

[R4071 : page 301]

## CALEB'S REWARD

- JOSHUA 14:5-14. - **OCTOBER 27** -

**Golden Text:** – "He wholly followed the Lord God of Israel." – Joshua 14:14.

IN all the promises to the faithful prior to the Gospel Age there were no intimations of spiritual things, – of the high calling to joint-heirship with Christ, of the privilege of being transformed New Creatures, partakers of the divine nature, etc. Thus, for instance, Caleb wholly followed the Lord God of Israel and received as his reward a choice portion of the land of Canaan.

We observe also many similar promises made to Israel as a nation conditioned on their obedience to God and their faith and loyalty: – They should eat the good of the land; their days should be long upon the land which the Lord gave them; their enemies should not triumph over them; they should be blessed in basket and in store, etc., etc. These were the immediate temporal rewards of earthly things promised to the obedient. But the promises to be realized to them even beyond the grave were also of an earthly kind. To [R4071 : page 302] Abraham God said, "Lift up now thine eyes and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward and eastward and westward; for *all the land which thou seest*, to thee will I give it and to thy seed forever." And Stephen and Paul, referring to this earthly promise to Abraham and to his seed according to the flesh, remind us that this promise was never fulfilled to Abraham in his past life (nor has it yet been fulfilled to his posterity – "for an everlasting possession"); but that he died in faith believing that when he should be awakened from death in due time the promise would be verified. – Acts 7:5; Heb. 11:8-10.

These observations suggest several important questions. (1) May the Christian expect the temporal rewards of earthly prosperity as a present reward of faithfulness to God? (2) Shall the Spiritual Seed of Abraham share the earthly inheritance with the Fleshly Seed? or (3), vice versa, If the higher promises were made to the Spiritual Seed, the Gospel Church, can they apply also to the Fleshly Seed?

Considering the second question first, we answer, No; for the saints of the Gospel Age are to be changed from the human to the spiritual, divine nature. They are to be made like unto Christ's glorious body, who is now "the express image of the Father" – "the King immortal, *invisible* and dwelling in light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see"; and with Christ they are to inherit all things. (I Cor. 15:51-53; Phil. 3:21; 2 Pet. 1:4; Phil. 1:5; I Tim. 1:17; 6:16; Rev. 21:7; Rom. 8:17.) While the Fleshly Seed of Abraham will rejoice to sit, each man, under his own vine and fig tree with none to molest or make them afraid (Micah 4:4), the Spiritual Seed will be reigning with Christ in glory, and from their exalted position will be able to bless all the families of the earth; and not only so, but even to judge angels. – Gen. 28:14; Gal. 3:16,29; I Cor. 6:3.

Nor can the Fleshly Seed of Abraham, even the most worthy and faithful prophets and martyrs, inherit the "*exceeding* great and precious promises," which belong to a subsequent dispensation of divine favor; for it is written that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God," – the spiritual plane of that Kingdom being here referred to, – though they will inherit its earthly phase, as it is written: "Ye [unfaithful Jews] *shall see* Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God [the earthly phase], and ye yourselves thrust out." (Luke 13:28.) These two phases of the Kingdom will be in communication and cooperation during the Millennium – the one, the higher, spiritual and invisible, and the other, perfect, human

and visible among men. Thus it is written, "Out of Zion [the spiritual phase] shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem [the human, visible phase]." (Isa. 2:3.) And while the promise to Abraham, "In thee and in thy Seed ['which Seed,' says Paul, 'is Christ' – Head and Body] shall all the families of the earth be blessed," shall be fulfilled in the Spiritual Seed primarily, yet the exalted earthly phase of the Kingdom is to be the blessed channel or agency through which the blessing shall flow to all the kindreds of the earth. And thus, as the Apostle declares, the promise of God – "In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" – shall be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law (the Fleshly Seed), but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham. And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's Seed and heirs according to the promise. – Rom. 4:16; Gal. 3:16,29.

This calls to mind the two phases of the Kingdom of God as presented in MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. I., Chap. XIV., and the separate and distinct inheritance and office of each. We are also reminded of the Lord's teaching that not all the natural descendants of Abraham are to be heirs with him of the promise, but only **[R4072 : page 302]** such as Abraham would be honored in owning as sons – such as partake of his spirit or disposition. – See John 8:39,44.

While to the Natural Seed of Abraham is promised all the land which Abraham saw, and the privilege of dwelling in it in safety, and while the inheritors of the earthly phase of the Kingdom are to be princes in all the earth (Psa. 45:16), to the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, which Seed is Christ – Head and Body – are given the "exceeding great and precious promises." – 2 Pet. 1:4.

This brings us to the consideration of our first inquiry, May the Christian expect the rewards of earthly prosperity for his

faithfulness to God, either in the present life, or in that which is to come?

We have already shown that Christians, members of the Body of Christ, have beyond this life "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" for them (I Pet. 1:4); consequently the earthly inheritance of human perfection and a peaceful home, each under his own vine and fig tree, could not confine to earth the immortal spirit beings, partakers of the divine nature, the scope of whose powers must necessarily extend to the utmost bounds of creation.

Nor can the rewards of present temporal prosperity in worldly things be expected by those who are running for the prize of this high calling to glory, honor and immortality as kings and priests unto God; for the way to the crown is the way of the cross, the way of sacrifice, as well to every member of the Body of Christ as it was to our Head and Lord, Christ Jesus. He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"; the reproaches of them that reproached God fell upon him; though he was rich, for our sakes he became poor; so poor that he said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." There was no reward of earthly prosperity for the Lord's faithfulness, but the reverse – privation and persecution were realized, even unto death. And the servant is not above his Lord: if they have persecuted him they will persecute us also; and the reproaches of them that reproached him will also fall upon us. The only present reward for which the followers of Christ may look is the heartfelt manifestation of the Lord's **[R4072 : page 303]** love and approval. "In the world," said he, "ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace."

It should be observed also that while rewards of temporal prosperity were promised and given to Fleshly Israel as a nation and as individuals, yet the very cream of that nation, the faithful

patriarchs and prophets received no such temporal rewards, but like the Gospel Church, they endured hardness as good soldiers and nobly fought the good fight of faith; and their abundant reward will be in the glory of the earthly phase of the Kingdom of God. Note the account of their faithful endurance as recorded by Paul in Heb. 11.

The temporal rewards and punishments and general discipline of Fleshly Israel were typical of the Lord's similar discipline of the world in the age to come; while his selection out from among that people of a worthy class of overcomers for the earthly phase of the Kingdom was typical of his selection during the Gospel Age of a class of overcomers for the spiritual phase of the Kingdom. In any case, it pays to wholly follow the Lord God of Israel, who is a rewarder of all them that diligently seek him to walk in his ways. – Heb. 11:6; Prov. 8:32-36.

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