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*God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.*

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**Salvation Comes Through  
The  
Promised Seed of Abraham.**  
(2013)

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The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises  
But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

***Teach it, don't demand it.***

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## Salvation comes through the Promised Seed of Abraham.

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### Topics.

- In Abraham all the families of the earth will be blessed.
- The faith of the early fathers.
- No one has been saved by the law and grace and the Ten Commandments.
- The commandments of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Christ the promised seed of Abraham.
- Receiving the promised Spirit through faith.
- God's promises to Abraham.
- In Abraham's seed shall all nations be blessed?
- God will rise up a prophet like Moses from Israel.
- Abraham the father of faith to Jews and Gentiles alike.
- The promise to Abraham and his seed was righteousness by faith.
- Not all Israel are Israel.

**INTRODUCTION:** in the very first book of the Bible God promised Abraham with an oath that in his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed, this study shows how this amazing promise is still coming to pass and will continue to do so until the promised seed of Abraham returns in glory.

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### Genesis 12

#### In Abraham all the Families of the Earth will be Blessed.

Genesis 12:1-3 ----- <sup>1</sup>Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup>And I will make of you a great nation and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup>I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonours you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

#### In these verses God promised Abraham: -

- He would make of a great nation.
- He would bless Abraham and make his name great.
- He would be a blessing in all the earth.
- He will bless those who bless Abraham and curse those who dishonour him.
- In Abraham all the families of the earth would be blessed.

**NOTICE:** God's promise to Abraham was to all the families of the world (i.e., Jews and Gentiles alike) and not just the Jews as they and many others even today think. The climax and fulfillment of this promise will be when the Lord returns in glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign.

In the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) the dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done.

Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

**For further information see titles: -**

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

**God Promises Abram Seed the Land.**

Genesis 12:7 ----- <sup>7</sup>Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your seed I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

This is fabulous, here we see that the promise God gave to Abraham would be fulfilled through his seed (referring to the Lord Jesus Christ).

The fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham and his seed came through Abraham and Sarah who gave birth to Isaac who married Rebekah who gave birth to Jacob who took as wives Rachael and Leah who with their two maids Bilhah (Rachel's maid) and Zilpah (Leah's maid) gave birth to the twelve tribes of Israel (the nation of Israel) from who King David came and then through David came Mary who gave birth to the promised seed of Abraham the Messiah the Christ the Lord Jesus the Savior of the world.

**Gentiles would be Blessed by the Seed of Abraham.**

Galatians 3:6-9 ----- <sup>6</sup>just as Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness? <sup>7</sup>Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. <sup>8</sup>And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." <sup>9</sup>So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

Paul makes a statement that Scripture foreseeing certain events that would come to pass announced them beforehand, these climatic events that would change the world and were proclaimed long before they come to pass refer to God's promise to Abraham that "In thee and in thy seed shall all nations be blessed" (Gen. 12:3) (Gen. 18:18) (Gen. 22:18). God in this promise is telling Abraham that his seed (the Messiah, the Christ) will descend from him and that salvation to eternal life and glory would be through him. The Gospel that was preached to Abraham was that the Messiah the Christ would come from his very own loins and that by him all nations (Jews and Gentiles) would be blessed (made happy). Abraham not only rejoiced at this promise but by faith saw Christ's day and was glad (John 8:56).

This reveals the following two things to us: -

1. That Abraham's faith rested solely on God's word and the promised seed, (the Christ to come).
2. That Abraham's Christ is our Christ and our faith and blessing is the same as Abraham faith and blessing.

The Gospel (meaning glad tidings and good news) that was preached to Abraham is the same Gospel (though not with the same fullness of revelation) that we preach today The Gospel message that was proclaimed to Abraham declared the following two central truths: -

1. That all nations (both Jews and Gentiles) will be counted righteous, justified and saved to eternal life in the same way that Abraham was which was by faith and not by the religious legal system or works of the law.
2. That through him all the nations of the earth would be blessed (made happy).

(Gen. 12:3) (Gen. 22:17) (Acts 3:25) (Rom. 4:13) (Gal. 3:16).

When it is said that, "All nations will be blessed," it does not mean that every individual of all nations will enjoy this happiness, because not all are in Christ, nor do all have his righteousness imputed to them, nor do all have faith in him, there are many that will be condemned with the world.

The meaning of the words, "All nations," mean "Some of all nations," meaning God through Christ will save some Jews and some Gentiles from all nations in contrast to God saving Hebrews and Jews only. The faithful of the Old Testament looked with joy toward the promise of the coming of their Messiah the Christ. The following words that Jesus said to the prideful legalist religious leaders of his generation who rejected him shine a spotlight on this truth: -

Jesus said: -

- Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad (John 8:56)

And the author of Hebrews wrote: -

- For unto us (in the New Testament) was the gospel preached, as well as unto them (in the Old Testament): but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it (Heb. 4:2)

These statements of Jesus and the author of Hebrews reveal to us the following two truths: -

1. During the Old Testament era faith for salvation to eternal life was required by God in the same way as it is today.
2. Those who were faithful toward God were not looking toward a passing or short-lived promise, but rather lived with the anticipation of the coming of their promised Messiah the Christ. Though they did not have the fullness of revelation of the Gospel that we have today they understood that righteousness was by faith in believing the word and promises of God and in their excited joy and anticipated hope of the arrival of their Messiah the Christ.

They understood that like Abraham who was counted and accepted as righteous by God because of his faith and because his believing was fastened upon the word and promise of God that they also by faith would in the same manner be owned and accepted by God as righteous in the same way. The blessing of Abraham is that he was counted righteous by faith and it is by the same faith that sinners become children of Abraham.

### **No one has ever Been Saved by the Law.**

Galatians 3:10-12 ----- <sup>10</sup>For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the law and do them." <sup>11</sup>Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith." <sup>12</sup>But the law is not of faith rather "The one who does them shall live by them."

The Book of the Law refers to Moses Law, the Ten Commandments, the ceremonial laws and the Jewish laws of purification. Those who rely on the law for their righteousness and justification are under a curse because if they break just one law they are pronounced guilty of breaking all the law. This is because the law is such a hard taskmaster it requires every law to be kept if a person is going to trust in it for their righteousness and acceptance by God to be counted worthy of eternal life.

All who trust in the law are clearly placing themselves under a curse because it is humanly impossible to perfectly fulfil the law and those who do not perfectly fulfil the law are declared guilty and condemned to eternal death by it. This is because the universal law of sin and death states: -

- The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23).

This means whoever does not perfectly keep all the commandments of the law is declared by the law guilty and therefore condemned to death (2 Cor. 3:9). This is why being under the law is called a curse, but there is an eternal and divine law that by grace supersedes the law of sin and death, it is called, the Good News, because this law states all who trust in Christ have been granted the free gift of God which is: -

- Eternal life in the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 6:23), because, "The law of the Spirit of life has set them free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2).

This means that the law of sin and death has no power over those who believe in Christ and faithfully follow him. This promise is guaranteed because it is not dependent on our self-effort, but on our faith this is why the Scriptures state: -

- Faith is counted to whoever believe in God who raised the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead who was delivered up to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification (Rom. 4:22-25).

And why Paul wrote: -

- The promise to Abraham depends on faith in order that it may rest on grace and in this way be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring (Jews and Gentiles) (Rom. 4:16).

God in his foreknowledge and knowing human nature knew if He had made eternal salvation dependant on our self-effort there is no-way He could guarantee or promise it to any of us. This is the reason God in His great wisdom made eternal salvation dependant on faith and another reason the Gospel of Christ is called the

Good News. It is not the Ten Commandments that are at fault, since they are not only perfect, but express God's perfect will, it is our corrupt fallen nature with all its sinful dysfunctions and aberrations (self, ego, pride, greed, lust etc.,) that that are the problem since they prevent all of us from attaining to the perfection the law demands.

**Living by faith:** believes that God counts us righteous because of our faith contrasted to self-effort it is having the faith that Abraham had. He believed against all the odds, (i.e., he was one-hundred and Sarah was ninety) and didn't consider the condition of their bodies or their age, but rather chose to believe God's promise, so it is with us, the body is corrupted it is full of sinful dysfunctions and aberrations that limit us from attaining to the holy perfection the law requires. This is the reason we need to take our eyes off our bodies and stop relying on self-effort and fully surrender our trust to God's promise which proclaims: -

- With the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved because the Scripture state, "Everyone who believes in Christ will not be put to shame" for there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him because, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom 10:1-21).

**Shall live by the Law:** means that those who are going to rely on keeping the law for righteousness must keep all the law since if they break any part of it they will be judged by it, the law has no compassion and no grace if it is broken it without mercy declares those who broke it guilty and condemns them to death. Since Paul clearly understood that those who rely on being righteous by keeping the law will in reality be declared guilty and condemned by the very law they are trusting in it is easy to see why the bulk of his letters are spent opposing those who entice new converts to Christ back under the law and why he shines a brilliant floodlight on faith and grace.

**Grace and the Ten Commandments:** obviously God's desire is that we all aim to keep the Ten Commandments since they are an expression of His perfect will, but since the Lord understands we cannot attain to their perfect standard of holiness our aim is not to abide by them in an effort to earn our righteousness and justification (since we would fail every time), but rather because the Spirit behind the law is love, because each law protects a human being from harm.

In the book of Romans Paul states: -

- Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 13:10).

The Spirit of the law is to protect the innocent from physical, financial, sexual, verbal, emotional and spiritual harm. Those who know God aim to keep the law because it is the right and loving thing to do. It fulfils the Ten Commandments regarding man, and fulfils the royal law "Love your neighbour as yourself." Added to these it honours God and brings a good testimony to His name and the name of Jesus and the Christian faith. Those who belong to Christ aim to keep the law not to get saved, but because they are saved. They understand that righteousness that leads to eternal life is a gift of God that comes through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and cannot be earned by self-effort.

Those in Christ know that the law is splendid as a guide to an understanding of God's will, but as a means of reunion with God, the God we have sinned against, it is a hopeless failure, nevertheless both law and grace go together, the law without the Gospel is diagnosis without remedy, but the Gospel without law is only the Good News of salvation for people who don't believe they need it because they have never heard the bad news of judgment, the law is not the Gospel, but the Gospel is not lawless (Rom. 3:19-20) (Eph. 2:13-22).

### **The Commandments of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

- Micah wrote: "What the LORD requires of mankind is to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with their God" (Micah 6:5-10).

- Isaiah says: “The LORD loves justice, hates robbery and wrong doing” (Isaiah 61:8).
- Jeremiah said: “Those who know God practise steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, because it is in these things that God delights” (Jer. 9:24).

The great prophets Micah, Isaiah and Jeremiah clearly show us that the people the LORD loves are not only those who acknowledge God, but who also uphold justice, do not lie, deceive or make promises they do not intend to keep, but speak the truth, do what is right, show respect and give help to others when able and make choices that lead to peace. These are the things the LORD delights in and that bring His favour.

**Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount:** the constant theme throughout Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount is doing what is right before God by seeking the way of peace in all situations. Jesus calls Christians to treat people fairly and with respect, dignity, decency grace compassion, kindness, mercy and to be quick to forgive. This means living a life that honours God and the Lord Jesus Christ is about doing all we can do to protect people from harm and being dominated by the thought, “What action can I take or do that will help and encourage this person.” It is all about doing right to others.

This is the reason the message Jesus spoke on the mountain is referred to as, “The Famous Sermon” because the principals if followed not only by Christians but all humanity are the only way to peace (Matt 5). A wicked person is primarily one who deliberately and consciously denies the existence of God and does harm to other humans.

**For further information on Jesus Famous Sermon see: -**

- Matthew 5 in Commentary New Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

**Christ the Promised Seed of Abraham.**

Galatians 3:13-16 ----- <sup>13</sup>Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— <sup>14</sup>so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith. <sup>15</sup>To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. <sup>16</sup>Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his seed. It does not say, “And to seeds,” referring to many, but referring to one, “And to your seed,” who is Christ.

The words, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law) means that those who belong to Christ are delivered from the struggle of keeping the law by self-effort to be counted righteous by God and justified. The law has no power to judge those who belong to Christ, guilty or condemn them to eternal death.

The words, “Jesus became a curse for us” means that even though Christ never sinned he was nevertheless killed as a guilty criminal it is in this sense that “God for our sake made Christ to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor. 5:21). The Lord Jesus Christ became the ultimate sacrificial Lamb without blemish not only for us, but for the entire world. Paul's entire focus in this letter to the Galatians is upon convincing the Galatian brothers and sisters that God counts them righteous because of their faith and not because of their self-effort in keeping the Law of Moses and the Jewish laws of purification and their religious customs and traditions.

**Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree:** throughout history there have been sceptics who have used the following words, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree” to undermine the Bible because traditional Christianity accepts that Christ was crucified on a cross. Their argument is futile since what is important to God's eternal foreordained plan of salvation for all mankind is that Christ laid down his life for the world and that he died and rose again to eternal glory, what he died on is irrelevant to God's plan and makes not the slightest difference to the Christian message of salvation. Nevertheless the use of the word tree and the cross can be harmonised in the following two ways: -

1. Since the word tree as used in this verse comes from the Greek word (xulon) which can refer to a literal tree or any other wooden article, obviously the cross was made from wood so in this sense it was simply a tree cut and chopped into the shape of a cross.
2. The words, "Cursed is everyone who is Hanged on a Tree" (v13) are cited from the book of Deuteronomy in which the civil law of that era stated, "If a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God" (Deut. 21:22-23).

These words were written in a time when men deserving death were hung on a tree and not crucified on a cross since crucifixion only began during the Roman era. Added to this Paul is not citing a prophecy of Christ, but a civil law that existed under Old Testament law thus the expression: "hanged on a tree" in reference to Christ is simply a Jewish idiom that in this context simply means, "Put to death as a criminal."

**Receiving the promised Spirit through faith:** the words, "That we might receive the promised Spirit through faith" (v14) show that the promise Paul now has in focus is the promise of the Spirit, in the context of this chapter it is the Spirit of righteousness (also called God's Holy Spirit). It is the Spirit of righteousness that God imputes to all who faithfully follow and trust in Christ so that they can be set free from the imprisonment and captivity of the law and by grace be justified, forgiven and granted eternal life and everlasting glory. Paul's entire focus in this chapter is the gift of righteousness that comes by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul is trying to convince the unbelieving Jews that Gentiles who have faith in Abraham's promised seed the Lord Jesus Christ are now accepted by God and receive the same Spirit of righteousness as Abraham did.

#### **A Man Made Covenant.**

Galatians 3:15 ----- <sup>15</sup>To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified (Confirmed in KJV).

To convince the Galatian brothers and sisters that God's covenant/promise of, the Spirit (of righteousness) through faith (v4) is guaranteed to all who trust in Christ Paul points out that when people make a promise they swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes their promise is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath by Himself, so that by two unchangeable things (i.e., God's promise and that it is impossible for God to lie), we who have fled for refuge (in Christ) might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us because we have God's promises and the truth that he cannot lie as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul (Heb. 6:9-19).

#### **God's Promises to Abraham.**

Galatians 3:16-18 ---- <sup>16</sup>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. <sup>17</sup>And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. <sup>18</sup>For if the inheritance be of the law it is no more of promise, but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

The words, "Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his seed" show that there were more than one promise made to Abraham and his seed (the Lord Jesus Christ). Following are the ten promises God made to Abraham: -

**First Promise:** was when Abram was seventy-five and Sarai was sixty-five the LORD said to Abram: -

- Get thee out of thy country (Haran), and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: <sup>2</sup>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: <sup>3</sup>And I will bless



them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and *in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed* So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and *Abram was seventy and five years old* when he departed out of Haran (Gen 12:1-4).

Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed out of Haran (Gen. 12:4). Sarai was ten years younger than Abram (Gen. 17:17). The word seed comes from the Hebrew word (zera and zara) and from Strong's Concordance means to conceive a child and be fruitful. All the promises God made to Abraham use the word seed (singular in the KJV) and offspring (singular in the ESV) which immediately refer to Isaac, but through prophecy to the Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:16).

**Second Promise:** was when Abram was in Canaan, the LORD appeared to him and said: -

- *Unto thy seed will I give this land* (Canaan): and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him (Gen. 12:7).

**Third Promise:** was when the LORD said unto Abram, after Lot was separated from him: -

- Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: <sup>15</sup>*For all the land* (of Canaan) which thou seest, *to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.* <sup>16</sup>*And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth:* so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered (Gen. 13:14-16).

**Fourth Promise:** was after Abram rescued Lot and met Melchizedek, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision saying: -

- Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. <sup>2</sup>And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? <sup>3</sup>And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. <sup>4</sup>And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, *This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.* <sup>5</sup>And he brought him forth abroad, and said, *Look now toward heaven,* and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, *So shall thy seed be.* <sup>6</sup>*And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness* (Gen. 15:1-6). (Notice there is no mention of Sarah being the mother of the promised child).

In this fourth promise God counts Abram as righteous and promises him his very own son from his own bowels. The Lord gave this promise to Abram the same day Abram sacrificed the heifer (Gen. 15:9-10, 18) which was most likely sometime during his first year in Canaan. This would mean Abram was about seventy six and since Abram was eighty-six when Hagar gave birth to Ishmael (Gen. 16:16) it is almost certain Sari and her husband had been trying to have a child for ten years before Sari offered Hagar to her husband (Gen. 16:3, 16).

**Fifth Promise:** was when Abram sacrificed a heifer, the LORD said to Abram: -

- Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land (Egypt) that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years (Gen. 15:13) (still no mention of Sarah being the mother of the promised child).

**Sixth Promise:** is also the same day Abram sacrificed the Heifer the LORD said to Abram: -

- *Unto thy seed have I given this land,* from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates (the land of Canaan) (Gen. 15:18) (still no mention of Sarah being the mother of the promised child).

Abram and Sarah had been living in the land of Canaan for ten years (v3) and Sarah was still barren so she says to Abram: -

- Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. <sup>3</sup>And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, *after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan*, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. <sup>4</sup>And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived (Gen. 16:2-4).

(Abram was 86 when Hagar gave birth to Ishmael) (Gen. 16:16).

**Seventh Promise:** was when Abram's name was changed to Abraham when he was ninety nine years old.

The LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him: -

- I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. <sup>2</sup>And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. <sup>3</sup>And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, <sup>4</sup>As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. <sup>5</sup>Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. <sup>6</sup>And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. <sup>7</sup>And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. <sup>8</sup>And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God (Gen. 17:1-8).

God tells Abraham: -

- His everlasting covenant is with Abraham and his seed after him.
- He will multiply Abraham greatly and kings will come from him.
- Abraham will be the father of a multitude of nations.
- He will be a God unto Abraham and to his seed after him.
- He will give Abraham and his seed the land of Canaan for an everlasting covenant.

Seventh promise continued, God said unto Abraham: -

- As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. <sup>16</sup>And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her. <sup>17</sup>Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? <sup>18</sup>And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee! <sup>19</sup>And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him (Genesis 17:15-19).

When Abraham was ninety-nine and Sarai was eighty-nine God changed her name to Sarah and told Abraham that she will become nations and have a son, God tells Abraham He will establish His covenant with Isaac (the promised son born of a miracle birth) and his seed forever.

The exclamation of Abraham: "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" (v18) shines a light on the idea that Abraham would have been happy for Ishmael to be the heir. This no-doubt is because Ishmael is almost thirteen at this time and it is certain Abraham loved him as his own son (Gen. 17:25-26). The seventh promise continued, God says to Abraham: -

- My covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year (Gen. 17:21) Abraham was ninety-nine when God said this to him.

### **Eighth Promise: -**

- The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken. <sup>2</sup>For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. <sup>3</sup>And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. <sup>4</sup>And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him. <sup>5</sup>And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him (Gen. 21:1-5).

Abraham was ninety-nine and Sarah was eighty-nine when the LORD said to Abraham He will return in one year and Sarah will have a son. Sarah doubted God and the LORD said to her, "Is anything too hard for the LORD?" (Genesis 18:10-14). One year later when Sarah was ninety and Abraham was one-hundred the LORD visits Sarah and Isaac were born.

**Ninth Promise:** was when Sarah told Abraham to cast Hagar and Ishmael out God said to Abraham: -

- Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad (Ishmael), and because of thy bondwoman (Hagar); in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called (Gen. 21:12).

**NOTE:** Abraham is now one-hundred and is devastated at having to cast out Hagar and Ishmael his son (Gen. 17:25-26) who it is certain he loved as his own child and who, is now thirteen. No-doubt this is the reason for God's encouragement to Abraham and one of the reasons God told Abraham twelve princes will come from Ishmael and God will make him a great nation (Genesis 17:20).

**Tenth Promise:** this promise was given when Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac. It was God's last promise to Abraham. The angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven a second time and said: -

- Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. <sup>12</sup>And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son* from me. <sup>13</sup>And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind *him* a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. <sup>14</sup>And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said *to* this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen. <sup>15</sup>And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, <sup>16</sup>And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: <sup>17</sup>That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; <sup>18</sup>And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice (Gen 22:11-18).

In these verses the LORD confirms the following three promises that He had previously made to Abraham: -

1. He will multiply Abraham's seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore.
2. Abraham's seed will possess the gate of their enemies.
3. In Abraham's seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed.

Abraham lived one-hundred and seventy-five years then died and was gathered to his people (Gen. 25:7-8).

**Abraham's faith:** the first promise was when Abram was seventy-five (he left Haran) (Gen. 12:4) and lived in Canaan for ten years (Gen. 16:3) then Hagar conceived and one year later Ishmael was born (Gen. 16:16). When Abraham was ninety-nine, Sarah eighty-nine and Ishmael, was thirteen years (Gen. 17:24-25).

God told Abram that in one years-time Sarah will give birth to a son who they are to name Isaac (Gen. 17:1, 15-17, 21) so Isaac was born when Abram was one-hundred and Sarah was ninety (Gen. 21:5) and Ishmael was fourteen. The first promise was when Abram was seventy-five (Gen. 12:4) so if we accept that God gave Abram the promise of his very own son in his first year in Canaan (Gen. 15:4) and that Abraham was one-hundred when Isaac the promised son was born (Gen. 21:5) then Abram believed God for almost twenty-five years before God's promise of his very own son and heir was fulfilled.

**God counted Abram as righteous:** Abram was counted righteous, because he not only believed God's promise that he would be the father of a multitude of nations, have offspring who would be as the stars of heaven and the dust of the earth who kings would come from and who would inherit the land of Canaan forever and be heirs of the world, but also God's promise that the LORD would give him his very own son to be heir. It is interesting to notice that even though the LORD had spoken this promise of a son to Abram many times God never told Abram that Sarah would be the mother until the year prior to her actually conceiving. So Abram had raised Ishmael as his own son for thirteen years and it is sure that he loved him as his own child prior to Isaac being born and not knowing that God had another son in mind to be the true heir.

It is almost certain Abram for those thirteen years believed Ishmael was the promise son and heir since God never told him any different, nor did God tell Abram that Sarah through a miracle birth would be the mother of the promised son until Ishmael was thirteen years old. Yet God even though he knew Abraham did not have a totally clear picture of how God's promises were going to come about still counted Abraham's faith as righteousness. This shows that Abraham's faith in believing against all odds was more important to God than Abraham having a perfectly clear understanding of every specific detail of how God was going to bring the promises to pass. The fact Abraham had a clouded understanding of who the promised son was did not stop God from counting him as righteous nor did it hinder God from bringing the perfection of the promise to pass.

This should teach us all that providing faith has the broad picture of God's promise it will be counted to those who are trusting in Christ as righteous despite the fact it does not have absolute clarity of how God's promises will come to pass. This is because God's grace covers that which is out of focus. To have the faith of Abraham does not mean we have to have perfect understanding, but it does mean we have to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for our righteousness in contrast to trusting in our own self-effort or any religious act or practise we may be faithfully performing. The thing God loved in Abraham was not his intellectual knowledge, but the spiritual muscle of his faith.

Even though Abraham thought the true promised son was Ishmael up until Isaac the true child of promise came God counted his faith as righteousness. There is a fabulous lesson we can learn from this i.e., whoever has faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (howbeit clouded) when the Lord does arrive in majestic glory we all like Abraham will accept with overwhelming joy his appearing when we see him face to face and Christ like God did to Abraham will continue to count us as his brothers and sisters clothed in righteous because of our faith in him despite our limited understanding.

Those who are of faith of Abraham are not only the sons of Abraham, but also blessed along with Abraham, the father of faith likewise those who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ become heirs in all the promises made to Abraham. God's delight in Abraham's faith shows us that even though we may have a clouded view of the Lord and how he will return, but are nevertheless faithful in our devotion, passion and faith toward him and patiently waiting with anticipated joy for him to return then that faith well be counted to us as righteousness.

#### **SUMMARY: God's Promises to Abraham.**

God told Abraham he would establish an everlasting covenant with him and that Abraham would be a father of many nations and God would make from his seed a great nation. Sarah would be called a mother of nations and kings would come from her. Abraham's son and heir Isaac would come from his own bowels and in Isaac Abraham's seed would be called and multiply as the stars of the heaven and

as the sand upon the sea shore. They would possess all the land of Canaan and the strongholds of their enemies. God would be a God to Abraham's seed and his seed after him. Abraham's seed will be an everlasting possession for God and he will be their God and in Abraham's seed all the families of the earth will be blessed.

(Gen. 12:1-7) (Gen. 13:14-16) (Gen. 15:1-6, 18) (Gen. 17:1-8) (Gen. 17: 15-19)  
(Gen. 17:21) (Gen. 21:12) (Gen. 22:11-18).

The Spirit promised to Abraham was the Spirit of righteousness. Everyone who accepts Christ by faith receives the promised Spirit of righteousness.

### Acts 3

#### In Abraham's Seed shall all Nations be Blessed.

Acts 3:22-26 ----- <sup>22</sup>Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. <sup>23</sup>And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.' <sup>24</sup>And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days. <sup>25</sup>You (the Jews) are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.'  
<sup>26</sup>God, having raised up his servant (the Lord Jesus Christ) sent him to you (the Jews) first to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness."

Peter cites the following words of Moses as recorded in the book of Deuteronomy: -

- The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen just as you desired of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.' And the LORD said to me 'They are right in what they have spoken. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers and I will put my words in his mouth and he shall speak to them all that I command him and whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him (Deut. 18:15-19).

Jesus Christ is the prophet God raised up like Moses. Moses delivered Israel from the bondage of Egypt (called the house of slavery), Jesus Christ is delivering Jews and Gentiles from the bondage of the law of sin and death which states, "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

**NOTICE:** Peter in his sermon said that God told Abraham, "In your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Acts 3:25).

**God will raise up a prophet like Moses from Israel:** travelling through the Old Testament we see that God through the prophets promised He would raise up His servant and as our journey through the Old Testament ends and we begin travelling through the New Testament we are presented with an Angel of the LORD telling a woman who found favour with God named Mary that: -

- The Holy Spirit will come upon her, and the power of the Most High will overshadow her and she will conceive in her womb and the child to be born shall be named Jesus and called the holy Son of God, and God the Most High will give to him the throne of his father David and his Kingdom will be eternal (Luke 1:30-35)

And now Peter is telling the men of Israel that Jesus (the one they killed) (v15) is the servant like Moses that God promised through Moses and the prophets that He would raise up (v22).

**Israel's wickedness during Jesus generation:** Peter in his sermon said, "God sent Jesus firstly to the nation of Israel to turn them from their wickedness" (v26). Following is a list of the wickedness that existed amongst the religious rulers of Israel during the time of Jesus (especially the chief priests, Pharisees, scribes and lawyers): -

- They were blind guides and hypocrites not practicing what they told others to do even though they held the most honoured place of religious authority (Moses seat).
- They were self-righteous and though they appeared holy on the outside were full of greed and wickedness on the inside.
- They oppressed others and perverted justice for their own gain.
- They ignored the poor and those in need and thereby neglected the love of God.
- They were prideful, loved the best seats in the synagogues and hearing their followers exalting and esteeming them as men of importance.
- They were loading people with burdens hard to bear that they themselves would not touch even with one of their fingers.
- They robbed people from the keys to God's knowledge and His Kingdom.
- They not only hindered those who were seeking God, but never entered into the LORD'S word themselves.
- God's priests and religious authorities were not in the ministry to serve God, but for their own selfish ambition
- They were full of self-indulgence and put legalistic rules and laws above grace, compassion and mercy shutting the door to the Kingdom of God to those who desired to enter in.
- They were leading the entire nation of Israel away from the LORD their God and His ways and when they did convert someone they made them worse than they were before and thereby were turning the people of Israel to a path of spiritual blindness, legalistic rules and a wrong way of living before God to such an extent that Jesus called them serpents and vipers (scorpions) (Matthew. 23) (Luke 11:39-54).

Though many Jews did turn from their wickedness and accept Christ as their Lord and Saviour the religious rulers (the chief priests, Pharisees, scribes and lawyers instead of turning from their wickedness increased it not only by plotting the murder of their Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ, but aggressively setting about to destroy anyone confessing or teaching the Lord Jesus Christ and in this way lead their nation away from their Messiah the Christ and Saviour of the world.

#### **Romans 4**

##### **Abraham the Father of Faith to Jews and Gentiles Alike.**

Romans 4:9-12 ----- <sup>9</sup>Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. <sup>10</sup>How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. <sup>11</sup>He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, <sup>12</sup>and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

God made a covenant with Abraham and his offspring saying: -

- Every male among you shall be circumcised and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised it shall be an everlasting covenant and any male who is not circumcised shall be cut off from Israel because he has broken my covenant (Gen. 17:10-14) (Gen. 17:23-27).

Though circumcision was a sign of God's covenant with Israel many in the Jewish faith had turned it into the means of salvation (i.e., as long as they were circumcised they were right with God), this is one of the reason for the lack of the fruits of the Spirit amongst many of the religious rulers of Jesus and Paul's generations. Notice it is our faith that is our righteousness, not our works (v9). Paul is using the fact that Abraham's faith was counted to him as righteousness before he was circumcised to prove to the unbelieving and doubting Jews and by extension all of us that outward works are a sign of righteousness, but no-matter how good they maybe they are not what makes us righteous before God, it is our faith that God counts as our royal robe of righteousness.

Paul points out circumcision was a seal/sign, but clearly not what made Abraham righteous since he was already counted as righteous prior to his circumcision clearly showing that even good works are only an evidence of the righteous that is acceptable to God and that leads to eternal life. The purpose faith is what God counts as righteous is so that everyone Jew and Gentile can attain by faith not works to this standard of righteous since we are all born with sinful aberrations and dysfunction that limit us from attaining to the perfect standard of righteous of the Most Holy God this is why we are saved by faith and grace and not works.

Paul is telling the Jews that even though they are circumcised they are still called to walk in faith as Abraham did to be counted righteous. This shines a brilliant light on the truth that the true heirs of Abraham are not Jews who maintain that salvation is by the law, but those who believe salvation comes by faith. Abraham did not become the father of many nations by works but by faith and it is by this same faith that we all become the Children of Abraham and heirs to the promise.

#### **The Promise to Abraham and His Seed was Righteousness by Faith.**

Romans 4:13-16 ----- <sup>13</sup>For the promise to Abraham and his seed that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. <sup>14</sup>For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. <sup>15</sup>For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression. <sup>16</sup>That is why it (the promise) depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law (the Jews) but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (Jews and Gentiles).

The Scriptures proclaim that all the world is held accountable to God and everyone transgresses the universal law which states, "The wages of sin is death." This means that wrath in this context refers to mortal death and ultimately to eternal death for those who stand before God at the great White Throne Judgment and are judged unworthy (Rom. 3:19) (Rom. 3:23) (Rom. 6:23). This is why God could not base the promise to Abraham on works because all of us have sinful aberrations and dysfunctions that cause us to transgress the law that is why God's promise had to be based on faith and not works of the law. God knowing that no human on planet earth could attain to the standard of righteousness acceptable to Him by works made the promise based on faith and grace so it was not dependent on our works and therefore could not fail (Rom. 3:19) (Rom. 3:23) (Rom. 6:23).

For further information concerning the great White Throne see, the title: -

- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.
- In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

#### **The Promise was for Abraham, Jews and Gentiles.**

Romans 4:23-25 ----- <sup>23</sup>But the words "it was counted to him" (Abraham) were not written for his sake alone, <sup>24</sup>but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, <sup>25</sup>who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

**Justification:** in this context means being declared innocent, acquitted and set free because of faith in Christ. Abraham believed God and God counted that faith as his righteous.

The words, "Abraham was fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised" (v21) is sometimes used to support the theory if we have enough faith whatever we desire will come into being, but Abraham's faith was in what God had clearly promised he was going to do and from this promise came the Christ. Paul in this chapter is using the faith of Abraham to shine a spotlight on the truth that righteous that leads to eternal life does not come by self-effort or adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days or by keeping religious customs and traditions, but by faith alone. Paul is highlighting the truth that it is by faith and not works that God counts a person righteous.

This is why faithful Christians say they are saved by grace and not by works and why not one of us can boast that by our own self-effort we have earned righteous. It was because of Abraham's great faith that God counted him righteous. He believed God and God counted that faith as his righteous. Acceptable righteousness before God does not come by self-effort and adhering to religious practises but by faith.

**The practical application of this for us today:** despite the oldness of Abrahams' body and the barrenness of Sarah's womb he believed God would keep His promise. Today our righteous comes by believing God's promise in Christ that by faith and God's grace we are saved despite the sinful aberrations and dysfunctions we know that we have within our fallen corrupted body. Paul warns us not to be ill-informed of this righteousness that comes from God and begin to go about trying to establish our own righteousness (by self-effort and religious works etc.) rather than submitting to God's righteousness which comes through faith in Christ who is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes (Rom. 10:3-10).

Righteousness that leads to salvation and eternal life has nothing to do with the law, self-effort, good works or the practice of religious rites, rather our faith is our righteousness it is like a royal robe that God has clothed us in, not because we are deserving of it or done anything to earn it, but because of our faith in His Son. Righteousness that leads to eternal life is imputed to everyone who puts their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**NOTE:** some may ask as the Jews did (at the end of chapter three), "If salvation is a free gift and has nothing to with the law, why not do away with it and do as we please? (Romans 3:31). Paul answers this question in Romans chapter six where he asks a similar question, "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?" To see what Paul's answer to this question is, see: "Romans chapter six" in, Commentary NT (ON WEBSITE MENU).

## Romans 9

### The Israelites are the Natural Born Seed of Abraham.

Romans 9:1-5 ----- <sup>1</sup>I am speaking the truth in Christ, I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit— <sup>2</sup>that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. <sup>3</sup>For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup>They are Israelites and to them belong the Adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. <sup>5</sup>To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

Israel has been a unique nation and God's special people, the LORD has always dealt with Israel differently to any other nation, He declared His word, statutes and His rules to Israel (the LORD has not done this with any other nation). They are children of Abraham the father of faith and because they are his offspring they were entrusted with the oracles of God and to them belongs the adoption, the glory and the covenants.

God says he gave birth to Israel and carried them from the womb even to their old age (Isaiah 46:3-4). He loved them when they were a child, and out of Egypt He called Israel His Son (Hosea 11:1). They were given the law, the worship and the promises, to them belong the patriarchs and from their race, came the Christ who is Lord over all that God created (Rom. 3:2) (Rom. 9:4-5, 7).



Added to this; the LORD called Israel His treasured possession and the apple of the LORD'S eye, his allotted heritage and a people holy to Him.

(Exod. 19:5) (Deut. 7:6) (Deut. 14:2) (Deut. 26:18) (Deut. 32:9).

Paul words, "I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit," means that Paul has a clear conscience before God in saying that he has great sorrow and unceasing anguish in his heart for the people of his nation Israel. It means that before God he knows he is telling the truth. Paul had great love for Israel, so much so that if it was possible for the nation of Israel to be saved by him laying aside his salvation he would gladly do it. Some scholars think Paul was boldly saying this because he knew it was impossible to do since everyone has to make their own individual decision, but Paul had previously stated that before God he has a clear conscience in expressing his deep sorrow and declaring his love for Israel. Perhaps to help understand the sincerity of Paul's words one only has to look at the enormous persecution, beatings, imprisonments etc., he suffered at the hand of the Jews in his continued attempts to proclaim to them the Good News of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**The beauty, majestic and stunning wonder of God:** Israel was God's chosen people, so much so that from them came the Christ we all love with overwhelming devotion and glory. Yet the nation that was chosen to be exalted above all nations rejected their promised King and Messiah, which resulted in God (through the apostles, especially Paul) turning His eternal favour toward the Gentiles (everyone who is not a Hebrew or Jew) and is now building a totally new nation in Christ made up of Jews and Gentiles in Christ.

For further information concerning this new nation in Christ, see the title: -

- The Commonwealth of Israel (at the end of this study).

**Not all Israel are Israel.**

Romans 9:6-8 ----- <sup>6</sup>But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel <sup>7</sup>and not all are children of Abraham because they are his seed, but "Through Isaac shall your seed be named." <sup>8</sup>This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as seed.<sup>8</sup>This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as seed.

The promise Paul refers to is the following promise God made to Abraham: -

- As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her." Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" (Gen 17:15-17).

Abraham and Sarah gave birth to Isaac, he took Rebecca as his wife and they gave birth to Esau and Jacob. Esau was the firstborn but sold his birthright to Jacob who gave birth to twelve sons who became known as the twelve Tribes of Israel and whose descendants are the nation of Israel. Paul is saying not all who descended from Jacob belong to Israel. Abraham's wife Sarah gave birth to Ishmael and Isaac and then later died after her death Abraham took Keturah as a wife and had more children (Gen. 25:1). Paul is saying only those who came through Isaac are counted as Abraham's seed. It is not the children of the flesh (meaning children born from Abraham naturally contrasted to the miraculous birth of Isaac) who are the children of God, but the children of the promise who are counted as seed (i.e. those born of Isaac). Sarah was ninety when she gave birth to Isaac and Abraham was one-hundred, Isaac was the result of a promise God made to Abraham and he came by a miracle birth that is why those from his bloodline are counted as Abraham's seed Ishmael and his children and the children of Keturah were of the flesh, meaning born of a natural birth and are not counted as children of the promise.

## The Commonwealth of Israel.

It is important to understand that the promised seed of Abraham and David is Christ, all the promises to Israel are now fulfilled in Christ therefore they are not limited to Israel only but extend and embrace all those who belong to Christ because God is now creating one new nation in Christ made up of both Jew and Gentiles. (Gentiles are everyone who is not a Hebrew or Jew) this means that Jews and Gentiles become one new nation in Christ (also called, a new man, a new creation, the church, the body of Christ and the Kingdom of God).

The Apostle Paul said: -

Ephes. 2:11-22 ----- <sup>11</sup>Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision (Jews), which is made in the flesh by hands—  
<sup>12</sup>remember that you (Gentiles) were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the *COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL* and *STRANGERS* to the *COVENANTS* of *PROMISE*, having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup>But now in Christ Jesus you (Gentiles) who once were far off (from God) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup>For he himself is our (Jews and Gentiles) peace, who has made us both *ONE* and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility <sup>15</sup>by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he (Jesus) might create in himself *ONE NEW MAN* (or Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles), so making peace, <sup>16</sup>and might reconcile us (Jews and Gentiles) both to God in *ONE BODY* through the cross, thereby killing the hostility (between the Jews and Gentiles). <sup>17</sup>And he (Jesus) came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) who were far off (from God) and peace to those who were near (Jews). <sup>18</sup>For through him (Jesus) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access in *ONE SPIRIT* to the Father. <sup>19</sup>So then you (Gentiles) are *NO LONGER* strangers and aliens, but you are *FELLOW CITIZENS* with the *SAINTS* (the Jews) and members of the *HOUSEHOLD* of God, <sup>20</sup>built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone <sup>21</sup>in whom the *WHOLE STRUCTURE* being joined together (Jews and Gentiles) grows into a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup>In him you (Jews and Gentiles) also are being built together into a *DWELLING PLACE* for *GOD* by the Spirit.

Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the, Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles). In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Christ is the head of this new nation and its Jewish and Gentile citizens are now equal in status before God since in Christ we are all brothers and sisters in the same eternal family that God is now establishing in the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all nations of the world.

### The practical application of what this means to you: -

If you belong to Christ, all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel also apply to you. The book of Revelation states: -

- When Christ returns in glory every eye will see him, even those who pierced him and all the tribes of the earth (Rev. 1:7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation (i.e., Jews and Gentiles) and he has made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:9-10).

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End