



to Paul's declaration in Philippians 3:3, **"For we are the circumcision* who worship God in spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh."** The point is that in the Christian age the true spiritual "Israel" is defined by those who put their faith in Jesus Christ awaiting the promise of the heavenly Jerusalem (see Revelation 21:2).

Modern Day Israel

It is commonly taught in the religious world that modern day Jews and the physical nation of Israel still have a place reserved

in God's purpose and grace. The prominent Southern Baptist preacher Jerry Falwell is quoted as having said - "God will deal with us as we deal with Israel." I believe much of this misunderstanding comes from falsely interpreting Romans 9-11. In these chapters Paul deals with his concern for his brethren (Jews in the flesh) who had not accepted Jesus. Paul states four important points:

- 1.) *God has allowed the Jews to turn away that the Gentiles might have access to salvation* (Romans 11:12,13, 25).
- 2.) *If Jews do not persist in unbelief they can be accepted by God* (Romans 11:23).
- 3.) *Not all the Jews rejected Jesus. A remnant accepted Him* (Romans 11:5).
- 4.) *All of the true spiritual Israel will be saved* (Romans 11:26).

Scripture makes it very clear that he who, **"...Does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son"** (II John 9). Any person who lives in this age whether he or she is a physically a Jew or a Gentile, black or white, rich or poor is commanded upon to obey the gospel of Jesus Christ. Those who do are **"The Israel of God"** (Galatians 6:16).

*In Scripture Jews are sometimes be called "The circumcision." See Acts 10:45, 11:2, Romans 3:30, 4:9, 12, 15:8, Galatians 2:7-9, 12, Ephesians 2:11, Colossians 4:11 & Titus 1:10.



Faithful Sayings Issue 11.13 March 29, 2009

Welcome Visitors

We are so glad that you joined us today. Please come again.

● Let us know if you have any questions.

ISSUE

11.13

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

MARCH 29
2009

Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM
10:20 AM
6:00 PM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Ken Ford
Charles Kelley
Pat Ledbetter

Deacons:

Dean Bowers
Eddie Cook
Bill Davis
Pat Goguen
Neil Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Fred Perez
Rusty Scott

Evangelists:

Kyle Pope
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4700 Andrews Ave.
Amarillo TX 79106
806-352-2809
www.olsenpark.com



"Peace and
mercy be
...upon the
Israel of God"
Galatians 6:16

The Spiritual Israel by Kyle Pope

The one man in Scripture who more than any other typifies true faith, is the Old Testament patriarch Abraham. Of his faith the Scripture makes the statement that God, **"accounted it to him for righteousness"** (Genesis 15:6). Such faith and the relationship that developed between Abraham and God led the Lord to offer him some of the most wonderful promises in Scripture.

The Promises

Genesis 12:2,3 records one such promise. The text reads, **"I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed"** (NKJV). What a promise! We might especially note two things about this passage:
1.) "I will make you a **GREAT NATION**" (emphasis mine).
2.) "In you **ALL FAMILIES OF THE EARTH** shall be blessed" (emphasis also mine).

The Lord expands upon these promises declaring to Abraham that his descendents would be as numerous as **"the dust of the earth"** (Genesis 13:16) and the **"stars if you are able to count them"** (Genesis 15:5).

Land & Circumcision

Tied with these promises were two key ideas. First, God promised Abraham, **“...all the land which you see I will give to your descendants (footnote: Literally *seed*) forever”** (Genesis 13:15). Second, God established a covenant with Abraham and gave him the practice of circumcision as a sign of that covenant. God said, **“This is my covenant which you shall keep, between me and you and your descendants after you: every male child among you shall be cir-**



Olsen Park church of Christ

cumcised” (Genesis 17:10). God added further, **“...And my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant”** (Genesis 17:13).

Concerning circumcision and the inheritance of the land of Canaan we are faced with some curious facts. It is evident from a study of Scripture that this “great nation” which God raised up did not include all of Abraham’s physical descendants. Ishmael, Abraham’s son by Hagar and his other children (born after Sarah’s death) were sent away from the land given to Isaac, the child of the promise (see Genesis 25:1-6, 18; Galatians 4:28). Further, not even all of Isaac’s children would be heirs of this promise. Esau’s descendants would grow into the idolatrous nation of Edom. The Edomites fought against God’s people and were judged by God in the vision of Obadiah. Only Isaac’s son Jacob (or Israel) would have twelve sons, through whom the promises would be fulfilled.

What makes all this curious is the fact that although the Lord promised them the land “forever” and that circumcision would be an “everlasting covenant,” even these two things were physically interrupted. The northern kingdom of Israel was conquered by Assyria in 721 BC and scattered, never again to be a nation. The southern kingdom of Judah was conquered and exiled in 597 BC to Babylon. Although they were returned between from 535-458 BC their splendor and self-rule continued to fade. By the first century continued revolt brought the wrath of Rome down upon the Jews. In 70 AD the temple was destroyed and most of the Jews were scattered, leaving the land in the hands of Gentiles for centuries.

With respect to circumcision there were times in the history of Israel when it was abandoned. In Joshua 5:2-5 we see that children who had been born in the wilderness had not been circumcised as infants. In the New Testament circumcision of the

flesh was no longer binding upon God’s people. The Holy Spirit revealed through the Apostle Paul, **“Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters”** (I Corinthians 7:19). Christians in the New Testament abandoned the practice of physical circumcision (see Acts 15).

The Israel of God

The New Testament explains what was behind these promises made to Abraham. Romans 9:6 declares, **“...For they *are* not all Israel who *are* of Israel.”** If this was speaking of “Israel” as simply the physical descendants of Jacob (and thus Abraham) this statement would make no sense. What it is saying is that not all of the “*physical*” descendants of Jacob and Abraham are the true (or *spiritual*) Israel. Paul declares in Romans 2:28,29, **“For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit (or spirit)...”** This indicates that the circumcision which identifies those in covenant with God no longer concerns the flesh but the spirit. That is the willingness to “cut off” from one’s heart any hindrance to submission to God. We might remember Deuteronomy 10:16, **“Circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer.”**

Sons of Abraham

The New Testament defines what truly makes one a descendant of Abraham: obedient faith! Galatians 3:7 declares, **“Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons**



of Abraham.” What a marvelous faith Abraham possessed. Whatever God told him to do he did without question. As James writes of Abraham, **“...By works faith was made perfect (or complete)”** (James 2:22). Today, those who listen to God’s words in Scripture and fully trust and obey Him, are descendants of Abraham.

That means that those who exercise this spiritual circumcision and possess the faith of Abraham are, **“...blessed with believing Abraham”** (Galatians 3:9). In other words true believers are “Israel” not of the physical Israel (see Romans 9:6). Listen