

## The Promised Land

By Santiago Lange



The New Testament principles in the Christian life are often illustrated for us in beautiful pictures in the Old Testament. In the book of Exodus, we see the people of God going out of Egypt. They were delivered from death by the Passover lamb. They were delivered out of the sin and bondage of Egyptian slavery. Their freedom was an act of divine grace. Under the New Covenant Christians are also saved by God's grace. We have been delivered by the blood of Jesus Christ, the "Passover lamb" that was slain for us.

As we journey in this fallen world we go spiritually through a "wilderness experience" in which God is weaning us off self-confidence to a place where we will trust in Him alone. God led Israel around in the wilderness. It was a journey to the Promised Land that took a long time to accomplish! Why? Because Israel was going around in circles of unbelief for "forty years". As Christians we should earnestly desire to stay away as far as possible from that bad example. God wants US to enter into the "Promised Land". God's purpose for Israel was a land filled with "milk and honey." He intended to provide for His people all their needs.

Transferred to a New Covenant context we have here a beautiful picture of the Spirit-led life, which is the life God intended for every Christian. God will not give us more than we are ready and willing to take. Jesus Christ is leading His people to eternity, into the "Promised Land". We are not to become complacent or be content with an inferior "wilderness experience". We were created to enter into a close and personal relationship with our Maker and ought not be satisfied to stay "on the easy side of the Jordan". God has reserved for those who seek and follow Him a "land" in which flows "milk and honey". God has reserved the best for those who will walk by faith and enter into His abundant life. The river Jordan is a marvelous picture of the believer crossing over into the life of fullness, allowing the Holy Spirit to own more and more of the believer. That is the Christian life the way God intended it to be. It is the Christ-life.

The book of Joshua opens up with a change of command. The great giver of the Law, Moses, was dead and God brought about a change in leadership for the new nation. Moses had been a great lawgiver and statesman. Joshua, his successor, was a great commanding general, a fearless warrior. He was a "take charge" leader who commanded the people to "rise, and go over this Jordan." Moses was dead, but God's work did not end with him. That work continues today. Christians have been given under the New Covenant even more wonderful and better promises.

God's promises mean sure provision for us. We can ask God for strength and encouragement. We all face difficult trials in our lives, but we can and will conquer through our faithful trust in the grace of God. We can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?" Jesus said, "Lo, I am with you always, even until the end of the age." God

is faithful. God is able. He has promised "not to fail or forsake us" in whatever difficult situation we may be confronting. Our journey is a walk of faith and God is also telling us today, as He told Joshua, to be strong and courageous!

On what level are we choosing to live the Christian life? Christ is calling all of us out of a self-centered condition into a Christ-centered position. The question for us ought to be: on what level do I choose to live Christ?

Joshua teaches us that strength comes out of our weakness and dependence. The only thing that will keep us on course in our spiritual journey to the "Promised Land" is the constant need of God's presence. We need to understand, it is not just how we begin the Christian life that counts, but also how we end it. We were all dead in our trespasses and sins, and no one can enter into the kingdom of God except by a spiritual birth and through Jesus. God raises the dead!

Here are a few thoughts that we ought to keep in mind regarding the Kingdom of God, our "Promised Land":

It is the basis for repentance. Matt 4:17

It is to be sought above all else. Matt 6:33

It is to be treasured above all else. Matt 13:44

Its mission is the most demanding and noble in which anyone can engage. Luke 9:62

Its message was the theme for the twelve and the seventy in their ministries. Matt 10:7, Luke 10:9

It is the purpose for which Jesus came. Luke 4:43

Let's keep on praying that our hearts burn to get the message of the Kingdom of God out to our church distanced relatives, friends and the world. □