

God's Promise To Abraham

God made three important promises to Abraham. *“Now the Lord had said to Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a **land** that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a **great nation**, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all the nations of the earth be **blessed**,”* Gen. 12:1-3.

Quite frequently world events provide an occasion for much speculation with respect to the Jews, Jerusalem, and Bible prophecy. This is the result of wide-spread notions among religious people that the Jews are yet, in some special sense, the chosen people of God, and that these promises are to be fulfilled. Well, what is the hope of the fleshly Jew today? Is he entitled to an earthly kingdom prophetically yet unfulfilled?

The Nation Promise

God promised to make Abraham a great nation, innumerable as the *“stars of heaven, and the sand which is upon the sea shore,”* Gen. 22:17. As a result of a famine in the land of Canaan the family of Jacob (Israel) went down into the land of Egypt and developed into a mighty nation. Solomon declared that this promise was fulfilled in his day. *“Now, O Lord God, let thy promise unto David my father be established; for thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth for multitude,”* 2 Chron. 1:9. *“Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude,”* I Kgs. 4:20.

The Land Promise

*“And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give **this land**,”* Gen. 12:7. God promised to give Abraham's descendants the land *“From the river of Egypt unto the great river the river Euphrates,”* Gen. 15:18.

Jacob (a grandson of Abram) and his family, went down into the land of Egypt to escape death in a seven year famine. There they remained and eventually found themselves in bondage to the government of the land. God then raised up Moses, who under God's direction, led these people out of Egypt. After wandering 40 years in the wilderness because of unbelief, they finally were led to the east bank of the Jordan River. Here Moses, by reason of death, was removed as their leader. God selected Joshua to succeed Moses. Joshua led Israel into **this land** and helped them conquer what God had promised.

Joshua said, *“And the Lord gave unto Israel **all** the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein... There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the houses of Israel; **all came to pass**,”* Joshua 21:43,45. Concerning God's promise Joshua said, *“not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you,”* Josh. 23:14. Solomon reigned over all the land with the dimensions God had promised.; *“And Solomon reigned over all the kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt,”* I Kgs. 4:21. So we can readily see that God kept His promise to Abraham.

The Restoration Promises:

Although God had brought the Israelites from Egypt and firmly established them in the

promised land, they did not obey the system of law He gave them. Nehemiah speaks of this condition: *“Nevertheless they were disobedient and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs, and slew the prophets which testified against thee to turn them to thee,”* Neh. 9:6.

About 700 B.C., The prophet Isaiah foretold the fall of Israel as a nation to the Babylonians. He said they would be taken and exiled, but he also foretold their return. Isaiah gave the name of the King of Persia, saying, Cyrus would allow the Jews to return to their own land, to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple, Isa. 44:28.

About 626 B.C. Jeremiah prophesied the fall of Jerusalem, urging the Jews to surrender the city to the king of Babylon and promised they would someday return, Jer. 16:15. However, Jeremiah prophesied that Israel would never again occupy the land as they once had, but rather would be like a broken vessel *“which cannot be made whole again,”* Jer. 19:11-12.

Later, after Jerusalem had fallen and the people were carried to exile in Babylon, God spoke through Ezekiel promising: *“I will take you from among the heathen and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land,”* Ezek. 36:24. Most of the scriptures being quoted today about Israel’s return to the land, are these **already** fulfilled, when Israel returned from Babylonian captivity (606-536 B.C.).

By carefully reading 2 Chron 36:11-12 we can easily learn that God said they would be returned to the land at the end of 70 years. This simply means that 70 years after Jerusalem was overthrown by Nebuchadnezzar and the people taken to Babylon, God would cause them to be released from captivity and returned to their own land,. When they returned they would rebuild the city and the temple. When the 70 years were completed, God said in verse 20, *“And them that had escaped the sword carried he away to Babylon where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia.”*

Then in verses 22-23, we are told of the reign of Cyrus, King of Persia, who in the first year of his reign, made a proclamation that the Jews would return to the land and rebuild their capital city, Jerusalem and the temple. This was done. The record of it is found in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Men today are preaching that the promise is on the verge of being fulfilled, that 70 years did not mean 70 years at all, and God has yet to keep the promise He said He would fulfill 70 years later.

The Spiritual Seed Promise

God told Abraham, *“In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed,”* Gen. 12:3. Paul proclaims the **spiritual meaning** of the promise God made to Abraham, *“for ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond or free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to **the promise**,”* Gal. 3:26-29. Paul was not speaking of a temporal earthly kingdom. He was not speaking of a fleshly chosen race who would be sole heirs of the promise. Those who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. In Him there is no distinction made between the various classifications mentioned as far as their spiritual relationship to the Lord is concerned. They are all made to comprise one body in the sight of God.

The Jews are now as Gentiles in God’s sight. Hear Paul, *“For there is no difference*

between the Jew and the Greek,” Rom. 10:12. God’s Jew (or Israel) today, then, is not of the flesh but of the faith, the kind of faith possessed by Abraham. “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew which is one inwardly: and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter,” Rom. 3:2-29.

We need not doubt that this seed promise was Jesus Christ. Paul made that precise point. *“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one. And to thy seed, **which is Christ**,” Gal. 3:16. Whatever hope a Jew can ever have, whether present or future, can be obtained only through Christ. This redemption was for all men of all nations, Matt. 28:18-20.*

God fulfilled His promises to Abraham. The restoration promise was also fulfilled. The return of some Jews to Palestine today and the state of Israel has nothing to do with these promises. Today, Jews and Gentiles may be blessed alike through Christ. The Gospel of Christ is the power of God to save both Jew and Gentile, Rom. 1:16-17. God’s chosen people today are those who hear, believe and obey Jesus Christ, Eph. 2:14-18; Heb. 5:8,9. The examples of conversions in the book of Acts show that the same was required of both Jews and Gentiles. There is nothing, in the future, in store for Jews that is not promised to the Gentiles also, For God no longer distinguishes between them.

Sentence Sermons:

“Sometimes the best way to answer anger is by silence.”

“Minds are like parachutes; they only work when they are open.”

“Believe it or not, groundless rumors can stir up a lot of mud.”

“The world crowns ‘success’, but God crowns faithfulness.”

“When you share joy you multiply it.”

By Everett Hardin