

Parson to Person
ROMANS 4 PART 5
(Reprinted from last week)

“For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith...

Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all..., so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, ‘So shall your descendants be.’ And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore ‘it was accounted to him for righteousness.’

Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification” (Romans 4:13–25 Excerpt NKJV).

The concept of all believers being considered the “seed” of Abraham has provided much controversy to believers. On one hand there are those who miss the fact that there is a contextual difference between Paul’s use of “seed” in Romans 4 and “Seed” in Galatians 3.

In Romans 4 Paul wrote that the “seed” of Abraham is comprised of all the people of *the* faith of Abraham. These become the fruitful manifestation of the promise God made to him, saying that he would be the “father of many nations” through the people of *the* faith.

Secondly, there are those who suggest that believers who become the “seed” indicates that God has no further interest in Israel as a nation and people. However, Israel is the nation of people who are the physical descendants of Abraham via his son Isaac, and grandson Jacob. God still has a covenant with the nation and people of Israel and has not finished His work with them. Paul clearly delineated this later in the book of Romans when he wrote, “*I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew”* (Romans 11:1–2a NKJV). (Please read all of Romans 11.) Moreover, Jeremiah records, “*Thus says the LORD, who gives the sun for a light by day, the ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, who disturbs the sea, and its waves roar (The LORD of hosts is His name): ‘If those ordinances depart from before Me, says the LORD, then the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before Me forever’”* (Jeremiah 31:35–36 NKJV). Therefore, the “seed” is both the people of faith and the nation and people of Israel.

Thirdly, the “Seed” as referenced in Galatians 3 is clearly a reference to Jesus Christ—the Messiah. Paul clearly wrote, “*Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘And to your Seed,’ who is Christ”* (Galatians 3:16 NKJV). Therefore, knowing the Scriptures carry no contradiction (but may need explanation), we conclude that Abraham’s “Seed” is the promised Messiah, Abraham’s “seed” is the nation and people of Israel, and that Abraham’s “seed” is the people of *the* faith—both Jew and Gentile.

All of *these* (correct) renderings require this discussion—for they involve both Israel and the Church. Moreover, correctly understanding the Old Covenant and the New, we must make a clear distinction between Israel and the Church—lest we land in the territory of those who embrace Replacement Theology as mentioned in point 2 above.

For this reason, allow me to add an observation and distinction between The Church Age attributes of the New Covenant and the (future) Millennial Age attributes of the same.

Church Age Attributes of the New Covenant:

- 1) Relationship with God.
- 2) A permanent cleansing and the forgiveness of sin and iniquities.
- 3) The Law of God written into the heart and mind.
- 4) A new heart: motivation to walk in the statutes of the Lord.
- 5) A new spirit and the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Millennial Age Attributes of the New Covenant:

- 1) Relationship with God.
- 2) A permanent cleansing and the forgiveness of sin and iniquities.
- 3) The Law of God written into the heart and mind.
- 4) A new heart: motivation to walk in the statutes of the Lord.
- 5) A new spirit and the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
- 6) Israel (and all the redeemed) occupy the Promised Land.
- 7) All mankind will have knowledge of the Lord.

I love you all, Pastor Paul