

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning

Week 36 (August 30-September 5, 2015)

Many people believe that the promises given to Abram and the Jewish people no longer apply since God has established His Church. This is a serious mistake! This week, we will see how the Lord has passed His original promises along to subsequent generations.

Sunday, August 30 (read Genesis 17:1-8)

The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God. (Genesis 17:8)

I did not feature chapter 16 where Abram and Sarai take a short cut and use Hagar, an Egyptian maidservant, to give birth to Ishmael, the father of the Arabs through the seed of Abram. The hostility created by this union continues to this day. In today's text, God confirms His covenant with Abram (v. 1-2). Because **many** nations will come from his seed, Abram's name is changed to Abraham, which means "father of many" (v. 4-5). Note some key words in the rest of the text, namely "**everlasting** covenant" and "**everlasting** possession" (v. 7-8, emphasis mine). Does it sound like God planned to replace Israel with His Church? The truth is this: "The mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are **heirs together** with Israel, **members together** of one body, and **sharers together** in the promise in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 3:6, emphasis mine).

Monday, August 31 (read Genesis 22:1-18)

I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me. (Genesis 22:17)

Abraham's wife, Sarah (see 17:15) gave birth to Isaac at age 90 "For nothing is impossible for God" (Luke 1:37). Be sure to take the time to read the amazing story of Abraham as he is asked to sacrifice this natural son on an altar (Genesis 22:1-12). The entire chapter previews Calvary where **God's Son** would be sacrificed on a cross for the sins of the entire world. There could be no substitute lamb on Calvary; the Lamb of God had to pay the price (v. 13). God extends His covenant with Abraham to include all of the nations on earth. Anyone from any nation who calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved (Romans 10:12-13). You are now living near the end of the Day of Grace (2 Corinthians 6:1-2). Don't delay your decision to live as a Child of God!

Tuesday, September 1 (read Genesis 26:1-6)

For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham. (Genesis 26:3b)

In today's text, we see the covenant pass along to the next generation. Isaac is told to refrain from going down to Egypt; rather, he is to live in the land of Canaan and allow God to provide for him and his family. The oath previously made to his father, Abraham, is now confirmed to the son (v. 1-3). (Today, Israel is looking to Egypt for help since the United States has made a treaty with Iran. This is against God's instructions and will not end well for the Jews.) Don't miss the fact that the covenant is passed along to Isaac because of **Abraham's** obedience (v. 4-5). This encourages me in claiming my family for Christ. God's Word says, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—**you and your household**" (Acts 16:31, emphasis mine). I have not seen the fruit of this promise in all my family, but I know I can trust God to fulfill His Word, even after my death. Praise His Holy Name!

Wednesday, September 2 (read Genesis 28:10-17)

"I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying." (Genesis 28:13b)

Isaac's wife, Rebecca, gives birth to twin boys, Esau and Jacob (Genesis 25:21-24). Through God's sovereign will, the blessing of the father goes to Jacob, even though he is the younger son (25:23). In today's text, Jacob has a dream in which he sees a stairway (ladder) reaching up to heaven with angels ascending and descending on it. Above the stairway stands the Lord (v. 12-13a). God introduces Himself as the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac (13b). He then replicates the covenant already made to Jacob's father and grandfather (v. 14-15). I love Jacob's reaction to this dream: "Surely the Lord is in this place" (v. 16). (There is a great worship song by that very title that many of you may know.) God's blessings do not stop with the death of a family member. We must continue on and find God's will for us!

Thursday, September 3 (read Genesis 35:9-15)

The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I also give to you, and I will give this land to your descendants after you. (Genesis 35:12)

Jacob's name has been changed to **Israel** (struggles with God) following a wrestling match with an angel (Genesis 32:22-28). In today's text, Jacob returns to the place of his strange dream (see yesterday's devotion) and God appears to him again to emphasize his new name, Israel (v. 10). The Lord commands Israel to "be fruitful and increase in number" (v. 11). God then reaffirms the covenant He has made to Abraham and Isaac (v. 12). Israel names the place "Bethel" (house of God) because of his previous experience at this location (28:10-17). I pray that you have a regular house of God to which you bring your willing offerings. No preacher should have to emphasize **giving** when God's Spirit prevails in His house! The response will be automatic!

Friday, September 4 (read Jeremiah 31:31-34)

"For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." (Jeremiah 31:34b)

From the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Israelites were disobedient to God and suffered through slavery in Egypt. Nevertheless, God has promised a **future** to them that will be similar to the Day of Grace that we Gentiles now enjoy. His new covenant will include forgiveness of their sins, His Spirit living in them, and a constant desire to learn and follow the laws of God (v. 33-34). This will not happen in Israel until God first calls His Church home in the rapture. Then He will turn His attention to His chosen people during the tribulation on earth. Finally, the Jews will realize that they crucified their Savior 2000 years ago on Calvary.

Saturday, September 5 (read Jeremiah 31:35-37)

"Only if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth below be searched out will I reject all the descendants of Israel because of all they have done," declares the Lord. (Jeremiah 31:37)

Do you see why the religion of Islam is trying to destroy the Jews? If they can accomplish this mission, the Koran is proven right and the Bible is proven wrong! God, the Creator of the sun, moon and stars declares: "Only if these decrees vanish from my sight . . . will the descendants of Israel ever cease to be a nation before me" (v. 36). When you begin with the phrase, "In the beginning God, . . ." other doctrines such as creation, marriage, original sin and salvation fall right into place. If you eliminate God from creation and believe in evolution, nothing makes sense, and the whole world is on its own. I choose to believe the Bible. Israel is safe in the arms of the very One the Jews crucified!