

God said to the Son, "You are My Son; today I have become Your Father" (Hebrews 5:5). Christ said of Himself, "A body You prepared for Me . . . Here I am – it is written about Me in the scroll – I have come (into the world) to do Your will O God" (Psalm 40:6-8; Hebrews 10;5-6).

When the time was right, God sent His Son. He gave the Son this commission: Go into the world and preach the good news that God will forgive man's rebellion and sin when they put their faith in Christ.

Jesus Christ was born of a woman (Galatians 4:4), grew up to be a man, told men and women the good news of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:15), died and rose from the dead to save all who would receive His message. This is the theme of Paul's letters to Christians in the churches of Asia Minor and to us (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

The Son came to earth to secure His inheritance. His inheritance is a spiritual community of those who love Him. He reigns over His citizens in the Kingdom which God is building Christ reigns over His Kingdom now, but it is not yet complete. His Kingdom is built of "living stones," that is, men and women who receive Him (1 Peter 2:5). They are His body, the Christian Church (Ephesians 5:30) and His inheritance forever (Daniel 2:44).

God's plan was "to seek and to save" a world lost in sin (Luke 19:10). He is accomplishing His plan and He wants you to be included. He invites you to become a citizen of heaven.

TALK ABOUT

1. God sent Jesus Christ, His Son, into the world to "seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10).
2. His Spirit actively seeks out those who will be saved ___ True ___ False.
3. There is only one way to come to God (John 14:6) ___ True ___ False
4. Are you trying to find God in your own way? Will you be successful?
5. Is it hard to believe the "good news?"

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Children of the PROMISE

Written in everyday English

by

Fred Morris

To the Reader: This study is about a very wonderful promise God made long ago. It is a promise for everyone who believes. Find the references in your Bible and read them several times. Verses are quoted from the New International Version. Share this study with a friend and you will be blessed.

THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER

Long before God created the physical universe there was conflict between good and evil in the heavens. God has revealed very little about this in the Bible. He does not explain the origin of evil or how and when this conflict began. The conflict between good and evil goes on, even as you read this. God and His angels are on one side and Satan and demon spirits on the other.

We do know that God did not create the evil, sorrow, and suffering that we see today in the world. He created a perfect world. The Father and the Son created man for their own enjoyment. God “walked and talked” with Adam before he sinned. All the universe was at peace until that fateful day when Satan came to the garden to tempt Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:1-7). Evil came to earth from outside God's perfect creation. Satan won the hearts of the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, when they disobeyed God's command.

God has decided to allow evil to run its course in the world until an appointed time (Romans 1:18-32; Acts 17:30-31).

Every man and woman is now born with Adam's sin (Romans 3:23). Moral evil infects our hearts and our society. Men fight and kill for power. Evil powers beyond our control kill and destroy. The natural world also suffers from the evil in the world. God did not intend for there to be destructive storms and other natural disasters. The origin of all these things is Satan. He fights God to keep control over the hearts of men. Jesus said Satan “was a murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44).

Because Satan is “the prince of this world,” there will be wars until the end of time. Jesus said, “When you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end (of the world) will not come right away . . . Nation will rise against nation. There will be . . . earthquakes, famines and plagues in many places, and fearful events, and great signs from heaven” (Luke 21:9-11).

One day God will close this age. Peter said, “the heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire... But, in keeping with His (God's) promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness” (2 Peter 3:10-13).

TALK ABOUT

1. Where did the conflict between good and evil begin?

destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms (of men) and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever” (Daniel 2:44).

Jesus said to His disciples, “You are those who have stood by Me in My trials. And I confer on you a Kingdom . . . so that you may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom . . .” (Luke 22:28-30).

God created you and me for fellowship with Him. He desires a close, personal relationship with every person, and all events move us closer toward that goal. He invites every person to “repent and believe the good news” (Mark 1:15). He tells those who believe to “be sanctified” (1 Thessalonians 4:3), which means to live lives of purity and holiness.

FROM GENESIS TO REVELATION

From Genesis to Revelation, God revealed His purpose to redeem men and women from sin. He commissioned His Son to carry out and fulfil His promise. This is the goal of the “eternal covenant” which Christ sealed with His own blood (Luke 22:20; Hebrews 13:20). In this life the “eternal covenant” equips us “with everything good for doing His will.”

Before Jesus went back to heaven He gave the same commission to His followers. He said to them, “All authority in heaven and in earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations . . .” (Matthew 28:18-19).

When this life is over, the same “eternal covenant” secures God's people a place in heaven. Peter said, “God the Father . . . in His great mercy . . . has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade - kept (reserved) in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:3-5).

TALK ABOUT

1. Have you received Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord?
2. Do you have the same faith as Abraham, or are you trusting in the things you do to gain favour with God (Galatians 2:21)?
3. Are you looking forward to living forever in the Kingdom of God (Revelations 21:1-5)?

GOD'S PROMISE TO THE SON

In eternity God said to the Son, “I will make the nations Your inheritance and the ends of the earth Your possession” (Psalm 2:8).

God the Father sent the Son to restore His rule in the hearts of men and to rescue creation from the clutches of Satan. For a short time, Jesus Christ was made flesh in order to do this. He became subject to the Father so that He might carry out this commission.

feet" (1 Corinthians 15:25; Hebrews 1:13; 10:13).

5. He has gone to prepare a place for His people (John 14:2-3). He will come again in the clouds of the sky and gather them into a place of everlasting peace and joy (Matthew 24:30-31; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

From "before the ages" the mystery of the Christian Church was settled in heaven, but "kept hidden in God" (Ephesians 3:9), God would take people (a remnant) from every tribe and nation and make them His own people (Revelations 7:9).

God gave Paul the task to "make known to everyone the administration of this mystery," a mystery revealed to him by God's Spirit (Romans 16:25-27);

Erich Sauer writes, "The blessing which those who would be afterward won from the nations is indeed 'Abraham's blessing' (Galatians 3:14 and verse 9). Also the Christian Church of the present age (Romans 15:27; 11:24; Ephesians 3:6), also the future Kingdom of God (Luke 1:72-73), right on to the New Jerusalem (Revelations 21:10, compare Hebrews 11: 10,16), (all) rest on the promise made to Abraham."

TALK ABOUT

1. Did God keep His promise to send as Redeemer?
2. What did Jesus Christ come to earth to do (Luke 19:10)?
3. What is the hope of every Christian (Titus 1:2-3)?
4. Do you have this hope?
5. How can you be saved from your sins (Acts 16:31)?

GOD PREPARED A KINGDOM

From eternity God prepared a Kingdom for His people. All who love Christ as their Saviour are born again into God's Kingdom. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "No one can see the Kingdom of God unless he is born again" (John 3:3). Nicodemus did not understand Christ's words and asked, "How can a man be born when he is old?" Jesus answered, "No one can enter the Kingdom of God unless he is born of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:4-6).

God gives a new spirit-birth to everyone who believes. He does this by sending His Spirit to live in them (Ephesians 1:13). His Spirit possesses them, marks them out as His sons and daughters and sanctifies them (Acts 20:32). Those who are not saved and sanctified have no inheritance in God's Kingdom (Ephesians 5:3-5).

At the end of time Jesus Christ, the King of God's Kingdom, will gather all who love Him. He will say to them, "Come, you who are blessed by My Father; take your inheritance, the Kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world" (Matthew 25:34). The Kingdom is a place where God rules in the hearts of His people, it is an eternal reality and will never pass away.

Daniel prayed to God to show him what the end of his people would be. They were in exile in Babylon. God gave Daniel a vision of His Kingdom truth. He said, "the God of heaven will set up a Kingdom that will never be

2. Who is the great enemy of God?
3. Why did God create men and women?
4. What did Jesus tell us to expect (Luke 21:9-11)?
5. What will happen to this world in the end (2 Peter 3:10-13)?
6. Are you ready for that judgment day (Matthew 24:36-42)?

THE CONFLICT OF THE AGES

Satan was once a shining angel in heaven. He became proud and wanted to sit on God's throne, so he formed a rebellion against God. Many angels followed Satan and rebelled with him against God. Those angels became demons.

God is perfectly just, so He cast Satan and the fallen angels who followed him out of heaven. They now fight against God and against the men and women who believe in Him. Peter wrote, "Your enemy (Satan) prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

Satan, the prince-leader of evil, and his demons hosts are free to come and go in the earth (Matthew 12:24). There are also wicked angels who are bound, awaiting final judgment (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6).

TALK ABOUT

1. What does the Bible say Satan is doing (1 Peter 5:8)?
2. Satan was once a great ?
3. Should people be afraid of Satan? Why not?

SATAN SCORES A HIT

When God created the heavens and the earth, He made the man Adam and his wife Eve. God said to Adam and Eve, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over . . . every living creature . . ." (Genesis 1:28). He gave the first man and woman a free will and a conscience to know right from wrong. He also gave them a command: "You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die" (Genesis 2:14).

Satan came into the Garden of Eden and tempted Adam and Eve to sin against God. They believed Satan's lies and rebelled against God's command. Eve put out her hand and took the fruit and gave some to Adam and he ate it. They disobeyed God's command (Genesis 3:1-7).

This single act of sin cut them off from God, and evil powers and authorities took control of their lives. Satan had scored a direct hit against God's creation. From that day on, every person was born with Adam's sin.

Because of their disobedience, God put the man and woman out of the garden and set an angel with a flaming sword to stop them from entering it again (Genesis 3:1-22).

The perfect world God had created was thrown into darkness and flooded with evil. But the God had a plan to recover his creation. His love for mankind was from “before the creation of the world”, so He promised to send One who would rescue them from the Evil One (Ephesians 1:4; Galatians 1:4).

THE PROMISE

God created us for His own pleasure. We were always in His great heart, the objects of His love. Even before it happened, God knew that evil would one day infect His perfect creation. So it was always in His heart to redeem the world and restore what sin spoiled (Ephesians 1:4). God said this was His eternal plan.

A moment after Adam sinned, God came to the garden in Eden looking for him. It seems that God kept a regular appointment with Adam and Eve “in the cool of the day” (Genesis 3:8), but this day was different. Adam and Eve not meet God in the usual place. They were hiding in the bushes. So God called to Adam, “Where are you?”

Adam answered God, “I heard You in the garden . . .”! was afraid . . .”because I was naked, “so I hid” (Genesis 3:10). They confessed to their disobedience, but Eve blamed the serpent and Adam blamed the woman.

God could have struck them down in a flash, but He did not. Instead He cursed the serpent, and He gave Adam and Eve a promise. It was the greatest promise God ever spoke to human kind. He spoke this promise to the man and the woman and to all the generations that would be born. “I will put a strong hatred between you (Satan) and the woman, and between your offspring (seed) and hers; He (Eve's offspring) will crush your head, and you will strike His heel” (Genesis 3:15). The woman's offspring that God said would crush Satan's head is Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:16).

Here, for the first time, God spoke the promise of the gospel. Gospel simply means “good news”. This Good News was that there would be a Deliverer, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who would defeat Satan and his break his power over mankind (Romans 16:20; 1 John 3:8).

Adam and Eve heard the promise, but they could not fully understand the meaning of God's words of hope. They stood crushed, beaten, and shamed by guilt. God quickly put them out of the garden and stationed an angel with a flaming sword to keep them from returning (Genesis 3:22-23).

3. Who was the ‘seed’ or offspring of the woman who would crush Satan's head (Galatians 3:15)?
4. What did Jesus Christ say to Martha (John 11:25-26)?
5. When did Jesus ‘crush’ Satan's head (Hebrews 2:14-15)?

THE PROMISE AND JESUS CHRIST

Concerning Jesus Christ, God promised.

- a) Eternal life to all who believe (1 John 2:25). “He redeemed us . . . that the blessing promised to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus . . .” (Galatians 3:22).
- b) That all who had faith in Christ would be heirs of the blessings of the promise. Paul wrote, “It is not the natural children (the Israelites) who are God's (real) children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring” (Romans 9:8; Galatians 3:29). The “children of the promise” are any who believe in Jesus Christ and place their faith in Him.
- c) Christ's servant role set an example for His followers. “I tell you, Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs, so that the Gentiles may glorify God for His mercy” (Romans 15:8,12; John 13:15).
- d) Jesus Christ must be the object of our faith. “It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise . . . but through the righteousness that comes by faith” in Jesus Christ (Romans 3:14).
- e) Those who believe in Christ must continue in faith to the end. “You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised” (Hebrews 10:35; Habakkuk 2:3-4).

GOD'S PROMISE AND THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Every part of the promise God made to Abraham is being fulfilled today in the Christian Church. The Church includes all the saints of all ages. After giving a list of great men and women of faith who lived in times past, the writer of Hebrews had this to say about their rewards in heaven:

“These (men and women) were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised” (the promise, Genesis 3:15; 17:5-8; 1 Chronicles 17:7-14; Micah 5:2-4). God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect (complete) (Hebrews 11:39-40; Ephesians 5:27).

1. Jesus Christ, the Redeemer came. He was the offspring (seed) of David (Matthew 1:1; Revelations 22:16). Jesus Christ told men and women how to become citizens of His Kingdom (Mark 1:15; John 3:5,8).
2. He came to rescue us from our enemy, Satan, and to deliver us from the kingdom of darkness (Luke 1:74; Colossians 1:13; Ephesians 6:12).
He has gone before us and won every battle (Hebrews 7:25).
3. Before the end of this world comes, His “gospel of the Kingdom” will be preached in all the earth (Matthew 24:14).
4. “He must reign (He is reigning) until He has put all His enemies under His

ruling in the hearts of His people, the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16: Romans 9:8). David's throne and family line was a symbol of the throne or rule of God in the hearts His people (Psalm 89:3-4).

TALK ABOUT

1. What did God promise King David? Name some of the parts of the promise (1 Chronicles 17:8-14).
2. Jesus Christ was called "David's greater Son." Why?
3. Discuss how Messiah Christ rules over Israel.

THE SEED OF THE WOMAN

For many centuries the prophets foretold the coming of the Messiah. The prophet Isaiah foretold that the Messiah would be born to a virgin (Isaiah 7:14). As time passed, the door of hope opened wider. A remnant of faithful in Israel hoped in God's promise of a Redeemer who would deliver them from the power of Satan. After many centuries of waiting and expecting the promised One, the time finally arrived and Jesus Christ was born.

So God's original promise to Adam and Eve looked forward to:

- a) Christ's incarnation as the "seed of the woman." The list of names in Luke 3 shows Jesus Christ to be the son of Adam, yet called the son of the woman because she would give Him birth and because He had no earthly father. Even though Adam blamed the woman for their sin (Genesis 3:12), God in His grace gave a woman the honour of bearing the Son of God.
- b) Christ's victory. He would "crush Satan's head," the center of all evil authority and powers. Christ won the victory over Satan and death when He gave His own life on the cross. He brought about a complete overthrow of Satan's kingdom and rule (John 12:31).
- c) Christ suffered when Satan "bruised His heel," that is, His human nature. Satan tempted Him in the wilderness (Luke 4) and 'terrified' Him in the garden when an angel came and ministered to Him (Luke 22:43). The devil put it into Judas' heart to betray Jesus and into Peter's heart to deny Him (Luke 22:24). And he puts it into our hearts to disown our Lord (2 Timothy 2:12)
- d) Christ's sufferings brought us victory over Satan and death. "By His (Christ's) wounds we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die" (John 11:25-26).

So God's original promise to Adam and Eve was not destroyed by Christ's death, but fulfilled for all who believe. "He (Christ) shared in our humanity, so that by His death He might destroy Him who holds the power of death – that is, the devil – and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by fear of death" (Hebrews 2:14-15).

TALK ABOUT

1. Who was listening when God gave the promise (Genesis 3:9-14)?
2. What did God promise Adam and Eve and the world?

TALK ABOUT

1. Why did God come to the garden in Eden to visit Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:8)?
2. How did Satan gain control over Adam and Eve?
3. What promise did God give the woman (Genesis 3:15)?
4. What or who did God mean by the woman's 'seed' (Galatians 3:16)?
5. Is God's promise for all the world?

THE LONG CONFLICT

God foretold the long conflict that would follow the disobedience of Adam and Eve. Satan and his 'children' would attack and destroy the children of God at every point in history. Satan's lies would blind the eyes of men and women and stop them from believing God's promise (2 Corinthians 4:4). The devil would do everything in his power to ruin God's glorious creation. He would fight hard to keep men and women, the special objects of God's love, from being restored to a right relationship with their Creator.

THE PROMISE HIDDEN

Hidden in the promise was the great love of God. His heart ached for the fellowship He had enjoyed with the man and the woman. He wanted to "walk and talk" with them again, but their sin stood in the way. Their sin cut them off from a holy God (Isaiah 59:2).

In the center of the garden stood the tree of life (Genesis 2:14-17). God had said Adam and Eve could eat of its fruit freely. This meant that He had provided for a continuous and eternal relationship with them. But they had turned down God's provision in favour of Satan's lies.

The promised Redeemer was indeed "the Tree of Life" for all who would feast upon Him. The apostle John saw 'the Tree' in his vision of heaven. On each side of God's river of grace stood the Tree of Life. Its fruit nourishes the repentant soul and its leaves are "for the healing of the nations" (Revelations 22:2). The same eternal Life was promised in the 'seed' of the woman and came forth in the Son (Galatians 4:4). The Tree was spurned in the garden and the 'seed' was bruised on earth. Indeed, the 'seed' of the woman would fall into the ground and die for the salvation of all mankind (John 12:24).

He would be the first to rise again from the grave, the firstfruits of all creation (1 Corinthians 15:23). Afterwards all those who put their faith in Him will rise to meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

Out of the 'death' of God's punishment for sin, came the hope of resurrection and Life forever in Christ the redeemer. What man lost in the garden is fully restored to him by faith in the Son, Jesus Christ.

THE PROMISE ECHOED DOWN THE AGES

God promised to defeat sin and evil and redeem mankind (Genesis 3:15). God did not use the word 'redeem' until later, when He repeated the promise to the Israelites (Exodus 6:6). But His plan to win back what had been lost was there from the beginning (Luke 19:10). To "redeem" means to buy back something that had been sold by paying the full price for it, or to free those held as slaves. Under Satan's control, man became a "slave to sin," and can only be set free by faith in the Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

The promise God made to Adam and Eve was repeated and echoed down the ages. Every time God made a covenant or agreement with man, He repeated the key elements of that first promise:

- a) There would be struggle and conflict between the children (seed) of God and the children of the devil (John 8:44).
- b) God would fight the battles against evil for His children and give them victory over Satan (Psalm 60:12; 1 Corinthians 15:57).
- c) God will win a final victory over all evil (Hebrews 2:14-15; Revelations 20).
- d) He will honor those who keep His commandments. They will enjoy the hope of redemption and an eternal relationship with Him in His Kingdom (Acts 2:39; Galatians 3:14,29; Hebrews 11:39-40). This is the inheritance promised to all who love God (Joshua 13:33; Ezekiel 36:12; Galatians 3:29; 1 Peter 1:4-5).

As the history of the world unfolded, God repeated the promise in its various forms. Each time some or all these elements were present. Noah lived in a hostile world. He was hated because "he did everything just as God commanded him" (Genesis 6:22). When it came time to go into the ark to escape the coming flood, not one of his neighbors joined him. Only Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives were saved from the flood (1 Peter 3:20).

God swept away the wickedness that was in the world and began a new line of faith with Noah. By his faith "Noah condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith" (Hebrews 11:7).

God credits His righteousness to men of faith and they will live with Him in eternity (1 Peter 1:4-5).

TALK ABOUT

1. Did God promise a Redeemer only once?
2. Name the key parts of God's promise to Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:15).
3. What did God do to the world in the days of Noah?
4. God said Noah was a man (Genesis 6:9).
5. Did God warn men before He sent the flood?

GOOD GAVE THE PROMISE TO ABRAM

Later God repeated the promise to a man named Abram. Abram was 75

Jesus was born into David's family (Matt 1:1). Jesus Himself said to the apostle John, "I am the root and offspring of David . . ." (Revelations 22:16).

Note the pattern:

- a) God's promise looked beyond the physical land, to a home in heaven reserved for His people.
- b) There was struggle and war and heathen nations oppressed God's people (1 Chronicles 17:9,22).
- c) God fought His people's battles for them and gave them victory (2 Samuel 23:12).
- d) God would raise up an offspring of David to rule His Kingdom in righteousness. There would be no more oppression, but only eternal rest for the people of God (1 Chronicles 17:9;22:10; Psalm 132:10-11; Matthew 12:23).
- e) Those who had faith in David's greater Son, Jesus Christ, were guaranteed eternal life (Zechariah 13:1; Luke 1:60; Acts 13:34).

DAVID'S GREATER SON

From the time Abraham's descendants left Egypt until the coming of Jesus Christ, the Israelites worshipped God with animal sacrifices and burnt offerings, and by attempting to obey God's Laws. But the sacrifices and offerings were not God's ultimate will or purpose. They were a stop-gap measure that pointed forward to the day when the promise would be fulfilled. In heaven the eternal Son spoke to the Father: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You prepared for Me... Then I said, 'Here am I – I have come to do Your will O God'." (Hebrews 10:5-7). All blood sacrifices offered under the Law were a symbol of the coming of Jesus Christ and of His once-for-all sacrifice for sin (Hebrews 9:12).

For hundreds of years, God sent prophets to the Israelites to tell of the One who would come to fulfil the promise made to King David and his ancestor Abraham. The prophet Micah exclaimed, "But you, Bethlehem . . . though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for Me One who will be ruler over Israel . . . He will stand and shepherd His flock . . . And they will live securely. For then His greatness will reach to the ends of the earth. And He will be their peace" (Micah 5:2-4).

The elements contained in the first promise are all here:

- a) The Redeemer who would come (Isaiah 9:6).
- b) The conflict. Evil forces attack God's people but the Great Shepherd of the sheep stands to protect them (Hebrews 13:20).
- c) His greatness and power will "reach to the ends of the earth." This is the same as saying it will be absolute and able to protect those who put their trust in Him (John 17:11).
- d) He will win the victory over all evil forces and they will live securely in His Kingdom because "He is their peace" (Ephesians 2:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:16).
- e) He will reign on David's throne "establishing it and upholding it . . . from that time on and forever" (Isaiah 9:7; Luke 1:33). This is a picture of Jesus Christ

people, 'You yourselves have seen what I did in Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.

Now if you obey Me fully and keep My covenant, then out of all nations you will be My treasured possession. Although the whole earth is Mine, you will be . . . a kingdom of priests and a holy nation' " (Exodus 19:5-6).

When God said He had carried the people "on eagles' wings", He meant He had cared for them. Eagles often carry their baby chicks on their backs. God loved the people and cared for them much more than an eagle cares for her young.

Later Moses repeated this thought in a song (Deuteronomy 32:10-11). He sang these words, "He (God) shielded him (Israel) and cared for him; He guarded him as the apple of His eye, like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them on its pinions (wings)."

God told the people that more conflict lay ahead, and He promised them victory. He said, "Obey what I command you today. I will drive out before you..." – and God named the nations that lived in the land.

They had seen God fight for them when they came out of Egypt (Exodus 14:14). The Egyptian army had pursued them, but God stood against the heathen army and they were all drowned in the sea (Exodus 14:27-28).

TALK ABOUT

1. Who attacked the people as they left Egypt (Exodus 14:10-12)?
2. What did God do for His people?
3. What did Moses tell the people to do (Exodus 14:14)?
4. What lesson does this teach us?
5. How did God care for them?

GOD'S PROMISE TO DAVID

Later when the Israelites became a great nation, they had a great king named David. He ruled over all Israel, the land promised to Abraham and his descendants. David became old and settled in his palace in Jerusalem.

One day God sent the prophet Nathan to David. Nathan repeated God's words of promise, "I will provide a place for My people Israel so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them any more . . . I will raise up your offspring (seed) to succeed you . . . I will set him over My house and My Kingdom forever" (1 Chronicles 17:8-14).

The offspring of David that God was referring to was Jesus Christ. Many years after David died,



years old when God told him to leave his father's family and home town. Abram packed up his household and all his livestock and left the city. He followed God, not knowing where God was leading him. He often sat by the fire thinking about God's command.

At this time God gave Abram the promise. It puzzled him. The promise pointed to the land of Canaan and to a son (seed) who would be born to Abram and his aged wife Sarai. Abram and Sarai believed God, and God changed their names to Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 12:7-8).

The promise looked far into the future to "a blessing for all people on earth" who would join Abram in his faith. Again, the blessing would come to mankind through a person, a promised son (Genesis 12:2-3; Galatians 3:16).

God told Abram that all people on the earth would be blessed through his faith and obedience. Abram wondered and travelled on toward Canaan.

When God made his promise to Abram, He told him that there would be a great struggle ahead for Abram's offspring. The Hebrew people, also known as the twelve tribes of Israel, were Abram's descendants.

God also told Abram, "Your descendants will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years" (Genesis 15:13). But Abram would die in peace and God would "punish the nation (Egypt) they served as slaves."

History records how God won the victory over Satan and the idols of Egypt (Exodus 7:6 - 11:10). The Hebrew slaves were set free and Moses led them out of Egypt.

God's promise to Abram is set out in seven phrases or parts:

- a) "I will make you into a great nation"
- b) "I will bless you"
- c) "I will make your name great"
- d) "You will be a blessing (to the whole world)"
- e) "I will bless those who bless you"
- f) "Whoever curses you I will curse"
- g) "All peoples on the earth will be blessed through you"



TALK ABOUT

1. Abram believed God and God credited it to him as(Genesis 15:6)?
2. God changed Abram's name to(Genesis 17:5)?
3. What did God promise Abraham and Sarah?
4. God's promise to Abram is our promise. How is this possible (Galatians 3:29)?

ABRAHAM'S FAITH JOURNEY

Adam was the head of the human race. Noah was the head of the remnant of people God saved out of the flood. Abraham stood at the head of a long line of faithful men and women (Hebrews 11). His faith and God's promises to him are a pattern for all Christian experience. Abraham was called "the friend of God" (Isaiah 41:8), and the father of all believers (Romans 4:11; Galatians 3:29).

The greatest event in Abraham's life happened when he looked up at the stars. God promised, "a son coming from your own body will be your heir" (Genesis 15:6). Abraham and Sarah were very old, but Abraham believed God (Romans 4:20).

Faith in God was all it took for him to be justified in God's eyes. God credited Abraham's faith to him as righteousness. God declared Abraham righteous and blameless (Genesis 17:1). Like Abraham, when we believe God's promise, we too are freely justified by God.

Abraham was justified while yet uncircumcised. God justified Abraham thirteen years before He gave the sign of circumcision, so that no 'works' were needed. The law of circumcision was only a 'seal' as evidence of his faith, and not the reason for Abraham's justification. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul made the need to have faith in God very clear. He wrote, "a man is not justified by observing the law" (Galatians 2:16). He said, "If righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!" (Galatians 2:21). Salvation is God's free gift of grace and cannot be earned (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Erich Sauer observes, "To attain to the temple of salvation the Gentile must not first pass through the ante-room of the Jews – that is, through the law – but the Jews must first pass through that ante-room of that faith which Abraham already had while being, so to say, a 'heathen'." (Galatians 3:29).

TALK ABOUT

1. Why did God choose Abraham?
2. What did God ask Abraham to do (Genesis 12:1)?
3. What did God promise Abraham (Genesis 13:15-16)?
4. God promised Abraham a S who would bless the whole world.

GOD PROMISED AN INHERITANCE

God promised Abraham an inheritance, a blessing that would come to him because of his faith. To prove that Abraham's faith was real, God asked Abraham to sacrifice his only son, the son of promise, Isaac (Genesis 22:1-19).

When Abraham proved that he would obey God's command, God provided a sheep to use as a sacrifice instead of Abraham's son Isaac.

Faith and obedience to God's command won Abraham his inheritance (Romans 3:27). God guaranteed future glory to Abraham and to all who have Abraham's faith (Romans 8:30; Galatians 3:29; 1 Peter 1:4). It is by faith alone that we will inherit that "land that is fairer than day."

The final result of the salvation that God gives us is Christ's victory over death. God expressed this to Abraham in the words, "Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies" (Genesis 22:17).

God gave Isaac the same promise He gave Abraham (Genesis 23:3-6). Isaac obeyed God's command to stay in the land. He kept faith in God and God gave him victory over his enemies and the blessings of the land.

Abraham was willing to sacrifice Isaac because he believed God could raise Isaac from the ashes of sacrifice, if need be. He believed that God could raise the dead (Hebrews 11:17-19).

God did raise His own Son Jesus Christ from the dead. Our salvation was secured by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul said, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile (or useless)" (1 Corinthians 15:17-19).

TALK ABOUT

1. Isaac was the son of God's p
2. What did God ask Abraham to do with Isaac (Gen 22:1-19)? God was p with Abraham's faith.
3. What did God provide?
4. Who did God provide to be the sacrifice for your sin?
5. Do you believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Why?

TO A PEOPLE IN BONDAGE

God repeated the same promise He gave Abraham to Abraham's descendants, who had become slaves in Egypt (Exodus 6:6). The promise noted the bondage of Satan (the people were slaves of the Egyptians), and the mighty acts of God's judgment that would be required to set the slaves free!

The story of the mighty acts of God against the Egyptians and how Moses led Abraham's descendants (the Israelites) out of Egypt are told in the Book of Exodus in the Bible.

After the slaves were safely out of Egypt, God said to Moses, "Tell the