

**THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM
THAT HE WOULD BE HEIR
OF THE WORLD
(ROM. 4:13)**

by Anthony Buzzard

Edited by
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Notes on Editing

The main function of my editing process is to honour the Set-apart Name. In keeping with an established practice, I use the Tetragrammaton YHWH for the Name of the Father, or use Elohim which means "Mighty One" or "Almighty." The formal name for the Messiah is Yahushua (yah oo shoo ah), but I also use the more familiar form, Yeshua (yeh shoo ah). I believe both are correct. As for the actual pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton, I believe that the Father's Name should be pronounced as Yahuah (yah oo ah). I encourage my readers to actually pronounce the Father's Name in their reading.

In most cases, actual quotes are left accurate and may include the traditional words for the Father and Son.

A secondary editing function is avoid the many words that have crept into the language of worship, but are false or misleading.

Tanach or *Tanakh*: the Hebrew Scriptures composed of the Law, the Prophets and the poetic Writings.

Brit Chadasha: the Messianic Scriptures (written after the time of the Messiah), and also referred to as the Renewed Covenant Scriptures.

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If you are of Messiah, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the Promise (Gal. 3:29).

The Christian world in general does not understand the ultimate purpose for being a believer in the Messiah. It seems reluctant to believe Shaul's clear teaching that the destiny of believers is closely related to the destiny of Abraham.

Along with his fellow Jews, Shaul, a leading exponent of the Good News, knew well that Almighty had promised Abraham that he would eventually come into possession of the land of Canaan and consequently of the whole world. The certainty of the coming inheritance of the world formed the basis of Israel's national hope of participation in the covenant promise Almighty had made with "father Abraham."

According to Shaul, however, only true believers, Jews and Gentiles alike, become potential participants in the very same inheritance of the world promised to Abraham (Rom. 4:13). Shaul says this so plainly that only the force of a contrary tradition can account for the unfamiliarity of this basic teaching in the Messianic Scriptures.

In Galatians 3:29 Shaul makes one of his determinative statements for the whole Nazarene faith: "If you are Messiah's [i.e., if you are a true believer], then you count as Abraham's offspring and are heirs according to the promise [made to Abraham]."

In Romans 4:13 Shaul's illuminating definition of the promise reveals what the future had in store for Abraham and his spiritual offspring: "The promise made to Abraham and his offspring that he should be heir of the world..."

Combining this information with Galatians 3:29, the truth becomes apparent that the promise to Abraham and to all believers is *that they should be heirs of the world*.

This staggering fact, one would think, would be trumpeted constantly from every Christian pulpit, involving as it does an inspired statement about the future of our earth and the ultimate control of the world. To be heir, of course, is to look forward to possession — in the case of true believers, possession of the world. Could any challenge be more calculated to stir the hearts of believers and drive them onwards to their ultimate goal?

Once grasped, this basic truth of the Scriptures will throw light on numerous parallel passages referring to the destiny of believers: They are "joint-heirs with Messiah" (Rom. 8:17), "Elohim's heirs" (Rom. 8:17), "heirs, because we are the children of

Elohim” (Rom. 8:17).

Heirs of what? Supplying the data from Romans 4:13, we see that believers are “Elohim’s heirs to the world,” “joint-heirs to the world with Messiah,” “heirs to the world, because we are the children of Elohim” (Rom. 8:17). Shaul made the same point when he wrote to the Galatians: “For if the inheritance [of the world] is based on law it is no longer based on a promise, but Elohim granted it [the inheritance of the world] by means of a promise... And if you belong to Messiah then you are Abraham’s offspring and heirs [of the world] according to the promise” (Gal. 3:18, 29).

THE TEACHING OF YESHUA

Yeshua’s teaching is virtually a commentary on the momentous information about Almighty’s plan and promise revealed to Abraham. This is to be expected since Shaul described the whole ministry of Yeshua as a confirmation of “the promises made to the patriarchs” (Rom. 15:8). It will therefore be impossible to understand the Good News if we are unclear about the promises made to Abraham.

The Scriptures that were written after the Messiah cannot be grasped without an understanding of the central message of the older Hebrew Scriptures. Almighty had initiated a Plan for the restoration of mankind when he invited Abraham to leave his native land of Babylon and take up residence in the land of Canaan (Palestine) (Gen. 12:1-4). By covenant oath he promised to give possession of the land of Canaan to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (13:14, 15; 17:8). Long after the Israelites had entered the promised land under Joshua, it was clear that the ultimate acquisition of the land by the patriarchs still lay in the future, for Abraham had never owned a square foot of the territory promised to him. All who reckoned themselves as Abraham’s descendants would share in the same inheritance. To this compelling goal every pious Israelite looked forward with the eyes of faith. Despite every national setback the “covenant” or “word” spoken by Almighty to Abraham served as a rock-firm guarantee of the eventual triumph of the faithful and their possession of the land (see Ps. 105:8-15).

As is well known, Yeshua constantly promised his followers that in the future they would inherit the Kingdom of Almighty. It is a very simple matter to deduce from this that “inheriting the world” (Rom. 4:13) and “inheriting the Kingdom of Almighty” mean exactly the same thing. True believers, therefore, are heirs to the world and heirs to the Kingdom of Almighty.

The destiny of the faithful described throughout the Messianic Scriptures is to inherit the “world” or “Kingdom” with Messiah when he returns. This is a cardinal teaching repeated constantly by the Messiah and Shaul and the other writers of the Messianic Scriptures.

Believers in Scripture must make a conscious effort to rid themselves of the well-entrenched idea that their destiny is to “go to heaven,” “get to heaven,” “gain a home in heaven,” “gain a kingdom beyond the skies,” etc. These phrases are without a shred of scriptural support. They have the unfortunate effect of dismantling Shaul’s assertion

that believers are going to *inherit the world*, as promised to Abraham and Yeshua (Gal. 3:29, Rom. 4:13, above), and rule the world with Yeshua (cp. Rev. 5:10; 2:26; 3:21; 20:1-6; Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:28-30; Luke 19:17; II Tim. 2:12; I Cor. 6:2).

Romans 4:13, therefore, should be a primary text in the thinking of those who seek to follow scriptural teaching. The point needs to be emphasized: the promise of “heaven” is nowhere offered to believers. In the First Century, unlike today, “The thought of Christian inheritance of the Kingdom [or the world, Rom. 4:13] was evidently well enough established in the churches known to Paul so that he has no need to be more explicit” (James Dunn, *Word Biblical Commentary on Romans*, Word Books, 1988, p. 463).

With nearly two thousand years of unscriptural tradition working against them, Scripture readers must take time to meditate on the above passages and adjust their thinking to the teaching of Yeshua and his Emissaries. Yeshua, after all, could not have made himself much clearer! “Blessed are the meek, for they are destined to inherit the EARTH” (Matt. 5:5). This is simply a restatement of the promise made to Abraham — a promise repeated six times in Psalm 37:9, 11, 18, 22, 29, 34, and written long after the death of Abraham:

“But those who wait for YHWH will inherit the land... The meek will inherit the land... YHWH knows the days of the blameless and their inheritance will be for ever... For those blessed by Him will inherit the land... The righteous will inherit the land and dwell in it for ever. Wait for YHWH and keep his way and he will exalt you to inherit the land.”

True to his Israelite heritage, Yeshua reiterates and confirms the Abrahamic promises of Psalm 37 with his famous dictum that the “meek will inherit the land (or earth)” (Matt. 5:5).

We could not wish for a less ambiguous statement about the believer's destiny. The difficulty is that what we know as Christian literature is thoroughly steeped in unscriptural language about “heaven” (“when I get to heaven,” “I’ll go up,” etc.). Passages like Matthew 5:5 are no longer “heard” in their original context. Their meaning is “blocked” by conflicting tradition. They will therefore require close attention, especially in relation to their background in the Hebrew Scriptures, in order for the necessary shift in thinking to occur. Preachers who continue with language about “heaven” should be encouraged to give clear expository sermons on Romans 4:13, Matthew 5:5 and Revelation 5:10, plus the numerous texts which plainly describe the true believer’s goal as the inheritance of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Revelation 5:10 is a precious text which amplifies the original promise to Abraham, confirmed in Messiah:

Messiah purchased for Elohim with his blood “men from every tribe and people and nation, and you have made them to be a Kingdom and priests to our Elohim; and they will reign *upon the earth*.” How very confusing, then, to talk about “going to heaven”!

THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM AND HIS OFFSPRING

Romans 4:13 connects the promise to Abraham closely to the promise to all believers. What then was that promise?

Shaul calls it “the inheritance of the world” (Rom. 4:13). Yeshua refers to it as the “*inheritance of the earth*” (Matt. 5:5). Only Christian tradition, which differs radically from the Scriptures, talks confusingly of the believer’s future as “heaven.”

The details of the promise to Abraham, well understood by First Century believers, but often unknown to contemporary churchgoers, are laid out in Genesis:

Genesis 12:7: “YHWH appeared to Abraham and said, ‘To your offspring I will give this land [Canaan].’”

Genesis 13:14, 15: “Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; for all the land which you see I will give to you and your offspring forever... Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you.”

Genesis 15:18: “On that day YHWH made a covenant with Abraham, saying, ‘to your offspring I have given this land.’”

Genesis 17:7, 8: “And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant to be Elohim to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojourning, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their Elohim”

We have seen that all true believers are reckoned as spiritual offspring of Abraham (Gal. 3:29) and that with Abraham they are “heirs of the world.” This is because the covenant promise given to Abraham (texts just above) guaranteed him the land forever.

It is obvious that the Mighty One initially promised part of the earth to Abraham, certainly not a home in “heaven.” He was invited to inspect his future inheritance by walking up and down in it and by looking to the four points of the compass (not upwards to heaven!) (Gen. 13:14, 15). Thus modern commentaries recognize properly that “the idea of ‘inheritance’ was a fundamental part of Jewish understanding of their covenant relationship with God, above all, indeed almost exclusively in connection with *the land* — the land of Canaan, theirs by right of inheritance as promised to Abraham” (Dunn, *Commentary on Romans*, Vol. I, p. 213).

Before the time of Yeshua and Shaul the promised inheritance of the land had been understood to include not just Canaan but the whole world. This was based on a legitimate reading of many passages in the prophets and Psalms, which expected the Kingdom of Heaven to extend across the earth. The following texts from various

Jewish writings document this concept and throw light on Shaul's thinking about the believer's future:

Ecclesiasticus 44:21: "Abraham, the great forefather of a host of nations, no one was ever his equal in glory. He observed the law of the Most High, and entered into a covenant with him... The Lord therefore promised him on oath to bless the nations through his descendants, to multiply him like the dust on the ground, to exalt his descendants like the stars, and to give them *the land* for their inheritance from sea to sea, from the River to the ends of the earth" (quoting Ps. 72:8).

Jubilees 22:13, 14: "May the Most High God give you all the blessings with which he has blessed me [Abraham] and with which he blessed Adam and Noah... May he cleanse you from all sin and defilement, so that he may forgive you all your transgressions, and your erring through ignorance. May he strengthen you and bless you, and may you *inherit all of the earth*."

Jubilees 32:19: "And I shall give to your [Jacob's] offspring all of *the land* under heaven and they will rule in all nations as they have desired. And after this all of the earth will be gathered together and they will inherit it forever."

I Enoch 5:7: "But to the elect there shall be light, joy and peace, and they shall *inherit the earth*" (cp. Matt. 5:5).

IV Ezra 6:39: "If the world has been created for us, why do we not possess our world as an *inheritance*? How long will this be so?"

THE BELIEVER'S DESTINY

Both the Scriptures and extra-scriptural Jewish writings are filled with the promise to the faithful of future possession of the world.

Psalm 2:8 invites Almighty's Messiah to "Ask of me and I will surely give the nations as your *inheritance* and the very ends of *the earth* as your possession." This is simply the ultimate form of the promise to Abraham of the possession of the world (Rom. 4:13).

The meaning of this astonishing fact about the destiny of the faithful is appropriately brought out by the *International Critical Commentary on Romans* (pp. 109, 111). The verse is paraphrased and explained in a way which beautifully expounds the mind of Shaul:

"The promise made to Abraham and his descendants of worldwide Messianic rule... The promise is that through Christ Abraham should enjoy *worldwide dominion*... the right to universal dominion." That promise is extended to all who accept the terms of the Good News (Acts 8:12).

Throughout the Messianic Scriptures believers are said to be "sons of Almighty" and,

as such, heirs of the “worldwide Messianic rule” promised to Abraham and his offspring. As James Dunn says:

“Integral to the national faith was the conviction that God had given Israel the inheritance of Palestine, the promised land. It is this axiom which Paul evokes and refers to the new Christian movement as a whole, Gentiles as well as Jews. They are the heirs of God” (*Commentary on Romans*).

INHERITING THE KINGDOM

The standard *Renewed Covenant* term for the world dominion promised to Abraham and all the faithful in Messiah is simply the Kingdom of Almighty. Variations are Kingdom of Heaven, my Kingdom and thy Kingdom. The inheritance or possession of the Kingdom is something which believers await. The same promised inheritance appears under another name as future “esteem,” esteem being a well-established alternative term for “Kingdom”:

Mark 10:37: James and John request of Yeshua, “Grant that we may sit in your *esteem*, one on your right and one your left.”

Matthew 20:21: The mother of James and John requests for her sons prominent positions in the future Kingdom: “Command that in your *Kingdom* these two sons of mine may sit, one on your right and one on your left” (cp. “Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the esteem”).

So Shaul, in Romans 8:17, speaks of “the coming esteem to be revealed as ours.” In Romans 5:2 he describes believers as “exulting in the hope of the esteem [or Kingdom] of Elohim.” James has exactly the same prospect in mind when he speaks of believers as “*heirs of the Kingdom* which Elohim has promised to those who love him” (James 2:5).

Elsewhere the Kingdom of Almighty is repeatedly offered to believers as their future reward, with dire warnings about types of conduct which will result in exclusion from the promised Kingdom:

Matthew 25:34: At his return, “The King will say to those on his right hand, ‘Come you who are blessed by my Father, *inherit the Kingdom* prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’”

I Corinthians 6:9, 2: “Do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of Elohim? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers shall *inherit the Kingdom of Elohim*.”

I Corinthians 15:50: “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood *cannot inherit the Kingdom* of Elohim.” The Kingdom is therefore the great event of the future which can only be inherited by resurrection or transformation at the return of Yeshua. Christians

in their present state of frailty cannot yet inherit the Kingdom. But they must prepare for it with all urgency.

Galatians 5:21: "I forewarn you, just as I forewarned you that those who practice such things [immorality, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these] shall not inherit the Kingdom of Elohim."

Ephesians 5:5: "For you know with certainty that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Messiah and Elohim."

Romans 2:12-14 "For not the **hearers** of the law are just before Elohim, but the **doers** of the law shall be justified" (editor).

James 2:5: "Elohim chose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom which He promised to those who love Him."

Matthew 21:38, 43: "Elohim sent his Son... This is the heir, let us kill him and seize his inheritance... Therefore *the Kingdom* will be taken away from you [hostile Jews] and given to a nation producing the fruit of it."

Matthew 5:5: "Blessed are the meek for they shall *inherit the earth*... *Blessed* are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." Inheritance of the earth is equated with gaining the Kingdom of Heaven.

Titus 3:5: "being justified by grace we might be heirs of eternal life according to hope."

The well-known phrases "eternal life" and "everlasting life" represent a single phrase in the original Greek of the Messianic Scriptures. The literal meaning of these terms is "Life in the Coming Age (of the Kingdom)." This is exactly equivalent to participation in "the coming worldwide Messianic Rule on earth" (see above on Rom. 4:13). There is no essential difference between the promise of "eternal life" - "life in the coming age" - and the promise of the Kingdom of Almighty in the land or earth. Permanent life, immortality, in the future Kingdom will be possessed by all true believers.

The future of the world is inextricably bound up with the future of believers, because at the time when Yeshua reappears "creation itself will be set free from the slavery of corruption into the liberty of the esteem of the children of Elohim," i.e. a worldwide Messianic rule or Kingdom of the sons of Almighty (Rom. 8:21).

ABRAHAM AND THE LAND

The writer to the Hebrews insists that Abraham is yet destined to come into his promised inheritance of the world. In chapter 11 the faith of the noble heroes of the Hebrew Scriptures is celebrated. It was "by faith [that] Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a *place which he was to receive as his inheritance*... By faith he

lived in *the land of the promise*, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise... All these died without having received the promise... We [they] are seeking the city which is to come” (Heb. 11:8, 9,13; 13:14). Now what reward was Abraham expecting? It was to live permanently in the land of the promise, described in Hebrews 11:8 as the “place which he was to receive as his inheritance.” This place was not “heaven” as some ethereal state of bliss removed from the earth. (The inheritance is sometimes described as “heavenly,” meaning that its origin is in heaven, though its location will be on earth.) The place destined to be Abraham’s possession was none other than the land of Canaan to which he was called and in which he lived (Heb. 11:9), and by extension, as we have seen, the whole world (Rom. 4:13). The promised land of inheritance was the earth with Canaan as its center.

The same writer exhorts believers not to neglect their promised salvation which he spells out as dominion over “the inhabited earth to come” (Heb. 2:5). Almighty, says the writer, has not subjected to angels the “inhabited world to come,” but He has subjected it - and this is the “greatness” of the salvation which awaits true believers - **to the Messiah and to believers as joint-heirs** (Rom. 8:17). The Good News message of salvation is precisely and expressly a statement about that great future promised to believers. This salvation “was first spoken through the Master Yeshua and confirmed to us by those who heard” (Heb. 2:3). It is “the inhabited **earth of the future** about which we are speaking” (Heb. 2:5). The Good News proclaimed by Yeshua was, of course, the Good News of the Kingdom, which implies the gift to all followers of Yeshua, of world rulership in that future society. The content of the Good News hope is appropriately summarized in the verse which follows. The verse bears repetition: “For Elohim did not subject to angels the inhabited earth to come about which we are speaking” (Heb. 2:5). But he has planned to subject it to man in the Messiah (Heb. 2:8).

It must be plainly stated again that the cherished, popular talk about “heaven” as the destiny of believers is fundamentally misleading. Indeed it undermines and distorts the whole framework of the Good News. It dissolves the reality of the believer’s hope into a nebulous prospect of life as a disembodied soul (a meaningless concept!) in some unknown region away from the earth. It negates Almighty’s great world plan to establish peace on the earth, as promised to Abraham. It negates the Good News of the promised Kingdom (see Dan. 7:18, 22, 27; 2:35, 44).

The Scriptures promises believers that they will share control of the renewed earth of the future to be introduced by the return of Yeshua. As participants in the worldwide dominion of Yeshua Messiah - the Kingdom of Almighty - they will have power to affect the destiny of countless members of the human race. They will be instrumental, with Messiah, in bringing about the utopia of world peace which is now the dream of so many, but which man apart from the Messiah will never achieve. All this forms the core of the Good News of the Kingdom as Yeshua and his Emissaries proclaimed it (Mark 1:14, 15; Luke 4:43, etc.). Contained within the same message, but not as a substitute for it, are the facts about the resurrection of Yeshua and his sacrificial death

for our sins. The forgiveness freely offered and the favor of Almighty enable believers to enter on the path which leads to the inheritance of the Kingdom of Almighty.

Preaching and teaching which persists in offering “heaven” to the believer should be challenged in the name of the teaching of Yeshua who expressly promised the meek that they “shall inherit the earth” (Matt. 5:5) and “rule as kings on the earth” (Rev. 5:10). “Fear not, little flock,” Yeshua said to his disciples, “for it is my Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom” (Luke 12:32).

To be given the Kingdom is to be granted royal office in the coming worldwide dominion of the Messiah. In response to Kepha’s direct inquiry about what the disciples might expect to receive as followers of Messiah, Yeshua replied that they would become ministers of state in the future Kingdom, the inauguration of which would be in the New World (see Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:28-30).

THE GOOD NEWS AND WORLDWIDE MESSIANIC RULE

As we saw above, the *International Critical Commentary* correctly understood the promise to Abraham that he would inherit the world to mean that he would take part in the coming “worldwide Messianic rule.” This is only a synonym for the Kingdom of Almighty. Our grasp of the stupendous future offered to believers directly affects our reception of the Good News itself.

This is simply because the Good News of salvation contains as its core the promise of the Kingdom of Almighty: It is the Good News about the Kingdom. This is the key term in Yeshua’s teaching and the reason for his whole mission (Luke 4:43).

The essential content of the Good News is seen in the following primary texts describing the ministry of Yeshua and Shaul. The term Kingdom of Almighty embodies the ancient hope of worldwide rule promised to Abraham and his royal descendant, the Master Yeshua Messiah:

Mark 1:14, 15: “Yeshua came into Galilee proclaiming the Good News of Almighty [i.e. Almighty’s saving Message] and saying, ‘The Kingdom of Almighty is approaching; repent [reorientate your life, your priorities and your commitments] and **believe in the Good News.**’”

Matthew 4:23: “And Yeshua was going about in all Galilee and teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom.”

Matthew 9:35: “And Jesus was going about all the cities and the villages teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom.”

Matthew 13:19: “When anyone hears the Message about the Kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart.”

Matthew 24:14: "This Good News of the Kingdom shall be proclaimed in the whole inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations and then the end shall come."

Matthew 6:33: "Seek first the Kingdom of Almighty and His righteousness and all these [other] things will be added to you."

Luke 4:43: "Yeshua said to them, 'I must proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of Almighty to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose.' And he kept on proclaiming the Good News in the synagogues of Judea."

Luke 8:1: "And it came about soon afterwards that he began going about from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching the Good News of the Kingdom, and the twelve were with him."

Luke 8:10, 12: The Message or Word concerning the mysteries of the Kingdom must take root in the heart of anyone desiring to believe and be saved. The Devil's object is to destroy the message about the Kingdom.

Luke 9:2: "He sent them out to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of Almighty."

Luke 9:6: "They began going about among the villages preaching the Good News."

Acts 1:3: "He [the resurrected Yeshua] spoke of the affairs of the Kingdom of Almighty."

Acts 8:12: "When they believed Philip as he proclaimed the Good News about the Kingdom of Almighty and the name of Yeshua Messiah they were being baptized, both men and women."

Acts 19:8: "And Shaul entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months reasoning and persuading them about the Kingdom of Almighty."

Acts 20:25: "...all of you among whom I went about preaching the Good News of the Kingdom."

Acts 28:23: "And when they had set a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the Kingdom of Almighty and trying to persuade them about Yeshua from both the Law of Moses and from the prophets from morning till evening."

Acts 28:31: "This salvation of Almighty has been sent to the Gentiles; they will also listen. And Shaul stayed two full years in his own hired house proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom and teaching concerning the Mater Yeshua Messiah with all openness, unhindered."

I Thessalonians 2:5, 9, 12: "Our Good News did not come to you in word only... We proclaimed to you the Good News of Almighty... who is inviting you into his own

Kingdom and esteem.”

II Thessalonians 1:8, 5: “...that you may be considered worthy of the Kingdom of Almighty for which you are suffering.” Almighty will destroy “those who do not obey the Good News of the Mater Yeshua.”

I Corinthians 4:15, 20: “I became your father through the Good News... The Kingdom of Almighty does not consist in words but in power.”

II Timothy 4:1, 2: “I solemnly testify to... the Messiah’s appearing and his Kingdom. Proclaim the Message [i.e. Good News]...”

In addition to these passages the term “Good News” occurs some 60 times in the letters of Shaul. In every case this key “technical term” should be “filled out” by adding the words “about the coming worldwide Messianic rule, or Kingdom of Almighty.” In this way the content of the Good News message will be protected against the loss of its central element - the Kingdom of Almighty.

Thus, to cite two examples by way of illustration, Shaul is “not ashamed of the Good News [about the coming worldwide Messianic rule - the Kingdom of Almighty], for it is the power of Elohim leading to salvation” (Rom. 1:16).

Shaul is profoundly disturbed by an attempt to subtract from or add to the saving Good News. He insisted in Romans 4 and Galatians 3 that the Good News is founded on the promises made to Abraham - the posterity promise and the property promise of land. Thus “the Good News was preached beforehand to Abraham” (Gal. 3:8; cp. Rom. 1:1-2). On no account may it be altered in any way:

“But even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim to you a Good News other than [the Good News about the coming worldwide Messianic rule - the Kingdom of Almighty, including the death of Messiah for our sins and his resurrection], let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8).

RULERSHIP WITH MESSIAH

The entire fabric of the Messianic Scriptures has suffered a drastic distortion because key scriptural terms have been “reinterpreted” - a sophisticated term for perverted - by reading an alien, post-scriptural system into them. Thus “heaven” has replaced the scriptural term “Kingdom of Almighty,” giving a thoroughly misleading impression of the teaching of Yeshua and the Emissaries. In Scripture there is no such thing as “going to heaven” when you die. What is promised is participation in the worldwide rule of Messiah on earth when Yeshua reappears. For those believers who die before Yeshua returns, participation in the Kingdom will be via resurrection from the dead (I Thess. 4:13ff, I Cor. 15:23, 50-52).

At present an anti-scriptural, Greek philosophical system colors and distorts the ordinary reader’s perception of scriptural teaching. This system which misled

believers as early as the second century exercises a stranglehold on the minds of many who sincerely want to understand the teaching of Yeshua and Shaul. A revolution is needed by which Scripture readers refuse to use unscriptural language about “heaven,” “going to heaven” and “the dead in heaven” (now propagated incessantly by funeral sermons as well as evangelistic appeals promoting “heaven,” both as the present residence of the departed and as the goal of the convert).

It is tragic that churches have not paid attention to Jewish historians who recognize that the Messianic hopes of the prophets were directed to a renewal of the earth. Speaking of the Hebrew expectation of the coming Kingdom taught by the early believers, Hugh Schonfield writes:

“What is clear is that a transformed human world is in view, and not a harp-playing home in the heavens. Pointers in the latter direction are of later date and partly inspired by Gnostic repugnance to a material dwelling place for the soul. We may dismiss Messianic eschatology as a fantasy; but we cannot say that Jesus and his early followers did not subscribe to it. What it did was to set *a target for achievement* which would justify the creation of man and make it worthwhile to persist in well-doing. Ultimately righteousness would be rewarded, and God’s will would be done on earth as in heaven. *There is no ‘pie in the sky when you die’ in the Messianic programme*” (*For Christ’s Sake*, pp. 84, 85, emphasis added).

Once the true meaning of Romans 4:13 is reinstated, Scripture readers will be able to grasp the tremendous destiny offered in the Good News to believers. With Abraham, the “father” of all the faithful (Rom. 4:12, 16), Jew and Gentile alike, believers will strive to “be considered worthy of the Kingdom” (II Thess. 1:5) to which, by the Good News, they are invited. Now joint-heirs of the world with Yeshua, they will later reign and rule over the nations with him in the renewed society of the Kingdom of Almighty on earth (Isa. 32:1; Rev. 5:10; 2:26; 3:21; 20:1-6). Such a calling affords them the greatest future imaginable for a human being. The Good News of the Kingdom or the coming worldwide Messianic rule is the ultimate Good News for a world groaning under the slavery of corruption and waiting for the manifestation of a state of incomparable esteem in which the sons of Almighty, in company with the Son of Almighty, will administer the world in righteousness and endless peace. This is the true believer’s hope and it is in that hope that we are saved (see Rom. 8:24). It is that hope which purifies (I John 3:3) and on that hope faith and love are built:

Colossians 1:5: “We have heard of your faith in Messiah Yeshua and the love which you have for all the saints *because of the hope* laid up for you in heaven of which you previously heard in the Message of the Truth - the Good News.” (Note that the hope is at present kept in reserve in heaven waiting to be manifested on earth at the Messiah’s return.)

Colossians 1:23: “...if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, *and not moved away from the hope of the Good News*” (i.e. the Hope of the coming Kingdom of Almighty presented in the Good News of the Kingdom). “Messiah

in us [now is] the hope of esteem [i.e. the Kingdom of Almighty]" (Col. 1:27).

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

The loss of the strongly future-oriented Good News can be traced to the Church's loss of the *Tanach*, the Hebrew Scriptures. Elizabeth Achtemeier devotes an entire chapter to "The Results of the Loss of the Old Testament: The Loss of the New Testament and the Development of 'Reader's Digest' Religion" (*The Old Testament and the Preaching of the Gospel*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973). She complains that what goes under the name of Christianity in American churches is a vague religion which has borrowed the name of "Jesus" but not understood his teaching, especially as it relates to the central covenant promise made to Abraham. (The term "Old Testament" has become a euphemism for past-away or deceased. - editor)

As the *Hastings Dictionary of the Bible* says, "The whole future of Israel is conceived as bound up in something which God said to Abraham" (Vol. IV, p. 105). The future of Israel is of critical importance to Christians. In the words of Paul, "Through the Gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 3:8). This is a summary statement of the whole New Testament faith.

The important doctrine of "justification by faith" has not escaped the distortion caused by the loss of the land promise made to Abraham which underlies Yeshua's Good News of the Kingdom. Justification is often limited to the concept of forgiveness of sin. But as the *Pulpit Commentary* (Vol. 18, pp. 121, 122) points out:

"We must not restrict justification to deliverance from deserved penalty, but must attach it to the further idea of inheritance. As one writer has well remarked, 'Justification is applicable to something more than the discharge of an accused person without condemnation. As in our courts of law there are civil as well as criminal cases; so it was in old time; and a large number of the passages adduced seem to refer to trials of the latter description, in which some question of property, right or inheritance was under discussion between the two parties. The judge, by justifying one of the parties, decided that the property in question was to be regarded as his. Applying this aspect of the matter to the justification of man in the sight of God, we gather from Scripture that whilst through sin a man is to be regarded as having forfeited legal claim to any right of inheritance which God might have to bestow upon his creatures, so through justification he is restored to his high position and regarded as *an heir of God*'" (Girdlestone, *Old Testament Synonyms*, pp. 259, 260, emphasis added).

Thus it is that man is justified in order to regain his status as a son of Almighty and in consequence his right to be heir of the promises given to Abraham and made possible through Messiah. The goal of a believer, which unconditional forgiveness and the favor of Almighty place him in a position to strive for and reach, is to rule with Messiah in the coming Kingdom of Almighty on earth. A number of high frequency scriptural terms describe this goal: "Kingdom of Almighty/Heaven" (Matt. 19:14, 23,

24), “eternal/everlasting life”- literally “life in the Age to Come” (Matt. 19:16), “life” (Matt. 19:17, Rom. 5:17), “salvation” (Matt. 19:25), “rulership with Messiah as royal family in the New Age to come” (Matt. 19:28), “inheritance of eternal life” (Matt. 19:29).

Inheritance of the promises of world dominion is invariably placed in the future. For the present time of struggle towards entrance into the Kingdom of Almighty, the believer is promised the spirit of Messiah as a “down payment” of the future inheritance (II Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14). But the inheritance itself is plainly to be received in the future (no Messianic Scripture text says that we have already inherited the Kingdom): “Whatever you do, do your work heartily as for YHWH rather than for men, knowing that from YHWH you will receive the reward of the inheritance [of the world promised to Abraham, i.e. rulership in the Kingdom of Elohim]” (Col. 3:23, 24).

Inheritance and possession of the world are offered to the faithful believers. The Greek word *kleronomia* — inheritance — is derived from two words, *kleros*, lot, portion, possession, and *nemein*, to control or administer. The true believer’s reward involves administration of the possession to be received. Thus Shaul believed that “the saints are to manage the world... The world is to come under your jurisdiction” (I Cor. 6:2, Moffat), while the wicked will be unable to “inherit the Kingdom of Elohim” (v. 10). The one phrase defines the other: Inheriting the Kingdom is equivalent to managing the world.

The notion of a future world government in the hands of the immortalized believers is derived not only from the promise made to Abraham of world dominion, but also from key passages in Daniel who predicted that “the Elohim of heaven will set up a Kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that Kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put to an end all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure for ever” (2:44). To the Son of Man (the ideal Human Person, Yeshua) “was given dominion, esteem and a Kingdom that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away and his Kingdom is one which will not be destroyed” (7:14).

The location of this Kingdom of the Almighty of heaven is described in Daniel 7:27: “Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the saints of the Highest One. Their kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom and all the dominions will serve and obey them” (RSV). It should be observed that this Kingdom will not come into power until the return of Yeshua. Any attempt by believers to dominate the politics of the world *now, before the reappearance of Yeshua*, is utterly mistaken.

The final word to Daniel was that he should expect to arise from the sleep of death to receive his portion or inheritance in the Messianic worldwide rule (Dan. 12:13) which was the subject of the visions he had received (Dan. 2, 7, 11, 12).

Shaul obviously shared the hope given to Abraham and confirmed by the prophets. As a leading believer he had not abandoned the scriptural, Hebrew expectation of world

dominion. He confessed before King Herod Agrippa that he was on trial “for the hope of the promise made by Elohim to our fathers, the promise to which our twelve tribes hope to attain” (Acts 20:7). That promise involved the future resurrection of the dead (v. 8, cp. Acts 24:15) and the inheritance of the world (Rom. 4:13). Speaking to Jews shortly before his martyrdom Stephen likewise testified that “Elohim had removed Abraham into this country in which you are living, and he gave him no inheritance in it, yet he promised that he would give it to him as a possession and to his offspring after him forever” (Acts 7:4, 5).

The false hope of “heaven,” as opposed to the possession and administration of the world, deserves to be revealed for the fraud that it is. As a leading British Scripture scholar noted: “Heaven is never in fact used in the Bible for the destination of the dying” (J.A.T. Robinson, *In the End God*, pp. 104, 105). He observed that “the whole of our teaching and hymnology has assumed that you go to heaven, or of course, hell when you die. But *the Bible nowhere says that we go to heaven when we die, nor does it ever describe death in terms of going to heaven*” (*On Being the Church in the World*, p. 130).

The reflective reader will realize that popular sermons and preaching at funerals are in need of drastic revision. They are at present vastly non-compliant with the Truth of the Scriptures and the teaching of Yeshua.

The truth is that a serious loss of the original faith and Good News has occurred under the influence of a Gnostic tendency which despised the things of the earth and therefore could not tolerate the idea of the earth renewed and reorganized under the Messiah as ruler. Despite the Hebrew Scripture’s passionate yearning for the restoration of the world under sound government, the churches have continued to promote a hope of bliss removed from the earth. The plainest teachings of Yeshua that the meek can expect *to inherit the earth* as their reward have been treated by theologians as metaphors and are supposed not to mean what they say! Churchgoers are left only with the vaguest idea of the ultimate purpose of faith in Messiah. They do not see how Christianity has anything to say about the future of the earth. Traditional talk about “heaven” thus thoroughly frustrates and confuses the Almighty’s Grand Design to bring peace on the renewed earth (for example, Isa. 65:17ff) through the return of Yeshua to establish his Kingdom.

May pulpits everywhere undertake the long overdue restoration of the language of Scripture and return to the original faith which is based on Yeshua’s confirmation of the promises made to the patriarchs (Rom. 15:8). Shaul was alert to the danger that doctrinal corruption could result in the abandonment of the hope contained in the Good News. Believers could expect to be presented “before Messiah set-apart, blameless and beyond reproach, *if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the Good News[of the Kingdom] which you have heard*” (Col. 1:22, 23).

That hope of ruling the world with the Messiah was presented to converts in the Good

News of the Kingdom proclaimed throughout Judea by Yeshua, designated “the Message” some 32 times in Acts, and summarized as “the Good News” 60 times in the letters of Shaul. (Acts 8:12 provides an essential summary of the content of the Good News.)

YESHUA AND THE GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM

Yeshua is proclaimed by the *Brit Chadasha* to be the Messiah of prophecy, the heir to the permanent throne of David (II Sam. 7; I Chron. 17; Luke 1:32ff, etc.). The Messiah was the promised seed of Abraham, the one to whom the covenants and promises were directed (Gal. 3:16). As recipient of the Kingdom of Almighty and rulership of the world Yeshua recognized that his life purpose was to announce the Good News about the Kingdom (Luke 4:43). To carry out this commission he saw himself as a sower sowing the message/Good News of the Kingdom (Matt. 13:19). Those who listened and understood his saving message became candidates for royal office in the coming Kingdom. The issue of salvation and the destiny of man hinges on our response to the Good News of the Kingdom as Yeshua preached it. Thus the parable of the sower informs us that **forgiveness and repentance depend on an intelligent and willing reception of the Good News of the Kingdom**. In an amazing statement Yeshua claimed to have revealed the secret of immortality and the destiny of both man and the world: “I have explained the secret about Almighty’s Kingdom to you, but for others this comes only as an enigma. The reason for this is [as Isaiah said]: ‘These people will look and look but never see, they will listen and listen *but never understand*. **If they did**, they would turn to Elohim [repent] and He would forgive them” (see Mark 4:11, 12).

Plainly, **repentance and forgiveness are conditional *not just on belief in the death of Yeshua, but on understanding and believing his prior preaching about the Kingdom*** (“**Repent and believe the Good News of the Kingdom,**” Mark 1:14, 15). The issue for Yeshua in the critically important parable of the sower is comprehension or non-comprehension of the Good News of the Kingdom. No wonder, then, that Luke records the Messiah’s brilliant intelligence report about how the message of immortality is treated in the present wicked system. Yeshua said: “The seed is God’s Message/Good News... But the Devil comes and snatches the Message out of their hearts so that they will not **believe and be saved**... Pay attention to how you listen. Everyone who has something will be given more. But people who have nothing will lose what little they think they have” (Luke 8:11, 12, 18, *The Promise, Contemporary English Version*).

The destiny and the future of each of us hinges on our comprehension and intelligent reception of the Good News of the Kingdom as it fell from the lips of the Messiah.

CONCLUSION

The Scriptures tells a coherent story. Almighty’s World Plan, in response to the fall of Adam, is to reestablish just government on earth under the rule of the Messiah Yeshua.

Man sinned by coming short of the esteem of Almighty (Rom. 3:23). The result was that his esteemed destiny as co-ruler with Almighty (Gen. 1:26) was forfeited. The Good News of salvation, therefore, is the invitation and command to repent and believe in the Message of the restored Kingdom (Mark 1:14, 15), which means a return to the lost esteem of man and the restoration of Garden of Eden conditions on earth. Sin is defined by Yeshua in John 16:9 as failure to believe in him which is failure **to believe his Goods News/words** (John 12:44-50; note verse 48).

The groundwork of this grand purpose was laid when Almighty called Abraham to go into the "land of the promise," in which he lived as an alien (Heb. 11:8, 9) but which was promised to him and his offspring as a permanent possession. This promise remains unfulfilled to this day (as Stephen said in Acts 7:5) and is dependent upon the future resurrection of Abraham and all the faithful to take possession of Canaan and the world Kingdom with the returning Messiah (Heb. 11:13, 39). That stupendous event - the return of the Messiah to inaugurate his Kingdom on earth (Rev 11:15-18) - is encapsulated in Kepha's brief reference in Acts 3:21 which speaks of Yeshua's temporary position in heaven "until the time comes for the *restoration (apokatastasis) of all things* about which the prophets spoke." (This is the meaning of Psalm 110:1, "YHWH said to my Master (Yeshua), 'Sit at my right hand, until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.'" editor)

The Messianic story was foreshadowed in the Exodus, which symbolizes our redemption from sin in the impalement of the Messiah. But the story does not end there. The resurrection of Yeshua guarantees the presence of Messiah with the faithful as they proceed throughout their "wilderness" pilgrimage towards the promised land. Believers have **not yet** entered the promised land of the Kingdom, though they have a foretaste of their inheritance in the spirit of Messiah. Traditional Christianity knows little about the end of the story and dispatches the believer to a location away from the earth to enjoy a vague celestial existence as a disembodied soul. It is as though the children of Israel disappeared in the desert haze and never reached Canaan. The Exodus then loses its whole point.

The oft-repeated talk of "heaven" as the destination of the believer is entirely false to the Hebrew faith of Yeshua and the Emissaries who, in their Good News message, put before us a momentous statement about the future of human society on earth. The Good News of the Kingdom, the Messianic Message, summons all who hear to prepare now for the staggering privilege of ruling the earth with Messiah and sharing in the fulfillment of the age-old covenant promise to Abraham that he would one day inherit the world (Rom. 4:13; Matt. 19:28; I Cor. 6:2). This should provide ample reason for believers to "exult in the hope of the esteem of Almighty" to be manifested in the coming Kingdom of Heaven. No prospect could be more calculated to instill the highest moral-spiritual idealism than the challenge of being "worthy of the Kingdom to which we are invited" (II Thess. 1:5; I Thess. 2:12). I Thessalonians 2:13 promises that Almighty's energy will be at work in all who accept the Good News of the Kingdom and thus align themselves with the mind and Plan of the Mighty One and His Messiah.

The unedited paper can be found at: www.focusonthe kingdom.org
<http://focusonthe kingdom.org/articles/promise.htm>

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For further reading I recommend: *Our Fathers Who Aren't in Heaven: The Forgotten Christianity of Jesus the Jew* by Anthony Buzzard. Available from Atlanta Bible College at 800-347-4261.

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Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people!
Deut. 4:6