

Israel of God

By Warren Zehrung – March 19, 2011

Brethren, this present evil world, which does not look to God's Word for understanding and truth, has turned the word "Israel" into a term of condescension and disdain. The world does not appreciate the word "Israel" and they are fearful of this word. There is almost a hate for the term "Israel." Because of this hate, this disdain, the people who use the word "Israel" in that way, have insured that they are going to miss out on the most extraordinary and fabulous promises of God, that God has for His people. God does call some now, and opens their minds. But all of the rest will have their minds blocked, and they will miss out on God's promises at least for the time being, until the Great White Throne Judgment.

For those of us who believe and are faithful, God's promises are sure. God's promises are plenteous.

Who then will be the recipients of the spiritual blessings that far surpass the promise of physical blessings that were made to ancient Israel? God made a lot of promises; many of them had to do with land, health, and physical things. But there are spiritual and eternal promises that God made. Who will be the recipients of those promises? The answer is, it is the Israel of God. But, who is the Israel of God? What is the real transcendent fulfillment of the Israel of God? What does that mean?

When most people hear the word Israel, they envision the Jews' land of Palestine. That is what you see on the news daily. They think of it as just being a little speck in the Middle East.

Unfortunately, the leadership of our country is more in sympathy, and more concerned with those who would drive the Jews of the modern-day land of Israel in Palestine into the sea. They are more in sympathy with that movement than they are with God's end-time prophecies about the Jews and the holy land. In the scriptures God does talk about that in the end time.

There are those high in our government who would count it a victory if the state of Israel were abolished completely.

They do not know their Bible – but the answers are there.

The name "Israel" refers to much. It first appears, back in Genesis 32:28, when it is given by God to our father in the faith, our patriarch, Jacob.

Genesis 32:28, 30 "And [Jesus Christ, God of the Old Testament] said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.

Jacob's name means "one who supplants," because he had usurped the birthright from his brother, Esau.

Genesis 25:33 And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.

Jacob's name was changed to Israel by God with the prophetic meaning, "the prince who overcomes or prevails." That is pointing to the ultimate reality that spiritual Israel would rule with Christ as kings and priests. We are going to jump around to locations, to names and to spiritual concepts when we are speaking about Israel.

Revelation 5:10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Jacob's twelve sons and their descendants are all referred to as Israel.

We, those of us in God's church, who understand the birthright promises that God made to Abraham, realize that America and the English speaking nations, formerly known as the British Commonwealth - Ireland, Wales, Scotland, - all of the United Kingdom, and the English speaking colonizers of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, are also properly referred to as modern day Israel of the Bible. We are recipients of those physical promises that go all of the way back to Abraham.

Do not make the same mistake as so many do when reading a prophecy about the people of Israel, and apply it to modern day Palestine.

I was reading the Journal last week, and reading an article written by one of God's ministers. He jumped track, and he took a verse from the scriptures that referred to Israel as God intends Israel to be, and he applied it to the modern day state over in Palestine.

Let me give you another use of "Israel." We commonly speak of "ancient Israel," "Israel in captivity," "Israel in the Promised land". They are to be understood as the children of Israel that God brought out of Egypt and into the Promised Land. That was the fulfillment of some of the promises for land and for blessings.

A very common mistake, that I see today, is the use of "Israel" and "Jew" interchangeably. I have seen it from Billy Graham and on down. They will synonymously use one or the other. They think that the Jews killed Christ and so there is a good deal of anti-Semitism that is not spoken, but possibly felt. Sadly they apply that to Israel. When they try to study their Bible and they run across the word Israel, their mind just substitutes Jew, and then they derail and they cannot come to a right answer. It is a very beautiful truth that has been restored to us, brethren, that we can understand the difference.

All Jews are Israelites, but all Israelites are not Jews. Judah was only one of the twelve sons of Israel. We will touch on a few of them today.

God made many promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Those promises were both physical and they were spiritual. We need to know how to discern the difference.

Paul explained that all of these promises would find their fulfillment in Israel.

Romans 9:3-4 "...my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom pertains the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises."

Paul is saying, 'You who are Israelites like me'. Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin. They very often did not distinguish between Jews and Benjamites, because they were there in the Promised Land together.

Physical Israelites "pertain the... promises." God very clearly shows, through Paul's inspired writings, that to the flesh and blood physical Israelites, pertain the promises.

When were those promises made?

What were those promises?

Paul expands on that to show that, to show that all who are baptized in Christ are Abraham's seed - covenant people - and heirs to the promises. But, that goes on to more than the physical promises; that goes on to the spiritual promises.

Paul explained to the Gentiles, that although at one time they were excluded from the promises of God given to Israel under the Old Covenant, but, they have become heirs of the promise of grace through Jesus Christ.

We have been going through the book of Galatians and we see that there is no difference, neither Gentile, Israelite, male or female. If you are baptized, and you are

converted, then you belong to Christ, and you are Abraham's seed, and heirs to the promise through Christ.

That means that we, who are in God's church, are His covenant people.

As we study through the epistles, keep in mind that the brethren to whom the letters were written were looking for the fulfillment of God's promises, much like we do today. Sometimes we do not think about that. Today, we think about Jesus coming back. But they had a little bit different concept being a little bit closer to the time of Christ. There was still a residual sentiment that the Kingdom of Israel in its physical powerful manifestations would be set up like it was at the time of David and Solomon. But, there was a general expectation of the promises, and they applied it the best that they could, much the same as we do today.

Their expectations were more along the line of physical Israel being restored and having Abraham as their father. You remember some Jews that Christ was talking to, they said that they had Abraham as their father, and Christ refuted that.

Even the Gentiles who were being factored into Israel had difficulty grasping the concept of *spiritual* Israel.

That is something that we will do today, we will try to distinguish between Israel and *spiritual* Israel.

We are going to try and conclude the book of Galatians today, and we will be looking at Galatians 5 and 6.

As we study through these epistles, we are able to focus on some of the major tenets of our faith. Not all of them. In Galatians 3, we could have made a real good case for studying "oneness" as a husband and wife are one flesh. God the Father and Jesus are one spirit. We cannot touch on every concept, but we will try to cover many of the major concepts.

Galatians 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

What does it mean Christ has set us free? Free from what? Free to do what? When we speak of freedom in America we often mean freedom from unwarranted government intervention, and rules and regulations.

Does freedom in Christ mean that we are free to party hardy, as our carnal minded society would do? Or does freedom in Christ mean that we have come out of that

world into the glorious light of Christ, and that we will not have to suffer the bondage of sin that comes from a sinful lifestyle?

The yoke of bondage is the death penalty for our sins. We have been set free from that.

We will be talking again about works of the ritualistic law, the "ergon" works of the law that do not take away sin.

When Jesus died, He validated, He ratified a new and better covenant. That is the spiritual covenant. Not with physical blessing, but of eternal life. The world is confused on this point too. They say, "I believe in Jesus Christ, I have faith in Jesus Christ." But, brethren, when we say that, we are not talking about believing that historically Jesus existed. The world believes that there was a man in Israel, and His name was Jesus, and He existed. I believe in Jesus. That is not what the Bible talks about when it says, "Believe in Jesus." Believing in Jesus is believing what Jesus stood for, who He was, what He taught, what He said that you must do. The world could care less about that what Jesus represented, but we are to believe the way of life that Jesus represented. That is what would bring salvation.

Romans 5:8 says that Jesus Christ died in our place... in our stead. We brought the death sentence on ourselves, through our sins.

Jesus Christ in His love, and in the Father's love, died so that we did not have to die, and that we might have eternal life.

Romans 5:9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be [future tense] saved from wrath through Him.

This is a freedom; we do not have to die.

Romans 5:10 teaches that Jesus' death removed the obstacle between us and the Father... but that does not grant us eternal life – eternal life comes through the righteousness of Christ which is imputed to us because we were saved by Jesus' life that the Father restored to Him.

Just because Jesus died, if He had stayed dead, we would not have eternal life. God the Father had to raise Jesus Christ back to life.

In the covenant with Abraham – if he believed that Jesus would do as He promised – it was counted to him as righteousness. That justified his past guilt. Abraham was a sinner, like you and I have been sinners. But because of his faith in Christ, he

believed in what Christ did and he acted on it. Study the life of Abraham and you will see that he acted on it in a big way.

In the New Covenant if we believe Jesus (what He said, and what He stood for), that it is imputed to us for righteousness. If we believe that He is our Savior, and we live our lives in accordance with His precepts, statutes, and guidelines, then that righteousness is imputed to us.

Romans 4 talks about Christ's righteousness being imputed to us.

Romans 4:14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:

If you can just do ritualistic things, like a school boy following all of the ritualistic laws and if that saves you and gives you eternal life, faith is made void. You do not need to believe in Jesus Christ, you do not even have to live like Jesus Christ. You can just do these various ritualistic things. "*The promise is made of none effect.*" But, brethren, let us be clear, the promises are in effect, all of God's promises are sure.

Romans 4:20 He [Abraham] staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

Why would he do that? He was old, but he still believed God through his unbelief and his doubts.

Romans 4:21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

Abraham did not doubt for a minute that God would do what He said. He knew that he was weak in the flesh, but he knew that God would do what He promised.

Romans 4:22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

We are talking about this faith in Jesus Christ, and having Christ's righteousness imputed to Abraham.

Romans 4:23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;

In other words, if we act in accordance with what Jesus Christ has said, His righteousness will be imputed to us. That requires that we live a life like Jesus Christ lived. He forgave, He was merciful, and He died for others. The exact same things are

required of us if we want Christ's righteousness imputed to us, because our righteousness is as filthy rags and entirely insufficient.

Romans 4:24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him [Father] that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

Galatians 5:2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye [cause yourself to] be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

In other words, if you think that you are going to have salvation by being circumcised, by ritualistic law, Christ shall profit you nothing. These are very strong words; it is either this or that. And the Galatians had fallen back in to believing, because of the Judaizers that the way to God's Kingdom, the way to righteousness is by going back to the ritual works of the law. So what we see in verse 2 is Paul is telling them not to rely on circumcision to save them. It cannot, and it will not save them.

Galatians 5:3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised [submits to circumcision], that he is a debtor to do [fulfill] the whole law.

This is the whole ritualistic law. He had never better slip up on one single point or he loses his salvation. So, I guess you could say that if somebody was able to keep all of the law perfectly, it is impossible, and then they would never have sin. Then if they did not have sin they would not have to die according to the law. Well that is foolish talk. Everyone has come short of the glory of God.

Galatians 5:4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by [no "the"] law; ye are fallen from grace.

If you try to do it by ritualistic law you are fallen from grace. You are not in God's graces, and you are not going to receive the promises of God. That goes from being called, having faith, having repentance, all of the way to salvation.

If your righteousness is based on legalism then you are cut off from Christ. Paul uses this concept of being cut off in reference to circumcision and in reference to our relationship with God. You are cut off from Christ, and your relationship is abolished, and you are dropped from His good graces.

Galatians 5:5 For we through the Spirit [as opposed to the fleshly works] wait for [fully expect] the hope of righteousness by faith.

This means that we fully expect, as we saw with Abraham a moment ago. Abraham knew, he was fully persuaded that it was going to take place. So Paul says that we,

through the spirit, fully expect the hope of righteousness by faith. These are verses that we do not often go through and it is good to go through these epistles and understand very clearly what is being said. This is written, as we saw, for our sakes on whom the ends of the earth have come.

Because we are making the same mistake, in many ways, in God's church today, and we will touch briefly on that in a few moments. It is Christ's imputed righteousness, not our own righteousness of works.

Galatians 5:6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision [they are not even a part of the equation]; but faith which works by love. [agape – Godly love – because God *grants us faith* – we do not work it up ourselves.]

What does that mean? That is because none of us work up faith, and even that is given to us by God.

God grants us faith; we do not work up our own faith. Yes, we try to build on our faith and strengthen our faith. We look to God, and we read His word, and we believe what He says. But that is a gift from God. We are not members of God's church, of the body of Christ, through our own works. That is by the grace of God.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

God grants us the faith.

Romans 12:3 ...God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

1 Corinthians 12:8-9 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; ...To another faith by the same Spirit;

God, through His Holy Spirit, gives us faith. So we cannot boast, we cannot be prideful and say that we are better than our neighbor next door. We can say that we are different than our neighbor next door, and the timing is different for us.

Galatians 5:7 Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

We know who tripped them up – it was the Judaizers that taught them that they must be circumcised and keep all of the legalistic rituals to be righteous in God's eyes – which was in effect turning their back on the sacrifice and redemption of Christ – which is obeying the truth.

Galatians 5:8-9 This persuasion [legalistic rituals] cometh not of Him [God the Father] who is calling you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

Why does Paul put "*a little leaven, leaveneth the whole lump?*" They knew very well what it meant. It meant that it does not take many Judaizers to corrupt the entire church. One rotten apple spoils the barrel. It only takes one or two Judaizers to corrupt the entire church.

Galatians 5:10-11 I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded [not led astray from the truth]: but he that troubles you shall bear his judgment [he will bear the blame], whosoever he be. And I, brethren, if I yet [still] preach circumcision [the false claim made against Paul], why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the offense of the cross ceased.

Paul had circumcised Timothy for an entirely different reason, not for salvation. But he was being accused of saying that you had to be circumcised on the one hand, and then telling the Galatians that they did not have to be circumcised, and he was coming under quite a bit of condemnation.

The word "offense" in the Greek is the word '*scandal*' and it means very much what the word scandal means in English. It means something that has been a stumbling block, something that trips you up, something that comes along to cause you to fall down.

Paul would say, 'If I was teaching circumcision, and you do not have to believe in salvation through Jesus Christ, then I should not be being persecuted, I would be on the right side of things according to the Judaizers'. The doctrine of a crucified Messiah was the stumbling block, scandalizing the Judaizers' pride. The Jews did not accept Jesus Christ. Christ was persecuted, He was killed; they did not like what Jesus Christ taught. Jesus taught to look to His Father, to love one another, those kinds of things. They did not want that kind of religion.

Galatians 5:12 I would [wish] they [Judaizers] were even cut off [amputate themselves – not only circumcise – but entirely] which trouble you.

Like homosexuals – drop out of the gene pool of humanity. Cease to exist.

Galatians 5:13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty [called on terms of freedom in Christ]; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another...

He is saying, 'No, this is not the way that you use the freedom in Christ. You do not have the freedom to go where you want, do what you want, bless yourself, and revel, and so forth'.

Galatians 5:13 ...by love [according to God's Ten Commandments, according to God's way of living] ...serve one another.

In other words, do not be self-serving because of your freedom, but be serving others.

This is the crucial point of this entire book to the Galatians.

The Galatians had left off laying their lives down for one another in favor of ritualistic religion. There is no salvation in that.

Today, church members have left off laying their lives down for one another, and they have substituted "a looking to men at headquarters," rather than trusting God and looking to His Word.

Today, church members have raised "church government" to a par with God's revealed authority. That is in place of forgiveness, reconciliation, healing, Christ's love, repentance, mercy, compassion. What do they do? They substitute their versions of the calendars, holy names, organizational loyalty ('be loyal to me and my organization') and organizational rivalry in place of the precepts that Jesus Christ taught. Jesus Christ taught no such thing.

It is very clear what Jesus Christ taught, yet we have a lot of substitutes in the Church of God today. That is the same mistake the Galatians made, and they had a substitute faith. They had moved away from the simplicity in Christ.

II Corinthians 11:3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ [to a substitute religious conviction].

There are no substitutes to the simplicity that is in Christ, it is straight forward.

Galatians 5:14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

That is pretty simple is it not? But, wouldn't we rather be watching what we eat, the way that we wear our clothes, how we participate in activities with people that really amounts to nothing but socializing, because sometimes after services the sermon is not spoken of, no-one is provoked into good works, the scriptures are not discussed.

I John 4:20 If a man say, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar: for he that loves not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

It is very clear that if we do not love our brother there is no salvation. Jesus taught a Christianity of right relationships with our fellow man. So many say, 'It is You and me Lord. I am by myself; I do not want to get involved with other people. I do not have time for other people, they are all the same, nobody listens, and nobody wants to do what God says, so I will just leave them all alone'.

Galatians 5:15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

It is like a gun fight where they both draw at the same speed and they both kill each other. You can chew each other up and both lose your salvation.

Galatians 5:16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

What does it mean to "...walk in the Spirit?" It is according to what Jesus Christ taught.

Gal 5:17 For the flesh lusteth [fights] against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would do.

You are prevented from doing what is right. Paul says that the flesh and the spirit are distanced as East is to West.

So, brethren, you and I should never think for a moment that we cannot be drawn off course. Look at the examples in the Bible of all of the people who were drawn off course. That is why we put on the whole armor of God.

Galatians 5:18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under [no "the"] law.

You are not to be subject to legalistic ritualism. There is no specific article "the" there. But if you are led by the Spirit, then you have not substituted something for the simplicity in Christ.

We are going to go through some lists, and I will go through them rather quickly. These lists, brethren, are not to be gone through quickly. We can use these lists to diligently examine ourselves prior to each Passover. God says that if we would judge

ourselves, if we would measure ourselves, if we would examine ourselves, then we would not be condemned.

Works of the flesh

Galatians 5:19-21 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, [impurity] uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, [enmities] variance, emulations, wrath, strife, [jealousy] seditions, [sectarian division, passionate anger] heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past [forewarned you], that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Brethren, you have to look these up and find out what they mean, and apply them in your life. Do not just say, 'I don't do those works of the flesh'. Take each one apart and see if our dealings with our mate, our dealings with our children, our dealings with our parents, if our dealings with the people that we work with, if any of these things come in. Look at "*seditions*" because we have had a lot of sectarian division in God's church.

Brethren, do we believe the scriptures? We have people that do these things and they think because of their position that they, or that nobody knows about it.

Again, we need to measure ourselves against this list as well. We can come short of these.

None of this is natural; every bit of this is hard work. This is the doing part of our faith.

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith [trustfulness],

Are we peacemakers, are we patient?

Galatians 5:23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

You can do as much of that as you want, you can be as meek and temperate as possible.

Galatians 5:24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

We buried the old man of sin.

Galatians 5:25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

We have God's Holy Spirit given to us; we are the children of God. But we must do it, we must live our faith.

Galatians 5:26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

It is wrong to say be loyal to me, look to me for understanding, trust no man but me.

"...*Provoking one another...*" - that is a two way street. That is brotherly love. That is 'helping' one another. That is the purpose of getting together. We read back in Hebrews 10, "Provoke one another to good works." That is our responsibility.

"...*Envying one another...*" - envying the good gifts. That person was a wonderful example; I want to be a wonderful example too.

We are our brother's keeper – that is true religion.

Galatians 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which [call yourselves] spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Brethren, this is a command of God, and this is something that we must do if somebody is overtaken in a fault, and you know about it, you have to "*restore such a one in the spirit of meekness.*" You do not get all puffed up and throw your chin back and your shoulders back, and think that you are better than them. You go to them and you reason with them, and you show them the word of God, and tell them the repercussions, and what it does to their character and so forth. You do not want to be sinful in correcting someone.

James 5:20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

That is a responsibility of a Christian. We do not have an option in the case.

Brethren, I would put a red flag in my notes here. This command is rarely complied with in God's Church today. How often have there been terrible sins in the church and people will not get involved? That is something to think about, brethren.

Galatians 6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Do you want to get right with God? Bear one another's burdens. As we come to Passover, let us ask ourselves, "Have I helped someone else in their difficult walk?" "Have I borne their burdens?"

Galatians 6:3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

I think that applies to a lot of the church. We think, 'I went to church last Sabbath, and saw all my buddies there. I think I am something now. It is me and Christ, and I am going to be in the Kingdom'. Do not think that we are in good standing when we are not doing what Jesus Christ says to do.

Galatians 6:4-5 But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden.

We are all guilty! We all have our sins, our weaknesses, our transgressions and our faults. We will stand before Christ, and we will give an answer for ourselves. And, when we have had opportunity to love a brother, to lay our life down for a brother, if we did not do it then we have not done as Jesus Christ commanded us to do. Jesus said we are to lay our life down just as He did. That is the job of a Christian. That is what we were called to. We were not called into a social club of good friends and prosperity. We were called to walk in the steps of Jesus Christ.

Galatians 6:6 Let him that is taught in the word communicate [share] unto him that teaches [Paul] in all good things.

Paul is talking about resources here, he is talking about the things that you have an abundance of, whether it is clothes, food, money, connections, whatever you have. Paul could use the resources to spread the gospel message. There are some people who listen and listen, but do not contribute a penny so that others might hear. Brethren, we are not just feeding ourselves. God will call some in the last hour. Paul went from town to town. He was stoned, beat up and brutalized, because he did not know who God the Father would yet call. It is the same today. Let us get the message out to the extent that God gives us the strength.

Galatians 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked [defrauded or deceived by what is really going on]: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

It is strange thing, but I have seen this quite a few times in God's church. Some people think that when they fool the minister – somehow they are in good standing

with God. God is not mocked; he is not defrauded, or deceived. God knows what is going on. We answer to God alone.

Galatians 6:8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption [doomed to perish]; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

Are we laying our lives down, are we provoking one another to good works? Or, are we doing exactly what Paul says here? To have life everlasting we have to live like Jesus Christ lived. Some people think that you just have to get in the right group, in the right organization. Brethren, the way to the Kingdom of God is much more difficult than that.

Galatians 6:9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

We shall attain the Kingdom of God, if we faint not.

Galatians 6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto the [brethren] who are of the household of faith.

You start with the church brethren. It means that you guide them, you lead them, you point them in the right direction, and you encourage them.

Now Paul is concluding this letter and he is saying, 'Do not settle for second rate religion, which is no religion at all. You Galatians, you church people, you are very special, you are set apart, and you are holy people.'

Paul told them, 'All the biblical promises are specifically for you, not for the world at this time'.

Paul called the *spiritual* promises to Israel, "covenants of promise."

Ephesians 2:12 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.

Romans 15:8 Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers,

The ultimate promise made to Abraham was that from his loins would come forth the Messiah and Savior.

Gen 12:3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Gal 3:8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee [Abraham] shall all nations be blessed.

Brethren – that applies more now, today, this year, more than it ever did, with regard to the people of God, the called out ones, the body of Christ. Those promises apply today.

Galatians 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

Paul clarifies that as we might not see that when we are reading this in Genesis. You should go back and mark your Bible where this is said. These are prophesies of a Messiah. Mark your Bible here:

Genesis 22:18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice [which is Christ].

No man can bless all the nations of the earth, this is talking about spiritual. All nations, that is the Gentiles, will be blessed eventually. But, brethren, those promises apply to the house of God right now.

Another Messianic prophecy:

Genesis 26:4 I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

God made physical and spiritual promises to Abraham. The physical promises involved physical greatness for his descendants, but the spiritual promises had to do with Christ and those who would become spiritual through Christ.

Also contained in the promises way back there to Abraham was the more important spiritual promise of salvation to all men who would become Abraham's "seed" (his descendants).

The singular seed is the direct promise about Jesus Christ in whom all the earth will receive spiritual blessings - salvation. Jesus is Savior.

In Abraham, all mankind is to eventually have access to God's spiritual blessings.

It is those who have become the "Israel of God" who will eventually inherit the Kingdom of God.

The incredible truth is that these spiritual blessings are bestowed on us today! Not on physical Israel, however, but on spiritual Israel – the Church of God – the Israel of God.

Galatians 6:12 As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they [alone] are constraining [forcing] you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

They know that if you do it God's way you will be persecuted. But they do not want to be persecuted so they go back to their ritualistic practices.

There is religion today, you live it out in the open and you will never be persecuted, but it is not true religion. You follow the laws of Christ and you will be persecuted.

Galatians 6:13 For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep **[no "the ritualistic] law**; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.

Paul said that they want the control, they want the numbers, they do not really care about you.

Galatians 6:14 But God forbid that I should glory [boast], save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

Paul is saying that the only thing that matters is salvation in Christ.

Galatians 6:15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but [becoming] a new creature [spiritual creation].

We have to become a new spiritual creation in Christ. Beware of those who teach that all mankind is the same, and that we all come from the same primordial swamp of humanity.

There is exceptionalism, and it is the people of God! Jesus is exceptional. The prophets and the apostles were exceptional. We are the Israel of God. We are exceptionally and qualitatively different from other people.

Jesus is our Brother, God is our Father, and we are the Israel of God. That is the ultimate fulfillment, the transcendent meaning of the word Israel.

We are the ultimate recipients of the spiritual promises Jesus made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel) – we who have God's Spirit are the fulfillment of those promises – the Israel of God.

Galatians 6:16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

God is faithful to keep all the promises that He made to our father, Abraham,

Galatians 6:17 From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

Paul says that he has rock scars on his head, and on his back, scars where he has been beaten and lashed. That is his proof that he is walking in Christ and has been persecuted.

Galatians 6:18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

In all who are led by God's Holy Spirit is the ultimate fulfillment of the spiritual promises. They will come on all of the world in the millennium, but right now we are the recipients of all of the spiritual promises of God.

We are the Israel of God.

WZ/pp/sl