

• *God reaffirms what He is intending to do for Abraham*

After his great generosity to Lot, Abram was rewarded by a fresh experience of God. Earlier, God's promise had first come to Abram in Ur ^{☐1}. Then there came a clarification while Abram was in Shechem ^{☐2}. Now for the third time God reaffirms what He is intending to do for Abram ^{☐3}. The land of Canaan was full of altars for pagan gods. Abram has nothing to do with them; he is building his own altars for God. He is not on any multi-faith venture. He was in the programme of forwarding the kingdom of 'the God of Abraham', the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

^{☐1} see 12:1–3
^{☐2} 12:7
^{☐3} 13:14–17

There are three aspects to the promise being emphasized.

1. Inheritance of the land

• *The land defined*

• *God's encouragement*

• *The phrase "for ever" added to God's promise*

1. **Inheritance of the land.** The land has been mentioned before ^{☐1}, but now it is defined even more clearly. Abram is in the hill country near Bethel. From that high viewpoint he is invited to look as far as he can see. The entire land is for Abraham and his seed ^{☐2}. Since Lot has also just been looking at a part of the land ^{☐3}, it includes the area Abram has just allowed Lot to take for himself! God is offsetting what has just happened to Abram. Man's discouragement is followed by God's encouragement. Also the phrase 'for ever' or 'indefinitely' is added to the promise ^{☐4}. The territory of Israel and all that it stands for is being given to Abraham and his seed for ever. God is able to keep giving us promises. When men and women discourage us, God is able to compensate for what they say and what they do by speaking to us again and reaffirming His intention for our lives.

^{☐1} 12:1,7

^{☐2} 13:14–15
^{☐3} 13:10

^{☐4} 13:15

• *"Given the land" means enjoyment rather than earthly ownership*

In what sense was Abram himself given the land? He was always a stranger and a pilgrim on planet earth ^{☐1}. He was given the land partly in the sense that he was able to enjoy it. Christians are given the earth. I do not refer to worldly ownership. The promise has a spiritual meaning. We do not steal what belongs to others! We do not offend others by the way we use God's world. Yet the blessings of the world come to us. We inherit the earth – even now! All things are ours. Everything is organised by God so as to bless us. People bless us 'whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas' ^{☐2}. 'The world' is there to bless us. If we enjoy God, we enjoy everything! ^{☐3}. Life blesses us. No matter what happens it will turn out for our good, if we are the called according to God's purpose.

^{☐1} see Hebrews 11:10, 13–16

^{☐2} 1 Corinthians 3:22
^{☐3} 1 Corinthians 3:22

• *A foretaste of the future*

Also the land was a foretaste of the future. In the sense of worldly ownership 'God gave him no inheritance... not even a foot of ground' ^{☐1}.

^{☐1} Acts 7:4

2. The quantity of 'the seed'

• *Multitudes*

2. **The quantity of 'the seed'.** The people are mentioned as well as the land. In Genesis 12:1–3,7 it was clear that many people would be involved in God's promises. Now the number of Abraham's seed is spotlighted: it will be beyond counting, as much as the specks of dust throughout the earth ^{☐1}. Abraham's seed will become an immense number.

^{☐1} 13:16

Christians, the seed of Abraham, are part of a new people who will be overwhelming in their sheer quantity. We have not seen the end of the matter yet! When we finally see the 'great multitude' of people that have the same faith in God's promises as Abraham had we shall be

delighted and astonished at the quantity of believers. The number will be staggering and is totally beyond our imagination, 'a great multitude, which no one could count' ¹. Earthly citizenship is not eternally important. There will be no earthly citizenship in heaven. People may be proud of their nationality, their tribe, their surname, their culture-group, now, in this world. But in that day nothing of this nature will matter to us, except to be in the vast number of the saved.

¹ Revelation 7:9

3. The presence of the future

• Claiming the land for God

• He embraces in the present what is to come in the future

• Arise, walk - I will give it to you!

3. **The presence of the future.** Abram is to start enjoying his inheritance by faith, even in his own lifetime! 'Arise, walk about the land... I will give it to you...' ¹. He starts to respond to this invitation to explore Canaan even further.

¹ 13:17

Before this time his camps have been in the north, in Shechem, and in the central part of the land near Bethel. Now he moves further south, and makes his temporary home at Hebron ¹. Abram's altar building continued. We have seen previous altars ². Now he builds one at Hebron ³. North, central, south – he was claiming the whole land for God.

¹ 13:18
² Genesis 12:7, 8; 13:4
³ 13:18


It is to be noticed that the promise is 'to you and to your seed'. It is for Abraham himself, and it is for Abraham's seed. In verse 17 the words are 'I will give it to you'; Abraham's seed is not mentioned. It is typical of the Bible to tell us that we enjoy the future even now! This is what we can call 'the presence of the future'. Abram is to walk around the land of Israel and enjoy the prospect of what God is going to do. It is to be so real to him that it is as if he has the inheritance already. Although he has not strictly got everything God is going to give him, it is almost as if he has it already. 'Without receiving the promise' ¹ in the fullest sense, he sees it and embraces it and starts enjoying it ². Abraham will be personally blessed by God. This has a lot to do with faith in the future. It is a matter of anticipating the future, in a way that is so real to us that it is like being in heaven before we are in heaven.

¹ Hebrews 11:13
² Hebrews 11:13

God says to each believer 'Arise, walk about the land... I will give it to you...' ¹.

¹ 13:17

See Map in Appendix 1

 <p>slices.org.uk</p>	<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible</i> (PTTB) books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p>	
<p>These specially reformatted chapters "Slices of Bread" produced by Sovereign World Trust are available in three categories as set out below</p>		
<p>Slices for the Nations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For pastors, libraries and colleges in those parts of the world where resources are scarce and unaffordable In the fullness of time the whole series will be made available free of charge Weekly emailings of 3 - 4 Slices or available to download from the Slices web site 	<p>Slices for Sponsors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For those in more prosperous circumstances who can afford to contribute to the development of this material and its distribution with a small monthly donation The same material as Slices for the Nations Weekly emailings of 3 - 4 Slices or by download from the Slices web site 	<p>Slices for Everyone / Slice of the Week</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For those who wish to sample the material or dip into it from time to time, a proportion of the PTTB series is available free of charge Slices for Everyone (as a download) or Slice of the Week (attached to a weekly email) The remainder of the PTTB material is available to Sponsors and those eligible to receive Slices for the Nations
<p>To subscribe please contact: slicesofbread@sovereignworldtrust.org.uk stating which category fits your situation. Further details are at www.slices.org.uk Details of the availability of <i>Preaching Through The Bible</i> books and how they may be purchased can be found on www.ibtr.org.uk</p>		