

Promised Land (On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand)

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On Jordan's Stormy Banks

This well-known hymn by the Rev. Dr. Samuel Stennett (1727–1795) first appeared in *Selection of Hymns*, a celebrated hymnal compiled by the Baptist editor John Rippon. Published in 1787, Rippon's hymnal also introduced in its enduring form Edward Perronet's "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name".

A native of Exeter, Samuel Stennett spent his childhood in London where his father served a Baptist church as pastor. In 1758, he succeeded his father in the pastorate of the Baptist church in Little Wild Street, London, where he served until his death. A scholarly man, Stennett received a D.D. from King's College, Aberdeen in 1763. Known also as a friend of the reigning monarch, George III, Stennett nonetheless refused political or social opportunities to devote himself to ministry. His prominence among the Dissenting ministers of London afforded occasions to use his influence with political figures on behalf of religious liberty. Stennett authored 39 hymns, five of which appeared in *Rippon's Selection* (1787). His grandfather, Joseph Stennett, had also been a prominent Dissenting hymn writer, publishing several hymnals reflecting his Puritan-rooted religion of the heart. Samuel Stennett continued the tradition, although with less passionate language of glory and grace than had marked his grandfather's Puritan-influenced notions of Christian experience.

Stennett wrote seven stanzas for "On Jordan's Stormy Banks". The hymn is also known by the title Stennett gave it, "Promised Land." Critics have noted that "Promised Land" echoes a well-known hymn by Isaac Watts, "There Is a Land of Pure Delight." More than any other of Stennett's hymns, "Promised Land" found enormous popularity in 19th-century America. Its acceptance by American Methodists and its subsequent use in camp meetings and brush arbors help account for this. The hymn has appeared in each American Methodist hymnal since Francis Asbury included it in his *Supplement to the Pocket Hymn Book* (1808). Stennett's eight stanzas are generally reduced to three or four, and several of these may be slightly altered. The song found its way into the 1835 *Southern Harmony* and is part of the American shape note tradition. At some times in American history, evangelicals have reinterpreted Stennett's biblical metaphors with a this-worldly eye toward the promised land just over the horizon on the western frontier.

"Promised Land" has been set to various tunes. Perhaps the best-known in the United States today is PROMISED LAND, a traditional early-nineteenth-century American melody with a strong resemblance to a once-popular dance tune. William Walker's *Southern Harmony* attributes the tune to

a Miss M. Durham. Rigdon M. McIntosh revised PROMISED LAND and changed it from minor to major tonality. McIntosh also added a refrain. "Promised Land" can be found in American hymnals in major or minor keys and with or without refrains.

David Ashley White

David Ashley White's sacred and secular compositions are widely performed and published. Sources for his frequent commissions include Piccolo Spoleto, the Texas Chamber Orchestra, the Mirecourt Trio, the Green Lake Festival, the Concert Chorale of Houston, Del Mar College, the University of Houston, the Houston Harpsichord Society, Houston Masterworks Chorus, the Houston Chamber Choir, and a number of churches and individuals.

White's hymns are found in a number of books, including *The Hymnal 1982* (Episcopal), the recently published supplement to that book, *Wonder, Love, and Praise, The United Methodist Hymnal*, Japan's *Hymnal for the United Church of Christ*, and Great Britain's *Worship Songs Ancient and Modern*. A collection of his hymns, *Sing My Soul: The David Ashley White Hymnary*, was published in 1996 by Selah Publishing Co.

White was born in 1944 in San Antonio, Texas. Holding a B.M. (oboe performance) and M.M. (composition) from the University of Houston, White received the D.M.A. in composition from the University of Texas at Austin. He is the director of the University of Houston's Moores School of Music, where he is also professor of composition and theory.

This hymn arrangement is sponsored by the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals (ISAE) at Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL 60187, through a grant from The Lilly Endowment. The ISAE exists to encourage and support research on evangelical Christianity in North America.

Promised Land

SAB, keyboard, flute, percussion, opt. cong.

Samuel Stennett, 1787

PROMISED LAND, American folk melody from
Southern Harmony, 1835; setting by David Ashley White, 2000

Joyfully, with energy (♩-ca.88)

Flute

Finger cymb.
Side drum

f

5

poco rit.

S.A. *mf*

On—

9

a tempo, with energy, slightly detached

mf

Jor - dan's storm - y banks I stand, - and cast a wish - ful eye to—

mp

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13

Ca - naan's fair and hap - py land where my pos - ses - sions lie.

Full unison choir *f*

I'm

17

Descant

I am bound, I'm bound for the prom - ised

bound for the prom - ised land, I'm bound for the prom - ised

20

land. Oh, who will go with me? I'm bound for the prom - ised

land. Oh, who will come and go with me? I'm bound for the prom - ised

mp *f* *mp* *f*

24 *f*

S.A. *mp* *div.*

land. There— gen - 'rous fruits— that nev - er fail,— on

B.

land.

f legato *mp*

28

trees im - mor - tal grow. — There— rocks and— hills and brooks and vales with—

f

Oh,— there are— brooks and vales with

f

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6

32

milk and hon - ey flow. I am bound

milk and hon - ey flow.

36

f Unison

to the prom - ised land. Oh, - who will - come and go with me? I'm -

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It features a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 32-35, and the second system covers measures 36-39. The piano accompaniment includes a prominent melodic line in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand. The vocal line is written in a soprano or alto clef. A 'Unison' instruction is placed above the vocal line in the second system. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is placed above the piano accompaniment in the second system. The lyrics are: 'milk and hon - ey flow. I am bound' and 'milk and hon - ey flow.' in the first system; and 'to the prom - ised land. Oh, - who will - come and go with me? I'm -' in the second system.

40

bound for the prom-ised land.

f Choir + cong.
All o'er those wide - ex -

44

f Descant
O God the Son for -

tend - ed plains - shines one eter - nal day; there - God the - Son for -

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8

48

ev - er reigns and scat - ters night a - way. I am

ev - er reigns and scat - ters night a - way. I'm bound for the prom - ised

52

bound for the prom - ised land. Oh, who will -

land, I'm bound for the prom - ised land. Oh, who will - come and

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56

go to the prom - ised land?

go with me? I'm bound for the prom - ised land.

f

59

S.A. *f*
No winds - nor pois - 'nous breath - can

B. *f*
No chill - ing wind - nor pois - 'nous breath - can

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10

62

reach that shore; sick-ness and— pain and death are

Unison

reach that health-ful shore; sick - ness and—sor - row, pain and death are—

66

feared no more. I'm— bound. I'm— bound. I'm— bound. for the

felt and— feared no more. I'm— bound. I'm— bound. I'm— bound for the

mp *mf* *mp* *div.* *mf* *f* *mp* *mf* *f*

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It features a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 62-65) includes a vocal line with lyrics, a piano accompaniment, and a unison vocal line. The second system (measures 66-69) continues the vocal and piano parts with dynamic markings. The third system (measures 70-73) concludes the piece with a final vocal phrase and piano accompaniment. A large diagonal watermark 'for review only' is overlaid on the score.

70 *f* *poco rit.*

prom - ised land, I'm bound for the prom - ised

73 *a tempo* *f*

land.

Choir + cong. *f*

When

a tempo

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77

Descant *f*

When—

shall I reach— that hap - py place and be for - ev - er blest? When—

81

shall I see my— Fa - ther's face and in his bos - om rest?

shall I— see my Fa - ther's face and— in his— bos - om rest? I'm—

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It features a descant section marked with a forte (f) dynamic. The lyrics are: "shall I reach— that hap - py place and be for - ev - er blest? When— shall I see my— Fa - ther's face and in his bos - om rest? shall I— see my Fa - ther's face and— in his— bos - om rest? I'm—".

85

I am bound for the prom - ised
 bound for the prom - ised land, I'm bound for the prom - ised

88

land. Oh, who will go to the prom - ised
 land. Oh, who will come and go with me? I'm bound for the prom - ised

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14 *Very slightly slowing*

92 *mf*

land.

S.A. *mf* *f*

I'm — bound for the prom - ised

B. *mf* *f*

land.

Very slightly slowing

96 *a tempo, energetically*

land!

f *ff*

a tempo, energetically

f *ff*

ff