

THE
MAN WHO WAS
PROMISED THE
EARTH



DO YOU KNOW

that God made more promises to Abraham than to any other person in the Bible?

DO YOU REALISE

that the promises given by God had relevance not only to Abraham, but also to his children.

The Jewish people are the family of Abraham, and these promises made thousands of years ago, still affect them today. We too can be involved and benefit from these promises.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED

to learn what the future will reveal; if you care about your personal destiny and how to change the course of your own life, providing you with hope for the future, read this booklet carefully and thoughtfully. It has a message for you.

HERALD OF THE COMING AGE

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The Man Who Was Promised the World

"He promised me the world!" This is an expression that is used colloquially to express a promise of boundless magnitude. It is sometimes used as an exaggeration, to express bitter disappointment. It might be said of somebody who has let us down.

Many promises are like that. Some people claim that they will stand by us, but in time of need they fail to do so. Politicians promise *"the world"* before an election, but have a tendency to break their promises when elected. Statesmen promise to make the world fit for heroes in time of war, but ignore their needs in time of peace. Modern science promises to free humanity from want, but a third of the world goes to bed hungry every night.

Even religion makes promises it fails to carry out. Religious leaders promise their followers a place in heaven, but fail to justify their promise by proving it from the Bible. It is a promise that nobody is in a hurry to attain! There is a reluctance to escape the problems of this life by death, in order to enjoy the so-called blessings of heaven. There is something intangible and unreal about a place in heaven, that few are keen to die. The prospect of one's "soul" (whatever that may denote) floating around in an intangible state is dull, monotonous, unexciting and unattractive. The zest of life, its joy and happiness, would disappear if bodies remain decaying in the grave and we exist in an unembodied state elsewhere.

The Bible does not promise this. It does not teach of a present immortal soul. It describes life and death, and both can be for eternity - everlasting life, or everlasting death. But the Bible teaches that this will be upon the earth, and in a bodily condition (Psalm 37v1; Matthew 5v5; Revelation 5v9). A physical resurrection to life eternal, and an everlasting inheritance on earth, is the hope offered to those who seek it (Daniel 12v2; 1Thessalonians 4v16). Death and the grave will be swallowed up in victory when *"this corruptible puts on incorruption, and this mortal puts on immortality"* (1Corinthians 15v53-58). The Bible teaches that as death came by man (Adam) at the beginning, so the prospect of a bodily resurrection to eternal life has been opened up to those

"For the promise that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham, or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith"
— Romans 4v13.

who desire to attain it through Jesus Christ (1Corinthians 15v22). His physical resurrection is set forth as the pattern of hope for all who desire it: *"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection"* (Romans 6v5). *"Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming"* (1Corinthians 15v23). *"He shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body"* (Philippians 3v21).

What God promises is what He promised faithful Abraham.

And he was promised the world!

With conditions! And those conditions, we now outline for you.

Abraham: An Example of Faith

Abraham is so important to the purpose of God that hundreds of references are made concerning him throughout the Bible. In fact, the Bible cannot be understood properly without the knowledge of Abraham, and of the promises that God made to him.

Concerning him, the Bible records: *"He (Abraham) staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead"* (Romans 4v20-24).

Abraham believed, and was strong in faith; and his example provides a pattern of what God wants of those who seek for life eternal.

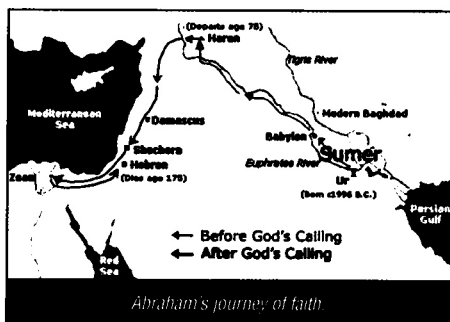
Called Out of Ur

The account of Abraham's life commences with a message from God in his home town of Ur (in the area today, of modern Iraq), calling upon him to separate himself from its idolatrous environment, and to leave for a land that God would show him (Genesis 12v1-3).

Little was known of Ur of the Chaldees. Time and desert sands had hidden the city from the eyes of man, so that it appeared for centuries, as a great mound of earth. But in 1922 the archaeologist, Leonard Woolley was commissioned to excavate the site of Ur, the ancient city on the banks of the Euphrates.

It became obvious that Ur was a centre of culture and learning. Libraries containing thousands of books, were found there. A history of the city was

reconstructed from the ruins of the past, which indicated that Ur had its own royalty and aristocracy, and dominated other neighbouring cities. It was the headquarters of the worship of the Moon Goddess. Previously, the site of Ur had been a matter of conjecture and debate;



but today its existence is beyond doubt. The excavations provide proof to the life account of Abraham, one of the most important men in Bible history.

Among other things, it confirmed that Abraham was brought up in an environment of idolatry. He was originally a worshipper of false gods which he subsequently rejected for the worship of the one true God. The nation of Israel that descended from Abraham was told: *"Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood [i.e. the river Euphrates] in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor; and they served other gods. And I took your father from the other side of the flood and led him throughout all the land of Canaan"* (Joshua 24v2-3).

Why did God call Abraham from such an environment? Why select him in preference to any other man? The reason is that God discerned qualities of character in him which He could shape, much the same as many years later God saw in Saul of Tarsus, the great persecutor of the Christians (see Acts 9), a man of high principle, who, once converted became known as Paul the Apostle. A man who used the energy he previously expended in opposing and persecuting the Truth, to instead advocating and defending it against great opposition.

As a result of the call of God, Abraham repudiated the false, idolatrous worship and environment in which he lived, to seek out the Truth.

In company with his father Terah, his brother Nahor, his nephew Lot, and his wife Sarah, Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees, and proceeded in a north-westerly direction, along the caravan route that followed the course of the River Euphrates for a distance of some 800 kilometres from the Persian Gulf to Asia Minor, eventually they arrived at the northern town of Haran.

The Crossroads of Abraham's Life

The place names of Abraham's journey are significant. They have a meaning that helps to illustrate the story that unfolds, and which reveals, in the life of Abraham, a type of the journey that every man or woman will take who would seek to acceptably serve God. For example, "Ur of the Chaldees" (see Genesis 11v31) means the *Light of the Chaldees*, and as "light" and "knowledge" are synonymous terms in the Bible, the meaning of the name signifies and describes, how that Abraham turned his back on the "light" or "knowledge" of the Chaldees, in much the same way as God requires believers to turn from the philosophies and false religious teachings in existence today.

The word "Haran" (Genesis 11v31) is also significant. It means *Road or Enlightenment*. A road "*enlightens*" one as to the way he must go, and, in fact, in those days Haran was the hub or crossroads of several caravan routes. It was suitably named as far as the biography of Abraham is concerned, as it proved to be the spiritual crossroads of his life. The family of Terah (Abraham's father) had heard the message of God calling them to leave Ur, and to go into a land that He would reveal (Genesis 15v7; Acts 7v2), and they had partially obeyed. They had reached a certain degree of "*enlightenment*," and the question now was: Were they to continue?

Faith and courage were required to go further. Haran was an outpost of Babylonia, and to move over the Euphrates into the land of Canaan, as commanded by God, meant that they would have to leave a place where they felt safe, and with which they were familiar, for the uncertainties of the unknown.

For a while the family remained at Haran. Few details are recorded of what occurred in that place. Probably there was some resistance to moving further. Then Terah, the aged father of the group died. Once again, Abram (as Abraham was then called), heard the Voice of God: "*Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee*" (Genesis 12v1).

Ordered to separate from his "father's house" and his "kindred" implies that others of the family were resisting the command of God to separate themselves from their contemporaries, and move over the Euphrates into the unknown land of Canaan. The original Hebrew of the Bible, expresses the statement in the imperative mood, emphasising the urgency of the appeal. It should be rendered: "***Go for thyself!***" implying that it would be to the advantage of Abraham to do so, irrespective as to the intentions of the rest of his family.

God told Abraham: *"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"* (Genesis 12v2-3).

In Galatians 3v8, the Apostle Paul taught that in these promises, *the Gospel*, was preached to Abraham. His words signify that if a person fails to understand the promises made to Abraham, he fails to comprehend the saving truths of the Gospel! The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ came to *"confirm the promises"* made unto such as Abraham (Romans 15v8-9), so that understanding and acceptance of the promises opens the way to eternal life at the coming of Jesus Christ to the earth again (2Peter 1v4; 1Corinthians 15v1-2).

The promise made to Abraham can be divided into four parts:

1. **A NATIONAL PROMISE:** *"I will make of thee a great nation;"*
2. **A PERSONAL PROMISE:** *"I will bless thee, make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing;"*
3. **A COMMUNAL PROMISE:** *"I will bless them that bless thee;"*
4. **AN INTERNATIONAL PROMISE:** *"All families (i.e., nations) of the earth will be blessed."*

Not one of these promises has yet been fulfilled. Abraham's descendants (the Jews) are not a great nation; he, himself, is dead; those who bless him are very few in number and are plagued with sin and death; the nations are in a state of antagonism and violence. All humanity is under a curse rather than a blessing.

The Promises Currently Being Vindicated

The first part of the statement is a *National* promise. The Jewish people, are the descendants of Abraham, but in all their long and chequered history they have never attained to being a *"great nation."* For a few years, under David and Solomon, they attained a measure of glory, but it was shortlived and terminated in civil war and division. Then, because of constant wickedness, God scattered the nation into all parts of the earth as He had warned (see Deuteronomy 28v49-52, 63-67).

But an amazing phenomenon of history took place. Though broken up as a nation, and scattered amongst the nations, they remained Jews, whether dwelling in China, Europe, America or Australia: a people apart and generally disliked. They became, as God warned they would, *"a proverb and a byword among all nations"* (Deuteronomy 28v37). The Jews were placed under great

pressure, with powerful tyrants, like Hitler, endeavouring to annihilate them, but in vain. God's Word had been given: *"Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished"* (Jeremiah 30:11).

God declared that He would restore them to their land, and that would occur "in the latter days" (v. 24).

Today, in these "latter days," Israel is a nation once again. In 1948 it was re-established in accordance with Bible prophecy and the promises made to Abraham. Consider the significance of the following words: *"Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all..."* (Ezekiel 37v21-22).

Notice the development: [1] the people restored; [2] the nation revived; [3] a monarchy established.

History reveals the preservation of Israel in spite of bitter and brutal persecution, and today the world witnesses the revival of the nation. After World War I, it saw the Jews return to their land; after World War II, it witnessed the nation revived; and after World War III, it will see the promised divine monarchy restored.

Who will be King? The One they crucified over 2,000 years ago — who was born and who died as **KING OF THE JEWS** (Matthew 2v2; 27v37). The prophet predicts: *"They shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem; neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart"* (Jeremiah 3v17).

Why does God do this for the Jews? Because of their obedience? Certainly not! Because of their worship of Him? No, for the Bible declares: *"Blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in"* (Romans 11v25). Why then? Because of the promise made to the man Abraham, to whom God promised the world!

God stated: *"...I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for Mine holy name's sake, which ye have profane among the heathen, whither ye went... For I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land"* (Ezekiel 36v22, 24). Israel will be fully restored under Jesus Christ their king, to reach a greatness and a glory the nation has never yet experienced. Then the promise to Abraham will

be fulfilled: *"I will make of thee a great nation."*

Abraham will live again to see that great time, for in declaring that He would make his name great, God promised to raise him from the dead to life eternal and to an everlasting inheritance upon this earth. The return of Jesus Christ, and the complete restoration of Israel, will pave the way for a new world order on earth that will bring the blessings of divine administration to all nations. So all four aspects of the promise (see page 5) made to Abraham will be fulfilled.

But the exciting fact is, that in the events taking place today, particularly in the Middle East, we see a part fulfilment, of that which was promised to Abraham. And this is the guarantee that all the promises will be fulfilled. *"When the LORD shall build up Zion, He shall appear in his glory"* (Psalm 102v16).

The Family of Abraham as Types

Heeding the command of God, and motivated by the promise made to him, Abram did not hesitate in leaving his relations who would not act, he left Haran and passing westward over the Euphrates, entered Canaan, as the land of Israel was then called (Genesis 12v4-5).

Consider now the four men who had heard the message of God, and left Ur. They are types of all those who hear the gospel message. **Terah**, Abram's father, whose name means *Tarry* or *Delay*, hesitated too long, and died in Babylonia. **Nahor**, Abram's brother, whose name signifies *Snorer*, acted accordingly and did not rouse himself sufficiently to heed God's message and promise. Spiritually lethargic, he was not moved by the urgent need of salvation. Abram's nephew, **Lot**, whose name means *Veiled*, followed the lead of his uncle, but because he lacked a sound vision of what God promised, was subsequently led astray into the wicked environment of Sodom. He typifies those who, having accepted God's invitation in the way appointed (by passing through the waters of baptism — Mark 16v16, as Abram crossed over the River Euphrates), ultimately give in to worldly pressures. **Abram**, the man of faith, whose name signifies *Exalted Father*, crossed over the river in answer to the urging of God. He gave his life completely to God, and resolutely set himself to obey God's commands (see Genesis 18v19).

Every person who hears the call of God, can fit into one of those four types. They either delay to respond like *Terah* until it is too late; are indifferent like *Nahor* the snorer and do nothing; act like *Lot* the veiled, and fail to keep the vision bright before them; or they follow in the footsteps of *Abram* the faithful, and receive God's blessing.

Abraham: The Hebrew

Having answered the call of God by crossing over the River Euphrates and entering the Promised Land, the status of Abram was changed. He became known as "Abram the Hebrew" (Genesis 14v13). The word "Hebrew" signifies "One who has crossed over," and denotes a man set apart. The Canaanites saw Abraham as a stranger in their midst. He was not one of them. He was "a *stranger and pilgrim*" (see Hebrews 11v13-16).

He is called "*the Father of the Faithful*" (Romans 4v11), by which is meant that he laid the foundation of the ecclesia of God. The Greek word *ecclesia* is the New Testament word rendered "church." In the Bible it is never associated with a building, but defines the community of the faithful, who walk in the steps of Abraham, endorsing his beliefs. The word is compounded of two Greek words: *ek* meaning "out of," and *klessis* signifying "a call or invitation." An *ecclesia*, therefore, signifies a congregation that has been separated from the world, called out by invitation as was Abraham.

The faithful believers throughout history are those who have withdrawn from the religious, social and political environments of their times, as Abraham had from Haran. Although they were Gentiles, they became spiritual "Hebrews" through belief (Ephesians 2v11-13). They saw the gospel as "the hope of Israel" (Acts 26v6-7; 28v20). Having "crossed over" from the way of death in the world, for the way of life in Christ, they identify their faith and belief with that of Abraham (Romans 4v11; John 8v39; Galatians 3v9, 29). Their status is defined in the Bible in the following words: "*God did visit the Gentiles (nations) to take out of them a people for His name*" (Acts 15v14). To all who hearken to God and the promise of life eternal, the divine invitation is extended: "*Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the LORD; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the LORD Almighty*" (2Corinthians 6v17).

Such a calling demands an element of sacrifice, but its rewards compensate a hundredfold both now and in the Age to come (Matthew 19v28-30; Mark 10v30). We are not called upon to physically remove from the places of our sojourn, but socially, politically and religiously, we must do so if we would please God. The act of "crossing over" from a way leading to death to one leading to life, is in accepting the Truth in Jesus Christ, and submitting to baptism. Jesus Christ told his disciples to "*Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved*" (Mark 16v15-16).

The call of Abraham constitutes a challenge to all who will conform to the example of Faith, as proclaimed in God's Word. The challenge is to stand aside from the world of the ungodly as did Abraham, and consecrate their lives to God in the way appointed.

Into The Land of Promise

In answer to the call of God, Abram entered the Land of Promise (Genesis 12v5). The narrative states that "*the Canaanite was then in the land*" (Genesis 12v6; 13v7). This apparently unimportant observation is of great significance. The Canaanites were a frightfully depraved, immoral people. Archaeology reveals that they had a form of religion, but not according to God's way. Politically, they dominated the Land of Promise, and socially they polluted it.

From them, Abraham had to remain completely separate.

True Christians are required to do the same in regard to the present social, political and religious trends of today. This is an age of great evil in which standards of restraint are ridiculed and abandoned, and God and His Word are not afforded the respect due. The thin veneer of respectability that once hid the wickedness of man from sight is today being set aside, while man is becoming completely hardened in sin and wickedness as Jesus Christ warned (see Luke 17v26-29), and the Bible predicts (2Timothy 3v1-5). Crime, immorality and violence are reaching plague proportions, and humanity is on a collision course with Destiny. It is heading for a crisis of destruction, described in the Bible as *Armageddon*.

The way of wisdom is to follow in the footsteps of Abraham. The stages in his spiritual development were as follows:

1. He was first an idolator, worshipping a false god.
2. He was attracted to the call of God, and recognised the folly of his previous life and circumstances.
3. He became educated in the gospel, through the promises God made him.
4. He separated himself from his previous way of life to live as a stranger and pilgrim in the land promised him.
5. He became a man of faith motivated by the hope of eternal life and inheritance on earth.

These are the steps that we also must take to please God and attain unto the promised reward:

1. Repudiate the social, political and religious trends that are antagonistic to God.
2. Develop an understanding of the Word of God.
3. Embrace with enthusiasm the gospel message.
4. Commence walking in the way of salvation through baptism.
5. Maintain a separateness from the world about us whilst awaiting the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, who will return to earth and grant to those who remain faithful, immortality and an eternal inheritance with him.

The Benefits of a Life In Jesus Christ

There are great benefits in walking with Jesus Christ. Firstly, there is the present satisfaction of living a purposeful life in awareness of God. There is objectivity in it, quite different from the aimless, frustrating life of so many today. Abraham was *"a stranger and pilgrim in the land"* (Hebrews 11v9). A stranger is one separated from his contemporaries, but a pilgrim is one who knows where he is going and is making his way to an appointed end; who has an object in view. Every step the pilgrim takes, brings him nearer to the objective of his life.

In the case of Abraham, the objective set before him was *"the hope of the promises"* (Acts 26v6). He lived in faith, and in anticipation of a resurrection from the dead to an eternal inheritance on earth.

This was the hope of the apostles, the foundation upon which Apostolic Christianity was built. Paul declared: *"Of the hope and resurrection of the dead am I called in question"* (Acts 23v6). *"I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto the fathers,"* he told his accusers. *"Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?"* (Acts 26v6-8). *"To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality [God will give] eternal life"* (Romans 2v6).

Concerning the spiritual descendants of Abraham who were motivated by his hope, the Bible further declares: *"They died in faith not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth"* (Hebrews 11v13). They lived their lives in anticipation of the coming of Jesus Christ, and a bodily resurrection from the dead. As the prophet Daniel declared of believers who die: *"Many of them that sleep in the dust shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt"* (Daniel 12v3).

Daniel did not teach that all would rise but that many would do so. By which

he is defining that only those who have come to a knowledge of God's purpose and therefore are amenable to judgment will be resurrected. They will receive either everlasting life or *"the second death"* (Revelation 20v14). Paul taught that *"the Lord himself shall descend from heaven... and the dead in Christ shall rise..."* (1Thessalonians 4v16). Among those resurrected to glory will be Abraham. God promised him: *"I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing"* (Genesis 12v2). The Lord Jesus Christ explained how that will be fulfilled: *"Ye shall see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God,"* he declared to the Jews of his day (Luke 13v28).

Abraham's Destiny

Abraham then will no longer be a *"stranger and pilgrim in the land,"* but an honoured associate of the Lord Jesus Christ, inheriting the land promised him, and reigning with Jesus Christ over the kingdom then established throughout the earth. For *"the LORD shall be king over all the earth"* (Zechariah 14v9). In anticipation of that wonderful time, the Psalmist declared: *"The LORD is King for ever and ever; the heathen are perished out of His land. LORD, Thou hast heard the desire of the humble; Thou wilt prepare their heart, Thou wilt cause Thine ear to hear; to judge the fatherless and the oppressed that the man of the earth may no more oppress"* (Psalm 10v12-16).

Vast changes are thus predicted. Jesus Christ will reign as king; his administration, the rewarded faithful, will establish justice and judgment in the earth; the needs of mankind will be provided for, whilst their spiritual requirements will be satisfied.

Abraham: Heir of the World

During the course of the wanderings of Abraham and Lot they covered the then-known world. They had left Ur of the Chaldees in Babylonia, moved up to Haran, travelled south through Syria and Canaan, down through Egypt and back again to a place between Bethel and Ai (Genesis 13v1-2). They had traversed the whole civilised world of that day! (See map on page 3). Here, unfortunately, dissension broke out between the herdsmen of Abraham and Lot, and they separated. Lot selected the well-watered plains of Jordan including the site where stood the alluring cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. He left Abraham to the isolation of his pilgrimage, and made his way to the enjoyment of sophisticated Sodom. His eyes were "veiled" (as his name

means!) to the vision of God, and he thought that Sodom offered an attractive alternative to his loneliness.

But it proved an illusion. Ultimately his family succumbed to the evil environment into which he led them, and Lot himself barely escaped with his life (Genesis 19).

Sadly, that will be the experience of many today who refuse the way of life in Jesus Christ. There is no future for this present evil world. The immoral conditions of Sodom are being repeated today, whilst the political world is slowly but inexorably moving toward an Armageddon that will leave a trail of ruin and death throughout the earth.

Most men and women refuse to hearken to the counsel of God and persist in rejecting His ways.

After Lot had left, a further message of promise and hope was given to Abraham. He was told: "*Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, southward, eastward and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever... Arise, walk through the land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee*" (Genesis 13v15-17). No mention of a reward in heaven "beyond the realms of time and space" fits this description! The territory promised Abraham is THE EARTH; and the length of time: FOR EVER. Nor does the theory of an immortal soul (a term not found in the Bible) fit the bill. The obvious intent of the promise is that Abraham must inherit the land for ever; and that requires his resurrection to immortal life.

Only by that means can he "inherit the world forever."

All Scripture is based on this tangible promise. It was the foundation of the preaching of the Apostles, fundamental to both the New Testament and the Old. In explaining his hope, Stephen, the first Christian martyr, based his defence on it: "*The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham and said unto him, 'Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans... into this land [the land of Israel] wherein ye [Jews] now dwell. And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on; yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession...'*" (Acts 7v1-5).

In view of Stephen's statement, how will Abraham inherit the land? The answer is: By a resurrection from the dead.

A few years after the murder of Stephen, Paul the apostle stood on trial for his life. He, too, based his defence upon the promises God made to Abraham,

Isaac and Jacob, the fathers of the Jewish race. Boldly standing before his accusers and judges, Paul declared: *"I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers."* And then, emphasising what that promise involved, he added: *"Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead"* (Acts 26v6-8).

It is by a resurrection from the dead unto life eternal (not heaven-going at death) that Abraham will inherit the promise. This is the consistent hope set forth in the Bible. Isaiah taught: *"Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise"* (Isaiah 26v19). David prayed: *"Thou which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side"* (Psalm 71v20-21). Jesus Christ promised those who live in accordance with his will: *"Thou shalt be blessed... for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just"* (Luke 14v14).

A True Christian

Abraham is to be resurrected to inherit the earth. That is what the Bible teaches; and the revival of Israel in modern times is God's guarantee of its ultimate fulfilment. Abraham is described as the heir of the world. The apostle Paul wrote: *"For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith"* (Romans 4v13).

Abraham will not inherit it on his own. He is described as *"the father of the faithful"* (Romans 4v11), and the apostle Paul adds that the things written concerning him were *"not written for his sake alone... but for us also... if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead"* (Romans 4v24).

A true Christian, therefore, is accounted a son of Abraham, and an heir with him of the same promise. The Bible declares: *"As many of you as have been baptised 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 3v26-29). This statement clearly shows that if a person does not understand the significance of the promises made to Abraham, he is not really "in Christ", no matter whether he is a member of a church or has been "baptised." On the other hand, it means that a true believer, like Abraham, has been promised the world! That is the point of Jesus Christ's teaching. He declared: *"Blessed are the meek: for they SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH!"* (Matthew 5v5).

Consider the wonderful implications of that statement. It means that God has a purpose with the earth and mankind upon it, and will not then tolerate the conditions existing today. The earth will no longer be the arena of violence, war, immorality, evil and wickedness as at present. Search the Bible for the wonderful statements of the glorious future in store for the world when Jesus Christ rules.

Consider the following Bible references:

- *"The heavens, even the heavens, are the LORD'S, but the earth hath He given to the children of men"* (Psalm 115v16).

- *"The righteous shall be recompensed in the earth"* (Psalm 11v31).

- *"For such as be blessed of Him shall inherit the earth, and dwell therein forever"* (Psalm 37v9, 11, 22, 29).

- *"A king shall reign, and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely, and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The LORD our Righteousness"* (Jeremiah 23v6).

- *"He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for His law"* (Isaiah 42v4).

- *"At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem; neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart"* (Jeremiah 3v17).

- *"Many people shall go and say, Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more"* (Isaiah 2v3-4).

All the references above (and many more could be supplied) emphasize that the earth is the arena of the future kingdom of Jesus Christ, and the eternal inheritance of the faithful. And that fact provides a practical solution for the problems that plague humanity today. The world will be delivered from the fear that currently enshrouds it, and the problems that plague its present governments.

We live in a sick society, but thankfully God has not completely abandoned it. To fulfil His promise made to Abraham and others, He will send Jesus Christ to establish His kingdom on earth:

- *"The God of heaven will set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever"* (Daniel 2v44).

- *"The LORD God shall give unto him [Jesus Christ] the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end"* (Luke 1v32).

Those found faithful at his coming, will become co-rulers with Jesus Christ:

- *"Ye [apostles] which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel"* (Matthew 19v28).

- *"He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations"* (Revelation 2v26).

- *"Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God, kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth"* (Revelation 5v9-10).

A Changed World

Abraham and his seed, therefore, are not only promised the world, but are promised it for ever, with honour and glory. They shall reign with Jesus Christ, comprising the immortal government of a universal divine, political kingdom to be set up on earth upon the ruins of man's governments. The prophet Daniel declared: *"The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him"* (Daniel 7v27). Other statements are:

- *"In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from river unto the ends of the earth... His name shall endure for ever; and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed"* (Psalm 72v7-8, 17).

- *"He shall cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations"* (Isaiah 61v11).

- *"For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea those nations shall be utterly wasted"* (Isaiah 60v12).

Jesus Christ's reign will completely change the way of life on earth. Mankind will learn to live in harmony and goodwill toward each other. There will be *"glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and goodwill among men."* Industrial and international antagonisms will cease under the one perfect government. Nations will be united under one King, dispensing with the need for armaments that today suck prosperity from the people by stupendous cost. People will be bonded together in one religion that will unite them in a

common worship of God. The wise, infallible government of Jesus Christ will relieve the world of its burden of poverty and problems, for *"the knowledge of the glory of the LORD shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea"* (Habakkuk 2v14).

God's Sanctuary Or Ruin?

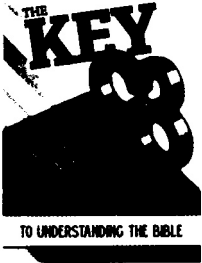
But God's way presents a challenge. It did so in the days of Abraham. The quarrel between the herdsmen of Lot and Abraham which led to the parting of the ways of these two men, took place at a most significant site. It was *"between Bethel and Ai"* (Genesis 12v2-3). The word Bethel signifies *House of God*, whilst Ai denotes *Ruin!* Bethel was in the heights in the centre of the land; it needed determination and effort to reach it; but Ai was on the slope beneath, and was comparatively easy to reach. Blinded for the moment by the attractions that materialistic Sodom seemed to offer, Lot selected the well-watered plains beneath, with their promise of ease and affluence. He left Bethel to Abraham, whilst he went downward to Ai and *Ruin!*

It is a parable of destiny. Figuratively, all who are drawn by the Bible revelation of God must make their choice as did Abraham and Lot. The social world of today is powerfully attractive. It seems to offer the opportunity of affluence, ease and prosperity. But it only leads to frustration and ultimately death. It promises the world, but it only gives an abiding place in the grave (Psalm 49v14-20; Romans 6v23).

On the other hand, Bethel, the *House of God*, offers its appeal. It, too, promises the world, but it does so on the basis of sacrifice and service. It demands of men and women that they separate themselves from the philosophies and fallacies of today, and give themselves to God in the way appointed: an understanding of the Gospel, and baptism into the name of Jesus Christ. The world is then offered them, and the guarantee is given in the fulfilment of Bible prophecy. The same appeal and invitation that was made to Abraham, is made to all those who have hearing ears. It is summed up in the words of Scripture: *"Therefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the LORD, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the LORD God Almighty"* (2Corinthians 6v17-18).

To those who are prepared to do that, God offers the world!

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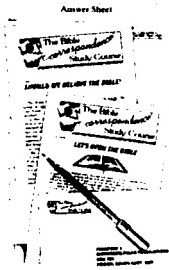
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