



ASSOCIATED BIBLE STUDENTS

"WEEPING MAY ENDURE FOR A NIGHT, BUT JOY COMETH IN THE MORNING." PSALMS 30:5

SUMMER 2015

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THE GOLDEN THREAD OF PROPHECY

There is one theme that weaves its way like a golden thread throughout the Scriptures—it is the prophecy that one day all creation will exist in peace and harmony with their Creator. History and Bible chronology indicate that the time in which we are now living is nearing the very end of this golden thread of prophecy. Very soon, God's Holy name and plan will be vindicated, as all will see His Kingdom come and His will done throughout the earth as it is in heaven.

THE THREAD BEGINS: THE SEED

The golden thread of prophecy began with a vague promise to Eve that, through her seed, mankind would ultimately be recovered from the power of Satan—the author of sin and death. God, speaking to Satan said: *"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."* (Genesis 3:15) Just here is a glimmer of hope that a promised seed, a Messiah would one day deal a fatal blow to the head of Satan, thereby ending the bitter struggle between good and evil.

Adam and Eve may have expected that one of their sons would be that promised seed. Their son Abel was a faithful man of God, but when Cain killed his brother Abel, in jealous anger, the hopes of Adam and Eve surely waned. In one devastating act, they lost two of their sons—one in death and the other in exile. No, the prophecy was yet for an appointed time, as hinted at by the faithful Enoch: *"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints..."* Jude 14

THE PROMISED SEED PRESERVED

Time and generations passed and all those with faith waited expectantly for the realization of the promise. The angels, too, looked for the fulfillment of the prophecy. As they observed the human family, certain angels, with prideful hearts and in sympathy with the rebellion of Satan, contemplated daughters of men that they might bring forth a seed more powerful, thereby circumventing the penalty of death upon mankind. In Genesis 6:1-14 we read the result: *"And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. ...And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ...Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. ...God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark..."*

And thus, all of humankind, which had been thoroughly corrupted by the fallen angels, perished. The ark carried only Noah's family through the flood to a cleansed earth—uncontaminated from the fallen angels. Thus, the golden thread was not severed and the prophetic promise continued through the line of Noah.

Noah's sons were Ham, Shem and Japheth. Shem was faithful to the Lord and became the line through which the seed of promise would pass. It is presumed, through reasoning on the Scriptures, that Shem is the noted Melchizedek—the honored prince of peace—a man of sincere faith in the prophecy. Of the generations from Shem was born the faithful patriarch Abraham. No doubt, Abraham learned of the prophecy through the patriarch Shem who lived contemporaneously with Abraham for 150 years.

THE GOLDEN THREAD AND THE ABRAHAMIC PROMISE

Abraham was unique in his generation because of his strong faith in God. St. Paul states: *"Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."* (Galatians 3:6) God tested this faith to the extreme when He asked him to deliver up his only son Isaac as a sacrifice. Abraham, although grieved in his heart, did not hesitate, but willingly submitted to the request. This no small sacrifice, as Isaac was a miracle of birth, conceived when Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 91.

At the moment Abraham prepared to slay Isaac, the angel of the Lord stopped his hand and provided a ram caught in the thicket to offer up as a sacrifice in Isaac's place. Because of this heroic faithfulness, God swore an oath to Abraham: *"By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; ...in thy seed shall all the nations [families] of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."* (Genesis 22:16-18) Herein lies the entire plan of God—the essence of the golden thread of prophecy! The seed of promise would bring about the blessing of all nations in due time!

THE PROMISE REJECTED

It was customary in those days to pass down from generation to generation, not only the inheritance of wealth, but, also, blessings to the eldest son. Isaac, being the firstborn through Abraham's wife Sarah, received the inheritance of Abraham's riches, but especially the most valuable of all, that through his line the promised seed would come.



Isaac had twin sons, and Esau, as his firstborn would be his heir. Esau was a reckless and careless man who did not appreciate the privilege of his inheritance. After a long day of hunting, in one selfish act of immediate gratification, he sold his birthright to his younger brother Jacob for a pot of stew to feed his hungry flesh. Jacob was quick to seize the opportunity to receive this grand prize of the promise, but it did not come without consequences. As a result, strife has existed between the descendents of these two brothers to this day.

THE THREAD WOVEN THROUGHOUT THE GENERATIONS OF ISRAEL

With the inheritance passing to Jacob and not to Esau, it would fall upon Jacob's line to carry forward the promise to bless all of the families of the earth. Jacob, faithful to his commission, pleased God: *"Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men..."* (Genesis 32:28) He begat twelve sons, and upon Jacob's deathbed, God pronounced them a nation of twelve tribes, indicating that, now, to them as a nation, descended the Abrahamic promise—*"in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."*

To protect the lineage from which the promised seed would come, God specially protected Israel as His chosen people. *"You only have I known of all the families of the earth..."* (Amos 3:2) God provided Israel the Commandments and the Law to separate them from the contaminating influences of other nations who worshipped false Gods. (See Galatians 3:19) But, Israel strayed from their promise to *"do all that the Lord hath commanded."* Like Esau, they were reckless and careless with the special privileges they had of being God's chosen people. In fact, during the period from Jacob's death to the birth of Christ, only a remnant of Jews remained loyal and obedient to God and appreciated the privilege of the inheritance.

Although the nation of Israel, like disobedient children, rebelled against God, He still watched over and guided them as His chosen people for the sake of their fathers—preserving the line for the promised seed. *"And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power..."* Deuteronomy 4:37

THE PROMISED SEED IS BORN

At the chosen time, God did send his son Jesus to be the Messiah of Israel – the prophesied seed of promise. And to many of the nation of Israel the prophecy to Abraham seemed to be fulfilled through this miracle worker from Nazareth! But Jesus was put to death as a common sinner upon the cross, and all seemed lost. Indeed, Satan thought he had broken the thread of the original prophecy, and that, therefore, the seed of the woman (Jesus) could no longer deal him that fatal blow. But, contrary to Satan's evil design, within three days, Christ, the worthy Lamb was raised from the grave *"to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."* Revelation 5:12

Yes, it was not until the sacrificial life and death of Christ that the Scriptures began to open up more clearly on the plan of redemption which God has provided through His obedient Son. Through the written words of Jesus and his disciples, guided by the holy spirit, there was given clear testimony that the curse which fell upon Adam and his family—sin and death— will be rectified in due time. *"There will no longer be any curse"* [the curse of sin and death] is one of the final statements upon the matter in the last chapter of the Bible, Revelation 22:3NAS.

SPIRITUAL ISRAELITES: INHERITORS OF THE THREAD OF PROMISE

Before all the nations of the earth will be blessed, God has provided that Christ would select as heirs of the promise a spiritual nation of dedicated believers—termed the body of Christ. Of these the Apostle Paul reasons: *"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."* (Galatians 3:29) Ye, the followers of Christ, are the inheritors of the promise— being a part of Abraham's seed.

As the servant is not above his master, so the body of Christ has received the same treatment during this Gospel Age from those who are used of Satan. And as Satan attempted to rid himself of Jesus, the promised seed, so he has attempted to rid himself of the body of Christ. Satan has sought to kill the followers of Jesus by every evil means at his disposal. They have been burned alive, crucified, tortured, fed to the lions and have suffered insults and slanderous attacks simply for being faithful to God's Word.

God has a marvelous purpose for all of the experiences which Christ and his body members have endured. *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."* (Romans 8:28, 29) These faithful few who have chosen to live and die with Christ, will be granted to live and reign with Christ in the resurrection. *"For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him. If we suffer, we shall also reign with him..."* (2 Timothy 2:11, 12) And, as with Jesus, we learn obedience by the things which we suffer. (Hebrews 5:8) Only by these sufferings will the Church be proven trustworthy and have their characters crystallized—prepared for the future work of bringing blessings to all the families of the earth. God will grant such a high reward only to those who have been tested and proven faithful. Revelation 2:10

And so, the golden thread of prophecy has reached its way to the spiritual seed of promise—Christ and his body members. But did God abandon the prophecies concerning the natural seed of Abraham?

ISRAEL NOT CAST OFF FOREVER

We read that our Lord was born under the Law Covenant *"that he might redeem those who were under the Law."* (Galatians 4:4, 5) In order to fulfill the special blessing of God's Covenant with Abraham—in thy seed—it was necessary that Christ should be of the nation of Israel and redeem them specifically. *"I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."* (Matthew 15:24) This same Law was meant to be a schoolmaster to lead the Jews to their Messiah, but, the pupils, the Jews who concentrated on the letter of the Law, missed the blessing and spirit of it. (Galatians 3:24) The nation of Israel fully expected that the seed of promise would come forth as a mighty King like David, and bring Israel forth as a nation among nations! But when Jesus, who looked so promising, failed to meet their expectations, they labeled him an imposter and nailed him to the cross.

Did this act of rejecting their Messiah sever the thread of prophecy to them? Has God cast away the people whom He promised would be specially used by Him in carrying the blessings of the Divine Law and instruction to all nations? God has not in any degree abandoned His original program as respects the nation of Israel—the seed of Abraham according to the flesh. This prophecy of the Abrahamic promise, the blessing of all the families of the earth through



Israel, will be accomplished. *“So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”* Isaiah 55:11

Notice how the Apostle Paul states this matter clearly in Romans 11:25-36. There he tells us that we should think not of Israel as being cast off forever, but merely disfavored of God for a limited period—during the time of the calling and approving and acceptance of the elect number of spiritual Israel. This elect number was first gathered from the Jewish nation and its completeness is to be made up from amongst the Gentiles. He tells us that when this elect number of spiritual Israel is complete, God’s favor will return to natural Israel, Jacob, and then all Israel shall be saved.

Jeremiah prophesied that the New (Law) Covenant promised to Israel, in which their sins will be cancelled and remembered no more, comes at the close of the Gospel Age and not at its beginning. *“After those days [after the completion of the body of Christ], ...I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the [Law] Covenant which I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; ...I will put my [New] law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; ...for I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more.”* (Jeremiah 31:29-34) These words of Jeremiah are proof positive that *“God hath not cast off natural Israel whom he foreknew.”*

Thus, the prophecy is accomplished in the natural as well as the spiritual seed of Abraham: (1) the stars of heaven—the spiritual seed and (2) the sands of the seashore—the natural seed. The Bride of Christ—the Church—developed during this Gospel Age is the spiritual seed, pictured as the stars of heaven, while the natural seed of Abraham is yet to become as the sand of the seashore. As soon as Israel accepts the offer of redemption through Christ, she will be the nation from whom the blessings of the Abrahamic promise will flow worldwide.

BLESSINGS TO ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH

The crowning feature of God’s marvelous plan is not only that of developing and blessing the seed (fleshly and spiritual Israel), but that the seed will extend this blessing to all the remainder of mankind. *“...God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. ...After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, ... and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord...”* Acts 15:14-17

The residue of mankind will receive their blessing after the Messiah (head and body) has been lifted up in glory, according to our Lord’s own statement, *“I, if I be lifted up..., will draw all men unto me.”* (John

12:32) Then, Christ and his Bride will bless and guide the nation of Israel as their earthly representatives in teaching the nations (all mankind) righteousness. Thus, we read of the golden thread written by the prophets: *“And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD [God’s Kingdom in heaven], and to the house of the God of Jacob [His Kingdom to come in earth]; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”* Micah 4:2



“...the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.” Acts 3:21

PARADISE LOST WILL BE PARADISE RESTORED

Adam and Eve would never have expected that now, over 6,000 years later, the complete fulfillment of the original prophecy given to them in Genesis 3:15 is about to be realized. The golden thread of prophecy has gradually been unfolding in clarity and reality throughout history even unto the time of the end in which we live. Soon *“the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”* (Habakkuk 2:14) Then all will see the rewards of obedience and the penalties of disobedience, that they may learn the benefit of righteousness. Isaiah 26:9

As the earth was part of man’s original estate, it too shared in the curse pronounced upon Adam: *“...cursed is the ground for thy sake...”* (Genesis 3:17) In fact, *“...the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together...”* But, God has promised the

restitution of all things provided by the sacrifice of Christ. Romans 8:19-23, Acts 3:20, 21

The entire work of the thousand year Millennium will consist in restoring and making glorious God’s footstool. Paradise, when lost through sin, was but a garden in a corner of the earth, but in as much as all the families of the earth will have been redeemed, it will become a paradise large enough to accommodate all—the entire earth shall become as the Garden of Eden. This is the grand consummation of the divine plan.



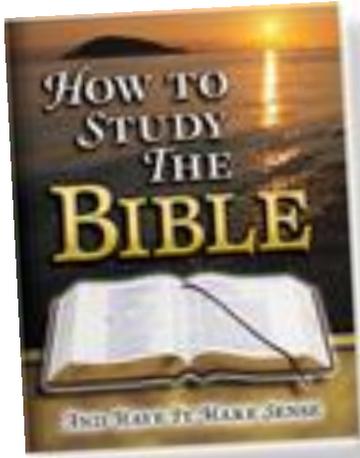
“And the Spirit [Christ] and the bride say, Come.... And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.” Revelation 22:17

The Apostle Paul states that our Lord *“...shall bruise Satan [with the fatal blow] under your feet shortly.”* (Romans 16:20) This purifying, beautifying and glorifying of the Lord’s footstool will not be completed until our Lord Jesus, as the Father’s honored agent, *“shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign until he hath put all enemies [Satan, sin and death] under his feet...”* Then he will deliver up the Kingdom to Jehovah at the close of the thousand year Millennium. 1 Corinthians 15:24-28

And thus will the golden thread of prophecy reach its end and be completely fulfilled. *“And saviours [Christ and his Bride] shall come up on mount Zion... and the kingdom shall be the LORD’S.”* Obadiah 1:21

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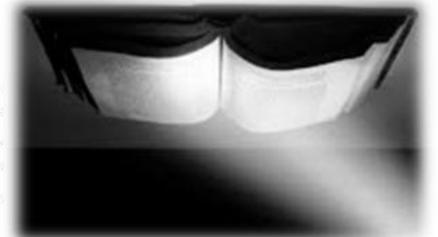


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