
BLESSED IS THE NATION WHOSE GOD IS THE LORD

This article by Pastor Record is taken from the November-December 2000 issue of The National Message News and Comments and is entitled, **IF YE BE CHRIST'S**

No two verses of scripture have been more abused, misinterpreted and misapplied than have Gal. 3:26,29. These verses are often quoted by clergy and layman alike in a vain effort to prove that the seed of Abraham was not intended to be taken literally, but that a spiritual seed is meant, made up of all who believe in Christ. These verses read as follows, "*For ye are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ...And if ye be Christ's. then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*"

One cannot read his Old Testament with any degree of understanding without realizing that the main feature of the Abrahamic Covenant was that of great national development, and through this national seed all the other peoples and nations would be blessed. Gen. 12:1-3 That this seed was to be a literal seed is also confirmed by the fact that God changed Abram's name to Abraham because he was to become the father of many nations. Gen. 17:4-5. In verse 16 of this same chapter, the Septuagint version, God says of Isaac, *I will bless him. And he shall become nations, and from him there shall be kings of nations.*" And what is more, this promise to Abraham and his seed is the basis of all subsequent biblical revelation. It marks the beginning of a kingdom planned and prepared of God from the foundation of the world. This kingdom was a literal kingdom with a king, a throne, a land, laws of administration, and a people who were to function as God's servants and builders. Spiritualize this which was to come through Isaac, and you make a shambles of the Word of God. Except where the language is figurative, poetical, or symbolic, it says what it means and means what it says. It is of no private interpretation.

Keep in mind that while Israel failed under the Law Covenant and God divorced them and put them away, God promises in Jer. 31:31-33, that the day was to come when He would make a New Covenant with Israel. In Matt. 26:27-28, as Jesus instituted what we call "The Lord's Supper," He took the cup saying, "*This is My blood of the New Covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*" What was this but Christ confirming or ratifying the New Covenant promised to Israel? But the full import of these words is lost to those who limit the national seed of Israel to the Jew, a religious sect classed with Protestants and Catholics. They imagine that because the Jews rejected Christ, God turned to a Gentile, or a non-Israel people with whom He made no covenant, and has been using them as His servants and witnesses. They would have you believe that these Gentiles (?) are a spiritual seed, or a spiritual Israel, doing Israel's work. But what saith the Scriptures? Isn't that what we want to know?

In seeking the meaning of any passage of scripture, it is of the utmost importance to keep in mind who is speaking, and who is being spoken to. And who is Paul speaking to in Gal. 3:29, when he says, "And if ye are Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise?" Are we to believe that just anyone who happens to read these words, and is a Christian, can claim to be Abraham's seed? That is not what Paul is saying, and it completely ignores the people to whom Paul was writing.

Paul's missionary journeys were made to an Israel people living in the region of Asia Minor. They were "Gentilized;" they were a portion of the lost sheep of the house of Israel who had been carried captive in 721 B.C. and who were in the process of moving to their new home in the West. II Sam. 7:10. That this is so is evident from such verses as Gal. 3/13, where Paul says to the Galatians, *"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree."* By no stretch of the imagination can these words be used of a non-Israel people. It was Israel to whom the Law was given. It was Israel who broke the Law Covenant and incurred the curse of the Law, and who stood in need of redemption.

To see what Paul meant when he addressed the Galatians, saying, "If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed," we need to go back to the 16th verse of this same chapter where we find Paul saying, *"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."*

Let us note first of all that "to Abraham and his seed were the promises made." Nothing is said of a spiritual seed. And in v. 29, Paul said that it is Abraham's seed who are heirs according to the promise. There is only one people who could fulfill the promises made to Abraham and his seed and that is the people to whom they were made--not in a so-called "Gentile Church" to whom no such promises were given.

The next thing I would have us note is, that in the Hebrew the word, seed, is a collective, and at no time denotes a single descendant. I would call your attention to the fact that Paul does not say, "And to thy seed which is Christ." While Jesus was the Christ, Jesus, viewed in His own solitary personality has no place in Paul's argument here. The word, Christ, is used here as a collective. Christ is the new Fountainhead of Israel--no longer Abraham.. What we need to see here is, that among Abraham's descendants a particular Head of the race was beforehand selected in the counsels of God, whose issue alone should inherit. In **I Cor. 12:12**, Paul declares, *"As the body is one, and hath many members...so also is Christ."* It is the usual thing in the Hebrew idiom to apply to a people the very name unmodified, of the head from which they derive--as "Jacob," "Israel," "Ephraim," "Edom," "Amalek," etc. The "Seed" is the Christ, the historicval Christ, but it is still viewed as a collective as summing up in Himself all who should be united to Him. To only one branch of Abraham's descendants did the Divine Disposer guarantee the promised grant, namely, that which would originate from Abraham's great Descendant, Christ; and this people were to be in Christ, and by His name be called. Just as the children of Israel were called "Israelite" after their head from which they derived, so they would be called after their new Fountainhead, Christ--perhaps Christians.

Paul, in writing to the Israel converts in Ephesus, declares in Eph. 1:4-5. that they were chosen in Christ ee the world was founded, and that they were destined to be His sons. In speaking of Israel in Rom. 9:4 (Moffatt), he says among other things that "theirs is the sonship." In Hosea 1:10 it is prophesied that Israel would be called, "The sons of the living God..." Paul, in quoting from Lev. 26:11-12, in II Cor. 6:16, reminds us that early in the history of the Israel people, it was prohesied that God would dwell in His people and be their God. In the light of such Scriptures as these, it is clear that Israel was to have a special relationship to God the other nations did not have. As Zacharias prophesied on the birth of John the Baptist, he cries out, *"Blessed be the LORD, God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people."* And in Matt. 16:24 our Lord declares that He was "not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

In the light of such scriptures as these, it should be clear that when Paul declares, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise," he was speaking of Israel and the very fact that they had entered into a new covenant relationship to God was a mark of identification. It was God fulfilling His promise to Israel. This in no way abrogates the promise that "whosoever will may come," but it puts things into their proper perspective.

