

Faith: The Better Way ~ Part 2c²

Messianic Jews 11:8-22

Letter to the Messianic Jews

In my last post, we began to explore the **Trust of the Avraham and His Children** in **Messianic Jews 11:8-22**. We looked at only verse 8. In this post, we continue to examine the **Trust of the Avraham and His Children** in **Messianic Jews 11:8-22** starting in verse 9.

⁸ By trusting, Avraham obeyed, after being called to go out to a place which God would give him as a possession; indeed, he went out without knowing where he was going. ⁹ By trusting, he lived as a temporary resident in the Land of the promise, as if it were not his, staying in tents with Yitz'chak and Ya'akov, who were to receive what was promised along with him. ¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city with permanent foundations, of which the architect and builder is God. ¹¹ By trusting, he received potency to father a child, even when he was past the age for it, as was Sarah herself; because he regarded the One who had made the promise as trustworthy. ¹² Therefore this one man, who was virtually dead, fathered descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky, and as countless as the grains of the sand on the seashore. ¹³ All these people kept on trusting until they died, without receiving what had been promised. They had only seen it and welcomed it from a distance, while acknowledging that they were aliens and temporary residents on the earth. ¹⁴ For people who speak this way make it clear that they are looking for a fatherland. ¹⁵ Now if they were to keep recalling the one they left, they would have an opportunity to return; ¹⁶ but as it is, they aspire to a better fatherland, a heavenly one. This is why God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city. ¹⁷ By trusting, Avraham, when he was put to the test, offered up Yitz'chak as a sacrifice. Yes, he offered up his only son, he who had received the promises, ¹⁸ to whom it had been said, "What is called your 'seed' will be in Yitz'chak." ¹⁹ For he had concluded that God could even raise people from the dead! And, figuratively speaking, he did so receive him. ²⁰ By trusting, Yitz'chak, in his blessings over Ya'akov and Esav, made reference to events yet to come. ²¹ By trusting, Ya'akov, when he was dying, blessed each of Yosef's sons, leaning on his walking-stick as he bowed in prayer. ²² By trusting, Yosef, near the end of his life, remembered about the Exodus of the people of Isra'el and gave instructions about what to do with his bones." ~ Messianic Jews 11:8-22 (CJB)

After **Avram** arrived in the land of **Cana'an** God told him, **"I will give this land to your seed"** (Genesis 12:7). But later He said, **"I will give it to you and your seed forever"** (Genesis 13:15). ¹

Avraham lived as a temporary resident, wandering **in** and out of **the Land** (Genesis 12:6-10; 13:1-12, 17-18; 14:13-16; 20:1; 21:34; 22:19; 23:4) which God had **promised** him (13:14-18; 15:7, 18-21; 17:8); so did **Yitzchak** (Genesis 26:3-4) and **Ya'akov** (Genesis 35:12, 27). But they all died without inheriting the land God had promised to them personally as well as to their descendants (v. 13). As a matter of fact, the Jewish people have never possessed the entire land that God has bequeathed to them.

Is the promise therefore unfulfilled? No, because **Yeshua** testified that **Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov** are still alive (Matthew 22:31-32). When their seed, the Jewish people, come into full possession of **Eretz-Israel**, as God has promised them, the Patriarchs will be alive to inherit with them.

But perhaps the promise that **Avram** will inherit the Land has been spiritualized in the **Brit Hadashah**? Perhaps **"the Land"** now refers to heaven and not to a piece of real estate in the Middle East? No, because God instructed Avram, **"Arise, and walk through the length and breadth of the Land, for I will give it to you"** (Genesis 13:17). Obviously God did not mean for him to walk through heaven. God keeps his promises, He does not renege on them by spiritualizing them into something else.

¹ I can't pass up this opportunity to impress upon my readers that the **Brit Hadashah** makes absolutely no sense without reading and understanding the **Tanakh**.

He was looking forward to the city with permanent foundations. The author is thinking Jewishly, remaining conscious of several levels of meaning. He does not deny the simple sense of the promises concerning the **Eretz-Israel**, where **Avraham, Yitzchak** and **Ya'akov** lived as **aliens and temporary residents**. But at the same time he implies that **Avraham** understood a deeper level of meaning in God's promise, a meaning relating not only to **Eretz-Israel** but to earth and heaven. This we learn from the author's citing the phrase, **"aliens and temporary residents on the earth,"** from 1 Chronicles 29:15. The last three words could be rendered from the Greek as **"in the Land,"** according to the context here. But in 1 Chronicles the Hebrew word means "on" not "in," and the context there makes it clear that **"ha'aretz"** means **"the earth."**²

Avraham's awareness of the deeper meaning gave him the faith to remain obedient to God in the face of not **receiving** during his lifetime **what had been promised**, namely, **Eretz-Israel**. This is why he could **aspire to a better fatherland, a heavenly one** (compare Philippians 3:20), namely, **the city with permanent foundations, of which the architect and builder is God** (v. 10), elsewhere called **"the city of the living God, heavenly Yerushalayim"** (Messianic Jews 12:22; compare 13:14 and Galatians 4:26).

Avraham's faith was such that he trusted God to fulfill His promise, even if it required miracles, first, of making an aged couple able to have children (Genesis 17:19, 18:11-14, 21:2; compare Ro 4:17-22), and second, of resurrecting **Yitzchak** from the dead, a possible implication of the story of the **'Akedah** (the "binding" of Isaac for sacrifice by Avraham, Genesis 22:1-19).

Avraham... offered up Yitzchak as a sacrifice. The story of the **'Akedat-Yitzchak**, the "Binding of Isaac," Genesis 22:1-19, is read in the synagogue as part of the liturgy for the second day of **Rosh-HaShanah**. The events of the **'Akedah** prefigure the atoning death of **Yeshua the Messiah**. The **'Akedah** is referred to again in the **Brit Hadashah** in James 2:21-23.

Although he lived as a highly honored Egyptian entitled to an elaborate tomb, **Yosef** believed the promises to **Avraham** that there would be an **Exodus**. His instructions that his bones be carried to **Eretz-Israel** (Genesis 50:24-25) were carried out more than four centuries later (Genesis 50:26, Exodus 13:19, Joshua 24:32).

In my next post, we will continue on our topic of the **Definition and Illustration of Trusting** by moving on to explore the **Trust of Moshe, The Deliverer** in **Messianic Jews** 11:23-28.

² Jewish New Testament Commentary by David Stern.