

The Seed Promise

The Bible is a marvelous book. The more one studies that book the more he realizes the truthfulness of the statement. Not only does nature (Psalms 8; Romans 1:20-21) cause one to be thrilled at the majestic power of God, but His inspired book, the Bible, elicits the same response to those who are willing to take the time to study it carefully. "...*My heart standeth in awe of thy word*" said the psalmist, and if that were true centuries before Jesus Christ was born, how much more should that statement describe our feelings today!

God said, through Isaiah His prophet, "*wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread; and your labour for that which satisfieth not?...*" (Isaiah 55:2). He then gave this prophecy: "*Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel...*" (v. 5). Here, 700 years before it occurred, Isaiah prophesied that one day the Messiah (Christ) would call Gentiles unto salvation, and cause Jews and Gentiles to be on par with one another in His eyes. This was fulfilled in the 1st century (Ephesians 2:11-22). Indeed, we ought to allow ourselves to thrill at the concept of prophecy and its fulfillment within the Holy Scriptures.

Earlier, God informed Isaiah "...*I am God, there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure'*" (Isaiah 46:9-10). This matter of prophecy and fulfillment is internal evidence, that is, evidence found within the Bible itself that it is what it claims to be – the word of God!

There is, however, one prophecy that

goes much further back in time, and that is the seed promise given by God to mankind, a prophecy that ties the Bible together as none other. For centuries the nation of Israel had looked forward to the coming of the Messiah. "*Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another*" (Matthew 11:2), and "*this is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world*" (John 6:14) illustrates such an air of expectancy. Although they crucified Christ when He did come into the world, they did it in ignorance and unbelief (1 Corinthians 2:8). It behooves us then to look over that which they overlooked – the seed promise!

The very first announcement of the coming of Christ is found near the beginning of creation. In Genesis 3:15, God informed Satan that "*I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*" This has been called the first gospel, for it discloses that in the future Satan would deal the Seed of woman a heel wound, but Satan himself would receive a head wound from which he would never recover. This Seed that would come thousands of years in the future would be the seed of woman, and that the Seed would be a single individual who would render Satan a head wound. Had the Bible closed at this point, we would know very little about what God had in mind at the time of the prophecy. Truly, His "thoughts are not our thoughts" nor are "his ways our ways" (Isaiah 55:8-9).

We want to encourage our readers to follow the seed promise carefully, down through the history from the time of Adam to Jesus Christ. Allow yourself to be impressed with what God knew, when He knew it, and how He was working behind the scenes throughout Old Testament history. You see, those prophets of old wondered about such prophecies regarding the Christ, and even the angels desired to look into these matters (1

Peter 1:10-12). We have, at our fingertips, that about which they could only wonder. We dare not lay it aside, nonchalantly, and go on to mundane matters of little significance.

Don't minimize the importance of studying the genealogy of Christ (Luke 3:23-38) because this gives us a "bird's eye view" of that seed promise. Luke begins his account of this genealogy with Christ and works his way backward to Adam. In our study, we start with Adam and work our way down to Christ, the promised Seed. The line begins with Adam, but we learn that the seed would not come through Cain, but rather through Seth, the 3rd child of Adam and Eve. "*Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: for God, said she, hath appointed me other seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew*" (Genesis 4:25).

Some 17 generations later, the Seed promise was renewed to Abram: "...*I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, ...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 12:2-3). But Abram was concerned, because he and Sarah were getting on up in years, and as he said to God: "*Behold, to me thou hast given no seed*" but God assured him that the seed "*shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir*" (Genesis 15:4). Ishmael would not be a part of the seed line, even though Abraham said to God "*O that Ishmael might live before thee*" (Genesis 17:18). God informed him that "*Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him*" (v. 19). When Abraham was a hundred years old, Isaac was born, according to God's promise. Trouble developed between Hagar and Sarah, and God informed Abraham that he

was to hearken to Sarah and her insistence to remove Hagar and Ishmael from the house. The nation promise was being fulfilled here (Genesis 12:2), but more importantly, God said that it was through *“Isaac shall thy seed be called”* (Genesis 21:12; see also Luke 3:34).

Following the seed line, we see that Isaac’s son, Jacob, was told that *“...in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed”* (Genesis 28:14). Remember now that God, through His providence, was bringing Christ into the world. Surely one ought, as he studies the Bible today, be impressed with the fact that God could *“declare the end from the beginning”* (Isaiah 46:10).

But through which of Jacob’s children would the Seed come? The answer: Judah (1 Chronicles 5:1-2). Some ten generations passed, and God’s prophet Nathan promised David, King of Israel, that *“when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish His kingdom”* (2 Samuel 7:12). We can see what has happened years in the past, but God, with His foreknowledge, can see centuries into the future. *“...I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever...”* (Psalm 89:35-36).

A thousand years pass, and we see that people were aware that the Christ was prophesied to come *“of the seed of David”* (John 7:42), the very point Paul emphasized in Acts 13:23: *“Of this man’s seed hath God raised unto Israel a Savior, Jesus.”* The Seed had arrived, the Seed that was promised thousands of years in advance.

The blessing of Abraham was to include the Gentiles (Galatians 3:14) – not just the nation of Israel. *“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” (v. 16). The promise which was made to Abraham over nineteen hundred years earlier had been fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Genesis 12; Galatians 3:16). Both Jew and Gentile have the right to be a part of God’s grand scheme of redemption.

Genealogy is important as it pertains to the line through which the Messiah would come, for after all, He was to be born of woman (Galatians 4:4) so He could be the Son of Man (Romans 1:3), but having no earthly father, He was the Son of God (Romans 1:4; Matthew 16:16). But our salvation is not a matter of genealogy, but rather of faith! *“Know ye therefore 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 of the earth be blessed.’ So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham”* (Galatians 3:7-9).

“If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:29). Every individual that belongs to Christ has obeyed His gospel, and is a part of that original plan of God. Along with Paul, we too say *“Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift”* (2 Corinthians 9:15).

This tract is condensed from a lesson presented at the 27th Annual Mid-West Lectures, “God’s Precious Promises.” To hear or view the complete lesson go to www.kc-cofc.org/2009Lectures.htm or contact the 39th Street Church of Christ 15331 East 39th Street Independence, MO 64055-4240 USA

God’s Precious Promises...

The Seed Promise

by
Wayne Price

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