

THE VISION SPEAKS

THE CHURCH OF GOD AT JERUSALEM ACRES
CLEVELAND, TENNESSEE USA ■ PENTECOST 2016

the

SEED

of

ABRAHAM

“Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.”

— MATTHEW 21:43



Editorial

FROM THE DESK OF PRESIDING BISHOP SAMUEL KRAMER, GENERAL OVERSEER OF THE CHURCH OF GOD

The theme of our Feast of Pentecost 2016 Celebration is **“Tested and Tried ~ We’re Brought Thru the Fire.”** This theme is based on Zechariah 13:8,9, *“And it shall come to pass in all the land,” Says the Lord, “That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, But one-third shall be left in it: I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, ‘This is My people’; And each one will say, ‘The Lord is my God.’”*

ZECHARIAH’S PROPHECY – THE FIRST PART

The Church of God at Jerusalem Acres believes that this prophecy—which was given by God to Zechariah nearly 2,500 years ago—has had a direct effect on our church today. According to Last Days Prophecy, the *first part* of the church began when The Church of God arose this side of the Dark Ages on June 13, 1903. A. J. Tomlinson organized a small group of believers who were formerly known as the Holiness Church at Camp Creek at the Fields of the Wood located near Murphy, North Carolina. Tomlinson joined the little group on the Sabbath, Saturday, June 13, 1903, when they agreed to pattern themselves after the church that was identified in the New Testament: The Church of God.

The Church of God began to grow under Tomlinson’s leadership; however, in 1919 the church began to drift into a democracy and was headed toward disruption and eventual reformation. A democracy in government was ultimately attained by the year 1922 when a constitution was drawn up, which in effect subjugated A. J. Tomlinson, God’s anointed prophet, to the full control and limitation dictated by a “Supreme Judges Court of Justice.” Tomlinson first approved of this constitution until he recognized that it was a device against theocratic government. He then made every effort to correct the error that had crept into the church. Tomlinson stood in opposition to the ruling and was subsequently impeached on June 21, 1923, and the first reformation of The Church of God which was to take place in this day was effected in partial fulfillment of Zechariah 13:8.

Bishop A. J. Tomlinson was stripped of his recognition from man and his position as General Overseer of the body which he had served faithfully for twenty years; however, he was not stripped of his anointing from God. He courageously stood for theocratic government and his God-given appointment to lead God’s people in prophecy. This he did with tenacity and vigor. With the torch of truth he stepped out to reform the church by a principle well supported in Jeremiah 18:1-11.

THE SECOND PART

Bishop Tomlinson organized another church named “The Church of God of Prophecy”. Tomlinson served as the General Overseer until his death on October 2, 1943. Earlier on the same day that he died, Tomlinson had appointed Bishop Grady R. Kent to serve as General Secretary of the Church Markers Association and in the additional office of working at the perfecting of the church.

After the passing of A. J. Tomlinson, his younger son, Milton, was selected to fill the office of the General Overseer. He was not, however, an influential man within the church at the time of his appointment, and he greatly lacked the fortitude of leadership which his father possessed.

M. A. Tomlinson had a reputation as an honorable man, and he sought to keep the church involved in the expansion of its ministry throughout the world. From 1943 until 1948 he led the church as General Overseer with the support of those who promoted theocratic government. While he lacked the charisma of others, he administered the business of the church well and presided over its continued growth. In 1948, however, his lack of strength to manifest leadership of the church in theocratic order manifested itself in his public acceptance of the General Assembly as the highest authority of the church. In essence he accepted in a functional democracy the very system which A. J. Tomlinson had rejected as unscriptural and not in keeping with theocratic government.

THE THIRD PART

The Church of God of Prophecy makes up the *second part* of Zechariah’s vision. Bishop Grady R. Kent resigned from The Church of God of Prophecy on February 13, 1957, to reorganize and reform the church according to a more perfect pattern.

Inasmuch as M. A. Tomlinson's submission to the General Assembly in 1948 had left the office of the anointed leader vacant, and inasmuch as God had chosen Grady R. Kent to fill this office, Bishop Kent declared himself on the authority of the Scriptures to be the Chief Bishop of The Church of God (at Jerusalem Acres). The Church of God at Jerusalem Acres is the *third part* of Zechariah's vision which God promised the following: "Says the Lord, "That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, But one-third shall be left in it: I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested."

Since 1957, God has been testing and trying The Church of God at Jerusalem Acres—the *third part*—and bringing it through the fire! It has been painful, people have come and people have gone, but God is still in the process of refining His church to be all that He wants it to be. The process has been heated and painful, and at times almost unbearable; however, God has preserved a remnant who are still focused on following Him wherever He leads.



TESTED AND TRIED – WE'RE BROUGHT THRU THE FIRE!

Throughout the Scriptures, God has always promised to "test" His people to see what was in their hearts. Jesus Christ, who was our purest example, was also *tested and tried* while He walked on this earth. He was perfect; however, people lied about Him, deserted Him, mocked Him, and ultimately crucified Him. Jesus was pressed to His earthly limits—consider the account of sweating blood in the Garden of Gethsemane—yet He was found without sin, and He remained faithful to God.

We also have the accounts of how the Early Church suffered including the 12 Apostles—of whom almost all were martyred for their faith. We have the Old Testament accounts of how Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, Moses, and more were tested and tried for their faith.

Let me ask you this question: "Are we any better than them?" If God allowed them to be tested and tried—some to the point of death—are we exempt from being tested? The answer is "no!" God's Word promises that we will go through storms with the instruction that we build our house on the solid rock of Jesus Christ so that we can stand through the storm!

If you find yourself experiencing difficulty in your life, don't become frustrated with God. God made it plain to Paul that we often experience our greatest closeness and strength in God when we are at our weakest point. The tests and trials in our lives are not designed to draw us away from God! They are designed to draw us closer to God and to realize that He is our only hope. Be encouraged! God will never leave you nor forsake you!

May God bless you is my prayer!

PRESIDING BISHOP SAMUEL KRAMER

The **GENERAL HEADQUARTERS** of THE CHURCH OF GOD at JERUSALEM ACRES is located at 1826 Dalton Pike, SE, Cleveland, Tennessee, USA 37364-1207. Presiding Bishop Samuel Kramer has served as **GENERAL OVERSEER** of the church since 1996.

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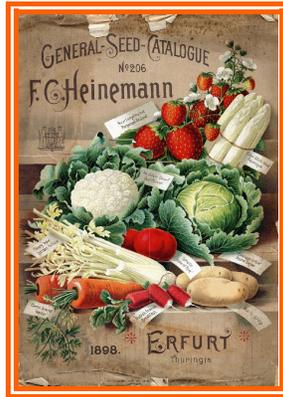
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ABRAHAM

by Presiding Bishop Samuel Kramer

There have been a lot of questions raised in the Christian Community about who is—and who is not—the recipient of the blessings and promises that God made to Abraham and his descendants thousands of years ago. Some say the promises are to the natural Jews only and don't apply to Gentile believers today. Others try to claim the promises but ignore the conditions or requirements necessary to be eligible for the blessings.

So, the question becomes: "Who does the Bible say are the heirs of God's promises and covenant with Abraham today?" I believe the Scriptures make it clear that in order to receive the Abrahamic blessings and promises, you must be born again. And, once you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you become part of God's Israel today—thus making you an heir of all God's promises and blessings!



GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM AND HIS SEED

Genesis 17:1-8, "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee."

"And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And **I will establish my covenant**

between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

God established an everlasting covenant with Abraham and his seed that would follow after him. What was the covenant? That Yahweh God would be their God and make Abraham and his descendants "exceedingly fruitful." God also promised Abraham that he would be the father of many nations and that through him all the nations of the world would be blessed. Finally, God promised to give them the land of Israel as an everlasting possession.

MY COVENANT I WILL ESTABLISH WITH ISAAC

Although God had called Abraham out of his country and away from his family, Abraham and his wife, Sarah, remained barren into their old age.

Abraham had a discussion with God about this very matter in Genesis 15:2-6, "But Abram said, "Lord God, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my

house is Eliezer of Damascus?" Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!" And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness."

Genesis 17:19,21, "Then God said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him...[21] But My covenant I will establish with Isaac..."

The time came for Isaac to be born. Genesis 21:3-5, "And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him—whom Sarah bore to him—Isaac. Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him."

Abraham's son, Isaac, was a type and shadow of Jesus Christ—which according to Galatians 3:29 is the true seed of Abraham. Remember the account of how God asked

Abraham to sacrifice Isaac on the altar but spared him at the last moment? This was an example of the sacrifice Jesus Christ would be required to make to atone for the sins of mankind.

When God told Abraham that He would establish His covenant with Isaac, He was really saying that His eternal covenant would be established through Jesus Christ, the very Son of God. Although Abraham's son, Isaac, was spared from being sacrificed,

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was not. Jesus was sacrificed for the sins of all mankind: past, present, and future.

HEIRS OF CHRIST

Galatians 3:27-29, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. **And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.**"

This scripture makes a very simple statement: If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs to God's promises.

So, the question is not whether or not you are a Jew or even if you are a Gentile, the question is: "Do you belong to Jesus Christ?" Have you accepted Him by faith as your personal Savior? And, if you have, then you are an heir to the promises that God make to Abraham. Again, the question is not whether you are a Jew or a Gentile but rather: Are you a child of God?

Romans 2:28-29, "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; **but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and**

"...Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant..."

circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.

The Apostle Paul makes it very clear that neither the outward or natural birth, nor the outward circumcision of the flesh, is what makes one a Jew today. A person is a Jew if he is one inwardly, and the circumcision is that of the heart—not of the flesh.

Now we understand why Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3:7b, “...*You must be born again.*” The first—or natural—birth as a Jew or as a Gentile does not count when it comes to the promises of God. In other words, it doesn’t matter who your mother or father is! It simply matters whether or not you have been born again.

Paul was preaching what was considered a radical message. The Gentiles—who were once aliens and foreigners—have been welcomed into the family of God. It was a hard doctrine for the Jews to swallow; however, it was God’s ultimate plan for mankind. He made the Jews and the Gentiles to become one through Jesus Christ!

WHO IS ABRAHAM’S NATURAL SEED?

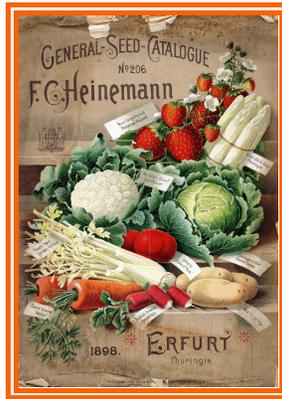
Abraham was a “Hebrew” as referenced in Genesis 14:13. So, the natural seed of Abraham were the Hebrew people—later known as the Israelites. Let’s take a look at the natural heirs of Abraham. How many sons did he have? His firstborn son was called Ishmael, who was born of the Egyptian handmaid named Hagar (Genesis 16:15).

Then he fathered a second son with his wife, Sarah, whom he called Isaac (Genesis 21:3). The scriptures refer to Isaac as the *son of promise* (Galatians 4:23). Later, Abraham had six more sons by his second wife, Keturah, and their names were Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah (Genesis 25:1,2).

The truth of the matter is that Abraham had a total of 8 sons—not just 2 as most people would think. However, only 2 of the 8 sons were *covenant* sons. Ishmael was circumcised the same day that Abraham was (Genesis 17:26), and Isaac was circumcised the eighth day after he was born (Genesis 21:4). This sets Ishmael and Isaac apart from the other 6 sons because Ishmael and Isaac had received the sign of the covenant (which in that day was circumcision—Genesis 17:11, “*And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you.*”).

THE NATION OF ISRAEL—AS A WHOLE—REJECTED JESUS AS THE MESSIAH

In John 8:43-45, Jesus said, “*Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me.*”



In John 8, we find Jesus answering a number of questions from the scribes and the Pharisees who were the religious ruling elite of the nation of Israel. After a number of contentious discussions, Jesus told the Pharisees, “*You are of your father the devil.*”

In Romans 11:7, Paul tells us what happened to the nation of Israel: “*What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded.*” The “elect” are the ones described in Revelation 7:4-8. They have been sealed by God, and they are the Jewish part of the Bride of Christ. However, the rest of the nation of Israel was blinded.

THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED VINEDRESSERS

Consider this parable that Jesus told the Pharisees found in Matthew 21:33-45, “*Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them.*”

“*Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.’ So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. “Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will*

he do to those vinedressers?”

“*They said to Him, “He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.” Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord’s doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes?’ “Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.”*

“*And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.*” Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them.”

WHO IS GOD’S ISRAEL TODAY?

Who is the “*nation bearing the fruits of it?*” It is none other than the NATION OF JESUS which consists of everyone who has accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord—Jew and Gentile alike!

Paul calls this group of people THE ISRAEL OF GOD in Galatians 6:15,16, “*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be*

“...Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.”

upon them, and upon **the Israel of God.**

Romans 9:3-8, "For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen. But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect.

For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called." **That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.**

Paul begins to address the subject: "Who is God's Israel?" Paul identifies the natural Israelites as his kinsmen according to the flesh—because he was born a Jew himself. In verse 5, he says that Christ also came from the Israelites as well.

In verse 6, however, he begins to unravel the mystery surrounding this subject. He starts by saying, "For they are not all Israel who are of Israel." What does that mean? Paul is saying that you are no longer part of God's Israel simply because you were born of Israeli parents.

He continues in verse 7, "Nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham." Again, Paul is specifying that the natural birth is no longer the requirement to be part of God's Israel.

THE CHILDREN OF THE FLESH—THESE ARE NOT THE CHILDREN OF GOD

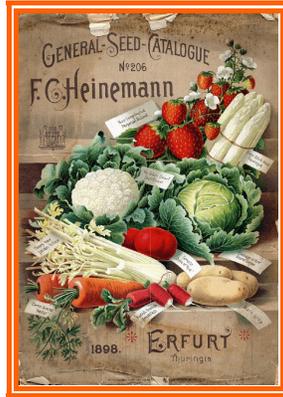
Paul gets to the heart of the matter in verse 8, "That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed."

Wow! Everything had changed! It was no longer good enough to be born of Jewish parents—now you had to be born again by faith in Jesus Christ. The natural Jews were shocked! And, sadly, to this day most of the Jews refuse to accept this change in God's plan for His people.

Galatians 3:6-9, "Just as Abraham *believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*" Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham."

Paul further clarifies the matter in verse 7, "Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham." A transition had taken place. It was no longer your family lineage that made you part of God's Israel. So, what was the new requirement? Faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Paul begins to address the issue of the Gentiles being a part of God's people in verse 8: "And the Scripture,



foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed."

Galatians 3:14-16, "That the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man's covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, **"And to your Seed," who is Christ.**"

In verse 16, Paul tells us that the promises were made to Abraham and his "seed"—which is singular. That "seed" is none other than Jesus Christ. Remember that Christ came through the natural lineage of Abraham—the nation of Israel.

THE MYSTERY

Ephesians 3:1-10, "For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles— if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when

you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power."

"To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places."

JESUS MADE THE JEWS AND GENTILES AS ONE

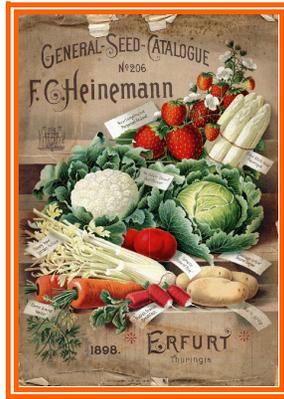
When Jesus Christ died on the cross of Calvary at Passover, everything changed! No longer where the Gentiles rejected by God, now they were welcomed with open arms.

Consider Ephesians 2:11-22, "Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world."

"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have

When Jesus Christ died on the cross of Calvary at Passover, everything changed! No longer where the Gentiles rejected by God, now they were welcomed with open arms.

been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, **who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,** having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that **He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.** And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father”



“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”

God’s eternal plan has always been a message of salvation for all of His creation. John 3:16 tells us emphatically that God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, because He loved the “whole world”—not just the Jews.

Paul tells us that the “middle wall of separation” has been broken down through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, both Jews and Gentiles now have access to be reconciled to God! Paul goes on to say that Jesus made the Jews and Gentiles “fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.”

Paul’s final summation is this: “For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. **For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved”** (Romans 10:10-13).

GOD’S PLAN FOR ISHMAEL AND THE GENTILES

God has always had a plan to include the Gentiles as a part of His chosen people and to extend salvation to them. Let’s look at Abraham and Hagar’s son, Ishmael, who was a Gentile and the firstborn son of Abraham. Genesis 16:11-16, “And the Angel of the Lord said to her: “Behold, you are with child, And you shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, Because the Lord has heard your affliction. He shall be a wild man; His hand shall be against every man, And every man’s hand against him. And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.”

“Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, “Have I also here seen Him who sees me?” Therefore the well was called Beer Lahai Roi; observe, it is between Kadesh and Bered. So

Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.”

While many people want to say that Ishmael was the result of a mistake that Sarah made when she offered her handmaiden, Hagar—a Gentile woman, to Abraham to produce an heir, the truth is that God was in control and enacting His eternal plan right from the beginning!

Ishmael—who represents the Gentile people—was not a mistake nor was he an illegitimate son. His father was Abraham—the same man who was the father of the Jews.

GOD BLESSES ISHMAEL

God made a promise to Ishmael that He would bless him and multiply him exceedingly. He also promised Ishmael that he would beget 12 princes (Genesis 17:20).

The Church of God believes and teaches that this is a principle (or type and shadow) of the Last Day Gentile Dispensation apostles which are ministers in the Gentile Church/Bride spoken of in Revelation 14:4. Their testimony is that they follow the Lamb—Jesus Christ—whithersoever He goeth.

We see Abraham’s grandsons by Ishmael referenced in Isaiah 60:1-10, “Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people; But the Lord will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.”

“Lift up your eyes all around, and see: They all gather together, they come to you; Your sons shall come from afar, And your daughters shall be nursed at your side. Then you shall see and become radiant, and your heart shall swell with joy; Because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you. The multitude of camels shall cover your land, The dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; All those from Sheba shall come; They shall bring gold and incense, And they shall proclaim the praises of the Lord.”

“All the flocks of **Kedar** shall be gathered together to you, The rams of **Nebaioth** shall minister to you; **They shall ascend with acceptance on My altar, And I will glorify the house of My glory.** “Who are these who fly like a cloud, And like doves to their roosts? Surely the coastlands shall wait for Me; And the ships of Tarshish will come first, To bring your sons from afar, Their silver and their gold with them, To the name of the Lord your God, And to the Holy One of Israel, Because He has glorified you. **The sons of foreigners shall build up your walls, And their kings shall minister to you;** For in My wrath I struck you, But in My favor I have had mercy on you.”

Notice that God says that the Gentile heirs of Abraham have gained acceptance on His altar. God also says that the Gentiles will build the walls and minister in God’s kingdom. Nebaioth and Kedar are identified as eldest sons of Ishmael

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in Genesis 25:12-15.

While God promised blessings upon Ishmael, he was not the promised son of the covenant. That son was named Isaac. It was through the family of Isaac—the nation of Israel—that Jesus Christ, the true Seed, would be born.

SHOULD WE KEEP THE OLD TESTAMENT LAW?

There are those that try to make us believe that the only way that we can be blessed by the faith of Abraham is to keep the Old Testament Law. My friend, that is not so!

Let's see what Paul tells us in Romans 4:13-16, "**For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, 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.**"

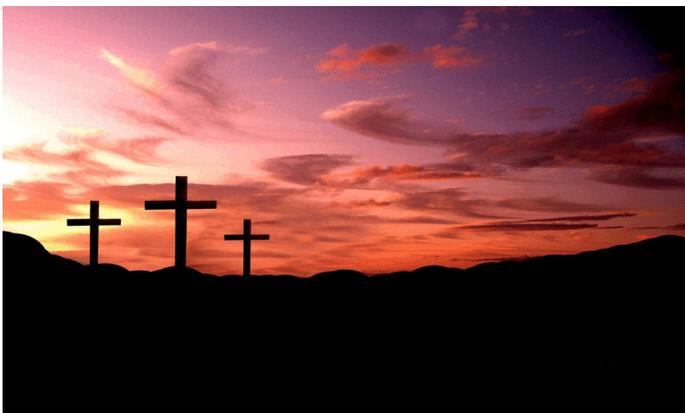
Paul makes it clear that the promises of God to bless and multiply His people came through faith—not through the Law. The Bible tells us that the Law was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ (Galatians 3:24). God's plan has always been based on the all-atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ—the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8).

CONCLUSION

Romans 3:28-30, "**Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.**"

In the beginning of this article I asked the question: "Who does the Bible say are the heirs of God's promises and covenant with Abraham today?" The answer is this: Those who have been born again through faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior are the true heirs of God's promises to Abraham.

When Jesus Christ died on the cross of Calvary, He abolished the wall of separation between Jews and Gentiles—He made the two become one. This was the



complete fulfillment of God's eternal plan to extend salvation to all of His creation.

God's ultimate purpose is to establish one people that He can dwell together with for all eternity in holiness and light. Revelation 21:3b says, "...God Himself will be with them and be their God."

If you wish to be a partaker of this great plan of God, simply repent of your sins and ask Jesus to be the Lord of your life. May God bless you in my prayer! ■



The Church of God at Jerusalem Acres is located at 1826 Dalton Pike, SE, Cleveland, Tennessee 37364-1207. Bishop David W. Kramer serves as the local pastor. You can contact him at 423-472-1597 (office) or 423/400-1832 (cell).

■ [magazine information](#)

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■ [production staff](#)



Founder:

Bishop Grady R. Kent

Editor-in-Chief

Presiding Bishop Samuel Kramer
General Overseer

Editor:

Bishop David W. Kramer

■ [for more information](#)

Please contact:

THE CHURCH OF GOD
P O Box 1207
Cleveland, TN 37364-1207
☎ 423/472-1597
☎ 423/476-5596
Fax: 423/478-5572
Email: TCOGJERACR@aol.com
Visit our website at:
www.thechurchofgodntj.org

THE VISION OF ALL

— A BIBLE STUDY —

by Bishop David W. Kramer

1. WHAT DOES THE PHRASE THE VISION OF ALL MEAN?

A. The term simply means that God has a master plan for His Church and His Kingdom and the world in general.

1) **God is in control!**

a. While our society would have us believe that we are in control of our destiny—hence the worry about global warming, population explosion control, etc.—the truth is that God is in control.

2) **God has a plan—revealed through the person of Jesus Christ—and His plan will prevail.**

a. Revelation 1:1-3, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, 2 who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. 3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.”

B. God’s plan for His people and this world go beyond salvation.

1) **While salvation is the most important part of His plan, it is not the entirety of His plan.**

2) **Consider the instructions of Jesus on how we should pray found in Matthew 6:9-13,**

9 *“In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.*

10 *Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

11 *Give us this day our daily bread.*

12 *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*

13 *And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. **For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”***

3) **Acts 3:19-21,** *“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of*

*refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, 20 and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, 21 **whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.”***

a. Most of the kingdom of God would have us believe that Jesus can return at any given moment. That simply is not true. If He could come, He would come!

b. Jesus cannot come until the prophecies relevant to His return are fulfilled.

c. Revelation 19:10b, *“...Worship God! **For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”***

d. In other words, the actions of Jesus are defined and regulated by Bible prophecy. Please note that according to John 1:1-5, Jesus is the Word, so in reality He is only regulated or governed by His own words!

2. SO, WHAT IS GOD’S PLAN?

A. The Word of God gives us the details of this great plan.

1) **It’s a plan that makes salvation available to everyone.**

a. Matthew 28:19,20, “**Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”** Amen.”

b. While the instruction to make disciples of all people is first and foremost, the second part of the instruction is this: “teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.”

2) **It’s a plan for God’s Holy Spirit to be poured out on His people.**

a. Joel 2:28,29, “**And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. 29 And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.”**

B. **It’s a plan that prophesies the restoration of God’s Church—His Bride body.**

1) **Ephesians 5:23-32,** *“For the husband is head of the wife, **as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.** 24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 **that He might***

sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30 For we are members of His body,[a] of His flesh and of His bones. 31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 **This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.**"

2) **Revelation 19:6-9**, "And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! 7 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. 9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

3) **Revelation 14:1-5**, "Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. 3 They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. 4 These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. 5 And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God."

C. **It's a plan that calls for the restoration of His pattern for church government and ministerial order.**

1) **When God took Abraham up on the mountain and showed Him what He wanted, He instructed him to follow His pattern found in heaven.**

- a. Exodus 25:8,9,40, "And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. 9 According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it...40 **And see to it that you make them according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.**"
- b. Remember the words of Jesus in the Lord's Prayer: "Your kingdom come. **Your will be done**

on earth as it is in heaven."

2) **We find God's pattern in the governmental order in Israel.**

- a. The 12 tribes of Israel found in Numbers 17:6, "**So Moses spoke to the children of Israel, and each of their leaders gave him a rod apiece, for each leader according to their fathers' houses, twelve rods; and the rod of Aaron was among their rods.**"
- b. The 72 Prophets of Israel found in Numbers 11:16,17,26, "So the Lord said to Moses: "**Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tabernacle of meeting, that they may stand there with you. 17 Then I will come down and talk with you there. I will take of the Spirit that is upon you and will put the same upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone...26 **But two men had remained in the camp: the name of one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them.**** Now they were among those listed, but who had not gone out to the tabernacle; yet they prophesied in the camp."

3) **We find God's pattern in the Early Church that Jesus built.**

- a. Jesus appointed the 12 Apostles in Matthew 10:1, "**And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.**"
- b. Jesus appointed 72 Prophets in Luke 10:1, NIV, "**After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go.**"
- c. Ephesians 2:20, "**Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.**"

4) **Let's be clear: We are not talking about building a natural temple, we are talking about building a spiritual temple.**

- a. I Peter 2:4,5, "Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, 5 **you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.**"

- b. How do we become those living stones that can be used in God's spiritual house?
- c. Ephesians 5:26,27, NLT, **"To make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. 27 He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault."**
- d. God makes this distinction about His Bride found in Revelation 14:5, **"And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God."**

D. It's a plan for Jesus to rule this earth together with His Bride and then to spend eternity with His people in a new heaven and new earth.

1) Jesus Christ will rule and reign together with His Bride on this earth for 1,000 years (the Millennial Reign).

- a. Revelation 20:4-6, **"And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."**
- b. II Timothy 2:10-12, **"Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. 11 This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. 12 If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us."**

2) God desires to spend eternity dwelling together with His chosen people.

- a. Revelation 21:1-6a, **"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. 2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There**

shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." 5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." 6 And He said to me, "It is done! **I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End..."**

- b. God's plan has a beginning and an end. Consider the words of Jesus, Himself, found in Revelation 1:8, **"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,"** says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

3. GOD'S ULTIMATE PLAN IS FOR HIS WILL TO BE ACCOMPLISHED ON HIS EARTH!

A. The "Manifold Wisdom of God".

1) Ephesians 3:8-13,

- 8 "To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles **the unsearchable riches of Christ,**
- 9 and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;
- 10 **to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,**
- 11 **according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,**
- 12 **in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.**
- 13 Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory."

2) The mystery to which Paul is referring to in this passage is revealed in verse 6 as "that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body."

3) The word manifold means a whole that unites or consists of many diverse elements.

- a. God is patiently fulfilling His eternal plan according to His timetable that He established before the world began—The Vision of All! ■

