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**God's Promises
to
Abraham, Isaac
Hagar and Ishmael.**

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



**Learn
The Bible
At Home**

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

God's Promise to Abraham Isaac, Hagar and Ishmael.

Topics.

- The ten promises God gave to Abraham.
- Abraham was counted righteous before He was circumcised.
- One of Paul's greatest battles.
- God's promise Abraham he would be heir of the world.
- Abraham believed against hope.
- Calling into existence things that do not exist.
- Abraham was looking forward to the city whose builder is God.
- From Abraham were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven.
- Abraham's great faith.

FIRST PROMISE

The first promise was when Abram was seventy-five and Sarah was sixty-five; the LORD told Abram to leave Haran and God tells Abram he will be a great nation and in him all the families of the earth will be blessed (notice there is no mention of Sarah).

- **Genesis 12:1-4:** Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country (Haran) and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ²And 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. ³I 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." ⁴So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. (Sarah was 10 years younger than Abram) (Gen 12:1-4).

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SECOND PROMISE

The second promise was when Abram was in Canaan; the LORD appeared to Abram and said I will give to your seed the land of Canaan (notice there is no mention of Sarah).

- **Genesis 12:7:** Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your seed I will give this land.

Seed in this context means to bear or conceive a child.

THIRD PROMISE

The third promise was when Abram separated from Lot in Canaan; the LORD said to Abram that He will give Abraham's seed the land of Canaan and his seed will be as the dust of the earth (notice there is still no mention of Sarah).

- **Genesis 13:14-16:** The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, ¹⁵for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your seed forever. ¹⁶I will make your seed as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth then your seed also can be counted.

FOURTH PROMISE

The fourth promise was after Abram rescued Lot and Abram met Melchizedek; the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision declaring to Abram that his very own son shall be his heir and his seed will be as the stars (notice there is still no mention of Sarah).

- **Genesis 15:1-6:** After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." ²But Abram said, "O LORD God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" ³And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no seed and a member (Eliezer) of my household will be my heir." ⁴And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: "This man (Eliezer) shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." ⁵And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your seed be." ⁶And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness (still no mention of Sarah and Ishmael has not been born yet).

FIFTH PROMISE

The fifth promise was when Abram sacrificed a heifer the LORD said to him that his seed will go into Egypt four-hundred years.

- **Genesis 15:13:** Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your seed will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs (Egypt) and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years."

SIXTH PROMISE

The sixth promise was the same day Abram sacrificed the heifer the LORD said to him that his seed will inherit Canaan (notice there is still no mention of Sarah).

- **Genesis 15:18-20:** On that day (the day Abram sacrificed the heifer) the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your seed I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, ¹⁹the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, ²⁰the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim."

Sarah still has no children.

- **Genesis 16:1:** Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar.

Up to here Abram and Sarah had been living in Canaan ten-years and now Sarah tells Abram to take Hagar as a wife and Hagar conceives.

- **Genesis 16:2-4:** And Sarai said to Abram, "Behold now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. ³So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. ⁴And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress.

Thirteen-years after Hagar gave birth to Ishmael and God told Abraham that Sarah will have a son. Abraham was ninety-nine, Sarah was eighty-nine and Ishmael was thirteen.

FIRST PROMISE TO HAGAR FOR ISHMAEL

The first promise to Hagar for Ishmael was when Hagar conceived and fled from Sarah and the Angel of the LORD told her to return and that her seed will be multiplied so that they cannot be numbered for multitude and they will be against Israel.

- **Genesis 16:10-12:** The angel of the LORD also said to Hagar "I will surely multiply your seed so that they cannot be numbered for multitude." ¹¹And the angel of the LORD said to her (Hagar) "Behold, you are pregnant and shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, because the LORD has listened to your affliction. ¹²He shall be a wild donkey of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen."

The LORD tells Abram that his seed will be in Egypt four-hundred years and that the fourth generation will come out of Egypt.

- **Genesis 15:13-16:** The LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your seed will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. ¹⁴But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵As for yourself, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. ¹⁶And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

Hagar gave birth to Ishmael when Abram was eighty-six (Sarah would have been seventy-six).

- **Genesis 16:1-16:** Hagar bore Abram a son and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. ¹⁶Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

SEVENTH PROMISE

The seventh promise was when the LORD changed Abrams name to Abraham when he was ninety-nine and told him that His covenant is with him and that He will multiply Abram greatly and make him the father of a multitude of nations and give his seed in the land of Canaan for an everlasting covenant.

- **Genesis 17:1-8:** When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, ²that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly." ³Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, ⁴"Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. ⁵No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. ⁶I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. ⁷And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your seed after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your seed after you. ⁸And I will give to you and to your seed after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."

The seventh promise continued, Abraham is still ninety-nine, the LORD changes Sarai's name to Sarah when she is eighty-nine and said to Abraham that Sarah will become nations and have a son. It is interesting to notice that it appears that Abraham desired that Ishmael would be the heir. Remember Abraham loved Ishmael and has been living with him as his own son for thirteen-years, nevertheless God tells Abraham He will establish His covenant with Abraham and his seed forever.

- **Genesis 17:15-19:** And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. ¹⁶I 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." ¹⁷Then 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? (Abraham is thinking one year ahead to when the child will be born) Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" ¹⁸And

Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before you!" ¹⁹God said, "No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his seed after him.

SECOND PROMISE TO ABRAHAM AND ISHMAEL

The second promise to Abraham and Ishmael was when Abraham was still ninety-nine and God told Abraham that his wife Sarah will have a Son and that He will multiply Ishmael greatly and Ishmael will have twelve princes (sons) and become a great nation.

- **Genesis 17:20:** As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation.

SEVENTH PROMISE CONTINUED

The seventh promise (continued) was when Abraham was still ninety-nine and God told him that Sarah will have a son in one year's time and that He will establish His covenant with Isaac.

- **Genesis 17:21:** But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year."

Abraham circumcised Ishmael when he was thirteen the same day God told him Sarah would have a son.

- **Genesis 17:23-25:** Abraham took Ishmael his son and all those born in his house or bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very day, as God had said to him. ²⁴Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁵And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.

EIGHTH PROMISE

The eighth promise was when Abraham was ninety-nine and Sarah was eighty-nine the LORD said to Abraham that He will return in one year and that Sarah will have a son. Sarah doubts God and the LORD says, "Is anything too hard for the LORD?"

- **Genesis 18:10-14:** ¹⁰The LORD said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. ¹¹Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah. ¹²So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?" ¹³The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' ¹⁴Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son."

One year later the LORD visits Sarah and Isaac is born (Sarah was ninety and Abraham was one-hundred).

- **Genesis 21:1-5:** The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did to Sarah as he had promised. ²And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him. ³Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore him, Isaac. ⁴And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. ⁵Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

NINTH PROMISE

The ninth promise was when Abraham was one-hundred years old Isaac is born and Sarah has told Abraham to cast out Hagar. Notice the context seems to indicate that Abraham may have thought (or desired) that Ishmael would be the heir. This should not be surprising since Ishmael and Abram would have grown very close, remember they have spent thirteen years together as father and son. The context also indicates by the language that is used that God understood Abraham's desire for Ishmael to receive the promise. This no-doubt is why God says to Abraham, "Do not be discouraged, because it is through Isaac that his seed will be named."

- **Genesis 21:12:** But God said to Abraham, "Be not displeased because of the boy and because of your slave woman. Whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for through Isaac shall your seed be named."

TENTH PROMISE

The tenth promise to Abraham for Isaac was when Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and told him not to harm the boy, then the Angel of the LORD called a second time from heaven, and said He will multiply Abraham's seed as the stars. Then the Angel tells Abraham that his seed will conquer their enemies and all the nations of the earth will be blessed in Abraham's seed. This tenth promise is the last promise to Abraham.

- **Genesis 22:11-18:** But the angel of the LORD called to him (Abraham) from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." ¹²He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." ¹³And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴So Abraham called the name of that place, "The LORD will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided." ¹⁵And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven ¹⁶and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your seed as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies, ¹⁸and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."

ABRAHAM'S DEATH

- **Genesis 25:7-8:** These are the days of the years of Abraham's life, 175 years. ⁸Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people.

Abram was seventy-five when he left Haran and one-hundred when Sarah gave birth to Isaac which means Abraham believed God for twenty-five years. He was one hundred and seventy-five years old when he died.

SUMMARY OF PROMISES MADE TO ABRAHAM, ISAAC, HAGAR AND ISHMAEL

Abram was seventy-five when he left Haran and one-hundred when Sarah gave birth to Isaac (Gen. 17:17) so between the first promise, to actually receiving it twenty-five years passed. This means Abraham believed God for twenty-five years. This is why Abraham is called the father of faith not

only did he believe God for twenty-five years, but as each year passed, he and his much-loved wife Sari were growing older until Sarah had far surpassed a woman's years for bearing children. It was approximately one-year after Abraham had lived in Canaan for ten-years that Hagar conceived and gave birth to Ishmael (Gen. 16:2-4).

Ishmael was thirteen when God told Abraham that Sarah would have a son in one-year's-time (Genesis 17:23-25) and it was one-year later that Isaac was born (Gen. 18:10) (Gen. 21:1-2).

THE PRACTICAL LESSON FOR TODAY

Even though Abraham never fully understood in perfect detail how God's promise was going to come about, he believed the promise would come about and for this he was counted as righteous. The application of this principal today means that even though Christians may not fully understand in perfect detail exactly who God is or every detail of how the Lord Jesus Christ will return if they have faith in the Lord, trust in God's grace and faithfully follow Christ and believe that he will return in glory the Lord will honour the faith they have and receive them into eternal glory.

PROMISES CONCERNING ABRAHAM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The following verses show that Jesus Christ is the promised seed of Abraham.

- The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the Son of Abraham (Matthew 1:1).

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the fathers of Israel.

- God gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision. And so Abraham became the father of Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day, and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve patriarchs (Acts 7:8).

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will be in the eternal Kingdom of God.

- I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 8:11).
- In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but yourselves cast out (Luke 13:28).

Those of faith are the sons of Abraham.

- Just as Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness? ⁷Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham (Gal. 3:6-7).

The Gospel preached to Abraham; was that a person is justified by faith.

- 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" (Gal. 3:8).

Those of faith inherit the blessing of Abraham.

- Those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith (Gal. 3:9).

Those in Jesus Christ receive the promise of the Spirit.

- So that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit (of the Spirit in KJV) through faith (Gal. 3:14).

The promise of the Spirit in this context is favour with God, resurrection to eternal life and entry into the Kingdom of God on earth and eternal life in everlasting glory. The promises were made to Christ who is the promised seed of Abraham.

- Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his seed. It does not say, “And to your seed referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your seed who is Christ.” (Galatians 3:16).

The law did not do away with the promise made to Abraham.

- This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void (Gal. 3:17).

The inheritance comes by promise and not by law.

- For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise (Gal. 3:18).

Those in Christ are the seed of Abraham.

- For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus and if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to promise (Gal. 3:27-29).

Abraham was counted righteous because he believed God.

- The Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"— and he was called a friend of God (James 2:23).

By extension, all who believe in God are counted righteous and are a friend of God and a friend of Christ. From these verses we learn that: -

- The Gospel preached to Abraham; was that a person is justified by faith.
- Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the fathers of Israel and will be in the eternal Kingdom of God.
- Jesus Christ is the true promised seed of Abraham.
- God’s promises were made to Abraham’s seed who is Christ.
- Those who are in Christ by faith are the seed of Abraham and Abraham’s sons and daughters.
- The promise of the Spirit refers to forgiveness of sins; salvation; favour with God; entry into His Kingdom; resurrection from the dead and eternal life.
- Those of faith in Jesus Christ receive the promise of the Spirit and will inherit the blessing of Abraham (Gal. 3:9).
- The law did not do away with God’s promise made to Abraham.
- The inheritance comes by promise and not by law.
- Abraham was counted righteous and a friend of God because he believed God’s promises, likewise whoever believe in Christ is counted righteous and a friend of God and will receive the promise of Abraham.

ABRAHAM WAS COUNTED RIGHTEOUSNESS BEFORE HE WAS CIRCUMCISED

- **Romans 4:9:** Is this blessing then only for the circumcised (the Jews), or also for the uncircumcised (the Gentiles)? We say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness.

The blessing in this context refers to the glorious truth that we are justified and counted righteous by faith and not by self-effort or adhering to ceremonial rights, holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions. (Rom. 4:1-6). Abraham was counted righteous before he was circumcised so he could be the father of the Gentiles (the uncircumcised) as well as the father of the Jews (the circumcised).

Circumcision: in the Jewish mind was without doubt deemed to be one of the highest standards of righteousness since they believed that an uncircumcised person was separated from God and therefore unclean. Because of this mindset no religious Jew (especially those in high position of leadership) would willingly put themselves in the company of an uncircumcised person since they considered them to be unclean. The reason the Jewish nation held circumcision in such high regard was because God made the following 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).

NOTICE: circumcision was a sign they were God's people and not a guarantee of salvation. We know this because Paul tells the Roman church that:

- Faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness before he had been circumcised. Abraham received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he already had by faith while he was still uncircumcised so that God could make Abraham the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to the uncircumcised as well, to the circumcised who also walk in the footsteps of the faith Abraham had before he was circumcised (Romans 4:9-12).

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 reasons for the lack of the fruits of the Spirit amongst many of the religious rulers of Jesus and Paul's generations).

ONE OF PAUL'S GREATEST BATTLES

Throughout Paul's ministry circumcision was a re-occurring problem amongst the Jewish brothers who believed in Christ. When Paul heard that some Jewish brothers amongst the Galatian church were distorting the Gospel of Christ and of grace and leading brothers and sisters in the Galatian church astray Paul in stunned amazement said: -

- I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel (Gal. 1:6-7).

The Jewish brothers were distorting the Gospel by teaching those in the Galatian church that they could not be saved simply by believing in Christ, but must also keep the laws of Judaism especially circumcision. Paul told the Galatian congregation that neither he nor Titus would even yield for a moment in submission to the laws of Judaism so that the truth of the Gospel might be preserved for all who believe the word of the Lord and be fully convinced that no-one is justified by works of the law but only through faith in Jesus Christ, so to be justified by faith everyone (Jews and Gentiles) must believe in Christ Jesus and not in works of the law, because by self-effort and works of the law no-one will be justified (Galatians 2:3-16).

In Galatians chapter five Paul says to the congregation:

- If they accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to them because everyone who accepts circumcision that they might be saved is obligated to keep the whole law (Gal. 5:2-3) (Note, law in this context refers to the customs of Moses and the laws of Judaism).

When addressing the Colossians Paul states:

- In Christ there is neither Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all (Col. 3:11)

And to the Roman church Paul wrote:

- Since God is one. He will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith (Rom. 3:30).

The problem Paul faced with these particular Jews was not that they didn't believe in Christ, but that they denied grace to be saved. This is why these Jewish brothers were so deceptive, it is most likely that they taught the promises of Abraham and that Jesus was the Son of God and believed in his death and resurrection, but lacked insight into God's saving grace and that it is our faith that God counts as righteousness and not our self-effort in adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions etc. The following words of Paul show the enormous importance of trusting in God's grace in Christ. Paul in his letters wrote:

- I do not nullify the *GRACE* of God, for if justification were through the law (or any form of religious self-effort), then Christ died for no purpose (Gal. 2:21).

This means, when a brother or sister in Christ begin to justify themselves through the law and self-effort, they nullify the grace of God and by their actions declare that Christ's death was of no value.

Equally as horrific as this Paul states:

- When we forsake *GRACE* we separate ourselves from Christ because it was only by *GRACE* that God made us alive in Christ (Gal. 5:4) (Eph. 2:5).

Paul to highlight even more the majestic glory of grace wrote with absolute boldness that:

- It is only by *GRACE* that any brother or sister has been saved (Eph. 2:8).

Paul in these verses is shining a brilliant floodlight on the truth that every brother and sister in Christ is saved, solely by faith and by grace and it is not their own doing, but the gift of God. This means that without grace no-one can be united to Christ and whoever is without Christ is separated from God and without God no-one can be saved to eternal life. This means in regards to eternal salvation, Christ, God, Grace and Faith, are all on an equal par with each other since no-one can be saved to eternal life without any one of them. This is the reason the author in the book of Hebrews spends so many chapters brilliantly and skilfully explaining to the Hebrews that they must stop their sin of trusting in religious works, the Levitical Law and their priesthood to be counted righteous before God and start trusting in the grace of God that is in Christ and in his righteousness to be saved to eternal life.

By extension this means that Christians must stop trusting in attending a church building every week, strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions to be saved. Though the practise of some of these maybe good in themselves they become grossly sinful when believers trust in them for their salvation since not one of them has any power to save to eternal life.

GOD PROMISED ABRAHAM HE WOULD BE HEIR OF THE WORLD

- **Romans 4:13-16:** the promise that Abraham should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression. ¹⁶That is why the promise depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be

guaranteed to all Abraham's seed—not only to the adherent of the law (the Jews) but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham (the Gentiles) who is the father of us all (Jew and Gentile).

All the world is held accountable to God and everyone transgresses the law which states, "The wages of sin is death" which means that wrath in the context of these verses refers to death (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 dwelling within that cause us to transgress the law that is why God's promise had to be based on faith and grace 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 and self-effort made the promise based on faith and grace so it was not dependent on our works and self-effort and therefore God could guarantee the promise with an oath since it could not fail because it is based on grace.

Now the majestic wonder and beauty of God's promise is revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul writes that 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 that is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all Abrahams offspring—not only to the adherents of the law (referring to the Jews) but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham (referring to the Gentiles), who is the father of us all (Jews and Gentiles), as it is written:

- I have made you (Abraham) the father of many nations"—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist (creation and the resurrection).

In hope Abraham believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be." Paul tells us that "The twelve tribes of Israel earnestly worshipped night and day hoping to attain to this promise (Acts 26:7). And then gloriously points out that the Scripture does not say, "And to seeds," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your seed," who is Christ. Some may think the promises made to Abraham was for the Jews only, but Paul magnificently explains in the book of Galatians that the promises of God have been extended to all nations through being baptised into the Lord Jesus Christ and clearly shows that the promises made to Abraham and to his seed the Lord Jesus Christ are not limited to the Jews only but embraces whoever will come to God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Rom. 4:13) (Rom. 4:16-18) (Gal. 3:16) (Gal. 3:27).

For further information see the title:

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

ABRAHAM BELIEVED AGAINST HOPE

- **Romans 4:18-19:** In hope Abraham believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your seed be." ¹⁹Abraham did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb.

Here is the great faith of Abraham, he had no evidence that Sarah would give birth to a child, in fact quite the opposite since she had far past the age for woman to give birth and Abraham was almost one-hundred years old. The only thing Abraham had to trust in was the word of God which he did and God counted his great faith and trust as Abraham's righteousness. Likewise, Christians have no physical or tangible evidence that Christ exists or that he will return, the only thing they have to trust in is God's word. When a person by faith trusts in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and in God's grace God imputes to them as He did to Abraham righteousness not because of their works, but because of their faith in His Son and their trust in His grace.

ABRAHAM HAD FULL ASSURANCE OF HOPE IN THE PROMISE

- **Hebrews 6:11-17:** And we (the apostles) desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, ¹²so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. ¹³For when God made a promises to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, ¹⁴saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." ¹⁵And thus Abraham, having patiently waited (25 years) obtained the promise (of a son when he was about 100 years old). ¹⁵And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise. ¹⁶For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. ¹⁷So 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. ¹⁷as it is written, "I have made Abraham the father of many nations"—in the presence of the God in whom Abraham believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

When salvation to eternal life is spoken of as the hope of the faithful in Christ, it is not called hope because it might or might not happen, but because it is unseen and yet future. The hope itself is guaranteed because it is based on God's promise and he cannot lie. The apostle Paul wrote, "In hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began" (Titus 1:2). The only thing that can cause the promised hope to fail is if the one enlightened to the hope turns away in unbelief. This is because it is not by works that anyone will receive the promises, but by belief in Christ it is faith alone that makes salvation certain while unbelief destroys everything. The author and those with him desire that the Hebrews and by extension every brother and sister in Christ would have this full assurance of the promised and guaranteed hope firmly fixed in their hearts until the Lord returns. When humans make a vow or promised they swear by someone they consider better or worth more than themselves, but since God is the head of the universe and he is the eternal perfect God there is no greater above Him therefore He can only swear by Himself.

GOD'S PROMISE

The promise God made to Abraham was that he would have a son and that his seed would inherit the world, the promised he received was the birth of the promised son Isaac who Sarah his wife (through a miraculous conception) gave birth to (Abraham was ninety-nine while Sarah was eighty-nine). From Isaac came Jacob and from Jacob came the twelve tribes of Israel and from Israel came the promised seed of Abraham the Lord Jesus Christ who at this present time is establishing a Kingdom of kings and priest to rule and reign with him when he returns as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth. To see more concerning Christ's return, see the notes following the title: "God's Promise to Abraham," following Hebrews 11:11-12 (below)

THINGS THAT DO NOT EXIST

The statement, "God calls into existence things that do not exist," (v17) is in the context of God giving life to the dead therefore the expression means that God calls into existence decayed and none existent dead bodies which He will do at the resurrection when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory, but the words, "God calls into existence things that do not exist" also refers to creation and bring prophecy to pass etc. The author of Hebrews wrote, "By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible (Heb. 11:3).

ABRAHAM WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO THE CITY WHOSE BUILDER IS GOD

- **Hebrews 11:8-10:** By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.
⁹By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

The principal of Abraham's faith can be applied today to whoever by faith responds to the call of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and faithfully follows the Lord as Abraham did leaving behind all those things that would hinder their faith and bring dishonour to the testimony of Christ so that they can receive God's promised eternal inheritance even though they do not know exactly how the heavenly city that God is designing and building will be manifested in majestic and royal glory in eternity.

FROM ABRAHAM WERE BORN DESCENDANTS AS MANY AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN

- **Hebrews 11:11-12:** By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age (90 years old) since she considered him faithful who had promised.
¹²Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead (100 years old) were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.

Abraham's much-loved wife Sarah gave birth to Isaac when Abraham was one-hundred and Sarah was far past the age for woman to give birth which means that the birth of Isaac was a miracle birth. Isaac took Rebekah for his wife and she gave birth to Jacob who God later renamed Israel. Jacob, by Rachael and her slave Billah and Leah and her slave Zilpah had twelve sons who went into Egypt for four-hundred years. At the end of this age of bondage God miraculously delivered them and they came out as God's chosen nation and treasured possession whose offspring would be as the stars of heaven and the sand by the seashore.

(Gen. 13:16) (Gen. 15:5) (Gen. 22:15-17) (Heb. 11:12-13).

King Saul, King David, King Solomon, and many other kings came out of Israel until the nation of Israel through Mary gave birth to the King of all kings the Lord Jesus Christ fulfilling God's word to Sarah that kings and nations would come out of her (Gen. 17:15-16).

GOD'S PROMISE TO ABRAHAM

God's Promise to Abraham was partially (or locally) fulfilled in Isaac, David, Solomon and many other kings of Israel, but the promise continues through the birth of Christ, the ministry of Christ the death and resurrection of Christ and will continue until it has its ultimate fulfilment when Christ 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).

THESE ALL DIED IN FAITH, NOT HAVING RECEIVED THE THINGS PROMISED

- **Hebrews 11:13-16:** These all died in faith, not having received the things promise, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ¹⁴For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵If they had been thinking of that land (Haran) from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

Every faithful believer from the Old and New Testament is not only an exile (outcasts and foreigner) on earth, but also are consciously aware that they are strangers in this world seeking a heavenly city that God is the designer and builder of. Not one of these people received the promise of a heavenly city this is because the promise is still being fulfilled it is flowing through time into the future until Christ returns and rules and reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords with all the faithful who have miraculously been gathered to him, but even this is not the end of the promise God made to Abraham since at the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a great White Throne and is ALL in ALL and eternity begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory. The heavenly city the faithful in Christ will receive is the eternal heavenly and holy city Jerusalem the city of God (Heb. 12:22) (Rev. 3:12) (Rev. 21:10).

ABRAHAM'S GREAT FAITH

- **Hebrews 11:17-19:** By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises (of a son) was in the act of offering up his only son (Isaac) ¹⁸of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your seed be named." ¹⁹He considered that God was able even to raise him (Isaac) from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

This is why God named Abraham the father of faith Abraham had received the promise of a son from his own loins and by the wife he loved who would be his heir and that from this son would come offspring as the stars of heaven and the sand by the sea. If Abraham had sacrificed Isaac the promise God had made to him of multitudes of offspring, would not have been naturally possible, but Abraham believed God was able to raise up Isaac and because of this great faith God has honoured Abraham with the name the father of faith for all eternity. Abraham could never have comprehended how enormous this promise God gave to him would be or that the seed God had in mind when He gave Abraham the promise was the Lord Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world, yet he understood enough of the promise to know God would give him a son through a miracle birth who would be his heir and from him would come multitudes as the stars of heaven and the sand of the seashore and because Abraham believed God's promise he was counted righteous.

Likewise it is with the Christian faith we may not understand every detail of God's eternal plan and purposes or have a clear picture of how Christ will return, but providing we have faith that Jesus is the Son of God and the Saviour who died and rose again to heavenly glory and faithfully follow him as Abraham did believing the Lord will return in glory and raise up to eternal life those who have died in faith together with the faithful who are alive to be forever with him in everlasting glory we like Abraham will be counted righteous and accepted into God's eternal Kingdom.

NOTE: the twelve tribes of Israel who became the nation of Israel and God's chosen people and treasured possession began with a miracle birth and by the hand of a mighty saviour (Moses) and a miraculous deliverance from Egypt (called the house of bondage) were delivered into the Promised Land. Likewise, Christianity begins with a miracle birth and by the hand of the mighty Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ who by the power of the Gospel, the power of faith and God's grace delivers us from the bondage of death to eternal life.

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:

- **Ephesians 2:11-22:** 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— ¹²remember 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. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you (Gentiles) who once were far off (from God) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For 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 ¹⁵by 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, ¹⁶and might reconcile us (Jews and Gentiles) both to God in *ONE BODY* through

the cross, thereby killing the hostility (between the Jews and Gentiles). ¹⁷And he (Jesus) came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) who were far off (from God) and peace to those who were near (Jews). ¹⁸For through him (Jesus) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access in *ONE SPIRIT* to the Father. ¹⁹So 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, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone ²¹in whom the *WHOLE STRUCTURE* being joined together (Jews and Gentiles) grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In 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

The practical application of what this means to all who belong to Christ, is that all the future and eternal promises that God made to Israel also apply to them. 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).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
