

22T16d Abraham's Promises- the LAND

Hello my friends. Thanks for joining me @ the PUNLA coffee table. In recent years, I've heard a lot about the promises to the nation of Israel. These are the promises in the Bible, I mean. When I started doing a little research on these claims, it appeared all the claims seemed to believe that the promises made to Abraham in the Bible applied today to the nation of Israel or the Jewish people as a whole. This seemed logical to me, but my questions were many. What are these promises? Why do we believe they apply to modern Israel? And so on.

People argue about exactly how many promises were made to Abraham, and I don't wish to enter that debate. Instead, I want to focus on a few only. Today, the promise of the LAND. THE PROMISED LAND.

The promise that Abraham is being given the land of Canaan. Let's read Genesis 12:1-4 (NIV) ***1The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. 2I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." 4So Abram went, as the Lord had told him***

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father. Thank you for your good news. Lord use me to share your message. If I say something in error, please let them remember what you wanted them to hear, not my errand words.

Help us not to be confused by the many voices and opinions we hear. May we stay focused on your word Lord. Guide our discussion. We pay in your name Lord Jesus, Amen.

Okay, ***"Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.*** Now this is commonly called The call of Abram out of Ur. But the interesting thing is there is no promise to give land to Abraham in this original promise. Go to a land but nothing about giving the land to Abraham and his descendants. But of course this promise does come later.

God reconfirms some of the original promises plus the land in Genesis 13:14-17 (NIV) ***14The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. 15All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. 16I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. 17Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you."***

Now Abraham is pretty old by this point and has no children. The claim we often hear is this idea that God promised the land to Abraham's descendants forever, right here is verse 15. Let's take a closer look at the word translated as "forever" here. The King James Bible says, "to thy seed for ever", NIV says "to you and your offspring forever", NLT "your descendants as a permanent possession", NAS "your descendants forever".

You get the idea; all of these English translations have the idea God has given this land to Abraham's descendants forever. But what is the word we have translated as forever? Well it is the Hebrew word "עד (ad-)" which means "as far as, even to, up to, until, while". Wait a second, none of those mean forever or everlasting. So, the obvious question is, is forever or everlasting really forever in the forever since. Well logically no. Why do I say this, well at the age when God reforms the new earth and new heaven, I don't think this will apply any longer. So, not forever. For a long time though, that's for sure. But until when, that is the question, but everlasting or forever don't make logical sense. So, I can imagine the translators really meant until Jesus comes back, but then that's not forever either. The Hebrew word means long duration, not really forever.

Then later in the story, in Genesis 17, Abraham receives a Covenant from God to be marked by circumcision. Genesis 17:1-14 (NIV) ***¹When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty ; walk before me faithfully and be blameless. ²Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers." ³Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, ⁴"As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. ⁵No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. ⁶I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. ⁷I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. ⁸The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God." ⁹Then God said to Abraham, "As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. ¹⁰This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. ¹²For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner—those who are not your offspring. ¹³Whether born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant. ¹⁴Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."***

So, Abraham's descendants will be given the whole land of Canaan as an everlasting possession. It also says Abraham will be the father of many nations and many kings with descendants which can not be numbered. So again what is the word translated as everlasting. It is the Hebrew word "עולם (o·v·lam)" meaning long duration or antiquity (or great age). Again none of the definitions of this word lead themselves to forever or everlasting. Long duration, maybe even for a "great age" or very long time. But not really forever or everlasting. In the KJV, the word everlasting appears 71 times and forever doesn't, but does more than 300 times in the NKJV. In the NIV, everlasting appears 68 times and forever 256 times. So let's look at some of these to see if "עד (ad-)" or "עולם (o·v·lam)" are used elsewhere in the Bible. In the NAS, "עד (ad-)" shows up 766 times and is translated into 61 different English words and phrases. 408

times it is translated until, 132 times it is translated far, 66 times forever. So, a vast majority more than 92% of the occurrences in the Bible are not translated forever. In the NAS, "עולם (o·v·lam)" shows up 434 times and is translated into 27 different English words and phrases. Most of the words and phrases in English are forever or everlasting, but it is also translated as never, old, long, ages, long time. So not the forever we think of.

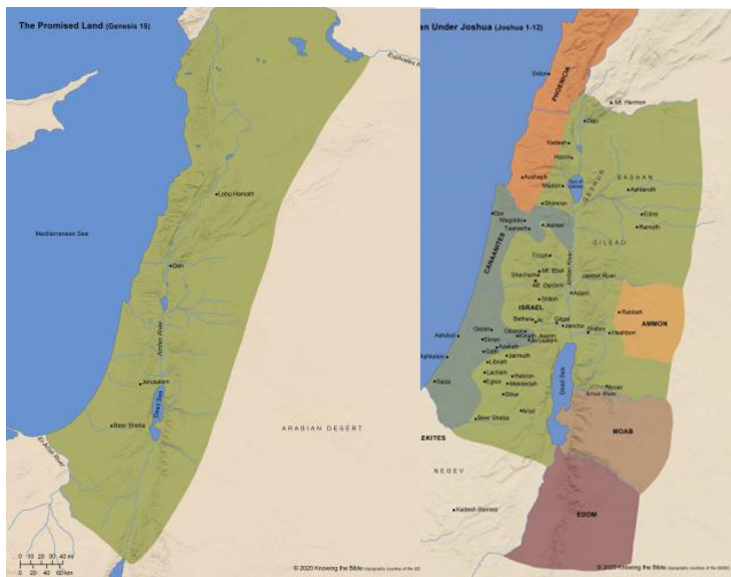
In fact the Hebrew word of everlasting is olam. So is it forever or everlasting in these verses. I'll leave that up to you.

Later, God reconfirmed some of the promises that were made to Abraham to Isaac in Genesis 26: 2-5 (NIV) ²*The Lord appeared to Isaac and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land where I tell you to live. ³Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. **For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham.** ⁴I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, ⁵because Abraham obeyed me and did everything I required of him, keeping my commands, my decrees and my instructions."*

So, God reconfirms the covenant with Isaac. This includes the land of Canaan or at least some portion of "these lands" It is impossible to determine the exact land God is promising to Isaac, but we can suppose based on Genesis 17 lots of descendants for both Isaac and Abraham. This is the only place in the story of Isaac that God confirms and of the promises made to Abraham to Isaac. But, then later in the Bible story God confirms some of these promises again to Jacob. Genesis 28: 10-15 (NIV) ¹⁰*Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Harran. ¹¹When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. ¹²He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³There above it stood the Lord, and he said: "I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. **I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying.** ¹⁴Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. ¹⁵I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."*

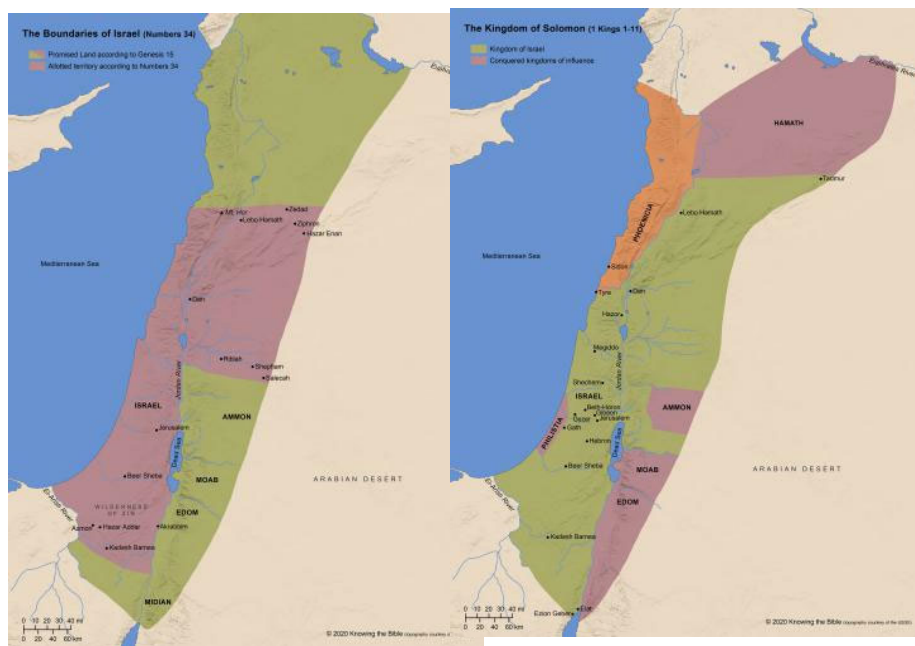
I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. This promise is very different than the land promise to either Abraham or Isaac. Now to Jacob it's the land you are lying on from the land as far as you can see. There is a size difference in this promise. Could it be the same amount of land. Of course. Does it have to be based on these verses. Well no. so there has got to be more in the bible to help define the Promised Land boundaries to Israel as compared to Abraham. And of course there is. You can look to Joshua and other books of the Bible to see what God told each tribe of Israel would be their inheritance. Let's look at a map.

This first map is roughly the land as it was promised to Abraham, from the Euphrates in the North to the wadi of Egypt in the south. This map is from knowingthebible.com, and I think it is a pretty good representation of the Promise to Abraham.



Now let's look at the land allotments in Joshua. This map is also from knowingthebible.com. I think it is a reasonable approximation of the what the Bible says. Do you notice something. Its not the same area as the promise to Abraham. Why is that?

In fact, if you look at the boundaries for Israel in the bible the map looks more like this one from knowingthebible.com. Even in Ezekiel, when Ezekiel is shows the land allotments for each tribe of Israel. It looks a lot like the pink area of this map, not the entire area promised to Abraham.



Even if you overlay a map from the time of King Solomon you get a better idea.

Even in the height of Solomon's reign as king, Israel never controlled the entire land promised to Abraham. But the promise made to both Isaac and Jacob fit these maps perfectly.

Okay the promise was a bit different for Abraham. To Abraham the promise is forever or at least for a long time to his descendants. To Isaac to your descendants but no mention of forever. To Jacob only the land he was laying on to his descendants but no mention of forever.

So how do we reconcile this? The most obvious answer is the promise to Abraham was a larger land allotment for his descendants than only the promised land given to

Jacob's descendants. Another significant difference is the lack of the phrase forever or everlasting possession. This was promised to Abraham but not to Isaac or Jacob. What does this mean. It is probably not forever in the way we think about forever, but I do believe that the descendants of Abraham have occupied this land in part or in full since the time the nation of Israel first took possession of the promised land. But we know from history, the Israelites have not always controlled this land and in fact, descendants of Jacob have never occupied or controlled all of the land promised to Abraham, but Abraham's descendants have if you consider his other children.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father. Thank you for you. You only are worthy of praise. You alone are king of kings. Help us to recognize you as the king of our lives. Help us to live like we know it. As your followers I pray that we act like it. Every day in every moment. Thank you, Jesus, for what you did for me or all of us. We pray in your name Lord Jesus, Amen.

Okay, let me leave you with this today. The land promised to Abraham was a little different than the land promised to Isaac, Jacob or in Exodus or Joshua or Ezekiel. Without getting too deep into the actual boundaries. What can we make of this. Not all of the promises to Abraham applied to Isaac or Jacob. We know this because God clearly tells Moses and Joshua and latter Ezekiel what land is to go to which tribe and the geographic area is not as large as the promise to Abraham. This is fact based on the Bible. So how does this apply to modern day Israel. It is a little unclear if it does. Abraham's descendants are promised the land forever or at least for a long duration, but this promise is not only for Jacob's descendants. From the Bible the land promise to Abraham includes all descendants of Abraham. I venture to say almost every nation in the middle east and beyond are descendants of Abraham, so this promise is kept with or without the nation of Israel. Don't get me wrong I support Israel and the Jewish people. However, this promise to Abraham is not the reason. The Promise to Abraham is much bigger than national Israel or even the ethnic descendants of Jacob.

Thank you for joining me @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. I hope you will join me as we study more about the promises God made to Abraham. Next time we are going to look at the promise "bless those that bless you, curse those who curse you".

If you liked the message, please click like. And please share the link with a friend to our channel. Send me comments to my email on the screen.

Until next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.