

Hymns: 20 Mansion Over the Hilltop 62 The Solid Rock
Scripture: Psalm 47

Beginning at an Existing Concrete Monument being North 88 degrees 59 minutes 39 seconds East 310.53 feet from an Existing Iron Pipe at the right-of-way of Branton Drive and being the dividing line between lot One, White Oak Estates and Telex Investment Inc./Trafalgar Properties LLC. Property also on the Western property line of lot Three, Landsdowne Subdivision. Said concrete monument having N.C. Grid Coordinates of : North = 741, 548.796, East = 2,036,729.004 (Nad. 83).

This is a portion of the legal description of a deed of easement. It's a key piece of land that allows my family to proceed with a house building project. Have any of you built your house? It's always fun to move into a new place. It's even more fun when the house is built to your specifications, and you can watch it come to life as each phase of construction completes. It's fascinating to see what was simply lines and words on paper become the house of your dreams right before your eyes.

Building is a *lot* of work but it's an exciting and rewarding investment. If all goes as planned, we should be in our new home in about six months. We'll keep you posted.

Today we want to consider the question, "What's the oldest and most solid deed ever written?"

The last few times we met, we focused on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Five of the nine Bible summary passages we identified contain a reference to the resurrection. Surprisingly, five of these passages also answer the question for today. First, lets walk through these five references to get an idea what they say.

1. Psalm 78

*[54] And he brought them [the Israelites] to the border of his sanctuary, even to this mountain, which **his** right hand had purchased.*

This is a poetic reference to the land of Israel.

[55] He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.

God kicked out the people who were not Israelites and gave their land and dwellings to His people.

In our next passage, we learn another key detail about why God did this.

2. Psalm 105

*[42] For he remembered his holy **promise**, and Abraham his servant.*

[43] And he brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with gladness:

*[44] And gave them the **lands** of the heathen: and they inherited **the** labour of the people;*

Hence, we have the term the *Promised Land*.

3. Nehemiah 9

*[22] Moreover thou gavest them kingdoms and nations, and didst divide them into corners: so they possessed the **land** of **Sihon**, and the land of the king of **Heshbon**, and the land of Og king of **Bashan**. ...*

Apparently, this refers to about 5000 square miles along the **east** side of the Jordan river.

*[24] So the children went in and **possessed the land**, and thou subduedst before them the inhabitants of the land, the **Canaanites**, and gavest them into their hands, with their kings, and the people of the land, that they might do with them as they would.*

[25] And they took strong cities, and a fat land, and possessed houses full of all goods, wells digged, vineyards, and oliveyards, and fruit trees in abundance:

so they did eat, and were filled, and became fat, and delighted themselves in thy great goodness.

That wasn't a bad deal for Israel. You hear about a turnkey rental or "move-in ready" house, this was a move-in ready country, with houses, furniture, food, water, and infrastructure.

4. Acts 7

*[45] Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Joshua into the **possession of the Gentiles, whom God drave out** before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David;*

5. Acts 13

*[19] And when he had destroyed **seven nations** in the **land of Chanaan**, he divided their land to them by lot.*

So there we have the five verses that summarize Israel going in to possess the Promised Land and that testify to the claim that the Jews have to that land.

June 2, 2011 the South Carolina House of Representatives passed the following resolution:

South Carolina HOUSE RESOLUTION 4339 June 2, 2011

TO COMMEND THE NATION OF ISRAEL FOR ITS RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND WITH THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

*Whereas, Israel has been **granted** her lands under and through **the oldest recorded deed as reported in the Old Testament**, a tome of scripture held sacred and **reverenced** by Jew and Christian, alike, as the acts and words of God; and*

*Whereas, as **the Grantor of said lands, God** stated to the Jewish people in the Old Testament; in Leviticus, Chapter 20, Verse 24: "Ye shall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to possess it, a land that floweth with milk and honey"; and*

*Whereas, **God has never rescinded his grant** of said lands; ...*
http://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess119_2011-2012/bills/4339.htm

What's the oldest and most solid deed ever written? Clearly **the** South Carolina House of Representatives got it right. It's for the Promised Land – Israel. God made a **promise** to Abram and even gave the specifics that identify the location of this land. That sounds very similar to the legal description used in the introduction.

Today we're going to take a look at what the Bible says about the Promised Land.

But, before we do, let's consider two questions.

1. What does the word Israel mean?
2. And where did it come from?

Meaning

God prevails

Soldier of God

Contender

Source

Where did the name *Israel* come from?

Genesis 32

[24] And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

[25] And when he [the man] saw that he prevailed not against him [that is against Jacob], he [the man] touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.

*[26] And he [the man] said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he [Jacob] said, I will not let thee go, **except thou bless me.***

Does this sound familiar? Didn't Jacob play some trickery to get a blessing from his father in the past?

*[27] And he said unto him, **What is thy name?***

Wait a minute? This sounds familiar too. **A blessing and a name.** With his blind father, Isaac, Jacob lied about his name, claiming to be Ishmael.

And he said, Jacob.

This time he had a chance to remember his lie and tell the truth to his Heavenly Father.

*[28] And he [the man] said, **Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but***

Here it is...

Israel:

*for **as a prince** hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.*

[29] And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?

God never lied about his name.

And he blessed him there.

*[30] And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for **I have seen God** face to face, and my life is preserved.*

So there we have the source of the name *Israel*. It's Jacob's new name, and it represents his descendants and their land. But what about those other names, Palestine and Canaan? Where do they fit in?

Palestine, Canaan, Israel

With the arrival of the Greeks, the name “Palestine,” derived from “Philistine,” came into use and eventually began to be used to refer to the whole of the land of Israel. (Zondevan Atlas of the Bible, Carl G. Rasmussen, p. 47).

In Genesis 17 we learn that Canaan was the Promised Land that God gave to the Jews:

*[8] And I will give unto thee [that is, Abraham], and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for **an everlasting possession**; and I will be their God.*

So you can see the terms Canaan, Palestine, and Israel mean basically the same thing.

The Bible contains very detailed specifications regarding the boundaries of Israel in the books of Numbers, Joshua, and Ezekiel, we'll skip those and just give some highlights from four short Bible passages:

1. Genesis 15

*[18] In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land,
from the river of Egypt [not the Nile, but a river at southeast Mediterranean] unto the great river, the river Euphrates:*

To clarify, God supplements these geographical markers with the names of the people living in this land.

[19] The Yemenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites,

[20] And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims,

[21] *And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.*

and as J. Vernon McGee, would add: *the electric lights.*

2. Exodus 23

[31] *And I will set thy bounds
from the Red sea [Gulf of Aqaba] even unto
the sea of the Philistines [Mediterranean], and from
the desert [Sinai] unto
the river [Jordan]:*

*for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and thou shalt **drive them out before thee.***

[32] *Thou shalt make **no covenant with them**, nor with their gods.*

Keep that little command in mind the next time you hear talk of a peace agreement with Israel.

3. Deuteronomy 11

[23] *Then will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves.*

[24] *Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours:*

*from the wilderness and Lebanon,
from the river, the river Euphrates,
even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be.*

Finally, in the book of Kings we have:

4. I Kings 8

[65] *And at that time Solomon held a feast, and **all Israel** with him, a great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath [well north of Sidon in Lebanon] unto the river of Egypt,...*

It's interesting to note that the land with the oldest and surest deed in all the earth remains a continual trouble spot, at hotbed of contention, that is constantly in the news. Here's a sample:

- August 8th (last Thursday): Israeli military closed Eilat airport, citing security concerns
- Israel recently gave preliminary approval for more than 800 new settlements in the West Bank
- Israeli – Palestinian peace talks scheduled to resume this coming Wednesday (August 14th)

Importance

But why does what happens in the land of Israel or to the Jews matter to us?

Romans 9

[3] *For I [that is the Apostle Paul] could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:*

*[4] Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth
the adoption, and
Jewish people are His people
the glory, and
God's presence in the Old Testament (Shekinah)
the covenants, and
Abraham,
Isaac,
Moses
David,
the giving of the law, and
through Moses. God preserved and brought His word through them.
the service of God, and
Priestly worship in the temple
the promises;
Land
Seed
King (Messiah) and coming Kingdom*

*[5] Whose are the fathers, and
of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.
Amen.*

Okay, that's big. Jesus came from the Israelites, but Jesus Christ has come. God has turned to the Gentiles. Why should we still care about the land of Israel or its people?

Romans 11

*[1] I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. ...
[2] God hath **not cast away his people** which he foreknew. ...*

That king and kingdom part of the promise still remains in the future plans for Israel. God has neither forgotten them nor cast them away.

Application

What is the oldest surest deed? We learned that it is for the land of Israel. But we can look at that question a different way. That perspective is given to us in Ephesians 1:4

[4] According as

he hath chosen us in him

[that's quite a deed]

before the foundation of the world,

[that makes it pretty old]

that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

[that's a high and worthy calling]

Benediction

Now the God of peace,
that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,
that great shepherd of the sheep,
through the blood of the everlasting covenant,
Make you perfect in every good work to do his will,
working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight,
through Jesus Christ;
to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13:20-21)

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