

Lessons From Israel's Journey Possessing Your Promised Land

by Jason Peebles

Israel's journey from Egypt to the Promised Land is an essential subject for Christians to study. The apostle Paul makes this clear in 1 Corinthians 10:11 -- "*Now all these things happened unto them and they are written for our example and admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*" **Paul knew that Christians would discover vital lessons when they took time to study Israel's journey.** In many ways, Israel's journey from Egypt to the Promised Land gives us a sort of spiritual "road map" for what to expect in our walk with God. Israel's successes and failures can help you in your own journey of faith.

Lessons for Success

As you read this Study Guide, be sure to refer to the diagram that we have provided. Some of the major lessons are listed (*let me quickly say that there are many more lessons that you can add to our list as you search the scriptures*). For example, the Old Testament makes it clear that Egypt was a place of slavery and bondage. In a similar way, before Christ, we were slaves to sin and the world. **And, just as Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years, many Christians waste precious time struggling in the wilderness of self-effort and flesh before they learn to walk in the Spirit.** Only as we learn to yield to the Holy Spirit and trust Christ do we begin enjoying the provision that God has for us. Ultimately, the

fulfillment of our Promised Land is heaven and all that it holds for the family of God. Our prayer is that this Study Guide will help you grasp the “big picture” of how to succeed in your journey with God.

Egypt: lessons of deliverance

Let’s begin examining some of the major lessons of Israel’s journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. The first lesson is **EGYPT** itself. As we said earlier, Egypt is a picture of bondage. The children of Abraham were slaves in Egypt and forced to work on Pharaoh’s massive projects (Ex 1:11-14). Every day they toiled in mud pits to make bricks and create the monuments of Egypt. Eventually, God sent Moses to be their deliverer. **In every way, Israel’s bondage serves as a picture of our bondage to sin and Satan prior to Christ.** Before Christ, Satan enslaved us to the world’s system and our carnal desires. Ephesians 2:1-2 says, *“And you He has quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air.”* Here are some additional insights:

1. God’s Deliverer – Israel was powerless to save themselves. God sent Moses with signs and wonders to set them free (Ex 7:1-7). Likewise, we too were powerless to free ourselves from sin and Satan’s grip. God saved us by sending Christ who died and was raised from the dead. Eph 2:4-10

2. Delivered by blood – Moses told the people to slay a lamb and paint their door posts with the blood (Ex 12:21-28). When they did, the death angel passed over them. Jesus Christ is our Passover Lamb. His sacrifice and blood save us. Heb 10:19-23

3. Abundant spoil – when the children of Israel left Egypt, the Bible says that they spoiled Egypt. They left with gold, silver, and rich fabrics (Ex 12:35,36). In Christ, Satan has been spoiled and we have all spiritual blessings. Col 2:15 / Eph 1:3

4. God’s cloud led the way – the Holy Spirit manifested as a huge cloud that led Israel (at night it was a pillar of fire). It stood between them and Pharaoh’s army to protect their exodus (Ex 14:19-22). The same Holy Spirit can lead us too (Rom 8:14). Additionally, Paul compares passing through the Red Sea and the cloud, to water baptism and baptism in the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 10:2 says, *“And they were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud (the Holy Spirit) and in the sea (water).”*

Wilderness: lessons of self-effort

Once Moses led the people out of Egypt, the next area in their journey was the **WILDERNESS** (see diagram). In reality, they could have crossed the Wilderness in about 40 days -- but the Bible says they wandered in circles for 40 years! The people were disobedient, lacked faith, and in general had rebellious attitudes. **In every way, the Wilderness describes the aimless life of a carnal Christian.** It is a picture of “self-effort” and flesh vs. walking in the Spirit. Here are some additional insights:

1. God desires a covenant relationship – God led Israel to Mount Sinai where He declared His desire to walk in covenant relationship (Ex 19:4-6). Israel failed to obey – thus, God sent the Messiah, Jesus Christ, to establish a New Covenant based on His own obedience. Hebrews 10

2. Delays due to sin – Paul tells us that Israel’s progress was delayed due to various sins. He lists disobedience, lack of faith, rebellion, and sexual sins (1 Cor 10:5-14). These sins delayed Israel’s progress and caused them to go in circles for 40 years. The Bible tells us to lay down our sins too, lest they hold us back. Hebrews 12:1

3. Murmuring and complaining – Paul identifies these sins of Israel as important lessons (1 Cor 10:10). Israel wearied God through their constant complaining. Complaining is a form of doubt and unbelief. It’s like saying, *“God, I don’t think you’re going to come through in this situation.”* You must guard against this sin that will erode your faith. James 3

4. Miracle provision – Paul gives us an unusual insight. He says that a Rock followed Israel in the wilderness, and that Rock was Christ (1 Cor 10:4). God provided water from the Rock and manna from heaven. God has miracle provision for us today when we trust Him. Ps 103:1-5

Promised Land: lessons of faith

After 40 years of rebellion, Israel finally entered the Promised Land. The **PROMISED LAND** is a picture of God’s will, His provision, and ultimately

heaven itself. Here are some additional insights that will help you enter your Promised Land:

1. Land of milk and honey – God promised Israel a land abundant in all kinds of resources (Deut 6:4-12). He called it a “*land of milk and honey*” – which is an idiom for prosperity. In Christ, all the promises of God are “Yes” and “Amen.” You have a rich inheritance in Christ! 2 Cor 1:20 / Rom 8:31-32

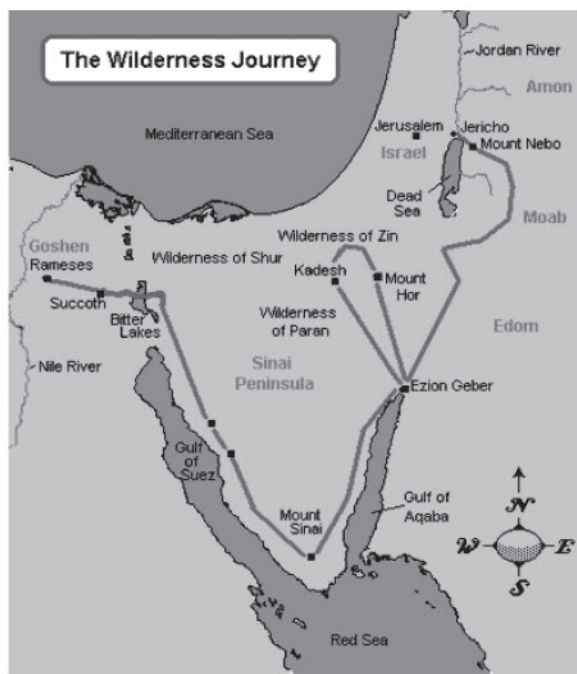
2. Enter by faith - this is one of the most important lessons. The first generation missed their opportunity to enter the Promised Land because they lacked aggressive faith. Only Joshua and Caleb had faith (Num 13 / 14:6). Because of it, God allowed Joshua and Caleb to survive the 40 years of wandering and they eventually led the second generation in. Hebrews chapter 4 is dedicated to this comparison for NT believers and warns us to use our faith to enter our Promised Land. We’ve dedicated more time to the importance of faith in Key #1 below.

3. Giants in the land – though the land was “promised” to Israel, they still had to “possess” it. In other words, it was a cooperative effort between God and Israel. The Bible says that there were various races of large people living in the land that had to be driven out (Josh 1). The lesson for believers is obvious – we have to “fight” the good fight of faith to lay hold of our inheritance. Just because God promises something doesn’t mean that it will be easy. Hebrews 6:12 says that through “*faith and patience*” we inherit God’s promises.

4. Be strong and courageous - God commanded Joshua – “*Be strong and courageous*” (Josh 1:7). In Joshua 14:12 Caleb said, “*Give me this mountain!*” He said that when he was 85 years old! Your faith must have an “aggressive” aspect to it, like a soldier determined to win the battle. This will help you accomplish your goals and win your battles.

Possessing Your Promised Land

Our goal in this study has been to present a quick overview of Israel’s journey and some of the wonderful lessons that can help you succeed. As we conclude, here are four keys that, in my opinion, deserve special attention. These keys are vital for possessing your Promised Land --



Egypt

Bondage
Deliverer
Blood
Spoil
Cloud

Wilderness

Covenant
Delays
Murmuring
Miracles
Self-Life

Promised Land

Abundance
Faith
Giants
Courageous
Spirit-led

KEY #1 - Live by faith in God’s Word – one of the most important keys for possessing your Promised Land is the habit of putting faith in God’s promises. God told Joshua that the source of His courage would be meditating in God’s Word (Joshua 1:8). God’s Word is filled with awesome promises for every imaginable need. There are promises for food, clothing, housing, business, children, protection, guidance, confidence, healing, and on and on! 2 Peter 1:4 says, “*Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature.*” **God’s promises are your “connection” to His resources.** In Psalm 103:1 David said, “*Bless the Lord O my soul and forget not all His benefits.*” Every day, as you face situations, you should make it a habit to recall and confess God’s promises that you’ve marked in your Bible. Doing this will strengthen your heart and release God’s power to work on your behalf.

KEY #2 - Walk in the Spirit – another vital key for possessing your Promised Land is walking in the Spirit vs. the flesh (Rom 8:1-6). Walking in the “flesh” is when you do what “you” want, when you want, and how you want. It includes everything from what some might call gross sins to an attitude of just “doing your own thing.” You could call this type of living the **SELF-LIFE**. This is the very thing that caused Israel to wander in circles for 40 years! On the other hand, God wants His people to walk in the “Spirit.” **I’ve heard all kinds of definitions for this, but to keep things simple, walking in the Spirit is when we endeavor to live in a yielded state to God’s influence in our lives. You could refer to this as the SPIRIT-LED life vs. the SELF-LIFE.** Walking in the Spirit really starts with an inner attitude that says, *“Lord, I want YOU to lead me and guide me. I have my own ideas about things, and others may give me their input, but ultimately I want YOU to direct my decisions.”* Your goal should be to walk in the Spirit 24/7 – but the reality is that you may have to **RE-YIELD** many times a day. If you get stressed, angry, or sin in attitude or action, it is important that you develop the habit of quickly whispering a prayer of repentance and re-yield right on the spot. **Deal with sin quickly and don’t let it cause you to wander in the wilderness like Israel did.** Some days you may feel like you are “crawling” in the Spirit instead of walking, but keep yielding! As you learn to yield, it positions you for God to help and lead you.

KEY #3 - Let the grace of God increase more and more in your life – 2 Peter 1:3 says, *“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you.”* The concept of “grace” can be defined in a number of ways. Here are two definitions that I like: **1) Grace is God’s unmerited favor; and 2) Grace is God’s ability and enabling power.** Think about this for a moment. When you first came to Christ, you realized that there was absolutely nothing that you could do to “earn” salvation. There was no way that you could be “good enough” in your own efforts. Romans 3:23 says, *“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”* Your salvation was an undeserved, unmerited FREE GIFT from God through the work of Christ on the cross. Romans 5:8 says, *“For God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.”* Thus, it was God’s ability and His enabling power that “saved” you. And guess what? The same principle of grace holds true in every other aspect of your Christian walk. **Hopefully, you will eventually learn that walking in the Spirit is**

more about YIELDING to His grace than about STRIVING. Ask God to help you learn how to yield to His ability and enabling power. Let His grace (his ability and enabling power) multiply more and more in your mind and heart. Take time to pray about things; take time to go to the Bible and find out what God says about your situation. Make it your aim to let God work in you and through you instead of “you” trying so hard in your own self-effort. Admittedly, this takes time and spiritual growth. But the sooner you learn this key, the faster you will experience the Promised Land and the easier things will be! Ask God to teach you the secret of yielding to His grace vs. your own works (Heb 4:9-11).

KEY #4 - Trust in the promise of Heaven and Resurrection - as we conclude our study, let me say that the biggest part of our Promised Land is the resurrection and Heaven (1 Cor 15:49-58). Certainly we want to experience God’s blessings in the “here and now” – but the older I get the more I realize what an awesome future awaits us! Christianity is not a “self-help” program just to make us feel better in this life. No, we have the promise of eternal life, resurrection, and heaven to look forward to! We are promised to rule and reign with Christ over a new heaven and earth (Rev 21-22). It is important for you to keep this eternal perspective in mind, because it will influence your decisions. We all have an appointment with death one day. No one can escape it. But we need not fear! 2 Corinthians 15:51,52 says, *“Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep but we shall be changed ... and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed.”* What an awesome promise we have in Christ! **There is coming a New World Order in Christ without disease, aging, war, famine, hunger, murder, death, or any other part of the curse.** Romans 8:19-23 tells us that “all creation” is waiting for this glorious new day. What an amazing future awaits those of us who are in Christ Jesus!

Dear friend, I pray that you will have a great revelation of your Promised Land and possess it by faith!

■ -- Jason Peebles

Key Memory Verse:

“Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest (Promised Land) lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”

Hebrews 4:11

Prayer for Possessing Your Promised Land

“Father, thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for my sins. I accept His sacrifice and commit my life to Him. I want to possess all that you have for me. Help me “enter” my Promised Land and walk in the assignments that you have for me. Thank you for your great love in my life. In Jesus Name – Amen.”

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