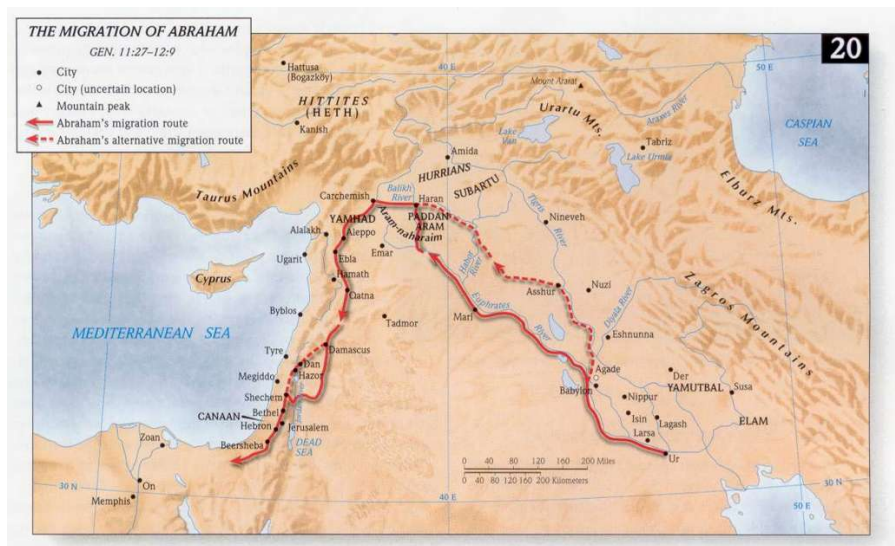




## Place: God's People Deeply Rooted In A Place

### - The Priority of Place in God's Plan

- **Place came before people—Eden...** God creates a beautiful garden, creates man, and places him there. God then gives man the task of enjoying it. Adam was called to live and work there *with* God, not *for* Him.
  - Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and **there he placed the man he had made.** (Gen 2:8 NLT-SE)
- **Adam was exiled from a place—Anywhere but Eden...** Next, God creates a partner for man, woman, and encourages them to enjoy the totality of the place He created for them. There was only one restriction. In disobedience, they crossed that line, were expelled from the garden and prevented from re-entering what was created to be their home forever.
  - <sup>23</sup> So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made. <sup>24</sup> After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And **he placed a flaming sword** that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. (Gen 3:23–24 NLT-SE)
- **Abraham was led back to a place—Jerusalem...** About 2,000 years later, God sends Abraham on a journey, led by Him and *for* Him. On this journey, He likely passed through the area where Eden was located (Genesis 2:10-14), but now changed forever by the Flood. **This is a picture of restoration**, not by Abraham returning to Eden, but trekking beyond that place to what would become the most significant plot of land in Jewish history, Jerusalem. The message was clear, "To your offspring I will give this land." It was a brand new start for Israel.
  - The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and **go to the land that I will show you.** (Gen 12:1 NLT-SE)



- Since Genesis 5 provides the ages of the fathers at the time of the births of the sons in the period between Abraham and Adam, it is a simple matter to **calculate the approximate number of years** during that time span—a figure that turns out to be about 2,000. In chart form it looks like this:
  - Present to Jesus — 2,000 years
  - Jesus to Abraham — 2,000 years (55 generations)
  - Abraham to Adam — 2,000 years (20 generations)
- **Israel was sent into exile—*Babylon*...**It was again time for Israel to get a “spiritual adjustment.” The people of God stumble into idolatry and injustice. God accomplishes this by allowing Nebuchadnezzar to sack Jerusalem and taking most of its inhabitants into captivity. While they were in exile, “the land (Jerusalem) entered into its time of rest” until the 70 years were completed.
  - <sup>22</sup> This is what the LORD says: “**Look! A great army coming from the north!** A great nation is rising against you from far-off lands. <sup>23</sup> They are armed with bows and spears. They are cruel and show no mercy. They sound like a roaring sea as they ride forward on horses. **They are coming in battle formation, planning to destroy you, beautiful Jerusalem.**” (Jer 6:22–23 NLT-SE)
  - <sup>4</sup> This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, the God of Israel, says to all the captives he has exiled to Babylon from Jerusalem: <sup>5</sup> “Build homes, and plan to stay. Plant gardens, and eat the food they produce. <sup>6</sup> Marry and have children. Then find spouses for them so that you may have many grandchildren. Multiply! Do not dwindle away! <sup>7</sup> And **work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare.**” (Jer 29:4–7 NLT-SE)
- **The Exiles return to a place—*Jerusalem*...**This is a repeat of Adam being exiled from Eden. All this was prophesied in detail to God’s people years earlier. Israel returns home to Jerusalem, rebuilds, and life goes on. And then the story is over...**or is it?**
  - <sup>14</sup> Now this is what the LORD says: “**I will uproot** from their land all the evil nations reaching out for the possession I gave my people Israel. And I will uproot Judah from among them. <sup>15</sup> But **afterward I will return and have compassion on all of them. I will bring them home to their own lands again**, each nation to its own possession. (Jer 12:14–15 NLT-SE)
  - “Then, after the seventy years of captivity are over, I will punish the king of Babylon and his people for their sins,” says the LORD. “**I will make the country of the Babylonians a wasteland forever.** (Jer 25:12 NLT-SE)
- **The Messiah was born in a place—*Nazareth*...**Situated inside a bowl atop the Nazareth ridge north of the Jezreel valley, Nazareth was a relatively **isolated village in the time of Jesus with a population less than two hundred**. Jesus spent his boyhood years in Nazareth before beginning his ministry when he was about 30. After moving his home to Capernaum, Jesus returned to teach in the synagogue of Nazareth twice more, but was rejected both times. On one occasion the townspeople were so outraged at Jesus that they tried to throw him off a cliff to his death.
  - <sup>43</sup> The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Come, follow me.” <sup>44</sup> Philip was from Bethsaida, Andrew and Peter’s hometown. <sup>45</sup> Philip went to look for Nathanael and told him, “We have found the very person Moses and the prophets wrote about! His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth.” “Nazareth!” exclaimed Nathanael. “**Can anything good come from Nazareth?**” “Come and see for yourself,” Philip replied. (John 1:43–46 NLT-SE)

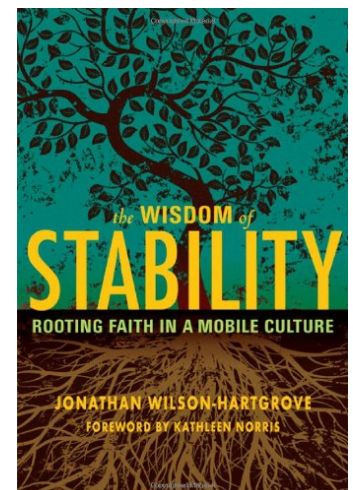
- **The Passion unfolded and the church was born in a place—Jerusalem...** Jesus' Crucifixion, Burial, Resurrection, and Ascension all took place in and around the city of Jerusalem. This location was again **the hub of the most important events in human history!**
  - <sup>3</sup> During the forty days after his crucifixion, he appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive. And he talked to them about the Kingdom of God. <sup>4</sup> Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, **"Do not leave Jerusalem** until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. <sup>5</sup> John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 1:3–5 NLT-SE)
- **The church is scattered from Jerusalem—Into the surrounding regions...** Through persecution, the early church was forced out of the city of Jerusalem and into the surrounding area. It looked like this was a going to be a death blow to the young believers, but it ended up being a catalyst for evangelism and the spreading of the Gospel with signs and wonders. You see in this apparent setback, the positioning for a greater advance and a greater display of his wisdom, power and love.
  - <sup>1</sup> Saul was one of the witnesses, and he agreed completely with the killing of Stephen. A great wave of persecution began that day, sweeping over the church in Jerusalem; and **all the believers except the apostles were scattered through the regions of Judea and Samaria.** <sup>2</sup> (Some devout men came and buried Stephen with great mourning.) <sup>3</sup> But Saul was going everywhere to destroy the church. He went from house to house, dragging out both men and women to throw them into prison. <sup>4</sup> **But the believers who were scattered preached the Good News about Jesus wherever they went.** (Acts 8:1–4 NLT-SE)
- **Jesus will return to a place—Jerusalem...** Jesus is returning, not hovering in the clouds, but to a place here on earth that is a familiar "landing zone" for God's people, as well as the Lord Himself—the city of Jerusalem.
  - The Good News about the Kingdom will be **preached throughout the whole world**, so that all nations will hear it; and then the end will come. (Matt 24:14 NLT-SE)
  - <sup>12</sup> And may the Lord make your love for one another and for all people grow and overflow, just as our love for you overflows. <sup>13</sup> May he, as a result, make your hearts strong, blameless, and holy as you stand before God our Father **when our Lord Jesus comes again** with all his holy people. (1 Th 3:12–13 NLT-SE)
  - <sup>4</sup> **On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem...** <sup>9</sup> And the LORD will be king **over all the earth.** On that day there will be one LORD his name alone will be worshiped. (Zech 14:4, 9 NLT-SE)
- **Jesus will restore a place—Heaven on Earth/Eden...** Everything comes full circle. Earth is restored during the millennial reign of Christ, the Great White Throne Judgement occurs, and the scene John is shown in Revelation 21 unfolds. What comes next? It's magnificent! This is what we were "born again" into...**Eternity with Jesus!**
  - <sup>1</sup> **Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth**, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. <sup>2</sup> And I saw **the holy city, the new Jerusalem**, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. <sup>3</sup> I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, **"Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people.** God himself will be with them. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever." (Rev 21:1–4 NLT-SE)

## - Exiles In A Mobile Culture

- HYPER-MOBILITY has caused us to struggle with **placelessness**. We struggle with this underlying cultural belief that every "advancement is moving us towards utopia." The result is that we rarely question advancement. "Oh, a new thing. Let's go!" As a result, this placelessness has become an epidemic. Everyone is looking for the ideal life, many through escapism, or careerism. What we are really struggling with is **rootlessness**.
- **The implications of *not* being rooted are worth noting:**
  - **How we find a church...**It used to be that we picked a church based upon location. When our culture was less mobile, we would find a church that was close, so we could not just walk there, but live there and work there. Now, we pick our church based mostly upon of **choice**, not place. The shift from proximity to preference has quickly become a breeding ground for **consumerism**.
  - **Recovering Parish life...**The lead pastor at Trinity Grace Church in NYC, **Jon Tyson**, defines the idea of "parish" this way. "A Parish: A geographical area of spiritual responsibility." You don't just live there, shop there, and play there, but **you follow Jesus there!**
  - **Many churches are two-dimensional...**We go for **God** and for **family**. There is a third reason to engage with other believers that is often missed. It is important for believers to have place in their lives. Deep down, we know that rapid change and constant motion are hazardous to our spiritual health. We long for that simple lifestyle that blossoms into fulness because it is **rooted in a place**.

## - The Wisdom of Being Rooted

- THE PROUD OF HEART REJECT WISDOM when they meet her. Others, like Solomon, let themselves be drawn away from her by the delights of the flesh. Still others, losing themselves in trifles through inconstancy of their heart, abandon her, being put out by the slightest difficulty. Why do they abandon her? **Because they have not sunk the roots necessary to stabilize them.** Yet how can they sink roots if they do not remain in the same place? Truly, the just person planted in the house of the Lord can become rooted and built upon charity only by remaining stable in one place. This is because he will not flourish or bear lasting fruit **unless he sinks deep roots.** ~ Gueric of Igny (c. 1070-1157)
- <sup>7</sup> "Blessed are those who trust in the LORD and have made the LORD their hope and confidence. <sup>8</sup> They are like trees planted along a riverbank, **with roots that reach deep into the water.** Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and **they never stop producing fruit.** (Jer 17:7-8 NLT-SE)
- **Let your roots grow down into him** (Jesus), and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness. (Col 2:7 NLT-SE)
- **The Wisdom of Stability:** Rooting Faith in a Mobile Culture, by Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove
  - **Stability...**does not depend on our ability to shore up crumbling foundations in the midst of change and confusion. Rather, **it rests on the character of One who promises to love us where we are.** Faith is a response to that love, rooting us in the reality of a God who is faithful.



- **Stability...**demands that we do the long, hard work of life with other people in the place where we are.
  - **Stability...**can begin to sound like wishful thinking, especially when we feel burned by people who decide to move on.
  - **Stability...**is a commitment to trust God, not in an ideal world, but in the battered and bruised world we know. If real life with God can happen anywhere at all, then it can happen here among the people whose troubles are already evident to us. **Maybe the single most important thing we can do if we want to grow spiritually is to stay in the place where we are.**
- **Preparing Fertile Soil for Courage to Grow**
- **Courage...**needs a place to manifest. It needs a place to establish itself and demonstrate the power and authority of God. Courage needs a place to display the faithfulness of God!
    - <sup>11</sup> And he said, “If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me, but if the Ammonites are too strong for you, then I will come and help you. <sup>12</sup> **Be of good courage, and let us be courageous for our people, and for the cities of our God, and may the LORD do what seems good to him.**” <sup>13</sup> So Joab and the people who were with him drew near to battle against the Syrians, and they fled before him. (2 Sam 10:11–13 ESV)
    - <sup>13</sup> I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD **in the land of the living!** <sup>14</sup> **Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!** (Psa 27:13–14 ESV)
  - **Abiding...**is a place where impossible things happen. When we abide IN Jesus the door to the impossible is opened and courage is release to walk through it.
    - <sup>4</sup> **Abide in me**, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, **unless you abide in me.** <sup>5</sup> I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for **apart from me you can do nothing.** <sup>6</sup> If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. <sup>7</sup> **If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.** (John 15:4–7 ESV)
    - “With man it is impossible, but not with God. **For all things are possible with God.**” (Mark 10:27 ESV)
  - **Stay!** Much of the success the apostles experienced in the book of Acts happened, not from going, but through staying. Many times, it took more courage and God gave more courage to stay than to go.
    - So **Saul stayed** with the apostles and went all around Jerusalem with them, **preaching boldly** in the name of the Lord. (Acts 9:28 NLT-SE)
    - <sup>42</sup> The news spread through the whole town, and **many believed** in the Lord. <sup>43</sup> And **Peter stayed** a long time in Joppa, living with Simon, a tanner of hides. (Acts 9:42–43 NLT-SE)
    - <sup>2</sup> Some of the Jews, however, spurned God’s message and poisoned the minds of the Gentiles against Paul and Barnabas. <sup>3</sup> But **the apostles stayed** there a long time, **preaching boldly** about the grace of the Lord. And the Lord proved their message was true by **giving them power to do miraculous signs and wonders.** (Acts 14:2–3 NLT-SE)
    - <sup>9</sup> One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision and told him, “**Don’t be afraid! Speak out!** Don’t be silent! <sup>10</sup> For I am with you, and no one will attack and harm you, for many people in this city belong to me.” <sup>11</sup> So **Paul stayed** there for the next year and a half, teaching the word of God. (Acts 18:9–11 NLT-SE)