

The Assembly of Eloah

This is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and the One You have sent—Jesus Christ. John 17:3 (HCSB)

Promise, Adoption, and the Law

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All things belong to God, the Father. He created both the physical and spiritual realms, as well as they that inhabit each realm (Gen 2:1). Yet scripture is clear that those inhabiting the spiritual realm are sons of God, and that man must pass through an adoption process before obtaining that title. What is entailed in this process, how we enter into it and maintain until we achieve our goal; is also clearly stated in scripture. The process begins with a promise.



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In Romans 9 the Apostle Paul points out who are the rightful recipients of this promise, and ultimately the adoption. It should be noted that even Israel, God's chosen, would have to go through this process before being referred to as sons.

The Promise

Rom 9:3-5 For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, 4) who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, 5) whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. (New American Standard Bible NASB used throughout)

In Genesis 12 God made this promise to Abram, but the promise was preceded by a command. He was to leave his country and family, being led by God, and go to a land foreign to him. Abram was to leave behind all that he knew.

Gen 12:1 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you;

We are told in Genesis 11:31 that Terah, Abram's father, took his family from, "Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran, and settled there." Haran is where God spoke to Abram and commanded him to "go forth." Yet, in Genesis 15:7 God tells Abram that it is He, God, Who has brought him out of Ur. Thus, God's influence must have been on Terah and was the motivating factor that prompted the move to Canaan. If Canaan was Terah's destination, why didn't he make it? Terah was old and he might not have been physically able to continue. Scripture doesn't tell us why, but perhaps he lost sight of his goal and became content with his surroundings to the point of

complacency. Either way, we're told he settled and died there.

As mentioned, the call to Abram was accompanied by a promise. God, at this point, didn't give Abram the specifics of how He would fulfill this promise, but only gave generalities. Abram didn't question God or request a clarification but, as we see in Genesis 12:4: "Abram went as God had told him." This promise, in verses 2 and 3, appears to be in 7 parts, each part beginning with the word "and."

Gen12:2-3 And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; 3) And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

Though much can be said about each part, it is the last or 7th part that speaks of all families being blessed in Abram that is pertinent to this study.

In the 17th chapter of Genesis we find an important event that begins to explain how Abram will become a blessing to all families.

Gen 17:3-5 Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, 4) "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you will be the father of a multitude of nations. 5) "No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.

Though childless at this point, God makes a covenant with Abram and tells him that he will be a father of a multitude of nations, and changes his name to Abraham to characterize the Hebraic meaning of the word. Genesis 17:10-14 identifies the sign and conditions for maintaining this *everlasting covenant*.

Gen 17:10-14 "This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised. 11) "And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the cov-

enant between Me and you. 12) “And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants. 13) “A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. 14) “But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.”

Moving on to Genesis 28:8, we see the depth of Abraham’s faith in trusting God when he was asked to sacrifice his son, Isaac. When Isaac asked where was the sacrifice for the burnt offering: “Abraham said, ‘God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.’” We see that Abraham did not withhold the knife from Isaac until told to do so by the Angel of the Lord. For this act of trust, God reiterates His promise.

Gen 28:18 “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

In Acts 3:25 the Apostle Peter made reference to this promise when he addressed a multitude that had gathered after he healed a lame man. He points out that Israel is the appropriate heir as descendant sons; just as Paul had done in Romans 9.

Acts 3:25 “It is you who are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘AND IN YOUR SEED ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH SHALL BE BLESSED.’

In verse 26, he made a statement that, if not expanded upon, would have been misunderstood and regarded as some new philosophy. We find in the following chapter that Peter and John were taken into custody for proclaiming: “In Jesus the resurrection from the dead”.

Acts 3:26 “For you first, God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways.”

David Brown’s commentary, (Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible, 1871*) explains that the word “raised” in the above scripture isn’t from the dead, but correctly translated means “having provided, prepared and given.” Peter connects Jesus with the blessed seed promised to Abraham.

Where Peter states that the promise, and thus Christ, came first to Israel, Paul emphasizes in Galatians 3:8 that the gentiles are included in the saying; “All the nations...”

Gal 3:8 The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU.”

However, Paul concurs with Peter that Jesus is the blessed seed promised, but puts it in more specific terms and, at the same time, links Christ directly to Abraham.

Gal 3:16 Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed He does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many, but rather to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ.

The element that has not been addressed so far is how this seed is to be a blessing to all nations. Scripture doesn’t elaborate about the blessing up to this point. In John 11:23-26, Jesus proclaimed this blessing when he spoke to Martha about Lazarus’ death, and pending resurrection.

John 11:23-26 Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” 24) Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” 25) Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me will live even if he dies, 26) and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?”

The word “resurrection” is not found in the Old Testament. However, we find the concept addressed by King David in Psalms 16.

Psalm 16:10 For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.

Jesus stated in John 11:26 that “he who believes in him will live even if he dies.” In his letter to Titus, Paul states that it is eternal life that was promised ages ago.

Titus 1:1-3 Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, 2) in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago, 3) but at the proper time manifested, even His word, in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior,

In Luke 1:67-69, during John the Baptist’s circumcision, Zacharias suddenly speaks out with prophecy that attributes salvation as another expression to the blessing of Abraham’s seed.

Luke 1:67-79 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying: 68) “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, 69) and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David His servant—70) As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old—71) Salvation FROM OUR ENEMIES, And FROM THE HAND OF ALL WHO HATE US; 72) To show mercy toward our fathers, And to remember His holy covenant, 73) The oath which He swore to Abraham our father, 74) To grant us that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear, 75) In holiness and righteousness before Him all our days. 76) “And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; For you will go on BEFORE THE LORD TO PREPARE HIS WAYS; 77) To give to His people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins, 78) because of the tender mercy of our God, with which the Sunrise from on high will visit us, 79) TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS

AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH, To guide our feet into the way of peace.”

The salvation spoken of here by Zacharias appears to be in the physical sense when he said: “Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us...” Given Israel’s history of oppression by their enemies, I’m sure that many viewed this prophecy in the manner of a physical salvation, even in light of verse 77: “To give to His people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins...” A closer look at this verse and we see that it is actually saying, “*Knowledge* of salvation,” showing us that, even until then, they didn’t fully understand the true purpose of Messiah.

Delitzsch’s commentary (Keil, C. F. and F. Delitzsch *Commentary of the Old Testament*, e-sword version) quotes a targum’s interpretation of salvation in explanation of Genesis 49:18: “For Your salvation I wait, O LORD.”

Accordingly, the later Targums (*Jerusalem* and *Jonathan*) interpret these words as Messianic, but with a special reference to Samson, and paraphrase Genesis 49:18 thus: “Not for the deliverance of Gideon, the son of Joash, does my soul wait, for that is temporary; and not for the redemption of Samson, for that is transitory; but for the redemption of the Messiah, the Son of David, which Thou through Thy word hast promised to bring to Thy people the children of Israel: for this Thy redemption my soul waits.”

Again we see the same duality here that is mentioned in Zacharias’ prophecy, that there is a physical redemption as well as a spiritual redemption. Though this might have been understood by the Jews of Zacharias’ time and by the rabbinic author of the above targum, they failed to recognize the Messiah in Jesus, thereby missing the blessing of Abraham’s seed.

Inspection of the process in receiving the promise of God reveals a pattern. First, God initiates the process with a calling, which in-

cludes a command and a promise. We then respond in faith, trusting that God will accomplish the promise, however fantastic it may seem. This faith should be as Abraham's faith -- without question. A faith that leads to obedience. And our obedience should not be intermittent, but lifelong no matter what we may face.

Our obedience is then followed by God's covenant of circumcision and receipt of the promise. Understand that we receive the promise at this point, not its contents. Peter said in Acts 2:29: "Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day." This can also be said of Abraham and all the prophets. In Philippians 3:11-12 Paul also spoke about not obtaining that which God promised in Philippians 3:11-12.

Phil 3:11-12 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. 12) Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

Paul understood by this statement that neither he, nor anyone, would obtain what God has promised until the resurrection.

Adoption

As mentioned above, Paul stated that gentiles will be justified by faith. According to the process identified above, justification by faith leads to the receipt of the promise of salvation -- **receipt of the promise**, not its contents. This is clearly stated in:

Gal 3:14 in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Keep in mind that all, not just the gentiles, must pass through the process to achieve adoption, for as Paul said, "There is neither Jew nor Greek".

Our calling is God's initiative and formed to His purpose.

Rom 8:28-30 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. 29) For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; 30) and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

How this is accomplished is seen in:

1 Cor 1:9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

It seems that Paul is saying that, at our calling, God also justifies and glorifies us; and yet Paul was not glorified, nor are we as long as we are in a mortal state. Bullinger explains that "the called ones are spoken of as already (in the Divine purpose) in Christ, justified, and glorified" (E.W. Bullinger, *The Companion Bible*, fn. Romans 8:30). Romans 11:29 explains why this is so.

Rom 11:29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

The primary command and the promise is found in:

John 3:16. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Remember what Jesus said to Martha, Lazarus' sister:

John 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, 26) and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"

Paul explained this to the church at Corinth:

1Cor 15:52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet

will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

The command is to believe. Jesus asked, “Do you believe this?” If we can whole heartedly say, “Yes,” we receive the promise and God makes a covenant with us.

We are told to repent and be baptized.

Acts 2:37-39 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” 38) Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39) “For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.”

The covenant requires circumcision. Circumcision by God’s Holy Spirit comes at baptism.

Col 2:11-12 and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; 12) having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

At our baptism and circumcision we become a Jew inwardly. Even a Jew must become a Jew inwardly according to God’s criteria.

Rom 2:28-29 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. 29) But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

At this point God views us as adopted sons.

Rom 18:14-16 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15) For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” 16) The Spirit Himself

testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,

Gal 4:4-6 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5) so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. 6) Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”

Though Paul says that we are sons at this point, that has to be taken in context with the same understanding of how we are now being glorified, as explained above, through predestination.

Eph 1:4-5 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him In love 5) He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

We know this because only spirit beings are the actual sons of God.

Luke 20:34-36 Jesus said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, 35) but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; 36) for they cannot even die anymore, because they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

The point at which we receive the contents of all that God promised, from the beginning of time, is found in:

Rom 8:22-24 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. 23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

The redemption of our body -- the resurrection of God’s chosen.

The Law

What do you do now as an adopted son of the God Most High? The first thing that comes to mind is to love Him with all your being, and to demonstrate that love with obedience. You must come to know Him and His ways. His ways are defined by His Law. Psalm 1:1-2 is good advice in how to learn the way of our Father.

Psalm 1:1-2 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! 2) But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night.

By meditating, or studying, on God's Law we find that God expects us to do something. We are called to believe in His Son and are commanded to live His Law. The Law of God is not a system of belief, but a way of life for His family.

Prov 16:3 Commit your works to the LORD and your plans will be established.

The word "plans" here (SGD #4284) is "thoughts." If we keep God's Law, we remain His sons and come to an understanding of His Plan on redeeming the entire creation.

As our knowledge grows, we should be drawn to the warning of Moses when he spoke to Israel prior to crossing the Jordan River. We, as our ancient brothers, are surrounded by pagans and are enticed by their ways in this world. Moses warned not to take up the pagan ways, and that they would be blessed if they kept God's ways and cursed if they didn't.

In conclusion, the words of Joshua still ring true today.

Joshua 22:5 "Only be very careful to observe the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love the LORD your God and walk in all His ways and keep His commandments and hold fast to Him and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul."

Let us heed his words.

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