

The Land of Canaan as It Is

by J.H. Collins

The sermon describes the Land of Canaan as a kingdom of God on earth where believers can experience heart purity, perfect love, and sanctification, and invites listeners to enter and possess this land.

Scripture: Genesis 13:15, Numbers 13:30, Malachi 4:2, Acts 2:17, Romans 8:28, Romans 12:1, Galatians 3:29, Hebrews 4:6, Hebrews 4:11, 1 Peter 2:9

Topics: "Sanctification", "Promised Inheritance"

Description

J.H. Collins preaches about the promised inheritance of the people of God, referred to as 'the rest of faith,' 'the higher life,' 'perfect love,' 'sanctification,' 'heart purity,' and 'the Beulah land.' Believers are encouraged to claim their right to possess this land of Canaan by inheritance through Christ, as heirs according to the promise. The description of 'the land of Canaan as it is' includes boundaries symbolizing inbred sin, worldliness, ignorance, and temptation, emphasizing the need to remain within its borders for safety. The delightful land is described as a place of beauty, prosperity, and peculiar inhabitants who are kings, priests, and prophets, reflecting the triune office of Christ.

Transcript

"Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." (Num. 13:30).

This inheritance of the people of God has been called by a great many names, such as "the rest of faith," "the higher life" perfect love," "sanctification," "heart purity," "the Beulah land."

These expressions, understood by the more advanced Christians, we use interchangeably with "the land of Canaan as it is."

We are glad to know that the kingdom of God is upon earth, and we are not inquiring of what that kingdom shall consist, and where it shall be located in the life to come, for "we know not what we shall be;" but our concernment is, What of the kingdom now? and what right and title have we to possess it at this present time? We answer: Our right comes by inheritance. The land of Canaan was given to Abraham and his seed, to be theirs forever. "For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever." "Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee." (Gen. 13:15-17). Now, as this land was given to Abraham's seed, we may claim it as ours, provided we are identified as that seed. Here we are not left in doubt: "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. 3:29).

St. Paul, in Hebrews, fourth chapter, speaks of the Canaan land, telling us that it remains unto the people of God. "Let us therefore," says he, "labor to enter into that rest; for we which have believed do enter into rest." Mr. Wesley thus describes it:

"A rest where all the soul's desire

Is fixed on things above,

Where fear and sin and grief expire,

Cast out by perfect love."

We are moved by two considerations to attempt a description of this land. First, the inheritance is ours. Second, "seeing that some must enter therein." "The land of Canaan as it is" is situated in the zones of this planet within the parallels of the longitude of the perfect love of God and the latitude of perfect faith. It is bounded on the east by the river of inbred sin, the course of which is winding as the folds of the serpent. It is bounded on the north by the mountains of worldliness, the high peaks of which are composed of points of honor, the lust of the eye, the pride of life. It is bounded on the west by the ocean of ignorance, from which arise many fogs of infirmities and mistakes. It is bounded on the south by the desert of temptation. Here the mirage glitters to deceive and destroy many travelers. It was in this desert that our Saviour was met by Satan and was "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin."

Hence we discover, from the dangerous character of these boundaries that the inhabitants of Canaan are safe only so long as they remain within their borders. As to the land itself, we are pleased to say it is delightful. Indeed, it is favored as no other country on earth. The surface is the best possible to conceive, since it was constructed not by ordinary and natural process, but was arranged on purpose by him who built all things. No monotony, no weariness to the eye; beauty loveliness, and sublimity everywhere prevailing. Mountains towering upon the one hand and valleys smiling upon the other. There birds of richest plumage wing their way through the atmosphere, or warble their praises from the bowers and groves. There brightest flowers grow beside the sparkling streams, and cluster near the promenades. The traveler through that land observes the lily of whiteness, representing heart purity; also the rose of perfect love, which sheds its sweet fragrance upon the air, not only delighting the spirit, but acting as a disinfectant, casting out fears "because fear hath torment." He hears "the liquid lapse of murmuring streams," he sees the honey shining in the rock, and is able to testify. Truly this is "a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass." (Deut. 8:8, 9).

In walking through this land I observed that it abounded not only in rural comforts, but also in prosperous cities, principal among which is Jerusalem, or the City of Peace. The inhabitants of Canaan I soon discovered were a peculiar people, unlike the other inhabitants of the world in disposition, in language, in dress; altogether, they are "a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus 2:14).

I entered into conversation with one of the citizens, who seemed to be very willing to talk of his interesting country, and was pleased to have a stranger come and settle within its borders. Said I: "Are you people that live in this land not given to boasting?" "Yes," said he, with a smile, "but not of ourselves, for we have nothing but that we have received. 'My soul shall make her boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.' Others may hear thereof, and do not understand, still we have learned to 'rejoice

evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks.'" Said he: "You see, these people are peculiar in their appearance. They wear crowns because they are kings. Their crowns are the tokens of their authority. They rule their appetites and propensities and passions; they bring their bodies under and keep them in subjection. You have read, 'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.' You observe these are priests as well as kings. (1 Pet. 2:9). They are priests to offer their 'bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is their reasonable service.' (Rom. 12:1). You see, furthermore, they have the appearance of prophets. This is that which was spoken by the mouth of Joel, 'I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and daughters shall prophesy.' (Acts 2:17). I do not mean that they prophesy in the sense of foretelling future events; for 'he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, exhortation, and comfort.' These people can thus speak; their tongues are unloosed, and they testify to the wonderful works of God. Why, on the day of Pentecost they were in such an uproar that the people came running together, and said, 'What meaneth this?' Others mocked, and some thought they were drunk; and many a time since the same outcry has been made against them." "But," said I to my instructor, "how is it that these persons have this triune office of prophet, priest and king?" "This," said he, as he looked into the Word of God, "is conferred upon them that they may be like their Elder Brother, who himself filled these three offices in an eminent degree. You will find it explained in Hebrews 2:11: 'For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.' "

My companion now pointed forward, and said: "You now see before you a wonderful river. It is clear as crystal. 'The streams whereof shall make glad the city of God.' (Ps. 46:4). This river is sometimes called the 'river of water of life.' Another and most appropriate name for it is the 'river of the will of God.' What is remarkable about this 'river of the will of God' is that it controls everything in this delightful country. It gives life and growth to the trees, and makes them ever green and ever laden with fruit. By drinking of this river, the people here are saved from fretfulness and anxious thoughts. Their burdens here fall off and are borne away on these rapid currents. It sweetens their tempers and gladdens their hearts and dries up their tears. The effect of this river is to cause those who drink to say, 'Thy will be done,' and to know that it is done in their hearts as it is in heaven -- not that it always removes afflictions, but they rest in the assurance that 'all things work together for their good.' (Rom. 8:28). Hence, they glory in tribulation. There was one of these people who had a thorn piercing his flesh; but while drinking of this wondrous river he gloried in his infirmity, and found that grace was sufficient. On another occasion two persons who drank of this water were put in prison, and their feet made fast in the stocks; but I understand they prayed and sang praises in the midnight hour. I now call your attention," said my obliging friend, "to the light which falls upon this country. It is true the natural sun dispenses his light; but these are not dependent upon him, for the Sun of righteousness shines upon them with healing in his wings. (Mal. 4:2.) Clouds may shut out the natural light, but their Sun of righteousness shines through clouds, and never goes down. So these continually walk in the light, as he is in the light, and have fellowship one with another, 'and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' And glory be to the worthy name of Jesus, this country is hard by heaven above, so that the breezes which blow from heaven bear hither sweet odors from the King's gardens! Yes; heaven is in sight, and our people have no trouble to go there when the Lord calls them. They are ready at a moment's notice. The ladder which Jacob saw is set down here; and ever and anon bright troops of angels come down its rungs, and fly through our land on missions of love."

As I looked upon the face of my companion he seemed to be rapt in praises to God. "Bear with me," said I. "Since this is such a delightful country, why is it that the vast multitudes wandering in the wilderness have not come and settled here for life?" "That is easy to explain. These that are here have come from the

wilderness beyond the river of inbred sin. Some of them wandered there many years. Those that still remain in the wilderness enter not in because of unbelief. (Heb. 4:6). It is quite a trial to step into that river, for the stream is not divided until their feet are placed in the waters. Many hesitate, and say, 'O! if I could only see the waters parted, then I would step in;' and thus they are kept back by unbelief. Others, again, are hindered by the fear of man; for those who wrote over the cross of the Saviour in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin are still in authority, and they write in all languages upon the sign-board by the river, 'All who come this way are fools, cranks, mad-men, and fanatics.' But, thank God, there are many determined to obey God rather than men, and they get safely over. Many Joshuas are now gone to the wilderness, bearing with them the grapes of Eshcol. Their mission is to encourage the people to enter Canaan as it is; for they say, 'Let us at once go up, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.'

Then I said in my soul: "Bless the Lord, I am resolved to remain in it! Yes; glory to God, I will take a pre-emption right, and live here forever!

"I can see far down the mountain, where I wandered many years,

Often hindered in my journey by the ghost of doubts and fears.

Broken vows and disappointments thickly sprinkled all the way,

But the Spirit led unerring to the land I hold today.

Is not this the land of Beulah, blessed, blessed land of light,

Where the flowers bloom forever, and the sun is always bright?"

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