 After you have had children and grandchildren and have lived in the land a long time--if you then become corrupt and make any kind of idol, doing evil in the eyes of the LORD your God and provoking him to anger, I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you this day that you will quickly perish from the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess.

EVEN THOUGH WE ARE SAVED BY GRACE - OBEDIENCE IS REQUIRED
CANNOT KNOW THE CONTINUED BLESSING OF GOD W/OUT HOLY LIVING

Psalms 37 Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture....
For evil men will be cut off, but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land.

c. The Problem – Man is Sinful, God is Serious / EXILE / Removed from LAND

ALMOST 1000 years before Judah taken into Babylon, Moses Prophesied

Deuteronomy 28:15 if you do not obey the LORD your God and do not carefully
follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come
upon you and overtake you:

36} The LORD will drive you and the king you set over you to a nation unknown to you
or your fathers. There you will worship other gods, gods of wood and stone. {37} You
will become a thing of horror and an object of scorn and ridicule to all the nations where
the LORD will drive you.

UNIQUE RELATION OF NATION OF ISRAEL TO GOD

State Motto of Hawaii “The Life of the Land is Perpetuated in Righteousness”
GOD LOOKED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND HE SAW NONE

NATION OF ISRAEL TAKEN CAPTIVE INTO EXILE IN ASSYRIA
NATION OF JUDAH TAKEN CAPTIVE INTO EXILE IN BABYLON

ABOUT 1500 YEARS AFTER PROMISE TO ABE - HIS CHILDREN IN EXILE

Psalms 137 By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion. {2}
There on the poplars we hung our harps, {3} for there our captors asked us for songs,
our tormentors demanded songs of joy; they said, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"
{4} How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?

FROM THE EXILE THE LORD GAVE AN EXODUS

When the LORD brought back the captives to Zion, we were like men who dreamed.
{2} Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was
said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them." {3} The LORD
has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy. Psalms 126:1-3

HISTORY OF ISRAEL – PROMISE OF LAND – SQUANDERED – STRUGGLE

2. The Possession of the Land

a. Symbolized by Joshua / TEMPORARY FULFILLMENT OF LAND PROMISE

God's Warrior and Champion / Conquests of the Army of the Lord / Joshua 21:44-45
The LORD gave them rest on every side, just as he had sworn to their forefathers. Not one of their enemies withstood them; the LORD handed all their enemies over to them. Not one of all the Lord's good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.

EVEN WHEN THEY "GOT THE LAND" - IT WAS NOT THEIRS / Leviticus 25:23
"The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you are but aliens and my tenants.

b. Secured by Jesus PROMISES OF GOD ALL FOCUS ON CHRIST

2 Cor 1:20 For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

PROMISE OF THE LAND - like all of them - IS FULFILLED IN CHRIST

HE STOOD RISEN FROM THE DEAD IN POWER AND GLORY / Matthew 28:18
Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Colossians 1:16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE – Jesus is Lord of All – NOW! / Reigns at Right Hand
“In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him” Hebrews 2.8

HE'S got the WHOLE WORLD in HIS HANDS / BUT we DON'T ALWAYS SEE IT

TENSION PICTURED IN PROMISE TO ABRAHAM

12.6 “The Canaanites were in the land” – TERRIBLE, POWERFUL, EVIL PEOPLE

12.7 “to your offspring I will give this land” – God owns land, gives it to whomever

ABRAHAM NEVER HELD DEED OF OWNERSHIP - IT WAS HIS BY PROMISE
THE PROMISE WAS THE POSSESSION - AS GOOD AS DONE

NEW TESTAMENT EXPLAINS THIS TENSION - 1 John 3:2 NOW & NOT YET
Now we are children of God, and what we will be has *not yet* been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

Romans 4:13,17 Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world...He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed--the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.

IS THIS AN EXAGGERATION?? HEIR OF THE WORLD!!

CHRIST NOT ONLY FULFILLS THE PROMISES - HE ENHANCES THEM

GOD IS NOT ONLY CONCERNED FOR A SMALL PIECE OF
 REAL ESTATE IN PALESTINE - SAD HOW MANY DIE BY MISSING THE POINT

IMPORTANT THING IS NOT THE LAND / BUT WHAT THE LAND IS FOR
 STAGE – DEMONSTRATE THE GRACE OF GOD / MANIFEST GLORY OF GOD

PROMISE OF THE WORLD NOT JUST TO ABRAHAM

Matt 5:5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

PROMISE WILL BE FULFILLED – Isaiah 11.9

“for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea”

2 Peter 3:10,13 the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare... {13} But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven & a new earth, the home of righteousness.

3. God's Pilgrim in the Land

a. Call MANY MUST HAVE THOUGHT ABE A CRAZY OLD FOOL

LEFT SECURITY of UR of CHALDEANS / Prosperous, Flourishing City of 250,000

FIRST CALL OF GOD - to leave UR 11.31 “they set out from Ur to go to Canaan”

Genesis 11:31 But when they came to Haran, they settled there.

SHOULD HAVE JUST STAYED OVERNIGHT IN TRANSIT - stayed 25 years!!

DESCRIBES some Christians / Called / Began / GOT STUCK SOMEWHERE

God wants them to go to the next level / LIFE IS TOO COMFORTABLE IN HARAN

SECOND CALL OF GOD - came from Haran

Gen 12.1 The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you NOTICE THE DIFFERENCE

Genesis 12:5 He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran

PARTIAL OBEDIENCE = TOOK LOT, WHO WOULD ONLY CAUSE TROUBLE

FOOLISH TO SOME - FAITHFUL TO GOD / ARRIVED BUT NEVER SETTLED

COMING INTO CANAAN // LIKE APOSTLE PAUL INTO ATHENS

THEY WERE VERY RELIGIOUS - TRUE AND LIVING GOD WAS UNKNOWN

Gen 12:7 So he built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

DID NOT ADOPT the GODS of CANAAN - ACKNOWLEDGED Only TRUE GOD
ALTAR WAS SIGN OF FAITH - SYMBOL OF FULFILLMENT OF PROMISES

DID NOT build a bank, or Gas Station Ankara Hotel - RAMSTORE

ONLY PIECE OF LAND HE OWNED IN CANAAN WAS GRAVESITE

23:3-4 Abraham spoke to the Hittites. "I am an alien and a stranger among you. Sell me some property for a burial site here so I can bury my dead."

PARADOX "Of all the persons then living in Canaan, Abram was the most permanent; he was there for the duration. Yet at the same time he was the least attached to the land or his possessions"

SYMBOL = tent // SECRET = ALTAR

b. Comfort WORD USED IN NT TO DESCRIBE LAND IS "REST"

WHAT PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR IN LAND

WHEN YOU HAVE YOUR OWN PLACE - go home after work and rest

WHEN YOU OWN THE PLACE - rest from making payments to buy it

SECURE IT - know will be lasting place for children & descendants

LARRY CRABB in "Connecting" – "We want to go home. We dream of relaxing in a well worn chair with all the bills paid; we long to enjoy our family gathered round the table with no one missing; we wish good friends would drop by and we'd have the time to welcome them for an evening of fun and conversation.

We want shalom, that neighborhood where everything is exactly the way it should be. Our urge for shalom is too strong to deny. It arises from depths within our hearts that define our nature. Nothing seems more legitimate than wanting a home.

But we're not there. Every minute makes it obvious we're somewhere else: health problems, money worries, relational tensions, emotional suffering. We're living in a world where nothing is exactly the way it should be. And God doesn't seem to be working to improve the situation.

We're not in hell; there are good things, even wonderful things that bring legitimate pleasure and joy. But what's bad makes it impossible to fully enjoy the good. It's hard living here. We're not home, but with all our hearts, we wish we were.

BIBLICAL IMAGE - HAVING LAND IS HAVING REST

- 1) PROMISE GIVEN TO ABRAHAM
 - 2) PROMISE OFFERED TO ISRAEL UNDER MOSES - FAILED TO RECEIVE IT
 - 3) PROMISE FULFILLED UNDER JOSHUA
 - 4) EVENTS EXPLAINED BY PSALMIST – Psalm 95
 - 5) ENTIRE EPISODE RECALLED BY WRITER TO HEBREWS Hebrews 3:7-4:11
- "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, the time of testing in the desert,...I declared on oath in my anger, "They shall never enter my rest." See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God....since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did...Now we who have believed enter that rest

WORD LAND IS REPLACED BY THE WORD - REST
BECAME SYMBOLIZED IN SABBATH

SABBATH IN CHRIST IT HAS COME TO MEAN MORE THAN A DAY OFF
PROMISE OF LAND / PROMISE OF REST = PROMISE OF SALVATION

NOT GIVEN BY WORKING FOR IT YOURSELF - GIFT OF GRACE BY FAITH
"Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

c. Commitment = RADICAL = ROOTS, DEEP ROOTED CHANGE IN CHRIST

Philip 1:21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Heb 11:8-10 By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. {9}

By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents...For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

11:27 Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran

IF YOU ASKED THE PEOPLE ABOUT TERAH'S SONS
NAHOR WOULD BE THE ONE PEOPLE WOULD SPEAK HIGHLY OF

24:10 the town of Nahor / BUILT a Town / Named after Self - LEGACY WILL LAST!!

ABRAHAM - CRAZY OLD WANDERING FOOL, NEVER SETTLES DOWN

GOD SEES 2 Brothers JUST THE OPPOSITE – 4000 years later –
ABRAHAM is Known and Revered by BILLIONS ALL AROUND THE WORLD

Without Biblical record of Abraham / we'd know nothing of Nahor today

PARADOX OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE - have everything and nothing

1 Corinthians 3:21-23 All things are yours, whether...the world or life or death or the present or the future--all are yours, {23} and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.

BIBLE'S IMAGE OF PILGRIM - not a restless person who settles in X
SETTLED PERSON WHO BECOMES FOREVER RESTLESS WITH CHRIST

NOTHING Fits Anymore / NEVER at HOME / EAGER ANTICIPATION

EVEN FOR US TODAY WHO WANT TO LIVE THE LIFE OF FAITH
SYMBOL = tent // SECRET = ALTAR

JOHN BUNYAN'S CLASSIC BOOK "Pilgrim's Progress" written 1600's
journey of Christian to the Celestial City

PASS THROUGH PLACE OF TEMPTATION - Vanity Fair

"The pilgrims were dressed with clothes different from any that traded at the fair. The people of the fair made a great gazing upon them. Some said they were fools...some said they were outlandish men...Few could understand what they said. They naturally spoke the language of Canaan, but they who kept the fair were the men of this world... these pilgrims set very light by all their wares. They cared not so much as to look upon them, and if called upon to buy, they put their fingers to their ears, and cried, 'Turn away mine eyes from beholding Vanity,' and looked upwards, signifying that their trade was in heaven"

THIS IS WHAT A PILGRIM IS - different clothing, language, values
SETTLED PERSON WHO BECOMES FOREVER RESTLESS WITH CHRIST

PARADOX – We have no claim on this World / But our Christ holds the Claim
THE NATIONS BELONG TO HIM / THEY ARE HIS INHERITANCE

PILGRIMS CALLED TO TAKE THE LAND – advance the Kingdom of our Lord

12 Spies went into Canaan / 10 said “No Way” / 2 said “Go for it” – WHY?
10 – Eyes on Nations and Themselves / Nations = Giants / Selves = Grasshoppers
2 – Had their Eyes on God / Lord of the Nations / Power at work within them
“We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it!”
Num 13.30

ARE YOU A PILGRIM FOR CHRIST?