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What does “territory” mean?

In the context of the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament, the word “hoz” (from the Swahili translation) refers to a territory, domain, inheritance, or possessions—everything a person owns or is entrusted with. It encompasses land, wealth, family, servants, influence, and even spiritual responsibility.

A great example of this is found in the life of Jabez, a man described in 1 Chronicles 4:10:

“And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, ‘Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!’ So God granted him what he requested.” (NKJV)

Jabez, whose name means “sorrow,” came from a painful background. However, he turned to God with a sincere and humble heart, asking for God’s blessing and for an expansion of his “territory”—which can be

understood as both material and spiritual increase. This included more land, livestock, wealth, influence, protection, and favor. Because Jabez honored God and prayed in faith, God granted his request.

Other Uses of the Word “Territory” (Hoz)

1 Chronicles 7:28 describes the territories inherited by the descendants of Ephraim:

“Now their possessions and dwellings were Bethel and its towns, to the east Naaran, to the west Gezer and its towns, and Shechem and its towns, as far as Ayyah and its towns.” (NKJV)

Here, “possessions and dwellings” refer to the tribal lands assigned to the Israelites. These were their God-given inheritances in the Promised Land.

1 Chronicles 9:2 shows how returning exiles from Babylon settled back into their ancestral lands:

“And the first inhabitants who dwelt in their possessions in their cities were Israelites, priests, Levites, and the Nethinim.” (NKJV)

After the exile, the people of Judah and Israel returned to reclaim their lands and live again in their allotted territories, emphasizing that land and inheritance were both physical blessings and a sign of God’s covenant faithfulness.

Spiritual Application: Guarding Our Territory

Just like in biblical times, God desires to bless His people with both physical and spiritual increase. However, there are conditions tied to this:

If we walk in obedience, like Jabez, and call on God sincerely, He can expand our territory—in business, influence, family, ministry, or spiritual gifts.

But if we walk in disobedience, like the Israelites who were exiled to Babylon, we risk losing what God has entrusted to us. Others may end

up occupying our “territory” (our calling, influence, or blessings).

Moreover, this concept applies not only in the physical realm but also spiritually. Every believer has a spiritual territory—your soul, your calling, your gifts, your ministry. If we allow sin and spiritual compromise, the enemy (Satan) can gain access to areas of our lives. As Jesus said in John 10:10:

“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” (NKJV)

Guarding Our Inheritance in Christ

We must protect our spiritual territory by receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and walking in holiness. When we do so, God not only preserves what we have but increases it. As Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:3:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.” (NKJV)

A Personal Reflection

So, let me ask you: Are you living within God’s protection and blessing?
Who holds your territory—God or the enemy?

The answer is in your hands. But know this: Jesus Christ is the only true source of lasting blessing and protection. Through Him, your territory—both physical and spiritual—can be expanded and secured.

Shalom.

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