

God's Plan of Salvation – (The Promises)

Abraham (at first called Abram) was a faithful man who believed in God. He lived in a city called Ur in the land of Mesopotamia (in present day Iran) about 2000 BC. God spoke to Abraham and asked him to leave his native country and to go to a land that He would show him. At the same time, God made promises to Abraham, which forms the main structure of God's Plan of Salvation.

We read about this in Genesis 12:1-3

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt 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." These promises were repeated and expanded on a number of occasions during Abraham's life.

Abraham obeyed this call and God led him to the land of Canaan (later known as Israel). Here, God said to him, *"Unto thy seed will I give this land"* Genesis 12:7. God then further identified the land by saying, *"Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed FOR EVER"* Genesis 13:14-15, and *"Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt [the Nile] unto the great river, the river Euphrates"* Genesis 15:18.

The "seed" Abraham was promised has both a plural and a singular meaning. Firstly, it has reference to Abraham's immediate descendants through Isaac, his son, and Jacob, his grandson. Jacob's name was later changed to Israel and from him descended the nation of Israel.

God said to Abraham... *"I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth"* Genesis 13:16. God also said that Abraham's seed would be *"a stranger in a land that is not their's, [Egypt] and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them.... And afterward shall they come out with great substance"* Genesis 15:13, 14. This foretold the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, which we read about in the book of Exodus, and the nation is still in existence today.

Most importantly, however, the "seed" promised to Abraham refers to ONE person through whom all nations of the earth would be blessed. This is explained to us in the New Testament. *"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"* Galatians 3:16. It is only through Christ that the promises to Abraham will be fulfilled.

It is very important for us to note that these promises were NOT fulfilled during the lifetime of Abraham, Isaac or Jacob. Hebrews 11:13. *"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off."* meaning, they believed they would receive them at a future time. When will this be?

At the return of Jesus Christ to the earth.

God developed His purpose with further promises first to Abraham's son and grandson. Then many years later to King David who was the second king of Israel. 2 Samuel 7:12

And 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.

David was reigning as King over Israel about 1000 BC, when God gave him this specific promise. David was also a descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, so he was in the line to receive the promise.

Now, here is some good news!

If we believe in what God has promised to Abraham and we obey God's requirements, we can share in these promises too as adopted people into Abraham's line! *"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ... And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."* Galatians 3:27-29.

Note: all quotes are from the King James version of the Bible.