

A photograph of a stone church building with a large arched window and a cross on the roof. A flowering tree with white and pink blossoms is in the foreground on the right.

Weekly Newsletter: 17 June 2025

Reflection: Exploring the Promises of God

By Joe Barnard

In Genesis 13 there is a striking contrast of vision. On the one hand, we see Lot “lifting his eyes” and gazing at lush fields that look like Egypt, even the garden of the Lord. This posture represents what the apostle John labels the “lust of the eyes”. Lot’s heart is driven by tangible prosperity, the hope of securing happiness right now.

On the other hand, in the same chapter Abram also “lifts his eyes”. However, his vision is altogether different from that of Lot’s. His gaze is not directed by what is within his grasp. Instead, it’s the promise of God that captivates and focuses the eyes of his heart. God says to Abram,

Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted.

How strange it would have been to be Abram! At the time this promise was given, he did not have a single child; he did not own a square-foot of land. His only security regarding future blessing was the word of God. There was absolutely nothing else to anchor his hope.

And, of course, this is a position that is familiar to Christians today. Although we have a lot more grounds of confidence than did Abram (the Bible is no small gift!), there are still a lot of unfulfilled promises for which the only solid ground we have to stand on is the word of God. The hope of resurrection, of a new heavens and new earth, of the return of Jesus – these are all out of our reach and beyond our ken. Very little in the modern world reinforces such expectation. And yet, like Abram, we hope against hope (c.f. Rom. 4:18). We profess together that there is nothing firmer and more trustworthy than the integrity of an impeccably faithful God.

Now, the idea I want us to reflect on this week is what comes right after the reiteration of God’s promise in Genesis 13. God says to Abram, “Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you.” What a picture this is: Abram tramping through Canaan, exploring an inheritance that is both his and not-yet-his at the same time. Abram’s situation shatters the mindset so characteristic of human life. We naturally live by an ethic of *carpe diem*, seize the day. Such logic makes intuitive sense to us. Live for what we can enjoy right now. Happiness is not defined by expectation; it is defined by consumption.

But this was not the calling of Abram. Abram was summoned to live by tomorrow, not today. The horizon of his happiness did not just stretch out into distant years of life; it extended far beyond the grave itself.

I love the thought of Abram walking up hills, exploring valleys, wading in rivers – all part of an inheritance kept in reserve for a distant future. While the rest of humanity was striving to suck the sweetness of a perishable moment for as long as possible, only Abram could allow time to pass without regret. Abram and *Abram alone* could say with utmost confidence, the best is yet to come.

Thinking of Abram measuring by foot the boundaries of promise ought to inspire us to a spiritual practice. In Ephesians 3, Paul pens one of the most glorious prayers in the Bible. He petitions the Father that believers might be granted the strength needed to comprehend “what is the breadth and length and height and depth” of the love of Christ. Now, in praying this, I don’t think Paul is expecting us to be passive – as if the love of God will be mystically made visible like the sky after the rising of the sun. Rather, I think Paul is suggesting that we as believers have a wonderful privilege to do something similar to what Abram did millennia before. If Abram was invited to explore the dimensions of Canaan, which was the blessing of God, we have a calling to explore the dimensions of Christ, who is the greatest blessing of God. Indeed, this is the chief privilege of our lives. What could be more rewarding – or ravishing – than the happy task of searching the unsearchable riches of Christ! Like Abram, we ought to get busy walking up and down the Scriptures to look out for the far edges of our inheritance in Christ. The result will be breathtaking. We will begin to understand the significance of Paul’s words to the Corinthians, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him”.

Many of us are in hard places right now. Let me encourage us to follow the example of Abram. Don’t live in the suffocating narrowness of the present moment. Instead, lift your eyes to the horizon of promise and take time this week to explore the breadth, length, height and depth of an inheritance that can only be measured by God himself.

Robert Nelson

After 48 years, Robert Nelson has decided to retire from being an elder at Holyrood. No doubt, we are all thankful for the tireless way in which he has served the church and helped to shepherd the congregation. The stability of his presence and the wisdom of his experience will be missed. Please give thanks this week for the quality of leadership that God has provided for us as a church over many decades.

Are you ready for the Community Picnic?



Hospitality is one of the core values of Holyrood. Sometimes this looks like opening our homes up for lunch guests; sometimes this looks like a meal before a prayer meeting; sometimes this looks like having a hog roast and inviting the whole of the neighbourhood.

The Hog Roast was a huge success last year. Three things you can do for this year: (1) invite friends to come along **this Saturday (21 June) from 12 noon – 3pm**; (2) pray for God's blessing; and (3) *bring outdoor chairs or a picnic blanket on the day* if you have one.

The plan is to follow the same format as last year. Weather permitting, we'll have games outside for kids. The food will be served inside the church. There will be ice cream both indoors and outdoors.

Summer Plans

Joe and the family head to the US on Monday 23 June and return on Thursday 24 July. We are grateful to the following men for covering our Sunday services:

Date	Morning	Evening
29 June	John Pickering (Holyrood)	Andrew Yong (Chalmers)
6 July	Joshua Kellard (Banner of Truth)	Joshua Kellard (Banner of Truth)
13 July	Joshua Kellard (Banner of Truth)	Joshua Kellard (Banner of Truth)
20 July	Jon Gemmell (Holyrood)	Jon Gemmell (Holyrood)

Over July and August, our home groups will take a break and there will be a prayer meeting in the church every **Wednesday at 7pm**. No refreshments will be served before the prayer meeting over the summer months.

Summer Sunday Club and Creche will run over July and August. Please note that there will be **no communion at the beginning of July** and speak to one of the elders if there are any pastoral matters that arise in Joe's absence.

Summer Appeal 2025

The current total is **£4455**. Each year our Summer Appeal goes towards the support of our three Holyrood missionaries – Lorna Ferguson (serving with OMF in Japan), James Stewart (serving with OMF in Singapore) and the Sorsamo Family (serving with Wycliffe in Finland). The appeal runs until the beginning of August. There are two ways you can give:

1. Electronically via BACS payment to the church account:
Sort Code 80-22-60, Account number 12345666 and use the reference 'Summer Appeal'
2. By cheque or cash in the offering box marked 'Summer Appeal'

Please speak to Nick Archer if you have any questions about how to give. Thank you!



The graphic features the Holyrood Evangelical Church logo, a sun icon, and a group photo of missionaries. It lists the names and locations of the missionaries: Hannu & Hazel Sorsamo (Finland), Lorna Ferguson (Japan), and James Stewart (Singapore). It also includes the Wycliffe Bible Translators logo. At the bottom, it provides instructions on how to contribute: via bank details on holyroodevangelical.org or by cheque/cash in the offering box.

Summer Appeal 2025

Hannu & Hazel Sorsamo
Finland

Lorna Ferguson
Japan

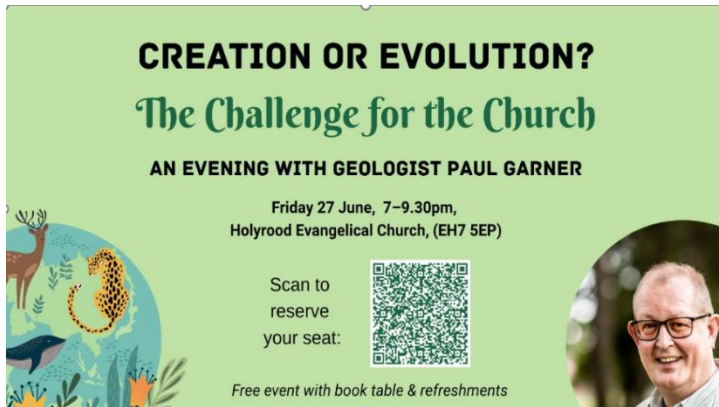
James Stewart
Singapore

To contribute please use the bank details on
holyroodevangelical.org (use reference 'Summer Appeal')
or cheque/cash in the offering box marked 'Summer Appeal'

Book Group

The book group will meet on 5 July (note change of date!) at 9 Craigentenny Avenue at 3.30. This month we are reading God on Mute by Pete Greig. Please contact Anncris if you have any questions.

Creation or Evolution?: The Challenge for the Church



How should Christians think about the issue of origins? Does it matter what we believe? How do we deal with claims that evolutionary theory has conclusively put paid to the notion that God created the world?

If you've ever wondered about any of these questions, then **Creation or Evolution?: The Challenge for the Church** has been organised for you! Come along to Holyrood on Friday 27 June from 7-9.30pm to an evening with geologist Paul Garner.

We'll be exploring the great relevance of the creation and evolution debate to the life of the Church today. Tickets are free and available [here](#).

The Pursuit of Holiness - Cross Training Men's Conference

Digital messaging is calling men to run after countless things: wealth, fitness, sex, comfort, materialism. But there is one thing that our world has no time for, holiness. Are you struggling with spiritual motivation? Do you wish you had a band of brothers to keep you focused on what matters most? Do you hunger to know God- really know God?

Join us this September for a weekend gathering focused on the theme of how we can pursue holiness. Speak to Joe for further details.

When: 12-14 September

Where: Gowanbank (Scripture Union)

Cost: £95



Church Calendar

For your info and prayers:

- Wednesday: Prayer Meeting (and online) at 7pm. Refreshments served from 6.45pm
- Thursday: Betty Conacher's funeral at Portobello Cemetery at 1pm and afterwards for refreshments at the Kings Manor Hotel. Everyone welcome.
- Saturday: Community Picnic from 12 noon to 3pm
- Sunday:
 - Morning service at 10.30am – Joe Barnard preaching (live streamed) followed by the Creche, Sunday Club and Youth Prizegiving
 - Evening service at 6pm – Jon Gemmell preaching (live streamed)
- Monday: Baby and Toddlers from 10-11.30am (last one!)



www.holyroodevangelical.org

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