

We Are Not Home

Genesis 15

By faith [Abraham] lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went 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 a city for them.
(Hebrews 11:9-10, 13-16, NASB)

Abraham was heir to some of the most magnificent promises God ever made to a human being. Yet he didn't see them fulfilled in his lifetime. He was to be the father of a great nation, but his single heir wasn't born till he was one hundred years old. The promised land was to belong to his seed, but he spent his entire life living in tents, moving from place to place. The only land he ever owned was a burial plot for his wife.

He lived as an alien, a stranger, a foreigner, an exile, always temporary, always in a strange land, never a citizen, never belonging.

But he was not alone. The biblical history of God's people is permeated with the pain of separation. Adam and Eve were forced out of their garden home, never to return. Noah lost everything and everyone in the flood, except for seven members of his immediate family. Joseph's own brothers sold him into slavery in a foreign land. Moses lost his Jewish family, then his home in the Egyptian palace, then spent eighty years in a brutal wilderness—forty as a shepherd, and another forty leading a rebellious people. Israel spent 400 years in a foreign land, much of that as slaves, then later lost their home, their nationhood, and their dignity in a bitter exile. The prophets, John the Baptist, Jesus, the disciples, the Apostle Paul, all knew the gnawing sorrow of separation, of living where they never belonged.

We know that deep sorrow as well. Many of us know what it's like to live much, or all, of our lives where we know we are not home.

All of us know the restless yearning of separation from our Father, our Creator. We groan under our troubles and sufferings, longing for perfect peace in Him. Even the joy

of His presence makes us conscious that we are not yet completely, constantly one with Him. Each taste of Him increases our sense of separation and longing.

But realize that such longing is itself a precious gift from our loving Father. It creates a deep, undying sense of anticipation. Just as hunger focuses all our attention on food, and as the thirsty can think of nothing but water, our separation from God pulls us toward the fullness, oneness, and completeness that will soon be ours in Jesus Christ. He is the longing that overshadows every joy. He is the joy that eclipses all suffering. In pleasure and pain, today and forever, He is our only satisfaction.

Every experience, every struggle in life can bind our hearts closer and closer to Him.

*The emptiness, pain, and sorrow
of our present existence continually remind us of this truth:
Jesus Christ alone is life as it was meant to be—
full,
rich,
joyful, and
everlasting.*

Hymn: [Longing for Home](#)

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