



The Seed Promise

By Keith Greer

When sin entered the world, man's future became dark and full of despair. But, God gave a ray of hope. "And I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and Her seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." {Genesis 3:15} By tracing God's promise through the Bible, we gain a clearer picture of His love and the provision He made for us through His Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

God's promise dealt with the seed of woman and the bruising of the devil's head. It would be more than 4000 years before the arrival of the promised seed of woman! What made the one who was the fulfillment of this promise so special? For one thing, He was born apart from the natural process; man was excluded from His conception and birth. He was the seed of woman. Bruising is representative of the resulting conflict between the serpent and the seed. The serpent would not be completely destroyed, but the seed would destroy his power (his head).

To trace the seed, we begin with Abraham. "I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." {Genesis 12:2,3} Later, after Abraham offered his son, Isaac, God reiterated His promise (Genesis 22:18). Abraham had two sons -- Ishmael and Isaac -- but Isaac was born to Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 21:12). Isaac had two sons -- Jacob and Esau, but Jacob was the one through whom the promise would come (Genesis 28:14).

Jacob had twelve sons and one daughter. In Genesis 37, we read that Jacob's older sons sold their brother, Joseph, into slavery and that Joseph was taken to Egypt. In our story,

one of the brothers -- Judah -- is very important. "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people." {Genesis 49:10} Later, we will see how Abraham's seed is part of the heritage of all of God's children.

Now, we need to look at the seed of David. David was the second king over the united kingdom. God's people were in the Promised Land, and He had blessed them with great prosperity. David determined to build a temple so God would have a dwelling place more suitable than the tabernacle. God told David that his son would build the temple, but at that time, He gave David a promise that is important to this discussion. "When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.." {2 Samuel 7:12,13} The promise to Abraham was renewed in David -- in a throne that will be in a kingdom that will last forever. The seed would have to be in the lineage of both Abraham and David.

About 300 years after David, the prophet Isaiah combined the promise made in Eden with the promise made to David. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son..." (Isaiah 7:13,14) Later, Isaiah commented on the government of this one to come (Isaiah 9:6,7). Remembering these two parts of the equation will help us as we turn our attention to the New Testament and the fulfillment of the promises. The passage of time does not mean that God had forgotten His promises, or that He was unable to follow through. God works according to His own timetable, and it was not yet time.

The Old Testament prophets wrote much concerning Jesus and His kingdom. "And in the days of these kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold -- the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure." {Daniel 2:44,45} During Judah's Babylonian captivity, king Nebuchadnezzar dreamed of a great image and its destruction. He pondered the dream's meaning.

The great image represented the four world empires -- beginning with Babylon. The Media-Persian, Greek, and Roman empires would follow the Babylonian empire. According to Daniel, the prophecy, which concerned a fifth kingdom that would never be destroyed, would be fulfilled during the days of the fourth world empire -- the Roman empire. This kingdom would have different characteristics than did the other world empires? It would never be destroyed, and its king would rule forever. This would lead one to believe that the fifth kingdom would not be a physical kingdom. "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." {Hebrews 12:28}

Daniel prophesied further concerning certain events surrounding the time of this kingdom. "I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and brought Him near before Him. Then He was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed." {Daniel 7:13,14} Daniel looked forward to the Lord's ascension following His resurrection. "Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." {Acts 1:9-11} When Christ went back to heaven, He went to His Father, the Ancient of Days, offered His blood, and received an everlasting kingdom over which he now reigns, seated on the throne of David. Thus, the promise made to David was also fulfilled.

The picture is becoming clearer. Slowly, God's plan is unfolding before our eyes. All of these promises, and God's eternal purpose are fulfilled through His Son, Jesus Christ the Messiah. God set these plans in motion. "But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons." {Galatians 4:4,5} Remember, God works according to His schedule, not ours. What made the time of

Christ the best time for God to bring His plan to fruition? To help unravel this mystery, let us examine some of Paul's teachings in the letter he wrote to the church at Rome. Everything God does has one purpose and meaning -- working His plan for the redemption of His creation.

The Gentiles had to learn that trying to redeem themselves through their own merit, or human wisdom, could not get the job done. Neither could the Jews, simply by having the Law of Moses, save themselves. Both needed a Savior, because both were under sin's bondage!

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." {Romans 1:18-20} In spite of all their worldly wisdom and theories, the Gentiles did not understand God or their accountability to Him. They were under bondage to sin and needed someone to show them how to be released.

Where did that leave the Jews who lived under Moses' law? Were they any better off? "What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God. For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect?" {Romans 3:1-3} Yes, the Jews were God's chosen people. God gave them a national law, but this advantage availed them nothing. Their disobedience to God's law put them in the same position as the Gentiles -- under sin's bondage (Romans 3:23).

So God's plan was needed to provide for both Jews and Gentiles what they could not provide for themselves -- redemption from sin. Redemption would come through God's Son -- not man's works. It was time for Jesus to enter the picture. "But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call

His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, God with us." {Matthew 1:20-23} Also read Luke 1:30-35. Isaiah's prophecy sees its fulfillment in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ!

In Galatians, the apostle Paul cements this reasoning. Remember the promises God made to the patriarch Abraham. "Just as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, in you all the nations shall be blessed. So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham." {Galatians 3:6-9} The ONE seed was Christ (Galatians 3:16). If we are in Christ, we are part of Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:24-29).

Remember the two messages preached by John the Baptist and Jesus Christ -- "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:15; 9:1). Jesus could not rightly receive His kingdom until he crushed and defeated Satan. He accomplished this when He overcame the grave (Romans 1:4; 1 John 3:8). God's eternal provision for the redemption of His creation is fulfilled in Christ Jesus -- the seed! The pieces are in place to afford man, after he sins and breaks fellowship, the opportunity to return to God. All of this demonstrates God's great love for mankind; and the Son's love is demonstrated by His willingness to die for us on Calvary's cruel cross.