



listening guide

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# Believing God for Your Promised Land

The concept of a promised land is a primary example.

In fact, God not only invites us to apply the concepts spiritually but also insists (Heb. 3).

## New Testament Applications of the Old Testament Promised Land

1. God originally promised a large segment of prime property (later termed the promised land) to Abraham and his descendants. New Testament believers are the spiritual seed of Abraham.
2. While heaven is the ultimate land of God's promise, the concept of a promised land has profound applications in our earthly lives, just as it did in the lives of the Israelites. In essence, my "promised land" is the place where my theology merges with my reality.
3. The most concentrated New Testament spiritual equivalent of the promised-land concept is perhaps best captured in John 15.
  - a. Our promised land is a place of possession. In John 15 we are called to possess: Christ's words, much affirmatively answered prayer, and the joy of Jesus. Our promised lands are places of God's unapologetic blessing to the obedient.
  - b. Our promised land is a place of abiding. Where? In Christ's love.
  - c. Our promised lands are places where God brings forth a great harvest.
4. Our promised lands will always involve conquests.
5. Our promised lands are places of great victory over our enemy (Josh. 3:10).
6. The original word for "amazing things" is pala meaning "to separate, distinguish; to be wonderful, do wonderful things; wondrous things, miracles. Used primarily with God as the subject, denoting the fact that He does things that are beyond the bounds of human powers or expectations." Our promised lands are places where God is willing to work untold wonders, but He desires two critical preparations from us: faith and sanctification.

## five-Statement Pledge of Faith

1. God is who He says He is.
2. God can do what He says He can do.
3. I am who God says I am.
4. I can do all things through Christ.
5. God's Word is alive and active in me.



# Believing God Is Who He Says He Is

We will invite the Holy Spirit to ask us three vital questions today, prompted by those Christ prioritized with His disciples in Matthew 16:13-19. For our immediate purposes we will apply them to God the Father, keeping in mind Christ's own words: that the Father and He are one (John 10:30).

## Question 1: Who do people say God is?

- a. Public opinion spans the spectrum from God is nonexistent to God is the God of the Bible.
- b. Perhaps the most dangerously influential opinions are those held by scholars and intellectuals who teach a kind of "god" but not the God of the Bible.
- c. All attempts to define God cannot help but minimize Him. If in our pursuit of greater knowledge God seems to have gotten smaller, we have been deceived.

## Question 2: Who do you say God is?

- a. Great wisdom resides in taking an inventory of how we have developed our present perceptions of God. Keep in mind that faith that remains unchallenged ordinarily remains unchanged.
- b. Sometimes we may realize that we have created a god in man's own image who is not God at all.
- c. Matthew 16:18-20 could very well intimate that God entrusts greater supernatural empowerment to those who believe He is who He says He is.

## Question 3: Who does God say that He is?

God reveals Himself two primary ways:

- a. His Word. See Psalm 100:1-3.
- b. His works. See Psalm 145:1-6.

# Believing God Can Do What He Says He Can Do

1. God is who He says He is.
2. God can do what He says He can do.

“You are the God who performs miracles.”

## Part 1: Miracles and Our Current Religious Culture

- a. Consider the extreme teachings on miracles: Cessationism versus Sensationalism.
  - In the Gospels Christ called those without faith to believe in miracles an unbelieving and perverse generation (see Luke 9:41)
  - and those who focused on miracles alone a wicked and adulterous generation.
- b. Perhaps the most serious offense of sensationalism is that it is self-centered rather than God-centered and prioritizes what God can do over who He is.
- c. The profoundly serious disservice of cessationism is that it cheats the believer and undercuts hope.  
“Everything is possible for him who him who believes” (Mark 9:23).
- d. Though our present session will answer somewhat to both extremes, more of us participating are probably caught in the prevalent cycle of unbelief. In other words, we believe little because we've seen little, and we've seen little because we believe little.

## Part 2: Discerning Which Promises Are Ours to Claim

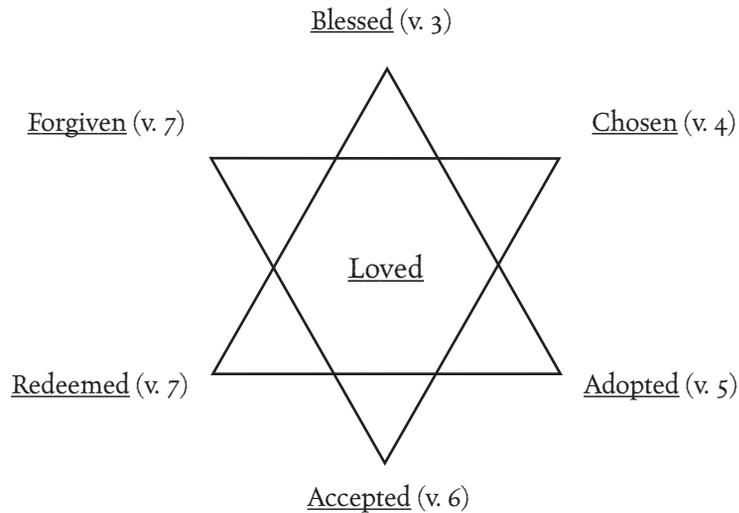
- a. God's covenant promises are directed to the people of Israel, the body of Christ, and His children in general.
- b. With the right heart we can request the fulfillment of any promise in the entire Word of God. We are greatly helped, however, by understanding that God has not obligated Himself to fulfill every promise from Genesis to Revelation to every believer throughout history.
- c. Generally speaking, God's covenantal promises are best understood under their subsequent covenants. You and I are under the new covenant.
- d. Insight into why God may make certain sovereign decisions regarding what kind of miracle He supplies may be found in one of the primary objectives of the new covenant.
- e. The bad news is that suffering has an undeniable role under the new covenant.  
The good news is that our covenant “glories” far surpass those of the old covenant.

## Conclusion

In the meantime,

- keep believing God for a miracle;
- give Him every opportunity through your faith to perform the one you desire;
- don't argue with a Pharisee!

# Believing You Are Who God Says You Are



What are several priority results of believing we are who God says we are?

1. Security: countless poor decisions are made from nothing more than insecurity.
2. Righteousness credited to our account.
3. Glorious liberation from the burden of our own sins.
  - “Transgression”—*pesa*—generally represents rebellious sin. “Denotes willful deviation from the path of righteousness, a premeditated crossing of the line of God’s law, a rebellious act of rejecting God’s authority.”
  - “Sins”—*hata’ah*—is often used in reference to sin in general.
4. Obedience: see Romans 1:5. Obedience comes from faith.

# Believing You Can Do All Things Through Christ

Sessions 4, 5, and 6 focus on God's priority work in the lives of believers. Each builds strategically on the one preceding it. As you view them in relationship to one another, picture session 4 as who, session 5 is the what, and session 6 as how.

1. God is in the process of raising mighty warriors among His people.
2. The common denominator will not be human leadership, denomination, ethnicity, or giftedness. The common denominators will be consistent with those throughout biblical history (see Eph. 6:10-18).
  - The shield of faith
  - The sword of the Spirit (see Josh. 1:8 figurative; 6:21 literal)
  - Communication with the Commander (prayer)
3. The church also has an earthly promised land that precedes her heavenly land of promise. The New Testament tells us that before the end of times the church will be purified, unified, fortified, and anointed to prophecy (or proclaim truth).
4. God warned the children of Israel not to fall for two of the biggest obstacles any of us will have about the fulfillment of God's personal promises: fear and discouragement. *Hatat*—"to be discouraged, shattered; be afraid, be dismayed ... The meaning of the term ranges from a literal breaking to military destruction to demoralization."
5. God will never fail us. The word *napah* means "to be slack, be remiss, be idle, be weak. ... The basic idea of relaxing the hand."
6. Our responsibility is to be strong and courageous. Strong—*chazaq*—"to be bound fast, be attached, to make firm, ... be valiant, ... to harden." Our success will be holding tight to the One who has us in His grip.

# Believing God's Word Is Alive and Active in You

“The Word that God speaks is alive and full of power [making it active, operative, energizing, and effective]” (Heb. 4:12, AMP).

Take to heart the first and foremost equipping for success in the promised land: the Word in our mouths.

## How to Become Armed and Dangerous

1. In first person: I believe, and therefore I speak. Without exception the most powerful built-in instrument God has given us is our mouth.
2. We are created in the image of God; therefore, His words are omnipotent, and our words are potent. Using our instruments inappropriately is an effective way to stay out of our promised lands.
3. For reasons ultimately known to God alone, He has ordained that spoken words carry a power, authority, and effectiveness that exceed words we simply think. “Renounced”—*apeipon*—“literally, to speak out against.”
4. By far, the most explosively effective thing we can believe and therefore speak is Scripture. “It is written: ‘I believed; therefore I have spoken.’ With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak” (2 Cor. 4:13). *Pneuma* means *spirit*, but it also means breath. Consider how we can live off the CPR of God: as we believe, we inhale His words, and as we speak, we exhale His words. Cast the burden upon God and His Word. Not our abilities to pray.
5. Perhaps more than anything else, Satan wants to hinder us from ever learning how to use our mouths. *Stenochoreo* means “to crowd into a narrow space, ... figuratively, to be constrained, reserved, be unable to express oneself.”
6. In the Old Testament oil can symbolize the Holy Spirit (see Isa. 61:1). Jeremiah 23:29 says, “‘Is not my word like fire,’ declares the LORD.”

# Believing God Has Been There All Along

1. God has assigned each generation a tremendous responsibility to its children and its descendants.
  - As the spiritual seed of Abraham, we are called to be far more intentional about building a heritage of faith into our children.
  
2. The Hebrew word for “cut off” is karat, meaning “to cut, cut off; to make a covenant.”
  - Through the concepts in Joshua 4, God seems to say, “Because I have cut covenant with you, I will also cut a path through any obstacle that stands between you and the fulfillment of My covenant promises.”
  - “I will make the path, but you must take the path.”
  
3. Consider the significance of the memorial stones coming from the middle of the Jordan. The middle can represent the halfway point, the place of sudden doubt and indecision.
  
4. Sometimes we are wisest to hurry over.
  - The Israelites: Go back!
  
  - Moses: Stand still!
  
  - God: Move on!
  
5. Conclude with 1 Peter 2:4-5. You and I are living stones. We are living reminders to the world that Jesus was here.



# Believing God to Get You to Your Gilgal

Joshua 5:6 recaptures the basic premise of our study: God has made solemn promises to His children and desires that we live in the place where we get to enjoy their fulfillment. He requires our faith-induced obedience.

See Hebrews 3:18-19 for the association of the following two words:

- Unbelief: *apistia*—*a*—without; *pistia*—belief
- Disobedience: *apeitheo*—acting on our unbelief

1. Joshua 4–5 retraces Israel's new beginning and an entirely new characterization.

2. The word *Gilgal* means circle.

3. Gilgal was the place God brought the Israelites full circle and broke the old cycle.

See the dating in Joshua 4:19 (also see Ex. 12:3) and Joshua 5:10 (also see Ex. 12:6,18).

On a separate piece of paper, please diagram a typical circle or cycle of defeat and another of victory, based on Israel's experience in the wilderness.

4. Gilgal was the place where circumcision was reinstated. Circumcision was the sign that they were different because they were in covenant with God. Remaining uncircumcised was their way of wearing their reproach. *Herpah*—"reproach, shame, scorn, contempt," is often translated disgrace in the Old Testament.

5. At Gilgal God cut away the sign of their unbelief, and they wore the mark of their new beginning.

Often a wounding precedes our full reception of God's promises, but healing always follows. Joshua 5:8:

"Healed"—*hayah*—"to live, exist, enjoy life; to live anew, recover, be well; ... to ... refresh, rebuild."

Paradoxically, by this wounding they were healed.

6. God wants to roll away the reproach of our Egypt from us. "Roll away"—*galal*—

"to roll, turn, drive away; ... roll upon oneself; to be rolled ( in blood), be died red."

# Believing God When Victory Demands Your All

1. No matter who or what rises up against you, God's title trumps every other (see Josh. 10:1).

*Adoni-Zedek* means lord of righteousness.

- God will ultimately take over and complete every earthly title of honor.

Ephesians 1:20-21 says that God "seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms, far above ...

every title that can be given, not only in the present age

but also in the one to come."

2. For children of God, a perfect setup for catastrophic defeat is also the perfect setup for miraculous victory. The strikes against Joshua and the Israelites were both mental and physical and could have been presumed spiritual.

- Mental: See Joshua 9:1-4, 14-18. Consider all the opportunities to lose this battle mentally:

How unfair

How stupid

Whose fault?

Our own bitterness

- Physical: They had an all-night march and an uphill battle.
- Spiritual: They could have presumed God's attitude to be "You got yourself into this mess; you get yourself out."

3. Our Father delights in exalting, ambitious praying.

4. When God requires and receives our 100 percent, He'll return a hundredfold.

5. God requires so much of us at times so that we can experience the unmatched exhilaration of partnering in divine triumph (see Ps. 47).

# Believing God for the Rest of Your Days

As we conclude our corporate study of faith, let's take one last glance at the portraits that hang on the walls of the Hall of Faith and then read Hebrews 11:32–12:3. Let's stand at the wall and gaze at the space in the heritage of faith that awaits our pictures. Today and perhaps for the rest of our lives, we will see ourselves as—Hebrews 11:41.

## Part 1: Defining a Race Well Run

The original word for *fought* is *agonizomai* meaning “to contend for victory in the public games ... to wrestle.” The original word for *fight* is *agon* meaning conflict.

A. Sometimes we run our way to the finish line. Other times we wrestle our way to the finish line.

B. We run our race well not by refusing to wrestle but by keeping the faith.

- *finished*: “not merely to end it but to bring it to perfection or its destined goal, to carry it through.”

## Part 2: A Few Facts to Help Us Keep the Faith

A. Faith always receives. We will receive at least the following three results:

- The pleasure of God (Heb. 11:6)
- The power of God (Eph. 1:18-20)
- The glory of God (John 11:38-40)

B. Faith soon sees. Second Timothy 4:6 (KJV) says, “the time of my departure is at hand.”

*ephistemi*: *epi*—by, near, upon; *histemi*—to stand.

C. Above all things, faith must present-active-participle believe God loves (Ps. 62:11-12).

## Conclusion:

- The call to intercession (Eph. 3:17b-18)
- The commission to faith