

The Story 2026

The Land

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: Assorted

Speaker: Josh Duran

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The fact is we're just selfish by nature, right? When sin entered the world, we just struggled with being selfish by nature. And that's what we're finding out as we go through our series that we're calling the story. And basically what we're doing is we're going through the whole book of the Bible and we're going to go through seven weeks. Now, we're going to take a broad overview, right? We're going to stay a little bit above before we get into the nitty-gritty. That is your job to go through the week and discover some of these details for yourself. But we're going to take a broad overview and look at the Bible.

And so the first week we talked about creation, how God created the earth, what it was created for. The second week, we talked about the fall of how sin entered into the world, and now we are just selfish, like I said earlier. Last week we talked about how God had a chosen group of people, and that through these people, God is going to reveal Himself to the world. This people group, they came from a man by the name of Abraham or Abram, depending on when you're reading about him. This group of people would just be called the Israelites.

Eventually it would be the Jewish people that we would read about Jesus, right? And so today, we're going to look at the fact that God didn't just promise a group of people to Abraham, but He also promised land. And so we're going to kind of look at that land. But before we do that, let's pray and ask how God would just help us understand more of His story. The Heavenly Father, God, we just thank you for today.

But God, first and foremost, God, we just lift up Pastor Joel to you, God our pastor, God my pastor, that God that you would just heal his body and his mind. God that you'd be with his daughter, Mariah. She's overcoming sickness as well. God, we just ask that you would just heal them in your mighty name. God, we ask that you just be with Carolyn and the other kids and protect them and not allow them to become sick as well. And God would just ask that you just be with them as they go through this week of recovery. God, we ask that you would just protect this morning.

God, that you would allow us to see your words. That God, even though we may have read the words multiple times, God, we just asked that through your Holy Spirit, we would come to have a deepening understanding of what you have for us this morning. So God would just ask that you meet with us and speak to us. We ask this in Jesus' name, Amen. And so if we're going to talk about the Promised Land, we're going to have to jump right into Genesis 12. I know everyone's like, "Genesis, again, we're getting out, I promise." All right.

Genesis 12 says, "The Lord appeared to Abram and said to your offspring, I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the Lord who appeared to him. Going down to Genesis 15:7, it says, "He also said to him, 'I am the Lord who brought you out of the caldiness to give you this land to take possession of it.'" And then jumping down to Genesis 15: 18 through 21, and again, this is where I feel super insecure as a pastor because Joel would just rattle these names off and I'm going to struggle.

So here we go. It says, "On that day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, 'To your descendants, I give this land from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, Kenazites, Cadmanites, Hittites, Parasites, Raphites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgishites, and Jebusites.

We covered all the ice. All right, we're ready to go. If you want to go down a rabbit hole, you can look at geography of the Bible, specifically the land of Israel, and you will find yourself three days later going, "I have no idea what I just read." Because the fact is, people are still looking at this land going, "Mine, mine, mine, mine," right?

There's still fighting over this land even 3,000 years later. There's these wars over the land, but this war's a little messy because you have religion involved. And through this religion, people are starting to say, "Well, who had it first? Who does it belong to? Did God give it to Israel for all of time or just temporarily? Was it given to only the promised son, which is Isaac and his descendants, or was the other son involved, which is Ishmael and his descendants?

Do all of this promised land that's given to Israel that we read in Scripture, does it refer to the physical Israel or is it the metaphorical Israel that just represents the church, those who follow Jesus?" And so it becomes really, really messy. And if I had an easy answer for you, it is there is no easy answer, which is why they're still fighting over it 3,000 years later. But here's the one thing I do know.

The Israelites are part of the plan for God to redeem the world. He chose these people to reveal Himself to the world, and that's where He would bring His Son, Jesus, to this earth, was through them. And so this morning, we're talking about the promised land. So we're going to take a dive more into this land. And to do that, we got to start in Joshua chapter one, verses one through six. And I'm just going to do a bit of reading here and then we'll break it down for a minute.

After the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua, son of none, Moses's aid, Moses, my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land that I'm about to give to them, to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, I promised Moses. Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon and from the great river, the Euphrates, all the Hittite country to the Great Sea on the West, no one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life.

What a promise. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will never leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and courageous because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. And so if you remember, Moses dies and he never even sees the Promised Land. He never even gets to go in because of decisions that were made in our selfish, sinful nature. But God, He rescues them from slavery.

And so they're out and about and they have nowhere to go. They have no home. And so he comes before Joshua and says, "I'm going to deliver on my promise. I'm going to take you to the land that I have promised your forefathers." Which brings us to our true statement number one, which just simply says that God is faithful and can be trusted. Now, for some of us, we hear that and go, "What a cliché thing to say as a pastor." But there are some of us in here that's in a season where you're like, I needed to hear that.

I needed to be reminded that God is faithful and can be trusted. That if God says he's going to do something, he's going to do it. For many years, the Israelites, they were complaining before God because His promises weren't fulfilling when they wanted them to be. But again, I'm here to remind you that God's timing is perfect. None of us struggle with this. None of us in here go, "God, why are you not on my time? You're late," right? We all struggle with this.

But the fact is the land wasn't void. There were people there that were living. There was wildlife all around. But God and His patience and His love, He wanted to allow as much time as possible for these people to really come before Him and know who God was. Which brings me to true statement number two, as I said earlier, God's

timing is perfect. Again, somebody hears on and goes, "Well, yeah, I know." But for some of us in here, we're in a season like, I needed to hear that.

I needed to be a reminder that God's timing is perfect. It's perfect. It doesn't say God's timing is good. God's timing is well. No, it's perfect. His timing is perfect. As a young man, I was kind of reminded of this a lot. I've been up here and I've preached before and I've told you stories that I took my Jeep going 50 miles an hour over a train track or you know I was speeding down in the park and going over the speed humps at like 60 miles an hour.

Stupid. Stupid. Don't do it. But I tend to drive a little fast. And so when I was younger, I felt like God just took all the slowest drivers in the world and put them right in front of me. And I would get frustrated and go, "Why are all these slow people in front of me?" Well, come to find out that we pass a cop about a mile down the road going, "Yep, he would have gave me a speeding ticket." And I began to really I know it's kind of a joke and we can laugh about it. But even to this day, when there's a slow person in front of me and I have to intentionally slow down, I wonder if there's a purpose.

I just wonder if there's a purpose behind God's timing that maybe I'm to drive slower because of a cop. Maybe it's to avoid something that was going to be put in my way. And so I just wonder that if we really can believe that God's timing is perfect, can we believe that God's timing has purpose? And so there's a greater plan that God has for us, but we have to believe that it may not be in our timing. There's always a bigger picture. There's always a bigger question.

But there's a lot of us in here that still today, even after hearing that, we'll walk out of this building going, I just don't know if I can believe that. I still think I question God's timing. I've got two things to say to that. One, it's normal. All of us will do it. We will all still walk right out of this building and keep questioning God's timing in our life. The second thing I have to say to that is, "Stop it. Quit doing it." Right? If it was that easy, we would all do it, right? But the truth is still there. We all have this question if God's timing is perfect in our life.

But even with the land, the promised land, God's timing showed up pretty big. We see this in Deuteronomy chapter 7 where it says, "The Lord your God will drive out these nations before you little by little. You will not be allowed to eliminate them all at once, or the wild animals will multiply around you." So God is saying, "I need you to trust my plan because even though I am giving you this land, there's a bigger issue here. They're called wild animals and I got to make sure they're taken care of." So again, I remind you here that God's timing is perfect.

But my question is, is there an area in your life that God's asking you to wait? Maybe it's a relationship. Maybe it's your future. Maybe it's your finances. Is there somewhere in your life that God's saying, "Hey, I need you to trust me and wait for my perfect, not good, perfect timing." You see, because the land that these Israelites were promised, it was called the land of the milk and honey. Sounds like a pretty good name, right? It's the land of milk and honey. Now, was it like actual milk and honey? No, right?

In Numbers chapter 14, it says this, "If the Lord is pleased with us, He will lead us into that land, a land flowing with the milk and honey, and He will give it to us." What he's referring to here is how fertile the soil was, that it would create lots of crops, that the land was nice and big and flat where they could have shepherds that could raise their flocks up, and they could have lots of livestock, which they needed to survive. God didn't just give them leftovers.

He didn't like take them to the side of a mountain and go, "Well, there's no one here. This is good. Plant here." No, he was giving them the best land, which brings me to true statement number three that says, "God gives good gifts." God gives good gifts. If we're patient, God will give us exactly what we need. In Matthew 7, which is my favorite chapter of the Bible, it's very dangerous, but that's why I like it. It says this, "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?"

Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake. If you then, though you are evil, sinful is what he's saying, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask

Him?" Now, if you remember the statement that I made before reading this, I said, "God gives us what we need. God gives us what we need and what is best for us, and that's not always what we want." Now, I'm 36.

A lot of you are probably like, "Oh, I wish to be 36 again." But I'm also old enough to have learned an important lesson that if God always gave me what I wanted, I would be so dangerous. So dangerous. God cannot give me what I want because it becomes a danger in my life. You see, part of submitting to scripture is also recognizing that he's Lord, meaning that God gives me what I need and not always what I want.

You see, as we go through this series, the story, we're really looking at God and who He is and His character and part of knowing who God is and making Him Lord in our life is recognizing and trusting that He gives us what we need and not just what we want. You see this land, this promised land, it was another vision to the Israelites of what the garden was supposed to be like. It was supposed to be this awesome. And for us, it's another image of what this life is going to be with Jesus eternally.

This is the end goal for us to live in the land of milk and honey. We see after conquering the nations across the Jordan, Israel, they are given rest. And then Joshua passes away, and then we skip all the way to Joshua 24, where it says, "Israel served the Lord throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had experienced everything the Lord had done with for Israel." And then to me comes this almost saddest scripture that we'll ever read in the Bible.

Especially as a youth pastor, especially as a dad. It says this in Judges chapter 2. It says, "After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel. A whole generation knew nothing of the Lord of what he had done for Israel. A whole generation. I'm not saying a group in Angola, a group in Fremont, a group in Fort Wayne.

A whole generation of people knew nothing of the Lord or what He had done for His people. That's sad. That is so sad to me that there was teens, my kids his age that knew nothing about what God had done for His people. But that started a cycle because life becomes good. They feel like they don't need God. They disobey God. Do whatever they want and they turn away. God judges them for their sin.

They realize this is no good. We really need help. So they go back to God and they cry out for help. God delivers them and says, "All right, they finally come to their senses, but those same people then go, eh, life's good. I don't need God anymore." And then things get so bad again as they go through this cycle that there's a civil war in Israel and it's divided into two nations. You get Israel, which is the northern kingdom, and then you have Judah, which is the southern kingdom.

And then both of these kingdoms walk completely away from God, and they're both decimated off the face of the earth. You have Israel who gets beat by the Assyrians in 722 BC, and then you have the Babylonians who come around and they knock out Judah in 586 BC. Now, what's awesome is there are some Jewish people that do go back to the land under Ezra and Nehemiah, but they don't become an independent state until 1948.

1948. We're talking before Christ to 1948 before they become back together again. And guess what? We're fighting over the land again. We're in a cycle. We're in a selfish cycle. And so where are we at? Where are we at today? What we're left with is, guess what? God's people are a mess once again as we continue to keep fighting over this promised land. You see, God, because He loves us and He wants to call us back, He will keep sending people to shout the good news.

But yet we still find ourselves doubting this message, not believing in God's timing, and we keep the cycle going because there is a problem in this world and it's called sin. We all have it. And again, somebody hears that and says, "Well, yeah, there's sin. We hear about it all the time." But the question that we have to ask ourselves is, do we take it serious? Do we take sin in our own lives serious in an attempt to stop the cycle?

You see, God has a plan and his plan was to send Jesus and He did send Jesus to get rid of sin once and for all. And so in conclusion, what have we learned today? We'll never conquer that sin ourselves. We need help. We

need God's help. We have to rely on His promises and His provisions for our life. This is the exact reason why He sent Jesus so that He could be our Savior. But again, when we make Him our Lord and making the Lordship of our life is trusting Him with the who, what, where, and when.

His timing is perfect. God is the giver of every good gift. As James 1:17 says, "Every good and perfect gift comes from Him above." The best gift he has given to us, though, is salvation through Jesus Christ, to cover that sin that we could not do ourselves. It's funny, I was kind of joking around with some of the people in the booth this morning and they're like, "Josh, are you going to be able to give a message with almost no prep time?" And I was joking around, but I'm kind of serious at the same time.

It was like, if I got up on this stage and said, "We're sinners, we're in need of a Savior, and that Savior's name is Jesus, we can have church." At the end of the day, it's about Jesus. It's not about anything we can do, what we've done. Now Jesus has called us to go and share this message with everyone else, but it's about the name of Jesus. And I hope that if I can just stand up here and say, "Jesus," that would be good enough for us to have church. And so this morning, I just challenge you.

A simple challenge is for you to admit that you need a man named Jesus, to believe that what Jesus said he was going to do, that he did, and that we would confess that we are in need of Him every single day. I've been talking to our teens a lot about what does it look like to have Jesus in every part of your life, whether it's at home or school or work or sports, what does that look like? And I give you the same challenge as you go back to school, as you go back to work, as you go to the store, as you sit at home and pray about God's timing.

Where do you see Jesus in your life? My prayer is that we as a church would do so well of making sure Jesus is part of our day-to-day life, that people look at the church, whether it's the big sea church or Fairview Missionary Church and they go, I want that. I want to receive those same gifts, those same fruit of the Spirit to enjoy that in my own life. But the promise is that we are given a Savior, but will we make Him our Lord? Let me pray. Dearly Father, God, I just thank You for this morning.

God, I thank You for Your Word. God, I thank You for the stories that we get to read and just take advantage of. God, I pray as we read these stories, God, that they just wouldn't be words. God, that they would become our lifestyle. And so God, as you make these promises to Abraham and Moses and Joshua, God, I would pray that we would receive those same promises in our life today. And so God, for those people that are making that decision today to just rely on your timing, God, I pray you would give them the courage to do that.

God, for those people just saying, "I just need to spend more time with Jesus." God, I pray you would help them make that decision today and show them that time that they can spend with you. And God, maybe for that person here today just saying, "I need to start this relationship this morning." God, I pray that they would recognize that I'm a sinner too. I'm just a man that needs forgiveness.

But God, that you died and you defeated hell in the grave, and God, that you provided salvation for our sin. And so, God, I pray that we would just walk in that freedom today through a relationship with your Son, Jesus Christ. God, protect our eyes, ears, and mouth as they all lead straight to our hearts. And ask us in Jesus' name. Amen.