

THE ISRAEL OF GOD

In Gal. 6.16, God inspired the Apostle Paul to refer to the Church as the Israel of God.

Since all scripture is profitable for instruction, I thought today we might examine this phrase, Israel of God and try to glean a better understanding into what God, through Paul is trying to convey by the use of this phrase.

It's my hope that through this study we can all gain deeper insight and a clearer vision into God's Plan for the Salvation of mankind, and the special part that He is preparing for each and every one of us.

The first point we need to consider is the use of names themselves. In our language and culture, names are little more than a label for identification. In scripture however, a name often defines a persons character traits or gives insight into specific thoughts or concepts that God is trying to convey.

In Noah Webster's Original American Dictionary, the scriptural definition under the name of God states: God's name signifies his titles, His attributes, His will or purpose, His honor and glory, His word, His grace, His wisdom, power and goodness, His worship, or God Himself.

In fact there is a book written by John Paul Jackson, titled: "I Am" The 365 Names of God.

So it seems that there are as many names, defining God's nature and character, as their are days in a year. All of them help us to better understand the various aspects of our Creator, and the loving relationship which He what's to have with us.

One simple example is the name Jesus which in the original Greek, which essentially means salvation.

Regarding the use of a name in relation to descriptive character traits, recall that Rebekah named her second born son Jacob, which means "supplanter"

Noah Webster's states that the word supplant comes from the Latin words sub and planta which means the "bottom of the heal" Remember at birth Jacob grabbed Esau's heal.

The word implies to trip up, as a runner would be tripped up by another person grabbing the foot.

Moreover, grabbing the heel or back of the foot implies sneaking up from behind, or tripping up by stealth. Webster further defines supplant as "to remove or replace by strategy" or to cunningly overthrow or undermine.

All these definitions can be applied to Jacob. Jacob through deceit and deception, acquired Esau's birthright, since Esau was the firstborn.

So there is a lesson we can learn from Jacob's name. For although we know, that Jacob was to be the heir of promise in God's plan, he did not display patience and faith, in waiting for God to fulfill His promise.

Rather he took matters into his own hands and allowed his carnal nature to get the best of him. In doing so, he did not display outgoing concern for his brother, rather just the opposite, he displayed self-centeredness and selfishness.

Now let's contrast these characteristics, with the point in time when God changed his name from Jacob to Israel.

GEN. 32.24-28

24 Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day.

25 Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him.

26 And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!"

This account of Jacob wrestling with God has always been a bit puzzling to me. Why would God want to wrestle with Jacob? And what is the significance of God dislocating Jacob's hip?

Let's dig a bit deeper, by looking into another account of this event. It's found in the book of Hosea.

HOS. 12.3-4

3 He took his brother by the heel in the womb, And in his strength he struggled with God.

4 Yes, he struggled with the Angel and prevailed; He wept, and sought favor from Him.

In regard to the word translated wept, the Theological Wordbook of the OT states it's meaning as: to wept by reason of joy or sorrow. Sorrow referring to remorse and or repentance.

So we find, that in combining these two sets of scriptures together, that this struggle was not just physical, but was also a deeply emotional struggle as well.

With this understanding we come to see that this wrestling match is symbolic of Jacob's conversion.

For consider, that prior to conversion, an individual is in a sense an adversary of God, battling or wrestling against Him and His way of life. As we read in Rom. 8.7, the carnal mind is at enmity, or hostile to God and His way of life.

The carnal mind, which we might call our own human nature, naturally is in tune with, and thus is influenced by, the god of this world.

In contrast, through the process of conversion, a person develops a deep remorseful or repentant state of mind, coming to the point where, one is willing to change the way they live their life, and submit to God's authority.

In this case of Jacobs conversion, we can see this more clearly by examining Jacob's statement in verse 26 of Genesis 32. He said that he would not let God go until God blessed him.

This term bless, in Hebrew in "barak" One of it's principle meanings is to "endow with power for success"

Let's just think about this for a moment. Jacob, said to the Man, capital letters, thus implying God, I will not let you go until you bless me. Stated more clearly, God, I will not let you go until you endow me with power to succeed. How might God endow Jacob with power to succeed?

It seems that Jacob must have been asking God to give him the Holy Spirit, just as God had given it to Abraham and Isaac. I can't think of anything that would be more empowering, can you?

Let's just compare Jacob's state of repentance at this point, with his attitude from about 20 or so years prior, before life had fully beat him up, by being cheated and swindled by Laban.

Gen. 28.10-17

10 Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran.

11 So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep.

12 Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

13 And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: "I am the LORD God of Abraham [your father] and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants.

Notice verse 13 carefully. In that it states "I am the LORD God of Abraham [your father] and the God of Isaac" As we know, Abraham was NOT Jacob's father, so this must be a Prophetic statement.

Abraham is the father of the faithful.

As we find recorded in GAL. 3.29. "If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise"

Jacob at this point however, was not yet converted as we will see. Let's continue reading in verse 14.

14 Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

15 Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you."

16 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it."

17 And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!"

Notice God just appeared to Jacob in vision and God literally laid before him the covenant promises that He had given his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac.

Now let's consider Jacob's reaction to this awesome promise and vision. Drop to verse 20.

20 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, [IF] God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on,
21 so that I come back to my father's house in peace, [then] the LORD shall be my God.

Notice the preconditions that Jacob puts forth. IF God will do this and that and the other thing- [then] God will be my God. It seems that Jacob would fit in quite well with our modern political system, suggesting a bit of *quid pro quo*.

Implying that, I'll let you be my God "if" you do all of these things for me. So it seems that Jacob is not displaying a very humble and repentant attitude, at this point, is he?

So keeping with this train of thought, that the wrestling match was symbolic of Jacob's conversion. Let's look at the question of why in this struggle, did God dislocate a hip and not dislocate Jacob's arm instead?

Seems to me, that if God is telling Jacob to let Him go and Jacob is struggling to hold on, dislocating an arm would have been an easy solution.

Therefore, let me suggest that the dislocation of Jacobs hip, is also symbolic of Jacob's conversion. Jacob is no longer going to walk the way he did in the past, led by his own carnal nature, and the god of this world.

From now on Jacob would walk differently, by allowing God's Spirit to led him.

Just like you and I, when we received God's Spirit at baptism and are now striving to be led by the Spirit of God, walking in newness of life. And in thinking about this passage of Jacob's hip being dislocated.

The thought came to my mind, that I wonder if Jacob walked with some sort of limp? Sort of like the thorn in the flesh that the Apostle Paul suffered with, to keep him humble. Just a thought, maybe in the future, God willing, I will be able to ask Jacob that question.

OK, back now to Gen. 32.27-28

27 So God said to him, "What is your name?" He said, "Jacob."

28 And God said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed."

Friends, it's important to realize, what underlying meaning is being imputed to Jacob, by these two verses.

Jacob tells God he will not let Him go until God blesses him. Then God asks Jacob what is his name. Why? God certainly knew his name.

Remember Jacob's name meant supplanter, which means to cunningly undermine, or deceive. So Jacob is saying in affect, my name is Jacob, the supplanter, I am a sinner.

He is holding on to God with all his might, cleaving to Him we might say, weeping, being deeply remorseful of his past actions, confessing that he is a sinner, to is Maker.

So after his confession and change in heart, God blesses him, probably empowering him with His Holy Spirit and then changes his name to Israel. Why Israel?

The name Israel, is made up of two Hebrew roots, which we could say, conveys a means to an end:

The first meaning is "to prevail with God"

The definition of prevail is to "prove to be more powerful than opposing forces; to be victorious"

We must prevail over the prince of the power of the air and overcome his deceptive influence. As well as overcoming, or prevailing over the proclivities of the flesh.

The second meaning suggests rulership in a future prophetic sense- Strong's Exhaustive Concordance translates Israel (# 3478) to mean "he will rule as God"

So putting these two definitions together, we can understand what God is trying to convey in Jacob's new name.

Jacob was persistent in his repentance, holding on to the Lord until, God granted Jacob his request, of being blessed with the power of the Holy Spirit.

And thus with his conversion, God also gives him his new name- Israel. Teaching us that only through God's Holy Spirit do we have the power to prevail.

In changing Jacob's name, God is demonstrating the fact of Jacob's conversion. Jacob through his own carnal nature was the supplanter.

Now as Israel, he is able to prevail and overcome the pulls of the flesh and the ways of this world, through the Spirit and power of God. And thereby, also qualifying to become an heir of the covenant promise of eternal inheritance.

So in type, we see that the man Jacob, and our modern nation, the descendants of Jacob, represents a carnal unconverted person. And thus, by contrast, the man or church named Israel, defines a Christian. Someone that has grown in the mind and character of God, and thus having prevailed and overcome, human nature.

Overcoming is the common thread connecting every one of the seven churches mentioned in Revelation 2 and 3. Wherein we find the statement, "He who overcomes, will inherit the promises"

Overcoming, therefore is the primary mission of the Church, individually speaking. We can proclaim the gospel all day long, but if we are not personally developing the mind of God, we will fall short of the goal. In fact we will be just as hypocritical as the Pharisees.

As noted before, the name Israel has a two fold meaning, prevailer and ruler. When we succeed in prevailing, God gives us the reward of ruling with Him, as well.

Let's go back to Genesis 35:10 where God reiterates Jacob's new name.
10 And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name." So He called his name Israel.

Notice particularly the blessing that follows in verses 11-12:

11 Also God said to him: "I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and **KINGS** shall come from your body.

12 The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land."

Now in the past I believe the Church has rightly defined this prophetic promise of kings, as the nations that became the physical descendants of the tribes of Israel. However, let me suggest to all of you, that this prophecy is also dual in nature, both physical and spiritual.

For true spiritual Israelites will inherit Christ's kingly authority, sitting with Him on His throne.

As we find recorded in Revelation 5: 9-10.

9. having redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.

As future kings and priests, one of our primary responsibilities will be to guide and direct the rest of humanity, in helping them to prevail and overcome, and thus be grafted into God's spiritual nation, the Israel of God.

Turn with me please to Rev. 3.12 He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more.

I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.

A pillar is used in construction to lend support to a structure. Thus likewise, as pillars in God's Spiritual Temple, we will be the supporting structure in helping our Father implement His plan of salvation for the whole world.

Let's spend a few minutes focusing a little closer on that plan of salvation and on our vital role, as the Israel of God, in it's implementation as the supporting structure.

Please turn with me to Ex. 13.1 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,
2 "Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast; it is Mine."

The Hebrew word, translated consecrate, used here in verse 2, means to dedicate, make holy, to sanctify, or set apart for holy use.

I find it of interest, that immediately after the nation of Israel departs from Egypt, God's very first act, is the setting apart of the first born, for His Holy use. And so we might ask why?

The answer is because originally, God's intention was for the firstborn, which naturally were the elders, to be the people through which God would govern the nation, along with Moses and Aaron.

A good example of this, is found in the first half of Ex.19. To save time I'll just read the pertinent verses, which are verses 5-7 of Exodus 19.

5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.

6 And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

Please take special note to verse 6, in which God's plan was for Israel to be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. Not just one tribe of priests, being the Levities.

7 So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the Lord commanded him.

8 Then all the people answered together and said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do."

Again, note the fact God had presented the terms of the covenant to only the elders. It was their job to convey it to the rest of the nation.

In Ex. 24, after the covenant was ratified, we read in verses 9 and 10 that " Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, 10 and they saw the God of Israel. And in verse 11, we find that they ate and drank with God on the mountain.

So again we see that God was only directly dealing with the 70 elders. And why 70, we might ask? Well, in Gen. 46.27 we read that "And the sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt were two persons. All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were seventy"

So since originally there were 70 members of Jacob's family, we might surmise that these 70 elders, represented the oldest living ancestor of each of the original 70. Can't say for sure, just an educated guess.

In any event, after the incident involving the golden calf, which time wise, seems to have occurred, shortly after the 70 elders had partaken in a meal with God on the mountain, God transferred the leadership responsibility, to the Levites.

We find this recorded in Numbers chapter 3, verses 11-12. where it reads 11 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying:

12 “Now behold, I Myself have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the children of Israel. Therefore the Levites shall be Mine.

However, this changing of the guard if you will, from the elders to the Levities, which involved the institution of the sacrificial system, administered by the Levitical priesthood, was only a temporary change.

This is made clear in Gal. 3. Let’s turn there and we will begin reading in verse 16.

16 Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “And to your Seed,” who is Christ.

17 And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect.

18 For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

19 What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made;

The sacrificial law, which established the Levitical priesthood was added in addition to the covenant laws, because of a failure of leadership by the elders.

Drop down to verse 24 “Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

So we find, that when Jesus Christ came and established the church, the spiritual leadership was transferred back to the elders. But this time, the elders will be the church, the spiritual firstborn, the Israel of God.

Which will fulfill God’s original promise that Israel was to be a nation of priests, a holy nation, as we read in Ex. 19.6-7. This understanding is confirmed by the writing of the Apostle Peter, found in 1 Pet. 2.9, which speaking of the church states;

1 Pet.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;

Let's continue with this point, of the church fulfilling the role of being the spiritual elders in the millennium. Please turn with me to REV. 14

REV.14.1

1 Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads.

4 These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being first fruits [or first born] to God and to the Lamb.

So we see from these verses that God's plan will have come full circle.

God's elect, the Israel of God, will not only fulfill the role of the spiritual priesthood, that was initially given to all 12 tribes, a nation of priests, but was then transferred to the Levites.

We will also fulfill the role that was first given to the firstborn Israelites in Exodus 13. As the spiritual firstborn, we will be the spiritual elders, the heads of God's spiritual family, teaching all of mankind to live God's way of life.

In fact, the scriptures seem to indicate, that as the first born, along with Jesus Christ, we will be the spiritual parents of all those that will follow us, into the family of God. Let's examine this last point a little closer.

EPH.5.30-32

30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Brethren just what is this great mystery?

REV.19.7-9

7 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."

8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'

As the firstborn of God, being completely composed of the Holy Spirit, we will be then fully united with Jesus Christ in the Family of God. Just as a physical marriage combines two physical people to become one flesh, so likewise in the marriage with the Lamb, we will marry our Creator and be the first born into the family of God. And then what will we do?

ISA. 9.6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder.

And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Brethren notice that in this verse, Jesus is described as the Everlasting Father. How will He, being God's Son, fulfill this role as the Everlasting Father? Brethren the answer to this question, will also clarify the great mystery that Paul referred to in EPH. 5.

Just like in a physical marriage, the couple becomes joined together as one flesh and through that union children are created.

Likewise as the Bride of Christ we will be joined together with Him for all eternity and we will then raise many spiritual children.

In fact, all that enter the family of God after the first resurrection will be our spiritual children. We will forever fulfill the role of the spiritual firstborn. Being the spiritual parents to all mankind. And all mankind will be apart of one big family.

The Family of Israel, because everyone that will be born into the God family, will have prevailed and overcome there sins of the flesh. Therefore they will also become a part of the Israel of God.

For scripture seems to point to the fact that all the Gentiles will eventually be grafted into spiritual Israel, following the pattern set forth by the church.

Let's turn to Rom. 9.3-4 and look at this point more closely.

3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh,

4 who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises;

Please take special note of verse 4, in that the covenants and the promises, which include the covenant promise of salvation were given solely to Israel.

This important point can be understood more clearly, when we take into account what we have been covering today. In that the name Israel is imputed on those that prevail and overcome.

For since God's entire plan centers around the creation of like minded beings like Himself. It stands to reason, that His plan involves all humanity being grafted into the Spiritual nation of Israel as they also overcome their carnal nature.

Let's review some scriptures that lend credence to the fact, that God's plan of salvation, involves all mankind becoming a part of the Israel of God.

First let's fully understand that the church, spiritually speaking is the 12 tribes of Israel. We have already mentioned Gal.6.16 where the church is called the Israel of God.

Let's look at 2 more scriptures, to make this point clear. James 1.1-2
1 James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings. 2 My brethren

This letter from the Apostle James is being addressed to various congregations of church members, which are scattered abroad, that is far from Jerusalem. And as we see, James refers too these scattered congregations as the 12 tribes.

Acts 26.6-7 6 And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers.

7 To this promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews.

In these verses Paul is obviously referring to the church, earnestly serving God night and day.

So let's look at a few more verses that give us a hint into the structure of God's salvational plan for mankind.

By the way, I find it interesting that Rev. chapters 7, 14 and 21 all refer to the Bride of Christ. We have already read REV. 14, let's go now to REV. 7.

REV. 7.4 And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed:

As we saw earlier the Bride of Christ is defined as the 144,000. And this verse informs us, that the Israel of God, we will be divided into 12 spiritual tribes. Which agrees with the scriptures we just covered in James 1 and Acts 26.

REV. 21.9-14

9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife.

Please take note, that the following verses describe heavenly Jerusalem. Thus we see that the church, as the bride of Christ will have direct involvement in what will be discussed next. Let's continue reading.

10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,
11 having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

12 Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

Verse 14- Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

I believe this verse is indicating that the salvation of mankind, will be carried out by God's elect, the Church, the 12 spiritual tribes, the Israel of God.

Lets drop to verses 23-27

23 The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.

24 And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.

Again, please take special notice of what we just read, up to and including verse 24, in which it states that the nations, that is all the people in the world that will be saved, will enter into heavenly Jerusalem through one of the 12 gates, of the 12 tribes of Israel.

It seems that the 12 apostles will be the leaders, of each of the 12 tribes, and the church, the 144,000 will be divided into 12 groups of 12,000 each and assigned to work with the 12 apostles, in bringing mankind to salvation. Continuing.

25 Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there).
26 And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.
27 But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

So we see here that the 12 gates of Heavenly Jerusalem symbolize, entering into eternal life.

Isa. 60, also adds to this understanding, that all the Gentile nations will be taught by and eventually grafted in Spiritual Israel.

Isa. 60.1-4 Arise, shine; For your light has come!
And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.

2 For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people;
But the Lord will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you.

3 The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.
4 "Lift up your eyes all around, and see: They all gather together, they come to you;
Your sons shall come from afar, And your daughters shall be nursed at your side.

Drop down to verses 11-12

11 Therefore your gates shall be open continually;
They shall not be shut day or night, That men may bring to you the wealth of the Gentiles, And their kings in procession.

12 For the nation and kingdom which will not serve you shall perish,
And those nations shall be utterly ruined. [laid waste]

Not to draw this message out much longer, I just want to focus on the word serve in verse 12. The Hebrew word is "abad" which means to obey.

In context, I believe these verses have deep spiritual overtones, reflecting the fact that God will be bringing all nations to salvation through the teaching and example set forth by His church, the Israel of God.

And take special note of verse 4- Your sons shall come from afar, And your daughters shall be nursed at your side.

Our spiritual sons and daughters will at last seek the light of the glory of God's way of life. And the gates of salvation will be continually open to them. We will teach all that willingly seek to obey God's way of life. However verse 12 informs us, that anyone that does not seek God's way of life will perish.

So in summation. God's Elect, the Church, is the Israel of God. Those that overcome, those that prevail as Jacob did, with the help of the power of God's Holy Spirit will be given the key to the entrance into God's Royal Family. [1 Pet.2.9]

As the Bride of Christ we will produce and teach and bring to salvation billions of spiritual children.

All mankind will be spiritually grafted into the Israel of God. Just like, on a smaller scale, the Gentiles have been grafted into the church in this age. Mankind will thus be brought to salvation by the Bride of Christ, which will be composed of the 12 spiritual tribes, symbolically led to salvation, through the 12 gates of New Jerusalem.

The Israel of God, composed of the 144000, as we read earlier in REV 14 will be the the spiritual firstborn of God's Family. Fulfilling God's statement given in Exodus 4, that Israel is God's firstborn.

The church, will also fulfill the role that was first given to the physical firstborn Israelites that came out of Egypt, and was later transferred to the Levitical Priesthood.

We will be the Kings and Priests of our God, that God promised would descend from Jacob in Genesis 35:12,

As loving parents, we will be nurturing, guiding and teaching God's Spirit born Family for all eternity. What an incredible opportunity we have been given, what an amazing journey we are on.

One final scripture. Please turn to Rev. 21.5-7

5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

6 And He said to me, "It is done I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

7 He who overcomes, "or we might add he who prevails, he who is an Israelite" shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

So Brethren in conclusion, we can see that as members of God's Holy Spiritual Nation, we do indeed have a lot in common with our namesake and forefather, the patriarch Jacob.

Like him we have to toil in this life in the flesh, to struggle and overcome. We must prevail over our own carnal human nature, the world and satan the devil.

Like Jacob we must wrestle, cleave and hold on to God and the promises that He has given us, so that we may receive the blessing of our Eternal inheritance.

And like Jacob when we prevail and overcome, we also will receive our new name and be given a vital part to play, in God's Plan for the salvation for all mankind. As part of God's Eternal Family, the Israel of God.

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