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WHICH
ISRAEL
WILL BE SAVED

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On occasion, I have inserted italics and brackets in Scripture quotations to enhance understanding, not to change the meaning.

May God bless you as you study this fascinating topic!

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Which Israel Will Be Saved?

During His ministry, Jesus often used earthly objects to help His listeners understand spiritual concepts. He spoke about the farmer who sowed good seed; the pearl of great price; the prodigal son; the grain of mustard seed; the fisherman's net; the man who built his house on the rock; and an individual being born again. Even though Jesus used many earthly elements to illustrate spiritual truths, one of the most quoted Bible verses is John 3:16. However, few have considered the requirements and setting for this famous verse.

One night, Jesus met secretly with a wealthy man, a prominent citizen in Israel named Nicodemus. As their conversation unfolded, Jesus shocked him with this somber truth. Being a descendant of Abraham meant nothing when it came to receiving eternal life! Nicodemus was dumbfounded. The Jews believed wealth was a sign of God's favor. Therefore, when Jesus said **“Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again,”**¹ Nicodemus recoiled. He could not believe a message that was in such opposition to his traditional understanding.

¹ John 3:3

The message Jesus was trying to teach Nicodemus was that in God's eyes, spiritually speaking, everyone is born a Gentile. This is why Jesus plainly told Nicodemus, "**You must be born again.**"¹ Jesus told a wealthy descendant of Abraham that being a biological descendant of Abraham did not guarantee eternal life. Nicodemus reeled at the idea that he had to be born again to become an heir of Abraham if he wanted to enter the kingdom of God.

What is Being Born Again?

Being born again is not humanly possible; it is a miracle that happens when the Holy Spirit comes into the heart and changes its polarity 180 degrees. Instead of being controlled by his sinful nature, man receives a new spiritual nature. Suddenly, there is an appetite for understanding the Word of God. A deep desire to please God rises in the heart, and there is a desire to forsake sin and to have sins forgiven. Finally, there is a wonderful release from bitterness and from the need for revenge. A born-again person receives the ability to forgive. Forgiving others as we have been forgiven by God!²

The problem with being born again is that this change of heart does not last if it is not consistently renewed.

¹ John 3:7

² Matthew 6:12

The tragic life of King Saul, the first king of Israel revealed this fact. Spiritual renewal requires our determination to feed the spiritual nature every day. If the spiritual nature is not fed in a meaningful way, it will grow weak and eventually die. This process is called backsliding, and if it continues, a person will eventually revert back to his former self and his behavior will once again be dominated by the sinful nature.

A person lets God know he wants to be born again with a genuine confession. When he confesses his sins to God; when he comes to the realization that he needs Jesus as his Savior to escape the penalty for sin, which is eternal death; when he feels deep sorrow and guilt for past deeds; when he surrenders to God's will, telling the Father that he is willing to go wherever God would have him go, do whatever God would have him do, and willing to become whatever God would have him be. When God hears a sincere confession like this, He gladly responds by giving the Holy Spirit a green light to perform the miracle of rebirth!

This process is how Jews and Gentiles become an heirs of Abraham. This is important because the only people who will be saved are heirs of

Abraham. An heir of Abraham is not to be confused with the Jewish race or the Jewish religion, or anything connected to a piece of ground in the Middle East.

This may be confusing, but with further study you can learn why God designed the process this way.

The Bible says, **“If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”**¹ What does Abraham and becoming Abraham’s seed through Jesus, have to do with being born again?

Three Promises God Gave Abraham

First, God said **“As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations.”**²

Second, God said **“The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.”**³

1 Galatians 3:29

2 Genesis 17:4-5

3 Genesis 17:8

Third, God said **“Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him.”**¹

The Bible also says, **“Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.”**²

After Abraham left home and traveled about 700 miles to a strange land, God made these three promises. The homeless and childless Abraham believed all God said and, as a result, God covered Abraham’s sins with the righteousness that Jesus would later produce by overcoming every temptation. God did this on the basis of Abraham’s faith!

Are you surprised that God forgave Abraham's sins and assured him of eternal life on the basis of faith alone?

Consider Paul’s words, **“Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham [saying]: ‘All nations will be blessed through you.’ So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.”**³

1 Genesis 18:18

2 Genesis 15:6

3 Galatians 3:7-9, insertion mine

God's covenant with Abraham affects you and me. We must have the faith of Abraham to be saved. God made Abraham the father of the faith-full. He is a symbol, providing an excellent example of how we are saved. Salvation does not come from religious rituals, good deeds, or baptism. Salvation comes through faith in Jesus.

Faith is much more than intellectual assent. God asked Abraham to leave his family and home, and travel to an unknown destination. Abraham obeyed. Abraham had no idea that God wanted him to travel a great distance until after he told the Lord that he was willing to go.

The apostle Paul declares, **“For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith.’”**¹ This verse declares that salvation requires the righteousness of God! This is a righteousness that no sinner can produce.

This is the reason Jesus was sent to Earth. He had to overcome every temptation to produce the righteousness required for sinners. After the Father hears from

¹ Romans 1:17

a repentant sinner who is willing to live by faith—willing to go, to be, and to do whatever He demands—the Father covers that sinner with the robe of Christ’s righteousness. This happened to Abraham. He surrendered his will to God, and God tested his resolve and faith by calling him to leave his homeland.

God has people in every church, religious system, and nation, because there are people of faith in all walks of life. Paul wrote, **“Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith.”**¹ This means God will cover any person who will live by faith, Jew or Gentile, with the righteousness of Jesus.

God made Abraham the father of the faithful in every nation, not just the nation of Israel. Spiritually speaking, Abraham’s descendants will be as numerous as the stars in the sky when gathered up at the Second Coming! **“He [God] took him outside and said, ‘Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.’ Then he said to him, ‘So shall your offspring be.’”**²

1 Romans 3:29-30

2 Genesis 15:5, insertion mine

What was God's purpose for Abraham's biological descendants since salvation is only possible through rebirth?

When Jesus spoke to Nicodemus that night, Jesus stated a point that millions of Christians today do not properly understand, even though John 3:16 is well known. Jesus said that whosoever believes His teachings shall not perish. Nicodemus was uneasy because he understood Jesus to mean that eternal life had nothing to do with being a blood descendant of Abraham.

Jesus said **“Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”**¹ His words apply equally to Jews and Gentiles. Salvation requires being born again. This is the reason that in God's sight, everyone is born a Gentile. The apostle Paul declares, **“For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.”**²

In God's sight, being a biological descendant of Abraham is different than being a spiritual descendant of Abraham. This is a critical point that many Christians do not grasp. I repeat this comment for emphasis, *In God's sight, being a biological descendant of Abra-*

1 John 3:3

2 Romans 8:14

ham is different than being a spiritual descendant of Abraham.

Paul emphasizes this point in Romans 9. He wrote **“It is not as though God’s word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham’s children. On the contrary, ‘It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.’ In other words, it is not the children by physical descent who are God’s children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham’s offspring.”**¹

Through the ministry of Jesus, every born-again Jew and every born-again Gentile is Abraham’s heir. He is the father of such people. Everything that God promised to Abraham will be given to his spiritual heirs, not his biological heirs. When Abraham died, he did not leave the land of Canaan to Isaac because God did not give the land to Abraham during his lifetime. In fact, Jacob and his descendants left Canaan because of a severe famine.

Whatever claim Jacob may have had on some land was lost during the four hundred years that Jacob’s descendants were in Egypt. This is an important

¹ Romans 9:6-8

point. God cannot give the land of Canaan to Abraham and his numberless descendants until they are resurrected and the earth is made new. Abraham understood this fact.

“By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.”¹

There is only one city whose architect and builder is God. The prophet John saw it. He said, **“I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.’”²**

Notice God’s statement, **“The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your**

1 Hebrews 11:9-10

2 Revelation 21:2-3

descendants after you; and I will be their God.”¹

Abraham knew this promise could not be fulfilled during his lifetime. Therefore, he was looking past the end of the present age which is contaminated by the curse of sin. He was looking for a new heaven and new Earth. He was looking for everlasting life and the holy city, New Jerusalem, whose architect and builder is God Himself.

God separates the spiritual heirs of Abraham from the biological heirs of Abraham. God’s purpose for the biological offspring of Abraham was that He wanted to make Abraham’s descendants the trustees of His gospel.

God wanted a large number of born-again Abrahams to tell the whole world of His love, salvation, and plans for a new heaven and Earth. God wanted a nation of people that completely reflected His character and His loving ways. However, Israel’s fifteen-hundred-year failure to accomplish God’s purposes is a sad story which ended A.D. 70 when Jerusalem was totally destroyed.

Shortly before God destroyed Israel, He sent Jesus to Earth with a new covenant. Then, God sent the apostle Paul to the Gentiles telling them that God had

¹ Genesis 17:8

abolished the Levitical law and any Gentile could become a trustee of the gospel of God if he were willing to live by faith like Abraham. If so, God would consider him an heir of Abraham.

Paul wrote to the Gentiles in Ephesus, **“Surely you have heard about the administration of God’s grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly.¹ This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.”²**

Consider this sobering thought: Living by faith is the only way that a born-again person can keep from backsliding. Living by faith is difficult, so Paul warned the Gentiles to take note of Israel’s history, often vacillating between obedience and rebellion. He warned that **“If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. You will**

¹ Ephesians 3:2-3

² Ephesians 3:6

say then, ‘Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.’ Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but tremble. For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either. Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.”¹

The apostle Paul’s comments made the leaders of Israel so angry they planned to kill him. Later, Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus. **“Surely you have heard about the administration of God’s grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.”²**

1 Romans 11:17-22

2 Ephesians 3:2-6

The Jews were furious with Paul, because he was insulting their religion. Paul claimed that through Jesus, there is one body of Jews and Gentiles, who encompass the heirs of Abraham. This claim does not rest upon the authority of Paul. The authority for this profound change is found in the new covenant. At the cross, the old covenant was abolished. Then, born-again Jews and born-again Gentiles became members, together, in one body. Since that day, there is neither Jew nor Gentile in God's sight. This is a critical point that millions of Christians have overlooked. Heirs of Abraham have been one body for two thousand years.

This is extremely important because 144,000 will be chosen from the body of born-again believers. In other words, the twelve tribes of Israel mentioned in Revelation 7 are not the biological tribes described in the Old Testament. They are twelve new tribes created 2,000 years ago by the new covenant!

Please consider four points:

1. The Father replaced the Old Covenant with the New Covenant when Jesus was on Earth. This change in covenants is profound. Paul said the change was not made known to men in other gen-

erations because the old covenant served its purpose until Jesus died; however, Jesus' death and resurrection brought about a sweeping change. The new covenant nailed the old covenant to the cross, and resulted in a new Israel comprised of born-again Jews and born-again Gentiles. Jesus is the Redeemer and King of this new Israel.

2. The new covenant does not require physical circumcision or the observance of Levitical laws. Instead, the new covenant requires circumcision of the heart. However, circumcision of the heart requires a Holy Spirit miracle. The Spirit has to perform this circumcision and He will not perform the miracle until there is total surrender to follow Jesus and obey His teachings. Sure, you can attempt to make yourself a Christian by being baptized and joining a church, but you cannot make yourself born again! To repeat—we cannot make ourselves born again.

A born-again person lives by faith; he is eager to know God's Word; he is given an honest heart; he loves God with all his heart, mind, and soul, and his neighbor as himself. One sign of a born-again person is a desire to make restitution to those he previously hurt or defrauded. When you

love someone, you want to restore them if you are deeply sorry for any hurt. After the tax collector Zacchaeus paid back all that he had stolen, Jesus said, **“this man, too, is a son of Abraham.”**¹ Jesus meant that a Jew, this Jew, had become an heir of Abraham because spiritually speaking, all Jews are born as Gentiles!

3. When a person is born again, Jesus assigns that person to one of the twelve tribes created by the new covenant. This means that God alone knows who is in each tribe. When the time comes to select the 144,000, God will select 12,000 people from each tribe. Of course, each tribe is larger than 12,000 but God only needs 12,000 from each group to accomplish His goal.
4. Twenty-five years after Jesus ascended, James, the brother of Jesus, served as the first president of the Christian church. James understood the twelve tribes of the old covenant had been replaced with twelve new tribes. Notice how he begins his epistle, **“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings.”**² Is James writing to the twelve old covenant tribes

¹ Luke 19:9

² James 1:1

which hated believers in Jesus, or to the twelve new tribes which had been scattered by severe persecution because of their faith in Jesus?

Ok, let us summarize the four points. Given the facts that God revealed to Paul that Abraham's heirs are one body consisting of born-again Jews and Gentiles; the new covenant abolished the old covenant with its physical circumcision and Levitical laws; under the new covenant there is neither Jew nor Gentile in God's sight; and 25 years after Jesus ascended, James, the brother of Jesus, wrote to the scattered believers in Christ calling them the twelve tribes, I must conclude the 144,000 will be chosen from the twelve tribes created by the new covenant.

Why did God use the names of the biological tribes to identify the new covenant tribes when He knew this would be confusing? Despite this confusion, understand that God is deliberate and purposeful in everything He does. He always has a purpose for His actions.

One night, when Jacob was fleeing from his brother whom he defrauded, the Lord said, **“I will give you [Jacob] and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust**

of the earth.”¹ Since the twelve tribes of Jacob are named after his sons, God used their names (replacing Dan with Manasseh) because they are Jacob’s descendants. Paul writes in Romans 9:6, **“For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel.”** Paul means that some of Jacob’s descendants are biological and some are spiritual. Paul states that Jacob’s descendants are not all Abraham’s children. This is like any church body. Some members are self-made Christians and some are born-again Christians. Jesus told Nicodemus, the kingdom of God excludes anyone who is not born again. Therefore, we have twelve biological tribes under the old covenant and twelve spiritual tribes of born-again people under the new covenant.

When the time comes to select 12,000 from each tribe, Jesus will personally select each individual. The 144,000 will serve as God’s prophets during the Great Tribulation. Compared to the population of earth, they will be few in number, scattered all over the world, but they will finish the gospel commission. They will be filled with Holy Spirit power. Jesus will speak through them, and everyone on Earth will hear the testimony of Jesus! The 144,000 will be tortured and eventually killed, but they will achieve in 1,260 days what Christians have not been able to accom-

¹ Genesis 28:13-14, insertion mine

plish during the past 2,000 years! Hundreds of millions of people will be saved through their ministry!

Many Christians have not considered the profound differences between New Covenant and Old Covenant Israel. Consider these nine differences:

1. New covenant Israel has the High Priest (Jesus) from the tribe of Judah; the old covenant requires a high priest from the tribe of Levi. This creates an insurmountable problem because old covenant Israel has had no way to determine who is a Levite. The Romans destroyed all Jewish genealogical records in A.D. 70.
2. As the High Priest of the new covenant, Jesus serves in the “true temple” located in Heaven. Old covenant Israel does not have a temple. The Romans destroyed it in A.D. 70, and for 2,000 years, God has prevented the construction of another Jewish temple.
3. New covenant Israel considers the holy city, new Jerusalem, to be their capital city—the city that Abraham anticipated. Old covenant Israel considers Jerusalem, a city with a long history of conflict and bloodshed, to be their capital city.

4. New covenant Israel has nothing to do with Zionism or modern Israel. The kingdom of God is not of this world. The Canaan anticipated by the heirs of Abraham is not located in the Middle East. Instead, new Canaan will be given to them as an everlasting possession when Earth is made new. God's rest, which old covenant Israel cannot enter, is located in heaven. New Canaan will be prominently located in the new Earth and Abraham will live there.
5. New covenant Israel exalts the Word of God from Genesis to Revelation. Old covenant Israel exalts the teachings of rabbis and the first five books of the Old Testament because Moses wrote them. For more than 2,000 years, old covenant Israel has not been able to fulfill many of the Mosaic laws because they have no high priest or temple to conduct animal sacrifices.
6. Old covenant Israel still anticipates the arrival of the Messiah. They believe He will be an ordinary man because it is not possible within monotheism to have more than one God. On the other hand, new covenant Israel accepts Jesus as the promised Messiah. He is a member of deity and the Lamb of God.

7. According to Hebrews 7 and 8, new covenant Israel believes the new covenant is based on a better set of promises than the old covenant. In fact, new covenant Israel believes the old covenant has been abolished—nailed to the cross!
8. New covenant Israel believes **“A person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code.”**¹ Old covenant Israel believes that physical circumcision is necessary to be an heir of Abraham.
9. New covenant Israel understands that all born-again people are heirs of Abraham. The biological offspring of Abraham who were not born-again have been separated and broken off from Abraham’s family tree. Old covenant Jews are strongly offended by Paul’s teaching. They insist the pathway to heaven is through Judaism.

There are other differences between new covenant and old covenant Israel. However, the bottom line is this, Abraham’s heirs are not people born of the flesh but of the Spirit! This has been true from the beginning. God made this condition clear when He refused to convey His covenant through Ishmael and again

¹ Romans 2:29

through Esau. New covenant Israel believes that salvation comes through faith in Jesus, not through biological heritage, good works, church membership, legalism, rituals, or ordinances.

After Abraham arrived in Canaan, God said, **“This is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations.”**¹ This promise has not been fulfilled; but, the fulfillment is coming. In fact, God showed John the fulfillment of His promise to Abraham. Consider John’s words, **“After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.”**² This innumerable group is the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham.

This is what Paul meant when he wrote, **“All Israel will be saved.”**³ Being grafted into the new Israel is the only way possible to be an heir of Abraham. This explains why Jews and Gentiles cannot be saved unless they are born again. Jesus said to John, **“Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will**

1 Genesis 17:4

2 Revelation 7:9

3 Romans 11:26, italics mine

give to each person according to what they have done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.”¹

In closing, consider your robe for a minute. Your robe is your character. Have you been washed in the blood of the Lamb? Has the Holy Spirit been able to circumcise your heart? Have you repented of your sins and made wrongs right? Do you spend more time seeking Jesus than pursuing the pleasures and material things of this world? Before answering, think about how you spend the time and money the Lord has given you. Actions speak louder than words.

Are you receptive to the voice of the Holy Spirit; are you willing to GO and BE and DO whatever He may command? Is your love for God and neighbor growing or are you treading water; or worse, backsliding? Remember, the problem with the spiritual nature is

¹ Revelation 22:12-15

that its attraction for spiritual matters does not last unless it is frequently refreshed.

There are born-again people in every nation, religion, language, and culture. Through Jesus, all of them have been grafted into the promises made to Abraham. This explains why salvation is limited to the spiritual heirs of Abraham. God will surely save all Israel because He said, **“If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”**¹ If you want to be a part of new covenant Israel, drop to your knees and tell the Lord! Don’t procrastinate. Today is the day of salvation.

If this subject is of interest, you can learn more about the love, character, ways, and plans of God, by accessing our book titled, “The Untold Story of Jesus” at <https://wake-up.org/who-is-jesus/the-untold-story-of-jesus.html>. You can also obtain a printed copy for only the cost of postage at the same link. Jesus is coming soon! May God bless you in every possible way, and let’s plan to meet around the throne of God!

1 Galatians 3:29

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