

The Prophecy of the Barren Wife

The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to the Church at Galatia which has become a sounding board for many who want to choose the manner in which they will, or will not obey God. He began the letter by addressing its theme in the first chapter.

Galatians 1:6: *I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, **let him be accursed**. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, **let him be accursed**.*

Here Paul makes it clear that the issues of the ‘gospel’ are being perverted. In other words, those false teachers involved have the elements of the gospel of Christ, but are perverting, or twisting the issues involved, thus negating the truth of the whole matter and how it affects our lives. He continues the letter, showing that it was addressing the error of Acts 15, whereby certain ‘converted’ Pharisees had gone out of the church and were trying to claim that the entire law from Sinai (Law of Moses) was a key of eternal life. Furthermore, this error had made headway, to a degree, into certain of the leadership of the church. While this error is easily debunked by scripture, and has been expounded upon in former articles, I wish to address a particular statement that Paul made further on in this letter, which is ignored by some, twisted by some, and seems to get little credit in the overview of God’s plan of salvation, as He has dealt with mankind. However, its understanding is actually invaluable in understanding the legal flow of the covenants. It should also be invaluable in helping us all understand the particulars of who we are in God’s eyes and what He expects from us. Satan has hidden the truth about this issue throughout the ages, because his ability to do so has always deceived certain of mankind concerning the correct way to honor the Messiah as our Savior. The statement involved begins:

Galatians 4:21: *Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar -- for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children -- but the **Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all**. For it is written: **“Rejoice, O barren, You who do not bear! Break forth and shout, You who are not in labor!”** For the desolate has many more children than she who has a husband.”*

*Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? **“Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.”** So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.*

Certain teachers, upon reading this text, quickly proclaim it as a condemnation of the Sinai covenant and every law it contains, along with the Ten Commandments, which they then decry as ‘oppressive bondage’. They then state that we are ‘free from any law’ in our relationship with Christ, through His grace. Curiously, the same people then admit that there are certain ‘laws’ necessary in walking with Christ. They just seem to want to get rid of those they don’t like, or which get in their way.

Others look at this text, and partially explain it as not ‘doing away with the law’ but instead pointing us to a higher respect for God through the ‘Jerusalem’ above. They then disagree on what that is.

Truthfully, there is far more information involved within this passage than we commonly realize, and it is

information which is pertinent to following our Creator correctly as we profess His name.

To begin, let us gather some very important facts that are easily discernible from this short text in Paul's letter.

1. Abraham had two sons, one by a bondwoman, and the other by a freewoman. This tells us:
 - a. One woman was his wife in a relationship of 'freedom'. In other words, she was there by her free will and motivated by her love for him.
 - b. The other woman was a 'bondwoman', and she was there by legal obligation, or a mutual physical interest. Furthermore, the relationship was 'bondage' by which he legally controlled her, and not out a motivation of love from freedom on either side.

The two sons born from the two women typified the spiritual and physical realities of these two 'marital' relationships. The one born of the bondwoman typified those things which are 'of the flesh', or physical only. The son of the 'freewoman' typified those born of the higher promise of the Spirit. The promise involved was the original promise to Abraham given in Genesis 12, concerning eternal salvation to all mankind, and first prophesied in Genesis 3:15. It offers all mankind the hope of eternal life through the lineage and children of Abraham. It is a spiritual reality and not limited to the physical, or flesh.

2. These two earlier wives, children, and the relationships they all shared with Abraham were 'types' of the two covenants. One covenant, which came from Mt. Sinai, involved bondage. It is linked with the Jerusalem on this earth as it now exists ("which now is"), and those who associate with God through honoring or glorifying this Jerusalem were in Paul's day (and now) under bondage, or the control of another faction, and not truly free.
3. Verse 28 tells us that those who properly honor the Messiah under the New Covenant (or renewed covenant) are 'children of the promise' (eternal life) according to the Spirit. Those who are spiritually rooted in the flesh (physical things through the Sinai covenant) typify the children of the bondwoman and will persecute the children of the freewoman.
4. The children of the bondwoman will be cast out, but the children of the freewoman will be heirs with the Messiah.

Now, from this information alone, it should be easy to see that a 'typical', or symbolic, comparison is being made between the children of Ishmael and the children of Isaac as those of the 'freewoman, and 'bondwoman'. But is this the true comparison being made here? NO!!! It is only the initial symbolic comparison involved, which typifies others which come later in scripture. Why do I say this? Because at that moment, the children of Ishmael were not an issue involved in Paul's letter. He was addressing an error being introduced by certain Pharisees, or Jews into the New Covenant. The comparison was being made between two Jerusalems, one above, and one on the earth. Ishmael had no heritage in either one at that moment, nor was the doctrinal issue at hand involving Ishmael in any way. The key to understanding the true 'wives' being addressed here lies in the prophesy that Paul quotes directly from Isaiah 54. "*Rejoice, O barren, you who do not bear! Break forth and shout, you who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children than she who has a husband.*" This is a prophetic statement by Isaiah which relates to the future, not something that had happened in the past. It refers to two wives: one who had many children, and one who was barren. It addresses the final triumph of the barren wife over the one who had the many children. It also states that the one with the many children would be 'desolate' (without a husband); and the barren wife would finally have both her husband and her children. The term '*desolate*' is a designation that is used throughout the scriptures to denote the absence of God's presence (see Matthew 23:37-39). Furthermore, Paul clearly states that this prophesy by Isaiah referred to the TWO JERUSALEMS AND THE WIVES THEY REPRESENTED -- NOT HAGAR AND SARAH. They and their sons were only the two initial 'types' of the ones being addressed here. They were only the initial 'freewoman' and 'bondwoman' who represented the ones to come after, who Paul seems to believe, are very important in understanding the true relationship that the followers of Christ must honor.

Now at this point, I could begin to go back and gather all the scriptures which deal with the bondwoman and the freewoman involved and try to tie them together, but I fear that would not suffice. One of the problems in understanding the Bible is that many follow that pattern to their own destruction. In other words, one should look

to the method of ‘here a little, there a little’ for understanding. What many fail to remember is that this statement by Isaiah also says that ‘here a little, there a little’, also leads to blindness for some. In my own experience, no sooner does one begin to explain certain concepts in correct order, than someone else begins to try to tear it apart by attacking it with philosophy that has been taken out of context, both historically and literally, and is a complete error made up by ‘here a little, there a little’-- without the overall view of the scriptures and covenants from start to finish. So let us begin at the beginning in order to gather ‘here a little, there a little’, in the correct order. We will begin with the concept of marriage, and how it may be founded on love or bondage, and progress through the Bible, examining *the prophecy of the barren wife*. Though many may not have heard of it, it is crucial in understanding the covenants of God from beginning to end. I will try to go through the Scriptures as concisely as possible in order that this study paper will not become too lengthy.

The Garden of Eden

Here God offers a covenant of eternal life to Adam and Eve if they will believe Him and obey His voice. They were offered to take of the Tree of Life and receive the Holy Spirit it contained. Instead, through Satan’s deception, they glorify themselves and the Knowledge of Good and Evil (God’s Law) and are shut off from the correct tree which would have made them in right standing eternally (justified) before God. They have perverted the issue involved and are left with only law to honor God and themselves by that physical (letter of the law) condition, with the law having dominion over them. Though the law is a spiritual law; without the Spirit of God as an internal motivation, it is limited to good or evil on the earth, and by human nature and its imperfect motivations. This condition was not intended by God. They are ‘under the law’, which is a diminished condition. The only way out of this state is through the Redeemer (Genesis 3:15). They have now entered into a state of ‘diminished allotment’ in their ability to honor God, or to dishonor Him. When this happens, there is a curse placed on mankind. They are cursed for being in this lesser state. If they do not honor at least the letter of the law, God’s presence is removed from them entirely, as with Cain.

It is evident that the marriage relationship that was originally planned by God between man and woman would mirror the relationship He desired between Himself and mankind. It would have been bound by the Holy Spirit of God, and would have functioned by the correct order, according to the will of God. In Ephesians 5, Paul later gives Christians who have been redeemed to this original state, now offered by faith in Christ, a glimpse into marriage formed by mutual love and proper order while bound by the Holy Spirit. **It was lost here in the Garden of Eden!**

Thus, mankind was left with their own human nature (which is created subject to sin by God’s own purpose) and the ‘letter of the law’. Therefore, the condition of human marriage is diminished, as well.

Genesis 3:16: To the woman He said: *“I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; **your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.**”*

Here the relationship of human marriage is diminished to one of bondage. Why? Because the best relationship it can ever be will be dictated by the compatibility of selfish human nature. The worse will be a ‘mutual’ life of hate and strife and/or divorce. God’s Holy Spirit, which could have bound men and women in the pure marriage relationship He originally intended is now gone, until brought back by faith in the Redeemer. Bondage does not mean ‘oppression’. It simply means that one controls the other. There has to be order. Bondage only becomes ‘oppression’ when the one in charge is evil in his/her intents and actions. The woman was made for the man, so this is the best thing that can exist under these diminished conditions. Therefore, in truth, though Eve may have learned to love her husband as a physical human, the greater love which signifies true and complete freedom is gone. She is a bondwoman, united to her husband by physical and legal obligations and totally subject to his control. Otherwise, due to the condition of the hearts of the natural woman and man, chaos will ensue. So then, the laws regarding this are ‘added because of transgression’, and apply to people in this diminished state.

Later, as the history of marriage progresses, Lamech, an evil son of Cain, begins to gather more than one

wife, further diminishing the role of the woman in society, thus viewing her as little more than property (Genesis 4:19). As mankind's history progresses, women become wives due to legal obligation, and this is recognized by God in this diminished condition of mankind. Christ told His followers, who have returned to the original condition intended by God for mankind, that if a man is married, he may not even look at another woman to wrongfully desire her. This is the way it was originally intended by God. Also, in Matthew 19, Christ tells us that God allowed people 'under the law' to divorce for reasons not originally designed by God because of the evil of their hearts, but from the beginning it was not so. All these conditions relate back to this curse in the Garden of Eden and tragically continued during the terms of the Sinai covenant, due to the evil of the hearts of the Israelites, as we shall see.

Not only is the condition of marriage reduced in this state, but mankind is also in bondage to the law, as well, as he has now placed himself under its dominion. It has the power of death over him in this diminished state. The only way for him to have any good in this state is to obey it, though he is cursed for being in this diminished condition (Genesis 3:10-13 and Galatians 3:10-12). All the goodness of the law, apart from the addition of the Holy Spirit, is limited to the 'letter of the law' existence which Solomon called 'under the sun' (Ecc.12:13). Only when the Spirit is returned through faith in Messiah, does the law find its original properly intended value as a guide to one who has taken that Spirit and is under the continual grace of God while faithful in that commitment (Psalms 119, John 15:9-17). In this state of existence, it finds its original condition as being only that which is holy, just, and good in the life of mankind (Romans 7:1-12). When one is fully committed to God through faith in Christ, he is continually under His grace, and the law has no power over him in this state (Romans 8). This covenant which is founded on 'faith in Christ' includes a person's willingness to obey His commandments (John 15:9-17). The only true value the law ever had in God's original design was to show mankind how insufficient his nature was compared to God's (condemn him), so that he would have a guide for improvement in his personal commitment to obey the voice of the Creator. Otherwise, man would have had no knowledge to define the boundaries and attributes of God's higher love (Romans 7:7). This is the relationship that Abraham, who is the 'father of the faithful' who have come to Christ, shared with God through faith in the Redeemer, even though He had not yet come (Hebrews 11-12, John 8:56, and Genesis 26:5).

To be under the law is to be in bondage, as well, as it is a relationship of cause and effect, reward and punishment, on this earth. God later outlines this condition, as it existed from Sinai, in Deuteronomy 30:11-20.

Any covenant relationship that God can have with man in this diminished state is 'master/servant' according to the flesh/physical. Human marriage was diminished to that state, though it can exist in varying degrees, depending on the nature and compatibility of the natural hearts of the man and woman.

Abel shared a 'lawful' relationship with God, though it was not on the level of that which one returns to when they accept Christ as their Savior and are willing to keep His commandments (Hebrews 12:24).

Anyway, it is necessary to understand these legal issues to discern what Paul refers to as 'under the law', and his letters concerning it.

Anyone who tries to abolish God's law and claim that no law is needed if one comes to Christ in the correct way, is lying and returning to sin and its dominion through lawlessness (Galatians 2:17-21). The claim that mankind's nature was pure from the beginning is a lie not supported by any Scripture of any sort. If this had been the case, he would have had no need for God. He was created subject to sin, with a sinful nature, and given a correct choice to obey God and be given something better. He bought into Satan's perversion of the issue of the Two Trees, and lost what potential God was offering.

There are those who falsely claim that if Adam and Eve had not rejected the Tree of Life, no law would have been necessary. God's Commandments, they reason, were then 'added because of transgression'. They state that true godly righteousness was originally inherent within mankind's nature, and he would have had no need for law, without this sin. This lie has been perpetrated, regardless of the great number of scriptures that show that mankind's nature was created subject to sin, and 'desperately wicked', of itself (Jeremiah 17:9 Romans 8:20). Without law, it has no standard of knowledge for self improvement, as it would strive to be like God. The Law's

initial and true value is to 'make us guilty' compared to God (condemn us). It shows us how insufficient our nature is compared to God's and gives us a guide for improvement. However, without the spiritual foundation that only the Holy Spirit (Tree of Life) could bring, any 'law keeping' (Knowledge of Good and Evil) is motivated by human 'self righteousness', for better, as with Job, or for worse, as with the Pharisees (Philippians 3:9). Both these Trees were placed in the Garden of Eden and were 'good for food' (spiritually) but only within their proper order. Satan, appealing to the evil vanity of the selfish human nature (**already there before any choice was made**), succeeded in perverting this issue within mankind's spiritual approach, in order to devalue God's holy grace and omnipotence in the equation. Furthermore, those who **still** 'glory' in the Law (Knowledge of Good and Evil), instead of the proper Tree of Life (God's Spirit and Grace'), as the true source of eternal life and Godly character (Romans 9:30-33) have done their share in hiding the truth about what the second tree represented; as they **improperly** handled the text which they were formerly assigned to preserve (Jeremiah 8:8, Luke 11:52, I Peter 2:8, Deuteronomy 4:2). The sin in the Garden of Eden involved the *perversion* of the two issues of Spirit and Truth, Law and Grace, Heart and Mind, etc., that were involved. Satan convinced them to 'glorify' themselves and the tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil over the Spirit of God, as being the component, which would elevate them to the true **eternally** righteous level.

The false leaders tried to do the same thing to the Galatian Christians, in order to take away what they had just gained.

The Commandments of God were represented by the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and were in the Garden as an original component of 'eternal life'. They would have provided proper knowledge of the boundaries of sin for anyone walking in the true path of God's grace (John 15-9). They represent eternal truth to mankind.

However, now that this transgression has occurred, a lesser 'cursed' condition has come over the earth and all mankind (Romans 5:12). **Once this is done, there will be laws that are 'added because of transgression', in order for God to maintain a presence among sinful mankind.** Every time mankind disobeys, God has to make adjustments in order to keep His presence there. We see this in the event in the Garden, and it occurs further when the Israelites disobey Him at the foot of Mt. Sinai. When we return to the original state that God intended for mankind, these laws still exist, but do not apply to a righteous son (I Timothy 1:5-11). Nothing God has ever decreed is ever 'done away' in its proper application, as Christ clearly stated. Learning its proper application is the key to knowledge.

This section may have been a bit lengthy, but necessary to understand the nuances of 'bondage', 'marriage', and application of God's law as we progress.

Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar

This is the first marriage recorded in the Scriptures that was bound by the **Holy Spirit being present in both man and wife.** All scripture concerning Abraham shows that he entered into the covenant later called 'Christian', or the New covenant, when he first believed God in Genesis 12. That initial faith and obedience which sealed that covenant in him (Genesis 15:6), then lead to his obedience to God's ways (Genesis 26:5). This was the legal relationship that Adam and Eve had originally been offered. Sarah, his wife, also is witnessed as being among those who found eternal life and a heavenly reward by that faith, even before the Redeemer walked the earth (I Peter 3:5-6). They were sealed up to that promise, but have not preceded those who came later, as the actual blood of Christ had to actually be applied first (Hebrews 11:39).

This is the marriage that is mentioned in the Galatians 4 account of the barren wife. Sarah was barren. She sinfully convinced Abraham to have a child by her handmaid, Hagar. Sarah was bound to Abraham by a marriage of true freedom, with the Holy Spirit binding them in love. The relationship with Hagar was a legal obligation and not truly acceptable, in light of the high state of **their** marriage. That is why they both recognized it as sin, even though they did it. However, having entered into it, they were bound by the rules governing this type of thing.

The law stated that if a firstborn came through a ‘marriage’ that was a ‘bond marriage’, or with a wife that was not truly loved, the birthright inheritance had to be given to that son, regardless. It could not be given to a child by a wife who was loved if her child was not born first. The exceptions to this rule would only be by direct proclamation of God; or in the case where the evil of the child would disqualify him from receiving the inheritance. Both these rules come into play as we progress.

Even though Ishmael was born first, as the son of the bondwoman, God decreed that he be driven out from the children of Isaac, as only Isaac’s children would be heirs to the two promises given in Genesis 12, and made into an oath in Genesis 22. Only the children of the freewoman would be heirs to the promises of Abraham. Only this marriage was bound by the presence of God’s Holy Spirit and the true order of marriage initially intended by God; though as the record shows, both Abraham and Sarah were imperfect in this relationship, as we all are.

This ‘type’ not only serves to show the true legal progression of the passage of the inheritance of Abraham, but also shows that the true children of the *promise* (eternal) will be by the nature of the pure relationship Abraham and Sarah shared. It pictures the marriage to Christ by His Bride (Ephesians 5). Those of a lesser relationship will have no part in the higher eternal marriage with the Creator (Hosea 2:16-17). Once again, this principle is very important in understanding the events which come after. Eternal life will be only for those who love God and obey Him with their whole heart. Not from a relationship of law, by legal obligation for a self-centered purpose.

Sarah and Hagar are the original ‘freewoman’ and ‘bondwoman’ which will picture and typify those who will come next.

Jacob, Rachel, and Leah

The next account of the ‘barren wife’ concerns the relationship that Jacob shared with the two daughters of Laban. Just to get a quick background concerning this triangle, let us briefly look at the events which led to it.

The birthright and blessings were the two immutable promises given to Abraham. One involved that which was spiritual, including the ‘blessing’ that Abraham’s seed would bring to the entire world. This is the promise of eternal salvation to all the children of Adam and Eve, first promised in Genesis 3:15. Though it will be to all mankind, it will come through Abraham’s descendants. This is called the *birthright*. The next promise was called the *blessings*, which involved physical blessings to all Abraham’s children, but the lion’s share given to the children of Isaac through these promises. Isaac was the son of the promise.

Before Isaac’s twins, Esau and Jacob, were born, God revealed to Rebecca, their mother, that the younger, Jacob, would inherit these promises. The elder would serve the younger. Esau was born first, so this would require some kind of intervention by God, or sin on the part of Esau.

At a point in time, Jacob took it on himself to ‘help God along’ and enticed his brother to sell the ‘birthright’ to him for a bowl of red soup. Esau, giving no esteem to this great promise, sold it to satisfy his physical hunger. The author of Hebrews tells us that Esau then lost the blessings (physical things), though he sought them with tears. His lack of esteem for the spiritual promise resulted in his loss of the physical, which he valued greatly. He married into the Canaanite lineage. The word ‘*Canaanite*’ means ‘*merchant*’. They were a hedonistic people who gloried in materialism.

Jacob, however, also ‘helped’ Esau lose the blessings by deceiving his own father. It was his mother’s idea, as well. As we shall see, this sort of deception was a family trait. Jacob would soon learn this the hard way.

All these things would have been Jacob’s in God’s own time, but when he took matters into his own hands, he set in motion a matter of chaos that continues to this very day. This resulted in him having to flee their homeland to keep Esau from killing him. When he fled, he went straight into the arms of his uncle, Laban, who gave new meaning to the word ‘deceiver’. Had he not done this, his marriage and the later events would undoubtedly have

come about in a different manner, in which he would have not been subject to the power and control of his deceitful uncle. Oh, what a tangled web we weave!

As it was, Jacob loved Rachel, the younger daughter of Laban, and agreed to work for Laban for seven years in exchange for her hand in marriage. This was agreed to and became a matter of legality. Thus, Rachel was to be Jacob's true legal wife, bound by the love they both had for each other.

However, on the night of their marriage, Laban switched daughters, putting Leah in Rachel's place; and the marriage between her and Jacob was consummated. It was the next morning before Jacob learned what had happened. Laban's reason for his action was cited as their custom that the oldest daughter had to be married first. Whether this was true or not, we do not truly know. We do know that there was complete deceit on Laban's part, as there had been seven full years to disclose this if it were true.

Jacob was now married to a wife of 'legal obligation', or a 'bondwoman' -- first. The original contract he had made with Laban had been deceitfully circumvented. He then agreed to work seven more years for Rachel, and then was given the wife he truly loved. After one week, Jacob was then given Rachel as a wife, and worked seven more years to fulfill her contract.

One factor that is often not given as much attention as it deserves was the injustice that was done to Rachel by this act. She was the wife who was loved, at least on a human level, and had been promised to Jacob by the original legal contract. Her children would have legally inherited all the rights of Jacob by that legality, and she should have been the only wife! As it was, those rights were stripped from her and her children by this act. Furthermore, due to the fact that Leah was not loved, God gave her children immediately. This, perhaps, serves to show that she was not truly guilty in Laban's deceit and God had mercy on her. Rachel was barren. This set of circumstances set in motion a strife between the children of Jacob that continues to this very day. Leah **vexed** Rachel, and made her life miserable because of the fact she could bear no children. Rachel **envied** Leah, and these two evil motivations continued to cause strife between them and their children. The law had also stated that if a man took two wives, they could not be sisters, as this would lead to this type of family strife. The dilemma that had begun by: first, Jacob's deceit, and second, Laban's deceit, caused chaos in the family.

As we progress from here, we shall see that these events were allowed by God in order to work His plan within the children of Jacob, throughout history, in order to bring blessings and eternal salvation all mankind.

Leah had six sons and one daughter. Her handmaid, Zilpah, later bore two sons for Jacob, though they were legally considered to be Leah's.

Rachel had no children, so she asked Jacob to bear legal children for her by her handmaid, Bilhah. Dan and Naphtali were born by this arrangement. Rachel named these children, as they were to be considered as hers (Gen. 30:3-8). Then God gave her a son from her own body, and he was named Joseph. Later, as they made the journey back to Canaan, she bore a second son and named him Ben-Oni ('son of my sorrow'), as she died giving birth to him. Instead, Jacob named him Benjamin ('son of my right hand', 'or son of the south').

Leah bore many children. Rachel was barren, but later was given children, though these events had diminished the rights of her children, and she wept and was in grief for what had been done to her and them. This will be known in prophecy as '***the weeping of Rachel***', every time her children are diminished or destroyed. It is a condition that will not fully cease until the second coming of Christ, as we shall see. In future prophecy **concerning the children of Israel**, Rachel is called the "**barren wife**", or "**she who was barren**". The prophecy of the "barren wife" centers around this true legal wife of Jacob, who had her inheritance taken.

Leah had the many children, who initially had rights to the inheritance of Jacob. In fact, she had four before Rachel had the first two through her handmaid. She later had two by her handmaid, and then bore two more sons and one daughter. She bore seven, but had nine legal children. Eight of them were sons, each would later head a tribe of Israel. As we proceed through prophecy Leah is called both: "**she who had many children**", and "**she who bore seven**". **These references are used as they and their children are compared to one another. The**

matter of the two Jerusalems mentioned in Galatians 4 center on these two women and the two great houses of Israel that came from them. One will envy the other. The other will vex the one. This will not cease until the restoration of all things prophesied in Isaiah 11:13:

Also the envy of Ephraim (by the world) shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah (in the world) shall be cut off; Ephraim (Rachel) shall not envy Judah (Leah), and Judah shall not harass Ephraim. (Parenthesis mine).

We see in this chapter that these two great houses of Israel will become separate and never united, in God's eyes, until this great utopian condition described in Isaiah commences.

As we shall see as we progress, the division between them is caused by two factors:

1. Leah trying to take the rights of Rachel's children. This is how Leah vexes, or harasses Rachel.
2. The weeping and envy of Rachel because her children have always been diminished ever since the deceitful act of her father, Laban. Because of this, Rachel envies Leah. This division will never end until justice is served and this matter is resolved.

But let us not get ahead of ourselves.

Joseph and His Brothers

The greatest single portion of the book of Genesis is made up of the early account of Joseph, his brothers, and the events surrounding them. This is often viewed as a great Bible story which contains many lessons, as it most assuredly does. There is another fact which is not stressed enough, however. The Bible is a legal book concerning legal contracts. Every event that is included here is extremely important in understanding the correct legal progression of the covenants of God. Furthermore, the events here are symbolic in understanding how the children of Israel will bring the promises of Abraham to the entire world. To make this portion of the study as concise as possible, let us first note the principle players and how the future of the covenants is impacted by their actions.

1. Reuben was the firstborn, a son of Leah, and the one who had the legal right to the promises of Abraham. He forfeited them by his evil act of committing adultery with his father's concubine (Genesis 49:3-4).
2. Simeon and Levi, also children of Leah were next in line, but had their rights taken away due to their unfaithfulness to their father described in Genesis 34 (Genesis 49:5-7, I Chronicles 5:1).
3. The other sons of Israel were also implicated in evil that devalued their status. It was Joseph who brought the evil report of their actions to their father (Genesis 37:2). This was part of the reason for which they hated him, along with the fact that his father loved him. Another reason was that God had begun to reveal that the promises of Abraham would be fulfilled in him. He was the firstborn of Rachel, the freewoman, whose children should have been the true inheritors of the promises, except for the deceit of Laban.
4. Joseph was the good son, even though his youthful exuberance did not show much wisdom and did much to alienate him from his brothers. He would later realize that it was by God's plan that all these events occurred (Genesis 45:5). God revealed His plan to Joseph in a dream. In this dream, he saw the sun, moon, and eleven stars bow down to him. All the family knew, apparently through revelation, that it referred to all eleven brothers and his mother and father bowing down to him. This obviously had to be a prophecy of the future, as his mother was long dead. Therefore, this had nothing to do with the events that later occurred in Egypt, though they were an earlier 'type' and symbolic of the greater fulfillment of this dream which has not occurred to this very day. Joseph was the only one of the children of Israel that shared the same covenant relationship with God as his fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
5. Judah was the truly bad son, and the fourth son of Leah. More detailed account is given to his sins than all the others, because it is extremely important in understanding the progression of the covenants. At the same time, though he was more evil, he had one quality that his older brothers lacked, and which he shared with his father: the ability to repent, or overcome with God. This is the same characteristic

mentioned of Jacob when he 'prevailed' with God in the event where his name was changed to Israel. Jacob had to also overcome his former faults before God officially put His blessing on him, though he had legally taken it from Esau. Reference Genesis 32:28 concerning Jacob and I Chronicles 5:2 in regards to Judah.

The Biblical account of Judah tells how he would go up to the cities of the Canaanites with his friend, Hirah, the Adullamite. He then married a Canaanite woman, just as his lawless uncle, Esau had done. She bore him three sons. God killed the first two because of their evil. The oldest had married Tamar, and Judah had promised her to the youngest son when he came of age, so that the rights of Tamar's children would not be lost, according to the law of the *levirate wife*. Judah's wife died, and he failed to follow through on his promise to Tamar. She tricked him by pretending to be a harlot when he next went up to the Canaanite city. This gives us a hint as to the purpose of these excursions. He found out that she was pregnant and ordered her killed for her harlotry. When she exposed him as the father of her child, he admitted his sin and gave her and her son the full rights due to her. This son, Perez, then carries the inheritance rights of Judah. (NOT ABRAHAM!!). She actually had twins, but Perez was given the rights as Judah's firstborn.

Later Judah was the one who was instrumental in selling Joseph into slavery (which was a symbolic death sentence) for twenty pieces of silver. When the others plotted to kill Joseph, Reuben convinced them to put him in a pit, planning on taking him out and delivering him to their father. Judah's treachery spoiled those plans.

However, as the story progresses, it is Judah who later bows down to Joseph in Egypt and offers his own life for the life of Joseph's younger brother, Benjamin. It is this change of heart and character which will someday make Judah a 'praise' to his brothers.

The fulfillment of the promises of Abraham take place within the two houses of Israel made up of Joseph and those aligned with him and Judah and those aligned with him. As we shall see, the name of Ephraim is placed on the house of Joseph as these heritance rights are passed along.

When Israel (Jacob) nears the time of his death in Egypt, he calls Joseph to bring his sons, Manasseh and Ephraim to his side to receive the promises of Abraham as their inheritance. Genesis 48 and 49 give us the following information concerning the passage of these promises.

1. Manasseh and Ephraim are given full legal status as the two firstborn sons of Israel (Genesis 48:5), and that name (Israel) will be placed perpetually on their descendants (verse 16).
2. When they achieve the final inheritance of Abraham, they (in the *birthright* inheritance) will also be called by the names of their brothers, the twelve tribes of Israel (verse 6). The birthright tribe who will carry this inheritance right is Ephraim.

As Israel finally gives the *birthright* and *blessings* (the *promises* of Abraham) to Joseph's sons, just as Isaac had once done to him, he places his right hand on the head of the younger, Ephraim. The placing of the right hand is only important to designate the firstborn rights of the birthright. The lion's share of the physical blessings was given to both boys, and was also partially shared with all of Abraham's children. In Genesis 48:20, he passes the *birthright* to them in this order, along with the *blessings* in verse 19. The younger is to be greater than the older. Thus, Joseph receives the birthright and the blessings of the firstborn (Genesis 48:22).

There is another important point involved here that should be noted as we progress. The two sons of Joseph received full status as sons of Israel, rather than grandsons, **giving Rachel and her children six legal rights**. At this point, it is proper to say that she has legally borne six. Joseph's full rights are now split into two and the firstborn of his sons receives a double portion of blessings. Thus, three inheritance rights have now come from Joseph. Later, when Israel goes into the promised land, Manasseh has a double portion, and Ephraim will have his portion, as well as the entire greater northern territory being designated as 'Ephraim', and the southern as 'Judah'.

Next, we progress to the all-important prophecy concerning the progression of the children of Israel, up to and

including the latter days (Genesis 49:1). Though the older sons had their rights stripped from them, due to their sins, Judah is given a portion of the promises of Abraham, because he prevailed (in repentance) above them. Genesis 49:8-12 gives the prophetic rights of Judah, even though the *birthright* and *blessings* have already been given to Joseph. Here Judah is told that one day his brothers will praise him. They will bow down to him, as well. The *scepter* (King) will not depart from him (his lineage) nor a lawgiver from between his feet (under his dominion or control) until Shiloh (the King) comes. The next verse then identifies this ‘Shiloh’ as the first coming of the Messiah:

Gen 49:11: *And to Him shall be the obedience of the people, binding his donkey to the vine, and donkey's colt to the choice vine, He washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes....*

Notice!! The prophecy states that these two things (scepter and lawgiver) will not depart from Judah UNTIL Shiloh comes, thus implying that they will after this event. Of course, those who believe that He (Shiloh, Messiah) has not come will argue that this has not happened. Those who realize that He has come already will then understand the true progression of the promises of Abraham.

They are given in Genesis 49:22-26. Here the future prophecies of Joseph are given, which enlarge the matter of his involvement in the *birthright* and *blessings*, which he has already received. Verse 24 states of Joseph: ***From there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel. This statement is a clear reference to Christ allied with Joseph.*** Continuing in verse 26: *The blessings of your father have excelled the blessings of my ancestors, up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. They shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of Him who IS separate from His brothers.* In light of the literal meaning of the Hebrew words, **Young's Literal Translation** renders this correctly. The meaning has been changed in later translations by those who have made slight word and punctuation changes to deny the true meaning of what is said here. “He who **IS** separate from His brothers” is the correct translation. This refers to the Messiah allied with Joseph, because He has been killed and cast off by His brethren, Judah. This phrase is not referring to Joseph in Egypt, as the one with the crown, or *scepter*, is a son of Judah. This is the One Seed of Abraham, through which all the nations of the earth will be blessed. He cannot go into His inheritance allied with Judah, His brethren, due to the fact that they will have killed him and cast Him off. **Thus He will be allied, in some manner to the children of Rachel.** As we progress, we will see how this alliance forms.

Judah is chosen as the tribe of the Messiah, due to the fact that His brothers must kill him, in order for God's purpose for Him in delivering all mankind from sin, may be carried out. Thus, in the fulfillment of the prophecies of Abraham, Judah is the one who ‘**always** fills up the transgression’; as expressly stated by the Apostle Paul in I Thessalonians 2:15-16. This role was assigned to them by God, as Paul clearly shows in Romans, chapters 9-11. It is consistent with the ancient characteristics of Judah. They will only become a true praise to all their brethren when **all** is finally fulfilled. To show the truthfulness of this, and how it progresses, we need only to continue through the scriptures.

Books have been written that try to turn the *birthright* into physical blessings, and claim that the *scepter* is the promise of salvation, given to Judah alone. These authors point to the New Testament statement by Christ that ‘salvation is of the Jews’ as proof of this. They fail to acknowledge that during first century Palestine, the word *Israelite* and *Jew* had become synonymous, just as they are used by many today. Paul said he was a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin. We know that Benjamites were not truly Jews. Christ spoke to the Samaritan woman in terms that were consistent with what she would understand. He was not educating her concerning the true legal inheritance of Abraham within the nation of Israelites, or ‘Jews’ as she would have known them at the time. He was simply making a comparison to her which showed that the God of Abraham was working this great work among the people of Israel (‘Jews’ to her), and not through the gods, nor the order, she imagined.

This error is typical of those who take phrases, words, and scriptures out of historical, literary, and legal context; then go back and try to fold them into the scripture from the beginning, making grievous errors. However, God decreed that this would happen.

In recent times, some who have become totally given over to this error have begun to claim that ‘salvation is

of the Jews' so therefore, we need to go back and honor Christ through the doctrines of the Pharisees, who Christ Himself said were children of Satan. He also told all who would follow Him to avoid any doctrines of these evil men.

I Chronicles 5:1-2 states that the *birthright* (spiritual promise of salvation) was given to Joseph, as a tribe, but the *scepter* (the One Seed, or King) was given to Judah because he prevailed. Neither of these are the physical blessings. There are three separate things involved here. When the One Seed goes into His inheritance, He will be allied with the children of Joseph and separate from Judah. This is the manner which God blends both the children of Rachel and Leah together to bring salvation to the rest of the world. Of course, those of the house of Leah would deny this, because, as we shall see, they will continue to deny the inheritance of Rachel until Christ comes to set all things in order. This too, is according to God's plan. In fact, today, most of those of the house of Leah deny the truth about the house of Rachel, and that they even exist as a separate people.

Mount Sinai

After the children of Israel are brought out of Egypt to share in the oath God gave to Abraham in Genesis 15, they are brought to the foot of Mt. Sinai to confirm a covenant with the Creator, which will allow them to share in that oath. Thus, they will be part of the 'covenant and the oath'. They agree to be his people as 'priests', or godly representatives to the nations around, by obeying His voice. He then speaks the eternal Ten Commandments to them face to face out of the cloud, **and no more!** They then refuse to obey Him and come to His presence any more, demanding that a man (Moses) stand between them and God perpetually. This is a violation of the 'marriage' covenant they have just made with God. He states that this violation was because they had no heart to love or obey Him. The conditions of the covenant are then diminished. He is now dealing with a 'bondwoman' wife. Though this covenant never promised anything but land and blessings for obeying the Law, they could have been offered the higher covenant if they had shown a heart to obey, as Abraham did (Hebrews 11 and 12). Some few of the ancients of old found this path individually. However, the Israelites refuse, and the state of the 'marriage' to Him is therefore, diminished. Deuteronomy 5:2-5 clearly states that this covenant is not that which He shared with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. It is a marriage to a bondwoman due to the legal obligation to Abraham He made in Genesis 15. Everything in it after the Ten Commandments, takes this into account. This is the legalistic way God applies His eternal laws to sinners in a bondage system of control, for their own good, until a better thing (what He shared with Abraham) should come (Galatians 3:24).

Therefore, there are many, many, rules in it that deal with the fact that they are not delivered from the original condition of bondage inherited by mankind from the Garden of Eden, as well as the original Ten Commandment covenant of freedom at Sinai being diminished because of their sin and refusal to obey what they originally agreed to. Thus, these evil hearted people can only relate to Him as a 'bondwoman' of legal obligation. Furthermore, since they refuse face to face individual contact with Him, as the fathers had, they must relate to Him only through a controlling priesthood and only at specific times and places, where He will choose, **or place His name. These conditions are indigenous to this diminished covenant.**

***For a detailed explanation of all these issues, please see Historic Summary of the Covenants of God, available upon request.**

We should make something clear at this point. These people who shared in this Sinai covenant were the most blessed people on the earth up to that point of human history. To have any direct association with God as a nation was something far greater than any nation on the earth had ever shared. Those who view this as 'harsh oppression' are looking through the evil eyes of their father, Satan, who despises any of God's laws or control on any level. It had been diminished to the point where freedom and a true 'free' marriage was impossible because of the evil of the people. Therefore, under the conditions, it was the best it could be, though certainly not the way God would deal with a 'freewoman' who truly loved Him and His laws (I Timothy 1:5-11).

God's efforts to give the people more freedom and personal responsibility by the covenant of Joshua just before his death resulted in more evil and chaos in the days of the Judges. People with evil hearts could not

handle freedom.

Therefore, the people were subject to this law, because of the oath to Abraham, until Christ could come and redeem everyone from the bondage of sin; and the better covenant, which God shared with Abraham, would begin to be offered to the world, in general, according to God's original plan of salvation for mankind. It is this covenant that was the original one offered Adam and Eve, and is the 'renewed covenant', NOT THE SINAI COVENANT!!

The people looked to God at the place where He chose as the only way to have any contact with Him, once they had refused the relationship He originally offered at the foot of the mountain. Initially, this was the tabernacle in the camp. The tabernacle was mobile for much of the early history of their sojourn in Canaan, but was permanently placed in Shiloh (Joshua 18), until it was later overturned due to the sin of the children of Joseph, and placed in Jerusalem, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Genesis 49:10 (Psalm 78:66-67). From that time, His presence was in Jerusalem.

It should be noted emphatically, that though the Mt. Sinai covenant was not an avenue of eternal life, it was the best relationship that could be shared with those people, and became the vessel by which the true knowledge of God's laws and eternal Ten Commandments have been preserved and passed to mankind. However, this Sinai relationship and much of the specifics concerning it was the 'marriage' to a 'bondwoman' of legal obligation. This is one of the points that Paul is making in his statement in Galatians 4. Furthermore, in Galatians 5:1, he tells them not to be entangled with this yoke (controlling device) of bondage, because they are called to a better marriage to the Messiah. One of freedom and love. Not one which is written in stone because it could not be written in the hearts of the evil people it governed. Therefore the 'bondage' elements of the law do not apply to them. The New Covenant 'writes God's laws in their hearts and minds' due to the higher character that the Holy Spirit brings, as the scriptures witness throughout. Its governance is personal responsibility and order.

Elkanah, Hanna, and Peninnah

This often-overlooked triangle of Samuel's family is the third example of the 'barren wife' prophecy in the Scriptures, and is important in understanding the progression of how this prophecy flows. Elkanah was a Levite from the region of Ephrath, which was the surrounding area of Bethlehem. [Some translations incorrectly translate I Samuel 1:1 and call him an Ephraimite]. At the time of the historic event surrounding these three, they lived in Ramah. It is critical to remember this, as we progress. The wife who is loved is Hannah, and the lesser wife, is Peninnah. The relationship they shared exactly mirrors the division that existed between Rachel and Leah. In fact, they are a type of the two earlier wives of Jacob, and are connected to the progression of Jacob's wives, in prophecy. Peninnah had both sons and daughters. Hannah had none. Hannah wept and cried out to God in fasting to hear her pleas for a son and for justice to be done for her. The prayer of Hannah is the 'voice that was heard from Ramah', and concerns 'Rachel weeping for her children'. In order to prove this, we need look no further than the account in the first two chapters of I Samuel.

Hannah prayed for a son, and Samuel was born to her as an answer of the Lord. She dedicated him to the service of God and he served as prophet and judge in Israel. The important legal event that occurred at this time involved much more than Samuel, however. A close examination of Hannah's prayer in I Samuel 2 shows that it is a cry of triumph for the barren wife being delivered from her oppression. However, if one looks closely, it is quickly discernible that it does not concern Hannah and Peninnah. It concerns Rachel and Leah. The 'voice that was heard from Ramah' concerns 'Rachel weeping for her children'.

*I Samuel 2:4...the bows of the mighty men are broken, and those who stumbled are girded with strength. Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, and the hungry have ceased to hunger. **Even the barren has borne seven, and she who has the many children has become feeble.***

Immediately follows a clear prophecy of Christ coming in to His Kingdom! This has nothing to do with Samuel, Hannah, or Peninnah. This is a clear prophecy of Rachel and Leah. It predicts a time when the 'barren'

(Rachel) will have ‘borne’ seven, and she who had the many children (Leah) will become feeble, or diminished to her proper role.

Next is the account of the evil sons of Eli who he does not correct. Thus comes God’s decree of the legality of the priesthood being taken from his father (Aaron) to whom the original Levitical covenant was given in Egypt, and the arm (lineage) of Eli’s father, which is Ithamar. So then, the legality of the priesthood will be taken from Aaron and left only with one arm (lineage) of that original priest, by the covenant made with Phinehas at Acacia Grove (Numbers 25). Phinehas was a son of Eleazar. This was a covenant based on spiritual zeal and faithfulness, not physical lineage alone. Christ will one day sit as High Priest by this spiritual heritage. God promises Eli that this change will occur from beginning to end. It will be a lengthy change. First the sons of Eli are killed, then Eli dies. Some want to incorrectly relate this change to the replacement of Eli by Samuel, ignoring the statement that the original prophecy, as it relates to the physical lineage, isn’t completed until the days of Solomon (I Kings 2:27). Furthermore, Samuel never served as High Priest, as he was not of the lineage of Aaron. Thus, this prophecy actually concerns the eventual overturn of the priesthood by a physical lineage, and being given to a priesthood determined by a spiritual lineage, with Christ being the High Priest. This gradual change in the lineage of the priesthood is a lengthy one and involves a study of itself. It wasn’t completely fulfilled until our Savior took that role. The promise given to Phinehas was because of his “zeal for the Lord”, not because of his physical lineage.

As has been noted, the voice that is heard from Ramah is the prayer of Hannah. She is a later ‘type’ of Rachel and the events here concern Rachel symbolically weeping for her children. This applies to every time the children of Rachel are diminished. Upon their final deliverance, and the triumph of the ‘barren wife’, Rachel will ‘have borne seven’. This is a clear prophecy of Christ being adopted in as the firstborn of the firstfruits of God, as He takes His kingdom. He has been cast off by His brothers, Judah, the children of Leah, in order to fulfill this role. Rachel’s children, (Joseph, Ephraim, or Israel), will be the firstborn into the eternal Kingdom of God. **This is the fulfillment of the original dream of Joseph**. As we proceed further, we will see how the clear evidence of this accumulates more and more, as we go through the Scriptures.

Furthermore, the expression “she who was barren has now borne seven, and she who had the many children has become feeble”, is a direct reference to the two Jerusalems that Paul mentions in Galatians 4. One is a Jerusalem below, that was associated with the ‘bondwoman’. The one being formed above is the Jerusalem of the ‘freewoman’ that ‘now has a husband’ (when Paul wrote those words). Christ’s presence was then removed completely from the bondwoman (signified by the earthly Jerusalem), until a future time (Matthew 23:37-39).

Now let us see how this condition develops.

The split of the House of Rachel and the House of Leah

Due to the sins of Solomon in his later days, God decreed that He would take the kingdom from his lineage, give it to another, and leave only two houses of Israel under the control of Solomon’s ancestors, for the sake of the promise He made to David.

Jeroboam was given the northern kingdom of Ephraim and all within that territory. This kingdom, along with its people, is also referred to as ‘Samaria’ in prophecy, as that city was its capitol. Judah is also called Jerusalem. These terms are interchangeable in prophecy. Judah became the southern nation, along with all aligned with them. The children of Benjamin, though a son of Rachel, were confined within this territory, and the cities of Jerusalem, Ramah, and Bethlehem, etc., had originally been theirs. When the tribe of Benjamin was almost extinguished during the days of the Judges, Judah primarily took over these cities (Judges 20). Benjamin, Jacob’s ‘son of the south’ remains basically allied with the kingdom of Judah, though they are children of Rachel.

Rehoboam, Solomon’s son, ruled the southern kingdom of Judah. These two houses split and all scripture

shows that they are two separate peoples, and God considers them as such, until He will reconcile them at Christ's coming (Ezekiel 37). Those who wish to deny the true heirs to the promises of Abraham will deny this until it occurs. Those who hate Judah, and try to diminish and deny all the heirs of Israel, will deny it as well. God has given the world over to this deception for the protection of the majority of the children of Israel.

Jeroboam, the king of the northern kingdom, has no faith in God's ability to keep His kingdom intact if he obeys Him. He refuses to let his people go to Jerusalem at the appointed times, which results in the removal of all the Levites and priests from the northern kingdom. Thus, the 'lawgiver' is now under the control of Judah, which was prophesied until Shiloh will come. God also makes a covenant with King David, a son of Judah, that the royal 'crown' or 'scepter' will be within his lineage. Jerusalem will be a Holy Place, and this designation extends into the future in the physical and historical sense. However, as we have seen in I Samuel concerning the sons of Aaron and the Levitical covenant made with him; covenant conditions exist as long as the covenant is honored. As the Hebrew Scriptures use the word 'forever', it does not mean 'eternal' in the sense of that English word. It is related to the duration of the covenant, or the matter at hand. Young's Literal Translation correctly renders this term 'age-during', or for the duration of the 'age', 'covenant', or agreement which is related to this matter. Thus, God told Aaron and his descendants, that He made the Levitical covenant with Aaron to be 'forever', but that legality was changed, or negated, because of his and his son's disobedience to the agreement involved (I Samuel 2:30).

However, concerning the covenants with Levi and David, God makes it clear that though there may be punishments, and/or interruptions due to disobedience, in time, these covenants will endure. These are individual covenants and are not linked to the Sinai covenant. In other words, they will extend into the future, regardless of the legality by which God is dealing with man (Jeremiah 33:19-26).

The primary sin that separates the northern kingdom of Ephraim (Joseph) from God is the refusal of those on 'Mt. Ephraim' to go up to God, at Jerusalem, as He orders. This led to a departure from God.

Furthermore, there was no righteousness in Jerusalem at that time, either; though due to the occasional king in the southern kingdom who honored God, they avoided captivity much longer than the northern kingdom.

God first puts the northern kingdom under partial captivity by the Syrian King Hazael, as a warning. When Joash, son of Jehoahaz delivers them, he foolishly repeats the sin of Jeroboam and departs from God in the same way.

Finally, the northern kingdom, due to their evil, is taken into captivity by the Assyrian empire. Thus, the children of Rachel are removed from their inheritance and scattered due to their sin, just as Joseph's foolish exuberance (which certainly contributed to his brother's hatred) had once contributed to his captivity. The children of Rachel are then diminished, and the kingdom of Judah then begins to write them off and claim to be the only true sons, and alone, worthy of Abraham's promises (Ezekiel 16:50-52).

The depravity that had led to the captivity of 'Ephraim' was accelerated by king Ahab and his Sidonian (Canaanite) wife, Jezebel.

Later, their daughter, Athaliah, who married the son of Judean king Jehoshaphat, brought the same evil into Judah when she reigned for six years after she tried to kill all the descendants of David. Jehoida, the priest, had her killed and established Joash as king when he was old enough to at least sit on the throne, as a child. Judah honored God as long as Jehoida was alive. Upon his death, the people demanded that Joash return to the worship of other gods, and he relented to their wishes. Judah continued this 'on again', 'off again' relationship with God, until the sins of King Manasseh prompted God to declare that He would also cast-off Jerusalem, just as He had Israel, or Samaria (II Kings 23:26-27).

Furthermore, during this same general time period, the prophet Isaiah gives the proclamation that when the final cutting off of both the houses of Israel occurs, the Law and Testimony will be the responsibility of His disciples. This is a direct reference to Christ (the King) and His 'little ones' who He has chosen (Hebrews 2:10-

13). Thus, when the King is cut off by His brethren, Judah (I Thes. 2:14-16), both the scepter and the responsibility of the 'lawgiver' will **DEPART FROM JUDAH**, just as Genesis 49:10 plainly stated. Furthermore, they were disobedient in honoring either. The 'signs and wonders' prophesied in Isaiah 8:18 are performed to prove who the Messiah is. When John the Baptist sent his followers to Christ to ask Him if He was the Messiah, Yeshua's/Jesus' only reply was to tell John's followers of the miracles they had seen. Everyone knew that this was the prophesied proof of the King and Messiah, from the text of Isaiah. Furthermore, verses 19-21 of Isaiah 8 give us the fate of Judah when this event begins to occur.

Initially, Judah goes into temporary captivity into Babylon for a period of 70 years. At the same time the Yoke of Babylon is put on the world, and will not be lifted until the second coming of Christ, as the second chapter of Daniel testifies (Jeremiah 27). A comparative few of Judah will return to Jerusalem after 70 years, while still under the control of the successors who have inherited that yoke of control. However, in spite of efforts by men like Ezra, Nehemiah, and the later prophets; these men refuse to return to God's ways until their 'evil' is filled up at the murder of the Messiah (I Thes. 2:14-16). This return from Babylon was not the return of the 'repentant', as some falsely claim. Instead, it was prophesied by God as a return to Jerusalem which would eventually put them through the fire (Ezek. 22:17-22), which would not culminate until the events of 70AD and 135AD. The murder of the Messiah was the act of 'filling up the transgression' of the Sinai Covenant relationship, which set these things in motion, and was prophesied by Christ in Matthew 23.

After the proclamation of the captivity given in II Kings 23, those who represented the 'mediator' system of the Sinai covenant (elders and priests) were no longer allowed to 'inquire of the Lord', concerning the role of their former responsibilities. Ezekiel 14 and 20 are extensive texts concerning this matter. They were specifically removed as the Lord's counsel in Jeremiah 19:7. Therefore, anything they did concerning God's law after this period did not have God's approval or involvement. The evil of their hearts in this role, during this time, is proved abundantly in scripture (Ezek. 14 and 20, along with Ezekiel 33:30-33). Furthermore, after the captivity ended, the prophet Zechariah testified concerning the sins of the people and priests, as well as the elders in the captivity; as they devised a religion and interpretation of God's laws that had no involvement from God (Zechariah 7:1-7). So therefore, even though they will not be officially removed from their role as the 'lawgiver' until the murder of Christ, God was not involved in anything they devised concerning His law during this time. During this time, the initial development of Judaism began.

It was during this time that those responsible for the control of the 'lawgiver' had haughtily begun to declare their decisions as being superior to the decisions of the Almighty, and He was bound to honor them. By this evil, they began to diminish the value of the true Law, once given by God, and sinfully claim that it was only legitimate when viewed through the lens of the 'law of the Jews'. This later developed into the two Talmud's, the Midrash, the Mishna, and sacred traditions. By these, they paganized, and truly negated the true Law of God. This haughtiness of elevating themselves to a role which God never gave them (Deuteronomy 4:2), had begun even before the captivity and continues today (Jeremiah 2:31-32 and Isaiah 65:1-5). The Messiah was to confront this false Jewish religion, and the things they had devised, when He walked the earth. The legal decree by which God had separated them during this time was given in Deuteronomy 29:14-29. So, they sat in the role of the 'lawgiver' but with no involvement or approval from God until the time the true and final cutting off of Judah and Jerusalem occurred (Matthew 23:37-39). At this time, ALL of physical Israel was then separated from Him (Isaiah 8:13-22), due to the proclamation of the curses of Sinai. The only legal connection that they have with Him from this point is the oath, or covenant to Abraham and the Fathers, which decrees that even in captivity and beyond; the promises to Abraham, concerning them, will occur. But not by the former Sinai covenant. Each will be brought back to Him in their own justly assigned time, by the New Covenant brought by Christ -- as they accept Him for who He truly is.

Now, in order to understand the progression of the rights of the '*barren wife*', let us look at how this will occur.

The Regathering of Rachel's Children

During the days of Josiah, the last good king in Judah, and the king who received the final proclamation of Judah's and Jerusalem's cutting off, the prophet Jeremiah begins to prophesy the regathering of the 'good wife' who was truly loved. This prophecy deals exclusively with the northern kingdom called 'Israel', or 'Samaria'. The proclamation is given extensively in Jeremiah 3. God says that even though He had previously justly divorced her (Samaria), and the law forbade Him from taking her back, He would anyway, **due to the change of her heart**. Judah had made her into the 'good wife' (by comparison) by the extremity of her own sins, even after seeing what had happened to Israel. Therefore, Judah (Jerusalem) had become the bad wife, by comparison, even though she haughtily proclaimed herself to be 'good'.

The companion text of this chapter in Jeremiah is Ezekiel 16 wherein that prophet, in more explicit detail, outlines the progression of how God will gather Israel (both houses) back to Him in a way that is just. Judah, according to these God inspired prophecies, had become twice as bad as Israel, even after witnessing her punishment. Not only that, but Judah (Jerusalem) had become worse than Sodom and Gomorrah, and even worse than the Amorites that originally dwelt in the land of Canaan. Therefore, the punishment of the children of Leah and all aligned with her will be greater than the punishment of the former, until all is fulfilled.

God will begin the regathering by His remarriage to Israel (Joseph, who is now designated as Ephraim, who carries the inheritance of the firstborn). Then will follow Sodom and her daughters (Gentiles), and finally Judah will come back to Him, as well. However, a remnant of Judah will be gathered back among the former in order to shame her when the time is right (Ezekiel 16). Furthermore, all this regathering is made by a New Covenant, by which His commandments will be written in their hearts and minds by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, because of their love and commitment to Him, as a 'free' wife. Formerly, all freedom that He had allowed, as in the days of the Judges, had been turned into lawlessness (Jeremiah 2:20). They will no longer look to the physical Ark of the Covenant, but to God above; in a relationship by which they will call Him, "Father" (Jeremiah 31).

At this legal point in the progression of the 'barren wife' we must examine who she will truly be when this 'remarriage' begins to occur. Even though the initial offering to this marriage is given to the children of the northern kingdom, by the word of the Lord according to these ancient prophets, all who enter this marriage will not be of this physical heritage. Why? The first marriage had been based on a physical lineage, and dealt only with physical blessings: the land of Canaan and all the blessings thereof. This Covenant is the one which God shared with Abraham and had once offered Adam and Eve. It will be based on 'freedom' and personal responsibility, with the Holy Spirit in each one who accepts, writing God's laws in their hearts and minds. Its reward will be eternal life for all who accept. It is not a covenant of law for land, as was the former Sinai covenant. However, when all of Israel accepts it, they will be brought back to that land as the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 13. Therefore, those promises to Abraham will be fulfilled, regardless of the former Sinai failure.

It will not be an administration of law that had to be written on stones because of the evil hearts of the former bride. It will be given only to those who love Him and are willing to obey His voice, and keep His commandments. The Holy Spirit will then 'write His laws' in their hearts, as the Holy character they picture will then alter the human nature of the recipient to reflect the true nature of God. It is not given only to the physical nation of Israel. It is a gathering of all of Adam and Eve's children to God by the *birthright* promise to Abraham, which applied to eternal salvation. The *birthright* promise was that: "in your Seed shall **all the nations** of the earth be blessed". So, this is to be fulfilled through Abraham's descendants, but it is to all Adam and Eve's children. But true to the progressive promises of Abraham, there is a correct progressive order by which it occurs. We should be able to see through the above prophecies, that it is offered to the 'lost sheep', or the House of Ephraim, then the Gentiles (Sodom and her daughters), and finally, Judah. The roles will be determined by who truly accepts. Those who come to Christ by the order of spiritual faithfulness will sit in their proper heritage, regardless of their physical lineage. All mankind are the heirs to this promise which originated in Genesis 3:15, long before there was ever an Israelite, or before Abraham was even born (Romans 9:6-8).

All mankind were to be the children of this promise; though Abraham's *promise* was that it would be fulfilled through His descendants. The physical Jew/Gentile, designation was indigenous to the lesser Sinai covenant to the 'bondwoman'.

Therefore, the children of men who will be offered and faithfully accept this new marriage by the better covenant will be the firstborn, or ***firstfruits***, into the Eternal Kingdom of God, and Joseph's heirs. They are designated as the children of Ephraim, **and the eternal firstborn, or firstfruits of God** (Jeremiah 31:9). The 'virginity' of the children of Rachel has been restored, by the Messiah (verse 4). Later, we will see them go into their eternal inheritance, called by the names of the twelve tribes of Israel (Genesis 48:6 and Revelation 7:1-8 and Revelation 14:1-5). The purpose of this designation will be to set up the boundaries in the Promised Land for the return of all Israel to the promise given Abraham in Genesis 13, and which still must occur (Jeremiah 31:21-22, Ezekiel 40 through 48, especially chapter 48, and Isaiah 11:12). **The Firstfruits of God into the eternal Kingdom of heaven are the children of the true wife who once loved her husband with her whole heart, and had her inheritance stolen by the wife of legal obligation**. They will be spiritual Israel, divided into 12 groups, each designated with a name of one of the tribes of Israel. They will surround the Messiah and set up banners for the return of all physical Israel to the Promised Land. They are the Bride of Christ, and the inheritance of Joseph, which he foresaw in ancient times in his dream. Isaiah 11, Jeremiah 31, Revelation 7 and 14, as well as Ezekiel 44 contain information which is pertinent to this issue.

The children of Leah (Judah and those aligned with her) will not be accepted until they repent and recognize their older sister (Samaria) for who she truly is (the Bride of Christ), and Sodom (the Gentiles that have preceded Judah) for who they truly are. This is the repentance of Judah which will let them finally find their true role in Christ's kingdom (Ezekiel 16:60-63), just as the repentance of Judah long ago brought about the physical deliverance of Jacob's children, when he bowed before Joseph (allied with Egypt) and offered up his life for Benjamin's. Then and only then will Judah (Leah's children) finally be restored (Zech.12:10).

But once again, let us not get so far ahead of ourselves.

During the days of Jeremiah, God put the Yoke of Babylon on the world, which will continue until Christ comes to smash it. During the days of this prophet, God gave the legal status of each of the houses of Israel that will continue until this great event occurs. The prophecy of Jeremiah outlines the legal destiny of these two houses during this time, which will only end when the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled. The 'types' of the people of Judah at that time serve to designate the future of the two houses of Israel. Ezekiel 33 tells us that later, the poor people left in Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, began to proclaim that they alone could be the only inheritors of the promises of Abraham since they were left to associate with Jerusalem. They then discount those taken into captivity. This is exactly what the kingdom of Judah had formerly done when Israel was taken away. God says that those taken into captivity were the 'good figs' and those left were actually the 'bad figs' (Jeremiah 24). We know from the progression of history up to that point that this was not initially true. Those taken into the Babylonian captivity were the more evil of Judah and responsible for its demise. Those people left were there to till the land because they were poor.

Therefore, these two 'types' only symbolize the two groups of Israelites that will exist until the Yoke of Babylon is removed from the earth. Those who go into captivity, as their place of safety, obey God, raise their families, till their land and become good lights of God to those around, are the true 'good figs'. Those who cling to Jerusalem, claim it is holy once God's presence is gone, begin to deny their brethren, and ignore these proclamations of God, are the 'bad figs' from this time forth. They will suffer for this. Thus, the obedience to God in this matter will serve as protection and anonymity for those 'good figs'. These instructions are also repeated in Jeremiah 29. **Captivity is safety**, as much as a physical place is concerned. However, as we shall see, those who truly follow Christ may be killed and persecuted wherever they are, and the only true refuge is the presence of the Creator. Those who are given to the sword will die by the sword. Those given to captivity will go into captivity (Jeremiah 15:1-2 and Revelation 13:9). You cannot flee the purpose of God. Remember Jonah.

This legal condition will persist until Christ's second coming. All those of the firstborn inheritance who let go

of the Jerusalem below and obey God after they are drawn back to Him by the better covenant during this time will be little sanctuaries (or temples) of God and the Holy Spirit (Ezek. 11:16).

Furthermore, at this crucial time when the more evil southern kingdom is set to go into her captivity which will remain for generations, Jeremiah links God's proclamation of her fate to a very significant heritage:

Jeremiah 15:9: "**She languishes who has borne seven**; she has breathed her last; her sun has gone down while it was yet day; she has been ashamed and confounded. And the remnant of them I will deliver to the sword before their enemies," says the Lord.

It was Leah who originally had borne seven. This is the fate of her children until their redemption. The return to Jerusalem 70 years after their captivity was not any sort of 'release'. They could do nothing unless approved by the Yoke of Babylon, which was still over them. They continue, only by the protection of those more powerful, to this very day.

The Ministry of Christ/Messiah

At the appointed time, the Savior walked the earth and died for our sins to redeem us from all former sins and its diminished conditions that sin brings. All will know this redemption, but each in his/her own time, as designated by God the Father. The firstfruits of Israel will be first, then the Gentiles will be called to Him, as He has proclaimed.

Let us look at one prophecy that deals directly with the final fulfillment of the prophecy of the 'barren wife'. It is contained within the "Song of Mary" in the first chapter of Luke.

Luke 1:46: *And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant...verse 50: And His mercy is on those who fear Him (this cannot be talking about Judah, who hated and killed Him), from generation to generation. He has shown strength with His arm; **He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the might from their thrones, and exalted the lowly....***

One only need look to Ezekiel 16:50 as to the 'haughtiness' of Judah, which became their downfall, along with the clear words in Hannah's prophecy in I Samuel 2:1-5 to see that this is a direct reference to the prayer of Hannah and the final justice for the barren wife over her adversary. In fact, this crucial moment in history was the time of the final cutting off of Leah's children, which had been prophesied long ago, and the beginning of the Messiah, and the gathering of His bride. The time for Rachel's justice has now come.

This prophecy that was uttered by the mouth of the mother of Jesus/Yeshua is a repeat of one proclaimed by the prophet David.

Psalm 113:9: *He raises the poor out of the dust, and lifts the needy out of the ash heap, that He may seat him with princes; with the princes of His people. **He grants the barren woman a home**, like a joyful mother of children. Praise the Lord!*

The lowly are the children of Rachel, who will be seated with the princes of God's people (Ezekiel 44). God will now 'grant the barren woman a home', as she (her children) will become Christ's bride.

The text of John 14:2-4 tells us where the dwelling of the 'barren wife' truly is. At this time, it is in heaven where God's throne abides.

The crucial importance of the words of Mary is that she utters them when the prophesied events of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel concerning the cutting off of Judah have finally come. The time between the proclamation of II Kings 23 and the murder of the Messiah is a time during which God has 'long endured these vessels of wrath' prepared for destruction (Romans 9:22). The time for the cutting off of Judah has come, as Christ

repeatedly showed throughout His ministry; and the time of the redemption of Rachel is now here. The prophet Isaiah spoke of this event long ago:

Isaiah 54:1: *Sing, O barren, You who have not borne: Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, you who have not labored with child! **For more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married woman,**” says the Lord.*

The entirety of Isaiah 54 should be read in this context.

It is this very prophecy which Paul refers to in his letter to the Galatians, where we began this study. At the time when Paul uttered these words, the ‘desolate’ represented Leah’s children (still identifying with the Jerusalem beneath), but who now had no legal connection to the Messiah, the Sinai covenant having ended at His death. The gathering to Christ to the ‘Jerusalem above’, that is being prepared for His bride (Rachel’s children), now is the only one of the two ‘who has a husband’ until a future redemption.

This very crucial time when the Messiah finally walked the earth was heralded by another ‘barren’ wife who finally bore a son, whose role was to prepare the way for all these historic events. This was Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. In fact, this event certainly must have heralded the fact that the events we are discussing here were about to occur.

In the Old Testament times, Manoah, the mother of Samson, had also been a barren wife who brought forth a son that would be a ‘type’ of the deliverer of Israel. In the events of Elizabeth and Manoah, they are apparently the only wife involved, whose release from the condition of being ‘barren’ heralds a ‘type’ of God’s deliverance.

The only other ‘barren’ wife of note in the scriptures, is Michal, the wife of David, who **became barren** because of her sin. As we see the progression of these monumental events, it should be clear how God used the ‘barren wife’ to fulfill His purpose, symbolically. But why are the children of the wife (the Jerusalem above) who ‘has a husband’, **far fewer** than the children of the ‘bondwoman’, Leah (whose children still cling to the Jerusalem below)?

The Bride of Christ -- the inheritance of Rachel

Long ago, when Joseph once dreamed the dream of his father, mother, and brothers bowing down to him, it was said that Jacob reproved him for his youthful impetuosity, but at the same time, ‘kept these matters in his heart’. Jacob knew that God spoke to the youthful Joseph in dreams, as it has been clearly stated in the book of Job, that He does (Job 33:14-18). Knowing that his dearly loved Rachel was long departed from this earth, he knew that all this was a prophecy for the future world where he would go to her, as she could not come to him or his sons (2 Samuel 12:23). This had to be the realization that led to his prophecies of Genesis 49, along with the passing of the *promises* of Abraham to Joseph.

Later, when he finally went to Egypt to see his beloved son, he made sure that Judah led the way (Genesis 46:28), obviously having seen the change in his fourth born son and realizing the role he would play in God’s plan of salvation for all mankind, which he knew would be fulfilled in his own lineage. God had promised him that, face to face. However, as the children of Jacob are listed within this chapter, it is Rachel, who alone, God has designated as Jacob’s true legal wife (Verse 19). **Who will her children be, and why are they so few, as stated by Isaiah and quoted by Paul in his letter to the Ephesians?**

Christ began to expound on the events of those called to the marriage in Matthew 22. Here He states that those originally called to a wedding with Christ would be sent two sets of servants, in order to invite them. This is the prophets and apostles. When they kill the servants, He opens the wedding to any who will come in and wear the correct garment of the ‘virgin’. Some will be seated at the wedding feast, but without a correct garment. They will then be put in ‘outer darkness’, which designated a position away from the presence of the ‘light’, which is Christ. This is not a designation of eternal judgment, but a place and time of suffering which

they must go through in order to correct them.

True to God's prophetic proclamation in Jeremiah 3 and Ezekiel 16, the **initial** people offered into the wedding will come from the northern kingdom of Ephraim, or the scattered tribes of Israel's 'lost sheep'. By Christ's time they had been scattered, and many had lost their identity. This is for their own protection, according to the prophecies of Jeremiah. However, Christ sends His disciples to the far places where they may be, in search of them.

He tells them not to go to Gentiles, as their time has not yet come. They are to go into various cities inquiring if anyone would be 'worthy' of this calling. This means that they must be truly an Israelite of that lineage. When they go, they are to perform miracles, as that would have a meaning to those familiar with the prophesied sign given in Isaiah 8:18 concerning the Messiah and His followers. If they go into houses, and the people are truly Israelite, they are offered to partake in the covenant with Christ. If they refuse, the disciples are to leave and dust their feet off against them. It will be better for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment (when God actually judges them), than for them. In other words, they will be put in the same legal position as the children of Judah, who rejected Him. Ezekiel 16 states that, because Judah had been worse, their opportunity and place in the kingdom will be put off to a later time, and both Samaria and Sodom and her daughters would precede them into God's Kingdom. Thus, all Israelites who accept Christ will come into the bride if they continue in faithfulness. All the others will be aligned with Judah, who will come after Sodom and Gomorrah.

As the gathering of the wedding to the Messiah commences, a new spiritual alignment begins, as well. Those of Joseph, who accept the Messiah, will later be known as Ephraim and all Israel aligned with him. Those who do not, and come later, will be known as Judah, and all aligned with him (Ezekiel 37). One (Joseph) will take preeminence, and most of the work and calling of the gospel of Christ has been done from among and within those people. All Israel will eventually bow down to them when they come into their inheritance (Revelation 7 and Revelation 14).

However, those who actually qualify to be in the Bride will only be 'one from a city, or two from a family', as the prophet Jeremiah stated (Jeremiah 3:14-15). There are 144,000 from the time of Abel until the calling to the wedding is shut. They will one day sit in the inner court of the eternal temple, as well as Christ's future temple, when David reigns over Israel, once again, under the rule of our Lord and Savior (Ezekiel 44 and Revelation 7).

Those who come to that wedding but with filthy garments, will be invited out into tribulation, or pain that is needed in order for their robes to be washed, and will, in the proper time, be led to the 'fountains of living water' (Bride of Christ), for the improvement they need. This is an innumerable multitude of believers who will be in the outer court, but will not serve in His direct presence, due to the fact that they compromised even the least of the Commandments, and polluted their worship with the worship idols, or pagan practices - just as Judah had anciently done (I Corinthians 3:12-15, Matthew 5:19, Revelation 7:14-15, Ezekiel 44). The Bride must uphold her faithfulness with the garments of the virgin, which are the righteous acts of the saints.

Thus, when Paul made his statement in Galatians 4, he was directly addressing those Pharisees who had been in the church, and then left -- falsely claiming that all the Law of Moses was a code of eternal life, failing to see that code of law in its proper place (Acts 15). He knew that Christ had already been crucified and ascended. The Sinai covenant had ended, as well.

The Jerusalem above, along with those who will someday fill the 'offices' (falsely interpreted as 'mansions'), or 'dwellings' that a husband must prepare for His bride before the wedding, was already being formed at that time. It is this Jerusalem above that is being prepared for the **'freewoman', Rachel, who is the mother of us all. This is the meaning of Paul's statement concerning the two Jerusalems in Galatians 4. Those who are still in 'bondage' either to the diminished condition of law after the sin the Garden of Eden, or those who falsely cling to the Sinai covenant which ended with the death of our Savior, were vastly greater in number than the children of the 'true' wife, who will return to God by the covenant of love, freedom, and personal responsibility shared by the Fathers and once offered to Adam and Eve.**

The Apostle Peter was the chief apostle sent to the 'lost tribes' of the House of Israel. Therefore, his letters are direct instruction as to their responsibilities. I Peter addresses this in length. I Peter is written to the 'elect', or those chosen few who qualify for this role. In I Peter 1:1, he identifies them for who they are...***elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.*** They have been separated by the sprinkling of Christ's blood, sanctification of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the commitment of obedience to God's voice, commandments and laws, just as their spiritual father Abraham; without which they would not be the legal heirs of Abraham (Genesis 26:5). Peter obviously knew that some would fall into the soon coming deception of the doctrine of 'lawlessness' (abolishing the law) spoken of by Paul in II Thessalonians, and also addressed by Jude. It is this false deception which provides the atmosphere for the innumerable multitude who may be pure in heart, but deceived about the true role of the Bride. Many are committed to this state for the purpose of God (Romans 11:30-32).

Peter's message to the 'lost sheep' gives them the basic requirements to fulfill the role of the 'virgin' and II Peter admonishes them of the false deceptions that are coming, some by Jewish fables -- from those who deny that the Jews have been cut off. This is the second way in which the deceiver (antichrist) attempts to pervert the Way of the Lamb (Revelation 13:11). The true understanding of who Peter's intended audience was, let us read verse nine from chapter two of first Peter:

*I Peter 2:9: **But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.***

Paul had made this same designation concerning those 'who once were not a people' to the Gentiles at Ephesus. They had never had a relationship with God (Ephesians 2).

Peter's message was not to those of Gentile descent. It was to the Dispersion, or the scattered people of Israel. Many mistake this with the Jews who later became scattered. This cannot be true. In the above scripture, he labels them as those called to the **holy priesthood**, which will sit directly in the presence of God. This is reserved for the Bride of Christ. Furthermore, he tells these ISRAELITES, that they had formerly been in outer darkness (not God's people), and in a state of actually being cut off from God. The only ones that would actually fit this description in its entirety would be those who had been removed from God's presence hundreds of years before by the captivity of the Assyrian Empire. They were now brought back by the New Covenant, in Christ.

*Let us remember that the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel proclaim that a 'remnant' of Judah would be brought back among them in order to shame Judah when the time comes that their eyes will be opened. The original disciples of Christ were among these (John 3:29).

Peter's instructions, therefore, are meant to help them see how our father Abraham, faithfully and in freedom - honored God, unencumbered by the complications that came from the relationships God shared with those who had no heart to obey His voice or His Commandments; and whom He had to legally allow in His presence for the purpose of a future redemption. **Let us, as the Bride of Christ, return to this faith once delivered to the saints.**

The Future

Prophecy reveals that in the time of the 'latter rain', Judah will be called to repentance and Leah's children will finally find their true inheritance, upon their repentance and acceptance of Christ. They, and all Israel aligned with them (those who have not accepted Christ in the proper way) are now cut off for the sake of the Gentiles (Romans 9-11).

In spite of the diminished condition of Judah and those aligned with him today, we are always admonished to support him and never demean him in his present role (Romans 11:11-18). **Always remember the curse that came**

upon the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites who treated Israel as they did while they were in the wilderness. They were their brothers and cousins, and their harsh treatment of them resulted in an eternal curse by God.

Eventually, all Israel will be saved. The day will come when the events of Isaiah 11 and Ezekiel 37 will finally occur. They will all be brought back to Jerusalem and the Promised Land by the legality of the New Covenant Christ instituted with His shed blood two thousand years ago -- when their repentance occurs. The past failure of the Sinai covenant conditions cannot negate this eternal promise that was confirmed by God's oath in Genesis 22. Judah will then be a praise to all his brethren, as we have seen in the words of the prophets. The prophet Zechariah foretold that future day in Zechariah 8. Christ will return (verse 3), and they will no longer be 'desolate', just as He stated in Matthew 23:37-39. The world will then look to Judah, who has humbly accepted her true inheritance, as a source of true knowledge for the entire world. Finally, the children of Rachel and Leah will be reconciled in their proper legal and intended role when this day arrives. The Messiah will reign over the entire world, with His bride, who will be fountains of living waters, bringing salvation to all the world. The events of Joseph's ancient dream will finally be fulfilled.

At this time, the prophecies of Jeremiah 31 will be fulfilled. The weeping of Rachel will cease. Not only will her spiritual children find their inheritance, but the physical descendants of her children will be brought back to their place in the Promised Land, as well (Ezekiel 48). At this time, Christ will rule this earth, as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Prince David will also rule over all the house of Israel, as in ancient times. Righteousness will be restored in all the land by the obedience of both tribes. There are two things that will be the continual catalyst for this obedience:

1. Jeremiah 31:6: *For there shall be a day when the watchmen will cry on Mount Ephraim, **'Arise, and let us go up to Zion, to the Lord our God'**.* When this great day occurs, the children under the territory of Ephraim will go to Jerusalem at the appointed times of God. This is a repentance of the sin of 'Jeroboam, son of Nebat', which led to the northern kingdom's original fall.
2. Jeremiah 31:23: *Thus says the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel: "They shall again use this speech in the land of Judah and in its cities, when I bring back their captivity: **'The Lord bless you, O home of justice, and mountain of holiness!'**"*

These two passages show the changed hearts of both houses of the sons of Israel. In former times, Ephraim refused to go up. Furthermore, there was no holiness in Jerusalem when they went there. Both of these errors will be corrected.

At this time, God will bring all Israel back to the Promised Land by the legality of the New Covenant which comes only by faith in the Messiah, Jesus/Yeshua as the Savior of the world. Those of the firstfruits and the Gentiles called to the New Covenant through faith in Christ before this time, will sit with Christ in His temple, bringing this final gathering of all the children of Israel back to the Promised Land. It will not come by the former Sinai covenant, which is now gone; but only when their eyes are opened, and they accept Christ for who He truly is (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

Any 'gathering' to that land before this monumental event occurs is not a fulfillment of this prophecy. It will be for another purpose, altogether. Judah was returned to Jerusalem, but still in bondage, after 70 years in captivity, to 'fill up the transgression' of the murder of the Messiah (I Thes. 2:14-16 and Daniel 9:24). Their 'regathering' in the latter day will serve to bring about the catalyst for the world events which will result in His second return. Many of Judah have returned there today, but only by the protection of greater world powers, as in former times.

The regathering and the events of Jeremiah 31 are for the physical children of Israel, once they all accept the Messiah by the New Covenant which He instituted with His shed blood (John 6). None of the events of Jeremiah 31, concerning the physical children of Israel will occur until the end time destruction, centered in that land; which will result in the second coming of Christ.

The prophetic proof of this sequence of events is stated in the prophecy of Isaiah 6, beginning in verse 6.

Here the Lord prophesies the blinding and cutting off of Israel (both houses). Christ stated during His first ministry that He had come to do that very thing. This is one of the reasons He spoke in parables, so that they would not understand. **So this did not officially occur until Christ came.**

Isaiah then asks God how long this condition of blindness will last, and Israel will then be able to see, once again. The answer is clear and emphatic: Isaiah 6:11: ***“Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant, the houses are without a man, the land is utterly desolate, the Lord has removed men far away, and forsaken places are many in the midst of the land. But yet a tenth will be in it, and will return and be for consuming, as a terebinth tree or as an oak, whose stump remains when it is cut down. So the holy seed shall be its stump.***

This final regathering of these people to that Land will not take place until **after** all these events have occurred. This regathering is the second ‘immutable thing’ contained in the original promises to Abraham, first given in Genesis 13 and made into an oath in Genesis 22. It is by these ‘two immutable things’ contained in the *promises* that any have hope in the God of Abraham. To deny either is to deny Him, in the truest sense.

In chapter 5 of Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, he talked of a marriage of true mutual love and submission, in which each partner takes his/her **proper role**, motivated by a **higher mutual love of self-sacrifice**, brought only by the **indwelling of the Holy Spirit**. When he wrote these words, this idea of marriage was truly something that would have been foreign to a world that had only seen marriage as a ‘bond’ relationship, with women reduced to little more than property for the use of their husbands. He stated that this is a picture of the true relationship that Christ will share with His bride. This relationship pictures the ‘restored’ covenant which is the only path to eternal life. It is the original path offered to Adam and Eve.

In the time of the firstfruits, many are called, few are chosen, and even **fewer will remain faithful to the end**. Only these will be the children of the ‘barren wife’: the wife truly bound to her husband by her love for Him and His love for her. No wife of legal obligation will be there, as that tragic role will be forever gone.

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