

Abraham in the New Testament

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall He not with him also freely give us all things? **Rom 8:32**

He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. **Rev 21:7**

JESUS CHRIST THE CENTRE OF THE PROMISES

It is Jesus Christ who will finally accomplish the promises to Abraham in the Kingdom age. Those who are "in Christ" by faith and baptism are heirs of this same promise: **Gal 3:8,16,26-29**. The final fulfilment of those promises is revealed in **Revelation 21**. Throughout the Four Gospels we read of God's purpose in the life of Christ as promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

We have seen how the events of **Genesis 14** revealed (in type) **how** the promises of **Genesis 12-13 will be accomplished**. It is by a northern invasion and the coming of a **King-Priest to Jerusalem**, the saviour symbolised in **bread and wine**. When nations finally gather for Armageddon in God's Holy City, Christ and the Saints, with faithful Abraham, will rescue Israel, who then mourn for their Messiah like an "only son": **Zech 12:10**.

The fathers were at the forefront of Christ's mind when he went to the cross: **Psalms 22:4-6**. Christ would have contemplated Abraham and Isaac, and the deliverance that God wrought for Abraham's "only begotten son" upon the altar. For Christ however, there would be no deliverance, except at his resurrection. Following is a beautiful summary of God's purpose in Christ:

"The death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ are like precious jewels which shine with many splendours as they turn in the light. The loving work of God in Christ lies at the heart of the Gospel; it is the means whereby everything else is secured. Christ is the key to the fulfilment of the cherished promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and again to David the king. The full blessings of the promises could not be released without the redemptive work of Jesus. How else could Abraham have everlasting life? How could there be an everlastingly righteous king on David's throne except the King himself be immortal? No one but Christ is sufficient for these things. He alone is the Royal Son of David, the Righteous Branch and King, and the Bearer of immortality. Christ is the seal to the everlasting covenant of promise. Christ is everything for all God's children, whenever they have lived and whatever the stage reached in the revelation of God when their faith was kindled. As the Bible beautifully puts it: "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ. And so through him the 'Amen' is spoken by us to the glory of God." 2 Cor 1:20 NIV" (H Tennant, *What the Bible Teaches*, p.80)

THE HEIR OF THE PROMISE

God's plan of salvation through Christ, the promised seed, was in the mind of God well before Abraham was even born:

Jn 8:56-58 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Jesus said ... Before Abraham was, I am.

Acts 3:13,25-26 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus... Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers...

Gal 3:14,16 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made.

The importance of Jesus Christ as the promised seed is highlighted by both Mary and Zacharias at his birth:

Mary: **Lk 1:54-55** He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.

Zacharias: **Lk 1:68,72-73** Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people... To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; The oath which he sware to our father Abraham. (Citing the concluding verse of Micah's prophecy: **Mic 7:20**)

How then are we able to share these promises through Jesus Christ?

BECOMING HEIRS BY FAITH

The Jews are natural descendants of Abraham through Isaac. It was to them that Messiah came and to them that the gospel was first preached. However they failed to emulate the **faith** of Abraham: **Jn 8:31-33**. They trusted in themselves and Jesus rebuked them:

Mt 3:7-10 O generation of vipers... Bring forth fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father.

Abraham was justified (counted as righteous) by **faith** in God's Word: **Rom 4:3** For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. (see also **4:11-12**)

Rom 4:13,16 NIV It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith... 16 Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring... He is the father of us all. (see also **4:17-18**)

Rom 10:17 Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

1 Pet 3:6-7 Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well... **heirs together** of the grace of life.

ABRAHAM'S REPENTANCE, AND OURS

God called Abraham out of Babylon, but Abraham had to respond and obey. We are also called to leave our former ways behind:

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. (cp. **Mt 9:12-13**)

John the Baptist speaks of repentance in the same sentence as Abraham: **Mt 3:8-9**. Abraham repented when he left Ur behind and headed in the direction God wanted him to go. This took real faith!

BAPTISM AND A NEW WAY OF LIFE

Abraham may not have been baptised as we are, but **he was in type**: **Josh 24:2-3**. Abraham "crossed over" the River Euphrates. We are called to be **baptised into Christ** to share in these promises:

Gal 3:26-29 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ...Ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye **Abraham's seed**, and heirs according to the promise. (see also **Mk 16:15-16**)

Eph 2:19-20 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

Baptism is just the beginning of a new life in Christ:

Rom 6:4,8 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in **newness of life**. 8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. (see also **Rom 6:12-13**)

JAMES 2: FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD

Jas 2:14-17 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? ...Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. (NIV "Can that faith save him?")

Real faith is more than giving lip service to a set of doctrinal beliefs: **Mt 7:21-24**. For instance in **1 John** we read of 7 tests of true discipleship: **1 Jn 1:6,8,10; 2:4,6,9; 4:20**. Faith is tested in daily life to show that it is genuine: **Mt 25:32-45; Acts 11:28-29; Rom 16:26**.

Jas 2:21-24 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And **the scripture was fulfilled** which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. (**Gen 15:6**, cp. **Gal 3:6; Rom 4:3**)

Abraham is the father of the Jews so what better example to use when writing to Jews. He is also father of the faithful: **Rom 4:12; Gal 3:7-9**. Our lives are inspired by the promise that God will provide: **Rom 4:12-25**. Abraham believed in God's power to raise Isaac: **Heb 11:17-19**. James cites Abraham's obedience offering up Isaac in **Gen 22:16,18**. This was the completion of a long process. **Matt 10:22** and **Heb 6:13-15** emphasise the need for faith **and** patient endurance.

HEBREWS 11: THE LAST DAYS

Hebrews is a letter written to the Jerusalem ecclesia about 7 years prior to the captivity of AD70. It is an **urgent warning** for believers in a **last days** situation. The life of Abraham is **specifically chosen** as relevant for believers who are preparing to leave their city behind:

Heb 11:8-9 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. (They are yet to receive the promise: **Heb 11:39-40**)

OUR INHERITANCE: SEARCHING FOR A CITY

Revelation 21 describes the perfected saints at the end of the Millennium when the Nation of Israel will embrace all. This is the vision we must grasp hold of tightly in these last days:

Heb 11:10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations... (also **11:16**)

Heb 12:22 But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem...

Rev 2:12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God... and I will write upon him the Name of my God, and the Name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem... (Promise to Philadelphia explained in **Rev 21**)

Rev 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

