

GOD'S PROMISE TO ABRAHAM

By Keith Greer

"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 12:3} When God called the great patriarch, Abram, He gave him some instructions and a number of promises. We want to examine God's third, and final, promise to Abram. This promise, the most important of the three, forms the center theme of the Bible's story regarding God's scheme for mankind's redemption. We know that God is faithful to His word and that He will accomplish what He promises. He renewed this promise on a number of occasions: (1) Before Sodom's destruction {Genesis 18:8}; (2) To Abraham's son, Isaac, following his father's death {Genesis 26:3,4}; (3) To Abraham's grandson, Jacob {Genesis 28:3,4}. It had great significance.

Retold in the gospel. "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.' {Galatians 3:7,8} This is the basic structure of Christ's gospel, which is to be preached to the entire world. Paul made this clear in his statement later in the chapter, "Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as of many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed,' who is Christ." {Galatians 3:16}

The promised seed lived in prophecy. Even while the Israelites were in Egypt, God was reinforcing the prophecies concerning Christ: "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} Could it be that the mystical Shiloh was Abraham's Seed? The prophecies continued: "I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him." {Deuteronomy 18:18,19} Jeremiah wrote, "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth." {Jeremiah 23:5} Isaiah made an even more pointed announcement, "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel." {Isaiah 7:14} We also have Isaiah's account of the suffering servant {Isaiah 53:1-12}.

One could continue reading in the New Testament, the fact that Christ is the Seed associated with the promise becomes even clearer. "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." {Matthew 1:21} Paul preached the truth concerning this Seed, "From this man's seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior-- Jesus--after John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel." {Acts 13:23,24} He often spoke of this promise {Romans 4:13,14} and told his audiences how to obtain the eternal inheritance {Galatians 3:26-29}.

Promises and blessings in Christ. "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." {Ephesians 1:3}

Can you see that everything pointed and led to Christ? Yet, God's final promise to Abraham pointed to the time when He would enact the final piece of the Redemptive Scheme. One can benefit from the spiritual promise to Abraham only by being in Christ. This was God's eternal plan before the world was even created to save ALL in Christ! Every step along the path of Bible history is leading us to the time of Christ and the fulfillment of God's remedy to bring man back into fellowship with His Creator. Let us take a little closer look at the blessings we can receive in Christ... More later ****