

COME HEAL YOUR LAND

A Devotional Meditation on Matot (Tribes) and Masei (Stages)

Numbers 30:2-36:13; Jeremiah 2:4-28, 3:1-16, 29:5-14;
Deuteronomy 11:12; Psalm 122:1-9; Romans 8:18-23; 1 Timothy 2:1-7

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August 3, 2024

Prayers for revival often call on God to bring healing to people and to the land on which they live. Songwriter Robin Mark expressed that some years ago in his song, *Come Heal This Land*, in which he passionately petitioned God to bring healing, reconciliation, and restoration to his native Ireland. * His prayer for Ireland echoes the prayers of peoples around the world for the lands in which they live, and sometimes for their native lands from which they have been exiled.



Dead Vlei (Dead Swamp), Namibia.
Photo by Giovanni, August 9, 2022, [via Flickr](#).

It is good to pray both kinds of prayers. Regarding the prayers of exiles, God gave these instructions to the exiles of Judah:

Build houses and live in them; also plant gardens and eat their fruit; take wives and have sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters; and multiply there, and do not decrease. Also seek the *shalom* of the city where I took you as captives in exile, and pray to *Adonai* for it—for in its *shalom* will you have *shalom*.
Jeremiah 29:5-7 TLV

Paul may have had these instructions in mind when he exhorted Messiah Yeshua's followers about prayers for the Roman Empire. Here's an example:

Therefore, first of all I urge that requests, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be made on behalf of all people—for kings and all who are in authority—so we may live a peaceful and quiet life in all godliness and respectfulness. This is good and pleasing in the sight of God our Savior. He desires all men to be saved and come into the knowledge of the truth.

1 Timothy 2:1-4 TLV

That's great advice for everyone at any time. However, there's more to it than godly citizenship, as we see in the continuation of the passage from Jeremiah:

For thus says *Adonai*: "After 70 years for Babylon are complete, I will visit you, and fulfill My good word toward you—to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans that I have in mind for you," declares *Adonai*, "plans for *shalom* and not calamity—to give you a future and a hope.

"Then you will call on Me, and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me, when you will search for Me with all your heart. Then I

* Robin Mark's song, *Come Heal This Land*, is on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/l6WwsJHhucU?si=1dyPL-ZI8RzKXLAY>.

will be found by you,” says *Adonai*, “and I will return you from exile, and gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,” says *Adonai*, “and I will bring you back to the place from which I removed you as captives into exile.”

Jeremiah 29:10-14 TLV

What we miss is that God’s plan of redemption involves not just human beings, but this planet, as Paul explains:

For the creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility—not willingly but because of the One who subjected it—in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from bondage to decay into the glorious freedom of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans together and suffers birth pains until now—and not only creation, but even ourselves. We ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the *Ruach* [Spirit], groan inwardly as we eagerly wait for adoption—the redemption of our body.

Romans 8:19-23 TLV

This is why we pray for our lands to be healed. God redeems not only human beings, but the habitat He created for us. Our fall as a species brought the corruption that has kept this planet in continuous turmoil and decay. That’s why our lands fail to be fruitful, and why there’s so much strife over land ownership. It’s hard to say who are the indigenous inhabitants of any land. What we can say is that those who came later displace those who were there before them. It’s happened on every continent, and it’s caused untold sorrow. So, when we cry for God to heal our land, we should also be crying out for healing of relationships among peoples.

Which gets to another uncomfortable point from the Torah: the whole premise of Israel’s conquest of Canaan –

Adonai spoke to Moses along the Jordan in the plains of Moab across from Jericho saying, “Speak to *Bnei-Yisrael* [Children of Israel] and say to them: When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, you must drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you. You must destroy all their idols and cast images, and demolish their high places. You will take possession of the land, so you will settle in it, because I have given it to you to possess.

Numbers 33:50-53 TLV

We don’t like the idea of God commanding His people to drive out the indigenous inhabitants of any land, but here He is doing just that. Or is He?

Consider what Canaan land means to God. It’s the only land He says He cares for, and the only place where He chose a city as His own. That’s why we pray for the peace of Jerusalem. For reasons we don’t fully understand, God designated the land of Israel as the place where He would begin redeeming the earth and the people living on it. His next step was to choose a family to live there, and grow into a nation that would be his vehicle of redemption for all nations. Why He didn’t choose the Canaanites already living there is a mystery. Maybe that civilization had disqualified themselves through violence and wickedness, just as the civilization in Noah’s day had disqualified themselves, moving God to designate Noah as his instrument of redemption.

That's the story of Abraham and his descendants, and why God's bequest of the land of Israel is still valid. Just as Israel took possession of the Holy Land in antiquity, Israel's descendants, the Jewish people, have retaken possession in our day. As they have done so, the land has responded with an ecological resurrection that has made the desert bloom.

This process has only just begun. There's still much more land for Israel to reclaim and restore, and the cleansing of the people is a work in progress. Israel is still a secular state, with idols and iniquities that perpetuate the corruption of ancient times. But then, that's the case for every people of every nation, even Christian nations and Christian people.

This gets to the nexus of Robin's Mark's prayer for Ireland, and all our prayers for all our lands: they won't be answered until God's land is healed. Why should we expect God to restore borders, return exiles, execute justice, bring reconciliation and peace, send rain, and bless crops in all our lands if He hasn't finished doing all those things in His own land? And why should He answer our prayers if we continue to obstruct His work in Israel by taking up the cause of those who oppose His promises to restore His people to their ancestral home?

Maybe it's time to rethink this whole question. Instead of petitioning God to heal our lands, maybe we should pray that He heal His land, and then ask how we can help.