

Israel: Land & People (Body & Soul)

For a Jew, the Land of Israel is more than a place. The land of Israel and the people of Israel go together like body and soul. They belong together, as ordained by God. Someone has well said that to be a Jew is to be on a journey to the Promised Land. The Jews are a people of destiny, involving the Promised Land called Israel.

When I taught through the Books of Moses verse by verse it was indelibly impressed upon me that God promised the land of Israel to them FOREVER! The promise to the patriarchs was so strong that if God doesn't keep this promise then the God of the Bible really can't be trusted. It is therefore sheer blasphemy to say God is done with Israel and that the land promises to them will not be fulfilled.

When I was in Bible College I had a professor who told us that Genesis 12:1-3 is the most important text in the Bible. He explained that the everything from Genesis 12 on builds on these verses – the entire plan of God is the outflow of what is found there. Here we have what is called “The Abrahamic Covenant” involving land, seed, and blessing.

The very first thing stated in Genesis 12:1 is in regard to A LAND that God would show to Abram. God had a specific land in mind, but at this point, Abram did not know where it was.

God spoke of “a land that I will show you”. This is the first of 5 “I will” statements that God makes to Abram in Gen. 12:1-7.

- 1) *To a land that I will show you (v. 1).*
- 2) *I will make you a great nation (v. 2).*
- 3) *I will bless you (v. 2).*
- 4) *I will bless those who bless you (v. 3).*
- 5) *I will curse him who curses you (v. 3).*

From the very outset, we see that God has WILLED to do this. God is determined to make this happen. The repeated use of “I will” without any qualifying conditions makes this a unilateral and unconditional covenant. God Himself will do this.

In Genesis 12:7 God told Abram “To your descendants I will give this land.” And then progressive revelation builds on this promise.

Genesis 13:14–15 (NKJV)

14 And the Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: “Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward;

15 for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever.

Genesis 15:18 (NKJV)

18 On the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying: “To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates—

Genesis 17:8 (NKJV)

8 Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

Not only to Abraham did God promise this land but then also reiterated it first to Isaac and then also to Jacob.

God’s promise to Isaac...

Genesis 26:3–4 (NKJV)

3 Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father.

4 And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed;

God’s promise to Jacob...

Genesis 28:13 (NKJV)

13 And behold, the Lord stood above it and said: “I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants.

Genesis 35:12 (NKJV)

12 The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land.”

Genesis 48:3–4 (NKJV)

3 Then Jacob said to Joseph: “God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me,

4 and said to me, ‘Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a multitude of people, and give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession.’

Starting with Abraham, God promised a special LAND to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants FOREVER!

Scripture has at least 170 specific references to the LAND that God gave to the patriarchs and their descendants. 55 times God is stated to have confirmed this promise of land with an oath, and 12 of those times the covenant is stated to be EVERLASTING in nature.

There are more than 1,400 passages in the Bible that talk about God’s relationship to the Promised Land. So, it is a major theme in the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation.

In Genesis, we have the development of a chosen **family**, the family of Abraham through Isaac and then Jacob. This family is born as a **NATION** in the Exodus. It was to this particular family-turned-nation that God promised the land of Canaan.

“The earth is the LORD’s, and all its fullness” (Ps. 24:1). God is the Creator of all and everything belongs to Him in that sense. But the land of Israel is special to Him. God uniquely says of the “Promised Land” that it is “My land”.

Some think that those land promises that God made to the patriarchs of Israel and their descendants FOREVER have long been forgotten. WRONG!! God has NOT forgotten and He is holding the world accountable both for what they do to His people (Israel) and what they do to the land (Israel).

One of the key reasons God will bring judgment down on the entire world in the last days finale that ushers in the kingdom is because the world has

abused God's chosen people and their land. We don't have to wonder about this as He has plainly told us in Joel 3:2.

Joel 3:2 (NKJV)

2 I will also gather all nations, And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; And I will enter into judgment with them there On account of My people, My heritage Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; They have also divided up My land.

Note the emphasis on **"MY PEOPLE" and "MY LAND"**. This is uniquely God's people and God's property. He has given the land to the Jews and although they are under discipline and God is allowing the nations to trample down Jerusalem during the time of the Gentiles (Lk. 21:24), still He will JUDGE the nations for what they have done.

Zechariah 2:8 (NKJV)

8 For thus says the Lord of hosts: "He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye.

When you mess with Israel (both the land and the people) you mess with God. This is HIS PROSESSION in a special covenant way!

Zephaniah 3:8 (NKJV)

8 "Therefore wait for Me," says the Lord, "Until the day I rise up for plunder; My determination is to gather the nations To My assembly of kingdoms, To pour on them My indignation, All My fierce anger; All the earth shall be devoured With the fire of My jealousy.

THUS SAITH THE LORD! It is sure to come! Wait for it!