

The Promised Land: A Whole Bible Journey

The Bible tells one unified story of exile and return—of humanity losing its home with God and God faithfully bringing His people home again. From Eden to Canaan, from exile to Christ, and finally to the New Jerusalem, the Promised Land theme reveals God’s purpose to dwell with His redeemed people in a renewed creation.

Jacob's return to the Promised Land (Genesis 31–33) is a biblical pattern of exile and return.

- God's people dwelling with God in God's place. A theme that stretches from Eden to Revelation: one long drama of humanity's homecoming
- Eden: The original home and "first exile" (Genesis 1–3)
 - God's dwelling place, God walks with Adam and Eve (Gen. 1–2) - "First Temple"
 - Exile = separation from God's dwelling place
- Canaan portrayed as a step toward restoring Eden
 - God's goal: a people dwelling with Him again

The Promise to Abraham (Genesis 12–17)

- Land tied to blessing for all nations (Gen. 12:3)
- Canaan as a down payment on restoration for *all people*
- Patriarchs as "sojourners" - living by faith, not possession.
- They look ahead to a "city with foundations"
 - **Hebrews 11:8-10 ESV** - *8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. 10 For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.*

Exodus and Conquest (Exodus–Joshua)

- God rescues Israel from Egypt (Exod. 3:8), and Joseph's bones carried as a sign of promise (Exod. 13:19)
- Israel enters and settles the land (Josh. 21:43–45), and God gives rest on every side - but clearly there is something that isn't fully fulfilled...
- Hebrews: Joshua did not give ultimate rest (Heb. 4:8)

The Babylonian Exile and the Prophets

- Jerusalem falls in 586 BC; Temple destroyed; people exiled - but God's promises remain:
 - **Jeremiah 29:10 ESV** - *10 "For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place.*
- Prophetic promises: Land restored "like Eden" (Isa. 51:3; Ezek. 36:35) and the reign of the Messiah would be for all the nations...
 - **Isaiah 51:3 ESV** - *3 For the LORD comforts Zion; he comforts all her waste places and makes her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.*

- **Isaiah 11:10 ESV** - *10 In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples--of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.*
- **Zechariah 2:11 ESV** - *11 And many nations shall join themselves to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people. And I will dwell in your midst, and you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you.*

Christ Fulfills the Land Promise

John 1:14 ESV - *14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

- Jesus as true Temple (*John 2:19–21*)
- Worship no longer tied to geography (*John 4:21–24*)
- Death on the cross as **exile outside the gate** (*Heb. 13:12*)
- Resurrection as the *ultimate return from exile*
- **Psalm 2** had prophetically declared of the Messiah: “*Ask of me and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.*”
- This isn’t a *nullification* of the land promise; it’s the *magnification* of it.

Union with Christ means home - even though we aren't home just yet.

- Heirs according to promise (*Gal. 3:29*)
- Citizens of heaven now (*Phil. 3:20*)
- Already at Mount Zion (*Heb. 12:22*)

The New Jerusalem (Revelation 21–22)

Creation is renewed - the final home. “Eden” is restored and surpassed - the whole earth!

Revelation 21:3 ESV - *3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.*

- Even the City shaped like the Holy of Holies (*1 Kings 6:20 & Rev. 21:16*)
- No more sorrow, tears, suffering, death

Living as Pilgrims with a Promise

- We are sojourners with a secure home (*1 Pet. 2:11*)
- We guard our hearts yet live faithful to God’s mission (not escapism)
 - The Christian hope is not the abandonment of creation but its renewal - so we care **deeply** about how we live in this world.
- Entering into “rest” now is through believing - and it’s so much of what is at stake in our lives as we await the full deliverance.