**“The Call of Abraham” Bible Echo and Signs of the Times 4, 9.**

E. J. Waggoner

Soon after the flood, as men began to multiply upon the earth, they again forsook the Lord, and gave themselves fully over to the service of Satan. In a very short time, we find them so filled with rebellious pride that they began to build a city and a tower, thinking that thereby they could protect themselves against any judgments that God might bring upon them. Genesis 2:1-9. This impious attempt was brought to nothing, and the people were scattered abroad upon the face of all the earth, yet they did not forsake the service of Satan. Within about four hundred years after the flood, the people of the earth were once more sunken in idolatry and superstition. {BEST May 1, 1889, p. 137.1}

At that time the Lord came to Abraham, one of the descendants of Shem, and said to him: “Get thee out of thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” Genesis 12:1-3. {BEST May 1, 1889, p. 137.2}

The Lord saw in Abraham a willingness to serve him, although all his people were idolaters (Joshua 24:2), and he separated him from them, so that he might not become contaminated by them, but might become the father of a people who should be fitted to inherit the earth. If we closely examine this promise, we shall find that it comprehends a great deal. “In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” means nothing less than the possession of the whole earth by the descendants of Abraham. But this will appear more clearly as we pass on. {BEST May 1, 1889, p. 137.3}

In Genesis 13:14-17, we find the promise renewed more in detail in these words: “And the Lord said unto Abram, after that 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; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. 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. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.” {BEST May 1, 1889, p. 137.4}

Here we have strong proof that the promise to Abraham included nothing less than the whole earth, for his seed were to be multiplied as the dust of the earth. The length and the breadth of the land was to be theirs. {BEST May 1, 1889, p. 137.5}

At that time Abraham had no child, and in all human probability could never have one. “And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face; and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. 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.” Genesis 17:1-5. {BEST May 1, 1889, p. 137.6}

Again, when God was about to destroy Sodom, he said: “Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.” Genesis 18:17-19. {BEST May 1, 1889, p. 137.7}

This give us to understand that the promise was made to Abraham with so much positiveness, because the Lord knew that he would keep his commandments, and that he would command his children and his household after him to do likewise. From this also we may learn that the promise to his seed was only to those who should serve the Lord. {BEST May 1, 1889, p. 137.8}

Once more we find the promise renewed, when Abraham had showed his faith in God by proceeding to offer up his only son, through whom the promise was to be fulfilled. The Lord then called to Abraham, 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, 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 seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.” Genesis 22:16-18. {BEST May 1, 1889, p. 137.9}

In the expression “thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies,” we have the promise of conquest. Bear this in mind, while we consider a few other points. In Galatians 3:15-17, we have a scripture that has an intimate connection with the subject under consideration. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; ...that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; though it be but a man’s covenant, yet if it be confirmed no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. 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. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law...cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.” From the above scripture we learn that the seed to whom the promise was made, is Christ,-the same that was promised at the time of the fall. {BEST May 1, 1889, p. 137.10}

Now in connection with the promise to Abraham, that his seed should possess the gate of his enemies, read the following words of God the Father to his Son Jesus Christ: “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” Psalm 2:7-9. {BEST May 1, 1889, p. 188.1}

When this shall have been accomplished, then “the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace;” for the meek are they who have come to Christ and have learned of him, yielding themselves to him to be his servants; and Paul says: “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Galatians 3:29. From this, together with the statement that “they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed” (Galatians 3:7, 8), we may conclude, even at this stage of our study, that the promise to Abraham, and to his seed, was nothing less than the promise of the earth to all who, through faith in Christ, should gain the victory over sin. And this is further confirmed by Paul’s statement that “the promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.” Romans 4:13. {BEST May 1, 1889, p. 188.2}

In the twenty-sixth chapter of Genesis we find the promise once more repeated, this time to Isaac; and in the twenty-eighth chapter it is renewed to Jacob. {BEST May 1, 1889, p. 188.3}

**“The Hope of the Promise” Bible Echo and Signs of the Times 4, 10.**

E. J. Waggoner

Now it is certain that neither Abraham, Isaac, nor Jacob, ever had any share in the inheritance promised to them. When Stephen was before the Jewish Sanhedrim, on trial for his life, he referred to God’s call for Abraham to go into the land of Canaan, and said, “*And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on*; yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child.” Acts 7:5. And this Stephen used as part of his argument that the promise to Israel was yet to be fulfilled. But we shall find that the Lord is not slack concerning his promise. {BEST May 15, 1889, p. 184.1}

Not only did Abraham have no inheritance in the land, but Isaac and Jacob were in a like condition. The apostles says: “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” Hebrews 11:8-10. {BEST May 15, 1889, p. 184.2}

And the same is true of Abraham’s posterity through faith. Verses 13-16. They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth, which had been promised to them for an inheritance. They died without having received the promised inheritance, or any part of it; yet their faith was as strong when they died as when the promise was first made. They plainly declared, says Paul, that they looked for a country, and we have already learned that that country was the whole earth; and since they were not disappointed because the country was not given to them in their life-time, it is evident that they understood the promise to embrace the resurrection from the dead. This was plainly declared to be the case by Paul when he testified of his faith before Agrippa. “And now I stand and am judged *for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers*; unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope’s sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?” Acts 26:6-8. {BEST May 15, 1889, p. 184.3}

All who have read the book of Acts know that Paul was persecuted by the Jews because he preached Christ. This was the cause of all the Jewish persecution of Christians. After Peter and John had healed the lame man, at the gate of the temple, and had declared to the Jews that it was done through the power of Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had crucified, and who had risen from the dead, “the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.” Acts 4:1, 2. And when Paul stood before Agrippa, and uttered the words quoted in the preceding paragraph, he said that he had continued unto that day, “saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come; that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.” Acts 26:22, 23. {BEST May 15, 1889, p. 184.4}

The Jews professed to believe the writings of Moses and the prophets, and the apostles preached nothing else. When Paul was accused by the Jews before Felix, he said: “But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets; and have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.” Acts 24:14, 15. {BEST May 15, 1889, p. 184.5}

It is probably a fact that in many instances where men have been persecuted as heretics, the heresy of which they were accused was some doctrine which their accusers would have been obliged to hold if they had been consistent with their profession. In the great majority of cases, the “heretics” in the church have been men who have obeyed and talk about truth of the Bible, and their persecutors have been those, who, by their preaching, were convicted of inconsistency. So the Jews held the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead; but they persecute Paul for preaching it, because it involved the preaching of Christ, whom their pride led them to reject. {BEST May 15, 1889, p. 184.6}

Now put these facts with Paul’s statement that he stood and was judged for the hope of the promise made of God to the fathers, and it is as plain as language can make it that the promise to the fathers that through Christ they should have a resurrection from the dead, and should by that means enter upon their inheritance. Paul looked forward to the fulfillment of the promise with as ardent hope and as steadfast faith as did Abraham, and it was this that he had in mind when he said that, “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” Titus 2:12, 13. {BEST May 15, 1889, p. 184.7}

This has been no hope of the church in all ages. But in the midst of his deep affliction, the patriarch Job found comfort in the knowledge that his Redeemer lived and should stand in the latter day upon the earth, and that although worms might devour his body, nevertheless in his flesh he should see God. Job 19:23-27. Again, after speaking of the certainty of death and decay, he asked, “If a man die, shall he live again?” and at once answered his own question, saying, “All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee; thou wilt have a desire to the work of Thine hands.” Job 14:14, 15. What this change will be, and when it will take place, we are told by the apostle Paul in the following language: “Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.... Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” 1 Corinthians 15:51-55. {BEST May 15, 1889, p. 184.8}

Isaiah also, after speaking of the desolation of Israel, said: “Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.” Isaiah 26:19. And this will take place at the time spoken of in the following verses, from which Paul quoted when he showed to the Corinthians the mystery of the resurrection from the dead: “And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.” Isaiah 25:6-9. {BEST May 15, 1889, p. 184.9}