

The Promised Land

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 27 November 2022

Preacher: Treg Hallman

[0 : 0 0] Good morning, church. I have the privilege of preaching this morning. And on our, y'all notice that we tend to do books of the Bible and large passages, and we just go verse by verse by verse. So we've done part of Exodus, we've done Ephesians, we're doing Psalm, I mean, Isaiah 55. And on the calendar, I've known this is a day I was going to preach, and it said, choose passage. So I didn't have a direction. I'm like, Lord, what passage do you want me to preach from? And, you know, we're so close to Thanksgiving, even though Thursday was Thanksgiving, in my mind, it's still proper to be looking at this concept of being thankful to God. And so as I asked the Lord, where do you want me to preach from?

If He asked you that question, where would y'all preach from? How many of you would pick Deuteronomy? So the Lord has laid on my heart to go back to the book of Deuteronomy, and take a look at what He says there. And it's my hope and my prayer that as we look at the Word there, it leads our hearts to being full of thanks. That's the goal this morning, that as we look at His Word, at the end of it, that God would bring us to this place where our hearts are lifted up to Him in thanks. You know, that's the way He's called us to live. I love the way Paul says it in the book of Ephesians. He says it this way, rejoice. And again, I say, rejoice. Rejoice in all circumstances.

Give thanks. Do you find that difficult to do? You know, the weight of this world can be heavy, right? And it can lead us to take on some of that weight and to not be continuously thankful and rejoicing.

The beautiful picture that I've shared with many is this picture of Paul and Silas. After doing exactly what God told them to do, preaching the Word of God in the streets, they were arrested, and they were beaten, and they were taken to the inner prison, they were chained to the wall. And you know what they did that night? They worshiped God in the jail. They sang songs and the place was shaken. That is the life of rejoicing. That's the life of recognizing that God is sovereign, and He's always in control, and He always leads us to a deeper walk with Him. Do y'all believe it?

As His children, He's always leading us to a deeper walk. He's changing us into the image of Christ from one degree of glory to the next. And you know those roads often pass through enemy territory?

[2 : 5 0] glory? It's not that life is easy. It's that God's got a plan, and that plan always ends with our good and His glory.

It's always true for His people, His children. And so this morning, God has led me back to Deuteronomy chapter 8, and believe it or not, it's a summary of the whole of scriptures. This morning, we're going to cover the whole Bible.

And so I've shared with a couple. I'm nervous that I'm going to be long-winded, so I'm going to do everything I can to shrink this thing down. And really, it is shrunk down for us in chapter 8 of Deuteronomy. So I'm going to ask if y'all will to open your Bible, and as Jonathan has shared with us, and I totally agree, it would be beneficial to have God's Word in your hand. Isn't it something powerful about holding the Word of God, and looking at the Word of God, and together studying the Word of God, and hearing the Word of God preached? So I encourage you to open to Deuteronomy 8. If you hadn't been back there in a while, it's back toward the very first of the scriptures, fifth book, and it's Moses that has written the first five books of Pentateuch. And in chapter 8, I want to set in history where we are.

And how do I do that? I sneak ahead to chapter 9. Because chapter 9, verse 1, tells us exactly what's going on in the life of Israel. The moment in the history of Israel. So this morning, here's my hope, is that we look at the history of Israel. We're going to take a look at the history of Israel, and then we're going to look at the spiritual message that is woven into the history of Israel.

Do y'all realize that all the scripture, when we read it, all of it gives us a spiritual message? It's not intended just to be history. It's intended for us to see God in it. There's a spiritual message woven into the history of Israel, and that's what I hope we will see this morning.

[4 : 52] You know that pertains to you and me? We look back in time years and years ago to a nation that that we've learned about, much about through the pages of scripture. But there's a message for you and I this morning. And that's what I want us to hear. And it's woven into this history. So if we look quickly at chapter 9, we will see exactly where we are in the course of things, in the life of the nation of Israel. And then I'll back up and we'll do a little small, short, quick history lesson about how they got here. But here's what chapter 9, verse 1 says, Hear, O Israel, you are to cross over the Jordan today.

So where have they been? What has led them to this moment where they're getting ready to cross over the Jordan? And you know what's on the other side of the Jordan River? It's the promised land.

It's the land that he said to them that they will inherit. He declared it. They've been in the wilderness for 40 years. But if we back up and look at the whole history, you know what we have to do? We have to go back to God breaking into the life of Abraham. And he said to Abraham, back in Genesis, I tell you we're going the whole Bible today. So y'all just note that we're in Genesis, okay? And then we're going to hit Revelation. So that's going to comprise all of Scripture, all right? In chapter 12 of Genesis, it says this, Now the Lord said to Abram, go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I want you to leave everything that's common to you, and I want you to go to the land that I'll show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse. And in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. So you hear the call? God says, while he's living in Ur, I want you to uproot yourself and your family, and I want you to go the direction I tell you to go. And I will tell you, I'm not telling you where you're going. I just say, follow me. Go where I tell you to go. And he goes up to the Euphrates, and he wraps around, and he goes into the promised land, because God led him that way. And yet he says to God, in chapter 15, fear not, Abraham, I am your shield. Though you are in this foreign land, though you're not among your people, though you've left everything you know, I am your shield.

But Abraham said, O Lord God, what will you give me? For I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eleazar of Damascus. And Abram said, Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir. What did God say? God said, No, Abraham, this man shall not be your heir, and your very own son shall be your heir. And he brought him outside, and he said, Abraham, look, or Abram, look up. Look toward heaven and number the stars if you're able to number them. And he said to them, So shall your offspring be. And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

[8 : 11] So you hear the picture, Abraham is traveling to exactly what God said. God says, Listen, I'm going to use you to bless the whole earth. Out of your loins, there are going to be born children, and it's going to be a great nation. Y'all realize what that nation's pointing to? His church, his bride.

But he says, Abraham said, But God, I don't have children, and I'm too old to have children. I thought you promised you'd give me children. He says, Believe me, I will come through. I will do what I tell you I'm going to do, and you're going to have a son. And we know that son to be Isaac, right?

It's the promised son in their old age when they were past childbearing. He had a son, Isaac, and Isaac had a son. And the passage was the promise that was given to Abraham was also given to Isaac. It's not exactly the same, but he reminds Isaac. So the Lord appeared to Isaac, and he said to Isaac, Sojourn in this land, this promised land, this land of Canaan, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and your offering I will give all these lands.

I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham. I will establish the oath that I swore. I will follow through on my promise. Is God good for his word? You know what he shared with Jacob? We know this story when he has a dream, and he sees the ladder, and he sees angels ascending and descending.

In that dream, he says, Jacob, I am the Lord, the God of Abraham, your father, and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie, that's where he had his head on a rock, and he was sleeping. The land on which you lie, I will give to you and your offspring. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land. Well, why did he need to leave the land? You remember there was a famine in the land, right? It was an incredible famine. As we read other parts of scripture, we know that that famine lasted seven years. And over time, the food began to dwindle, and they weren't able to plant crops, and everybody was going towards starvation. But God had already prepared in Egypt this vessel of his, Joseph, one of the sons. He'd sent him ahead. He'd seen the dream.

[10 : 34] He'd interpreted the dream. He had filled the barns with food. And what happened to the family of Israel, the nation of Israel, which started with one man, Abraham, and his faithfulness that grew through Isaac and through Jacob to be 70 souls. And they went and they dwelt in Egypt. Why? Because God had placed Joseph in this position of authority. And he invited his family to come and live in this land of Egypt. And for 30 years, they enjoyed that. And then after 30 years, they were placed in slavery.

And in slavery, what happened to the nation of Israel? They grew, and they grew, and they grew, and they grew, and they grew. They grew so large that what did Pharaoh think? Or what did Pharaoh share with his council?

He said, these people are too great. They're going to overthrow us. So let's make them slaves, and let's put a great burden upon them. And for year after year after year, and the Bible says they were in slavery for 400 years. Can you imagine 400? That's older than the U.S. They were enslaved for 400 years. And finally, we read about this, and we preached about this in Exodus. You remember?

Finally, the people groaned. And they cried out for help. To who? To the Lord God Almighty. Because their burdens had become so great that it took them a long time to finally cry out to God.

And what did God say? Then the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their suffering, and I have come down to deliver. Isn't that powerful? Wow. God heard their cry. Why did it take them 300 plus years before they started crying out with this? But when they finally cried out, God did it. You know what he said to Moses? Moses, I will send you. And Moses said, whoa, whoa, whoa.

[12 : 39] You got the wrong guy. I can't do that. He said, exactly. You can't do that, but I'll do it through you. And what he did, he sent Moses to this place called Egypt, which by the way, in scriptures, whenever the name or the country or the place called Egypt is referred to in reference to the children of God, it always reminds them of slavery. The word of God declares, they were in slavery in the land of Egypt, but God delivered. And so now we turn to our passage in Deuteronomy. So real briefly before I read it, I will remind us of this, is that when they were in slavery, Moses came and he spoke to the Pharaoh. We had, they had 10 plagues. And on the 10th plague, even the first night, he says, you cannot go. And on the 10th, you cannot stay, get out of here.

And they left and they crossed through the Red Sea. And then when the Egyptian army tried to do the same thing, the Red Sea collapsed on them and killed the whole army. They were never the same.

The nation of Egypt has never been a power since that day. It destroyed the army of Egypt and they fled and they went to Horeb, the mountain where they received the 10 commandments. And ultimately they went toward the promised land, but because of unfaithfulness, they were not allowed to enter into the promised land. Remember? And how long did they spend on, Regina reminded me of this, because this is happening in the children's ministry. For 40 days, they went around the land scouting it out. And they came back and said, we can't do this. They're too big. They're too great, too powerful, too tall. We can't do this. And that's as they said to God, we don't trust that you'll fight on our behalf. And so he said, for every day you spent there, you're going to spend a year wandering in the wilderness. And they spent 40 years wandering in the wilderness. And every male, excuse me, every adult that had seen the plagues in Egypt and had seen the crossing of the Red Sea died in the desert. So that every child that was born, every child that was a part of the nation, when they stood here after 40 years in the wilderness, were born in the wilderness. They had never seen anything but the wilderness. They'd never known anything else. All of the adults had died off.

And he leads them up around Moab and Edom, and they come to the Jordan River. And in chapter 9, we read, it said, here, O Israel, you are to cross over the Jordan today to go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than you, cities great and fortified up to heaven, a people great and tall, the sons of Anakim, who you know and of whom you have heard it said, who can stand before the sons of Anak. Know therefore today that he who goes over before you is a consuming fire.

He is the Lord your God. And we turn back to chapter 8 with our text, starting in verse 7.

[15 : 44] Read with me as I start in verse 7. It says this, For the Lord your God, Moses speaking to the children, the day before or right before they're getting ready to cross into the promised land. Forty years of wandering, they're getting ready to cross over.

And he says this to them, For the Lord your God is bringing you into, and I want to just emphasize that word into. We'll come back there in a minute. He's bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water and fountains and springs, flowing out of the valleys and flowing out of the hills, a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. And you shall eat and be full. And you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. Take care, lest you forget the Lord your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today. Lest when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, and when your herds and your flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, then your heart be lifted up and you forget the Lord your God who brought you out of, and I'll stop, out of, remember that, out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, who led you through, remember that word through, who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground, where there was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock, who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you to do you good in the end. Let's pray.

Father, this morning, I pray that you would open our spiritual ears that we could hear the powerful message of your word, that Father, you give us ears to hear. Father, you'd open our eyes spiritually that we would see the truth that is declared in your word, and Father, you would give us an appetite for your word, that we would hunger for your word, which is food for our soul.

Father, feed us this morning with the truth of your word, and I pray that you would fill us this morning with rejoicing, with this thankfulness, a continual thankfulness, where we lift up our hands and praise to you. Father, open your word this morning that we might see the incredible truths, and I pray in your name. Amen. Did you notice the three words that I stopped and I said, out of, through, and into? Out of, through, and into? And I want to just make this note, it's true for you and me, just as true as it was for them. We'll talk about the spiritual part of this in a few minutes. I want to talk about the historical part of it. Continue with the history for a minute.

It says, he took them, in verse 14, the Lord your God brought you out of, out of what? Out of slavery. The Lord your God brought you out of slavery, out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

[19 : 08] We've already talked about that. This house of slavery, there for 400 years enslaved, and they were forced to do manual labor, and we know through the times of the plagues, it got worse, and worse, and worse. They had to go find their own straw to make the bricks that were building the kingdom of the Egyptians in slavery, who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness.

You know, you and I don't have any idea what it's like. At least, maybe y'all visited. I've never visited, and actually stayed in a desert place for any length of time. And it's my understanding that the Sinai Peninsula, that part of the world, was really barren. Matter of fact, in Numbers 20, after the children of Israel had left Egypt, and just a note here, when they're in Egypt, you know they had beds, and you know they had food, and they had a level of comfort, a level of protection. And when they left, and they crossed the Red Sea, and they're on their own in the wilderness, you know they have no beds, have no food, have no water, and it gets bad. It gets bad real quick. And they're at the waters of this place called Meribah, where they finally had three days with no water, roughly, and they arrive at this place that has water, and they go to take of it, and the water's bitter. They can't even drink it. And it says this, and why have you made us come up out of Egypt to bring us to this evil place? It's not just talking about Meribah, it's talking about the whole of the wilderness, this evil place. It is no place for grain, or figs, or vines, or pomegranates, and there's no water to drink. This picture of the desert is this barren place that men can't survive for long, in this place that God has led them. You know, they come out of being redeemed. They're redeemed out of the land, and where do they go? Into the wilderness. Out of redemption into the wilderness. That's the path of God's people. He led them there. And then it's interesting, you know,

David, when he had to flee from Saul, he found that he had to hide in caves, and he was wandering around in desert places, trying to stay away from Saul so he wouldn't get caught and killed.

And he writes this Psalm 63, and it gives us a picture that he was acquainted with this type of land, and here's what he says, oh God, you're my God. Earnestly I seek you. My soul thirsts for you.

My flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. You know what? If there's no water, there's no life. If there's no water, there's no life. If there's no water, there's no grass, there's no flour, there's no produce, there's no fruit, there's no trees, there's no life.

[22 : 22] And God led his people into this realm where there's no water, there's no life. Not in the wilderness. But you know the beautiful picture of what he did? We read it.

Back in Deuteronomy 8, it says this. He led you through the great and terrifying wilderness with its fiery serpents and scorpions. Not only is there no water, there's danger.

The potential to get attacked by snakes or serpents and scorpions is the possibility of death. And God led them that way. It's like, God, what are you doing? Why would you not send us right to the promised land on the coastal highway that everybody goes that's really, really short? Why did you send us all the way down and our backs up against this body of water, open the water, and we're crossing?

And now we're in the middle of this barren place with nothing. And by the way, if you were to see a picture of what Mount Horeb looks like, you would be like, oh man, I don't want to visit there. I believe I'm going to stay up in Jerusalem. I'm not coming down here. It's just barren. And yet, here's what the word God says, that even in this place, this wilderness where the ground is thirsty, I love how it says that, and there was no water who brought you water out of the flinty rock. You know what God did when they were in the wilderness? He showed himself strong on their behalf. He gave them what the world, what this wilderness could not give them. He gave them water. He sustained them in this place called the wilderness. And not only that, he fed them. He fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know. This thing, this only happened once in the span of all of creation, is this time when he fed them for 40 years with manna. It says their shoes didn't wear out, their clothes didn't wear out, they had water to drink out of the flinty rock, and they had manna to eat. They were sustained in this place that does not give life for 40 years.

And with that in mind, this nation had never, ever tasted anything else save Joshua and Caleb and Moses.

[24 : 43] Not another soul saw the miracles of Egypt. Not another soul remembered the events in Egypt. They heard them as stories. They never experienced them. They'd only known the wilderness. And here's what Moses says as they're getting ready to cross over. Think about this in light of the wilderness.

He says this to them. For the Lord God, this is Moses speaking to the children of Israel who'd never seen anything but wilderness, who'd never eaten anything for the most part besides manna and a few quail that flew in, right? We remember that. For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, out of slavery, through the wilderness, into the promised land. Into a good land, a land, listen to this, a land of brooks, of water, of fountains and springs flowing out in the valleys and flowing out of the hills. Think about this. They'd never seen water except this water that's provided by God, that's coming out of this flinty rock.

And they're walking around and they come to this, and there's this promise. Over there, there's water galore. You know what water does? It gives life. It gives life to flowers and fruits and vegetables and trees. It gives food for the herds and the... This was foreign to them. This was strange to them. And it says, a land of wheat and barley. Can you picture just fields full of wheat when you're out in the Arab desert, in the Sinai Peninsula? Not a chance. They'd never seen a field of wheat and barley, ever. A land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, and a land of olive trees and honey, a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity. Can you imagine they've been picking up manna every day and they've been eating it? They can only keep it one day, except on Saturday they can keep it too, by the grace of God. They can't even imagine eating loaves of bread without scarcity. In which you will lack nothing, a land who's... And I could go on.

But I want to make this point, you shall eat and be full. You shall eat and be satisfied. You shall never lack. You hear the picture of what Moses is telling these people? That there's something right ahead. There's something right over there. You be faithful to follow the leading of God. And the Almighty God is going before you. And though those nations are greater than you and stronger than you, He's going before you. He will clear the path for you. You go and obey and you take possession of this beautiful promised land that He's promised to Abraham when the nation began.

Y'all hear the history? The beautiful history of the Old Testament, what God has done. And they're stepping into the promised land. This is the gift of God. Now I want to share with you the spiritual story that's woven into this history. I suppose y'all have already seen this. You've already heard it before. But it's my hope that this morning when we finish telling this story, there's going to be something welling up in you with excitement about the promised land that God's talking about here. Let me just share with us, it's not foreign to us that there was a time in each of our lives that we were in slavery. So spiritually speaking, do you realize this refers to every child of God? That there's a time, Christian, when you were in slavery. You know how the Bible articulates that? That we were born in sin. And in this condition of sin, we're separated from a holy God.

[28 : 38] We're enslaved. According to Romans 6, we're slaves to sin. And the only way we cannot be a slave to sin is by the mighty hand of God. And isn't that true of the children of Israel? How is it that they were delivered from slavery? It's the mighty hand of God. And we saw it in 10 plagues. We saw it in what He did to open the passageway for the children of Israel through the water. And when they got on the other side, He said, stand and see what God's going to do. And He watched and He destroyed the enemies.

He delivered them. He did it all. They were just led by Him. And you know what's true of you and I, that we were in this condition called sin with no hope? You know that this condition of sin leads to hell?

Well, there's no hope for us who are in sin but God. But God. God sent His Son, Christ, to deliver us from sin. How much does that move us? Has that become such a common thing that it's so common that it doesn't stir us anymore? Listen, do you often think about your tendency still to sin? You know what God's doing? He's doing a work in each of our hearts to try to show us His glory so that we look at His glory and go, wow. In the sin that kind of throws itself at us, we look at that and say, no, look at His glory.

Wow. I don't want anything to do with that. This is what I want. I want the Father. I want Him. Is that true for you and me? Do we recognize the ugliness of our sin? Do we recognize what He's done on our behalf that He sent His Son to come and dwell within us? It is powerful to see what He's done.

Now, I want us to understand this wilderness that we're in. Spiritually speaking, do you realize that once He delivered us from sins, once He took us out of slavery and gave us life, He delivered us from sin? You know where He sent us? Right to the wilderness. Do y'all realize that right now we're walking in the wilderness? That we're not home yet? You know there's multiple passages that say, you're not home yet. You are actually Christian and ambassador of another kingdom. What is an ambassador? It's a representative of another kingdom that tells people about the kingdom.

[31 : 17] Y'all realize that right now we're not home yet? That we're sojourners in a foreign land? That we're aliens and strangers in this life? Let me just stop and help us to try to grasp the reality of this. You know what the enemy wants us to do? The enemy wants us to turn our eyes off of Him, off of Christ, off of His glory, and turn our eyes onto the things of this world. He says, look how good this is, and look how good this is, and look how happy this will make you. Why don't you go do this, and why don't you do that? You know what? The enemy would love for us to set up camp here, would love for us to forget about the promised land, would love for us to forget about the Lord, and would love for us to make our home here and begin to crave the things of this wilderness.

You know how ludicrous that is? Think about how ludicrous that is in the life of the Israelites who are in the desert, this evil place where there's no water and no food. Do you realize that spiritually speaking, there's nothing here for you?

Do you realize in this wilderness that we're walking, there's nothing redeemable? There's nothing that is going to lead us to life. Now, there's pictures of it all around. I look and I see the creation. What do I see? God, God, God, God, God, God, God. I see Him everywhere. Creation shouts His glory.

But you know, just seeing it's not going to give us life. You know what it does? It points to the one who gives us life. And God uses that to move our hearts to desire Him. He opens our eyes that we can see our need of our Savior, and we bow our knee, and He brings us out of slavery, and He takes us into this wilderness. Why would He do that? Well, Deuteronomy talks about why.

It says, who fed you in the wilderness with manna. You know that right now in this wilderness, the only way you and I are going to get fed is right here. It's the Word of God. You realize that He will feed us until we're so full and satisfied with Him we can't imagine. He's feeding us here. There's something better. We're going to talk about the better in just a second. But He's feeding us with His Word. And you know that He's quenched our thirst. You know how He did it? With the person of the Holy Spirit who's come to live within us, and life has come to dwell within us, and we now are transformed from the inside. He's given us life. He's given us this love for Him.

[33 : 51] He's transformed us. Even though we walk in the wilderness, even though we're not home, God hadn't left us to die. He's feeding us His Word. And He's feeding us the living water of His Holy Spirit that sustains us here, spiritually speaking. But you know the most beautiful part of all of this is what He said to the children of Israel, this nation that had only known the wilderness. And by the way, you know what? That's all we've known here is the wilderness. I just want to help us to see the stark contrast between the wilderness that they walked around in for 40 years, lived in, dwelled in for 40 years. And the stark contrast of what He says is right over that river.

This land that I've promised you is this land that's flowing with milk and honey. You know what it is to be flowing with milk and honey? You know how beautiful that picture is? In flowing with milk and honey, five words. You know what it communicates? A whole lot more than five. In order to have milk, you have to have something that produces milk. In order for the goat to survive and produce milk, they've got to have grass in abundance. They've got to have food. And so if it implies these lush valleys that are full of grass and so full of grass and food for these flocks, these herds of goats and milk-producing creatures, that it's flowing. The milk is flowing. It's not just a bottle of milk. It's flowing. It is so great, it's like rivers flowing. And honey. Now that's the substance. The milk is, in essence, the sustenance. But the honey is the abundant luxury.

In order for there to be honey, there has to be something to produce honey, right? And it was known about that nation that figs were abundant. The date trees with the figs on, I mean, excuse me, the dates and the figs were abundant. Fig trees and date palms. And they dripped the sweetness of honey. And bees, in order for them to produce honey, what do they have to have?

Flowers. And what does a flower grow on? That which gives vegetables and fruit and the grass. And it's just this picture of this incredible lushness. Now, I share all that to make this point, is that the land you and I are living in right now is like the wilderness.

And you know what he's saying? There's a kingdom coming that you can't possibly imagine. I'll tell you about it. And I'm going to end with the story about what's coming.

[36 : 33] But for you, each of us Christians, there's something so amazing on the other side of the river you can't possibly imagine. It says, The promised land is so lavishly great, we can't even dream it up. It's just like being in the wilderness all your life and never having seen a fig, and never having seen a vine of grapes, and never having seen a pomegranate, and never having seen a spring of water that's springing out of the land. You can't even imagine. It's just a story to you.

But when they walk in and see it, they're going to be overwhelmed with how incredible the gift is. You know, for us, we're walking in this world, you know, we think heaven's going to be like this.

Oh, Christian, this is nothing. This is nothing compared to what heaven's going to be like. This is a barren wilderness where it will not even sustain life apart from the gift of God.

You know what? In this world, you're not going to be fed unless you're fed with this. Our souls will dry up and shrivel away without the feeding of the living water of God in the Word of God.

And he says, what's coming is this beautiful thing. I want you to hear it from the Word of God. The promised land is for you and I, Christian, and we know it is the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God. And we don't know how great it is.

[38 : 07] But if we had any idea how great it was, you know what? It would help us to fix our eyes on Jesus and never take them off. I'm reminded of the story that C.S. Lewis writes when he writes about the screw tape letters.

And he says, Christian, I want you to walk and I want you to keep your eyes straight. Don't look to the left. Don't look to the right. And the demons are up in these buildings in this really narrow lane and they're screaming out, come do this. Come do this. You need this. You've got to have this.

This is so great. Come on. And the Christian's been told, don't look. Don't look. You keep your eyes fixed on what is the... You know, that's what happens to us if we keep our eyes fixed on the promised land and we know the great gift of God that's coming. This time frame we're in is like a blank. It's like a... It's like a vapor. It passes so fast. Why does it captivate us so?

Why does the world and the things of this world captivate us so? 1 John says the world's passing away. Why do we cling to that which is passing away that's going to be burned up? John 17 says this. Lord Jesus, he says, he's praying to the Father.

We get a glimpse of his prayer life here and here's what he says. I do not ask for these only, that is the 12, the disciples. I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word. That is us. He's pointing forward in time to the Christians that will accept Christ as Lord and Savior. And he says that they may all be one just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us. Do you think that Jesus was enamored with this world and wanted to stay? You know what Jesus did? He would go into the mountain.

[40 : 00] He would spend time with the Father. He would pray all night long. He has eyes fixed on the Father. Whatever the Father said, he said. Whatever the Father led him to do, he did. He wasn't distracted by this world. Why? Because he knew what heaven was like. He knew what this was like. This fellowship, this closeness, this spiritual relationship that is more powerful and more grand and more great and more blessed than you and I can possibly imagine. We have a taste of it now.

But now we see through a glass dimly. But then, that is on the other side, we're going to see him face to face. We're going to be in the presence of Almighty God and there's going to be nothing that hinders us experiencing him and seeing his face. You know what the word God says about seeing his face?

No man can see me and live because of the holiness of who I am. No man in this life can see me and live. But you know when we're on the other side, we're going to be able to see him just like this. Not only are we going to see him, the word of God, here's what Christ prays, that we may be one, that they may be one just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us. There's something mystical or mysterious is a better word. There's something mysterious about how this could possibly be true.

Being in him and him being in us, there's a fellowship that we don't quite understand, but it's spoken of here in the promised land. That's what it's going to be like. He says, the glory that you have given me, I have given to them, that they may be one.

That they may be one. Christian, you and I, brothers and sisters, don't we already feel it? When we're gathered together and we're lifting up God's word, do you sense a closeness here? Do you sense a family? Do you sense fellowship? Where two and more are gathered in his name, there is he in the midst and there's this deep fellowship. You know, in the second chapter of Acts, it talks about they ate bread together and they listened to the word of God together and they prayed together and the place was shaken. The power of the presence of God, it was tasted by the first century church in a most powerful way. And you know, when we're in heaven, there's going to be no hindrance to that on an ongoing basis. We're going to be in the presence of almighty God. And he goes on to say that they may become perfectly one so that the world may know that you've sent me and love them even as you love me. Father, I desire that they also whom you have given me may be with me where I am. Let me just make a statement here. Oneness, unity, glory.

[42 : 40] Jesus is praying that you and I have oneness, unity, and glory. And listen to it in Revelation. Have you all ever thought what the wedding supper of the Lamb is going to be like?

Have you ever wondered just how powerful a time that's going to be? When the bride of Christ, who's been waiting, receives the groom who comes back and he takes us into this place he's made and built for us, this place called heaven, this place called his kingdom, the kingdom of God.

And here's what the word of God says in Revelation 19. It pictures us so beautifully. Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of the great multitude, like the roar of many waters, and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder crying out, hallelujah, the Lord God, for the Lord, our God, the almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory for the marriage supper of the Lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready. You know what's happening in this wilderness while we're here? That God's doing a work in our lives. You know what he's doing? He's humbling us.

He's testing us. You know what it means to test? You know faith is not faith unless it's tested. It's just a concept. You know what he's doing? He's blessing us with these circumstances in our life that calls us to be one humbled and calls us to see if our faith is real. You know, we watched Abraham put his son, promised son Isaac, on the altar, and he was willing to trust God that much, believing that the almighty God was able to raise him up even after he died on the flame on an altar. That type of faith is what he's working in each of our lives. We believe he is who he says he is, and we believe he'll do what he says he'll do. And here it is. It says, this time has come. The bride has made herself ready. It was granted her to clothe herself in fine linen. You know what that is? That's the righteousness of Christ. We will be clothed with the righteousness of Christ. Bright and pure for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

And the angel said to me, write this, blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the lamb. When it says blessed, it means beyond your wildest imagination. Let me ask each of you, have y'all been invited to the wedding supper of the lamb? Do you know for sure that you're his, that you're called by his name? Do you know for sure that he's called you and drawn you into his kingdom and he calls you his son and his daughter? If that's true for you, this is true for you, that you and I will be at the wedding supper of the lamb. And listen how beautiful it is.

[45 : 31] And talking about the new heavens, the new earth, and we'll close with this. And this is John, the revelation that God gave him. And in this part of revelation, the end of Bible, I told you we're going to make it all the way, right? Genesis, you know, we read out Genesis. I pointed that out and we're reading out of the end of Revelation. We're actually going to hit chapter 22. It's the last chapter. So we're doing the whole Bible here today.

Y'all with me? Let's rejoice together in the beautiful picture of the new heavens and new earth. Listen to what it says. And he said to me, it is done. I am the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty, I will give from the springs the water of life. Here it is again, water without payment. Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the lamb coming down out of heaven from God. Having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel. And I saw no temple in the city for its temple is the Lord God almighty and the lamb. And the city has no need of the sun or moon to shine on it for the glory of God gives us light and his lamp is the lamb and his gates will never be shut. There's no need to shut the gate when there's no danger.

It's perfect peace forever. Then the angel showed me the river of what of the water of life, brightest crystal flowing from the throne of God and of the lamb through the middle of the streets of the city. Also on either side of the river, the tree of life with its 12 kinds of fruit yielding its fruit each month. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and the lamb will be in it and his servants will worship him. They will see his face. Church, there's a time coming when the veil will be taken away. We will be in the presence of the maker of all things, the creator of all things, the glorious, majestic, holy God. And we'll be able to see him face to face. Let's pray.

Amen. Oh, Father, I pray that you would open your veil a little bit, God, and you would give us a glimpse, a bigger glimpse of your glory. It's like Moses prayed, show me your glory. And Lord, I realize that we can't see the fullness of your glory and live because of your holiness and your purity and because of the sin that can, that resides deeply in our lives. And God, I know you're doing a work to purify us. I know you're doing a work to purge us of the flesh and the tendency to walk by the flesh.

And God, you've called us to walk by the light. God, you said you're doing a work to change us from one degree of glory to the next, to change us into the image of your son, Jesus, that you're purifying your bride so that your bride will be without spot and without blemish in order that we might see you face to face. God, I thank you for your righteousness. Lord, we confess before you we have no righteousness of our own. But as the scripture said, just filthy rags, God. That our clothes are dirty, Father. We're covered with sin. We're full of sin.

[48 : 49] And apart from your gracious work, that you would provide living water for us to taste and see that you are good, God. To be born again by your work in our lives, God. We would be lost forever.

But Lord, you've chosen to give many of us, if not all of us, life. God, to bring us in your kingdom to save us. And Father, you've told us there's a day coming when you'll step onto the other side. You'll step into the eternal kingdom. And when you do, there will be living water everywhere.

There will be fruit, continuous food. You'll be satisfied with you. Lord, it's a picture of being satisfied fully in you. You, we will be in you and you will be in us, God. I can't imagine, I can't imagine what that's like. But I know how great it is because when Christ was on the cross, I remember him saying, my God, my God, why have you turned your back on me? The greatest of all losses.

And I'm thankful that Lord Jesus, you'd be willing to do that, that we might know you, that we might be in the eternal kingdom with you, that we might be with you where you are in the heavenly kingdom. And God, we give you thanks. We praise you in the name of Christ. Amen.