

Claiming Other's Claims

Remember that You swore to Your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Israel by Yourself and declared to them, 'I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky and will give your offspring all this land that I have promised, and they will inherit it forever.'" So the LORD changed His mind about the disaster He said He would bring on His people. - Exodus 32:13-14 HCSB



Yahweh made a promise to his friend¹, Abraham, when He took him outside and said, "Look at the sky and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then He said to him, "Your offspring will be that numerous."²

Yahweh reiterated the promise to Abraham's son Isaac: "I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky, I will give your offspring all these lands, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed by your offspring because Abraham listened to My voice and kept My mandate, My commands, My statutes, and My instructions"³ Isaac was blessed because Abraham obeyed.

Later still as Jacob (who was later renamed Israel) left home, Isaac blessed him, "May God give you and your offspring the blessing of Abraham so that you may possess the land where you live as an alien, the land God gave to Abraham."⁴ Isaac passed the blessing on to his son and God held

Himself to it.

Centuries afterward, Yahweh was in the process of making good on His promise. He had already made Abraham's descendents into a great nation and was taking them back to the land He had promised. Unfortunately, Abraham's children were not as worthy as their ancestor and they went astray, enraging the Lord their God by worshipping a false god.⁵

In His fury, the Lord threatened to destroy them all and start over with only Moses. Fortunately, Moses understood the principle of claiming Hashem's promises and prayed urgently that the Lord remember His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Israel.

The most humble man in his day,⁶ Moses did not lay personal claim on Yahweh. Instead, just as Isaac did for his son Israel, so Moses claimed Abraham's covenantal promises for the nation of Israel. This grants us insight into two very important aspects of prayer.

First, when pleading with God for personal favors, we may claim other's righteous acts and needs rather than our own. The humility of this approach seems to appeal to the Father. It's pertinent to note that though Moses cited Abraham, Isaac and Jacob's claim in his prayer, the Lord God gave all the credit for this peace-keeping act to Moses.⁷

Second, all those who become Israel⁸ may claim God's promise to Israel. Therefore, we need to mine the Scriptures, finding any of God's promises to which we may lay legitimate claim and, as our ancestor Moses did, bring them up in critical times. God has a habit of listening to those kinds of prayers. It would be foolish to not take that into consideration.

¹ 2 Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23

² Genesis 15:5

³ Genesis 26:4-5

⁴ Genesis 28:4

⁵ Exodus 32:1

⁶ Numbers 12:3

⁷ Psalm 106:19-23

⁸ Romans 2:27-29 cp Matthew 3:7-12; Hosea 2:23; Romans 9:22-23