

Fundamentals of Belief  
#16A: God's Twofold Promise to Abraham

Edited Sermon Transcript  
Jon W. Brisby; 12-8-2001

This afternoon, brethren, we are going to pick up the long series on the Fundamentals of Belief of the Church of God, The Eternal that I have been working on for well over two years now, I think. It has been quite a number of weeks since I addressed the last fundamental. We finished number fifteen on *War and Military Service*, and now we are ready for fundamental number sixteen.

There are twenty-six fundamentals, so we are just a little over half done. We probably have enough material for well over another two years, depending on how long I might stop in between to address some other topics to the Eugene congregation here—and especially in recognition of the fact that we are going to have to take some serious time on this fundamental sixteen. It is a long one, and it contains so much in one fundamental that it is going to take a number of sermons in order to cover this topic exhaustively the way that I want to.

Here is fundamental number sixteen as Mr. Armstrong originally wrote it back in the Radio Church of God:

We believe the PROMISES were made to Abraham and his "seed," Christ, and that the Covenants (including the New Covenant), and the promises pertain alone to ISRAEL. That our white, English-speaking peoples of today are enjoying the national phases of the promises—that of MATERIAL blessings—called the "Birtright," which was handed down thru the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, whose descendants we are; but that the "Scepter"—the promise of kings, and the SPIRITUAL phase of the promises, including Christ and salvation thru Him—was given

to and shall not depart from Judah of whom are the race we know today as the Jews. We believe eternal life is God's gift resting upon the promises made to Abraham and his "seed," Christ, designating this earth (made new), not heaven, as our eternal home and reward. That salvation is thru Christ alone, and not inherited thru the Birthright (right of birth) and that salvation is freely open to Gentiles, who, thru Christ, become Abraham's children and are adopted into the family of Israel and become heirs according to the promises.

Is that not a mouthful? As you can see, there is a lot of material encompassed within that single stated fundamental of belief. For the most part, we are talking about that which, in the world today, is entitled "Israel Identity," "British Israelism," or many other variations of terms. It is probably one of the most controversial topics of belief today.

We are probably going to spend several sermons just getting through the meat of the fundamental of belief. I am basically going to be using as my reference most of the material that Mr. Armstrong used when he wrote *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy*. In it, he laid out and succinctly stated many of the pieces contained in this fundamental concerning the identity of Israel, the difference between the Birthright and the Scepter, the difference between the promises that were physical—material—given through Ephraim and Manasseh, and the promises that were given to and fulfilled through Judah—including Christ and salvation.

So we want to cover all of those in detail. Then, before we move on, I also want to cover how this very doctrine of belief is received and perceived within the world and the fact that this may be one of the beliefs that might lead to our persecution. I can tell you, brethren, that to believe there is anything unique about Israel—let alone to believe that the people of the United States, Britain and the Northwest democracies of Europe are descendants of those lost ten tribes of Israel—is something the world hates. The Jews hate the concept that anyone else would claim or dare believe they are part of Israel, and yet it was one of the most phenomenal teachings that probably helped many respond to the ministry of Mr. Herbert Armstrong. *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy* was the most requested book or booklet that initially grabbed the attention of many across this country and other parts of the world.

Is it the most important doctrine or fundamental? No. You might be surprised to hear me say that. Mr. Armstrong called this knowledge of the difference between

those promises of the Scepter and the Birthright—between Judah and the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh—the master key to understanding prophecy in the Bible. And that is very true, because when you understand the details of who Israel is, it helps bring to light all of these prophecies in the Old and New Testaments so that we can apply them more generally.

I will start by telling you right off the bat, brethren, that Mr. Armstrong was not the originator of this knowledge. He was not the first one who understood the difference between the promises to the descendants of Joseph versus the descendants of Judah. In fact, it is one of the key areas where people who now despise Mr. Armstrong have tried their best to discredit him by claiming that he plagiarized or copied the material on this knowledge of British Israelism from other men, most especially a man named J. H. Allen who wrote a book called *Judah's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright*. If you read their material, they make it sound as if Mr. Armstrong secretly read these other books, plagiarized the material, repackaged it, never told anyone about it, and then pawned it off as his own individual revelation. The original details of that material, a lot of which I will go through today, were not unique to Mr. Armstrong. What is unique is that Mr. Armstrong, through the gift of the Holy Spirit and the process of divine revelation from Jesus Christ, was able to determine the difference between the truth and the error.

There are hundreds and thousands of books written by people claiming to have Biblical knowledge—and yes, many who are not called, converted or led by the Holy Spirit still have the capacity to understand certain facts and come up with information that is true. The difference is that human beings, of themselves and separated from God, always possess a mixture of truth and error. The difference in what Mr. Armstrong taught is that he was able to sift out the error and actually put together the truth. How? Not of his own accord or by his own study, but because he was being guided by God—he absolutely was receiving it as revelation. One of those pieces that he was able to certify as true, even though it was also documented by many other writers, was this concept of the identity of Israel and what happened to the lost ten tribes. So, no, he is not the first one who ever wrote on it. Over the centuries, there have been many books written concerning the identity of Israel and the knowledge that the throne was moved to the British Isles and resides among those who sit on that throne of England at this very time.

That was not unique or special information. There are many who responded when they first heard Mr. Armstrong speak on this topic on the radio broadcast years ago, but not necessarily because it was new information, but because it clicked with things they

already knew and believed to be true. It's only that, for the first time, they heard a man speaking concerning the Bible who also had that same information and knowledge; and, given the knowledge and acceptance of the fact of who those lost ten tribes were, he was able to put all of the Bible into context. No one else at the time was doing a work in that category other than Herbert W. Armstrong.

So we'll talk a lot about some of these who want to accuse and discredit Mr. Armstrong. There is at least one or more individuals—long-time members of the Church—who have told me that Mr. Armstrong didn't try to keep J. H. Allen's book, or any others, a secret. In fact, years ago, back in the 1950s, he actually suggested that the Church members read these books. He even had them in the Church libraries, as opposed to these men who try and say that Mr. Armstrong plagiarized this material and hid these books away, which were found in his basement after he died. Then they like to paint it like this was the first time—while rummaging through his basement after he died—that they found these books published years before he ever published his books, which is proof that he just copied this material.

Well, that's a good story if you're looking for a reason to discredit the servant that God used to bring the Truth in the last days. I'm here to tell you, brethren, that this knowledge of British Israel is just one piece of the puzzle. It's one piece of the puzzle that is useless on its own, except that it also goes hand-in-hand with that which was totally unique to Mr. Armstrong's ministry; and that was the knowledge of the plan of salvation pictured in the Sabbath and the Holy Days, the hope of salvation as God is reproducing Himself, and the God-Family as our ultimate goal and hope of salvation. That was a unique message, brethren, and no one else taught it. I'll be giving some sermons on that in the future as well.

Just to put this in perspective, there are some out there in other groups and on their own who believe that this teaching on British Israelism is the single most important doctrine, if you want to call it, in the Church. I disagree with that. Yes, it is the master key to understanding how to put many of the Biblical prophecies together, but it's just one piece of the puzzle; and it basically fails to fulfill anything if the revelation of Jesus Christ—the knowledge of His master plan and that which is reflected in the Sabbath and the Holy Days—is not put together with it. There's only one man who put all of those pieces together.

A lot of the material that we are going to be going through is that which Mr. Armstrong masterfully summarized in that book, *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy*. So let's get into that this afternoon.

There are many who have believed over the years that the Bible is not true or credible. The reason is that they look at those promises of great national wealth that God made to Israel, starting with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And because they are looking at the Jews for the fulfillment of that, they say, "This could never have been true because the Jews have never had all of this wealth. They never received the fulfillment of those promises that God made, so surely the Bible must not be true." One of our great American leaders, Thomas Paine, was one of those who ended up totally repudiating the Bible. The reason that he and other men became deists and began to repudiate the authenticity of the Bible was the fact that they never saw the fulfillment of these promises in the Jewish people.

So, why else is this knowledge important, and why is it legitimately and truly a master key for understanding prophecy, as Mr. Armstrong said? Because it will help substantiate the fact—when you understand the Truth—that God has fulfilled the very promises that He gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He absolutely has, and those promises are being fulfilled. It is a marvelous thing to see when you put those pieces together in order. It absolutely does substantiate the veracity of a God who created and called a holy, chosen people in Israel. And He has fulfilled, and is fulfilling, those very promises that He gave originally to Abraham.

As I quoted to you earlier, "We believe the PROMISES were made to Abraham . . ." So let's look at those promises to Abraham.

Let's turn to Genesis 11:31. First, I want to make the point, also to put things into perspective: recognize that the entire Bible was written for Israel. Did you realize that? It is not a book. It is not a book of books that was written for the entire world, for anybody who wants to pick it up and read it. The Bible is a chronicle of a people named Israel. It was written and preserved, by the very hand of God and by His miraculous intervention, for Israel. As Mr. Raymond Cole used to say many, many times when quoting 1 Corinthians 10, Paul said that these things were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

All the experiences of those people that are chronicled in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation—all of those experiences in the time of Israel—were written for the last-day Church. Who is that Church? None other than spiritual Israel. This Bible was written for Israel, and it was written about the experiences of those that God called and separated as a holy nation. It's very exclusive, brethren. Many people in the world and other churches who use that Bible and think they're Christians would shutter to hear me

say these things. They're going to shutter to hear a lot of other things that will come out of my mouth; but I am telling you, brethren, it is an exclusive book. It was written for an exclusive purpose, and it was for God's chosen people. It was written for the Church, those who become spiritual Israelites by virtue of receiving the down payment of the Holy Spirit and being begotten into that family—Israelites.

If you'll notice, of all the books of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, there are only eleven chapters—the first eleven chapters of the first book, Genesis—that do not relate directly to Israel. The rest of Genesis and all of the other books relate directly to Israel. Other nations are mentioned in the Bible in so far as they come into contact with Israel. Only the first eleven chapters of Genesis do not involve Israel, and that's only because it leads from creation up to the establishment of Israel. It puts everything into perspective.

Just think about that. The Biblical text, all that is a part of the Bible, was written probably in about a four-thousand-year period, from creation up until the final books of the New Testament were written by the apostles. And two thousand years—half of that time—is encompassed in the first eleven chapters. The summary of the first half of human experience up until that time is just quickly scanned through in the first eleven chapters. From then on, it is focused entirely on the experiences of the holy nation that God called, Israel.

And so does it apply all the way through those books of the New Testament written by the apostles and preserved—Christ Himself being the High Priest of that holy nation. Israel is the significant topic of the entire Bible. It is valuable, and it is a master key for us to be able to put those things into perspective, to know who Israel is—the different branches of that family—and how God is manifesting Himself to fulfill the very promises that He gave originally to Abraham.

So let's read Genesis 11:31, and we'll see the history of that calling of Abram.

And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.

If you want to study it, you will find the commentators have a number of interpretations of these events. But here we find that Abram was called out of Babylon,

which was his homeland, and he was of a royal family. His father, referenced here as Terah, was of a kingly line in Babylon; and so Abram was of royal stock. Sarai, who became Sarah, was Abram's half sister. They shared the same father, which is this Terah, but they had different mothers. So she was a princess. Whatever the circumstances were, and God doesn't provide them here, that entire family, including the father, made this journey out of Babylon. Now, they didn't get all the way out of Babylon, because they stopped in Haran. So they didn't go to Canaan. The Bible doesn't tell us why, but they stopped. They were headed to Canaan, and they stopped in Haran.

Haran was the older brother of Abram, and he died. The Bible doesn't tell us at what point he died, but this was Lot's father, Terah's older son. When it says they came unto Haran—now, was it already named Haran, or did they actually name this town after the oldest son of Terah at the time? That's a likelihood. It doesn't tell us how long they were there, but there's a good chance that they were there for many, many years.

[Verse 32] And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.

Then turn over to Genesis 12, and we'll pick up the story in verse 1:

Now the [Eternal] had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee . . .

So God had determined to work specifically and uniquely with Abram. Initially, even his father and some of his other kinsmen came out of the center of Babylon with him, but they stopped short. God still had to call Abram out specifically to get him into the land that he intended for him to go—the land of Canaan.

Notice here the first mention of the special promises, which are the topic of this entire sermon:

Now the [Eternal] had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And [There is a condition.] I will make of thee a great nation . . .

This is the first time this promise is made, and it is a conditional promise, which means it's not automatic. God didn't certify that He was going to do this no matter what,

but He basically made an offer to Abram. He said, "Abram, if you do something, I promise to do something else." That's what a conditional promise is. This will become important, because down the line (and you already know the answer in the back of the book) that promise ultimately became unconditional. We'll see that part this afternoon as well, but right now God begins by making a conditional promise to Abram. If Abram does something—obeys God, fulfills His will—then God agrees and binds Himself to do something in return. What was it that was given as the promise?

. . . I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 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.

Was that a singular promise in that text I just read from verse 2 through verse 3? Or what do we find? This will become more apparent as we go through it, but there are two aspects of the promise that God made. The first one in verse 2 was that Abram would be made a great nation. Then, part two of the promise in verse 3, ". . . and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Those are two different promises, brethren. They don't overlap. One part of the conditional promise to Abram says that out of Abram would come a great nation, and the second part of the promise says that all families of the earth would be blessed because of Abram and something that God was going to do through him.

What are those two promises? The mistake that most have made in the world, and that which Mr. Armstrong brought out and made so simple to understand, was the fact that there is a twofold promise. It was a conditional promise to Abraham, and the twofold promise included 1) a national, material promise that the descendants of Abraham would be a great nation, and 2) a blessing to all families on the earth. You know what that blessing to all families on the earth was—the fact that the one seed, Jesus Christ, would come out of the lineage of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob. It is through Christ that all humanity has an opportunity to receive salvation in that Kingdom. That's the second, greatest, most significant part of the promise, but it is one of two promises that were made in this covenant that God was proposing to Abram at the time. They are simply classed as one—the national promise of material wealth and abundance as a promise of race, according to the physical ancestors of Abraham, and the promise of salvation through Jesus Christ, which we can call grace. It was two promises—a promise of race and a promise of grace. We'll look at those two aspects as we go through.

At this time, though, it was conditional. It was not certified, because if Abram failed to fulfill a certain requirement, then all bets were off. As we read in Genesis 12:1, God said, "Get thee out of thy country . . . And I will make of thee a great nation." He is saying, "If you do this—if you act in faith, if you're willing to trust me and do what I am telling you to do, which is to pick up yourself, your families and all that you possess; and get out of your homeland, that area where you are comfortable, where you feel secure and safe; and go into this strange land—then I promise that I am going to give you great wealth as a nation and that all of these families will be blessed from someone I am going to raise up of your seed." So it was conditional.

Later, God reaffirmed this conditional promise of the physical blessings—the race blessings. Notice it in Genesis 17:1. We'll read the first nine verses. Notice as we go through, you're not going to hear a reference to part two—the promise of grace through the one seed, Jesus Christ, and the blessing of all families upon the earth. This is strictly related to the first part of that promise.

"And when Abram was ninety years old and nine . . ." Now, when he came out of Babylon, he was seventy-five years old. So, fourteen to fifteen years later, God is reconfirming that original promise.

And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the [Eternal] appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

It's a restatement of the conditional promise.

. . . walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

Here we find that God even expands the promise, because if you remember, back in Genesis 12, He promised that He would make of Abram a great nation. Now, in fact, God is expanding and filling out that promise. ". . . thou shalt be a father of many nations." Not just one nation, but many nations.

Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make

thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee [What is the gift? What is the promise?], the land . . .

This, you see, brethren, is not a promise of the coming of Jesus Christ and of salvation. No, this is specifically related to the first part of the race promise—the covenant concerning race. The physical descendants of Abraham would be the recipients of great wealth and abundance as nations. Not even just one, but many nations of people. What was their gift? It was going to be the land.

. . . and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.

After Abraham proved that he was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac, God made that promise unconditional, but not before. Because, you notice here, the promise is still conditional, based upon Abraham's faithfulness. So God could have retracted the promises at any time depending upon what Abram, who became Abraham, actually did with it—whether he was willing to obey and trust God, or whether he was not. It was still conditional up until this time.

You know the story. God promised that Sarah was going to have a child. Sarah and Abraham had a hard time believing because they were well past childbearing age. Yet she did conceive and have a son—but not before Sarah and Abraham had taken things into their own hands. They believed the promise of God that Abraham would have a son through whom all of these promises of national wealth would be fulfilled; but because it didn't come right away and they had to wait for many, many years, they naturally did what all human beings do. They said, "Well, I still believe God is true; I know He is going to fulfill His promises. So maybe what He meant was that Abraham was supposed to have a child through Sarah's handmaid, Hagar." And so they were going to help God along with the fulfillment of His promise. They used good, old, carnal reasoning and look at the price that all of the descendants of Israel have continued to pay centuries and millennia later.

The offspring that came from Hagar, who also was the father of great nations—who we were always taught were the Arabs—have continually been a thorn in the side of Israel. If our well-meaning president and our other national leaders think they are going to find a solution to terrorism, that they are going to solve the world's problems and bring about utopia upon this earth, where all of us get along and there is no distinction between religions—between Christianity and Islam and all of the other eastern religions—they have another guess coming. They are never going to achieve it because God wrote into those relationships the penalties that are still being paid by humanity, and will continue to be paid, until the very revelation of Jesus Christ when He comes to take possession of His Kingdom upon this earth. Until then, those prices are going to continue to be paid.

Ishmael and his descendants became a curse to Israel because it was a reflection of Abraham and Sarah taking things into their own hands and not waiting at that time and trusting God to fulfill His promise. How many times are we guilty of that, brethren? How many times do we try to force the issue in our lives in some physical way, some challenge that we have in our day-to-day lives or a circumstance we come up against? We know what God requires—we know what His law is—yet God's law seems to be an obstacle in front of us. If we could just get around it, if we just didn't have that obligation—whether it was to keep the Sabbath or a Holy Day, to tithe, or to do something else that just seems to be an obstacle at the particular time—if we could justify not obeying, just this one time, then everything would work out fine.

Well, that's exactly what Abraham and Sarah were doing. They were going to help God along; but it never works out according to human wisdom, and it didn't for them. Abraham learned the lesson, because he is the father of the faithful. Abraham certainly learned that when it comes to God's promises, we can absolutely count on those things. And no matter how difficult it becomes for us in the flesh, no matter how long God makes us wait, He is going to fulfill it—if we're patient and if we believe. The problem is, most of us are not willing to wait that long for God. We basically give God a time limit. I think it is especially that way with health circumstances. "If God heals me by a certain date, then I'll wait and trust Him; but if He doesn't, then I have no choice but to take matters into my own hands." That is a very natural reaction, brethren, especially when we are in a very serious health calamity and when we are experiencing pain. As I have told you many times before, I don't begin to put myself in that position and tell you what I would or wouldn't do personally, because no one knows unless they are there. But I know, brethren, that it is incredibly hard to really trust God and wait for Him. As I have quoted to you many times, and will yet, Job said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

You see, Abraham and Sarah hadn't learned that lesson up to this point. All they could see were the realities of the physical, which were incredibly compelling. Sarah couldn't have a baby; that was ridiculous and preposterous! They would have never mentioned it to someone else, especially when God gave that promise probably twenty-five years before the time she finally conceived. And so for twenty-five years, they were supposed to believe and to tell their friends and neighbors, "Oh yes, I know I am over ninety years old, but I still believe that I am going to have a child"? Ridiculous, isn't it? Humanly speaking. And so are some of the things that God probably wants us to believe and adhere to in our own lives that humanly might seem ridiculous, but only if we don't trust that He is faithful and true and will fulfill all of those promises that He has given to us.

Abraham and Sarah did finally learn the lesson; you can read the story on your own. Sarah did conceive; Isaac was born. He grew to be a young lad, and then was the test where God required Abraham to sacrifice his own son. Again, you can read the account yourself; I'm not going to go through the details. By this time, Abraham had learned to trust God implicitly. He knew God had promised that those twofold promises of race and grace would be fulfilled through Isaac. How could that be? Because now God was going to require him to put Isaac on an altar, to bind him, cut his throat and offer him as a sacrifice.

Abraham learned that you don't question. If you know it is God who has commanded, then you simply obey and leave things in God's hands to His fulfilling. Abraham must have believed that God was going to resurrect Isaac. How else could he have been willing, in confidence, to put the knife to the throat of his own son—that priceless offspring that God had promised and for whom they had waited so many years? He must have absolutely believed that God was going to perform the miracle to resurrect him. He had no reason or expectation to think that God was going to stop him; yet, as you know, God did stop him right before he sliced Isaac's throat with that knife, and God told him not to touch the lad. By that act of faithfulness, Abraham proved that he did love and respect that God who had called him and brought him into that land. He was faithful, and so he became the father of the faithful. Because of that act of faithfulness—those works of faith that Abraham performed—now God makes His promise to Abraham unconditional. Notice it in Genesis 22:15:

And the angel of the [Eternal] called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the [Eternal] . . .

This is significant. God is getting ready to bind Himself inexorably, even swearing by His very own name.

... By myself have I sworn, saith the [Eternal], 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; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And [Here's part two.] in thy seed [singular] shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

This is a repetition of the twofold promise of race and grace that was going to come out of the descendants of Abraham—the wealth of mighty nations, physically, as well as the promise of the one seed, Jesus Christ, through whom all families of the earth would be blessed by being given the opportunity for salvation, to be born as sons in the very Family of God. Both of those promises are reconfirmed and now made unconditional to Abraham. In this reconfirmation of God, you did not see a condition placed—*if* Abraham would do something. This time, because of the faithfulness of Abraham, God made it unconditional. Now, no matter what Abraham, Isaac, Jacob or any of those descendants did—whether they obeyed God, loved God, hated God or despised Him—God had bound Himself inexorably to continue to fulfill every one of those promises to those descendants. Now it was unconditional.

Is there any reason, brethren, why the Northwestern democracies of Europe, Great Britain, and the United States continue to receive such incredible blessings out of all people on the face of the earth? Is it because of our inherent goodness, or our worth, or because we deserved something more than any other people on the earth? Absolutely not. We have not reaped these promises because we were better or more deserving. God bound Himself because of Abraham's faithfulness in being willing to sacrifice Isaac. As a result, we continue to receive the blessings that we are all taking advantage of right now. Do you stop and think about that? It's not because we were worthy at all. Not a bit.

Well, the fact is, brethren, that all who believe in the Bible and call themselves Christians recognize the promise of Christ as that one seed. Why? Because the Apostle Paul expounded upon it in Galatians 3. Let's read it. So the promise of salvation through Christ, those who are truly Abraham's seed in the Spirit, was expounded upon by the Apostle Paul. Most people understand this. This is not a big mystery.

Galatians 3 and beginning in verse 6:

Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

That's not just somebody who claims they have faith; this means somebody who's legitimately of faith. And who can be of faith, except one who is being motivated and guided by God and Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit? There is no faith, short of the influence of God. So those that are cut off from God may have their own form of human faith or confidence, even in those things they are willing to die for, but it's not the faith of Jesus Christ. It's not legitimate; it's not real. That comes through the power of God's Holy Spirit.

. . . they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

This is the very promise that we've seen in those chapters in Genesis. Here Paul restates that promise of grace—the second part of the promise to Abraham.

. . . In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. [Now skip down to verse 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.

To whom was the promise of grace made out of the descendants of Abraham? It was not a promise that all who were physically born of Abraham had the right to salvation and to be born into the Family of God. No, the promise of grace was that the one seed, Jesus Christ, would be a physical descendant of Abraham, and it would be through that one seed that all families of the earth would have an opportunity for salvation.

Verse 26:

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither

Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed [There's the answer.], and heirs according to the promise.

What promise? The very promise that was a part of the covenant made between God and Abraham. That's the promise—the second part of that twofold promise, which we call the promise of grace. It came through Jesus Christ; and it was offered not just to physical Israelites born of the flesh, but to all whom God would call into and make part of the very Body of Christ—whether physical Israelites or physical Gentiles, whether Jew or Greek, according to God's election.

That, brethren, is how we demonstrate that this belief in the unique aspects of Israel as a holy nation is not to be discriminatory against the rest of the nations of the earth. We do not use this fundamental of belief as a means to look down our noses at the Gentile nations of this world, which is what many have done who have attached themselves to this ideology of British Israelism or the Israel Identity Movement. It is taken and misused, perverted, and twisted by the majority of those who understand it.

Many people understand who the physical descendants of Israel are, but many of them misuse that. Either they believe there is something special about them that makes them worthy of blessings, which is not true, or else they believe they are the ones who have special access to God and the rest of the world does not. But the truth is, brethren, anyone who is not part of Christ—whether Jew or Gentile, Israelite or non-Israelite—is cut off from God and the promises. It is only through Jesus Christ that any human being has an opportunity for salvation, and that requires a call.

We've got thousands and millions of physical Israelites extant in parts of this world out of the lost ten tribes of Israel, and they are not in a relationship with God at all. They are absolutely cut off, even as the Jews are, because they do not have Christ. They cannot and will not have Christ until God chooses to call. In the meantime, it is only to a very small handful on the face of this earth that God has even provided that opportunity—those whose names were written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world.

Yes, millions of names are yet going to be written in that Book when He does set His hand to call the rest of the world at the time that Jesus Christ returns; and there may be even many who are called before that time and who will be a part of that innumerable multitude who will have made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb before His

arrival. But for the present time, brethren, only those who now have received that call have the opportunity to partake of that grace, which is part of the second of the twofold promise to Abraham. Salvation for mankind is only through Jesus Christ, but this is only the second portion of the twofold promise. Go back to Genesis 17, and we'll quickly read the first few verses again.

Beginning in verse 1:

And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the [Eternal] appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

Now, could that refer to the promise of Jesus Christ? Absolutely not. Why? Because Christ is the High Priest of one nation only, which is the Church—spiritual Israel—manifested as the Body of Christ. He is not the father of many nations. Christ is the High Priest of one nation, spiritual Israel. But this promise was that Abraham would be the father of many nations. Verse 5:

Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

Most people try to combine those two promises and say they were all fulfilled through Jesus Christ. Not at all. There was a promise of race—that He was going to multiply the physical descendants of Abraham as the sand of the sea. And separately, then, was the promise of grace—that Christ, as the one seed, would come out of the descendants of Abraham, and that all families on the earth would have that opportunity for salvation through Him. These "many nations" cannot refer to Christ. He is King and High Priest of one nation, spiritual Israel—the Church. So who are these other "many nations" that were promised to Abraham? Did God fulfill it?

1 Peter 2:9:

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation . . ." So, yes, those that are called, who become a part of the Church, who receive that calling—that opportunity to receive the down payment of the Holy Spirit—are called to become a part of a holy nation. But it's not many nations; it's just one.

. . . an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

These are they who have been called to become a part of spiritual Israel. They have become Israelites—Israelites of the Spirit—regardless of what their physical, flesh and blood heritage might be. But through Jesus Christ and receipt of the Holy Spirit, they have become a part of that one holy nation, which is the Body of Christ. No one can be a part of that nation, except by a call; but the promise of race was given as a distinct and a separate promise. Go back with me again to Genesis 17, and now pick up verse 6:

And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee . . .

Is this the reference again to that one seed, Christ? Notice as we read on:

. . . I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations . . .

He didn't say "in His generation," referring to Jesus Christ. This is a part of the race gift, the promise to the physical descendants of Abraham, and not the promise of Christ's coming as our High Priest and Savior. No, ". . . thy seed after thee in *their* generations . . ." He's talking about a multitude of physical people.

. . . for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee [What? Salvation through Jesus Christ? No.], the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

The promise to the physical descendants of Israel was the land of Canaan. We're going to find that it was expanded even beyond that. God will expand this promise as we get to the promises to Isaac and Jacob, but it begins with the promise of land in Canaan and that they would become a great nation; and in fact, that Abraham would be the father of many nations, as God expanded that promise. It is a separate and distinct promise from the promise of grace through Jesus Christ. How much land did God promise? Genesis 15:18 gives us a hint:

In the same day the [Eternal] made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.

If you know the river of Egypt, which is the Nile, you know where that runs—down in the heart of Egypt. From the Nile all the way to the Euphrates River in the east, in Babylon, was what God promised to give to the Israelites in this national promise of race. Let me ask you this: Did Israel at any time, even at its height as a kingdom under Solomon, ever possess the land all the way from the Nile River in Egypt to the Euphrates? The very greatest time of the national prominence of Israel in antiquity was under the reign of Solomon. And probably even your Bibles may have a map in the back that shows the extent of the reign of Solomon. I have a number of those maps. And the greatest reign of the Israelites under Solomon never got much beyond the territory that we call Palestine. It certainly never reached to the Euphrates River, let alone all the way to the Nile in Egypt; yet this is what God promised was going to be part of that physical inheritance of those descendants of Abraham.

That has never been fulfilled, because the Jews certainly have never received that kind of a kingdom. We've never seen the fulfillment within the descendants of Judah—those that are called the Jews today—and their small, little amount of land in Palestine and around Jerusalem that they're feverishly defending right now. They've never received that kind of a promise, and they never received the fulfillment of that promise at the height of the Israelites in the past; so it must be something that is yet going to happen in the future. But it is a part of the race promise, not the grace promise. So it is going to be a spiritual fulfillment. When is it going to happen? At the return of Jesus Christ during His millennial reign. You can bet that God will assign the land and put all of those nations back into the proper place where He intended them to be. He is going to bless every nation upon the earth in that millennial reign. The physical Israelites are going to be gathered back together and are going to possess the land that God has indicated for them within the bounds of their inheritance that He promised to Abraham.

Those promises, brethren, have not yet been fulfilled. They certainly have never been fulfilled in the Jews. The Jews, in fact, have never been more than one nation. Abraham was promised to be the father of many nations. Where are these many nations that were promised as a part of the Birthright? That, we will see.

Next, the promises to Abraham were also reconfirmed to Isaac, and no one else. Notice Genesis 26:1. At this point, the promises were given to Abraham, but those many nations didn't spring from multiple sons of Abraham. No, the promises were passed to one son of Abraham's, who was Isaac, and those promises were passed to one son of Isaac's, Jacob, as we will see. So, at this point, those promises were held in the personage of one man. Abraham, as Mr. Armstrong put it, was a one-man nation. And then those promises were vested in Isaac, his one son. Isaac was a one-man nation until it was passed to Jacob as a one-man nation—until the sons of Jacob began that multiplication, and those promises that God had given began to be fulfilled according to how He was going to work. But it passed first from Abraham to one son, Isaac.

Genesis 26:1:

And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar. And the [Eternal] appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of . . .

Here is a test for Isaac. They are fleeing from a famine; and, physically speaking, with the events that are going on around them, it just made perfect sense to go where the food was, which was down in Egypt. Yet God stopped him, and said, "No, I don't want you to go to Egypt. I know that's what humanly appears to be the wise thing to do, but that's not what I want you to do. I want you to go here instead, and I promise I'm going to take care of you and your family." So Isaac had to have his faith tested, whether he would be obedient to God or not—just like you and I do on a day-by-day basis.

"Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of . . ." And it was probably a land that looked pretty desolate at the time. It probably looked like the most foolish thing that anyone could do, to go where God was leading him, because it probably looked like an area where there wasn't going to be any sustenance at all for his family and for his possessions. Yet God promised that He was going to provide.

Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries . . .

Here God is restating to Isaac, the chosen progeny of Abraham, those same promises of race and grace that were originally given decades before.

. . . for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father; And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries [That's the promise of race.]; and in thy seed [Here's the second, separate promise.] shall all the nations of the earth be blessed . . .

This is a re-certification of the promise of the arrival of Jesus Christ as the one seed through whom salvation would come. God restated both the promise of race—national abundance and wealth—as well as the promise of the one seed, Christ, who would come out of the descendants of Isaac.

. . . Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

Again, you see that these promises were not conditional. No, God had already bound Himself unconditionally to fulfill the promise He made to Abraham, and He was now restating it to Isaac, Abraham's son.

Then, in Genesis 24, we find another separate blessing that was given, even inspired through the relatives of Rebekah as they were sending her off to marry Isaac. What was this blessing that was pronounced on Rebekah?

Genesis 24:60:

And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.

An expanded part of the promise was recorded here—that God's intent of the promise of race to the Israelites through Isaac and Rebekah was going to be the fact that she would be the mother of thousands of millions. ". . . and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them." Now, what is that referring to, "possessing the gate of those which hate them"? This was a confirmation of the same promise given to Abraham, that his physical descendants would possess the gates of his enemies. Notice it in Genesis 22:16:

And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the [Eternal], 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; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.

If you have an old copy, or access to an old copy, of Mr. Armstrong's book *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy*, there is actually a fold-out page of the world map in one of the later versions. It shows the proliferation of the greatest extent of the British Commonwealth and the United States, and all that those two nations possessed together at the same time at their height earlier in this century. Between those two nations of the Commonwealth of Britain and the United States was the possession of every strategic seaport and significant land area.

The map is really terrific because it shows, in a picture form, a certification that God did absolutely fulfill this very promise that those descendants of Abraham and Isaac were going to possess the gates of their enemies. All the way from the Panama Canal, the Suez Canal, the Rock of Gibraltar—every significant, strategic point on the face of the earth was held at a given time, at the height, by either a commonwealth nation of Great Britain, or the United States. That's just a fact, brethren. There's no one else that ever had the combined wealth, prominence, military might or world domination that was manifested by the United States and the British Commonwealth—not even the Roman Empire or any other empire that has ever existed on the earth.

Mr. Armstrong stated categorically that this was a fulfillment of the very promise made to Abraham and restated to Isaac—that they would possess the gates of those who hate them. ". . . thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies." Those two countries collectively did possess the most strategic ports and areas of land and sea, which had everything to do with managing commerce, trade, and military might. Those enemies were controlled significantly because of the possession of those strategic land and sea gates.

These same promises, then, were reconfirmed to Jacob. So God continued to reconfirm the covenant all the way down each generation. First to Abraham, then to Isaac, and now He confirms the covenant again to Jacob. First, the birthright promises are intended for the first-born son; that's the way it's supposed to work. It was intended that the first-born son inherit the birthright promises—the greatest portion between those and the other offspring of the father.

Let's notice Genesis 27:26. "And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son." You know the story, and I won't dwell on it, where Rebekah and Jacob have gone into collusion to deceive Isaac who, in his old age, is blind. Esau, the eldest son, is the one who, by human standards, should have physically received the Birthright promises of Abraham through Isaac. And yes, they were promised, as we'll see. It was God's intention all along that Jacob was going to be the son who was going to receive those Birthright promises. Yet, again, even as Abraham and Sarah were not willing to wait for the fulfillment of God's promise and took matters into their own hands with Hagar, so also did Rebekah and Jacob take matters into their own hands in an attempt to surreptitiously gain the Birthright promises, which they did, and God allowed it; but it wasn't without prices to be paid. Here, we see Jacob who dressed himself like his brother and put the lambskins on his arms to make his arms feel hairy, and the other things to make him smell like his brother who was the shepherd and the hunter.

And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son. And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the [Eternal] hath blessed: Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven . . .

Now Isaac is blessing his son—who he thinks is Esau, but is actually Jacob—and is passing on the Birthright promises.

. . . Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.

These are the very same promises of blessing and cursing that God originally gave to Abraham.

Then, Genesis 28:10. Isaac has bestowed upon Jacob the Birthright, even though he is the second son. Esau was born first; and yet when Jacob was born, that little hand came out and grabbed the heel of his brother. That's how he received the name Jacob, which means "heel catcher" or "supplanter." Jacob had some pretty serious character flaws from birth. If you go through the story, you find out that Jacob *was* a supplanter

and that he was capable of all kinds of devious mischief. Well, he had to pay some prices too. Yet Jacob changed; he did come to have a relationship with God and to recognize and fear Him.

Genesis 28:10:

And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the [Eternal] stood above it, and said . . .

So, in this dream, in this vision, God is talking to Jacob while he sleeps, and He is about to reconfirm the very covenant promises that were given to Abraham and Isaac.

And, behold, the [Eternal] stood above it, and said, I am the [Eternal] God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

This is a restatement of the twofold promise of race and grace—a promise of physical wealth and national success, as well as a reconfirmation of the second promise of grace through Jesus Christ as the one seed. Now they are reconfirmed in Jacob just as they were confirmed in Isaac and originally in Abraham. But here we find that this promise of race was worded differently and expanded even beyond the land of Canaan. Notice that it was first stated as Canaan, and then to Isaac it was stated as the bounds from the river in Egypt to the Euphrates, and now look at how He defines the limit of all that the physical descendants of Jacob were going to possess. Verse 14:

And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south . . .

The Hebrew word for "spread abroad" means "to break forth." It means "to break forth and to spread without limits." This promised place has no limit on how far in each

direction Jacob's descendants would actually spread. It didn't say that the fulfillment of all of these national promises of wealth and of nations was going to be limited to the Palestine area or right there in Canaan. Basically, it was expanding that promise to say that the descendants of Jacob were going to spread out around the entire earth and that they would become the phenomenal power on the face of the earth by virtue of the Birthright promises that were bestowed upon them. They would continue to be blessed as they spread abroad, but they would ultimately be brought back to the Promised Land at Christ's return. Notice verse 15: "And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest . . ." So they were going to go somewhere else. This wasn't a promise that indicated that they were going to stay together in one area of the world—in that Promised Land. Not at all.

. . . and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

Ultimately, the prophecy was that those physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were going to be gathered back together in their homeland. That will happen when Jesus Christ returns and establishes His Kingdom on this earth, because the world will be put back according to the nations as God has drawn it. All nations will inhabit their inheritance. It will be a blessing to every nation, but the specific blessing of Israel will be in that Promised Land.

The Jews have never become a great nation. They certainly have not become a company of nations. Notice Genesis 35:9. We see now a further expansion, a definition of the Birthright promises, as God reconfirms them to Jacob. He already confirmed them once to Jacob, and now, years later, we find that God again restates those two promises of race and grace to Jacob.

And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padanaram, and blessed him. And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name . . .

Here we find the very moment in time when God changes the name of Jacob to Israel—the first time that it's used. This becomes the signature of those whom God makes a part of His holy people.

. . . but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel. And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee . . .

We haven't heard that before. Before, we heard the promise to Abraham that God would make a great nation of him. Then, He expanded it to say that Abraham would be the father of many nations. Now, we find a further distinction, a specification, of exactly how He was going to bring that promise to bear.

. . . a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins [A nation and a company of nations—keep it in mind.]; And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land. [That's not a promise of salvation through Christ; it's a promise of physical possessions—the land, wealth, and national success.] And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him.

The Jews, brethren, have never become a great nation, let alone a company of nations. That fulfillment was never meant to come through Judah. Judah, as we are going to find, is only one tribe of twelve. The fulfillment of the promises of Israel's national wealth and expansion were not going to come through the tribe of Judah at all. It has everything to do with that which is called "the lost ten tribes of Israel." When we get into the next segment, which we're not going to cover today, we will see that the Birthright promises among the sons of Jacob, who became Israel, were not passed to Judah. The Scepter, the promise of Christ as that one seed, was promised to come through the son who was named Judah. The Birthright promises of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were to come through a different son, Joseph, and the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh. Just keep that in mind.

". . . the Covenants (including the New Covenant), and the promises pertain alone to ISRAEL." Let's notice that quickly before we close. No matter what else may be said or interpreted by those who want to read the Bible and ascribe to themselves the right to partake of the promises of God, the promises are all for Israel. Whether it be the promises of race to the physical descendants of Israel, or whether it be the promise of grace for spiritual Israel—those whom God has called and placed within the Body of Christ—it is all Israel. None of those promises are given to anyone but Israel. That fact causes many in the world to hate this concept. They consider it isolationist and exclusivist; they consider it racial intolerance to speak about the promises of God to

Israel. Well, I have already told you that this entire Bible was written about Israel, for Israel—about the physical Israelites and, in the New Testament, the spiritual Israelites who were a part of the first-century Church. It was written for those of you, brethren, upon whom the ends of the world are come, spiritual Israel of the last days. It's here as your handbook to show you what God requires of you as one of His faithful people if you want to receive the bounty and the blessings, especially of the fulfillment of the second covenant promises of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Let's notice very quickly that God told Abraham that those promises would not be given to Ishmael. They would not be given to Esau either. Those were the things that made sense to both of their fathers. Abraham assumed that Ishmael should be the one God was going to bless and that He would fulfill those covenant promises through him. Notice Genesis 17:18: "And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!" See, Abraham knew that God wasn't looking favorably upon Ishmael, yet Abraham loved Ishmael; and he wanted God to love him as much as he did, and to bless him and give him those Birthright promises.

. . . O that Ishmael might live before thee! And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed . . .

He's saying, "Abraham, you've got to get off of this. You've got to come to accept the fact that you are going to have a son through Sarah, and he's the one who will receive the promises."

. . . Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.

God determined that it was going to be Isaac and none other. It was not going to be through Ishmael or any other child of Abraham's—but Isaac. Notice, then, Isaac who wanted Esau to receive it. After it passed to Isaac, Isaac assumed it should go to his first-born son, Esau. Jacob wasn't even in his thinking at all. Turn with me to Romans 9:9, and we see a synopsis that the Apostle Paul gave here, in describing that story.

For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son. And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to

election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

God determined that Jacob was going to be the son through whom those Birthright promises were going to be fulfilled, even though he was the second of those twin sons that were born. By natural right, it should have been Esau, but God—in order to show that He's the One who's directing the events in the annals of human history—determined that it would be Jacob. Jacob and his mother, Rebecca, knowing that prophecy, took matters into their own hands. They didn't need to do that; God would have fulfilled it. God had determined it. If they had waited in faith, God would have worked it out in His own way so that Jacob would have been the recipient of the Birthright, even though Isaac was dead set against it at the time. It just goes to show, brethren, that human beings are not the ones that determine. God is the One who directs. He directed Abraham and said, "It's Isaac, not Ishmael—no matter what you think." And in time, even in how He allowed circumstances to work out, He said, "It is Jacob and not Esau. Those promises will not come through Esau; they will not come through Ishmael. They will come through Jacob," whose name was changed to Israel. And it is still through Israel that all of those promises are being fulfilled, both physically and spiritually.

If we are not a part of Israel as the Church, we have no part of Christ and no opportunity for the promises of salvation. We must be a part of that holy nation, spiritual Israel, through the gift of the Holy Spirit. And for those who are descendants of any other nation except physical Israel, they have not participated in the Birthright promises—only those nations who are the offspring of those twelve tribes of Israel. We will see it as we go on, brethren.

Next time, we're going to look at the descendants of Jacob who became Israel. We're going to see, then, how the Birthright promises and the Scepter promises of kingship and of that one seed, Christ, were actually divided and became a part of two separate branches—one through Joseph and one through Judah. Next time.