

Abraham believed in the resurrection of the dead, **(Heb. 11:19)** and it is through resurrection that he will inherit the promise.

Those raised and approved will be made immortal, as Jesus said, 'Neither can they die any more for they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection'. **(Luke 20:36)** They will comprise a vast multitude, 'a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues'. **(Rev. 7:9)** This will be Abraham and his seed, able now to inherit the land for ever, in accordance with the promise. This resurrection to everlasting life has been made possible only through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. By his death he confirmed the promise and by his resurrection he made its realisation absolutely certain.

To share in the realisation of this promise, we must have the faith of Abraham and obey God as he obeyed Him, 'he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved'. **(Mark 16:16)** Only if we believe the gospel which was preached to Abraham and obey the command to be baptised, can we hope to share in the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham. 'As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ... And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise'. **(Gal. 3:27-29)**

On the basis of 'the exceeding great and precious promises' **(2 Pet. 1:4)** of God we can have a strong consolation and a hope which is as 'an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast'. **(Heb. 6:13-19)**

## The Christadelphians

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# The promise to Abraham

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# The promise to Abraham

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Abraham, the father of the Jewish race, lived about 1900 years before Christ and the promises made to him by God, are recorded in the first book of the Old Testament. Yet it is clear from many references in the New Testament, that the hopes and beliefs of Jesus and his apostles were based on those promises.

Paul wrote of Jesus that he came 'to confirm the promises made unto the fathers'. **(Rom. 15:8)** When on trial for his life, he said that he was being 'judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers'. **(Acts 26:6)** Again, he said that when God promised Abraham that through him all nations would be blessed, the gospel was preached to Abraham. **(Gal. 3:8)** This gospel, or 'good news', has to do with salvation, that is, deliverance from sin and death and inheritance of the Kingdom of God; and Jesus said 'salvation is of the Jews', **(John 4:22)** the descendants of Abraham.

Abraham, or Abram as he then was, lived in Ur of the Chaldees, a city known from the work of the archeologist, to have been large and prosperous, but idolatrous. He was told by God to leave this place and journey to a country of which he knew nothing. **(Heb. 11:8)** He was directed to the land of Canaan, later known as Palestine, and today as Israel. Forsaking city life he moved from place to place with his flocks and herds, dwelling in a tent. **(Heb. 11:9)**

Whilst living under these circumstances God made the following promises to him

1. Inheritance of the land of Israel by himself and his seed (descendant or descendants) for ever; **(Gen. 13:14,15)**

2. Descendants which should be as numerous as the grains of sand on the seashore, or as the stars of heaven; **(Gen. 22:17)**
3. A seed who should 'possess the gate of his enemies' **(Gen. 22:17)** - meaning that he would have power and authority over his enemies;
4. A seed in whom all nations of the earth would be blessed; **(Gen. 22:18)**

The terms of these promises, leave no room for doubt that God intended a literal fulfilment involving Abraham, his descendants, and a country clearly defined by its boundaries. Moreover in that fulfilment all the world would benefit.

Yet not one aspect was realised in his own life time. It is true that Abraham lived in the land of promise, but it was not his: he was a stranger and a pilgrim.

**(Heb. 11: 9-13)** This was brought home to him and his children very forcibly, when he was compelled to purchase a field from the rightful inhabitants in order to bury his wife. **(Gen. 23)** Truly, as Stephen reminded the Jews of his day, God gave Abraham 'none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on'.

**(Acts 7:5)** Paul shows quite clearly that Abraham and his descendants look 'afar off' for the realisation of these promises. **(Heb. 11:13)** 'These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect'. **(Heb. 11:39,40)**

Here again Paul associates the hope of the Christian believer, with the promise made to Abraham. His words to the Galatians teach this very plainly: '**As many**

**of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ ...**

**And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise'. (Gal. 3.27-29)**

It is quite evident that the possession of the land by Abraham's descendants in the past, was not a complete fulfilment of this promise. This complete realisation still lies in the future. In fact, all aspects of the promise converge on the return of Jesus Christ to the earth. He is the promised seed: 'He saith not, and to seeds, as of many, but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ'. **(Gal. 3:16)** Christ will inherit the land, for he will come as the king over the land and people of Israel, the rightful heir by the Divine decree revealed to his mother Mary. **(Luke 1:31-33)** He is the one who is to rule over his enemies, for he is the Lord's anointed, who is to be given the nations for his inheritance and who will break them with a rod of iron. They will then 'serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling', **(Psa. 2:11)** and as a result all nations will be blessed in the kingdom which Christ will establish, the Kingdom of God on earth.

But how will Abraham inherit the land? When Jesus returns to the earth, he will first raise from the dead all those who through the ages have come to know the true purpose of God. They will be judged according to their response to the will of God. Amongst these will be Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Moreover, we know that they will find approval, for Jesus said to certain Jews of his day who refused to believe and obey him, 'Ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the Kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out'. **(Luke 13:28)** There is no doubt that ▶▶