

Crossroads Baptist Church  
February 25, 2007 10:00  
Romans 4: 13-17a  
Romans #21

## “We Are An Heir to the World”

A few years ago, our Southern Baptist Convention developed an initiative to call Christians to pray for the Jewish people to receive Jesus as their Messiah and be saved. There was a tremendous backlash against the initiative claiming religious arrogance. Even a rabbi responded, Abraham Heschel, “Christians must abandon the idea that the Jews must be converted. This is one of the greatest scandals in history.”

How sad this episode because it distorts the historic Christian and Biblical teaching about the relationship between Israel and the church. So let’s look this morning at the thought of we, as Gentiles, being part of Abraham’s family.

Judaism is so central to Christianity that there is no salvation without it. And Jesus Christ is so central to Judaism that there is no salvation without him.

### I. There is a promise here for us.

Verse 13 indicates this promise is for Abraham’s seed (descendants). Who are the true descendants of Abraham?

Galatians 3:29 “And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise.”

I am assuming this morning about the text that is before us that Paul is addressing Gentiles who trust in the Messiah, Jesus, and are fellow heirs of the promise of Abraham thus actually children of Abraham. Thus, it is accurate to say that I or you are a Jew. I am also assuming that ethnic Jews who reject their Messiah, Jesus, will not be counted as true Jews and will go to hell.

I John 2:23 “Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father, the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.”

In other words, Jews who reject Jesus as their Messiah and Savior forfeit their promises as Jews. And Gentiles who accept Jesus as the Messiah and Savior become heirs of those promises.

It was Jesus himself who said in Matthew 8:10-12 when the Centurion’s servant was healed, “Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel. I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

We do have a great appreciation for the Jews and Judaism. We don’t want Jews to abandon their heritage because “salvation is of the Jews.” The only way for us to be saved is by trusting in the Jewish Messiah.

As we have seen in previous messages, the promise does not come from obedience to the law (verses 13-15), but through the righteousness of faith.

Thus, the promise is given to believers in Jesus Christ.

### II. There is a prize here for us.

What is the prize of the promise?

“He will be the heir of the world..”

The promise to Abraham and his seed, that they would inherit the world, involved three things in the Jewish mind from the time of Abraham.

#### A. The peace that endures throughout life

Genesis 15:15, God promised Abraham that he would go to his grave in peace.

#### B. The possession of a tangible land.

Genesis 17:8 “I will give to you and your descendants all the land for an everlasting possession.”

The seed of Abraham will possess the land.

#### C. The personal relationship with God.

Genesis 17: 7 “I will establish my covenant between Me and you and your descendants....to be God to you.”

#### D. The position of authority over all people.

Genesis 22:17 “Your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies.”

This means that in the future there are no enemies that will triumph over the descendants of Abraham. All their enemies will be subdued.

The Jews consider themselves the descendants of Abraham but so do the Muslims and yet neither are physically, but only spiritually is this promise.

E. The posture of blessing others.

Genesis 22:18, God promised Abraham that he would be a blessing to the nations.

### **III. There is a power here for us.**

“You are an heir of the world with Christ.”

This means God has given to you all the promises of Israel.

A. We can enjoy personal peace now and forever.

Romans 5:1 We now have peace with God.

B. We are to possess the land representing maturity.

Our Canaan is not a piece of ground in the Middle East but it is a land of victory. But we know that one day we shall reign with Christ as he rules from Jerusalem.

“The meek shall inherit the earth.” Matthew 5:5

C. We are to enjoy a personal relationship with God.

We can know God personally.

D. We are to take our position of authority over our enemies.

We are to live as if there are no enemies because in reality all our enemies will be defeated, even death (I Corinthians 15:25-26).

Live like you are never going to die, because you won't.

E. We can be a blessing to others.

We can give to others and bless them because our hands are full of the blessings of God to us.