

I've never worn khakis. I've never been unable to go home, night after night. I've never had that experience.

I don't want to presume but I think you probably wish you weren't here at Bayside State Prison. You probably wish the place you slept could be called, "my bed." And the place where you spend your days and nights could be called "my place." Those of you who are believers may ask yourself, from time to time, "Why has God decided to put me here? I can't think of this place as my home." You would like to be back with your families and friends, with the people you love surrounding you.

Think about Debbie Crossland, Chap. Crossland's wife. She has cancer. Her body is wasting away from the disease. She's not in prison, but that doesn't mean she has no problems. If you were outside prison you would find that life is not perfect. It might feel that way to you right now, but really, life on the outside has its problems too. In fact, I'd be surprised if within a year of getting out of this place you pray, and ask God, "What am I doing here? This is not the home I thought it was. Why have you put me here? It seems like there no place is the home I wish it would be."

At this point you're probably thinking, "Rev. is this supposed to be uplifting? Because if it is, it isn't working."

And, you'd be thinking correctly. What I'm saying isn't very uplifting.

So how should a follower of Jesus Christ feel about life in general? Is it good? Is it bad? Should we love it? Should we hate it? Is it wrong to want life to be better than it is?

God made promises to His people. Understanding these promises unlocks our understanding of life as we know it. It's a blessing, but the best is yet to come. The better tomorrow isn't just about getting out of Prison. There is a much better blessing that Jesus' chosen people will receive.

Wasn't Abraham's Blessing All about Land?

Promise - Promise of the Promised Land

Genesis 12:7 "Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "**To your offspring I will give this land.**" So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him." (This would be a tremendous blessing for a man who left behind the place where he grew up. He had said good bye to most of his relatives and never saw them again. Things would be different for his descendants).

Abraham's promise was given to Jesus. Galatians 3:16 "Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. **It does not say, "And to offsprings,"** referring to many, but **referring to one,** "And to your offspring," who is **Christ.**" (The promise went from one man, Adam, to one man, Abraham, to a nation, Israel, and then to one man, Jesus).

The promise of the land was given to Abraham's descendants, and that inheritance was passed to Jesus. But the inheritance is much bigger than the land of Israel.

Bigger Promise - A Promise Bigger than the Promised Land

Are yo surprised that there is an inheritance for Abraham's descendants that is bigger than the land of Israel? The prophets of Israel and Judah wouldn't have been surprised.

Even in the Old Testament the promise was bigger than the land of Israel:

Isaiah 54:2-3 "Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and **your offspring will possess the nations** and will people the desolate cities." (Why so big an inheritance?).

Psalm 2:1-3 "Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us."" 7-8 "I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, "**You are my Son;** today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and." **I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.**

This was God's plan from the very start. [Genesis 1:26–29](#) "Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and **over all the earth** and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and **fill the earth** and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves **on the earth**." And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food."

Jesus is one man, but he is not too small to inherit the world. The world is not too large of an inheritance for Jesus, and those he calls to be his own people. This was God's plan from the very beginning - from the time of Adam. If Adam hadn't sinned, this would have been his inheritance - but it wasn't because he sinned.

Inheritance - An Inheritance for God's People

Jesus understood the earth was His to grant to His own chosen people. [Matthew 5:5](#) “Blessed are the meek, for they shall **inherit the earth**.”

Summary

- God made a promise to Abraham, for his descendants, to inherit the Promised Land.
- Jesus ultimately was the recipient of that blessing, and He passed it on to His followers.
- The promise, ultimately, was to inherit the whole earth.
- What do you have now?
- What will you have then?

Begin at the End

The inheritance God the Father has given to Jess is bigger than the land of Israel. It is the whole world of the new creation. But what else can we know about this great inheritance that is waiting for all those who are in Christ Jesus?

Like unwrapping a gift. There are multiple layers to work through before we fully realize what we have received. There are two ways to unwrap the multi-layered revelation of God. We can begin at the end, or we can go back to the beginning, but sometimes there is more than one beginning. So, let's begin at the end.

Revelation 21:1–22:5 (ESV) - the end of the story

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And **I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem**, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, **the dwelling place of God is with man**. He will dwell **with them**, and **they will be his people**, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will **wipe away every tear from their eyes**, and **death shall be no more**, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." ... **And I saw no temple in the city**, for **its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb**....

What we can know about the new creation:

- God will dwell with His people
- God will wipe away every tear.
- Death will be no more.

What about more details about heaven? Why doesn't God tell us more that we can understand?

Knowing that Jesus has come, our perspective of the promise first given to Abraham that he would be father to as many descendants as there are stars in the sky or sand along the ocean, shifts and changes to include people from all over the entire earth. We can know a great deal from what God has told us.

Hebrews 11:8–16 (ESV) - the beginning that started with Abraham

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as **an inheritance**. And **he went out, not knowing where he was going**. **By faith he went to live in the land of promise**, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. **By faith** Sarah herself **received**

power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.

- When God called Abram, **he went**.
- Faith means **not knowing** all the details. There is a missing piece of information. God has it. We have to take His word on that, and trust Him.
- By faith Sarah received the **power to conceive**. - the power to multiply the blessings, over and over, until the descendants of Abraham became a nation.

These all **died in faith**, **not having received the things promised**, but having **seen** them and **greeted** them **from afar**, and having acknowledged that they were **strangers and exiles on the earth**. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are **seeking a homeland**. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they **desire a better country**, that is, **a heavenly one**. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their **God**, for he has **prepared for them a city**.

- Old Testament saints **died in faith**.
- They had **seen** and **greeted from afar**, what had not happened in their lifetimes.
- During their lifetimes they were **seeking a homeland**.
- They **desire a better country**, a **heavenly one**.

Conclusion

Faith must grow. God deserves our trust. We can learn to be with Him even now, and in that way prepare ourselves for eternity.

There is a longing in every human being's heart for the impossible, a home where they truly belong. A place where what they want and what exists match perfectly. Consider [Ecclesiastes 3:11](#) "He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, **he has put eternity into man's heart**, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end." God made us this way, so that we would know that our life is incomplete without a personal relationship to Him.

Have you forgotten that Jesus told His disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you" ([John 14:2&3](#)). He will return to the people who are His own, and they will dwell with Him for eternity.

What about the place Jesus is preparing? What does the Bible tell us? The first thing you need to know is its bigger than you think.

[John 14:3](#) "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also."

- God's promise is bigger than your imagination or mine.
- God's Savior is more singular than many in this world expect - there is but one, and only one, savior, Jesus Christ.
- The best news: Jesus will be there, in the new creation, with His people.