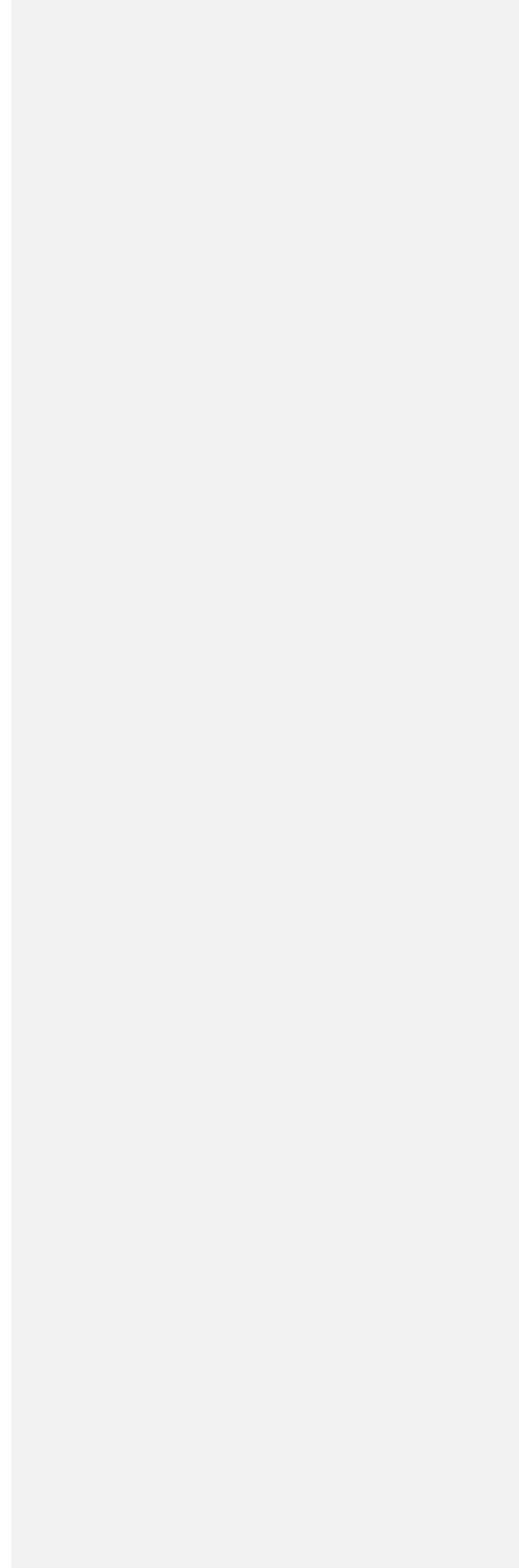
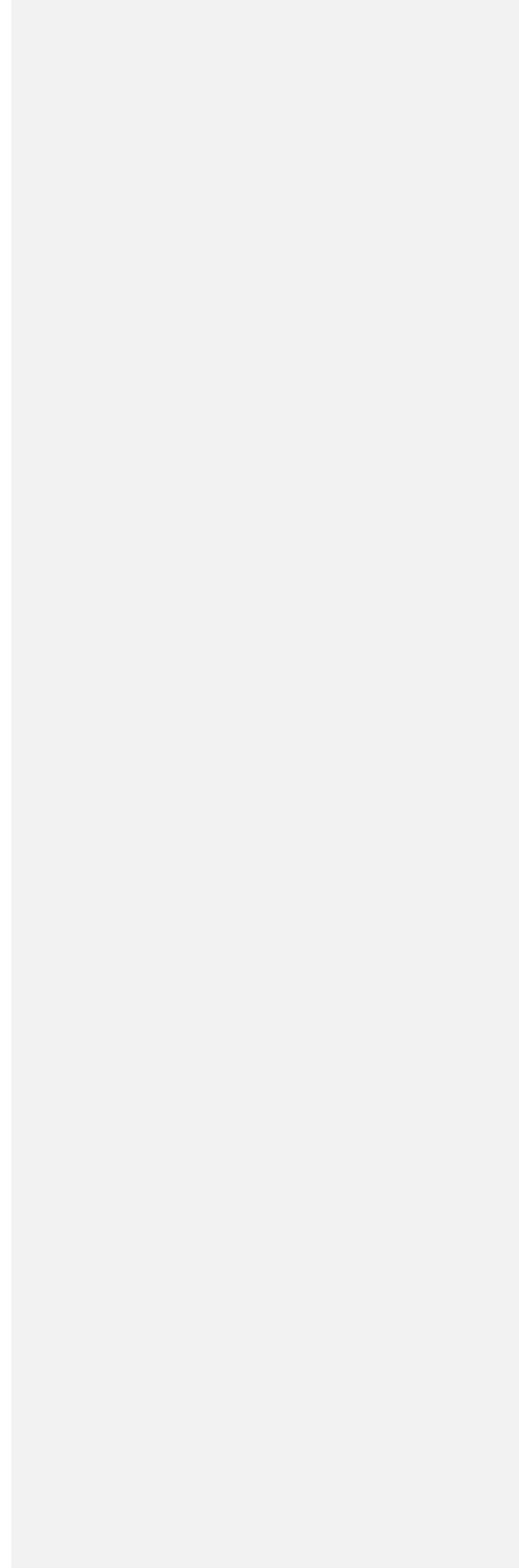


UNDERSTANDING PAUL



PART I
UNDERSTANDING WHAT HAS HAPPENED PRIOR TO
MESSIAH'S FIRST COMING



THE BIRTHRIGHT PROMISES

(NOTE: See Appendixes for a fuller explanation of the birthright)

In Genesis, YHWH makes a series of covenantal promises to Abraham (*Genesis 12:1-3; 13:16; 15:3-5, 17:1-7; 22:17*). These promises are:

- **You will be a great nation**
- **You will be a multitude of nations**
- **Your name shall be great**
- **You will be a blessing**
- **Blessed be everyone who blesses you**
- **Cursed be everyone who curses you**
- **In you all families of the earth will be blessed**
- **Your descendants shall be as numerous as the stars**
- **in heaven**
- **Your descendants will be as numerous as the sand**
- **on the seashore**
- **Kings will come from you**
- **You will be exceedingly fruitful**

Taken together, these promises become part of Abraham's 'spiritual property,' which makes them part of his descendants' spiritual inheritance. To look at it in ancient Hebrew terms, YHWH's promises to Abraham would become part of the birthright of Abraham's first-born son. However, in this case, it goes to Isaac, the first born of the free woman (*Sarah, Galatians 4:21-23*).

In [Genesis 26:3-5](#), YHWH confirms these blessing have been passed to Isaac, promising:

- **I will be with you**
- **I will give you all these lands**
- **I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven**
- **In your seed, all nations of the earth will be blessed**

Then we have the whole story of Esau selling his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of soup. This leads to Isaac passing the birthright to Jacob ([Gen 27:27-29](#)), where Isaac adds these blessings:

- **May the Lord give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness**
- **of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine**
- **Let people serve you**
- **Many nations will bow down to you**
- **Be master over your brethren**
- **Let your mother's sons bow down to you**
- **Cursed be everyone who curses you**
- **Blessed be those who bless you**

From Jacob, the birthright will eventually pass through Joseph to Ephraim, who Israel (*a.k.a. Jacob*) adopts as his own son, promoting him to the place of 'first born' in the process ([Gen 48](#)). It is in the process of adopting and transferring the birthright to Ephraim that Israel (*Jacob*) prophecies that Ephraim will become a company of nations (*but, in the Hebrew, it says fullness of the Gentiles – connecting Ephraim to [Romans 11:24-26](#)*).

The point is simple: Gentiles are grafted in through Ephraim, not Judah! This is because Ephraim holds the birthright, the inheritance of all YHWH's promises to Abraham.

ISRAEL (JACOB) PASSESS THE BIRTHRIGHT TO EPHRAIM

Genesis 48

New American Standard Bible

Israel's Last Days

48 Now it came about after these things that Joseph was told, "Behold, your father is sick." So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim with him. ²When it was told to Jacob, "Behold, your son Joseph has come to you," Israel collected his strength and sat up in the bed. ³Then Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, ⁴and He said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and numerous, and I will make you a multitude of peoples, and will give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession.'⁵ **Now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are.** ⁶But your children that you have fathered after them shall be yours; they shall be called by the names of their brothers in their inheritance. ⁷Now as for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died, to my sorrow, in the land of Canaan on the journey, when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath. I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)."

⁸When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, "Who are these?" ⁹And Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me here." So he said, "Bring them to me, please, so that I may bless them." ¹⁰Now the eyes of Israel were so dim from age *that* he could not see. And Joseph brought them close to him, and he kissed them and embraced them. ¹¹And Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face, and behold, God has let me see your children as well!" ¹²Then Joseph took them from his knees, and bowed with his face to the ground. ¹³And Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right, and brought them close to him. ¹⁴**But Israel reached out his right hand and placed it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, crossing his hands, although Manasseh was the firstborn.** ¹⁵And he blessed Joseph, and said,

*“The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked,
The God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day,*

¹⁶ The angel who has redeemed me from all evil,

Bless the boys;

And may my name live on in them,

And the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac;

And may they grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.”

¹⁷When Joseph saw that his father placed his right hand on Ephraim’s head, it displeased him; and he grasped his father’s hand to move it from Ephraim’s head to Manasseh’s head. ¹⁸And Joseph said to his father, “Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn. Place your right hand on his head.” ¹⁹But his father refused and said, “I know, my son, I know; he also will become a people and he also will be great. However, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations.” ²⁰So he blessed them that day, saying,

“By you Israel will pronounce blessing, saying,

‘May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh!’”

And so he put Ephraim before Manasseh. ²¹Then Israel said to Joseph, “Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you, and bring you back to the land of your fathers. ²²And I give you one portion more than your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow.”

THE BLESSING AND THE CURSE

Deuteronomy 11 NASB

Rewards of Obedience

¹¹ “You shall therefore love the LORD your God, and always keep His directive, His statutes, His ordinances, and His commandments. ² Know this day that *I am not speaking* with your sons who have not known and who have not seen the discipline of the LORD your God—His greatness, His mighty hand, His outstretched arm, ³ and His signs and His works which He did in the midst of Egypt to Pharaoh the king of Egypt and to all his land; ⁴ and what He did to Egypt’s army, to its horses and its chariots, when He made the water of the Red Sea engulf them while they were pursuing you, and the LORD completely eliminated them; ⁵ and what He did to you in the wilderness, until you came to this place; ⁶ and what He did to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben, when the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them, their households, their tents, and every living thing that followed them, among all Israel—⁷ but your own eyes have seen all the great work of the LORD which He did.

⁸ “You shall therefore keep every commandment which I am commanding you today, **so that you may be strong and go in and take possession of the land** into which you are about to cross to possess it; ⁹ **and so that you may prolong your days on the land** which the LORD swore to your fathers to give to them and to their descendants, a land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁰ For the land, into which you are entering to possess it, is not like the land of Egypt from which you came, where you used to sow your seed and water it by your foot like a vegetable garden. ¹¹ But the land into which you are about to cross to possess it, a land of hills and valleys, drinks water from the rain of heaven, ¹² a land for which the LORD your God cares; the eyes of the LORD your God are continually on it, from the beginning even to the end of the year.

¹³ “And it shall come about, **if you listen** obediently to my commandments which I am commanding you today, to love the LORD your God and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul, ¹⁴ that **He will provide rain for your land** in its season, the early and late rain, so that you may gather your grain, your new wine, and your oil. ¹⁵ **He will also provide grass** in your field for your cattle, and

you will eat and be satisfied. ¹⁶ Beware that your hearts are not easily deceived, and that you do not turn away and serve other gods, and worship them. ¹⁷ Otherwise, the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and He will shut up the sky so that there will be no rain, and the ground will not yield its produce; then you will quickly perish from the good land which the LORD is giving you.

¹⁸ “You shall therefore take these words of mine to heart and to soul; and you shall tie them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets on your forehead. ¹⁹ You shall also teach them to your sons, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk along the road, when you lie down, and when you get up. ²⁰ And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, ²¹ so that your days and the days of your sons may be increased on the land which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth. ²² For if you are careful to keep all of this commandment which I am commanding you to do, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and cling to Him, ²³ then the LORD will dispossess all these nations from you, and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than you. ²⁴ Every place on which the sole of your foot steps shall be yours; your border will be from the wilderness to Lebanon, and from the river, the river Euphrates, as far as the western sea. ²⁵ No one will be able to stand against you; the LORD your God will instill the dread of you and the fear of you in all the land on which you set foot, just as He has spoken to you.

²⁶ “See, I am placing before you today a blessing and a curse: ²⁷ the blessing, if you listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I am commanding you today; ²⁸ and the curse, if you do not listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I am commanding you today, by following other gods which you have not known.

²⁹ “And it shall come about, when the LORD your God brings you into the land where you are entering to possess it, that you shall place the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal. ³⁰ Are they not across the Jordan, west of the road toward the sunset, in the land of the Canaanites who live in the Arabah, opposite Gilgal, beside the oaks of Moreh? ³¹ For you are about to cross the Jordan to go in to take possession of the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall possess it and live in it, ³² and you shall be careful to do all the statutes and the judgments which I am placing before you today.

Deuteronomy 29 NASB

The Covenant in Moab

29 These are the words of the covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the sons of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which He had made with them at Horeb.

² And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, “You have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh and all his servants, and to all his land; ³ the great trials which your eyes have seen, those great signs and wonders. ⁴ Yet to this day the Lord has not given you a heart to know, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear. ⁵ And I have led you in the wilderness for forty years; your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandal has not worn out on your foot. ⁶ You have not eaten bread, nor have you drunk wine or *other* strong drink, in order that you might know that I am the Lord your God. ⁷ When you reached this place, Sihon the king of Heshbon and Og the king of Bashan came out to meet us for battle, but we defeated them; ⁸ and we took their land and gave it as an inheritance to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of the Manassites. ⁹ So you will keep the words of this covenant and do them, in order that you may be successful in everything that you do.

¹⁰ “You stand today, all of you, before the Lord your God: your heads, your tribes, your elders and your officers, *that is*, all the men of Israel, ¹¹ your little ones, your wives, **and the stranger who is within your camps**, from the one who gathers your firewood to the one who draws your water, ¹² so that you may enter into the covenant with the Lord your God, and into His oath which the Lord your God is making with you today, ¹³ in order that He may establish you today as His people, and that He may be your God, just as He spoke to you and as He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

¹⁴ “**Now it is not with you alone that I am making this covenant and this oath,** ¹⁵ **but both with those who stand here with us today in the presence of the Lord our God, and with those who are not with us here today** ¹⁶ (for you know how we lived in the land of Egypt, and how we passed through the midst of the nations through which you passed; ¹⁷ moreover, you have seen their abominations and their idols *made of* wood and stone, silver and gold, which *they had* with them); ¹⁸ so that there will not be among you a man or woman, or family or tribe, whose

heart turns away today from the Lord our God, to go to serve the gods of those nations; that there will not be among you a root bearing poisonous fruit and wormwood. ¹⁹ And it shall be when he hears the words of this curse, that he will consider himself fortunate in his heart, saying, 'I will do well though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart in order to destroy the watered *land* along with the dry.' ²⁰ The Lord will not be willing to forgive him, but rather the anger of the Lord and His wrath will burn against that person, and every curse that is written in this book will lie upon him, and the Lord will wipe out his name from under heaven. ²¹ Then the Lord will single him out for disaster from all the tribes of Israel, **in accordance with all the curses of the covenant which is written in this Book of the Law.**

²² "Now the future generation, your sons who rise up after you and the foreigner who comes from a distant land, when they see the plagues of that land and the diseases with which the Lord has afflicted it, will say, ²³ 'All its land is brimstone and salt, burned debris, unsown and unproductive, and no grass grows on it, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which the Lord overthrew in His anger and in His wrath.' ²⁴ All the nations will say, 'Why has the Lord done *all* this to this land? Why this great outburst of anger?' ²⁵ Then *people* will say, '***It is because they abandoned the covenant of the Lord***, the God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt. ²⁶ And they went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods that they have not known and whom He had not assigned to them. ²⁷ Therefore, the anger of the Lord burned against that land, to bring upon it every curse which is written in this book; ²⁸ and the Lord uprooted them from their land in anger, fury, and in great wrath, and hurled them into another land, as *it is* this day.'

²⁹ "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, so that we may follow all the words of this Law.

THE PROMISE OF RESTORATION

Deuteronomy 30 NASB

Restoration Promised

30 “So it will be when all of these things have come upon you, **the blessing and the curse which I have placed before you, and you call *them* to mind in all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you,** ²**and you return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul in accordance with everything that I am commanding you today,** you and your sons, ³**then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you.** ⁴If any of your scattered *countrymen* are at the ends of the earth, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back. ⁵The LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will be good to you and make you more numerous than your fathers.

⁶“Moreover, the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the hearts of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and all your soul, **so that you may live.** ⁷And the LORD your God will inflict all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you. ⁸**And you will again obey the LORD, and follow all His commandments** which I am commanding you today. ⁹Then the LORD your God will prosper you abundantly in every work of your hand, in the children of your womb, the offspring of your cattle, and in the produce of your ground, for the LORD will again rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers; ¹⁰**if you obey the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and soul.**

¹¹“For this commandment which I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it far away. ¹²It is not in heaven, that you could say, ‘Who will go up to heaven for us and get it for us, and proclaim it to us, so that we may follow it?’ ¹³Nor is it beyond the sea, that you could say, ‘Who will cross the sea for us and get it for us and proclaim it to us, so that we may follow it?’ ¹⁴On the contrary, the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may follow it.

Commented [JB1]: The House of Judah has tried to keep TORAH, and is once again in the land. But the House of Israel has not yet returned to TORAH.

Choose Life

¹⁵“See, I have placed before you today life and happiness, and death and adversity, ¹⁶in that I am commanding you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, **so that you may live and become numerous, and that the LORD your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to take possession of it.** ¹⁷**But if your heart turns away and you will not obey,** but allow yourself to be led astray and you worship other gods and serve them, ¹⁸**I declare to you today that you will certainly perish. You will not prolong *your* days in the land** where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and take possession of it. ¹⁹I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that **I have placed before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants,** ²⁰**by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding close to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, so that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.”**

PROPHECY OF REBELLION AND DESTRUCTION

[Deuteronomy 31](#) NASB

Moses' Last Counsel

31 So Moses went and spoke these words **to all Israel**.² And he said to them, “I am 120 years old today; I am no longer able to go out and come in, and the LORD has told me, ‘You shall not cross this Jordan.’³ It is the LORD your God who is going to cross ahead of you; He Himself will destroy these nations before you, and you shall dispossess them. Joshua is the one who is going to cross ahead of you, just as the LORD has spoken.⁴ And the LORD will do to them just as He did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, and to their land, when He destroyed them.⁵ The LORD will turn them over to you, and you will do to them in accordance with all the commandments which I have commanded you.⁶ Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or in dread of them, for the LORD your God is the One who is going with you. He will not desert you or abandon you.”

⁷Then Moses called to Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, “Be strong and courageous, for you will go with this people into the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you will give it to them as an inheritance.⁸ And the LORD is the one who is going ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not desert you or abandon you. Do not fear and do not be dismayed.”

⁹So Moses wrote this Law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel.¹⁰ Then Moses commanded them, saying, “At the end of every seven years, at the time of the year of the release of debts, at the Feast of Booths,¹¹ when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place which He will choose, you shall read this Law before all Israel so that they hear *it*.¹² Assemble the people, the men, the women, the children, **and the stranger who is in your town, so that they may hear and learn and fear the LORD your God, and be careful to follow all the words of this Law**.¹³ And their children, who have not known, will hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as you live on the land which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess.”

Israel Will Fall Away

¹⁴Then the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, the time for you to die is near; call Joshua and present yourselves at the tent of meeting, and I will commission him.” So Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves at the tent of meeting. ¹⁵And the LORD appeared in the tent in a pillar of cloud, and the pillar of cloud stood at the entrance of the tent. ¹⁶The LORD said to Moses, “Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers; **and this people will arise and play the prostitute with the foreign gods of the land into the midst of which they are going, and they will abandon Me and break My covenant which I have made with them.** ¹⁷Then My anger will be kindled against them on that day, and I will abandon them and hide My face from them, and they will be consumed, and many evils and troubles will find them; so they will say on that day, ‘Is it not because our God is not among us that these evils have found us?’ ¹⁸But I will assuredly hide My face on that day because of all the evil that they will have done, for they will have turned away to other gods.

¹⁹“Now then, write this song for yourselves, and teach it to the sons of Israel; put it on their lips, so that this song may be a witness for Me against the sons of Israel. ²⁰**For when I bring them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I swore to their fathers, and they eat and are satisfied and become prosperous, then they will turn to other gods and serve them, and spurn Me and break My covenant.** ²¹**Then it will come about, when many evils and troubles find them, that this song will testify before them as a witness (for it shall not be forgotten from the mouth of their descendants);** for I know their inclination which they are developing today, before I bring them into the land which I swore.” ²²So Moses wrote down this song on the same day, and taught it to the sons of Israel.

Joshua Is Commissioned

²³Then He commissioned Joshua the son of Nun, and said, “Be strong and courageous, for you will bring the sons of Israel into the land which I swore to them, and I will be with you.”

²⁴It came about, when Moses finished writing the words of this Law in a book until they were complete, ²⁵that Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, ²⁶“Take this Book of the Law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, so that it may

remain there as a witness against you. ²⁷For I know your rebellion and your stubbornness; behold, as long as I have been alive with you *until* today, you have been rebellious against the LORD; how much more, then, after my death? ²⁸Assemble to me all the elders of your tribes and your officers, that I may speak these words in their hearing and call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against them. ²⁹For I know that after my death you will behave very corruptly and turn from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will confront you in the latter days, because you will do that which is evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him to anger with the work of your hands.”

³⁰Then Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song, until they were complete:

Deuteronomy 32 NASB

The Song of Moses

32 “Listen, you heavens, and I will speak;
And let the earth hear the words of my mouth!

² May my teaching drip as the rain,
My speech trickle as the dew,
As droplets on the fresh grass,
And as the showers on the vegetation.

³ For I proclaim the name of the Lord;
Ascribe greatness to our God!

⁴ The Rock! His work is perfect,
For all His ways are just;
A God of faithfulness and without injustice,
Righteous and just is He.

⁵ *They have acted corruptly against Him,
They are not His children, because of their defect;
But are a perverse and crooked generation.*

⁶ *Is this what you do to the Lord,
You foolish and unwise people?
Is He not your Father who has purchased you?
He has made you and established you.*

⁷ Remember the days of old,
Consider the years of all generations.
Ask your father and he will inform you,
Your elders, and they will tell you.

⁸ *When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance,
When He separated the sons of mankind,
He set the boundaries of the peoples
According to the number of the sons of Israel [Elohim].*

⁹ *For the Lord’s portion is His people;
Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance.*

¹⁰ He found him in a desert land,
And in the howling wasteland of a wilderness;
He encircled him, He cared for him,
He guarded him as the apple of His eye.

¹¹ As an eagle stirs up its nest,

And hovers over its young,
He spread His wings, He caught them,
He carried them on His pinions.

¹²The Lord alone guided him,
And there was no foreign god with him.

¹³He had him ride on the high places of the earth,
And he ate the produce of the field;
And He had him suck honey from the rock,
And oil from the flinty rock,

¹⁴Curds of the herd, and milk of the flock,
With fat of lambs
And rams, the breed of Bashan, and *of* goats,
With the best of the wheat;
And you drank wine of the blood of grapes.

¹⁵“But Jeshurun [*Israel*] became fat and kicked—
You have become fat, thick, *and* obstinate—

Then he abandoned God who made him,
And rejected the Rock of his salvation.

¹⁶They made Him jealous with strange gods;
With abominations they provoked Him to anger.

¹⁷They sacrificed to demons, *who were* not God,
To gods *whom* they have not known,
New *gods* who came lately,
Whom your fathers did not know.

¹⁸You forgot the Rock who fathered you,
And forgot the God who gave you birth.

¹⁹“The Lord saw *this*, and spurned *them*
Because of the provocation *by* His sons and daughters.

²⁰Then He said, ‘I will hide My face from them,
I will see what their end *will be*;
For they are a perverse generation,
Sons in whom there is no faithfulness.

²¹They have made Me jealous with *what* is not God;
They have provoked Me to anger with their idols.
So I will make them jealous with *those who are* not a people;
I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation,

²² For a fire has flared in My anger,
And it burns to the lowest part of Sheol,
And devours the earth with its yield,
And sets on fire the foundations of the mountains.

²³ 'I will add misfortunes to them;
I will use up My arrows on them.

²⁴ *They will be* wasted by famine, and emaciated by plague
And a bitter epidemic;
And the teeth of beasts I will send against them,
With the venom of crawling things of the dust.

²⁵ Outside the sword will make *them* childless,
And inside, terror—
Both young man and virgin,
The nursing child with the man of gray hair.

²⁶ I would have said, "I will wipe them out,
I will remove the mention of their name from humanity,"

²⁷ Had I not feared the provocation by the enemy,
That their adversaries would misjudge,
That they would say, "Our hand is triumphant,
And the Lord has not performed all this."''

²⁸ "For they are a nation destitute of counsel,
And there is no understanding in them.

²⁹ If only they were wise *and* they understood this;
If only they would discern their future!

³⁰ How could one chase a thousand,
And two put ten thousand to flight,
Unless their Rock had sold them,
And the Lord had given them up?

³¹ Indeed, their rock is not like our Rock;
Even our enemies themselves judge this.

³² For their vine is from the vine of Sodom,
And from the fields of Gomorrah;
Their grapes are grapes of poison,
Their clusters, bitter.

³³ Their wine is the venom of serpents,
And the deadly poison of vipers.

³⁴ 'Is it not stored up with Me,
Sealed up in My treasuries?
³⁵ Vengeance is Mine, and retribution;
In *due* time their foot will slip.
For the day of their disaster is near,
And the impending things are hurrying to them.'
³⁶ For the Lord will vindicate His people,
And will have compassion on His servants,
When He sees that *their* strength is gone,
And there is none *remaining*, bond or free.
³⁷ And He will say, 'Where are their gods,
The rock in which they took refuge?
³⁸ Those who ate the fat of their sacrifices,
And drank the wine of their drink offering?
Let them rise up and help you,
Let them be your protection!
³⁹ See now that I, I am He,
And there is no god besides Me;
It is I who put to death and give life.
I have wounded and *it is I who* heal,
And there is no one who can save *anyone* from My hand.
⁴⁰ Indeed, I raise My hand to heaven,
And say, as I live forever,
⁴¹ If I have sharpened My flashing sword,
And My hand has taken hold of justice,
I will return vengeance on My adversaries,
And I will repay those who hate Me.
⁴² I will make My arrows drunk with blood,
And My sword will devour flesh,
With the blood of the slain and the captives,
From the long-haired leaders of the enemy.'
⁴³ Rejoice, you nations, *with* His people;
For He will avenge the blood of His servants,
And will return vengeance on His adversaries,
And will atone for His land *and* His people."

⁴⁴ Then Moses came and spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the people, he, with Joshua the son of Nun. ⁴⁵ When Moses had finished speaking

all these words to all Israel, ⁴⁶ he said to them, “Take to your heart all the words with which I am warning you today, which you will command your sons to **follow carefully, all the words of this Law.** ⁴⁷ **For it is not a trivial matter for you; indeed it is your life.** And by this word you will prolong your days in the land, which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess.”

⁴⁸ Now the Lord spoke to Moses that very same day, saying, ⁴⁹ “Go up to this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab opposite Jericho, and look at the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the sons of Israel as a possession. ⁵⁰ Then you are to die on the mountain where you ascend, and be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people, ⁵¹ because you broke faith with Me in the midst of the sons of Israel at the waters of Meribah-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, because you did not treat Me as holy in the midst of the sons of Israel. ⁵² For you will see the land at a distance but you will not go there, into the land which I am giving the sons of Israel.”

Deuteronomy 33 NASB

The Blessing by Moses

33 Now this is the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the sons of Israel before his death. ²He said,

“The LORD came from Sinai,
And dawned on them from Seir;
He shone from Mount Paran,
And He came from the midst of myriads of holy ones;
At His right hand there was flashing lightning for them.

³Indeed, He loves the people;
All Your holy ones are in Your hand,
And they followed in Your steps;
Everyone takes of Your words.

⁴Moses issued to us *the Law*,
A possession for the assembly of Jacob.

⁵And He was king in Jeshurun,
When the heads of the people gathered,
The tribes of Israel together.

⁶“May Reuben live and not die,
Nor may his people be few.”

⁷And this *was* regarding Judah; so he said:

“Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah,
And bring him to his people.
With his hands he contended for them,
And may You be a help against his adversaries.”

⁸Of Levi he said,

“Let Your Thummim and Your Urim *belong* to Your godly man,
Whom You tested at Massah,
With whom You contended at the waters of Meribah;

⁹Who said of his father and his mother,
‘I did not consider them’;

And he did not acknowledge his brothers,
Nor did he regard his own sons,
For they kept Your word,
And complied with Your covenant.

¹⁰ They will teach Your ordinances to Jacob,
And Your Law to Israel.

They shall put incense before You,
And whole burnt offerings on Your altar.

¹¹ LORD, bless his strength,
And accept the work of his hands;
Smash the hips of those who rise up against him,
And those who hate him, so that they do not rise *again*.”

¹² Of Benjamin he said,

“May the beloved of the LORD live in security beside Him
Who shields him all the day *long*,
And he lives between His shoulders.”

¹³ Of Joseph he said,

“Blessed of the LORD *be* his land,
With the choice things of heaven, with the dew,
And from the deep *waters* lying beneath,

¹⁴ And with the choice yield of the sun,
And the choice produce of the months;

¹⁵ And with the best things of the ancient mountains,
With the choice things of the everlasting hills,

¹⁶ And with the choice things of the earth and its fullness,
And the favor of Him who dwelt in the bush.

Let it come to the head of Joseph,
And to the top of the head of the *one who was* prince among his brothers.

¹⁷ As the firstborn of his ox, majesty is his,
And his horns are the horns of the wild ox;

With them he will gore the peoples
All at once, *to* the ends of the earth.

And those are the ten thousands of Ephraim,
And those are the thousands of Manasseh.”

¹⁸ Of Zebulun he said,

“Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out,
And, Issachar, in your tents.

¹⁹ They will call peoples *to* the mountain;
There they will offer righteous sacrifices;
For they will draw out the abundance of the seas,
And the hidden treasures of the sand.”

²⁰ Of Gad he said,

“Blessed is the one who enlarges Gad;
He lies down as a lion,
And tears the arm, also the crown of the head.

²¹ Then he selected the choicest *part* for himself,
For there the ruler’s portion was reserved;
And he came *with* the leaders of the people;
He executed the justice of the LORD,
And His ordinances with Israel.”

²² Of Dan he said,

“Dan is a lion’s cub;
He leaps out from Bashan.”

²³ Of Naphtali he said,

“Naphtali, satisfied with favor,
And full of the blessing of the LORD,
Take possession of the sea and the south.”

²⁴ Of Asher he said,

“More blessed than sons is Asher;
May he be favored by his brothers,
And may he dip his foot in olive oil.

²⁵ Your bars will be iron and bronze,
And as your days, so *will* your strength *be*.

²⁶ “There is no one like the God of Jeshurun,
Who rides the heavens to your help,
And the clouds in His majesty.

²⁷ The eternal God is a hiding place,
And underneath are the everlasting arms;
And He drove out the enemy from you,
And said, ‘Destroy!’

²⁸ So Israel lives in security,
The fountain of Jacob secluded,
In a land of grain and new wine;
His heavens also drip down dew.

²⁹ Blessed are you, Israel;
Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD,
The shield of your help,
And He who is the sword of your majesty!
So your enemies will cringe before you,
And you will trample on their high places.”

JACOB SENTENCES RACHEL TO DEATH

One of the biggest un-realized themes in all of Scripture starts with the story of Jacob cursing whoever had taken Laban's household idols to death. He did this rashly, without considering the possible ramifications. As it turned out, Rachel was the guilty party, and though she was not discovered at the time (*which would have demanded her immediate death*), the curse would be fulfilled – spiritually and in the material world. It's just that it was fulfilled through her offspring. In other words, they paid the price for the actions of their parents:

***'The fathers have eaten sour grapes,
But it is the children's teeth that have become blunt.'***

Here is where this all starts in the Scriptures:

[Genesis 31:22-35](#)

New American Standard Bible

Laban Pursues Jacob

²²When Laban was informed on the third day that Jacob had fled, ²³he took his kinsmen with him and pursued him *a distance of seven days' journey*, and he overtook him in the hill country of Gilead. ²⁴However, God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream of the night and said to him, "Be careful that you do not speak to Jacob either good or bad."

²⁵And Laban caught up with Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country, and Laban with his kinsmen camped in the hill country of Gilead.

²⁶Then Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done by deceiving me and carrying away my daughters like captives of the sword? ²⁷Why did you flee secretly and deceive me, and did not tell me, so that I might have sent you away with joy and with songs, with tambourine and with lyre; ²⁸and did not allow me to kiss my grandchildren and my daughters? Now you have done foolishly. ²⁹It is in my power to do you harm, but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Be careful not to speak either good or bad to Jacob.' ³⁰Now you have indeed

gone away because you longed greatly for your father's house; *but* why did you steal my gods?" ³¹ Then Jacob replied to Laban, "Because I was afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force. ³² **The one with whom you find your gods shall not live;** in the presence of our relatives point out what is yours among my belongings and take *it* for yourself." Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.

³³ So Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the tent of the two slave women, but he did not find *them*. Then he went out of Leah's tent and entered Rachel's tent. ³⁴ Now Rachel had taken the household idols and put them in the camel's saddlebag, and she sat on them. So Laban searched through all the tent, but did not find *them*. ³⁵ And she said to her father, "May my lord not be angry that I cannot stand in your presence, because the way of women is upon me." So he searched but did not find the household idols.

THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL IS GIVEN A GET (*DIVORCE*)

This represents the spiritual death of the House of Israel. Since they are divorced from their Husband (*YHWH*), they no longer have a share in the inheritance (*eternal life*).

Jeremiah 3

New American Standard Bible

The Defiled Land

3 God says, "If a husband divorces his wife
And she leaves him
And becomes another man's wife,
Will he return to her again?
Would that land not be completely defiled?"

But you are a prostitute *with* many lovers;
Yet you turn to Me," declares the Lord.

² "Raise your eyes to the bare heights and see;
Where have you not been violated?
You have sat for them by the roads
Like an Arab in the desert,
And you have defiled a land
With your prostitution and your wickedness.

³ Therefore the showers have been withheld,
And there has been no spring rain.

Yet you had a prostitute's forehead;
You refused to be ashamed.

⁴ Have you not just now called to Me,
'My Father, You are the friend of my youth?'

⁵ Will He be angry forever,
Or keep *His anger* to the end?'

Behold, you have spoken
And have done evil things,
And you have had your own way."

Faithless Israel

⁶Then the Lord said to me in the days of King Josiah, “Have you seen what faithless Israel did? She went up on every high hill and under every leafy tree, and she prostituted herself there. ⁷Yet I thought, ‘After she has done all these things she will return to Me’; but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it. ⁸And I saw that for all the adulteries of faithless Israel, I had sent her away and given her a certificate of divorce, yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear; but she went and prostituted herself also. ⁹And because of the thoughtlessness of her prostitution, she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and trees. ¹⁰Yet in spite of all this her treacherous sister Judah did not return to Me with all her heart, but rather in deception,” declares the Lord.

God Invites Repentance

¹¹And the Lord said to me, “Faithless Israel has proved herself to be more righteous than treacherous Judah. ¹²Go and proclaim these words toward the north and say,

‘Return, faithless Israel,’ declares the Lord;

‘I will not look at you in anger.

For I am gracious,’ declares the Lord;

‘I will not be angry forever.

¹³Only acknowledge your wrongdoing,

That you have revolted against the Lord your God,

And have scattered your favors to the strangers under every leafy tree,

And you have not obeyed My voice,’ declares the Lord.

¹⁴‘Return, you faithless sons,’ declares the Lord;

‘For I am a master to you,

And I will take you, one from a city and two from a family,

And bring you to Zion.’

¹⁵“Then I will give you shepherds after My own heart, who will feed you knowledge and understanding. ¹⁶And it shall be in those days when you become numerous and are fruitful in the land,” declares the Lord, “they will no longer say, ‘The ark of the covenant of the Lord.’ And it will not come to mind, nor will they remember it, nor miss *it*, nor will it be made again. ¹⁷At that time

they will call Jerusalem 'The Throne of the Lord,' and all the nations will assemble at it, at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord; and they will no longer follow the stubbornness of their evil heart. ¹⁸ **In those days the house of Judah will walk with the house of Israel, and they will come together from the land of the north to the land that I gave your fathers as an inheritance.**

¹⁹ "Then I said,

'How I would set you among My sons
And give you a pleasant land,
The most beautiful inheritance of the nations!
And I said, 'You shall call Me, My Father,
And not turn away from following Me.'

²⁰ However, as a woman treacherously leaves her lover,
So you have dealt treacherously with Me,
House of Israel," declares the Lord.

²¹ A voice is heard on the bare heights,
The weeping, the pleading of the sons of Israel.
Because they have perverted their way,
They have forgotten the Lord their God.

²² **"Return, you faithless sons,
I will heal your faithlessness."**

"Behold, we come to You;
For You are the Lord our God.

²³ Certainly the hills are a deception,
Commotion *on* the mountains.

**Certainly in the Lord our God
Is the salvation of Israel.**

²⁴ "But the shame has consumed the product of our fathers' labor since our youth—their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters. ²⁵ Let us lie down in our shame, and let our humiliation cover us; for we have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even to this day. And we have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God."

**JEREMIAH 3 EXPLAINS WHY THE MESSIAH HAS TO BE YHWH,
AND WHY HE HAS TO DIE**

[Jeremiah 3](#)

New American Standard Bible

The Defiled Land

3 *God* says, “If a husband divorces his wife
And she leaves him
And becomes another man’s *wife*,
Will he return to her again?
Would that land not be completely defiled?”

[Deuteronomy 24:4](#)

New American Standard Bible

⁴then her former husband who sent her away is not allowed to take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the Lord, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance.

YHWH divorced the House of Israel, thus removing Israel’s hope (*inheritance, eternal life*). YHWH cannot re-marry the House of Israel unless He dies first. Otherwise, He would violate His own law (*sin*), which YHWH cannot do. This is what Paul is explaining in [Romans 7](#), and why Paul says he is speaking to those who know the law well. He assumes his audience understands all this. This is also why Yeshua (*Jesus*) says He was sent to the lost sheep of the House of Israel:

[Matthew 10:6](#)

but rather go to **the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

Matthew 15:24

But He answered and said, “I was sent only to **the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**”

[In Context](#) | [Full Chapter](#) | [Other Translations](#)

The ancient Hebrews should have understood this. YHWH, speaking through His prophets, says He will not abandon Ephraim/Israel. He will restore them and take them as His bride once more. Well, **the law is clear: the husband cannot remarry a divorced wife unless he dies first. So why didn't the Hebrews understand that YHWH would have to die (*which requires He also take on human form*)?**

A NEW COVENANT IS PROMISED

Jeremiah 31

New American Standard Bible

Israel's Mourning Turned to Joy

31 "At that time," declares the LORD, "I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people."

²This is what the LORD says:

"The people who survived the sword
Found grace in the wilderness—

Israel, when it went to find its rest."

³The LORD appeared to him long ago, *saying*,

"I have loved you with an everlasting love;
Therefore I have drawn you out with kindness.

⁴I will build you again and you will be rebuilt,

Virgin of Israel!

You will take up your tambourines again,
And go out to the dances of the revelers.

⁵**Again you will plant vineyards**

On the hills of Samaria;

The planters will plant
And will enjoy *the fruit*.

⁶For there will be a day when watchmen

On the hills of Ephraim call out,

'Arise, and let's go up to Zion,

To the LORD our God.'"

⁷For this is what the LORD says:

"Sing aloud with joy for Jacob,
And be joyful with the chief of the nations;
Proclaim, give praise, and say,

'LORD, save Your people,

The remnant of Israel!'

⁸**Behold, I am bringing them from the north country,**

And I will gather them from the remote parts of the earth,

Among them those who are blind and those who limp,
The pregnant woman and she who is in labor, together;
They will return here as a great assembly.

⁹They will come with weeping,
And by pleading I will bring them;
I will lead them by streams of waters,
On a straight path on which they will not stumble;
For I am a father to Israel,
And Ephraim is My firstborn.”

¹⁰Hear the word of the LORD, you nations,
And declare *it* in the coastlands far away,
And say, “He who scattered Israel will gather him,
And He will keep him as a shepherd *keeps his flock.*”

¹¹For the LORD has ransomed Jacob
And redeemed him from the hand of him who was stronger than he.

¹²“They will come and shout for joy on the height of Zion,
And they will be radiant over the bounty of the LORD—
Over the grain, the new wine, the oil,
And over the young of the flock and the herd.
And their life will be like a watered garden,
And they will never languish again.

¹³Then the virgin will rejoice in the dance,
And the young men and the old together;
For I will turn their mourning into joy
And comfort them, and give them joy for their sorrow.

¹⁴I will refresh the soul of the priests with abundance,
And My people will be satisfied with My goodness,” declares the LORD.

¹⁵**This is what the LORD says:
“A voice is heard in Ramah,
Lamenting *and* bitter weeping.
Rachel is weeping for her children;
She refuses to be comforted for her children,
Because they are no more.”**

¹⁶This is what the LORD says:

“Restrain your voice from weeping
And your eyes from tears;
For your work will be rewarded,” declares the LORD,
“And they will return from the land of the enemy.
¹⁷ There is hope for your future,” declares the LORD,
“And *your* children will return to their own territory.
¹⁸ I have certainly heard Ephraim grieving,
‘You have disciplined me, and I was corrected,
Like an untrained calf;
Bring me back that I may be restored,
For You are the LORD my God.
¹⁹ For after I turned back, I repented;
And after I was instructed, I slapped *my* thigh;
I was ashamed and also humiliated
Because I bore the shame of my youth.’
²⁰ Is Ephraim My dear son?
Is he a delightful child?
Indeed, as often as I have spoken against him,
I certainly *still* remember him;
Therefore My heart yearns for him;
I will certainly have mercy on him,” declares the LORD.

²¹ “Set up roadmarks for yourself,
Place guideposts for yourself;
Direct your mind to the highway,
The way by which you went.
Return, O virgin of Israel,
Return to these your cities.
²² How long will you waver,
You rebellious daughter?
For the LORD has created a new thing on the earth:
A woman will shelter a man.”

²³ This is what the LORD of armies, the God of Israel says: “Once again they will speak this word in the land of Judah and in its cities when I restore their fortunes,

‘The LORD bless you, O place of righteousness,
O holy hill!’

²⁴ Judah and all its cities will live together in it, the farmers and those who travel with flocks. ²⁵ For I give plenty of water to the weary ones, and refresh everyone who languishes.” ²⁶ At this I awoke and looked, and my sleep had been pleasant to me.

A New Covenant

²⁷ “Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of mankind and the seed of animals. ²⁸ And just as I have watched over them to uproot *them*, tear *them* down, ruin, destroy, and bring disaster *on them*, so I will watch over them to build and to plant *them*,” declares the LORD.

²⁹ “In those days they will no longer say,
‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes,
But *it is* the children’s teeth *that* have become blunt.’

³⁰ But everyone will die for his own wrongdoing; each person who eats the sour grapes, his *own* teeth will become blunt.

³¹ “Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “**when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah,** ³² not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, **although I was a husband to them,**” declares the LORD. ³³ “**For this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,**” declares the LORD: “**I will put My law within them and write it on their heart; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.** ³⁴ They will not teach again, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the LORD, “for I will forgive their wrongdoing, and their sin I will no longer remember.”

³⁵ This is what the LORD says,
He who gives the sun for light by day
And the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night,
Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar—

The LORD of armies is His name:

³⁶ “If this fixed order departs
From Me,” declares the LORD,
“Then the descendants of Israel also will cease
To be a nation before Me forever.”

³⁷ This is what the LORD says:

“If the heavens above can be measured
And the foundations of the earth searched out below,
Then I will also reject all the descendants of Israel
For everything that they have done,” declares the LORD.

³⁸ “Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when the city will be rebuilt
for the LORD from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. ³⁹ The measuring
line will go out farther straight ahead, to the hill Gareb; then it will turn to Goah.

⁴⁰ And the entire valley of the dead bodies and of the ashes, and all the fields as
far as the brook Kidron to the corner of the Horse Gate toward the east, shall
be holy to the LORD; it will not be uprooted or overthrown ever again.”

ALTERNATE TRANSLATIONS OF THE NEW COVENENT

[Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)

New American Standard Bible

³¹ “Behold, days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the Lord. ³³ “For this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord: “I will put My law within them and write it on their heart; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴ They will not teach again, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the Lord, “for I will forgive their wrongdoing, and their sin I will no longer remember.”

[Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)

English Standard Version

³¹ “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. ³³ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

[Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)

New King James Version

³¹ “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— ³²not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. ³³But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

Brenton's Septuagint Translation

31(38:31) Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Juda: **32**(38:32) not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day when I took hold of their hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; for they abode not in my covenant, and I disregarded them, saith the Lord. **33**(38:33) For this is my covenant which I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will surely put my laws into their mind, and write them on their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. **34**(38:34) And they shall not at all teach every one his *fellow* citizen, and every one his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them: for I will be merciful to their iniquities, and their sins I will remember no more.

[Jeremiah 31 Interlinear Bible](#)

THE NEW COVENANT IS PROMISED AGAIN

Ezekiel 36

New American Standard Bible

The Mountains of Israel to Be Blessed

36 “Now you, son of man, prophesy to the mountains of Israel and say, ‘You mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord. ²This is what the Lord God says: “Since the enemy has spoken against you, ‘Aha!’ and, ‘The everlasting heights have become our possession,’ ³therefore prophesy and say, ‘This is what the Lord God says: “For good reason they have made you desolate and harassed you from every side, **so that you would become a possession of the rest of the nations**; and you have been taken up in the talk and the rumor of the people.’””

⁴Therefore, you mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord God. This is what the Lord God says to the mountains and to the hills, to the ravines and to the valleys, to the desolate ruins and to the abandoned cities which have become plunder and an object of ridicule to the rest of the nations which are all around—⁵therefore the Lord God says this: “Certainly in the fire of My jealousy I have spoken against the rest of the nations, and against all Edom, who appropriated My land for themselves as a possession with wholehearted joy *and* with contempt of soul, in order to *make* its pastureland plunder.”

⁶Therefore prophesy in regard to the land of Israel and say to the mountains and to the hills, to the ravines and to the valleys, “This is what the Lord God says: ‘Behold, I have spoken in My jealousy and in My wrath because you have endured the insults of the nations.’ ⁷Therefore the Lord God says this: ‘I have sworn that the nations that are around you will certainly endure their insults themselves. ⁸But as for you, mountains of Israel, you will grow your branches and bear fruit for My people Israel; for they are about to come. ⁹For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you will be cultivated and sown. ¹⁰And I will multiply people on you, **all the house of Israel, all of it**; and the cities will be inhabited and the ruins will be rebuilt. ¹¹I will multiply on you people and animals, and they will increase and be fruitful; and I will populate you as you were previously, and treat you better than at the beginning. Then you will know that I am the Lord. ¹²Yes, I will have people—My people Israel—walk on you and

possess you, so that you will become their inheritance and never again bereave them of children.’

¹³ “The Lord God says this: ‘Since they say to you, “You are a devourer of people and have bereaved your nation of children,” ¹⁴ for that reason you will no longer devour people and no longer bereave your nation of children,’ declares the Lord God. ¹⁵ I will not let you hear insults from the nations anymore, nor will you suffer disgrace from the peoples any longer, nor will you make your nation stumble any longer,” declares the Lord God.”

¹⁶ Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, ¹⁷ “Son of man, when the house of Israel was living on their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their deeds; their way before Me was like the uncleanness of a woman in her impurity. ¹⁸ Therefore I poured out My wrath on them for the blood which they had shed on the land, because they had defiled it with their idols. ¹⁹ I also scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the lands. According to their ways and their deeds I judged them. ²⁰ When they came to the nations where they went, they profaned My holy name, because it was said of them, ‘These are the people of the Lord, yet they have left His land.’ ²¹ **But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations where they went.**

Israel to Be Renewed for His Name’s Sake

²² “Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘This is what the Lord God says: **“It is not for your sake, house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. ²³ And I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord,”** declares the Lord God, “when I show Myself holy among you in their sight. ²⁴ For I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the lands; and I will bring you into your own land. ²⁵ Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. ²⁶ **Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put My Spirit within you and bring it about that you walk in My statutes, and are careful and**

follow My ordinances. ²⁸ And you will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God. ²⁹ Moreover, I will save you from all your uncleanness; and I will call for the grain and multiply it, and I will not bring a famine on you. ³⁰ Instead, I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the produce of the field, so that you will not receive again the disgrace of famine among the nations. ³¹ Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for your wrongdoings and your abominations. ³² **I am not doing *this* for your sake,” declares the Lord God; “let *that* be known to you. Be ashamed and humiliated for your ways, house of Israel!”**

³³ “This is what the Lord God says: “On the day that I cleanse you from all your wrongdoings, I will populate the cities, and the places of ruins will be rebuilt.

³⁴ The desolated land will be cultivated instead of being a desolation in the sight of everyone who passes by. ³⁵ And they will say, ‘This desolated land has become like the Garden of Eden; and the waste, desolated and ruined cities are fortified *and* inhabited.’ ³⁶ Then the nations around you that are left will know that I, the Lord, have rebuilt the ruined places *and* planted that which was desolated; I, the Lord, have spoken, and I will do it.”

³⁷ “This is what the Lord God says: “This too I will let **the house of Israel** ask Me to do for them: I will increase their people like a flock. ³⁸ Like the flock for sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts, so will the waste cities be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the Lord.””

THE RESTORATION OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL (AND THE KINGDOM)

[Ezekiel 37](#)

New American Standard Bible

Vision of the Valley of Dry Bones

37 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and He brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; and it was full of bones. ²He had me pass among them all around, and behold, *there were* very many on the surface of the valley; and behold, *they were* very dry. ³Then He said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” And I answered, “Lord GOD, You Yourself know.” ⁴Again He said to me, “Prophecy over these bones and say to them, ‘You dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.’” ⁵This is what the Lord GOD says to these bones: ‘Behold, I am going to make breath enter you so that you may come to life. ⁶And I will attach tendons to you, make flesh grow back on you, cover you with skin, and put breath in you so that you may come to life; and you will know that I am the LORD.’”

⁷So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a *loud* noise, and behold, a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸And I looked, and behold, tendons were on them, and flesh grew and skin covered them; but there was no breath in them. ⁹Then He said to me, “Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath, ‘The Lord GOD says this: “Come from the four winds, breath, and breathe on these slain, so that they come to life.”’” ¹⁰So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath entered them, and they came to life and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.

The Vision Explained

¹¹Then He said to me, “Son of man, **these bones are the entire house of Israel**; behold, they say, ‘Our bones are dried up **and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off.**’ ¹²Therefore prophecy and say to them, ‘This is what the Lord GOD says: “Behold, I am going to open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, My people. ¹⁴**And I will put My**

Spirit within you and you will come to life, and I will place you on your own land. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken and done it,” declares the LORD.”

Reunion of Judah and Israel

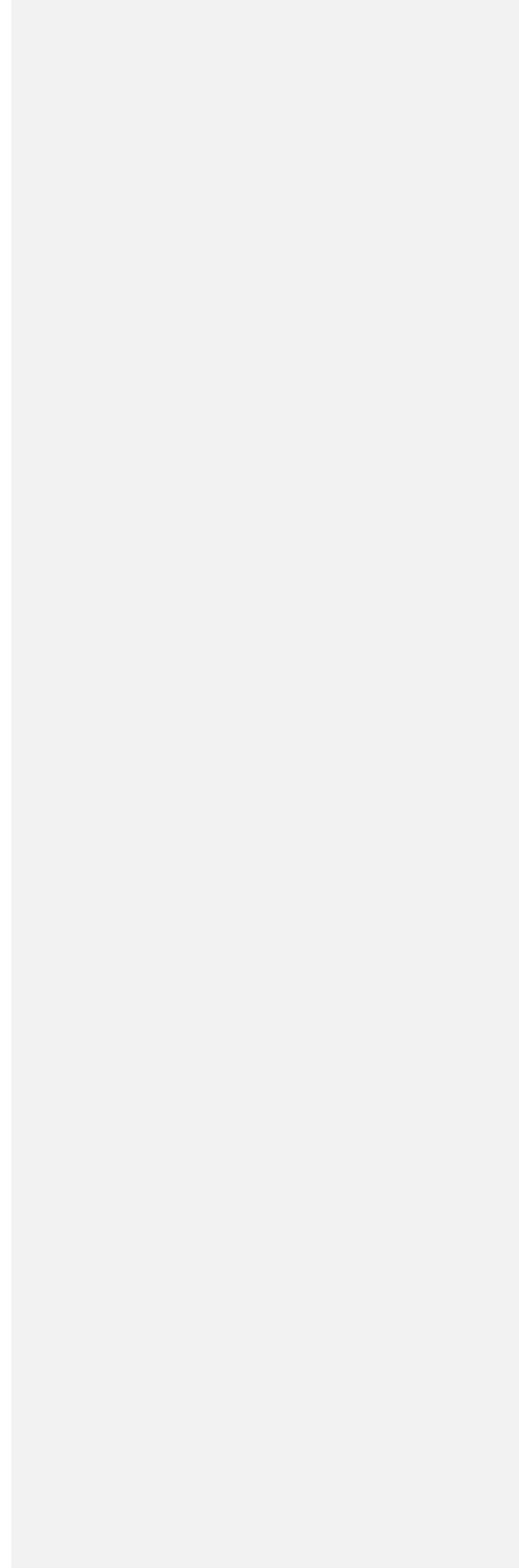
¹⁵The word of the LORD came again to me, saying, ¹⁶“Now you, son of man, take for yourself one stick and write on it, **‘For Judah and for the sons of Israel**, his companions’; then take another stick and write on it, **‘For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and all the house of Israel**, his companions.’ ¹⁷Then put them together for yourself one to another into one stick, so that they may become **one in your hand**. ¹⁸And when the sons of your people speak to you, saying, ‘Will you not declare to us what you mean by these?’ ¹⁹say to them, ‘This is what the Lord GOD says: “Behold, I am going to take **the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel**, his companions; and I will put them with it, with **the stick of Judah**, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand.”’ ²⁰The sticks on which you write will be in your hand before their eyes. ²¹And say to them, ‘This is what the Lord GOD says: “Behold, I am going to take **the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone**, and I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; ²²**and I will make them one nation in the land**, on the mountains of Israel; **and one king will be king for all of them; and they will no longer be two nations, and no longer be divided into two kingdoms**. ²³They will no longer defile themselves with their idols, or with their detestable things, or with any of their offenses; but I will rescue them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. And they will be My people, and I will be their God.

The Davidic Kingdom

²⁴**“And My servant David will be king over them**, and they will all have one shepherd; **and they will walk in My ordinances, and keep My statutes and follow them**. ²⁵And they will live on the land that I gave to My servant Jacob, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they, and their sons and their sons’ sons, forever; and **My servant David will be their leader forever**. ²⁶And I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and set My sanctuary in their midst forever. ²⁷My dwelling place also will be among them; and I will be

their God, and they will be My people. ²⁸ And the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever.””

PART II
UNDERSTANDING THE SPIRITUAL CONDITIONS AT
THE TIME OF MESSIAH'S FIRST COMING



John 3

English Standard Version

You Must Be Born Again

³ Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ² This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.” ³ Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” ⁴ Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?” ⁵ Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ ⁸ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

⁹ Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” ¹⁰ Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? ¹¹ Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. ¹² If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

For God So Loved the World

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world,^[1] that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works

were evil. ²⁰ For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. ²¹ But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

John the Baptist Exalts Christ

²² After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he remained there with them and was baptizing. ²³ John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptized ²⁴ (for John had not yet been put in prison).

²⁵ Now a discussion arose between some of John's disciples and a Jew over purification. ²⁶ And they came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness—look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him.” ²⁷ John answered, “A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. ²⁸ You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.’ ²⁹ The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. ³⁰ He must increase, but I must decrease.”

³¹ He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all. ³² He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony. ³³ Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true. ³⁴ For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. ³⁵ The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. ³⁶ Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

Romans 4

New American Standard Bible

Abraham's Justification by Faith

4 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? ²For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God. ³For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." ⁴Now to the one who works, the wages are not credited as a favor, but as what is due. ⁵But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness, ⁶just as David also speaks of the blessing of the person to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

⁷"Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven,
And whose sins have been covered.

⁸Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account."

⁹Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, "Faith was credited to Abraham as righteousness." ¹⁰How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while ^[1]circumcised, but while uncircumcised; ¹¹and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them, ¹²and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.

¹³For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴For if those who are of the Law are heirs, then faith is made void and the promise is nullified; ¹⁵for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation.

¹⁶For this reason *it is* by faith, in order that *it may be* in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is

the father of us all, ¹⁷(as it is written: “I have made you a father of many nations”) in the presence of Him whom he believed, *that is*, God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that do not exist. ¹⁸In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, “So shall your descendants be.” ¹⁹Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now *as good as* dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah’s womb; ²⁰yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, ²¹and being fully assured that what *God* had promised, He was able also to perform. ²²Therefore it was also credited to him as righteousness. ²³Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, ²⁴but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, to *us* who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵*He* who was delivered over because of our wrongdoings, and was raised because of our justification.

[Galatians 2](#)

New American Standard Bible

The Council at Jerusalem

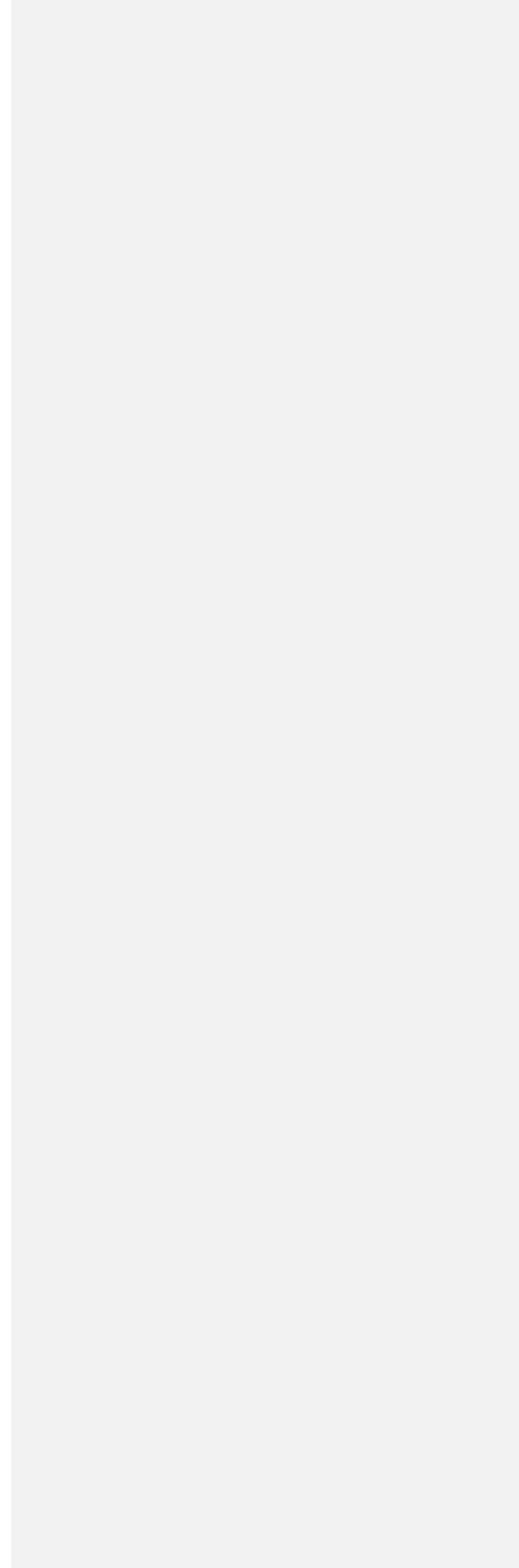
2 Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also. ²It was because of a revelation that I went up; and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but *I did so* in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that somehow I might be running, or had run, in vain. ³But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. ⁴Yet *it was a concern* because of the false brothers secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy on our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to enslave us. ⁵But we did not yield in subjection to them, even for an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you. ⁶But from those who were of considerable repute (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no favoritism)—well, those who were of repute contributed nothing to me. ⁷But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter *had been* to the circumcised ⁸(for He who was at work for Peter in *his* apostleship to the circumcised was at work for me also to the Gentiles), ⁹and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we *might go* to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. ¹⁰*They only asked* us to remember the poor—the very thing I also was eager to do.

Peter (Cephas) Opposed by Paul

¹¹But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. ¹²For prior to the coming of some men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he *began* to withdraw and separate himself, fearing those from the circumcision. ¹³The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. ¹⁴But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, “If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how *is it that* you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?”

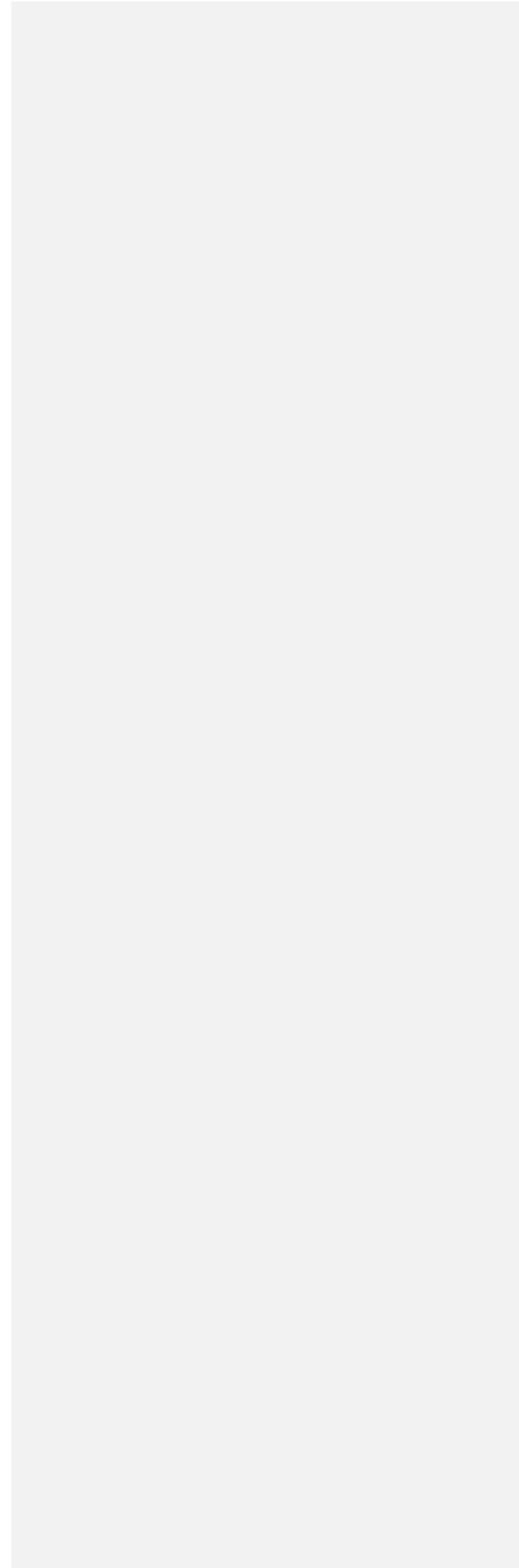
¹⁵“We *are* Jews by nature and not sinners from the Gentiles; ¹⁶nevertheless, knowing that a person is not justified by works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the Law; since by works of the Law no flesh will be justified. ¹⁷But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Far from it! ¹⁸For if I rebuild what I have *once* destroyed, I prove myself to be a wrongdoer. ¹⁹For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live for God. ²⁰I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. ²¹I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness *comes* through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.”

PART III
UNDERSTANDING PAUL



GLOSSARY

APPENDIXES



DEUTERONOMY 32 WORLDVIEW

(a.k.a. the Divine Council Worldview)

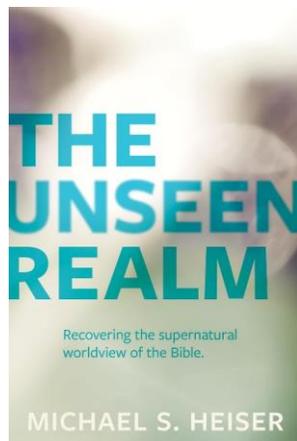
DEUTERONOMY 32:8 AND THE SONS OF GOD

Deuteronomy 32:8-9 NASB

⁸When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance,
When He separated the sons of mankind,
He set the boundaries of the peoples
According to the number of the sons of Israel [it says Elohim, not Israel].
⁹For the Lord's portion is His people;
Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance.

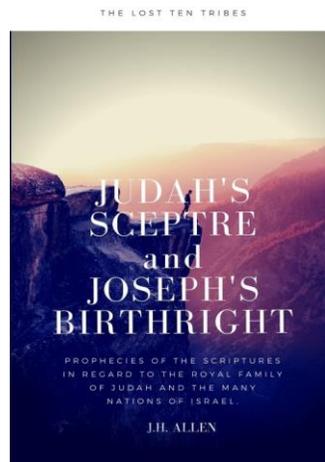
Israel is YHWH's inheritance: His People, His Nation, His Kingdom

The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible



THE BIRTH RIGHT

Judah's Sceptre And Joseph's Birthright



The Birthright Promises: Abraham to Ephraim

This is a quick overview of the birthright promises given to God's people as recorded in Genesis.

This paper is a simple outline of the birthrights that were passed down. For a better understanding of the story you'll have to read Genesis chapters 12-49.

Part 1: Abraham to Isaac

Starting in chapter 12 of Genesis, Abraham is chosen by God to be the father of many nations and whom the world would be blessed through. (Genesis 12:1-3; 13:16; 15:3-5, 17:1-7; 22:17)

The promises given to Abraham by God are:

- **You will be a great nation**
- **You will be a multitude of nations**
- **Your name shall be great**
- **You will be a blessing**
- **Blessed be everyone who blesses you**
- **Cursed be everyone who curses you**
- **In you all families of the earth will be blessed**
- **Your descendants shall be as numerous as the stars**
- **in heaven**
- **Your descendants will be as numerous as the sand**
- **on the seashore**
- **Kings will come from you**
- **You will be exceedingly fruitful**

Sarah, Abraham's wife, was also promised blessings and so were her children (Genesis 17:15-16):

- **She will be blessed**
- **She will be a mother of many nations**
- **Kings of people will come from her**

Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael was Abraham's firstborn from Hagar, Sarah's maidservant. (16:3-4) Isaac is his second born from Sarah. (21:1-3) Isaac receives the birthright promises, Ishmael does not. (17:16-22) Ishmael receives his own promises from God, but not those promised to Abraham and Sarah (16:10-12).

Ishmael will :

- **Be a wild man**
- **His hand shall be against every man**
- **Every mans hand will be against him**
- **He will dwell in the presence of all his brethren**

God confirms these blessings to Isaac after Abraham dies (26:3-5):

- **I will be with you**
- **I will give you all these lands**
- **I will make your descendents multiply as the stars of heaven**
- **In your seed, all nations of the earth will be blessed**

Part 2: Isaac to Jacob

Isaac marries Rebekah. (24:67) Rebekah receives more promises (24:60):

- **Your descendants will possess the gates of their enemies**
- **Rebekah will be the mother of thousands of ten thousands**

Isaac and Rebekah have twin boys: Esau and Jacob. Esau was born first and Jacob was born second. (25:24-26) The birthright promises skipped Esau and went to Jacob. (25:23, 29-34)

Jacob was blessed by his father Isaac: (27:27-29)

- **May the Lord give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness**
- **of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine**
- **Let people serve you**
- **Many nations will bow down to you**
- **Be master over your brethren**
- **Let your mother's sons bow down to you**
- **Cursed be everyone who curses you**
- **Blessed be those who bless you**

Esau also received promises, but not the birthright (27:39-40).

Esau will:

- **Dwell in the fatness of the earth and with the dew of heaven**
- **from above**
- **Live by his sword**
- **Serve his brother (Jacob)**
- **Break his yoke from his neck**

Part 3: Jacob to Joseph

Jacob marries two sisters: Leah and Rachel. (29:15-30) From Leah, Rachel, and their two maidservants (Bilhah and Zilpah), Jacob has 12 sons (35:23-26): (These sons are listed in order from oldest to youngest)

- 1. Reuben**
- 2. Simeon**
- 3. Levi**
- 4. Judah**
- 5. Dan**
- 6. Naphtali**
- 7. Gad**
- 8. Asher**
- 9. Issachar**
- 10. Zebulun**
- 11. Joseph**
- 12. Benjamin**

God changes Jacob's name to Israel (35:10). Joseph, who is #11 of the 12 sons, is sold into slavery by his brothers. (37:28) God ends up exalting him to the highest rank in Egypt as promised to him. (41:39, 40)

ALL of the blessings and birthright promises given to Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, and Jacob (Israel) are passed on to Joseph.

Reuben (the first born) does not receive the blessings and birthright promises and neither does Judah (as assumed).

Genesis 49: 22-26

22. Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well;

whose branches run over the wall:

23. The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him:

24. But his bow abode in his strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob;

(from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)

25. Even by the God of the father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb:

*26. The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: **they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separated from his brethren.***

1 Chronicles 5:1-2

*1. Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, (for he was the firstborn; but, for as much as he defiled his father's bed, **his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel:** and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright.*

*2. For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and from him came the chief ruler; **but the birthright was Joseph's***

All of the birthright and blessings go to Joseph's sons...but Judah is given the right to rule:

Genesis 49:8-12

8. *Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee.*

9. *Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he crouched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?*

10. *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come: and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.*

11. *Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in grapes blood:*

12. *His eyes shall be red with wine and his teeth white with milk.*

NOTE #1:

Shiloh = Jesus

“Shiloh” means “to whom dominion belongs”

Jesus comes twice to this world:

In The First Coming of Our Lord 2000 some years ago, Jesus:

1) Fulfilled the law

2) Gathered His bride

In The Second Coming of Our Lord, He will:

- 1) Fulfill the scepter
- 2) Gather the nations

Part 4: Joseph to Ephraim (and Manasseh)

In Egypt Joseph had two sons: Ephraim and Manasseh. (41:50-52) All 12 brothers become tribes except for Joseph.

Joseph is not made a tribe but his two sons (Ephraim and Manasseh) become tribes, as a double portion, a blessing. (48:5,21,22) The birthright is passed through Joseph and goes to Ephraim and Manasseh, but Ephraim is given the greater blessing (48:12-20) Ephraim is given the right to the father's name: Israel.

Realize that there are actually 13 tribes altogether.

Even though Levi does not have land possession, Levi is still a tribe!

Moving forward through history.....

After Joseph's death, the children of Israel become slaves in Egypt. After 400 years they are led out of Egypt under Moses and wander in the desert for 40 years. The children of Israel are then led into the Promised Land under Joshua.

The 13 Tribes of Israel eventually become a nation, occupying the territory promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. After the reign of King Solomon over the nation of Israel, the tribes split into two kingdoms: Israel and Judah.

Israel is the Northern Kingdom, headed by the tribe of Ephraim.

Judah is the Southern Kingdom, headed by the tribe of Judah.

There are 9 ½ tribes to the North, 2 ½ tribes to the South, and the Tribe of Levi is scattered throughout.

The people of the Northern Kingdom: Israel, are called Israelites and the people of the Southern Kingdom are Judahites (or Jews).

Only the Israelites of the Southern Kingdom are Jews.

Ephraim (Israel) is taken into captivity 745 B.C. by the Assyrians.

Judah is taken into captivity 573 B.C. by the Babylonians.

The Jews returned from captivity after 70 years.

The northern tribes never return.

These northern tribes are the 10 “lost” tribes of Israel.

But are they really lost? Or do they just have different names?

Wherever these "lost" tribes are, they must be as numerous as "the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore".

Remember:

Ephraim and Manasseh receive the birthright, not the Jews!

The birthright promises AREN'T fulfilled when they become tribes.

The birthright promises ARE fulfilled when they become nations, a multitude of nations, and many kings!

"To Ephraim and Manasseh :

Blessed be everyone that blesses you,

cursed be everyone who curses you,

you will be exceedingly fruitful,

you will possess the gates of your enemies,

you will be a blessing to all nations

**you will be as numerous as the sand on the
seashore and as the stars in heaven."**

Hosea 1:9-11

9 Then God said:

*"Call his name Lo-Ammi,
For you are not My people,
And I will not be your God.*

10 *"Yet the number of the children of Israel*

*Shall be as the sand of the sea,
Which cannot be measured or numbered.
And it shall come to pass
In the place where it was said to them,
'You are not My people,'
There it shall be said to them,
You are sons of the living God.'*

11 Then the children of Judah and the children of Israel

*Shall be gathered together,
And appoint for themselves one head;
And they shall come up out of the land,
For great will be the day of Jezreel!*

Note:

The children of Judah and the children of Israel are not the same. Becoming a son of the living God can only be obtained through being born again by the Spirit of God.

Where & when did the children of Israel become "not my people", then as numerous as the sand on the seashore, then a multitude of nations, and then "sons of the living God"?

KEY TERMS

[Birthright](#) (*Bible Gateway*)

[Birthright](#) (*Bible Study Tools*)

[Birthright](#) (*Blue Letter Bible*)

[Birthright](#) (*Bible Hub*)

[Birthright](#) (*Christianity*)

[Birthright](#) (*Jewish Encyclopedia*)

[Covenant](#) (*Bible Gateway*)

[Covenant](#) (*Bible Study Tools*)

[Covenant](#) (*Bible Hub*)

[Covenant](#) (*Christianity*)

[Blessing](#) (*Bible gateway*)

[Blessing](#) (*Bible Study Tools*)

[Blessing](#) (*Bible Hub*)

[Curse](#) (*Bible gateway*)

[Curse](#) (*Bible Study Tools*)

[Curse](#) (*Bible Hub*)

APPENDIX

PLEASE NOTE: I do not necessarily agree with everything in the following articles. They are included because they are among the better 'Christian' articles I found on the subject(s) in question and, as such, provide a starting point from which a fuller, more Biblical understanding of those subjects may begin.

Easton's Bible Dictionary - Birthright

Birthright [\[N\]](#) [\[S\]](#)

☞ This word denotes the special privileges and advantages belonging to the first-born son among the Jews. He became the priest of the family. Thus Reuben was the first-born of the patriarchs, and so the priesthood of the tribes belonged to him. That honour was, however, transferred by God from Reuben to Levi ([Numbers 3:12](#) [Numbers 3:13](#) ; [8:18](#)).

☞ The first-born son had allotted to him also a double portion of the paternal inheritance ([Deuteronomy 21:15-17](#)). Reuben was, because of his undutiful conduct, deprived of his birth-right ([Genesis 49:4](#) ; [1 Chronicles 5:1](#)). Esau transferred his birth-right to Jacob ([Genesis 25:33](#)).

☞ The first-born inherited the judicial authority of his father, whatever it might be ([2 Chronicles 21:3](#)). By divine appointment, however, David excluded Adonijah in favour of Solomon.

☞ The Jews attached a sacred importance to the rank of "first-born" and "first-begotten" as applied to the Messiah ([Romans 8:29](#) ; [Colossians 1:18](#) ; [Hebrews 1:4-6](#)). As first-born he has an inheritance superior to his brethren, and is the alone true priest.

Why is the firstborn so important in the Bible?

In biblical times, the firstborn was given certain unique rights, responsibilities, and privileges. A married couple's firstborn male child was given priority and preeminence in the family, and the best of the inheritance. The nation of Israel is identified as God's "firstborn" in the Bible ([Exodus 4:22](#); [Jeremiah 31:9](#)); in other words, Israel held a special place of privilege and blessing among the nations.

People in ancient cultures attached great value to the eldest son, assigning him distinct benefits and obligations. The firstborn male was important because he was believed to represent the prime of human strength and vitality ([Genesis 49:3](#); [Psalm 78:51](#)) as the "opener of the womb" ([Exodus 13:2, 12, 15](#); [Numbers 18:15](#); [Luke 2:23](#)). As a result, the firstborn son became the primary heir of the family. The firstborn's [birthright](#) involved a double portion of the household estate and the leadership of the family if his father became incapacitated or was absent for some reason ([Deuteronomy 21:17](#)). After his father's death, the eldest son usually cared for his mother until her death and provided for his unmarried sisters.

In the Old Testament, firstborn humans—and animals—were considered sacred to God ([Genesis 4:4](#); [Exodus 13:1–2](#); [Leviticus 27:26](#); [Numbers 3:11–13](#); [Deuteronomy 15:19–23](#)). After God rescued Israel from slavery in Egypt, He commanded the people to consecrate every firstborn male human and firstborn animal to Him ([Exodus 22:29–30](#)). The dedication was in memory of God's great deliverance and a sign to their children that God had brought them out of Egypt ([Exodus 13:11–16](#)).

At the beginning of Israel's years in the [wilderness](#), God took all the males in the tribe of Levi into service in place of the firstborn males from the other tribes, entrusting the Levites with the work of His tabernacle ([Numbers 3](#)). The number of Levite males did not equal the full number of firstborns among the other tribes, so, to make up the difference, some of the firstborn from other tribes were redeemed with a financial offering to the priests ([Numbers 3:46–48](#)). After the Israelites settled in Canaan, the firstborn sons of all Israelites were to be redeemed as a sign they they belonged to God ([Exodus 34:19](#); [Numbers 18:14–](#)

16). Among the clean animals, the firstborn male was to be sacrificed to God eight days after birth ([Exodus 13:11–16](#); 22:39–30). The firstborn males of unclean animals were either redeemed through a financial payment to the temple, replaced on the altar of sacrifice by a clean animal, or killed ([Exodus 34:20](#); [Numbers 18:14–16](#)). These symbolic acts represented the Passover. In the final plague against Egypt, God “passed over” the firstborn males of Israel, who were in their homes with the blood of a lamb as a sign on their doors as God had commanded. The firstborn Egyptian males, including the livestock, were struck down (Exodus 11—12:30).

The firstborn could sell his rights, as [Esau](#) did to Jacob ([Genesis 25:29–34](#)). In doing this, “Esau despised his birthright” ([Genesis 25:34](#)). The author of Hebrews warned his readers, “See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. Even though he sought the blessing with tears, he could not change what he had done” ([Hebrews 12:16–17](#)). In taking his position as firstborn lightly, Esau sinned against God and his family.

The rights of the firstborn could also be lost, as was the case for [Reuben](#), Jacob’s firstborn son ([Genesis 49:3–4](#)). Reuben slept with Bilhah, his father’s concubine ([Genesis 35:22](#)), an act that demonstrated the utmost disrespect for his father and his family. Jacob denied Reuben the blessing of the firstborn because of that sin ([Genesis 49:4](#)). In fact, Jacob withheld the blessing of the firstborn from the next two oldest sons, too, due to their violence against the Shechemites ([Genesis 49:5–7](#); cf. [Genesis 34](#)).

The importance of the firstborn reaches its apex in Scripture in the person of Jesus Christ. All prior implications of the firstborn’s role in the Bible serve to illuminate Christ’s preeminence over all creation and in the family of God.

The New Testament describes Christ as the “[firstborn](#)” several times. In an earthly sense, Jesus is Mary’s firstborn son ([Luke 2:7](#)), and He was dedicated according to the law ([Luke 2:22–24](#)). Spiritually, Jesus is the “firstborn among many brothers and sisters” in the body of Christ ([Romans 8:29](#)). In [Colossians 1:15](#), the apostle Paul writes, “The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.” This use of the title *firstborn* for Christ echoes the wording of [Psalm 89:27–29](#), where God says of King David, “And I will appoint

him to be my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth. I will maintain my love to him forever, and my covenant with him will never fail. I will establish his line forever, his throne as long as the heavens endure.”

In the book of Hebrews, Christ is “heir of all things” ([Hebrews 1:2](#)) and God’s “firstborn into the world” ([Hebrews 1:6](#)). Just as the firstborn son is head over his earthly family after his father, Jesus Christ is head of the body of Christ—the church—after God the Father ([Ephesians 1:20–23](#); [Colossians 1:18](#), [Hebrews 2:10–12](#)). Just as the firstborn son receives the greatest inheritance from his father, Jesus Christ receives the world as His inheritance. God says to His Son, “Only ask, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance, the whole earth as your possession” ([Psalm 2:8](#)).

As a point of clarification, the term *firstborn* in relation to Jesus does not suggest that He is a created being. The Son of God has existed for all eternity along with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Jesus is fully God ([John 1:1–3](#)). He took on human flesh so that He could become our Savior to serve as the Mediator between humankind and God ([1 Timothy 2:5](#)). When Scripture refers to Christ as the “firstborn,” the message is that Christ’s supremacy, sovereignty, and priority extend over all things and all other beings.

In paying for our sin, Jesus Christ suffered death, but He also became “the firstborn from the dead” ([Revelation 1:5](#)); that is, He conquered death and is the first person to ever be “born” to eternal life after dying. By God’s grace, through faith in Jesus, we, too, can receive eternal life ([Ephesians 2:1–10](#); [John 3:16–18](#)). Through His death and resurrection, Jesus is the “firstfruits” who guarantees the future resurrection and eternal life of many other sons and daughters of God ([1 Corinthians 15:20–23](#)). As He Himself said, “Because I live, you also will live” ([John 14:19](#)).

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Question: "Why is the birthright so emphasized in the Bible?"

Answer: The birthright is emphasized in the Bible because it honored the rights or privileges of the family's firstborn son. After the father died, or in the father's absence, the firstborn son assumed the father's authority and responsibilities. However, the Bible also shows that the father could rescind the birthright and pass it on to a younger son. A good example of this is the case of Jacob and his twelve sons. Reuben was the eldest, but the birthright was given to Joseph's sons. Even then, Jacob blessed the younger son, Ephraim, above the elder, Manasseh (Genesis 37:19-22; Genesis 49:1-4; Genesis 49:22-26).

In addition to assuming the leadership role in the family, the recipient of the birthright inherited twice that received by the other sons. In cases where a husband might have more than one wife, the birthright always went to the firstborn son of the father and could not be awarded to the son of a favorite wife without proper justification (Deuteronomy 21:15-17) or if the firstborn son's mother was a concubine or a slave (Genesis 21:9-13; Judges 11:1-2).

The birthright of a king's firstborn son included his succession to the throne (2 Chronicles 21:1-3). King Rehoboam of Judah violated this tradition by passing the birthright to Abijah, his favorite son. However, to avoid trouble with the older sons, the king paid them off (2 Chronicles 11:18-23).

As New Testament Christians, we have an inherited "birthright" status through Jesus Christ as the firstborn Son of God (Romans 8:29; Colossians 1:15; Revelation 1:5). As God's only begotten Son, Jesus received the kingdom from His Father and is Lord of all (Acts 2:36; Philippians 2:9-11; Revelation 19:16). Christ promises to share with us His kingdom and inheritance (Romans 4:13; Galatians 3:29; Ephesians 1:18; Hebrews 11:16).

Christians are warned not to imitate Esau who, on impulse, gave away his birthright for a bowl of stew (Hebrews 12:16-17; Genesis 25:19-34). Because of his foolishness, Esau lost his birthright and the blessings of his father (Genesis 27). The lesson for us is to respect what is holy. We should never throw away what is important, godly, or honorable for the sake of temporary pleasure.

Our focus is to remain on Jesus, the appointed heir of all things (Hebrews 1:2;

Psalm 2:7-8; Matthew 28:18). And we, through His grace and our faith in Him, are counted as joint heirs (Romans 8:17; Galatians 3:29; Titus 3:7).

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Question: "What is the difference between a blessing and a birthright (Genesis 25)?"

Answer: When twins Jacob and Esau were born, Esau came first, technically making him the firstborn. As the firstborn son, Esau automatically held the "birthright." A birthright was an honor given to the firstborn, bestowing "head of household" status and the right to inherit his father's estate. The son with the birthright would receive a double portion of whatever was passed down (see Deuteronomy 21:17). Yet, even before the twins were born, the Lord predicted that Esau would serve Jacob (Genesis 25:23).

Later in Genesis 25, Esau sold his birthright, giving it up for a meal because he was hungry. "Thus Esau despised his birthright" (Genesis 25:29-35). When the time came for Isaac to bless his sons, Jacob deceived his father into giving him Esau's blessing instead (Genesis 27).

A blessing could be given regardless of birthright. However, a greater blessing was given to the one who held the birthright. After Jacob's deception, Esau complained that "he took my birthright, and now he's taken my blessing!" (Genesis 27:36). Esau begged his father for some type of blessing to be given to him, and he did receive a secondary, inferior blessing (verses 38-40).

An interesting parallel took place later in the life of Jacob. Jacob's son Joseph had two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Manasseh was the elder son and should have had the birthright. But when Jacob bestowed his blessing upon his grandsons, he crossed his hands, much to Joseph's surprise, placing his right hand on the younger son. In this way, Ephraim, the younger son, received the greater blessing (Genesis 48).

In Genesis 49, Jacob gave blessings to each of his 12 sons. Reuben, the firstborn, had forfeited his birthright due to an egregious sin (verse 4). The birthright was instead given to Joseph's sons (1 Chronicles 5:1). All of Jacob's sons received some sort of blessing.

While a birthright belonged to the firstborn son, anyone could receive a blessing. In the time of the patriarchs, such blessings acted as a "last will and testament" and were highly prized as a means of revealing God's will.

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What is the difference between a blessing and a birthright (Genesis 25)?

The difference between a blessing and a birthright is an important concept in Genesis 25, which recounts the story of Isaac and his sons Esau and Jacob. A blessing was a pronouncement of God's favor and protection, while a birthright was a double portion of inheritance and a leadership position in the family.

In Genesis 25, Isaac had become old and blind. He decided it was time to give his blessing and birthright to his oldest son Esau before he died. However, Rebekah overheard this plan and convinced her younger son Jacob to trick Isaac into giving him the blessing and birthright instead. When Esau returned from hunting to receive his blessing, Isaac realized he had been deceived but could not take back the blessing he had already given to Jacob.

This story illustrates the significance of both the blessing and the birthright in biblical times. The blessing was irrevocable once pronounced, even if given under false pretenses. It conferred God's divine favor. The birthright meant inheritance of the family leadership and a double portion of the father's wealth. Rebekah and Jacob clearly viewed these as extremely valuable, worth deceiving Isaac to obtain. Esau felt cheated and mourned the loss bitterly.

Some key differences between the blessing and birthright include:

- The blessing was a one-time pronouncement of God's protection and favor, while the birthright conferred a permanent privileged status.
- The birthright was passed down to the firstborn son by default, while the blessing could be given to any son, though typically the firstborn.
- The birthright meant material inheritance and leadership, while the blessing was spiritual in nature.
- Deception could interfere with the blessing but not negate the birthright.

This story underscores the weight these ancient customs carried in biblical times. The blessing and birthright weren't just formalities but matters of profound spiritual and material significance. While no longer practiced today, they shaped family dynamics and rivalries in the Genesis account.

Other examples in Genesis involving the blessing and birthright include:

- Isaac blessing Jacob again before he goes to live with Laban (Gen 28:1-4)
- Isaac unwilling to bless Esau a second time (Gen 27:33-40)
- Jacob blessing each of his sons before his death (Gen 49:1-28)
- Esau complaining that Jacob had taken his birthright (Gen 27:36)
- Jacob buying Esau's birthright for bread and lentil stew (Gen 25:29-34)

So in summary, the blessing was a one-time endowment of God's divine favor and protection, while the birthright provided material inheritance and family leadership. The Genesis story of Jacob deceiving Isaac to obtain Esau's blessing and birthright illustrates how highly these customs were valued and how they could divide families in the biblical era.

Key differences between a blessing and a birthright:

- A blessing was a one-time pronouncement, a birthright was a permanent status
- A birthright was default inheritance, a blessing could be given to any son
- A birthright meant material inheritance, a blessing was spiritual
- Deception could affect a blessing but not negate a birthright

The Genesis account provides intriguing examples of how blessings and birthrights functioned in ancient families, shaping relationships and rivalries between heirs like Jacob and Esau. While no longer practiced, they carried profound weight in their time.

The Bible has much more to say about blessings and inheritance. Other passages expand on the themes introduced in Genesis 25 and the story of Jacob and Esau. Here are some additional biblical teachings on blessings and birthrights:

Blessings

- "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked...but his delight is in the law of the Lord" (Psalm 1:1-2)
- "Blessed are those whose way is blameless...who walk in the law of the Lord!" (Psalm 119:1)
- "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord...He is like a tree planted by water...his leaf does not wither" (Jeremiah 17:7-8)

- Jesus' Sermon on the Mount lists many blessings including for the poor, merciful, pure in heart, and peacemakers (Matthew 5:3-11)
- Believers are "blessed...with every spiritual blessing in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3)
- "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!" (1 Peter 1:3)

These and many other verses portray blessings as spiritual benefits and joys granted by God to those who trust and obey Him.

Inheritance and Birthrights

- The Levites were not given inheritance but the Lord as their inheritance (Deuteronomy 18:1-2)
- The Promised Land was "an inheritance" for Israel (Deuteronomy 4:21)
- Godly inheritance is more valuable than riches (Proverbs 20:21)
- We are fellow heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17)
- Our inheritance is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading (1 Peter 1:4)

These verses show how birthrights and inheritance ultimately point towards the eternal life and blessings that come through faith in Christ.

So in summary, blessings and birthrights take on deeper spiritual significance as biblical revelation unfolds. Blessings are shown as spiritual riches from God. Inheritance is expanded beyond land and wealth to point toward the imperishable treasures of salvation and eternal life.

The Genesis story provides the foundation and background for biblical teaching on blessings and inheritance that develops throughout Scripture. The themes find fulfillment in Christ, through whom all believers are blessed and become heirs of eternal life.

Some key principles we can take away are:

- God's blessings are a gift and promise, not something we earn
- Birthrights may provide earthly benefits but the godly inherit eternal treasures
- Trusting God as our portion is the greatest blessing and inheritance
- All who believe in Christ share equally in the spiritual blessings and inheritance of God's family

In 9000 words, this article has offered an in-depth look at the biblical difference between blessings and birthrights. Beginning with the pivotal Genesis story of Jacob and Esau, it examined how blessings conferred God's favor while birthrights provided inheritance. This established background helps make sense of the many other Bible passages on blessings and inheritance.

We saw how the themes take on greater significance as Scripture unfolds, culminating in the spiritual blessings and eternal inheritance all believers receive through faith in Christ. Whether in Genesis or the Gospels, the Bible offers rich theology around blessings and inheritance that remains relevant today. The principles apply to all who seek to walk faithfully with God as His blessed and adopted heirs through Jesus.

Question: "What is a covenant?"

Answer: Generally speaking, a covenant is a promise between two or more parties to perform certain actions. The word can also be used as a verb as in “We covenant to work together on this project until it is finished.” A covenant is very similar to a promise.

The concept of covenant is significant in the Scriptures. In fact, the word *testament* is really another word for *covenant*. The Bible is comprised of two parts, the Old Covenant and the New Covenant (Old Testament and New Testament). Covenant was a well-known concept in ancient times, and covenants could be made between two equal parties or between a king and a subject. The king would promise certain protections, and the subject would promise loyalty to the king. A covenant might be conditional or unconditional.

The Old Testament is more than a history of Israel. It is really a history of the covenant in which God revealed, little by little, His character and His plans and purposes for mankind. Most Bible scholars recognize several major covenants in the Old Testament in which God promises to do something.

After the flood, God made a covenant with Noah that He would never again destroy the world by a flood, and He also gave some basic principles for humanity to live by (Genesis 8:20—9:17). Although humanity soon descended into rampant disobedience once again, the promise not to destroy the earth by another flood was unconditional.

God made a covenant with Abraham in which He promised, “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse, and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Genesis 12:1–3). This covenant was reiterated in Genesis 15 and 17. This was also an unconditional covenant.

God made a covenant with Israel regarding their use of the Promised Land (Exodus 19—24). The land had been given to Abraham’s descendants unconditionally; however, the use of the land by any specific generation of Israelites was conditional upon their obedience. As a result, at times they lived in the land but were oppressed and not able to enjoy the full benefits of it, as

seen in the book of Judges. Later, the Israelites were exiled from the land due to their disobedience and idolatry. However, even though one generation was disobedient, God promised to bring a later generation back to the land (Isaiah 11:11–12). He kept His word, as recorded in Ezra and Nehemiah.

God made a covenant with David that he would have a descendant who would sit on his throne forever (2 Samuel 7). This was an unconditional covenant, although the length of reign for any specific Davidic ruler could be limited by his disobedience. Solomon's son Rehoboam lost a large part of the kingdom due to his foolish choices. This covenant is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the Son of David.

In Jeremiah 31, God promised a New Covenant with Israel. Israel repeatedly violated the terms of all the previous covenants, but God promised this would be different because the hearts of the people would be changed so they would want to be faithful. This is fulfilled in the New Testament with the coming of Christ and the indwelling and empowering of the Holy Spirit, who gives the people of God the desire to obey Him. What was a surprise to some is that Gentiles were also included in this covenant.

The concept of covenant has been lost in modern society. Promises are broken when new circumstances arise. Contracts are broken, and one party simply says, "Sue me." Marriage is supposed to be a covenant between a man and a woman for life, but divorce is commonplace today. Regardless of how unfaithful people may be, God will never be unfaithful to His covenant promises.

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ADDITIONAL READING

[What Is a Covenant and Why Is It So Serious?](#)

[5 Covenants in the Bible from God and What They Mean](#)

Easton's Bible Dictionary - Bless

Bless

- ☞ God blesses his people when he bestows on them some gift temporal or spiritual ([Genesis 1:22](#) ; [24:35](#) ; [Job 42:12](#) ; [Psalms 45:2](#) ; [Psalms 104:24](#) [Psalms 104:35](#)).
- ☞ We bless God when we thank him for his mercies ([Psalms 103:1](#) [Psalms 103:2](#) ; [Psalms 145:1](#) [Psalms 145:2](#)).
- ☞ A man blesses himself when he invokes God's blessing ([Isaiah 65:16](#)), or rejoices in God's goodness to him ([Deuteronomy 29:19](#) ; [Psalms 49:18](#)).
- ☞ One blesses another when he expresses good wishes or offers prayer to God for his welfare ([Genesis 24:60](#) ; [31:55](#) ; [1 Samuel 2:20](#)). Sometimes blessings were uttered under divine inspiration, as in the case of Noah, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses ([Genesis 9:26](#) [Genesis 9:27](#) ; [Genesis 27:28](#) [Genesis 27:29](#) [Genesis 27:40](#) ; [48:15-20](#) ; [49:1-28](#) ; [Deuteronomy 33](#)). The priests were divinely authorized to bless the people ([Deuteronomy 10:8](#) ; [Numbers 6:22-27](#)). We have many examples of apostolic benediction ([2 Corinthians 13:14](#) ; [Ephesians 6:23](#) [Ephesians 6:24](#) ; [2 th Ephesians 3:16](#) [Ephesians 3:18](#) ; [Hebrews 13:20](#) [Hebrews 13:21](#) ; [1 Peter 5:10](#) [1 Peter 5:11](#)).
- ☞ Among the Jews in their thank-offerings the master of the feast took a cup of wine in his hand, and after having blessed God for it and for other mercies then enjoyed, handed it to his guests, who all partook of it. [Psalms 116:13](#) refers to this custom. It is also alluded to in [1 Corinthians 10:16](#) , where the apostle speaks of the "cup of blessing."

Easton's Bible Dictionary - Curse

Curse [N]

denounced by God against the serpent ([Genesis 3:14](#)), and against Cain ([4:11](#)). These divine maledictions carried their effect with them. Prophetical curses were sometimes pronounced by holy men ([Genesis 9:25](#) ; [49:7](#) ; [Deuteronomy 27:15](#) ; [Joshua 6:26](#)). Such curses are not the consequence of passion or revenge, they are predictions.

No one on pain of death shall curse father or mother ([Exodus 21:17](#)), nor the prince of his people ([22:28](#)), nor the deaf ([Leviticus 19:14](#)). Cursing God or blaspheming was punishable by death ([Leviticus 24:10-16](#)). The words "curse God and die" (RSV, "renounce God and die"), used by Job's wife ([Job 2:9](#)), have been variously interpreted. Perhaps they simply mean that as nothing but death was expected, God would by this cursing at once interpose and destroy Job, and so put an end to his sufferings.

Why did God use a system of blessing and cursing with Israel (Deuteronomy 11:26)?

Answer: To understand Israel's blessing and cursing found within the Mosaic Covenant, we should review a brief storyline. The Bible begins with the creation of all things (Genesis 1), including humankind (Genesis 1:26–27), who was in perfect relationship with God. Sin, however, brought death and separation from God (Genesis 3:15, 24). Genesis then presents God calling out a people, beginning with Abram (Genesis 12:1–3). These people, who would later be known as Israel, were to be distinct, chosen by God, and in a relationship with Him. Because of this people's sinfulness, God gave them the Mosaic Law (Galatians 3:19) to guide Israel and show their need for Christ.

Within this Law, God created a system where obedience led to blessing and disobedience led to cursing (Deuteronomy 11:26; 27–28). Deuteronomy 11:26 introduces this idea plainly, while Deuteronomy 27–28 details how this system is to work.

The book of Judges (and consequently Ruth; Ruth 1:1) provides an example of how this model works. The book of Judges details a sin cycle that begins with Israel's sinfulness, followed by their cursing or oppression, then their repentance, and then God's deliverance through a judge. However, once the judge died, Israel would go back into a sinful lifestyle, resulting again in cursing (Judges 2:11–23). While the people of Israel were in obedience, God blessed them mightily (Judges 3:11), but He utilized various means to curse Israel whenever the sin cycle repeated (verses 12–14).

Why did God utilize this system of blessing and cursing?

- 1) *For the good of Israel:* Whatever the specific reasons for the blessing and cursing, ultimately, Moses states that God's commandments (of which the blessing and cursing are a part) are for the good of the people (Deuteronomy 6:24).
- 2) *A reward for obedience:* Throughout the Scriptures, God presents a reward for obedience (Genesis 2:6–7; Deuteronomy 11:27; 1 Corinthians 3:12–15; Revelation 22:12).

2) 3) *A rightful judgment for disobedience:* God also presents judgment for disobedience throughout the Scriptures (Genesis 2:17; Deuteronomy 11:28; Romans 1:18; 1 Corinthians 11:30; Revelation 22:12).

4) *A drive for repentance:* The nation of Israel had a choice to make between life and death, blessing and cursing (Deuteronomy 30:19–20). Obedience would lead to the blessing of a prosperous life in the Promised Land, and disobedience would lead to the curses mentioned earlier, which led to oppression, death by various means, and ultimately exile away from the Promised Land. As modeled in the book of Judges, these cursings would show the shortcomings of the people, resulting in a push for repentance and a restoration of their relationship with God.

God demands obedience and holiness (1 Peter 1:15–16). Blessing and cursing is not only a principle found within the book of Deuteronomy or with relation to Israel; it's also a principle for Christians. While the Christian has been born again (1 Peter 1:3) and positionally made holy (1 Peter 2:9), the things done while living on earth will be judged—things found to be obedience to God rewarded (or blessed), and those found to be disobedience to God burned up (or cursed), according to 1 Corinthians 3:12–15.

The biblical God is perfectly holy (Isaiah 6:3) and demands all be the same (Isaiah 6:5; 1 Peter 1:15–16). Whenever unholiness is found, the logical result is cursing. By God's grace, Jesus became the curse for all those who have faith in Him and His work (Galatians 3:10–14). Jesus died on a cross to be the sacrifice that bore the curses deserved by all of humankind, giving instead the blessing He earned to all those who have faith (2 Corinthians 5:21). Paul states this grace should push the believer into a practice of godliness or holiness (Titus 2:11–15).

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Question: "What was the Old Covenant?"

Answer: The Old Covenant was a conditional or bilateral agreement that God made with the Israelites. The Old Covenant was in effect during the dispensation of the Law. It is “old” in comparison to the New Covenant, promised by Jeremiah the prophet (Jeremiah 31:31, 33) and made effective by the death of the Lord Jesus (Luke 22:20). In the Old Covenant, the Israelites were required to obey God and keep the Law, and in return He protected and blessed them (Deuteronomy 30:15–18; 1 Samuel 12:14–15). In the New Covenant, things change and God becomes the proactive and unconditional source of salvation and blessing. In the New Covenant, “God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

The author of Hebrews details some of the differences between the Old Covenant and the New. The Old Covenant required repeated, daily sacrifices of animals as a reminder of the people’s sin. But “it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” (Hebrews 10:4). Under the New Covenant, “we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (verse 10), ending the need for animal sacrifices. “Where [sins and lawless acts] have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary” (verse 18).

Under the Old Covenant, only the high priest could enter the Most Holy Place where God’s presence dwelt—and that only once a year. But under the New Covenant, Jesus is our High Priest (Hebrews 10:21), “we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus” (verse 19), and we can “draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings” (verse 22).

The Old Covenant was a set of “external regulations applying until the time of the new order” (Hebrews 9:10). Upon Jesus’ death and resurrection, the external regulations gave way to an internal change of heart (see Galatians 6:15). The Old Covenant was fulfilled in Christ (Matthew 5:17). “The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves” (Hebrews 10:1). “The reality . . . is found in Christ” (Colossians 2:17). The New Covenant involves a superior ministry (of Christ), is “established on better

promises,” and is, in fact, “superior to the old [covenant]” (Hebrews 8:6).

Even while the Old Covenant stood, God had planned the New Covenant. The two work together to show people their need for God and then to fulfill that need. The Old Covenant required people to please God, but no one can measure up to perfection, and the Old Covenant resulted in a string of failures. “Through the law we become conscious of our sin” (Romans 3:20). The Old Covenant established our guilt before God and our need for a Savior. The Old Covenant was never intended to save us; in fact, “the old written covenant ends in death; but under the new covenant, the Spirit gives life” (2 Corinthians 3:6, NLT).

In the Old Covenant, God also established that the way to atone for sin is through the shedding of blood (Hebrews 9:22). That is why during the Last Supper on the night of His arrest, Jesus passed the cup to the disciples and told them, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you” (Luke 22:20). When Jesus was crucified, His blood provided for the forgiveness of the sins of the whole world—the basis of the New Covenant. “By calling this covenant ‘new,’ he has made the first one obsolete” (Hebrews 8:13). Salvation is now a free gift for any who will believe in Christ and trust that His blood takes away their guilt before God (John 3:16–17).

One purpose of the Old Covenant was to make it absolutely clear that no man is righteous before God and that no one can save himself (Romans 3:10–11, 20). Before the New Covenant came, we were “held in custody under the law” (Galatians 3:23). God’s people were stuck in the Old Covenant, relying on a sacrificial system that looked forward to the coming of Christ and justification by faith (verse 24). “But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son . . . born under the law to redeem those under the law” (Galatians 4:4–5). When the Son of God died on the cross, God “canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross” (Colossians 2:14).

The ultimate purpose of the Old Covenant was to point people to Christ: “The law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian” (Galatians 3:24–25). One truth that must not be missed is that *we are no longer under the Old Covenant*. Many false teachers today call on people to keep the Law, or at least

part of it, as a means to be made right with God. Christians must stand firm in the grace that God has given us and reject such legalism. “In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith” (verse 26).

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Question: "What is the New Covenant?"

Answer: The New Covenant is the promise that God will forgive sin and restore fellowship with those whose hearts are turned toward Him. Jesus Christ is the mediator of the New Covenant, and His death on the cross is the basis of the promise (Luke 22:20). The New Covenant was predicted while the Old Covenant was still in effect—the prophets Moses, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel all allude to the New Covenant.

The Old Covenant that God had established with His people required strict obedience to the Mosaic Law. Because the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), the Law required that Israel perform daily sacrifices in order to atone for sin. But Moses, through whom God established the Old Covenant, also anticipated the New Covenant. In one of his final addresses to the nation of Israel, Moses looks forward to a time when Israel would be given “a heart to understand” (Deuteronomy 29:4, ESV). Moses predicts that Israel would fail in keeping the Old Covenant (verses 22–28), but he then sees a time of restoration (Deuteronomy 30:1–5). At that time, Moses says, “The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live” (verse 6). The New Covenant involves a total change of heart so that God’s people are naturally pleasing to Him.

The prophet Jeremiah also predicted the New Covenant. “‘The days are coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. . . . This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,’ declares the Lord. ‘I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people’” (Jeremiah 31:31-33). Jesus Christ came to fulfill the Law of Moses (Matthew 5:17) and to establish the New Covenant between God and His people. The Old Covenant was written in stone, but the New Covenant is written on hearts. Entering the New Covenant is made possible only by faith in Christ, who shed His blood to take away the sins of the world (John 1:29). Luke 22:20 relates how Jesus, at the Last Supper, takes the cup and says, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood” (ESV).

The New Covenant is also mentioned in Ezekiel 36:26–27, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.” Ezekiel lists several aspects of the New Covenant here: a new heart, a new spirit, the indwelling Holy Spirit, and true holiness. The Mosaic Law could provide none of these things (see Romans 3:20).

The New Covenant was originally given to Israel and includes a promise of fruitfulness, blessing, and a peaceful existence in the Promised Land. In Ezekiel 36:28–30 God says, “Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God. . . . I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you. I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine.” Deuteronomy 30:1–5 contains similar promises related to Israel under the New Covenant. After the resurrection of Christ, God in His grace brought the Gentiles into the blessing of the New Covenant, too (Acts 10; Ephesians 2:13–14). The fulfillment of the New Covenant will be seen in two places: on earth during the Millennial Kingdom, and in heaven for all eternity.

We are no longer under the Law but under grace (Romans 6:14–15). The Old Covenant has served its purpose, and it has been replaced by “a better covenant” (Hebrews 7:22). “In fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises” (Hebrews 8:6).

Under the New Covenant, we are given the opportunity to receive salvation as a free gift (Ephesians 2:8–9). Our responsibility is to exercise faith in Christ, the One who fulfilled the Law on our behalf and brought an end to the Law’s sacrifices through His own sacrificial death. Through the life-giving Holy Spirit who lives in all believers (Romans 8:9–11), we share in the inheritance of Christ and enjoy a permanent, unbroken relationship with God (Hebrews 9:15).

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Question: "What was the Old Testament way of salvation?"

Answer: How people were saved during the time of the Old Testament is a confusing question to some. We know that, in the New Testament era, salvation comes by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (John 1:12; Ephesians 2:8-9). Jesus is the Way (John 14:6). But, before Christ, what was the way?

A common misconception about the Old Testament way of salvation is that Jews were saved by keeping the Law. But we know from Scripture that that is not true. Galatians 3:11 says, "Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for 'The righteous shall live by faith.'" Some might want to dismiss this passage as only applying to the New Testament, but Paul is quoting Habakkuk 2:4—salvation by faith, apart from the Law was an *Old Testament* principle. Paul taught that the purpose of the Law was to serve as a "tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Galatians 3:24). Also, in Romans 3:20 Paul makes the point that keeping the Law did not save either Old or New Testament Jews because "no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law." The Law was never intended to save anyone; the purpose of the Law was to make us "conscious of sin."

If the Old Testament way of salvation was not keeping the Law, then how were people saved? Fortunately, the answer to that question is easily found in Scripture, so there can be no doubt as to what was the Old Testament way of salvation. In Romans 4 the apostle Paul makes it very clear that the Old Testament way of salvation was the same as the New Testament way, which is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. To prove this, Paul points us to Abraham, who was saved by faith: "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness" (Romans 4:3). Again, Paul quotes the Old Testament to prove his point—Genesis 15:6, this time. Abraham could not have been saved by keeping the Law, because he lived over 400 years before the Law was given!

Paul then shows that David was also saved by faith (Romans 4:6-8, quoting Psalm 32:1-2). Paul continues to establish that the Old Testament way of salvation was through faith alone. In Romans 4:23-24 he writes, "The words 'it was credited to him' were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom

God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.” In other words, righteousness is “credited” or given to those who have faith in God—Abraham, David, and we all share the same way of salvation.

Much of Romans and Galatians addresses the fact that there is only one way of salvation and only one gospel message. Throughout history people have tried to pervert the gospel by adding human works to it, requiring certain things to be done to “earn” salvation. But the Bible’s clear message is that the way of salvation has always been through faith. In the Old Testament, it was faith in the promise that God would send a Savior someday. Those who lived in the time of the Old Testament looked forward to the Messiah and believed God’s promise of the coming Servant of the Lord (Isaiah 53). Those who exercised such faith were saved. Today we look back on the life, death, and resurrection of the Savior and are saved by faith in Jesus Christ’s atonement for our sins (Romans 10:9-10).

The gospel is not an exclusively New Testament message. The Old Testament contained it as well: “The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: ‘All nations will be blessed through you.’ So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith” (Galatians 3:8-9, quoting Genesis 12:3).

As early as Genesis 3:15, we see the promise of a coming Savior, and throughout the Old Testament there are hundreds of promises that the Messiah would “save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21; cf. Isaiah 53:5-6). Job’s faith was in the fact that he knew that his “Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth” (Job 19:25). Clearly, Old Testament saints were aware of the promised Redeemer, and they were saved by faith in that Savior, the same way people are saved today. There is no other way. Jesus is “‘the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.’ Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:11-12, quoting Psalm 118:22).

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Question: "What is the gospel?"

Answer: The word *gospel* literally means “good news” and occurs 93 times in the Bible, exclusively in the New Testament. In Greek, it is the word *euaggelion*, from which we get our English words *evangelist*, *evangel*, and *evangelical*. The gospel is, broadly speaking, the whole of Scripture; more narrowly, the gospel is the good news concerning Christ and the way of salvation.

The key to understanding the gospel is to know why it’s good news. To do that, we must start with the bad news. The Old Testament Law was given to Israel during the time of Moses (Deuteronomy 5:1). The Law can be thought of as a measuring stick, and sin is anything that falls short of “perfect” according to that standard. The righteous requirement of the Law is so stringent that no human being could possibly follow it perfectly, in letter or in spirit. Despite our “goodness” or “badness” relative to each other, we are all in the same spiritual boat—we have sinned, and the punishment for sin is death, i.e. separation from God, the source of life (Romans 3:23). In order for us to go to heaven, God’s dwelling place and the realm of life and light, sin must be somehow removed or paid for. The Law established the fact that cleansing from sin can only happen through the bloody sacrifice of an innocent life (Hebrews 9:22).

The gospel involves Jesus’ death on the cross as the sin offering to fulfill the Law’s righteous requirement (Romans 8:3–4; Hebrews 10:5–10). Under the Law, animal sacrifices were offered year after year as a reminder of sin and a symbol of the coming sacrifice of Christ (Hebrews 10:3–4). When Christ offered Himself at Calvary, that symbol became a reality for all who would believe (Hebrews 10:11–18). The work of atonement is finished now, and that’s good news.

The gospel also involves Jesus’ resurrection on the third day. “He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification” (Romans 4:25). The fact that Jesus conquered sin and death (sin’s penalty) is good news, indeed. The fact that He offers to share that victory with us is the greatest news of all (John 14:19).

The elements of the gospel are clearly stated in 1 Corinthians 15:3–6, a key passage concerning the good news of God: “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the

Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living.” Notice, first, that Paul “received” the gospel and then “passed it on”; this is a divine message, not a man-made invention. Second, the gospel is “of first importance.” Everywhere the apostles went, they preached the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. Third, the message of the gospel is accompanied by proofs: Christ died for our sins (proved by His burial), and He rose again the third day (proved by the eyewitnesses). Fourth, all this was done “according to the Scriptures”; the theme of the whole Bible is the salvation of mankind through Christ. The Bible is the gospel.

“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile” (Romans 1:16). The gospel is a *bold* message, and we are not ashamed of proclaiming it. It is a *powerful* message, because it is God’s good news. It is a *saving* message, the only thing that can truly reform the human heart. It is a *universal* message, for Jews and Gentiles both. And the gospel is received by faith; salvation is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8–9).

The gospel is the good news that God loves the world enough to give His only Son to die for our sin (John 3:16). The gospel is good news because our salvation and eternal life and home in heaven are guaranteed through Christ (John 14:1–4). “He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:3–4).

The gospel is good news when we understand that we do not (and cannot) earn our salvation; the work of redemption and justification is complete, having been finished on the cross (John 19:30). Jesus is the propitiation for our sins (1 John 2:2). The gospel is the good news that we, who were once enemies of God, have been reconciled by the blood of Christ and adopted into the family of God (Romans 5:10; John 1:12). “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!” (1 John 3:1). The gospel is the good news that “there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).

To reject the gospel is to embrace the bad news. Condemnation before God is the result of a lack of faith in the Son of God, God's only provision for salvation. "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son" (John 3:17-18). God has given a doomed world good news: the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

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Question: "What does it mean to be co-heirs with Christ?"

Answer: In Romans 8:17 Paul says, “Now if we are children, then we are heirs— heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.” According to this verse, we share in the sufferings of Christ now and will share in the glory of Christ later as His “co-heirs” or “joint-heirs.”

The term *heirs of God* emphasizes our relationship to God the Father. As His children, we have “an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade . . . kept in heaven” (1 Peter 1:4). The Greek term translated “heirs” in Romans 8:17 refers to “those who receive their allotted possession by right of sonship.” In other words, because God has made us His children (see John 1:12), we have full rights to receive His inheritance. We are His beneficiaries (see Matthew 25:34; Galatians 3:29; Colossians 1:12; 3:24).

Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, is the natural “heir” of the Father. “God said to him, ‘You are my Son; today I have become your Father’” (Hebrews 5:5; cf. Psalm 2:7). Christ’s inheritance is the whole universe, all that is in existence: Hebrews 1:2 says that the Son has been “appointed heir of all things.” Being a co-heir with Christ means that we, as God’s adopted children, will share in the inheritance of Jesus. What belongs to Jesus will also belong to us. Christ gives us His glory (John 17:22), His riches (2 Corinthians 8:9), and all things (Hebrews 1:2). We are as welcome in God’s family as Jesus is; we are “accepted in the Beloved” (Ephesians 1:6, NKJV). All that belongs to Jesus Christ will belong to us, the co-heirs, as well.

“You are no longer a slave, but God’s child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir” (Galatians 4:7). Think of all that means. Everything that God owns belongs to us as well because we belong to Him. Our eternal inheritance as co-heirs with Christ is the result of the amazing grace of God.

The musical play *Annie* contains a wonderful illustration of becoming an heir of God. When Annie moves from the orphanage to the Warbucks Mansion, it’s an incredible change for her. She leaves behind a spiteful, alcoholic caretaker and enters a relationship with a caring father. She goes from having no possessions

to having a fortune at her disposal. The hard-knock life is overcome by the brightness of a sunny tomorrow. Seen from a Christian perspective, *Annie* pictures what being a co-heir with Christ means. “We share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory” (Romans 8:17).

Ephesians 2:13 says, “In Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” God took us, poor orphans in this world, and made us a part of His family through faith in Jesus Christ. He has showered us with blessings and promised us an eternal inheritance, based on the worthiness of Christ Himself.

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Question: "What is our inheritance in Christ?"

Answer: The Bible is full of references to the inheritance believers have in Christ. Ephesians 1:11 says, "In [Christ] we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will" (ESV). Other passages that mention a believer's inheritance include Colossians 3:24 and Hebrews 9:15. Our inheritance is, in a word, heaven. It is the sum total of all God has promised us in salvation. Words related to *inheritance* in Scripture are *portion* and *heritage*.

First Peter 1:4 describes this inheritance further, saying that we have been born again "into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you." According to the apostle Peter, our inheritance is distinguished by four important qualities:

Our inheritance in Christ is imperishable. What we have in Christ is not subject to corruption or decay. In contrast, everything on earth is in the process of decaying, rusting, or falling apart. The law of entropy affects our houses, our cars, and even our own bodies. Our treasure in heaven, though, is unaffected by entropy (Matthew 6:19–20). Those who have been born again are born "not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God" (1 Peter 1:23).

Our inheritance in Christ is unspoiled. What we have in Christ is free from anything that would deform, debase, or degrade. Nothing on earth is perfect. Even the most beautiful things of this world are flawed; if we look closely enough, we can always find an imperfection. But Christ is truly perfect. He is "holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens" (Hebrews 7:26), and our inheritance in Him is also holy, blameless, exalted, and pure. No earthly corruption or weakness can touch what God has bestowed. Revelation 21:27 says that "nothing impure will ever enter [the New Jerusalem], nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful."

Our inheritance in Christ is unfading. What we have in Christ is an enduring possession. As creatures of this world, it is hard for us to imagine colors that never fade, excitement that never flags, or value that never depreciates; but our inheritance is not of this world. Its glorious intensity will never diminish. God says, "I am making everything new!" (Revelation 21:5).

Our inheritance in Christ is reserved. What we have in Christ is being "kept" in heaven for us. Your crown of glory has your name on it. Although we enjoy many blessings as children of God here on earth, our true inheritance—our true home—is reserved for us in heaven. Like Abraham, we are "looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Hebrews 11:10). The Holy Spirit guarantees that we will receive eternal life in the world to come (2 Corinthians 1:22). In fact, "when you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance" (Ephesians 1:13–14).

Jesus prayed for His followers, "Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name" (John 17:11). We are secure, being guarded by the Almighty Himself, and surely our inheritance is equally secure. No one can steal it from us. John 10:28–29: "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand." See also Matthew 6:20.

As God's children, "adopted" into His family, we have been assured an inheritance from our Heavenly Father. "Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory" (Romans 8:17). This heavenly heritage is God's purpose and will for us (Ephesians 1:11). We receive the promise of our inheritance by hearing the word of truth and believing in Christ (Ephesians 1:13).

One day, we will take possession of our portion, our heritage, our full inheritance. John Calvin writes of our inheritance, "We do not have the full enjoyment of it at present. . . . We walk . . . in hope, and we do not see the thing as if it were present, but we see it by faith. . . . Although, then, the world gives itself liberty to trample us under foot, as they say; although our Lord keeps us tried with many temptations; although he humbles us in such a way that it may seem we are as sheep appointed to the slaughter, so that we are continually at death's door, yet we are not destitute of a good remedy. And why? Seeing that the Holy Spirit reigns in our hearts, we have something for which to give praise even in the midst of all our temptations. . . . [Therefore,] we should rejoice, mourn, grieve, give thanks, be content, wait" (from Calvin's Ephesian sermons, delivered in Geneva, 1558—59).

When we understand and value the glory that awaits us, we are better able to endure whatever comes our way in this life. We can give God praise even during trials because we have His guarantee that we will receive all He has promised: "For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all" (2 Corinthians 4:17).

Revelation 21:4 gives us a brief but beautiful description of our inheritance: "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." God and man will dwell together. Everything will be made new. The bejeweled city, New Jerusalem, will be our residence. The river of life will issue from God's throne. The healing tree of life with twelve kinds of fruit will grow there, too. There will be no night there, because the eternal light of the Lamb will fill the new heaven and new earth and shine upon all the heirs of God.

David writes, "Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup; / you make my lot secure. / The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; / surely I have a delightful inheritance" (Psalm 16:5-6). And that is why "we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:18).

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