

## THE ROLE OF ISRAEL TODAY

There is a movement within Evangelicalism today that is enamored with the modern nation of Israel, which is struggling for survival in the midst of its Arab neighbors. Ministries like that of John Hagee are focused on a zealous support of Israel, no matter what. The basis for such a wholehearted backing of Israel comes from their view that God's promise to Abraham formed an eternal covenant. Let's begin with that promise and move forward from there, looking to determine the Biblical place of Israel within God's economy today.

### The Promise

This begins God's communication with Abraham (or *Abram*, as his name was at the time): "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee [this is one command with four parts]: And [then] I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing [this is a command to 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).<sup>1</sup> God's initial promise to Abraham, to multiply his descendants, was conditional upon his obedience to the specifics of what the Lord required of him. However, apart from that, God also instructs Abraham to be a blessing, and gives him His assurance that He will extend His blessings to those who bless Abraham, and, conversely, He will make contemptible those who curse him.<sup>2</sup> Hagee, on his website, refers to this passage as being "an eternal covenant between God and the seed of Abraham to which God is faithful," yet this is not a covenant between God and Abraham (that comes later in Genesis 17), and there is nothing here that would justify an unconditional support of the secular nation of Israel that is in existence today.<sup>3</sup> It appears that Hagee's focus is on *blessing* Abraham and being *blessed* by God, somewhat like endeavoring to hold God hostage by His own words – if you bless Abraham (in this case, his descendants according to the promise), then God just has to bless you. However, that is a misapplication of this passage; this was something that God gave to Abraham, and it was not repeated when the Lord formally established His covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17), nor do we see it ever being restated to any of his children. The much larger promise that is made here is that through (*in*) Abraham all the families of the earth will be blessed; this is a promise that extends well beyond Abraham, and carries an element of eternal application. In essence, this is the promise of God that through Abraham would come the One Who would defeat Satan and establish righteousness – a reflection of His promise in Genesis 3:15.

Twenty-four years later, the Lord confirmed His promise to make of Abraham a mighty people, and spoke of making a covenant with him. However, before the Lord begins to outline the covenant that He will make with Abraham, He states this: "I *am* the Almighty God; walk [a command; in a manner that is pleasing and good] before me, and be thou perfect [in integrity before God, i.e., faithfully obedient]" (Genesis 17:1). It was because of Abraham's faithfulness that the Lord

---

<sup>1</sup> BDB.

<sup>2</sup> BDB.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.jhm.org/WhoWeAre#ourmission>

entered into a covenant with him, and it would be through his continued faithfulness that the covenant of the Lord would be binding. In many respects, the covenant was a reiteration of what the Lord had already conditionally promised to Abraham: “And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. 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 [not a *God*, but simply *God*] unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto [have given] 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 [am] their God” (Genesis 17:6-8).<sup>4</sup> It is important to notice that God’s covenant with Abraham hinges on one thing: his faithfulness to the Lord, and the faithfulness of his posterity. It is upon this premise that God tells Abraham that He has given him and his descendants all of the land of Canaan. As we look at the life of Abraham, we recognize that this was a promise that was not fulfilled in his lifetime, for he died without receiving any of the land. The writer of Hebrews explains this for us: “By faith he [Abraham] sojourned in the land of promise, as *in* a strange [foreign] country, dwelling in tabernacles [tents] 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: 9-10).<sup>5</sup> Abraham’s faithfulness to the Lord gave him an upward look so that God’s promise of land was not his priority; it would seem that Abraham had caught the significance of the promise that through Isaac the everlasting covenant of the *blessing* would be kept (Genesis 17:19). Consider this: “Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (Romans 4:3; cp. Genesis 15:6); he is commended for his faith in the Lord despite never owning more of the promised land than the burial plot in Canaan that he purchased. Therefore, if the physical aspects of the promises of God to Abraham didn’t see fulfillment in his lifetime (or that of the next two generations of his descendants), what then was the significance of the promises that God made to him?

As already noted, the greatest element of God’s promise to Abraham is contained in this phrase: “in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 12:3). In the Garden of Eden, God promised Satan that it would be through the Seed of the woman that his demise would be accomplished; “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it [He] shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Genesis 3:15).<sup>6</sup> As Abraham receives God’s promise that through his family-line all of the families of the earth would be blessed, God is affirming the promise that He made to Satan. The universal blessing that would come through the lineage of Abraham was the Lord Jesus Christ Who would crush the head of the serpent, and make spiritual life available to everyone (*all the families of the earth*). As Abraham stepped back from offering his son Isaac unto the Lord, he again hears, “And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice” (Genesis 22:18); it was through his obedience to the Lord, that the promised Blessing would come through his descendants. To Isaac (Abraham’s son by promise), the Lord confirmed His promise based upon Abraham’s obedience: “and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 26:4). As Jacob (Abraham’s grandson) fled to his uncle Laban, the Lord repeated the same words to him (Genesis 28:14). Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were all promised the land of Canaan, yet none of

---

<sup>4</sup> BDB.

<sup>5</sup> Strong’s Online.

<sup>6</sup> BDB.

them realized it – they spent all of their days living in tents; however, along with the promises of land ownership and multitudes of descendants, came the much greater promise that one of their lineage would be a blessing to all of the people of the earth! It would be through the family line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that God would bring the Savior of the world!

Fast forward to Moses, to whom God reveals that He is about to deliver His people Israel out of the hands of the Egyptians, to whom they were slaves (Exodus 3:8), and that He will bring them into the land of the Canaanites (hearkening back to the promise that He had made to Abraham – Genesis 17:8). When Jacob moved into Egypt to escape the severe famine in Canaan, the family of Israel was a total of seventy persons (Genesis 46:27); now as Moses was commissioned to bring Israel out of Egypt, their numbers were in excess of two million, by most estimates.<sup>7</sup> Very shortly after leaving Egypt, they received instruction from the Lord as to how they were to live. Obviously, the Law of Moses, with all of its statutes and ordinances, was necessary for such a vast number of people to know what God required of them, and for there to be a determined form of justice – without a code of conduct, anarchy would have reigned. Therefore, God provided His newly released children with His Law (the Ten Commandments, providing a foundation for their personal relationships with God and their neighbors), and the Law of Moses (the detailed instructions regarding the priesthood of the Levites, the sacrificial system, specific festivals, and the numerous decrees concerning what was clean and unclean). Because these were the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Lord provided them with a code of conduct that was in keeping with His enduring promise to bless all of the families of the earth through them. Although the Law of Moses was particularly focused on the physical activities of the people of Israel, that must not be considered to be its only emphasis; its effectiveness for the individual came only through faith. The tabernacle, the priesthood, and the sacrificial regulations all dealt with the individual's relationship with the Lord, and it was this relationship that formed the foundation for all that was required of Israel. The Law of God begins with four laws that are a guide to a person's relationship with the Lord, and the last six (dealing with his neighbors) build upon that living bond with Jehovah.

### **The Promise – More than Physical**

We have seen the promise of God carried forward to the children of Israel as they are brought out of Egypt, and God established His covenant relationship with this great people. When Moses read the words of the Lord (as we have them in Exodus 20-23, which includes the Law of God and an overview of the laws and ordinances comprising the Law of Moses) to the people, their response was, “All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient” (Exodus 24:7). The Ten Commandments formed the foundation for Jehovah's relationship with the children of Israel, and how they related to one another. At the end of his life Moses rehearsed what the people had committed to: “And he [Jehovah] declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, *even* ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone” (Deuteronomy 4:13). These tables of stone, on which God had etched the Ten Commandments, were kept in the

---

<sup>7</sup> Exodus 12:37 tells us that there were about 600,000 men who left Egypt, and when they were numbered at Sinai, it was found that they had 603,550 men who were over twenty years old (Exodus 38:26); add to this number the younger men, women and children and two million would appear to be a very conservative estimate.

Ark of the Covenant, which was located in the Holy of Holies within the tabernacle (1 Kings 8:6-9). The Ten Commandments were the core of God's covenant with Israel, and the Law of Moses served as a guide on how the Ten Commandments were to be lived out; together they made up the covenant between God and Israel. The justification of the Israelites before God carried a heavy emphasis upon doing the right things, in compliance with the numerous laws and ordinances to which they had committed themselves. However, outward compliance was not sufficient.

Isaiah wrote the words of the Lord to Israel: "Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah [a condemning reference to Israel]. To what purpose *is* the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of [filled to being sickened with] the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain [worthless] oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with [I cannot endure]; *it is* iniquity [wickedness], even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble [burden] unto me; I am weary to bear *them*. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: **your hands are full of blood**" (Isaiah 1:10-15).<sup>8</sup> This is a description of Israel living in compliance with the requirements of the Law of Moses – they were faithfully sacrificing the animals and celebrating the festival days according to the requirements as specified by the Lord; however, Jehovah calls it all *worthless* and *wickedness*. Despite all of their activities, the Lord declares that, before Him, there was no cleansing in Israel – their hands were still *full of blood*. Israel had lost sight of what the Lord desired; "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else. ... In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory" (Isaiah 45:22,25). Israel had focused on the physical observances, and had lost sight of the Lord Who had put all of these sacrificial requirements into place in order to foreshadow the One Who would come to provide a permanent cleansing from sin; their compliance was devoid of faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They had failed to keep in mind the summation of the first four Commandments: "And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deuteronomy 6:5). Their faith was in their works, the sacrifices, and not in the Lord Who justifies; to Israel, Jehovah says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved."

In the midst of Moses rehearsing the numerous laws and ordinances with the children of Israel, we find this: "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken ..." (Deuteronomy 18:15). In the middle of the Law of Moses comes a glimpse of the promised Messiah Who would come to strike Satan with the promised death-blow. The words of Jehovah to Moses were these: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him" (Deuteronomy 18:18); when Jesus, the Promised One, came He said, "For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me,

---

<sup>8</sup> Strong's Online; BDB.

so I speak” (John 12:49-50). A reminder of the promise of blessing to all of the families of the earth is couched in the midst of the Law of Moses – here is the reason for Israel to keep the numerous ordinances faithfully!

### The Physical Promises are Conditional

As we look at the promises made by God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, we can recognize that these included a promise of the land in which they were living, and the blessing that would come through them to the whole world. We have seen that both of these were well in place during the time of Moses: 1) the Lord declared that He would bring the children of Israel out of Egypt to a “land flowing with milk and honey” (Exodus 3:8), and 2) the Lord affirmed that He would raise up “a Prophet from among” the Israelites Who would speak forth His truth (Deuteronomy 18:18). The latter tells us that from among the families of Israel will come One Who will speak the words of God; we have seen this uniquely fulfilled in Jesus, and, clearly, through Him all of the families of the earth have been blessed – whether they acknowledge it or not. We have tied the spiritual promise of blessing through to its fulfillment in the Lord Jesus Christ. What about the promise of the land? We have already noted that, even as it was given to Abraham, this was conditional on being faithful to the Lord. Has anything changed since the initial promise?

As Moses rehearsed the Lord’s requirements before all of Israel, he warned them about testing the Lord through their disobedience: “Ye shall not tempt [test] the LORD your God, as ye tempted *him* in Massah [where the people grumbled against Moses because there was no water – Exodus 17:3-7]. Ye shall diligently keep [hear and harken to (LXX)] the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee. And thou shalt do *that which is* right and good in the sight of the LORD: that [in order that] it may be well with thee, and that [in order that] thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers, To cast out all thine enemies from before thee, as the LORD hath spoken” (Deuteronomy 6:16-19).<sup>9</sup> Even now, Israel’s possession of the land that was first promised to Abraham is conditional upon their obedience to the Lord – nothing has changed! “For **if** ye shall diligently keep [hear and harken to (LXX)] all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him; **Then** will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves” (Deuteronomy 11:22-23). There can be no mistaking the openly conditional expression of the promise concerning the land. If the children of Israel lived in obedience to the Lord, then He would ensure their victory as they claimed the Promised Land. As Moses summed up his discourse, he said, “I call heaven and earth to record [to bear witness] this day against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest [the end or purpose of choosing *life*; *that thou mayest* should be read as *to*] love the LORD thy God, *and* that thou mayest [*to*] obey his voice, and that thou mayest [*to*] cleave unto him: for he *is* thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest [*to*] dwell in the land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac,

---

<sup>9</sup> BDB.



and to Jacob, to give them” (Deuteronomy 30:19-20).<sup>10</sup> Once again, the option of choosing life, first of all, means to love, obey, and cleave to the Lord, and, then, to dwell in the Promised Land. We must not miss that, conditional to dwelling in the land that God had promised to Abraham, was Israel’s obedience to the Lord their God!

### **Results of Failure to Meet the Conditions**

Moses clarified for Israel the consequences of not meeting the conditions that the Lord placed upon their occupation of the Promised Land: “Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you ... and shall corrupt *yourselves*, and make a graven image, *or* the likeness of any *thing*, and shall do evil in the sight of the LORD thy God, to provoke him to anger: I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish [be exterminated] from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong *your* days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed [annihilated, exterminated]” (Deuteronomy 4:23-26).<sup>11</sup> Likewise, Joshua, when he neared the end of his life, warned Israel that if they failed to keep the Lord’s commands, then they would perish from off the land. What cannot be missed is that if Israel failed to remain faithful to the Lord their God (the promise to Abraham was that Jehovah would be their God – Genesis 17:8), then, as a nation, they would cease to exist. With the passage of time, we see both Israel (the northern kingdom that followed Jeroboam away from the house of David) and Judah (the southern kingdom that retained kings in the lineage of David) were taken into captivity, and the Promised Land was kept by strangers and by a remnant of the people who were left behind (2 Kings 17:23-24; 2 Kings 25:21-22) – that nation of Israel was gone.

However, the Lord, after seventy years, brought Israel back to the land of promise, with the help of their captors, and in fulfillment of prophecy (Jeremiah 29:10). They were re-established as a people, but never gained the power and prestige that they enjoyed under King David; although they identified themselves as being a nation, they never regained their autonomy. Even at the time of Jesus, Israel was a nation, but they were under the governorship of Rome.

### **The Promised Blessing to All**

Mingled throughout the OT Scriptures, we find indications that the fulfillment of the promise that the Lord made in Genesis 3:15 was alive and well. Isaiah wrote: “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14); “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). In the midst of prophecies of gloom and destruction for Israel, comes a clear message that the promised One is on schedule. This One, Who was to come, would be “wounded for our transgressions,” and the Lord would lay upon Him the “iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:5-6). The promised blessing that would be to all people was

---

<sup>10</sup> Strong’s Online.

<sup>11</sup> Strong’s Online.

beginning to be fleshed out through the Lord's prophets; here was the Promised One Who would fulfill the prophecies that commenced with Genesis 3:15. Even though Israel and Judah were facing captivity, and the land of Israel would be destroyed, there is no failure in this promise!

### Changes Prophesied

As the Lord guided events to the fulfillment of the prophecy recorded in Genesis 3:15, hints of changes to come were spoken of through His prophets.

Jeremiah records this: "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new [fresh] covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know [learn to know] the LORD: for they shall all know [learn to know] me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will [*should* – the XXL notes this as being in the subjunctive mood (Hebrew doesn't have a subjunctive mood)] remember their sin no more" (Jeremiah 31:31-34).<sup>12</sup> As the writer of Hebrews explains this passage from Jeremiah, he writes that "if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second" (Hebrews 8:7). After then quoting the above passage from Jeremiah, he goes on to say, "In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old [obsolete]" (Hebrews 8:13). What this tells us is that the covenant that was made between God and Israel at Mt. Sinai was not an everlasting covenant in that form (the Law of God and the Law of Moses), but has been replaced in keeping with OT prophecy. However, it is also noteworthy that Jeremiah quotes the Lord, "I will put **my law** in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts"; the Law of God, those Ten Commandments, written by the finger of God upon two tables of stone will, at this time, be written by the Lord upon the hearts of those who place their faith in Him.

### The Words of Jesus

A question that we might ponder is this: Why did the Lord call Abraham away from his home in Ur? Was it to give him a land that he had never seen, or was it so that all the families of the earth might be blessed through him? Obviously, the promise of God included both, but as we have examined His promise regarding the land, we have seen that it was always dependent upon obedience, whereas, as we have seen, the promise of blessing flowed uninhibited, even when Israel was in exile, and only received greater clarification through the Lord's prophets.

Jesus came in fulfillment of the promised blessing – here was the One Who would strike the blow to Satan by being the sin-bearer for all of humanity. Jesus was eternal God in the flesh (John 1:1,14), born into Israel so as to be a High Priest Who could identify with us (Hebrews 2:14). We

---

<sup>12</sup> Strong's Online; Septuagint.

might find it amazing that the Jewish people could miss their Messiah when He came, when they had all of the prophecies of the OT for reference. However, because of their oppression under Rome (they were quite free, but were required to pay taxes to Caesar, and live under their laws), they were diligently looking for a political Messiah; they majored on “the government shall be upon his shoulder,” and felt no need for the promise that He would bear their sins. They were desperately awaiting relief from Rome, and felt little concern for their sinful state – after all, they had the sacrificial routines down to a science! Like the people of Isaiah’s day, they shed much blood but realized very little cleansing – those who remained faithful to the Lord were only a remnant.

The religious leaders of the Jews never accepted Jesus as being the Son of God, and very soon looked for a reason by which they could have Him removed, since it became obvious that He wasn’t going to do away with Rome. One day Jesus told these religious leaders a parable about someone who built a vineyard, along with everything that was needed for its operation, and he let it out to caretakers (*husbandmen*). When it was time for the owner to receive of his vineyard, he sent his servants to get some of the product for him; however, the caretakers abused his servants and gave no produce from the vineyard. At last the owner sent his own son, thinking that the caretakers would recognize who he was and show a change of heart. However, when they saw the son, they killed him; Jesus’ question for the religious rulers was: “What will he [the owner] do unto those husbandmen?” (Matthew 21:40). Their response was a vigorous: “He will miserably [severely] destroy those wicked men, and will let out *his* vineyard unto other husbandmen ...” (Matthew 21:41).<sup>13</sup> Jesus responded, “Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you [future tense, but indicative mood – a stated fact], and given to a nation [people] bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matthew 21:43).<sup>14</sup> “And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them” (Matthew 21:45).

In His teaching, Jesus clarified some things for us regarding those who are His from all eras. “As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold [*oule* – speaking of those who were not a part of Israel]: them also I must bring [lead], and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold [*poimne* – flock], and one shepherd” (John 10:15-16).<sup>15</sup> Jesus says that He is the Shepherd of one flock of sheep, and this flock will be made up of both Jews and Gentiles.

Just before Jesus went to the cross to pay the price for the sins of the world (in fulfillment of the promise that the Lord made to Abraham), He met with His disciples for what we call the Last Supper. It was during this time that something very significant took place. When Jesus took the cup after their supper, He said, “This cup is the new [fresh] testament [covenant] in my blood, which is shed for you” (Luke 22:20). Here is the implementation of the prophecy of Jeremiah – God (Jesus) is making a new covenant with the house of Israel and Judah (His disciples were all Jewish) – a covenant founded upon His blood that would be shed, not on the blood of sacrificial animals (Hebrews 9:12). Clearly, with a new covenant in place, it would be understood that changes were going to be made in how we are to live; at the very least, based solely upon Jeremiah’s prophecy, we know that God will now write His Laws upon the heart.

---

<sup>13</sup> Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>14</sup> Strong’s Online; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>15</sup> Strong’s Online.



## Paul's Writings

Paul, as the Apostle to the Gentiles, bore the responsibility of helping the Gentiles to understand what had taken place that suddenly opened the way for them to come to God through faith. To the Romans, Paul explained that “he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly ... but he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly” (Romans 2:28-29). We have already seen that simply doing Jewish things was not enough to please the Lord (Isaiah 1:11-15). Now Paul adds to that by stating that just because someone is born into the family of Abraham, it does not make him a Jew inwardly; Abraham was justified before God because of his faith in Him (evidenced through his obedience to the voice of the Lord), therefore, anyone who is without that faith is not truly a descendant of Abraham – a Jew.

To the Galatians, Paul explained that Abraham received the promise that began in Genesis 3:15 – “And I [Jehovah] will put enmity between thee [Satan] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it [He] shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”<sup>16</sup> He goes on to explain that “her seed” speaks of none other than Christ, the Promised One (Galatians 3:16). The Law of Moses, we are told, “was added because of transgressions, till the seed [Christ] should come to whom the promise was made.” (Galatians 3:19). Without any doubt, the promise, which God made to Abraham, that through him all of the families of the earth would be blessed, found its fulfillment in Christ; He is the One Who has blessed everyone in the world, and He came into this world as a child of Abraham.

To the Ephesians, Paul explains for us that Jesus not only brought salvation from sin, but He removed that which had, from the time of Moses, separated the Jews from the Gentiles – the Law of Moses. “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off [Gentiles] are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath **made both one** [the Jew and the Gentile], and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances [the Law of Moses]; for to make in himself of twain [Jew and Gentile] **one new man**, *so* making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in **one body** by the cross ...” (Ephesians 2:13-16). Here is the explanation of what Jesus meant when He said that He would shepherd only one flock; there is not a flock of Jews and a separate flock of Gentiles – we are all ONE. The kingdom of God is one; the Jews of Jesus’ day lost the kingdom because of their unbelief; the kingdom has received us through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

## Conclusion

From what we have just seen, what should our view of modern-day Israel be? Are we to join with John Hagee in supporting the nation of Israel as much as we can? Or should our focus be to live in obedience to the Lord Who paid the price for our sins so that we can be a testimony of His presence in the world today?

---

<sup>16</sup> BDB.

In Romans 11, Paul tells us that we (as Gentiles, branches from a wild olive tree) have been grafted into the Root (the Lord Jesus Christ), whereas the Jews (those of the fold – John 10:16) have been broken off because of unbelief (Romans 11:17-21). We are spiritual Israel, for we are in Christ by faith; “all Israel shall be saved” when the last person joins that one flock of the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 11:26). In the words of the Scriptures: “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature” (Galatians 6:15).

God chose Abraham so that through him would come the Seed (Christ); this is the fruition of the promise that through him all of the families of the earth would be blessed. As Christ completed His work of salvation, and ascended into glory, He brought to an end the unique role of the nation of Israel in history. The veil before the Holy of Holies was torn open when He died upon the cross, and, through the New Covenant that He set in place, there came a new means of reconciliation with God. The sacrifices were ended, the priesthood was replaced, and the temple was no longer required. With the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD, God removed the last vestiges of Jewish tradition so that His people would seek Him through faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ only! The Jews were God’s chosen people to carry the promise forward, and to receive the Law of Moses (Romans 3:1-2), which foreshadowed the work that Christ would complete while He was on earth. That task has been accomplished in full.

Paul asks the question, “Hath God cast away [rejected] his people?” (Romans 11:1), to which his answer is: “God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew” (Romans 11:2).<sup>17</sup> To the Ephesians, Paul explained this foreknowledge: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* **in Christ**: According as he hath chosen us **in him** before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will ...” (Ephesians 1:3-5). Even though, being omniscient, God knows who will accept His salvation, it does not mean that His knowledge is deterministic; He has not predetermined some people to salvation, and others to damnation. The choice always rests with the individual! Moses admonished the people of Israel to “choose life” (Deuteronomy 30:19), Joshua challenged them to choose whom they would serve (Joshua 24:15), and we are told that whoever is believing on Jesus Christ should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16) – choosing and believing are all things that we are called upon to do; God has not, nor will He, do it for us.

Habbakuk, a prophet to Judah before they were exiled, declared that “the just shall live by his faith” (Habbakuk 2:4b); or “a righteous man by his faithfulness liveth.”<sup>18</sup> It was not hidden from Israel that despite the many required activities of the Law of Moses, faith was still the key that opened the door to a relationship with the Creator. Paul states that the Gospel was preached to Abraham through the promise that all peoples would be blessed through him; that was the Good News of Christ coming to pay the price for the sins of the world (Galatians 3:8). Christ has purchased our freedom from the law of sin so that we might receive the blessing that was promised through Abraham: the Spirit of God Who comes to abide within us when we place our faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:13-14; Romans 8:9)! Paul brings the Galatians

---

<sup>17</sup> Strong’s Online.

<sup>18</sup> BDB.

to this conclusion: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for 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” (Galatians 3:28-29). The modern-day nation of Israel is of no spiritual significance in God’s eyes; as a nation, they accomplished the purposes that He desired when Jesus came to earth, and their rejection of Him as their Messiah was confirmation that they still did not understand that God desired faithfulness, and not just works.

The obsession that many Evangelicals have with the nation of Israel comes partly from the dispensational error that is made by separating Israel from born-again believers (commonly called “the church”). By creating this artificial distinction, which finds no basis in Scripture, they are required to perpetuate the usefulness of Israel within God’s economy in order to explain some of the events that are prophesied to take place in the days ahead through which “the church,” in their view, will not participate. Because they view “the church” as being a parenthetical institution in God’s dealings with man, they must bring Israel back into their own as a nation so that the rest of prophecy can be fulfilled. This has become such a prominent understanding among professing Christians today, that to hold to anything other than this is to invite looks of incredulity. However, the fact remains that the Scriptures are filled with the clear teaching that the purposes of Israel are completed and that, in Christ, they are the same as the Gentiles. Within our minds, the Jews must hold no higher place of significance than our next door neighbor.

Will the land that Israel occupied (the Promised Land) hold any significance in the days ahead? That is a decidedly different matter, and the answer to that would be, yes! When the Lord Jesus Christ returns to establish His reign on earth, we are told that He will inherit all of the kingdoms of the earth (Revelation 11:15), and we are told that He will reign from Jerusalem, like unto His earthly forefather, David. “Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem ...” (Isaiah 24:23). After Satan is released from his thousand-year stay in his prison, he will gather the peoples of the earth in battle against the Lord, “and they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city [Jerusalem]” (Revelation 20:9). Clearly, this will be the center from which the peoples of the earth will be ruled with a rod of iron.