

***The Mystery of  
Christ and the Church  
and  
The Covenants***

***Showing God's Purpose to  
Glorify Himself in Christ  
in Two Spheres:***

***The Heavenly  
and  
The Earthly***

**by R. A. Huebner**

**Volume 2**

**Noah's Governmental Administration**

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### **Volume 3: Moses' Covenant of the Law**

### **Volume 4: The Mysteries of the Kingdom of the Heavens and of Christ and the Church**

## *Preface*

[If the Lord will, this is the second of several volumes about the mystery of Christ and the church and the covenants. We began in volume 1 with the silence that had been kept in OT times regarding the mystery of Christ and the church, then the objections of covenant theology, claiming that the silence was only partial, and why this objection is made. After that, we developed the idea that the key to understanding the OT is that it is the history of the (fallen) first man to see if he was recoverable. The crowning act of his implacable hostility to, and enmity against, God was the rejection of the revelation of the Father in the Son (John 15:23, 24), nailing the Son to the cross. This terminated the testing of the (fallen) first man to see if he was recoverable.

What followed was an exposition of the early chapters of Genesis, looking for evidence that “covenants” were a thematic element in that part of the Bible. Here we continue to ask, “Did Adam after the fall, or any of his descendants, behave as though their lives were impacted by a covenant with God?” Well, no. Neither Abel, nor Cain, appealed to the terms of a covenant. How different from the record of Genesis is the thought of Cain replying to God, “But the terms of the Covenant said nothing about avoiding murder! Surely, no penalty ought to apply to me when I have kept to the exact terms of the Covenant.”

In contrast to such folly, the early chapters of Genesis are built around the doctrines of sin, righteousness, justification by sacrifice, rebellion of lost man, etc. The idea of a covenant with God is just simply absent from Adam's fall until after the deluge in the days of Noah.

In this second volume, we consider both Noah and Abraham. Noah had more than a covenant from God: he had a governmental administration over the earth that was given to him by God. Why is that governmental administration not taken up more often by expositors of the Bible as a description that brings light and understanding to the reading of the OT? Lastly, Abraham's covenant with God will occupy us at length in the remainder of this volume.

Scripture quotations are from the translation by J. N. Darby, unless otherwise indicated, but the KJV may be found in many of the quotations from other authors.

The manuscript for this book was found among the papers of the late R. A. Huebner and has been prepared for publication without his guidance. Except where noted in the text, the changes made to his manuscript were confined to editorial changes for grammar, spelling, reference checking, rearrangements

of some of the topics as seemed needed, and mostly minor adjustments of wording for clarity's sake. Chapter 11 of volume 4 was not found with the rest of this manuscript. So the editor inserted extracts from the working notebooks of R. A. Huebner to fill in that missing material. In several places, conclusions of chapters or sections of the text were missing and the editor has attempted to insert appropriate words to bridge such gaps (for example, by writing this preface), but in each case has indicated that the words are his and not the author's. The reader is invited to replace these additions with his own conclusions, if he should prefer them to what the editor has added.

The editor is very conscious that the author would not have wanted this book to appear in public without its being accompanied by prayer for the blessing of the Lord Jesus upon it to the good of the souls that read it.

D. Ryan, editor]

## Volume 2, Chapter 1

### *God's Government in the Earth Introduced: the Governmental Administration.*

#### *The Pre-Flood State of Man and The Trial of Man*

In a certain, and most important, sense there are only two men; two men who are respective heads of races.

The first man Adam became a living soul; the last Adam a quickening spirit. But that which is spiritual [was] not first, but that which is natural, then that which is spiritual: the first man out of [the] earth, made of dust; the second man out of heaven (1 Cor. 15:45-47).

Christ is called the *last* Adam because there is no other head after Him. The first man is natural; the second man is spiritual. When we speak of the testing of the first man we are referring to the testing of the race of Adam's headship. The first man had a standing before God in responsibility and was tested by God in various ways until the casting out of Christ. Adam's trial was unique in that he was tested before the fall, when he was "innocent" -- which means that he was ignorant of evil. JND wrote:

We find men tried in every way from innocence to the cross of Christ, and the Son Himself is cast out of the vineyard and slain.<sup>1</sup>

However, it was not until after the "innocent" man fell that Adam became the head of a race.

Just as Adam became the head of a race after he sinned, so Christ has become the Head of a race after He has risen.<sup>2</sup>

After the fall, man was *lost*, though we well know that men will not admit that, and even many Christians will not admit that man is totally lost a redundant expression, for emphasis), though "man as man has been fully tried, and God has set up another man"<sup>3</sup> thus ending the testing of the first man. The history of the OT and Christ's coming and rejection give us the history of the testing of the first man. That, having ended in the cross, the second man, Christ, has taken His place as the last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45-47). But observe that the trial of man while "innocent" had its own peculiar character and is not one of a sequence of trials having the common character of man being tested in the fallen state. The fall introduced a totally new

condition where man as fallen formed a race of men with fallen Adam as head.

Since the fall it was *fallen man* that was under trial by God, not to educate God, of course, but to completely manifest fallen man's condition. The first trial, or probation, of fallen man occupied the time from the fall until the flood. That age had its own distinct character of testing from the form that the testing took following the flood. The flood marked a distinctly new method in the ways of God's testing of fallen man and that flood broke this world's history into two parts. This is noted in 2 Pet. 3:6,7 where the pre-flood period is called "the then world" and the post-flood period is referred to as "the present heavens and the earth."

"The then world" was a world of fallen man left to himself without an arranged dealing of God<sup>4</sup> by which to try man. God did not introduce any arranged order or principle but simply left man to himself. Some Christians may call that age "the dispensation of conscience" but the fact is that God did not dispense conscience, nor did He dispense the knowledge of good and evil. Man acquired these in the fall. God, then did not dispense conscience as an arranged order. He simply left man to himself. Now, JND well knew that man was left to his own *conscience*, but he rejected the idea that there were any "dispensations" before the flood. JND has made remarks that there were no dispensations, properly speaking, before the flood.<sup>5</sup> He also referred to the time between Adam and Noah as "conscience."<sup>6</sup>

In the following quotation from an 1838 paper there is a key thought regarding the pre-flood condition: ". . . there was consequently no development of the principles of the character of God."

There is a very clear distinction between the ways of God before and after the deluge. Since the fall, there has always been a people of God, and the world of the ungodly. God has never left Himself without a witness. The prophecies of Enoch were the instruction of the people of God in those days, and the hope of the faithful in our days. Nevertheless, in those times, there was no manifested judgment, no nation, no external call, which formed believers or an elect people into a body acknowledged before God; and there was consequently no development of the principles of the character of God. It was a fallen race; and the fallen nature of man showed itself, and followed its course in spite of the witness of God; and God did nothing until (the evil being intolerable) He

4. *Synopsis*, 4:15 note.

5. *Collected Writings*, 2:132; 5:384; 13:153; 26:248. *Synopsis*, 1:24 (p. 30 in Heijkoop ed.); 4:15 (p. 19 in Heijkoop ed.).

6. "Thus up to Christ we have conscience, promise and law . . .," *Collected Writings*, 22:370. See also 22:337-340,366; 10:177; 34:9. For "conscience" in general, see the index in the *Collected Writings*; also *Notes and Comments*, 1:104-106.

1. *Collected Writings*, 19:319; see also 26:115.

2. *Notes and Jottings*, p. 210. See also *Letters of J. N. Darby*, 1:48.

3. *Collected Writings*, 19:319.

swept them from before His face, by a judgment which none could escape, save the little band in the ark; and the world, swallowed up in the waters, perished. God “repented that he had made man,” for “the earth was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence,” and God destroyed it.<sup>7</sup>

Again:

It is not without interest to note the distinction of God’s ways before and after the flood. When Adam was judged, no promise was made to him. The first man had lost all but the judgment he merited, nor could promise be made to sinful flesh. But the total destruction of Satan’s power is announced. In judging the serpent, it is declared that the woman’s Seed, not Adam (clearly he was not the woman’s seed), should bruise the serpent’s head. The promises were in Christ. Then, though individuals were dealt with in grace, as Abel, Enoch, Noah, there was no new system or principle set up. Man remained responsible as man; and the earth was lawless, corrupt, and full of violence, and so bad that judgment came, and the world that then was perished. There was no new head and root of promise.<sup>8</sup>

### ***The Rule of Life Before the Flood***

There were various considerations that bore on fallen man’s behavior before the flood.

The rule of life for unfallen Adam was consistency with the innocent nature and place of blessing in which God had set him. He should have felt and walked in consistency with this.

To continue man’s subsequent history briefly and see what rule of life is before us in scripture -- warnings, we know, were given, as by Enoch and Noah, but the scene after the fall ended in the flood. The power of evil in corruption and violence was judged. For them the knowledge of God (brought with them from the beginning), conscience, the testimony of these prophets, with the witness of God in the creation, was the rule by which they would be judged. So others, as the apostles, teach us after them. It is evident when God was revealed -- as to Enoch -- the true knowledge of God as far as given in grace would guide.<sup>9</sup>

### ***Government is the First***

7. *Collected Writings*, 2:132. See also 26:115.

8. *Collected Writings*, 28:115.

9. *Collected Writings*, 10:177.

### ***Dispensation, or Administration: Dispensations and Distinguishable Time Periods***

While there is a distinguishable time period from Adam’s fall until the deluge, that does not constitute it, strictly speaking, a dispensation.

During the period which transpired between the expulsion of Adam from the terrestrial paradise and the deluge, man was one family, one race. There was no idolatry. Man was left to his own ways (not without witness, but without restraint from without), and the evil became insupportable: the deluge put an end to it. After this event -- this judgment of God, a new world began, and the principle of government was introduced. He who should kill a man should himself be put to death: a curb was put upon violence, a bridle on outward sin. The corruption of the heart in a world at a distance from God remained just as it was. But although there were as yet no nations, the destiny of various races, such as it has been to the present day, began to dawn at least prophetically. Noah failed in the position in which he had been placed after the deluge, as Adam had failed in paradise, as man has always done; as every creature has done which has not been directly sustained of God.<sup>10</sup>

Since numbers of readers have been accustomed to thinking of “innocence” and “conscience” as dispensations, the fact that JND did not accept the idea that there were any dispensations before the flood will raise the question, ‘What did he mean by a “dispensation”?’ For one thing, he did not attach to the word the importance that some persons do:

I do not hold to the word dispensation, although it is generally used to specify a certain state of things, established by the authority, during a given period.<sup>11</sup>

Be that as it may, it is clear that he did not think that every distinguishable time period was a dispensation. There was a necessary element that needed to be present for an age to be a dispensation:

A dispensation is any arranged dealing of God in which man has been set before his fall,<sup>12</sup> and having been tried, has failed, and therefore God has been obliged to act by other means.<sup>13</sup>

In fact, *the introduction of dispensation hinged on the introduction of government*. In an address in June 1839 at a gathering at Leamington JND pointed out:

10. *Collected Writings*, 22:340.

11. *Collected Writings*, 1:169.

12. {He means a fall with respect to the arranged order and dealing of God; for example, as Noah becoming drunken after receiving government.}

13. “The Dispensations and the Remnants,” *Collectanea*, p. 41 (1839).

Before the proper dispensation of God, we get the world before the flood; not exactly a dispensation, but a body of men left, in a certain sense, to themselves. There was testimony, as in Enoch and Noah, but no dispensed order or system by which God acted as governing the earth. We find even in this, that God acts in the grace of His own character. Noah was a faithful witness; in him was the great principle [of faith], though this was not strictly a dispensation.<sup>14</sup>

## The Word Aion

Concerning the word *aion*, i.e., age, JND wrote:

. . . formed from *aion*. This latter word is used in classical Greek writers for “man’s life,” and in scripture for “a dispensation” (or course of events in this world ordered of God on some particular principle . . . )<sup>15</sup>

Here again we see that he understood that in order for there to be a dispensation it required the introduction of some particular principle on God’s part. It is insufficient for one to merely distinguish an *aion*, or age, and, *strictly speaking*, call it a dispensation. So, strictly speaking, dispensations have to do with the trial of the first man during the ages from the flood to the cross, after which God set up the second Man in resurrection.<sup>16</sup> This should be kept in mind also in view of the fact that JND often used the word dispensation in a conventional way when speaking of the present period, though the church is neither a dispensation or age.

## Hebrews 9:26 and 1 Cor. 10:11

There are a number of interesting remarks bearing on our subject in JND’s comments on Heb. 9:26 and 1 Cor. 10:11, which, in his translation, read:

But now once, in the consummation of the ages he has been manifested for [the] putting away of sin by his sacrifice (Heb. 9:26).

Now all these things happened to them [as] types, and have been written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come (1 Cor. 10:11).

JND wrote:

The Lord said (John 12:31), in speaking of His death, “Now is the judgment of this world”; and in John 15:24, “They have both seen and hated both me and my Father.” Therefore it says, in Heb.

9:26, “Now once in the *end* of the worlds hath he appeared.” The cross was morally the *end* of man; but at the same time, and by the same fact in the death of Christ, was laid the foundation of the new creation according to the righteousness of God. The same fact which on God’s part has made an end of the first Adam, inasmuch as his race rejected the Son of God, has also laid the foundation of the new condition of man in the *second* [last] Adam. Christ was made sin on the cross; sin was there judged, and the old man forever set aside.<sup>17</sup>

The “end of the ages,” or “consummation of the ages,” are all the dealings of God with man to test his general condition. In this general sense the state of innocence came in; but the proper connection is what comes after the fall, yet not looking at man as lost, but testing his state and whether he was recoverable; or was lost and had to be saved. Without law; under law; God manifested in the flesh, were the great features of this {testing of the first man}. Hence in John 12 the Lord says, “Now is the judgment of this world.” Though there was testimony, there were no religious institutions before the flood, unless the fact of sacrifices. There were afterward: government; promises to Abraham, showing it was grace to one separated from an idolatrous world and head of a new race {not a strictly accurate description}; the law; the prophets; and at last the Son as come, not as offered. Then God laid the foundation of His own purposes in righteousness.<sup>18</sup>

The expression, “the ends of the ages,” which will be found in 1 Corinthians 10:11, is rather strange; but to preserve the sense of the Greek, we could not say, “the last times,” any more than “the end of the ages,” still less “the end of the world.” The end of the ages was not yet come; but all the different dispensations by which God had put Himself in relation with man, so far as they were connected with man’s responsibility, had come to one point, and were brought to an end in the death of the Lord Jesus. After that -- great as had been His long-suffering -- God established a new creation. We have therefore used the literal translation, “the ends of the ages.”<sup>19</sup>

Thus it was morally the consummation of the ages.<sup>20</sup>

. . . because man’s moral history is ended -- grace is not ended.<sup>21</sup> “In the end of the world,” i. e., in the end of the dispensations -- not dispensation -- “in the completion of the ages, Christ has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

14. “The Dispensations and the Remnants,” *Collectanea*, p. 42.

15. *Collected Writings*, 7:41.

16. I suggest that in view of the fact that there are no dispensations after the cross, W. Kelly was the more consistent in translating *οικονομία* as “administration.” See Table 1, below. However, in his writings JND affirmed that in Eph 1:10 the word signifies “administration.”

17. *Collected Writings*, 33:339, 340.

18. *Letters of J. N. Darby*, 3:442.

19. *Collected Writings*, 13:169.

20. *Synopsis*, 5:224; see also *Collected Writings*, 10:275; 27:393.

21. *Collected Writings* 34:295; see also 32:235; 29:194.

Consequently I get Christ's work as the ground upon which I am already with God.<sup>22</sup>

{Concerning 1 Cor. 10:11} It is not Israel who is the figure, but that which happened to Israel -- the ways of God with Israel. The things themselves happened to Israel; they were written for our instruction who find ourselves at the close of God's dispensations.<sup>23</sup>

It is clear from scripture that the first man is no longer under testing since Christ was rejected and so we "find ourselves at the close of God's dispensations" meaning there is no dispensational *trial* now:

In {1 Cor. 10} v. 11 the "ends of the world" is the completion {consummation} of the ages. To me the world is not now under any dispensation, but the whole course of God's dealings with it are over until He comes to judgment. Man was under responsibility from Adam to Christ, and then our Lord says, "Now is the judgment of this world."<sup>24</sup>

What about the present time, then?

The scripture, the Lord Himself there, does speak of periods carried on under God on different principles (which are very justly called dispensations), whereas one of the writer's periods is never called *οικονομία*, nor is this word ever applied to, nor does it mean, a period at all. "So shall it be in the end of *this age*" (του αἰῶνος τούτου), says the Lord. (Matt. 13). So He appeared ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰῶνων. (Heb. 9). Now αἰὼν clearly signifies, in such passages, a period or course of time in which certain principles have sway on God's part. Thus until the end of the age, judgment, which plucks up out of this world, is not to be executed by the Lord's servants; whereas, in the end of it, judgment will gather out of the kingdom of the Son of man all scandals. And hence it is also that this present time is called (not I judge a dispensation, but) a parenthesis, because the Lord Jesus speaks of "this age" when He was upon earth, as the same as that which will close by judgment at the end; but this was a period connected with His relationship with Jews, and which will not be closed till He is again present in person; whereas, in the interval, the Church of the first-born has been gathered for heaven.<sup>25</sup>

The above quotation requires some thought on the part of the reader in order to digest its contents. JND understood that the church is not an age but that we are now in the continuing Mosaic age. The phrase, "end of the age" (Matt. 24:3), refers to the end of the Mosaic age. It is during the end of the age that the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7) will occur.

22. *Notes and Jottings* p. 35.

23. *Synopsis* 4:172.

24. *Collected Writings* 26:248.

25. *Collected Writings* 13:155.

The chart found at the end of this chapter illustrates these thoughts and may help in apprehending them.

## *The Word Οικονομία*

There is another word in the N. T. besides αἰὼν (age) that bears on our subject: *οικονομία*, translated stewardship, or dispensation or administration. A table of its usage may be helpful here.

TABLE 1

VERSE		KJV	J. N. DARBY	W. KELLY
Luke 16:2,3,4	stewardship	stewardship		stewardship
1 Cor. 9:17	dispensation	dispensation		administration
Eph. 1:10		dispensation	dispensation	administration
Eph. 3:2		dispensation	administration	administration
Eph. 3:9		fellowship	administration	administration
Col. 1:25		dispensation	dispensation	stewardship
1 Tim. 1:4		edifying	dispensation	dispensation

JND denied that the word *οικονομία* signifies a period:

But I deny entirely that the Adamic state is called an *οικονομία*, or that *οικονομία* signified period anywhere.<sup>26</sup>

In connection with this fact, he remarked:

But there is another word which is employed in scripture, which does give distinct periods . . . which Christians in general call dispensations, as when the principles on which they are carried on are distinct; namely αἰὼν and αἰῶνες. Of these scripture does speak, but it never speaks of *οικονομία* as a period at all.<sup>27</sup>

However, there is a coming administration (Eph. 1:10) that will be in force during the 1000 year reign of Christ as we shall see in the next quotation where JND says that the word means "administration."

. . . *οικονομία* does not mean headship of creation at all, but administration; . . . I give the passage literally: "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself for the administration of the fullness of times, [namely] to head up all things in Christ, the things in heaven and the things on earth, in Him in whom we have an inheritance," etc. Now, here *οικονομία*, administration, is as simple a word as possible. The *particular kind* of

26. *Collected Writings* 13:161.

27. *Collected Writings* 13:153, 154.

administration is heading up all things in Christ.<sup>28</sup>

Concerning a misuse of the word “dispensation” and the present, JND said:

And see what extraordinary confusion Mr. Oliver introduces into his criticism of that word. “The present dispensation is the dispensation of the grace of God” (p. 111). But this passage is merely speaking of a ministry confided to Paul -- “if ye have heard of the dispensation (*ministry, oikonomia*) of the grace of God which is given me to youward.” Here we see the meaning which I have pointed out -- the primitive sense of the word; it is someone to whom the distribution and administration in the house have been entrusted. But can one say that the present dispensation, in the ordinary sense of the word, was entrusted to Paul? That would be ridiculous.

In 1 Cor. 9:16, 17, the word of evangelization is said to be an *administration (oikonomia)* which is entrusted to him. Once more let me ask, was the present dispensation, in the sense in which everyone takes it, confided to Paul? The apostle used the word “stewards” (1 Cor. 4) in the same sense, applying it to ministry.<sup>29</sup>

The time during which the saints are seated in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6), then, strictly speaking, is not a dispensation. Moreover, it is not an administration; for, while the saints now are called and seated in the heavenlies, they do not have government committed to them, as Israel did. The present period is a parenthesis, a “heavenly parenthesis,” as W. Kelly aptly called it. It is a heavenly parenthesis of being seated in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus, which saints before Pentecost were not, nor shall future saint saints after the rapture be so seated, though we saints ever shall. This is illustrated on the chart at the end of this chapter. And this brings us to the consideration of the introduction of the first dispensation.

## *The Dispensation, or Administration, of Government*

In 1836 JND wrote *The Apostasy of the Successive Dispensations*. In this paper he used the word “dispensation” frequently in a conventional way, though he made the following remark:

Here dispensations, properly speaking, begin. On the first, Noah, I shall be very brief: restraint and godliness should have characterized it -- the government which would have repressed corruption and violence. But the first thing here found is the saved patriarch drunk, and his son shamefully mocking him, for which the curse justly descends upon him. This issued in idolatry; Josh.

28. *Collected Writings* 13:155, 156.

29. *Collected Writings* 1:289, 290.

24.<sup>30</sup>

*The introduction of dispensation hinged on the introduction of government.*

In an address in June 1839 at a gathering at Leamington JND pointed out:

Before the proper dispensation of God, we get the world before the flood; not exactly a dispensation, but a body of men left, in a certain sense, to themselves. Here there was testimony, as in Enoch and Noah, but no dispensed order or system by which God acted as governing the earth.<sup>31</sup>

Here we find clearly what JND understood to be of the essence of a dispensation, *strictly speaking*. It requires a -- **“dispensed order or system by which God acted as governing the earth.”**

In 1839, at Geneva, he delivered a series of eleven lectures, *The Hopes of the Church of God . . .*, wherein he said:

But (to enter a little more into the succession of dispensations, and also into that which concerns the character of God in this respect) the first thing which we would remark is the deluge, because until then there had not been, so to speak, government in the world. The prophecy which existed before the deluge was to this effect, that Christ was to come. The teachings of God were ever to this end: “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints.”

Let us pass on. In Noah’s time there was government of the earth, and God coming in judgment and committing the right of the sword to man.<sup>32</sup>

Yes, the antediluvian prophecy was that the Lord would come in judgment. The Father has committed all judgment into the hands of the Son (John 5). But before that coming in judgment, government was put into the hands of man. We read in 1 Cor. 15 a divine principle of God’s ways, namely, first that which is natural and afterwards that which is spiritual. So in the development of God’s ways in government in the earth, it first was in the hands of the first man.

The trial of man under government began in the post-flood world,<sup>33</sup> called “the present<sup>34</sup> heavens and the earth” (2 Peter 3:7), scripture thus marking the change. In Noah, man began to be guided by God’s mind in connection with the introduction of government. Dispensations, then, have to do with the post-flood world.

I pass over the time before the flood, whose general character

30. *Collected Writings* 1:125.

31. “The Dispensations and the Remnants,” *Collectanea . . .*, p. 42 (1838).

32. *Collected Writings* 2:374, 375.

33. See *Collected Writings* 34:12, 13; 22:340, 341; 2:134.

34. In a footnote to his translation JND remarked, “Lit. ‘the now heavens,’ in contrast to the ‘then world,’ ver. 6.”



offers a sad contrast to the time when righteousness dwells in the new heavens and the new earth, without a government to maintain it and make it good against the opposition of an adverse nation or the weakness of a failing one. Neither one nor the other can properly be called dispensation. They are both another world from that in which we live.

With Noah, we begin the course of dispensations, or of the manifestations of the ways of God <sup>35</sup> for the final bringing out the full glory of Christ. These ways regard the earth, and are founded, so far as they are conferred blessing, on the sacrifice of Christ. Enoch indeed had been taken out of the midst of the corrupt world and had a heavenly portion in Christ. But Noah was preserved through the deluge, to begin a new world, of which he was the head and chief.

The name Noah is expressive of the rest of the earth, comfort concerning the work of men's hands, because of the ground which the Lord had cursed. Three especial features accompany and characterize this position: the sacrifice which turned aside the curse, the restraint of evil, and the pledge of secured blessing to creation while earth lasted. But, as regards dispensation, Noah was the head of a new system, where evil was, but where evil was to be restrained, and the curse relieved under which the earth groaned. <sup>36</sup>

Another point to touch on is Noah as a type of Christ compared with Adam as a type.

The reader may, in passing, remark Adam as an image of Him who was to come, of the last Adam; and Noah as also a figure of Christ, inasmuch as the government of the world and the repression of evil were now entrusted to man. <sup>37</sup>

### *The Rule of Life After the Flood*

Near the beginning of this chapter we considered the rule of life before the flood. Those things that constituted the rule of life before the flood ought to have continued to affect man's conduct. In connection with Noah, three things were especially prominent from which men ought to have learned, though it was government which was expressly committed to man.

1. SACRIFICE: the burnt offering, pointing to Christ giving Himself up completely to God, for His glory, a savor of rest to God (Gen. 8:21).
2. GOVERNMENT: to put down evil, which Christ will accomplish (Gen. 9:1-7). Christ will enforce capital punishment

35. {I think that he has in mind here government in the earth and earthly calling.}

36. *Collected Writings* 5:384.

37. *Collected Writings* 22:340.

- also, if required, during the millennium.
3. THE BOW: the promise of blessing, which only Christ can accomplish (Gen. 9:8-12).

### *Characteristic Failure*

Not only do the successive ages, or time periods, end in failure, as for example, the pre-flood era ended in violence and corruption, but at the beginning of a distinguishable time period there is a characterizing sin. A characterizing sin has a character to it that fore shadows the character of the failure that finally brings the judgment of God. Thus in the first generation of man after the fall we find violence in Cain killing Abel and corruption in presenting to God the fruit of the ground. These two characteristics filled the earth when God sent the flood. The same pattern followed upon the introduction of government. Shortly after, Noah failed in governing himself in connection with becoming drunk (Gen. 9:18-27). He failed in governing himself.

Abraham, called of God to the land of promise, went down to Egypt; and, when there, he denied his true relationship to his wife. Thus the children of Israel went quickly out of the way when Moses was still on the mount. They sat down to eat and to drink and rose up to play -- a not uncommon conduct -- and worshiped the golden calf. If the Spirit came in a divine capacity to form and indwell the church, in personal presence, and indwell the believer, very soon two lie to the Holy Ghost (Acts 5), acting as if the Spirit was not there in the special capacity for which He came.

### *The Three Administrations*

There are a number of subjects, upon which JND laid heavy emphasis in connection with the development of God's ways for the bringing out of Christ's glory, that I wish to bring to bear in connection with what is called "dispensational truth." These are:

1. "With Noah, we begin the course of dispensations, or of the manifestations of the ways of God <sup>38</sup> for the final bringing out of the full glory of Christ."
2. A dispensation is "a dispensed order or system by which God acted as governing the earth." I will call this an *administration*, rather, in order to distinguish this from dispensations (i.e., the dispensing) of priesthood, judges and kingship, which, observe, are not time periods, all falling within the Mosaic administration.

38. {I think that he has in mind here government in the earth and earthly calling.}

3. The calling of God (introduced through Abraham -- see the next chapter).
4. The combination of government and calling (in Israel).
5. The testing of the first man ended at the cross.
6. Consequently, the mystery of Christ and the church, unforeseen by the OT prophets (Rom. 16:25,26; Col. 1:26; Eph. 3:9), is presently unfolded as a heavenly system of grace.
7. And, all wherein man failed shall be made good to God's glory, by Christ, in the *administration* of the fullness of times (Eph. 1:10), when Christ will head up both the heavenly and the earthly, glorifying God in government and calling, as part of the headship of earthly things.

Points 3-7 will be illustrated on the chart at the end of this chapter and also as bearing upon the special character of two things that occurred in connection with the dispensational testing of the first man, designated as (1) and (2) on the chart. In order to arrive at a convenient terminology to describe these two things, which JND did not specifically do, I suggest the following points as helping to this end.

- a. The word "trinity" is not found in Scripture but it does indicate the truth which we find in Scripture regarding the three Persons of the Godhead. Thus, it would be convenient to have a word or designation indicating the special character of (1), (2) and (3) on the chart located at the end of this chapter.
- b. An administration (οικονομία) was committed to Paul personally; but a period of responsibility (the period from himself to the rapture) was not committed to him. However, while οικονόμια does not mean a period of time, the fact is that the administration of the fullness of times (Eph. 1:10) will be an administration for the 1000 years while Christ administers it for that long; and this shows that an administration may be in force over a length of time.
- c. Christ will glorify God in all things wherein the first man failed under trial, including failure under the two previous administrations. Christ will take up the *administration* of government and calling (3) *ADM.* on the chart at the end of this chapter) perfectly for God's glory.
- d. Bear in mind that the millennium is the time when Christ will make good, what remains to be made good, wherein the first man failed. This implies one or more previous administrations involving calling and/or government in which the first man failed.
- e. Government was committed *to man*, as such, not merely to Noah. And it was *the nation* of Israel, as such, which received government and calling combined. These are special and important principles of God's dealings with man, and were heavily emphasized by JND.

Indeed, government and calling, along with the end of the trial of the first man at the cross and the consequent establishment of the last Adam, are of the essence of his teachings on the ways of God with man, giving distinctive character to his teachings.

I therefore suggest that it would have been better to have designated the commitment of government to man as the first *administration* <sup>39</sup> (as well as a dispensation) in order to take into account the above points and to give it

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39. In JND's paper quoted above wherein he stated that Mr. Oliver had introduced confusion concerning the word "dispensation" (a complaint that was justified), JND spoke about the derivation of the word οικονόμια. It is a passage that might be urged against my suggestion of the use of the word "administration" to explain his view. Well, use some other word to describe the unique character of what I have called the first two administrations. Objecting to the *thing* that he discriminated and so emphasized, which I seek thus to describe, is, of course, another matter. The word "dispensation" will not do justice to the *thing* because it is clear that he used that word for a number of God's ways in His relationship with man beyond the items marked (1) and (2) on the chart; and thus the word "dispensation" is not a word that discriminates sufficiently. At the same time, there is no difficulty referring to the first two administrations as dispensations (the dispensation of government and the dispensation of government and calling combined). At any rate, for completeness I here quote the passage.

Economy or administration . . . signifies the *administration of a house*; and, taken in an extended sense, it means any order of things that God has arranged, as when one says, animal economy, vegetable economy. It is true that the Greek word signifying 'law' is derived from the same root; but it is a derivation much more distant in meaning. *Nemo* means to distribute, divide, feed, etc.; and thus in a house there was a steward, and an *economy*, the *administration*, of the house. Thus, when God had established a certain order of things upon the earth, one has accustomed oneself, pretty correctly, as it appears to me, to call it an economy. The word of God even makes use of it in Eph. 1. {1:10}. It is possible that there may be a shade of difference between the scriptural and the conventional use of the word. In general, the way in which it is used in the word of God is more strictly according to its original meaning, and contains rather the idea of an active administration. The word *dispensation* is often used thus, and it has the same etymological meaning. God *dispenses* His favors. In the conventional sense, *economy* means an order of things established by God: the *Jewish economy*, the *present economy*, etc.

But these economies, until the coming of Christ, are as far as their course is concerned, left to man, and his responsibility, although God may work secretly. For example, the Lord speaks thus of the present economy, "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come." Outwardly, all goes on without the intervention of Christ, from the sowing of the seed till the harvest. Well, the time which elapsed from the seed-sowing is what is generally called the *present dispensation*. I have called it "the church dispensation," because it is the time during which the church is called, and exists here below, in contrast with the Jews and the legal system. And one sees that, although it is God who causes the corn to ripen, outwardly He seems to let everything take its own course. Thus Satan may act in the midst of all this; men may sleep; and the whole state of things may become corrupt; and, in fact, it has become corrupt, as Israel had become corrupt; and this dispensation also, this order of things, is in a state of ruin.

distinctive force commensurate with what JND pointed out. A new test of the first man came, however, when government and calling were combined in Israel. This is the second <sup>40</sup> *administration* (as well as a dispensation of law), a designation that also gives this a distinctive force commensurate with what JND pointed out. And during the time that Israel was recognized as Jehovah's people, there were other subsidiary dispensations, such as priests and kings. These were additional ways in which God placed Himself in relation to the people. Priesthood and Kingship were institutions dispensed by God in connection with His government in the earth in the called nation under the covenant of the law. They were subsumed under the administration which combined government and calling in Israel, which continued from Moses until the times of the Gentiles began.

Consequent upon Israel's failure, government was transferred to Gentile empire (Dan. 2) and thus **an earthly parenthesis of judgment upon Israel** occurred.

The event of which we speak *changed the whole state of the earth*, by separating the *government* from the *calling* of God -- two things which had long been united in the Jewish people under responsibility: a union which (having failed through the unfaithfulness of man, when God Himself ruled over them [i. e., before they had a king]) had been propped up, and established afresh, under the reign of a man who was a chosen type of Christ [David]. From the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the throne of David, the government of the world was in the hands of the Gentiles; and the times of the Gentiles commenced (see Dan. 2:37,38) under a responsibility, the effects of which are described in the book of Daniel, the Apocalypse, and Zechariah, and which are characterized in Dan. 4 . . . All the time of their dominion, Israel has been *Lo-ammi*, "not my people."<sup>41</sup>

But with this change the Gentiles did not have calling; nor did Israel any longer have government committed to the nation by God. And so there was no longer an administration. The first man had failed in carrying out the administration of government and calling. The next administration, in the sense in which we have been speaking of it, is when Christ will make good, to God's glory, this failure of the first man when He administers the fullness of times (Eph 1:10); i. e., the millennial reign.

At the cross, representatives of the called people (Israel) and the Gentile government (Roman) cast out the Christ of God. Thus ended the trial of the first man. Consequently, God brought out the great secret, the *mystery*, hid from ages and generations (Col. 1:26; Rom. 16:25,26; Eph. 3:9), as a

heavenly parenthesis, a heavenly system of grace, between Pentecost and the Rapture. After this work is completed Daniel's 70th week will take place. But now, the saints have calling but not government. There is now no dispensation (i.e. administration).

In the middle of Daniel's 70th week, the beast (Rev. 13:1-10) will receive authority from Satan, marking a new form of government in the earth not from God, but from Satan. Here, then, we see *governmental apostasy*. Also, it is at this time that the apostates of Christendom, and the Jewish apostates, will be given over to the lie (2 Thess. 2) and worship Satan, the beast and the Antichrist (2 Thess 2; Rev. 13:11-18).

At the point when evil has ripened to its fullest expression, the judgment of this world, made certain by the casting out of Christ ("now is the judgment of this world"), the second Man will come from heaven in flaming fire taking vengeance on those that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 1). Then will our Beloved be publicly established as universal Lord, to Whom every knee shall bow. On earth, all Israel shall be saved (Rom. 11:26; Isa. 66:8) for they shall have been brought into the bond of the covenant by the sovereign act of God (Ezek. 20:33-38; Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:8-13). Then shall Messiah reign before His ancients in glory (Isa. 24:23) and we with Him (Rev. 3:21; 2 Tim. 2:12). He shall make good all wherein man has failed, even in priesthood and kingship, hence He shall take the place of priest upon His throne (Zech. 6:13). Our Lord Jesus humbled Himself to the lowest when He glorified God and finished the work He was given to do (John 17:4). On Calvary's cross He sustained the glory of God and it is morally right that in the very scene where He did so, there shall He himself bear the glory. Listen:

Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts, saying, Behold a man whose name is [the] Branch; and he shall grow up from his own place, and he shall build the temple of Jehovah: even he shall build the temple of Jehovah; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both (Zech. 6:13).

The coming of Christ in power and glory will be the occasion of the smashing of the image of Dan. 2. It marks the catastrophic end of the power of Gentile empire and the establishment of government in the hands of Christ, administered through Israel now restored, all saved (Rom. 11:26), a called nation (cp. Rom 9:4). Thus, in the administration of the fullness of times there will be re-established an administration of government and calling (then under Christ) which had been interrupted (due to the failure of Israel) by the earthly parenthesis of judgment on the nation.

What we have discussed in this chapter is that there are in Scripture only three administrations in the earth. These three administrations are illustrated on the chart in the next section.

40. Meanwhile the principle of calling was established in Abraham but this was not a new dispensation because, man, as such, was not being tested by calling at that point in time.

41. *Collected Writings* 2:149, 150 (1838).

## *The Key to Understanding the Unity of Scripture*

In the *Synopsis* 2:207, J. N. Darby in his introduction to the prophets wrote:

We enter, now, dear reader, on the field of prophecy; a vast and important one, whether in view of the moral instruction that it contains, or on account of the great events that are announced in it, or through its development of God's government, and, by this means, its revelation of that which He Himself is in His ways with men. Jehovah and His dealings, and the Messiah, shine through the whole. Israel always forms the inner circle, or chief platform, on which these dealings are developed, and with which the Messiah is immediately in relation. Outside of, and behind this, the nations are gathered, instruments and objects of the judgments of God, and finally, the subjects of His universal government made subject to the Messiah, who however will assert His especial claim to Israel as His own people {realized in the millennium}.

It is evident that the assembly and the Christian's individual place is outside this whole {earthly} scene. In *it* there is neither Jew nor Gentile; in it the Father knows the objects of His eternal election, as His beloved children; and Christ, glorified on high, knows it as His body and His bride. Prophecy treats of the earth, and of the government of God. For after personal salvation is settled, **there are two great subjects in scripture**,<sup>42</sup> the government of this world, and the sovereign grace which has taken poor sinners and put them into the same place as God's own Son as the exalted man, and as adopted into sonship, the divine glory, and that in Christ, being of course the center of all. If we measure things not by our importance, but by the importance of the manifestation of God, whatever develops His ways as unfolded in His government will have much importance in our eyes. There can be no doubt that the assembly, and the individual Christian, are a still more elevated subject, because God has there displayed the whole secret of His eternal love, and deepest present divine affections. But if we remember that it is not only the sphere of action that is in question, but He who acts therein, the dealings of God with Israel and the earth will then assume their true importance in our eyes. And these are the subjects of prophecy. For the others we must specially look to Paul and John. We must understand that the OT is the history of the (fallen) first man to show that he was not recoverable, with a view to setting him aside and introducing the second Man and last Adam, through Whom God's purpose to glorify Himself is carried out. The crowning act of the first man's implacable hostility to, and enmity against, God was the rejection of the revelation of the Father in the Son (John 15:23, 24), nailing the Son to the cross. This terminated the

testing of the (fallen) first man to show he was not recoverable. Of course, during that time of probation God acted in sovereign grace in the case of individuals, making saints of them. Moreover during that time God also brought in certain things (for example such things as dispensing government, priesthood, judges, kingship, etc.) wherein man failed, but Christ will take up all wherein man has failed and make those things good, redounding to God's glory.

It is not so, as Covenantists claim, that "Dispensationalism" holds to two purposes of God -- because of holding that there is a heavenly people and an earthly people. The unity of the Scriptures is seen in God's one purpose, to glorify Himself in Christ in the heavenly and earthly sphere (Eph. 1:9, 10) -- Christ in resurrection, as the second Man and last Adam, having displaced the first man, the first (fallen) Adam. That there is a heavenly people and an earthly people involved in this display of God's glory in Christ is not a valid basis to say that this means God has two separate purposes and claiming that this amounts to undermining the unity of Scripture. Such a conclusion is merely in the eye of the Covenantist beholder. It is his erroneous system which makes it appear that way to him.

Redemption by Christ's blood is the way God changes sinners into saints who participate in the display of His glory in Christ, in the two spheres. But redemption and covenant is not what unifies Scripture.

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42. {Boldface added.}

## Chapter 2

### From the Fall Until the Flood

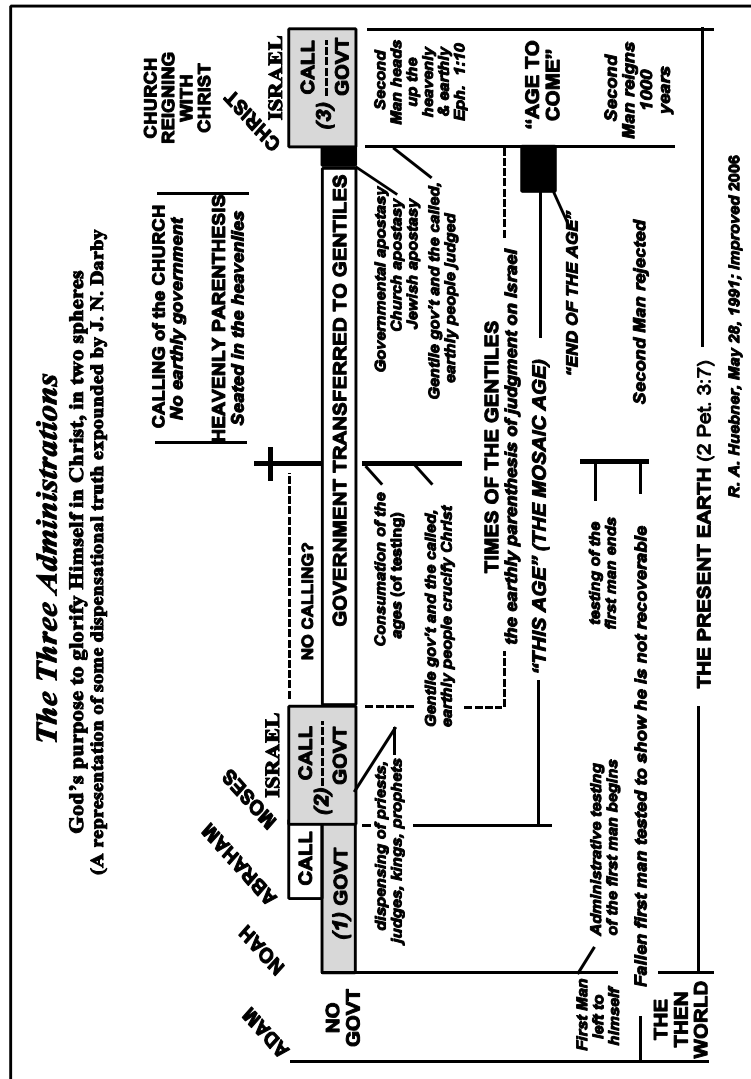
The following is from *The Present Testimony*, vol. 2.

\* \* \* \* \*

Let us now look at Gen. 4 and 5. Short and concise history of man's conduct under the first display of grace! And here, as ever, man utterly fails. Yet, fail as he may, God changes not his counsel and plan about the mediatorial glory of redemption for his Son, and those that are his; for *He* had not failed; nor did the fresh proofs of the badness of that which the serpent had done induce the thought that, therefore, *he* should go unpunished. Surely, it was contrariwise; and, if man was allowed to develop and make manifest before all, in heaven and on earth, what the evil of the fall was, while God's patience was perfect, -- [because, his power being perfect (and perfect, not only over all around, but perfect in self-possession too), He could wait -- wait, that man might hear of grace and live -- Wait, that the real imbecility against Himself of the adversary might become the more evident] -- *still the counsel remained unchanged.*

No sooner is Adam out of Eden, than we read of the birth of children. The first-born, Eve called Cain, saying, "I have gotten the man from the Lord." And did she really think that this was the Seed of the woman promised -- that he was Cain indeed (a possession)? Bitter delusion, if so she thought. Bitter counterpart, out of Eden, of the same haste she had made in Eden. Cain, the bandyer of words with God; -- Cain, the murderer; -- Cain, whose hand, hot with a brother's blood, should display the first sample of that death to which Eve had sold herself -- What a possession was Cain! Righteous and true is the Lord in all his dealings; and his moral government often brings home first to the very bosom which carried forth seed prohibited to be sown, the harvest of its own folly. She had brought in death. The mother of death to her race, she should be the mother of the murderer, and should nourish and nurture in her own bosom the first murderer and the first victim of death! How must "*possession*" {= Cain} and "*a passing breath*," {= Abel} the names of her two sons, have, oft, in after-times, recurred to the mother's mind.

I do not say Satan is not to be traced in Gen. 4. Surely, to the eye of faith, he is seen there present, -- lurking beneath the surface; but his power is not the thing which is sought to be illustrated, or which stands out in prominence in this portion. Neither, again, is the question at all about man's circumstances; -- that is settled, -- he is *out* of Eden, and in the sweat of his brow has to eat bread. *The* point of instruction, of Gen. 4 as a whole, I conceive to be, *man*. How will man act, if left to himself, out of Eden? How will man there treat the long-suffering of God, who, waiting to be gracious, may still be manifesting his goodness? Alas! sad picture! we have that



question answered here.

And, as in Eden, I see what the unfallen man is, as a *creature*, if left to himself; so here I see what the fallen creature's course will be, while on earth, and allowed to abide there.

1. We have to notice the simple guidance of faith, and its contrast, the error of nature. The firstlings of the flock bespoke faith, or the apprehension of that which was now in the Divine mind, the basis of every man's approach to him, -- new as it might be to man; and the fruits of the earth, bloodless offering, though more venerable, told of a mind unguided by God, and left in nature's darkness.<sup>43</sup>

2. It was the younger who was taken, the elder who was left, according to electing love.

3. And this appears -- "The Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering." "He had respect," *that* was the point: but then it says, "To Abel and his offering"; not to the offering of Abel and to himself. The person is set before the way of approach, that grace might have its mark on the page.

4. See the effect of God's judgment upon the heart of unrenewed man. "And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell."

5. What gentle dealing on the Lord's part! what grace shown! if, haply, the wanderer might yet return; if, yet, the assurance that one way was open to him as to Abel, and to all, might win Cain into the path of blessing. But man, as man, has no heart for God, no will to bow to Him, and own his absolute dependance for every thing. The question is not, Has he a free will? but will the {alleged} free-will of fallen man turn to God? That is the question.

6. We find he goes out -- talks with Abel about it -- and then murders him. Lawless putting forth of power this! even if he meant not that which would follow; and sad reason that which the Word of God (in 1 John 3) assigns for the deed; viz. because his own works were evil, and his brother's good. Affecting truth! but truth it is: there is nothing which more provokes enmity in the mind of fallen man, than a savour of godliness in another man.

7. "And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel, thy brother? And he said, I know not: *Am* I my brother's keeper?"

What gentleness on the Lord's part! what seeking after conscience! but conscience was seared; hard as the nether millstone. Alas! the folly of man's wisdom! With whom was this infuriate bandying words? Against whom was he restlessly throwing up the shoulder, as if He were unjustly assuming that he (Cain) had a duty to his brother? It was the Lord omniscient, almighty, who had made men to be helpers, the one to the other: who had, as yet, given the power of life and death over man to no one, and whose rights Cain had just

infringed, assuming to himself the right to slay Abel, because his works pleased God, as his own did not.

8. The judgment was just; -- a curse, from the earth. But let it be observed, how this sentence upon Cain told of how precious, in God's sight, not only was the blood of the martyr Abel, but how precious was the earth still itself in his sight. For Adam's sin he had said (Gen. 3:17, 18),

Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee.

But now he says (Gen. 4:11),

Thou art cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

9. Cain fears for his own life, and turns to see what he can gain for himself. Fair subject he, in the school which Satan was conversant, and to which he alludes (Job 2: 4),

And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.

Without deference to God; without one natural affection which will answer to that name *brother*; without a chord to respond and vibrate in unison with the heart of a father and mother, so bereaved and so afflicted, Cain has yet his fear for *himself* And he turns, a suppliant, to the avenger of his brother's blood.

10. Touching occasion this for the Lord to show -- how open His ear, how ready His hand to give freely! Cain is heard, and the much loved life is protected by a mark and a proclamation of the Lord. He gives to the unthankful and to the evil; causes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust -- and is good to all His works.

11. But Cain was untouched by the goodness, and in v. 16 we read,

And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord.

Yes! the presence of the Lord suits not man when he is bent upon wickedness and self-will. But as it was the younger son who, having asked "for the portion of goods which falleth to me," . . . "not many days after" . . . "gathered all together and took his journey into a far country" -- so likewise, here it is written, "Cain went out from the presence of the Lord" -- the action was his own. He went out thither, where his own way, -- the way of Cain (Jude), <sup>44</sup> -- might be undisturbed.

Fallen human nature has a religiousness of its own as had Cain.

43. The expression, v. 3, "in process of time," lit. "at the end of days," is remarkable. Verse 8, "Cain talked with," is rather, "Cain spoke it to."

44. {"The Way of Cain" in Jude 11 refers to the false approach to God -- the works-approach of his offering. Balaam represents a hired ministry, and Core (Korah) represents a false worship, seen in the strange fire presented before Jehovah.}

Among the heathen, it is to be seen in full development. It will not bow to the living and true God, nor own His way of grace and mercy in Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent; it cannot bear his people; its pleasure leads it out from the divine presence, and there it gets a name on the earth.

12. Let us glance at the family of Cain.

His first-born he called *Enoch* [or dedicated]; built a city and named it after his son “Enoch.” Was it like Absalom that he desired the name to be remembered? *Dedicated* to whom? for what? Whatever he thought, the city looks like an overt act of rebellion against the Lord, though a sorrowful confession of his own distaste to the fugitive wandering life to which he himself had been doomed

If he thought that himself would become a settler, then he showed his insubjection to the sentence recorded against him. If he sought to make a name on the earth for his family, dwelling outside of the presence of the Lord (wanderer as himself might be), he was rearing a pillar out of God’s presence, to make his family to be a testimony of his own discontentment in being a wanderer. But his family had a name on the earth; for the city was called by Enoch’s name. How unlike the heavenly Enoch of the next chapter, who passed over the earth lightly, and left no record save a heavenly one behind him!

Next, we find in Cain’s family, polygamy, “which was not so at the beginning” (Matt. 19:8); as said our Lord. But, here (v. 19) we read, “Lamech took unto him two wives.”

The name Lamech is said to signify *strong*. That he was a remarkable man, one greatly characterized in his place, day, and family, for *energy* and *wisdom* of a certain kind, cannot be doubted.

In one branch of his family, leaving the city, there was a son, who was the first example of a Nomad cattle-holder; in another son was found the head of the science and art of music, -- “the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.” His other wife’s children, too, were not without name; and one of them (Tubal-cain) was “an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron.”

Thus polygamy, character on the earth, and the arts and sciences, were found in Cain’s family . . .

Such was the family of Cain; a little WORLD (or *orderly system*) set up by man, in which to make himself happy without God, and out of God’s presence. Solemn thought! that reprieve of judgment should be frittered away in self-devised conceits and fading pleasures. Poor world! all its pleasures are but for a season; its day of reckoning is coming, and then where will be Cain’s family? Where will be those that have walked in *his way*?

If man is left to himself in the day of grace -- the world is what is produced. Thus far as to Gen. 4:1-24. A few words now on what follows.

As is the divine way,—the insignificant thing is spoken of first, and

afterwards that which is of importance. Cain’s family is chronicled, and then comes Seth’s family—that is, the world first, and then the line of promise, blessing, and descent.

And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.

Cain was under sentence; and of his own accord he had “gone out from the presence of the Lord”: a new line is *placed* or *set* (Seth) in the place of Abel, who had been the representative of the household of faith. To Seth a son is born, and “then began men to call themselves by the name of the Lord” -- so I read it: that is, as Cain was recorded as remarkable for cities, arts, sciences, character, etc. etc., out of God’s presence; so the family of Seth took up *this* as their distinctive mark, “*We are the Lord’s*.” Sweet privilege for the meek and lowly this! But if it were done in pride of heart, it would be the harbinger of judgment. The Lord takes care to put in juxta-position with this,

And Adam . . . begat a son *in his own likeness, after his image*, and called his name Seth.

The *likeness and image* of fallen Adam clave, still, to those who on earth were the Lord’s, -- and were *His* line for blessing and for testimony. First, observe how far from brilliant, either as to the things of God, or the things of earth this line of Seth was. As to the earth, nothing glorious is recorded: no city was built and named; there was no bettering of the human race, by discoveries, inventions or the effort to strike out some new path or to bring in some new convenience or pleasure into the family. And this was no bad token for it either. For, *What is the power by which all these things are cultivated?* It is the knowledge of good and evil, which came with the fall, -- and nothing else. Yes; men may hide their own shame, if they will; or, they may foam out their own shame, in witty inventions; but after all, where got they this power, and, what in their present condition, does it speak? It was *stolen*, stolen under the suggestion of Satan, sacrilegiously stolen from God, against His orders. That God may have used witty inventions, as printing for the Bible, and ships, and railroads, etc., for the passage of his servants, is quite true; but they owe not their existence directly to Him; and, if flowing out of the knowledge of good and evil which marks Him, as He said, “they are become as one of us knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3), they have flowed out, through that power, fraudulently and sacrilegiously stolen by man under Satan’s guidance, from God. And what do they, in our present condition, be-speak? Of nothing but expediency to meet felt and confessed necessity. In Eden there was no necessity, and until the fall no expedient. The first thought of blending circumstances together so as to meet need which we read of, is in Gen. 3 --

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

And the second is like unto it, Gen. 3:8,

And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.

A cover from their own eyes and a covert from the presence of the Lord, was what in these two *expedients*, these two wise blendings of circumstances, they sought; and is not *a cover from our own eyes and a covert from the presence of the Lord* (something which, by darkening our minds, may make the sense of His presence less painful) to be seen, by faith, on all that man thus glories in -- arts, sciences, etc. He seeks them *for himself*, he being in ruin, and without the manifested presence of God with him, as it was with Israel when it went up out of Egypt and passed through the Red Sea, tarried forty years in the wilderness, and then entered the land in triumph. In the new heavens, on the new earth, what will be the place such things will have? One need not ask -- where God shall be all in all -- they could not live.<sup>45</sup>

Down to v.18, the birth, the living till marriage, the becoming parents, the living after that, the number of children and the deaths, is pretty much all that we read of.

The continuity of the line of blessing which would be found *in the Seed to come*; that was *the* great thing for man; though, to grace divine, every little circumstance of the people of His choice is dear; every hair numbered; every circumstance cared for; and precious in His sight the death of his saints. Still, though the Lord's people are not to be great in the earth in its things, it is, and ought to be, a most humbling thing to see how few of them attain to any place of distinction in Him or in His things. Six links in the pedigree and no Enoch yet: none, as yet, of whom the Lord could speak as that they had found grace publicly to identify themselves with Him. I speak not now as to the question of standing in the line of testimony, or as to that of being individually blessed; but of this -- why so many of those who are in the line of testimony, who are individually blessed, keep not practically their position of testimony, and the power of their blessing, so as to make it manifest to all? Why, alas, do so very few keep it at all, so as to be manifested to others, and to have their good works go before them? God is not unmindful of any work and labor of love for His name's sake; and that He loves to say the most He can for His servants, who can doubt? He made good the standing of Job before his friends, better than Job could; and how graciously, withal, does He make them taste the pre-eminency they must be blessed through Job. He gives Job, too, a better character than he could give himself (see James 5:11). And who can read the seventeenth chapter of John's gospel and not be astonished at the thoughts

45. To use such things *as are*, is our privilege, and that, without a question; for the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof: to glory or take delight would be incompatible with *seeking, minding*, things above.

which the blessed Lord expressed to His Father about His poor feeble disciples. It is the mother's eye which makes the first-born babe so *peculiar* to her sight; it was faith-estimate of the people which made Balaam say such things about Israel (Num. 24:1-9); and it is the Lord's own heart makes him speak so of his disciples. There is no unwillingness in God to praise us -- quite the contrary; but, as for us, there are fifty Lots for every one Abram. And who of us, judging the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life, are walking in heavenly spiritual Nazariteship, as we should?

2ndly. -- As to Enoch. His name signifies *dedicated*. If he was dedicated to the Lord of heaven, and for a testimony upon earth for Him, then his name was as well chosen as was that of the other Enoch in Cain's family, if *dedication* to human interests on the earth was that which he was meant for.

We may notice, as to this Enoch, the name of his son. Methuselah -- "(At) his death (he) sends": as if some great event were before his mind. And, as has been observed, the death of Methuselah just preceded the deluge. Then observe the testimonial for Enoch. His excellency consisted not in deeds wrought or service (as man counts service) done; but he had chosen the better part -- God was in all his thoughts, and his life told it --

He walked with God.

He walked with God! blessed privilege *open* to every member of the family, in the household of Faith, in every age -- *enjoyed*, however, by but few.

He walked with God, and he was not, for God took him;

and,

By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God (Heb. 11:5);

and the testimony in Jude closes his history --

And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him (vv. 14, 15).

Brilliant exception to the rest of those whose honored place was in the line of testimony and of blessing before the deluge. How soon after Philadelphian praise and beauty does Laodicean failure and pride appear upon the stage; and how soon after Enoch does the night close in upon the antediluvian world. Indeed, it may be, that, like the testimony of Peter and John in Jerusalem, at Pentecost, Enoch was the token that evil had risen to its measured limit, and that judgment was at the very door: for oft, as has been remarked by others, a display of light and power are not the harbinger of blessing to that, before which they are set, but of judgment on it and of salvation to others.

Lamech, who -- self-deceived and deceiving -- prophesied smooth and soft things (as has elsewhere been noted), was one sign of those last days.



And who can read of his conduct in this respect, and think of the way in which, in our own day, the professing church is using prophetic Scriptures, and not tremble? If men will have “a rest” on this earth, -- if they think to have glory, under the present heavens, -- and the exaltation of man, as he now is, -- they will find it in Babylon -- the harlot and city; but all there is Godless, Christless, and without the Spirit; earthly, sensual and devilish.

This is not our rest; it is polluted. Noah’s inheritance and prospects lay under another canopy, in another sphere altogether, to that which Lamech supposed: but Lamech’s tone of speech and thought, though different from the overt wickedness, which is afterwards spoken of, chimed in with it; and tended to blunt the edge of the prophetic word of judgment coming. As one might have answered Noah, when he was a preacher of righteousness and busy preparing for judgment, “Nay, your own father and family correct your folly -- hear what he said and how piously he spoke.” Infidelity does not always scoff openly. The *second* mark of the last days is recorded, Gen. 6:1, 2,

And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they *were* fair; and they took them wives of all they chose.

The sons of God, were, I presume, those who called themselves by the name of the Lord,<sup>46</sup> and the daughters of men were in Cain’s family. And observe the corruption was *from within* the separated body. It is not said, “The sons of men took of the daughters of God” -- but the reverse. It was God’s witness which was betraying *itself*, was mixing the lines which God had separated.

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46. {Allow me to say that “the sons of God” here mean such as are spoken of in Job 1:6, 2:1, and 38:7. Both the OT and the NT point to this meaning. There is no reason for the unions to produce “giants” (Gen. 6:4) if only humans were involved, and this both before the flood “*and also afterwards*.” Objections such as mistaking Matt. 22:30, that in the resurrection there is no marriage but the state is as the angels, proves nothing against this; for that Scripture, fully quoted, speaks of “the angels of God *in heaven*.” These in Gen. 6 are not the angels of God *in heaven*. Note carefully that the angels who kept not their own original state, but had abandoned their own dwelling, are kept in eternal chains (Jude 6). If you apply “not kept their original state” to the fall of the angels with Satan, then why are Satan and demons loose now? The not keeping their original state means those “sons of God” noted in Gen. 6. Note also the word “As” which begins Jude 7, and allow the context to help understanding. 2 Pet. 2:4, 5 also is a context that includes these “angels who had sinned,” with the destruction by the flood, and then Sodom and Gomorrah. Of these angels we read that God has “cast them down to the deepest pit of gloom” {down to tartarus}, has delivered them to chains of darkness [to be] kept for judgment. The phrase “angels that had sinned” cannot refer to the original fall of the angels because then no fallen angels would be loose in the world.

But we cannot enlarge upon this unhappy subject here. The sin was worse than the godly mixing with the ungodly, sinful as that is. And we see the machinations of the Enemy in this unspeakable *corruption*, as well as the violence that *filled* the earth.

Concerning “and also afterward” (Gen. 6:4), the sons of Anak appear to have had this origin. Israel was used to exterminate them. See *The Bible Treasury*, 20:288; *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 19:72.}

And what wonder, when a Lamech was the preacher? Earnestly did Paul warn upon this same subject (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Alas? if I spake here my thought as to ourselves, it is this: -- The world has too much hold over *us*, for us to see how much association with it we have. I condemn no one; I speak for myself and the church of God -- the saints are not heavenly and divine in character as their Head would have them, -- they are not, here below, like the widow that is desolate and trusts in God.

Thirdly, man had tampered with God’s word; had trampled down, for the sake of indulging the lust of the eye and the flesh, the barriers which God had raised for His testimony upon earth. The next thing (and what wonder?) there is violence against his fellows: “the earth was *filled* with violence.” When the people who are separated unto the Lord outwardly and in profession, become known on earth for their giants, -- their mighty men, their men of renown, -- it needs no great acquaintance with the human race, or with the Divine government, to be able to say that violence among men will soon plentifully show itself; and, then, judgment from the Lord will quickly follow. The boast of our day is not in height of stature or width of shoulder, but its boast and glorying is not in the Lord alone; -- intellect is man’s pride now. How perfect is the word of our God in warning as in guidance, and it has said,

Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited (Jer. 17:5, 6).

It is impossible to trust to man and the Lord.

No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon (Matt. 6:24).

And again,

Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in

these things I delight, saith the Lord (Jer. 9:23, 24).  
See also the character of the king in Dan. 11.

The pride of man has *already* lifted him above family, title, and wealth, in this land and, in Europe, at least; but not above *intellect*. And when that comes to be honored, as it will be ere long, with full homage, then will men's hearts be blinded *thoroughly* to every folly. Let the French revolution be heard, if men will not hear Scripture, and let the stupid follies of the age of *reason*, and its immediate connection with the reign of *terror* be thought of. No considerate mind can doubt that we are on the eve of most eventful times in the history of both Christendom and the world. The entire revolution of everything throughout Europe, which the last twenty-five years have brought, cannot be hid. What, then, are the saints of God about, and where are they? There is but one Power which can keep them free from other influence, and that is the Holy Ghost. Are they led by Him, -- are they walking in Him, -- or are they loose and lax in their walk, yielding now to one influence, and now to another, as it may chance to suit their convenience? Never, perhaps, was there a time when the value of a sure guide, a faithful *Eliezer* [*my God the helper*, which is not far from the idea which John 14 and 16 give us of the Spirit's gracious services] was needed. In our scenes at home, we have seen and been made to feel the value of One who can detect "angels of light" (falsely so called), and can unravel the mass of truth tangled with error. The Spirit of God knows all the land-marks of truth; can detect every shoal and sand-bank of error. What a blessed thing to have such a One for Guide in such a day as this!

May the saints of God humble themselves under Him, and He will enable them to see and understand far more of the written word than they now do, and give them more power, too, to use what they have. But let them get and keep themselves entirely separate from evil. Let "cease to do evil, learn to do good," be the guide of their lives.

One word more. Not only is God's pleasant purpose about making the heavens and the earth to become scenes for the display of the glory of Christ, the ground (which never can be shaken) of all his dealings with the earth; but, it is just because that never can be given up, that there have been, from time to time, acts of judgment upon various generations of men. The accomplishment of that purpose, and the development of that plan of redemption-glory, supposed God to be present, dealing (more or less directly) with man, in testimony, until the time came which was fixed for the display of the glory. To give up the testimony would have been to have shut out man from the glory. But man is so base, that without a check the world would have destroyed itself and its inhabitants, and, so far as it could, it would have driven God from it. Upon this ground, the Divine government has from time to time interfered to keep evil in check, and make it possible for God to continue dealing in grace, and for man to continue where the long-suffering of God is salvation.

And thus, these solemn judgments, before which the heart quails,

overwhelming as they are to a whole generation, speak in the language of heaven, not only judgment, but the fixity of the Divine purpose to bless, under Christ, the human race, both in heaven and on earth.<sup>47</sup>

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47. "The Deluge. Reasons of It -- On Earth, In Heaven," *The Present Testimony*, vol. 2.

## Chapter 3

### *Gen. 4: The Seed of the Serpent Murdering the Righteous and Developing Its World*

Genesis 4 and 5 bring before us the two seeds. First we have the account of the natural seed (Gen. 4) then the spiritual seed (Gen. 5), a not uncommon order in Genesis, and one in keeping with the principle given in 1 Cor. 15:46. A great difference between the two chapters is seen in the opening verses of the two chapters. Chapter 4 opens with what appears as a natural continuation of the sin brought out in ch. 3. We shall see the consequences of sin in the line of Cain, beginning with murder and ending in Lamech, the seventh from Adam in Cain's line, in whose family the world is developed in its complacency away from God. We shall find typical things of the ungodly in Cain's line; but in contrast, typical things of the godly in Seth's line in ch. 5. These chapters show us two lines, one line choosing to make themselves as comfortable in the world of sin and death as they can, and the other walking in separation in the light of the coming Seed of the woman.

The two lines began with two men both seeking *acceptance* by Jehovah. One came before Jehovah for acceptance in virtue of death (i.e., the offering of the firstlings of the flock, and the fat thereof). The other came without the sense of where he was spiritually -- he had not learned from God's question to Adam, "where art thou," and brings an offering of the fruit of the cursed ground. So one recognized and bowed to Jehovah Elohim's judgment and the other ignored it. One brought, as it were, the blood; the other, in effect, mocked the blood -- typically speaking, mocked the blood of Christ, though such might like to see the blood of the righteous spilled upon the ground.

One represents the first man, the other the second man -- and the first man killed the second man. Is there nothing typical in *that*?

The one was the seed of the serpent and the other was of the coming Seed of the woman. One had the carnal mind; the other was born of God, one in whom faith worked. One was of the flesh; the other was of the Spirit.

Another is appointed in Abel's place, Seth, speaking of Christ in resurrection. A line of born-again ones follows (Gen. 5).

The line of the carnal man is traced to the seventh, Lamech, in whose children the world of Cain comes to full expression. The line of the born-again one (Seth) has a seventh one also, noted for being translated from Cain's world, a type of the saints' rapture before the coming judgment. The line of born-again ones continues through Noah, a type of the Jewish remnant preserved for the millennial earth.

We must remember that it was Cain's world that was swept away by

the flood. Is there nothing typical in *that*? *Man's* civilization will be swept away when

The great city was [divided] into three parts; and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon was remembered before God to give her the cup of the wine of the fury of His wrath . . . (Rev. 15:19, 20).

Gen. 4 divides into two main parts. Typically speaking, Gen. 4:1-15 is the rejection of Jehovah by the first man and Gen. 4:16-26 brings before us the consequent development of the world by the first man.

### *Gen. 4:1, 2: False Expectations of Nature*

The name of Adam's firstborn was Cain, which means acquired (or possession), as the text itself indicates. First, we note that it appears that *she* named the son, whereas in Seth's case Adam named him (Gen. 5:3). Perhaps she had not yet learned what could be learned from her forwardness in Gen. 3, though after what transpired with Cain and Abel she might have deferred to Adam regarding naming Seth.<sup>48</sup>

It is indicated that she thought that the Seed announced as coming (Gen. 3:15) had been born and that she had acquired him of Jehovah. The line of the natural was at work in her thought and she did not know that God must appoint the deliverer. She connected nature and its expectations with the name of Jehovah. She did not know that great principle set forth in 1 Cor. 15:46. Nor had it been announced:

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son and call his name Immanuel (Isa. 7:14; cp. Matt. 1:23).

She wrongly expected the deliverer according to the order of the natural. But we know that the incarnation was by the overshadowing power of the Spirit. However, she did have faith that Jehovah would provide a deliverer. As we learn about the character of Cain subsequently, that character would indicate that by the time Abel was born, she had learned that the deliverer was not Cain. He was not the Seed. The next son is named Abel, which means a breath, or vanity. That name expresses that she perceived she was mistaken about Cain even before Abel was born.

Let us jump ahead a little, for a moment to connect this with Seth and his son. After the death of Abel God appointed Seth (meaning, appointed) in Abel's place, a type of Christ's resurrection. There is an indication of better spiritual judgment in the words, "For God has appointed me another seed instead of Abel . . ." (Gen. 4:26). God's working is recognized and

48. It might seem from Gen. 4:25 that Eve named Seth, but Gen. 5:3 says that Adam "called his name Seth."

expectations according to nature are set aside. Then Seth had a son he named Enosh, meaning frail man, and in a footnote to the text JND's note says, "Man, as weak, mortal: Psa. 8:4; 103:15." The cross and the resurrection of Christ has fully exposed what man is. Seth naming his son Enosh points to this.

To return, the occupations of Abel and Cain are noted next, and in that order, not in the birth order. God has had eternally before Him the Lamb for sacrifice that would glorify Him in the place where sin abounded -- in Cain's world, so to speak. Cain, who represents "the first man," would have the earth as his until the slain Lamb, the lion of the tribe of Judah, takes to Himself His great power and reigns. He that humbles himself shall be exalted in due time (Matt. 23:12), and so Christ *must* reign (1 Cor. 15:25).

## ***True and False Approaches to Jehovah: Gen. 4:3-7***

### ***Cain and Abel: First That Which Is Natural. . . and Afterwards That Which Is Spiritual.***

. . . The first man Adam became a living soul; the last Adam a quickening Spirit. But that which is spiritual [was] not first, but that which is natural, then that which is spiritual: the first man out of [the] earth, made of dust; the second man, out of heaven (1 Cor. 15:46-47).

#### **THAT WHICH IS NATURAL IS SET ASIDE**

This great principle in God's dealings with man is enunciated in connection with the first and last Adams. These refer to two headships. Consequent on the cross, God closed the trial of the first, fallen man, for He had shown that man was not recoverable. In resurrection Christ took the place of the last Adam, displacing the first as having a standing before God (during the trial). Though Christ was the second man *in person*, as being here in manhood, He took *the place* in resurrection. It is the greatest, the most momentous, exhibition of *God's moral order*, that *first is the natural and after that the spiritual*. And this also confirms that the first man has been set aside, the trial of the first man has ended -- "natural, *then* that which is spiritual." You cannot have both Christ and Adam together.

The natural man, the first man, put Christ to death on the cross. The first man cast out the second man. That act is the end of God's dealings with the first man as having a standing under trial, hence Romans declares man lost, which was never said while he was under trial. The issue is settled.

Yet, that awful deed having been done, the ancient serpent having his fangs in it, Christ is established in resurrection. And this is reflected in the case of Cain the firstborn killing the second born. There is the foreshadowing of the

first man killing the second man: Cain killed Abel. But God raises up Seth.

Down through the ages the seed of the serpent is opposed to the seed of the woman, and we see that quite clearly in Cain. It came to full expression in the hatred against Christ -- and therefore the first man must eventually lead to the final Antichrist of prophecy.

#### **SETTING ASIDE THE FIRSTBORN IS CHARACTERISTIC IN GENESIS**

In every case in Genesis where we can determine who the firstborn was, he was not regarded by God's grace as in the prime place. This is so with Japheth, Ishmael, Esau, Reuben, Mannasseh, etc. Abraham was not a firstborn, either. The setting aside of the first man is stamped upon the book of Genesis. Is there nothing typical in *that*?

This is not the outworking of covenant promise. Covenant promise began with Abraham, and the principle we are noting was in effect before the Abrahamic Covenant. Indeed, the first Adam and the last Adam are the prime expression of God's work in this regard.

When God acts in grace, in Christ, Christ has the place of the first-begotten, or firstborn. It is not a question of priority in time, but of pre-eminence. In incarnation He enters the creation, He takes the place of first-born of all creation. If He has brethren, He is first-born among many brethren. If He rises from among the dead, He is the firstborn from the dead.

In Heb. 12:23 we read of the "assembly of the firstborn [who are] registered in heaven." This is the assembly of God in a distinctive position of pre-eminence.

### ***Abel: The First Martyr and the Sacrifice***

The following article is from *The Girdle of Truth* 3:65-75.

#### ***Abel***

Abel's history cannot be taken up altogether apart, since it is designedly presented to us in scripture in opposition to Cain's in its principles, and fruits, and final results. In the two there is a contrasted exhibition of righteousness and iniquity, and their correspondent fates in the world, now under the power of sin. This is the more striking as it occurs in the first two individuals of the human race which were born after the fall. But, as to the springs of life and action, it may be said that Abel's history and Cain's stretch on to the end, and characterize the two families which divide the world. They present also the irreversible opposition of righteousness and sin, and lay open the sources of the one and of the other in faith and unbelief.

*Faith* is the recorded characteristic of Abel's history, which, after sin had come in, was the only possible link of connection with God, the only possible ground of acceptance and pathway of restoration to His favor. For

what does the fall present, according to the truth of God's character and word, in regard to man's original position in innocence and on the grounds of nature? Is it not this -- expulsion from Eden -- sin which God will not associate himself with -- and death? And who that believes this but must either sink in hopeless despair when looking at himself, or find his hope and confidence in' looking upward to the restoring power and grace of God?

But fallen man is a proud being proud under any circumstances -- and likes not to surrender the position that once was his, but which sin has forfeited. The fall that cast him down from his innocence has not quenched his ambition; and he would seek to maintain his place before God on grounds that involve the entire setting aside of His judgment of sin, and the utter subversion of His moral character as judge.

Cain's ground of approach to God is an example of this. For, with all that had so recently taken place in Eden, and with the consequences of the fall daily before his eyes, he nevertheless rushes into God's presence, and there seeks to be accepted, as if there had been no fall, no sin, no penalty of death as God's judgment of sin! He comes without faith, without confession, without bloodshedding, without a sacrifice to mark his subjection to death, without a single recognition of God's judgment of sin or a thought that "He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity" and yet he hopes to be accepted! But every man who seeks to have to do with God on any ground but that of the sacrifice of Christ, of which Abel's was a type, but copies the example of Cain, only under the aggravating circumstances of increased light and testimony from God. When death is not owned as God's judgment of sin, any expectation of restoration to His favor is only based upon the vain hope that God will falsify His word and that He will recede from the solemn judgment He has declared. For if I own that my *life* is forfeited under the just judgment of God for sin, it is plain that all hope in myself is for ever gone, and I am cast in faith on the death of Christ, by which sin's penalty has in grace been met.

But what in truth does Cain seek in coming with his bloodless offering before the Lord? Does he seek, and long, for restored intercourse with God because His favor is delighted in? Not in the least. He is satisfied with his position in a world of sin, and if he may but be allowed to enjoy the fruits of his toil, all that he seeks in intercourse with God is that he may obtain the divine sanction to his thoughts of himself, and thus silence the accusations of conscience and dissipate his fears.

And what does man's religion always seek? Not communion with God; not subjection to His word and will; not the sense of His light and favor to cheer the soul in a world of evil while looking onward, beyond the world and death, to an eternal dwelling in His presence! No: but it would pursue its own course in the world, without a thought in common with God, as to the world's condition, or man's estate before Him, and then by some sacrifices, or services, or fruits of nature, would bind Him over to an approval of the

worshiper's condition, and character, and aims. It would make self and not God its end, and then blindly seek to attach to its self-deceivings the sanction of God's approval and name! <sup>49</sup>

Abel, on the contrary, by faith reads in the light of God's thoughts the sad history of the fall. He forgets neither his sin nor its penalty; but in his offering he puts death between himself and God, as the just judgment of sin.

But death thus owned feeds his hopes, and the divine acceptance of his person and gifts takes the place of every earthly tie and every spring of earthly

blessing. For Abel is not here presented to us as a sinner seeking for pardon, but as a believer in intercourse with God, and his offering is the embodiment of his faith, as Cain's is of his unbelief.

The Lord had respect unto Abel and to His offering. But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect.

Each brought his character as well as his offering before the Lord; and Abel "obtained witness that he was righteous," which was the formal reception of man back again into the place of divine favor. "God testified of his gifts, and by it he being dead yet speaketh." It was this revelation to his soul that formed his character as a witness for righteousness in the presence of the evil and hostility of the world, which is provoked by it: for Cain's spirit is the spirit of the world,

The *ground* of righteousness before God, which Abel's faith lays hold of, is plain; but there is, further, *the life* of practical righteousness, which

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49. {Abel, the first martyr on earth, closes his history here in death at the hand of him against whom he witnessed for God as to the true manner of approach to God, and of acceptance as the fruit of it. If we could with any accuracy survey the scene and the testimony, and the different motives and ideas which produced such diverse actings in these two men, in the opening of the world's history, how impressive and grand it would become to us the more we dwelt on it, as a display of human religion against divine! Man does not, as a rule, deny altogether the claim of God, but he overlooks the moral side of it, and seeks to commend and render all acceptable by IMPROVEMENT. The Cains do not deny that there is need for improvement, but they rest everything on improvement. Abel, on the contrary, announces that all blessing to man comes from God through the intervention of one entirely *outside himself*, and therefore he is accepted; and because thus manifestly accepted of God, he is pursued with relentless hate, a hate that takes away the life of the owner -- the hatred of a murderer. The highest human religionists are, in reality, God's bitterest opponents; and in proportion as human religion is held to, so is their opposition to the divine. Abel heads the cloud of witnesses or martyrs. (The word is the same for both in Greek.) He had obtained witness that he was righteous, hence he fell by the hand of his brother. What a commentary on man's goodness! and the earth which drank in his blood must answer for it. The fact of his death has a voice to man, and therefore though dead yet speaketh. Hence the Lord pronounces that, of the Jews -- the earthly people rejecting Him -- all the righteous blood shed upon the earth should be required: "from the blood of righteous Abel," &c. It called for judgment, and the world is oppressed with this additional judgment. Hence it is said of the blood of Jesus that it "speaketh better things than that of Abel"; for it on the contrary speaks of forgiveness.

*The Girdle of Truth*, 9:88, 89.}

results from the faith that allies with God and brings into happy subjection to His will.

It was the blood of “*righteous Abel*” that Cain shed; and not merely of *accepted Abel*. For God in his person had raised a living testimony to righteousness in the world, where sin has its course, in the harmony of Abel’s spirit with His own character, who is “the righteous Lord that loveth righteousness.” And it was this, we are told, that provoked Cain’s hatred of his brother and his murder. For the scripture says,

Cain was of that wicked one who slew his brother. And *wherefore* slew he him? Because his own works were evil and his brother’s righteous.

Faith wrought in Abel separation from nature’s path, or the world’s course (in principle) in the power of divine approval; and this awakens the hostility of the world, so that he meets death not as the consequence of sin, but as a witness for righteousness. His death becomes a sacrifice to righteousness, as his life was a life of faith, a life of hope in God as the God of resurrection, as well as the vindicator of righteousness which now had no place on earth.

Abel is, in this respect, a type of Christ, as suffering for righteousness, as Cain is a type of the world in crucifying Christ. But “the blood of sprinkling,” through God’s love in the gift of Christ, “speaketh better things than that of Abel.”

Abel’s earthly occupation and pursuits were also in accordance with his heavenly character and hopes; for we may speak of his heavenly character in contrast with Cain’s, who had his home and interests on earth. “Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.” Both were lawful occupations; and the culture of the ground had now become, in a sense, necessary to man, who had no longer his home in paradise. But the eye of faith in Abel, looks upon the earth as the scene of the curse; and no results which labor may win by the cultivation of the reluctant soil, can take from his mind the thought that the very necessity for toil came in with the incoming of sin. In Eden and in a state of innocence, labor and the sweat of the brow had no place. Abel wanders with his flock, and his earthly necessities are met by that which is nourished by the dews and rain from heaven, and not by his laborious toil. He goes from place to place, as the pasturage of his flock demands — a wanderer in the world, having no immovable property to encumber him, or laborious improvements to attach him to an embellished home on earth. Cain tills the ground, as a settler in the world; and his toil, when rewarded with increase, brings no token to his mind of the presence of sin. The sweat of his brow to him is but the effect of honorable toil, and the fruits which his industry raises, are in his estimation, a token of the divine favor and blessing. This may seem a fatuity in Cain, almost beyond the power of conception; but it must be remembered that though the penalty of *death* had been pronounced upon Adam’s sin, Adam still lived. And unbelief, which would credit the

declaration, “thou shalt not surely die,” might easily persuade itself that while the sinner lived there was no proof that the penalty incurred would ever be exacted. And we know who has said,

Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily,  
therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

But restored intercourse with God is Abel’s power to judge of things around him, as it meets also the longing desires of his renewed spirit. For communion with God produces a double effect upon the character; it conforms to God in the love of holiness, and separates from the world which is in contrariety to Him, and governed by principles altogether at variance with those which He approves. Faith no more surely connects the soul with God, and gives discernment of His mind, than it forces into a path in direct opposition to the world.

Abel the righteous is cut off from the earth, and leaves neither name nor posterity there; for his record is on high. But to Cain is given a history of worldly exploits, and a distinguished posterity -- for unbelief and unrighteousness have their natural descent; but faith and righteousness are not found apart from their object and their source. Evil sustains and propagates itself, and has dominion in the earth; but righteousness is only found as sustained by Him who is its spring, while its home is above, and its hope in the “glory that fadeth not away.” ♦

### *Abel: His Suffering and Sacrifice Typical of Christ*

Abel and his offering typify two aspects of Christ. The first is that as Abel suffered as a righteous one at the hands of the man, his brother, so Christ suffered at the hands of man as *the* righteous One. Secondly, Abel’s offering typifies what Christ suffered at the hands of the holy God, for sin. The fat of the offering points to the excellency of the offering. Indeed, the value and glory of Christ’s Person as the God-man was imparted to the sacrifice of Himself on the cross in the three hours of suffering for sin in the darkness, and to His death, and to that precious stream of water and of blood. Some comments on this by J. C. Bayly are:

As Cain (Jude 11) represents the course of the “man of the earth”<sup>50</sup> in sin, so Abel represents the course of the righteous, and especially of the Righteous One -- Christ (Heb. 12:24). Now both Abel and the sacrifice typify Christ in suffering -- not in glory as Adam did -- but in the sacrifice He is suffering at the hands of God (i.e., by His ordinance) for sins, whereas in Abel we see Him suffering at the

50. {See Psa. 1:6; “the wicked” is a designation of Antichrist.}

hands of man for righteousness. In Abel's sacrificial action we see Christ "*offering Himself*." Three aspects are true: He suffered by the "determinate counsel of God" for the sins of others; He was by "the foreknowledge <sup>51</sup> of God . . . by wicked hands crucified and slain" {Acts 2:23} for His own righteousness; and He laid down His life voluntarily (John 10; Heb. 9) offering Himself without spot to God.

There are other aspects of the sufferings and death of our Lord, but these seem the principal ways in which they are presented. It is exceedingly objectionable to make such a theme a subject of cold critical analysis, still we cannot err in following with reverence what is revealed. It has been pointed out how distinct are these presentations, and how invariably that, when the suffering from the hand of God is presented (as in Psa. 22 and 102) it is for sin, and the result at the end of these Psalms and in the following ones is blessing to mankind; but when suffering from man is spoken of (as in Psa. 69) it is for righteousness and the result is judgment. It is in the former aspect the sacrifice is seen; in the latter aspect Abel. The characteristic of this type, then, is a Righteous life opposed in the world, hated and temporarily defeated, apparently crushed, but accepted by God, and in its results ultimately triumphant. Such a life breathes an atmosphere composed of two elements, Faith and Obedience -- kindred elements of such mutual regard that one cannot live without the other. Judged outwardly this life seems to be lamentably wasted and resultless: the very name signifies something vain and transient -- a breath {or, vanity}; but it is a breath of divine inspiration, the effects of which travel over the dismal centuries. Abel "being dead yet speaketh," and one most definite speech is that there *must* be a future life in which wrongs are redressed and the perversions of human judgment reversed if there be such a thing as justice in the universe.

We are thus warned from the first against the crude and vulgar error of supposing that virtue is always rewarded and vice always punished in *this* life: a most mischievous delusion, which the multitude of novelists and dramatists work perpetually to uphold, notwithstanding that the daily experience of every one is otherwise. If we judge the virtue of lives by their outward success and results, then we have to account for the suffering and death of Abel the protomartyr, and the outward failure and disaster of thousands of lives, like his honorable, and like his apparently condemned and fruitless. The type of all such is Christ: there has been no such (outward) failure as that of the life and death of our Lord in human history. He said (Isa. 49:2), "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought"; and, after a dependent, laborious and devoted life, the outward result is a handful of

51. Not of course by the counsel this: observe the accuracy of the terms in Acts 2.

ignorant fishermen as followers, who desert Him at the approach of danger, deny and betray Him; a crown of thorns, a scepter of reed, a cross of wood, and a borrowed grave. If God be just, such a life cannot be allowed to terminate *there*: time is thus shown to be but a part of eternity; and what is not set right in the present existence will be set right in the future.

Moreover Christ's death in this aspect is full of comfort for many a discouraged and broken life, apparently barren of results. It could not be more so than His; and yet, in outward defeat and disaster, He won far greater victories than when in the olden time, or in a day to come, He hurls the assaulting hosts from the battlements of heaven. The apostle is told that there is indeed One who has by the prowess of His victories acquired a right to unfold God's purposes (Rev. 5); and this One is the Lion of Judah. But when John turns to see the Lion, he sees, instead, "a lamb as it had been slain." It was in this way and character that Christ gained His mightiest triumphs -- in misconception, hatred, suffering, disastrous defeat and death. And we too. <sup>52</sup>

Grace operated in Abel and this Cain would remove through murder. Our Lord said:

. . . but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father (John 15:24).

And he says to them, Behold the man! When therefore the chief priests and the officers saw him they cried out saying Crucify, crucify [him] (John 19:6, 6).

J. N. Darby remarked:

Christ has become man's "brother" (it is not a question of God's purpose and counsel here); and is not God demanding of the world, Where is Christ? Cain replied, "I know not: am I my brother's keeper?" <sup>53</sup>

It is the world that has done this. The Jew and the Gentile had their part in it, though the Jew was the special instrument in it as the trial of the first, fallen man took place for Israel under the Mosaic Covenant.

## *Abel's Offering Signifies Propitiation and Acceptance*

There has been discussion of whether or not there were sin-offerings offered before the giving of the law, or if they were all burnt-offerings. In Gen. 4:7 the word sin, we are told, may be rendered "sin" or "sin-offering." The following quotation is helpful:

52. *The Bible Treasury*, 15:109-110.

53. "Cain, His World and His Worship," *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 12:324. Read this whole, very profitable article.

Abel's sacrifice was not a sin-offering. Neither Cain nor Abel came before God with the conscience oppressed by a known transgression. It is the state of each of them that is in view, the state of man before God: the one owning himself driven justly out from His presence because of evil, yet drawing near to Him according to His grace; the other, the natural man insensible to sin. In God's answer to Cain (Gen. 4:7), the subject is positive transgression; and this confirms the thought that in the passage an offering for sin is meant, and not sin itself simply.<sup>54</sup>

So, typically speaking, that notice of a sin-offering brings Christ before Cain as the answer to "if thou doest not well."<sup>55</sup> Moreover, he would then maintain the elder brother's place (Gen. 4:7b). That, of course, does not mean that the sacrifices recorded in scripture before the giving of the law were sin-offerings, though an additional aspect of Christ's work on the cross is foreshadowed here. Let us now consider Abel's offering as pointing to acceptance and propitiation:

Now I admit and believe that the free sovereign self-originated love of God is the source of all our joy and hopes and blessings, eternal and infinite as they are. But God exercises that love by bringing in a Mediator in death: not here by bloodshedding to meet guilt, but in perfect

54. *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 2:143.W. Kelly discusses this at length in *The Bible Treasury* 19:290, concluding that sin-offering is meant. An argument used to support the idea that sin is meant is that "*lieth* at the door" means "couching," like sin ready to spring on Cain. The following quotation may interest the reader:

Genesis 4:7 . . . The converted Jew had no authority for saying, that in the phrase "sin lieth at the door" the word "lieth" could not be applied to a quiet animal, as a sheep, but only to a wild beast, and that, therefore, the ordinary explanation was incorrect, which referred it to a sin-offering. The word VAJ, in Gen. 4:7, "lieth," is applied indiscriminately to a wild beast and to a tame animal. By referring to a Hebrew Bible the indiscriminate use may at once be seen, as in the following passages, in which the same Hebrew word occurs: In Gen. 49:9, "he couched as a lion"; Jer. 33:12, "shall be an habitation of shepherds causing their flocks to lie down"; Psa. 23:2, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." Congleton, *The Christian Annotator* 2:90.

See also *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 19:79.

55. {Gen. 4:7 says,

If thou doest well, will not [thy countenance] look up with confidence? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door . . .

Abel did well in presenting the offering he did; Cain did not do well. He had opportunity to judge himself, to repent, to own his state as fallen. Then for his acceptance he should bring an offering like Abel's. Then he could look up in confidence. He had come in self-confidence, not in the confidence of the acceptable offering. He turns from refusal of the blood of acceptable sacrifice to shedding blood in murder. Is there anything typical in *that*?

self-surrender to God in that which was death, as such, and the fruit of sin. Fat was offered (Gen. 4:4) as much as blood, yet not offered as such for forgiveness but for acceptance in Another, Who gave Himself wholly to God in death which had come in. And mark this was that souls might approach to God: each came with his offering.

Cain came, as if nothing had happened, so much so that he brought to God, as offering, what was the sign of the ruined state into which he had got, but which he did not reckon as ruin. There was no faith in it. In Abel's there was. He offered by faith, which recognized that death had come in by sin, but that Another had given Himself for him, an offering made by fire of a sweet savor. For there are two things: "unto Him That loveth us and washed us from our sins" {Rev. 1:5}; and "Christ also loved us and gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor" {Eph. 5:2}. One was to clear foregone sins; the other, the value and preciousness of Him in Whom we are accepted -- "accepted in the Beloved" {Eph. 1:6}. Now this was a question of acceptance in coming; and God did not accept Cain. He did accept Abel; but the witness was borne to his gifts. He was accepted, but God's testimony was to that which he brought, the life of another in all its energies and perfectness {the fat} given up to God, in death.

Another thing we have to remark here; it was not God setting forth anything to the sinner. That was "a mercy-seat (ἱλαστήριον) through faith in His blood" {Rom. 3:25}. Here it is Abel presenting himself to God, but coming by the acceptance and perfectness of another who had given himself for him. And this is propitiation. Now to say that God could receive a sinner as He received an innocent person is to say that God is indifferent to good and evil. And note here, it was not by the eye of God resting on an inward change that a difference was made (there was such a change, for faith was working in Abel's heart), but a judicial estimate on God's part of the gifts he brought, Christ in figure, Christ offered in sacrifice; and for this we have the express authority of the Epistle to the Hebrews. It was a propitiatory sacrifice as ground of acceptance; or the whole basis of the standing of a fallen world is gone -- the whole moral basis of the preference of Abel to Cain.

That love, electing love, may have been there is



admitted; but the ground of acceptance, as stated in scripture (see Heb. 11), is gone, if propitiatory sacrifice be not accepted. To win secure righteousness before God, and for the believer's acceptance, according to the value that is in Christ, He offered Himself absolutely without spot {Heb. 9:14} for God's glory.

Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him {John 13:31-32}.

Faith believed in it then and found its fruit. Abel was accepted, and distinctively on the ground of what he brought -- his gifts. Cain brought no such offerings; he had to be accepted in himself only, and he was not. Faith looks to this sacrifice, and finds acceptance and blessing according to the value of Christ in the eyes of God.

I only add now that God gave Christ to us for this end. He "sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" {1 Jn. 4:10}. The self-originating work of love is in it, but the effectual work of suffering is to make good in righteousness that love. God forbid that I should weaken confidence in the Father's love.

He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him {1 Jn. 4:16}.

And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us {1 Jn. 4:16}.

It is certain then, that man being fallen, Abel sought God's face and acceptance by a sacrifice, to the value of which God bore testimony, "by which he obtained testimony that he was righteous." It was a sacrifice which recognized death as come in, but which, as so presented, bore the character of perfect self-offering to God's glory. Not actual sins were in question, but the state of man and his acceptance on the ground of mediatorial death, in which God's own glory alone was sought on man's part in obedience, and in which the highest gift of grace shone out on God's part in love.<sup>56</sup>

56. *The Bible Treasury*, 17:321, 322.

## *Genesis 4:8-16: Cursed, Yet Preserved*

### *Gen. 4:9: Hatred for Disrespect to the Religion of Works*

W. Kelly made the following observations:

Nothing rankles more in a natural man than disrespect to his religion; and it assumes the most deadly character where God's disapproval is even insinuated. Yet what can be plainer or more certain than that a sinful man cannot be accepted of God in himself or in virtue of anything he can do? Sin is not cancelled so, nor is God thus glorified. The believer judges self before God, not selfishness only but all that is in man as he is, of which nature is proud till God unveils all, too late for salvation; and this justly, for the evil of man, and the resource of divine grace, were before Cain no less than Abel. But Abel laid it to heart believingly, Cain did not and paid the penalty of woe, as all must who proceed in his way (Jude 11): a danger specifically laid before men in the Christian profession. So speaks, expressly in view of "the last hour," the apostle John in the First Epistle, (ch. 3:12), where Cain appears as of the evil one and slaying his brother; and this, because his works were evil and his brother's righteous. If sin begins toward God, it goes on toward man, even if that man were a brother with the loving claims of a relationship so near. Thus the irritation from a worship rejected of God broke out in hatred of the accepted man, and murder was the result then as ever since (Matt. 23:35, Rev. 18:24). For scripture lifts the veil and proclaims the truth, whatever appearances or pretensions say; the Cain worshipers hate and, if they can, slay those like Abel because their own works are evil, those of the persecuted, righteous.<sup>57</sup>

## *Genesis 4:9-12*

(From W. Kelly)<sup>58</sup>

. . . Not that Jehovah was ignorant any more than heedless; but He would bring home secret sin, and to the guiltiest give space and ground for repentance. Yet in the case before us the conscience was hardened by religious pretension without reality, and exasperated by the acceptance of him who stood only in the faith of divine grace, though in fact Abel's works were righteous and Cain's evil. He that received the best good in hope did good in his measure; he

57. *The Bible Treasury* 19:289.

58. The following series of quotations from W. Kelly are taken from articles in *The Bible Treasury* 19, under the title "The Early Chapters of Genesis."

that despised it envied and hated and slew his own brother, that looked up in dependence on the God of grace.

The questions of Jehovah were searching: not, as before to Adam, Where art thou? but Where is Abel thy brother? and What hast thou done? Adam went away from God, self-convicted, before God pronounced on his sin and made known the resource of His mercy in Christ. Cain to his sin against Jehovah added sin against man, not a neighbor only but his brother: type of the world's, especially the Jew's, sin in the cross of Christ, Who had deigned to come of that people according to flesh. But unbelief blinds the heart to the highest favor which godless will can torture into a wrong to justify its own murderous pride.

If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloke (excuse) for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other hath done, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But [it is] that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause (John 15:22-25).

The Son of God come and rejected proved the state of the world and of Israel in particular.

But Cain was as impenitent as faithless, and had the effrontery to fall back at once on falsehood. He knew not! he knew not where his victim lay! Yea, to a lie he added the insolence of "Am, I my brother's keeper?" Had he laid to heart Jehovah's remonstrance in vv. 6, 7, he would have judged himself and brought a suitable offering, thankful that his brother had profited by taking the shame of sin and giving God glory for His grace. But as indifferent to God as to his sins, he was puffed up and fell into the devil's fault and snare, manifesting himself as a child of the evil one.

His second question Jehovah follows up with the direct and terrible fact.

And he said, What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now cursed be thou from the ground, which hath opened its mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand (vv. 10, 11).

The ground had fallen under curse for Adam's sin; and Cain, utterly thoughtless of sin and of God's sentence had brought of the fruit of it under his tillage, itself a consequence of the fall, as an offering to Jehovah. This might have been, had man not sinned. To ignore sin is to show neither repentance nor faith, without which no sinner can find the way to God. No believer would have offered what lay under curse, what spoke of his own toil. Now the proof of the unbeliever's evil was flagrant: violence and falsehood and irreverence. For his brother's blood cried to Jehovah from the ground. He himself too most righteously was pronounced accursed, not the ground now but the man who tilled it, because of the wrath which burned to white heat, not at the instant but

the more his haughty spirit brooded over his own worship disowned, his brother's accepted.

It is to be observed that nothing answering to civil government was instituted originally; nor was it invented by man during all the centuries which preceded the flood. God set it up for the first time after that great event which ushered in those dispensations of God which still run their course till the Lord come. Hence it is that Cain was not punished by man, as responsibility would have required after the sword was committed to Noah. Thenceforward did God solemnly require blood for blood:

whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God made He man.

The sword of civil government was only borne by man as God's minister after the deluge.

Nor do we find explicitly the eternal judgment in Cain's case any more than in Adam's. No doubt words employed occasionally imply more to the ear of faith; but the open statement speaks of God's government of the earth, as was suitable in a revelation given to His people Israel. Therefore we hear not of heaven or of hell; but

when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield its strength to thee; a fugitive and a wanderer shalt thou be on earth (v. 12).

Heavier than before was to be the lot of him who slew his righteous brother, cursed himself on the reluctant earth, whence with difficulty he should draw his food, and where he should be a constant prey to a bad conscience and anxious fears, shunned by all around him.

How blessed the contrast in the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel (Heb. 12)! This called for vengeance, as that will blessing on the earth when the day arrives for the liberty of the glory, as Rom. 8 speaks: how due to an infinitely better than Abel!

## Genesis 4:13-15

(From W. Kelly)

The sin of Cain was not simply self-will in rebellion against God like Adam's, but despite of grace in the fallen state; which broke out in murderous violence against the accepted man, not a neighbor only but his brother. It was the type of the Jews' sin against Christ; and the sentence was not death but to be cursed from the earth, a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth. This too we see strikingly verified in that people, who as yet show as little compunction as their prototype, tenacious of religious forms, but leaders of the world in rationalistic infidelity with a bad conscience.

And Cain said to Jehovah, My punishment (or iniquity) [is] greater than to be borne. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day on the face of the ground, and from thy face I shall be hid, and I shall be a

wanderer and a fugitive in the earth; and it will come to pass [that] every one finding me shall slay me. And Jehovah said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, it shall be avenged sevenfold. And Jehovah set a mark on Cain, lest any finding him should kill him (vv. 13-15).

Here we see the reaction, from unbelieving indifference and dislike of grace and hatred of its object as well as its source, to despair. How deep the lesson and solemn the warning! How hard the heart which so slightly regarded his own fratricidal guilt, to say nothing of such a brother as Abel; and which so ungratefully received the goodness of Jehovah in all His ways and words with himself, which left the door open for repentance and, it would seem, a sin offering also! But his pride rankled with hatred because of his unbelieving and rejected oblation, even though his primogeniture was expressly declared to be intact.

How true is that which our Lord lays down! If, on the one hand, a man love Me, he will keep My word, as, on the other, He that loveth me not keepeth not My sayings. The holy pleading of Jehovah with His vain worshiper never entered that unhappy heart. In man fallen the beginning of moral goodness is in the confession of one's badness; and faith in the Deliverer coming, and yet more as come, produces this repentance, which bows to God and confides in His mercy. So it was with Abel; not so with Cain whose bitterness rose up everywhere rebelliously, the form only changing with the circumstances. Cursed from the earth though he was, he was to live a wanderer here below: Jehovah does not act on the precepts of earthly government He had not yet divulged.

What space for self-judgment, if the appeals of Jehovah had been laid to heart! Heedless of His words, thankless for His longsuffering, Cain sheds not a tear over his murdered and martyred brother; his whole feeling is for himself. It was not his iniquity that overwhelmed his conscience. Of his punishment he complained as too great to be borne. That this is the true meaning of his words the context shows.

Behold, Thou halt driven me out this day on the face of the ground, and from Thy face I shall be hid.

But what care for Jehovah's face had he, who, without a victim, without the confession of sin and death, still less of a Savior to come, dared to approach Jehovah with the fruit of the ground cursed for man's sin? His worship betokened his wickedness, his incredulity, his dark unexercised conscience; as Abel's told out his sense of ruin, but confidence in the One revealed of God to destroy the destroyer on man's behalf and to His own glory.

We shall see ere long how little Cain respected the divine sentence which he next repeats: "And I shall be a wanderer and a fugitive in the earth." It was really a most mild and merciful dealing with the wicked man whose hands were imbrued with his brother's blood, directly suited to furnish time for bitter

reflection and self-loathing and anguish, had not sin hardened his heart into a mill-stone.

Bold as he was, his consciousness of guilt could not keep his fears hid:

And it will come to pass that everyone finding me shall slay me. There however he was mistaken. Jehovah's long-suffering with His adversaries is amazing; as men now would feel and own, if they only let in light enough to see their own dark enmity to God.

And Jehovah said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, it shall be avenged sevenfold. And Jehovah set a mark on Cain, lest any finding him should kill him (v. 15).

Cain was preserved, notwithstanding that which deserved immediate and condign punishment; he was reserved for the special dealing of Jehovah at the end; for He had even a mark set on him (of what sort it is not said) that none should find and slay him. He had the wretched consolation that man's meddling with him to his hurt, certainly to seek his death, would be avenged to the fullest degree. How evident a type it is of God's dealings, and in the revealed character of Jehovah too, with the Jew because of His blood Who was raised up from among His brethren after the flesh to be the anointed king and prophet and priest on His throne, all this and more, being in His own right Son of the Highest and no less God than the Father, Who alone of men and as man had glorified Him in all respects to the uttermost! Yet was He, yea because He was and spoke the truth to the Jews and witnessed the good confession before the Gentiles, slain far more wantonly and ignominiously than Abel was of Cain. But God in that unspeakable wickedness and crime of man made Him sin for us, that we might become divine righteousness in Him: the deepest and most needed and withal most effectual proof of what the God of love is toward man in salvation of the lost at all cost to Himself and His Son. But the Jew, blinded by religious pride and hardened yet more than the Gentile in his guilty course of evil, remains preserved of God, and awaits the special dealings of Jehovah at the end of the age, in that unequaled tribulation which is his predicted portion, before the indignation shall cease and Jehovah's anger in the destruction of the enemies of Israel.

## *Genesis 4:17-24: Cain's World*

### *Genesis 4:16, 17*

(From W. Kelly)

The way of Cain thus demonstrates the worthlessness of natural religion to meet the need of fallen man, still more to suit Jehovah. It ignores both the ruin through sin and the nature of God. "Thou thoughtest," says the Psalmist, "that I was altogether such a one as thyself." Spiritual insensibility like this, when

reproved of God as with Cain, becomes furious against such as by grace bow to the truth, even were they in the nearest ties of flesh and blood. Finding acceptance with God is intolerable in his eyes who was rejected of Him. There was no self-judgment, though Jehovah pointed out the way of mercy for the evil-doer, and maintained Cain's natural primacy intact. His religious observance covered a heart darkened and defiled by unbelief; the word of Jehovah slighted left him a prey to the evil one; and murder followed. For Satan is a murderer, as we saw him a liar in ch. 3. And Cain declares himself hid from Jehovah's face; as the man and his wife themselves from the presence of God when they heard His voice after their transgression.

But there is more for us to weigh in this instructive history. Despair not only closes the heart to the word of God, no matter what the grace He reveals, but it urges on the spirit to ever growing departure, and to fill up the void with present objects of sense. This is the fresh lesson taught here. The time was not yet arrived for the enemy to bring in idolatry, of which we never hear in scripture till after the deluge; and we are not entitled to affirm it without proof. In the antediluvian earth, bad as men were and ever sinking lower, they did not yet worship the powers of nature; still less did they change the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds and quadrupeds and reptiles {see Rom. 1}.

But Cain shows us the progress of an impenitent soul in a field for the energies of man without God. His worship is dropped; the world morally begins.

And Cain went out from the presence of Jehovah, and dwelt in the land of Nod [wandering] east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife;<sup>59</sup> and she conceived and bare Enoch. And he was building a city, and called the city's name, after the name of his son, Enoch (vv. 16, 17).

The language of inspiration is most significant. Jehovah did not leave Himself without witness, even to wicked Cain. He knew the end from the beginning, yet remonstrated with him when He could not accept his offering, urging righteousness, but disclosing the resource of grace when wrong was done. He laid the conviction of guilt on Cain after his secret murder of the suffering saint whose blood cried unto Him from the ground. What interest even in so wicked a man! What long-suffering with man as he is!

59. {This question, sometimes asked triumphantly, as an objection to what is written in Gen. 5 is: "Where did Cain get his wife?"}

And the days of Adam lived after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years; and he begot sons and daughters (Gen. 5:4).

Was that so hard to see?

Some of the Ptolemies of Egypt, and some of the Inca rulers, had brother-sister marriages; but Cain marrying a sister? Such is the mind hostile to the Word of God.

How can any believer venture to treat such early and gracious interventions of Jehovah as other than plain and sober, however solemn, facts! Undoubtedly they became rarer as the rule in man's history here below; and this in large part because they really were vouchsafed for his learning at the beginning. In no sense are they to be regarded as mythical, but as His actual dealings with man for his profit now and evermore, if he have ears to hear.

It was Cain then who "went out from the presence of Jehovah," and dwelt in that land which seems named from his exile; east of Eden. Jehovah was no longer before his mind. The world was his object. There were such as he feared already (v.14); and Jehovah had given or appointed for him a sign, lest any should find and kill him. Fear of Jehovah he had none. What actuated mankind later wrought in him henceforth.

Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily,  
therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil  
{Eccl. 8:11}.

The space which grace gives for repentance, ungodliness perverts to pursue its own will and indulge its lusts, in defiance of God and His word. His son is the "initiated,"<sup>60</sup> whose name his father gives to the city he was building: a most striking fact for that day, and above all notable in him whom Jehovah had sentenced to be a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth.<sup>61</sup>

It is the rise of civilization without God; the effort of man to make a paradise for himself and forget that he is an outcast through sin. Cain shows us the first budding of what was to bear the bitterest fruit. Psalms 69 is a moralizing of the godly Jewish remnant, who in it see man, whatever his pretensions, no better toward God than the beasts that perish. With all their pride, then self-seeking meets its rebuke, for death shall be their shepherd, they being appointed as a flock for Sheol, and the upright shall have dominion over them

60. It is all the more noteworthy, because in "the seventh from Adam" in the line of Seth we have another bearing the same name. His was another "initiation," his pre-eminently a heavenly calling. {Others give "dedicated" as the meaning of Enoch. Also, there was no heavenly calling until the church was formed. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, typifies the heavenly calling.}

61. {God's sentence he sought to evade. Such a course hardens one in departure from Him Who alone has the remedy for sin. Rather, Cain set up the city of the first man; and it was "dedicated" to the first man in his naming Enoch. The wrong use of the name Enoch occurs before the true Enoch came on the scene, the seventh from Adam in the line of Seth. Such is the way and portion of the seed of the serpent.}

The city of the first man is brought before us before the city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11:10), provided for by the second man, the great Seed of the woman, through His redeeming work on the cross. May I point out that the reference is not to a literal city? God's city speaks of permanence, and safety, and the divine presence, in contrast to our short stay here on earth.}

In naming things, the first man seeks to perpetuate the remembrance of the first man. Let us take heed and not imitate it.

in the morning. Their inward thought is, their houses are for ever, their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. This their way is their folly; yet after them men approve their sayings. Such is the world, till the Lord appears and executes judgment.

## Genesis 4:18-22

(From W. Kelly)

We have seen under Cain the cradle of public civilized life, the first building of a city; his son named with an expression of initiation or culture, earthly as it was; and the city named in the pride of life after the name of his son: a little beginning of that vast system to rise up ere long in opposition to God, where the knowledge of the Father and of His love never penetrates, where Christ and they that are His cannot escape hatred. It was the resource of man under curse in the land of his exile, who went forth from His presence Who convicted him of sin against man, his brother, no less than against God. Faith alone purifies the heart; but faith was as far from him as love, the fruit of that divine love which unbelief never sees or feels. And as there was no dependence on God, so a bad conscience engendered dread of man: “whosoever findeth me shall slay me,” his own words. Within that wretched breast grew up the notion of a city; as his son’s name furnished the idea of perpetuating a family boast on earth. Jehovah’s name was nothing to his soul, save one of horror, because of his own conscious guilt. He must die like his parents, but his city, like his family, shall continue for ever, his dwellings from generation to generation, and then at least the name should not die. Expulsion from paradise, going out from Jehovah’s presence, only gave the occasion to prove how a brave and determined man can rise above the dreariest lot and turn a land of wandering into a settled habitation and secured from marauders and other foes.

And to Enoch was born Irad; and Irad begot Mehujael; and Mehujael begot Methushael; and Methushael begot Lemech. And Lemech took to him two wives; the name of the one [was] Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. And Adah bare Jabal: he was father of such as dwell in tents and [have] cattle. And his brother’s name [was] Jubal: he was father of all such as handle harp and pipe. And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-Cain, forger of every tool of copper and iron; and Tubal-Cain’s sister [was] Naamah (vv. 18-22).

In this first genealogical draft, what is said of Lemech arrests us. He is marked as violating first the divine order of marriage. It was “not good that the man should be alone.” But His provision was not two or more, but one woman, “a helpmate,” his counterpart. Self-will, ever growing, did not longer hesitate to traverse God’s mind, evidenced sufficiently for those who fear God in His act: and “Lemech took to him two wives.” From the beginning it was not so {Matt. 19}. Our Lord treats the account, not as poetic, or mythical, but

as authentic and divinely authoritative fact. He also, we may notice, binds together chs. 1 and 2 as parts of one inspired narrative, whatever the difficulties or dreams of *soi-disant* higher criticism, not only erring but in its overweening vanity ignorant of the scriptures, and of the power of God, which faith alone in the nature of things can apprehend and enjoy. Polygamy is a direct transgression of that unity which is of its original institution according to God’s will. The law no doubt permitted a measure of licence in view of the hard-heartedness of Israel (i.e., of man in the flesh); but the law made nothing perfect: Christ vindicated, as He is, the truth.

The names of Lemech’s wives are given, as of our first mother, and these only, with his daughter Naamah, of the antediluvian women. As Eve was named with express significance, it may well be that Lemech’s choice denotes the gratification of taste in the growing world. For Adah means “beauty,” Zillah “shadow,” and Naamah “pleasant.” God was not in the thought of their designations. They fell in with the advances of civilization, which disdains the pilgrim and stranger character, so dear to faith. Earth is its home, and every accession of present loveliness is welcomed. Why think of sin or righteousness, of death and judgment, of Christ and His coming? Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die. A “garden” of Epicurism soon opened when Paradise was closed; and votaries were not wanting long before Epicurus rose among the Greeks or Sadducees among the Jews.

Still clearer or more certain is the inference from the verses that follow.

And Adah bore Jabal: he was father of such as dwell in tents and [have] cattle. And his brother’s name was Jubal: he was father of all such as handle harp and pipe. And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-Cain, forger of every tool of copper and iron; and Tubal-Cain’s sister [was] Naamah.

Agriculture was the early occupation of Cain, as Abel had been a shepherd. “Building a city” followed guilt and dread of man without the fear of God acting on a mind stimulated by energy and fertile of resource, and a heart set on earthly hopes. Thenceforward the race progressed rapidly. Some, of whom Jabal is chief, pleased themselves in the rough and adventurous life of nomad herdmen; others struck out and pursued the inventive path of art and science. For Jubal, brother of Jabal, was father of all such as handle stringed and wind instruments: inventions cherished almost alike without a city as within, as experience shows. Nor this only: Tubal-Cain follows, forger (or furbisher) of every tool for cutting instruments of copper and iron. The road to eminence lay open for man alienated from God and indifferent to it, independent of God in will, if not really, and of course wrongly. He acts of and for himself to make the land of his wandering his paradise, of which he is the more proud because these useful or pleasant inventions he can boast of as his own. But he is God’s creature, and responsible to obey, and must give account. By Adam’s sin he lost his true place and relationship; and instead of seeking another and a better open to faith in the Second man, he prefers his own will,

his fancied independence, which is no other than Satan's service, with Satan's doom at the end.

It may not be amiss to notice how the word of God overthrows the modern speculator who assumes the three ages of stone, bronze, and iron, through which they will have early mankind to have passed in pre-historic times. Even had we no inspired record, enough has been gathered from facts of the past to dispel the illusion. Epochs in chronology they are not in any sense. There are regions even now, and not all confined to Australia, whose use of rough stone implements would thus fix them in the palaeolithic age. A similar condition was attested a century ago of races in the northern and eastern districts of the Russian empire, European and Asiatic. And we have good authority (Prof. Rygh, of Christiania, before the Stockholm meeting of the International Congress of Pre-historic Archeology) that, north of Nordland in Norway, the inhabitants remained in the practice of the so-called Stone age till the beginning of last century, though for hundreds of years in communication with people who used iron. See *Academy*, August 29, 1874. Again, the races of Mexico, Central America, and Peru, employed weapons of obsidian and implements of bronze, when the Spaniards overran and conquered them. So it was in the early age of Greece, which used stone and bronze together, but not iron any more than did S. America. And what evidence is there of a stone *age* in Egypt, however early we trace the facts? No one doubts that a few traces of stone appear, and even bronze only prevailed a short while. In Babylonia both flint and bronze were used for war and peace; as were leaden pipes and jars, along with iron; as, much later, stone implements continued to be used, when ancient civilization had reached its zenith with cutting instruments of metal in familiar use (Smith's *Anc. Hist.* 375).

To this day the people in Northern Abyssinia use stone hatchets and flint knives, along with iron poignards. And as to cave dwellers, they are still found, not only in distant lands, but even in a land so near as Spain, where many perished quite recently through sudden floods which surprised whole families. It is a question, not of antiquity, still less of definite ages in that imagined succession, but of civilization; and scripture is express that the settled, ordered, and combined life of a city, as well as the working of metals, and the invention of musical instruments within two main divisions, began early in the life of Adam. The mythical treatment of the question is entirely due to skeptical men of science who prefer hypothesis to well ascertained fact, and seem pleased in opposing revelation.

### ***Genesis 4:23-24***

(From W. Kelly)

We have had in Cain the moral history of man outside Paradise, sin fully developed, not against Jehovah only, but, because his own works were evil

and his religious service an offering of impenitent folly and rejected, against his believing and righteous brother Abel. Along side of it the long-suffering yet righteous dealings of Jehovah are of the highest interest and instruction, the manifest foreshadowing of His ways in due time with His people Israel, who would abandon promise by God's grace in Christ for conditions of law which flesh presumes to fulfil to its own ruin. Like Cain too, the Jews slew in result Jesus Christ the Righteous, though He came of them according to flesh, their own Messiah, Who is over all, God blessed for ever. Hence they also are gone out from the presence of Jehovah, cursed from the earth for blood-guiltiness, dwell in a land of wandering exile, and, in the evident loss for the present of their divine mission of blessing to all families of the earth, betake themselves to city life, to bold adventure, to the inventions of art and science, and to the amenities of the civilized world. Man's will governs and pursues its onward way, totally indifferent to God's will and glory.

It is therefore not man only, but the firstborn in sin, answering to God's favored people, men religious after the flesh, but in fact unjust and rebellious even to the death of the Righteous One, Whom by the hand of lawless men they did crucify and slay. By fierce imprecation of all the people, His blood is on them and on their children, and their land as yet like the potter's field to bury strangers in, justly called Akeldama, Blood-Field.

This is followed up in the account of Lamech's words to his wives, on which tradition has hung its myths, and theologians have speculated through not seeing the divine mind and purpose to be gathered from the scripture. Either way God's word is not honored by faith; and who can wonder that edification fails?

And Lamech said unto his wives,

Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;

Ye wives of Lamech, hearken to my speech:

For a man I have slain for wounding me,

And a youth for hurting me;

If Cain shall be avenged seven-fold,

Then Lamech too seventy and seven[fold] (vv. 23, 24).

It is the first recorded poetry in the Bible; and God is in no way the object, but self for this life: another and weighty addition to the picture of the world.

Whatever the historical circumstances, the aim was to reassure his wives who dreaded the consequences of his violent deeds. Lamech appears to plead that the blood he had shed was shed in self-defence, not murderously like Cain; and therefore he avails himself of the divine shelter of his own forefather as the surest pledge of intervention on his own behalf.

The fact is certain that God watches over His ancient people, guiltier far than Cain, but of blood that speaks better than that of Abel. For if the Jew has been kept, in the face of man ever hostile and ready to slay, in the face of more spiteful Christendom, Greek or Latin, utterly ignorant of God's secret purpose

to pardon and bless in the end, neither bloody crusades of old nor cruel ukases now, will succeed to exterminate Israel, but only to bring punishment another day on their adversaries. There they are, wanderers but preserved, as no people ever was, for everlasting mercy when their heart turns to God and Him Whom they cast out. And here in Lemech's words, though he may have meant nothing higher than the sad facts of Cain's deed or his own, can we not hear the inspired image of the Jew's confession in the latter day? Assuredly we know on authority which cannot be broken, that the repentant Jew will yet own, like their forefathers in the analogous case of Joseph, but about One greater and better than Joseph, We were very guilty concerning our brother. For the prophet declares what divine goodness and truth will yet fulfil: --

I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourned for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn (Zech. 12:10).

Lemech's saying, therefore, is an unconscious prophecy like that of Caiaphas, but of the Jews acknowledging, not hiding, blood-guiltiness (Psa. 50), the blood of their own King: and of what a King! Himself, the sacrifice for the sin which slew Him; and those who in their blind unbelief were thus guilty brought to true faith and real repentance, thenceforward to have God blessing them, causing His face to shine upon (with) them that His way may be known upon earth, His saving health among all nations . . .

### ***Lemech, the Seventh from Adam***

#### **HIS FAMILY A PICTURE OF THE WORLD AWAY FROM GOD**

##### **CAIN**

acquisition, possession

<b>LEMECH</b> , the seventh from Adam <b>strong</b>			
<b>ADAH</b> ornament		<b>ZILLAH</b> shadow	
<b>JABAL</b> stream, flowing father of those who dwell in tents and breed cattle	<b>JUBAL</b> river, he that runs father of those who handle the harp and pipe	<b>TUBAL-CAIN</b> issue of Cain  forger of tools of brass and iron	<b>NAAMAH</b> charming, pleasant

In Jude 11 our attention is directed to Enoch, the seventh from Adam. While it is true that this gives certainty that the Enoch in the line of Cain is not meant, suppose Jude had not said the seventh from Adam, would you have supposed that reading Gen. 4, 5 you would come to the conclusion that Cain's son was prophesying such coming judgment? I suggest that the *seventh* directs our thoughts to two matters:

- (1) that as the number seven in Scripture is used to show the completeness of something, so Enoch points typically to some work that God would complete; and
- (2) it invites us to also examine the seventh from Adam in the line of Cain, i.e. Lemech (Gen. 4:19-24), and contrast the two. In Lemech's family we see how that in certain aspects the world came to matured expression in Cain's line. Previously, no woman's name had been given since Eve, and no daughter's name had been given until now. But, while three sons of Lemech are noted, and remarkably, a daughter is named, the purpose is not to continue the line of Cain.

So, some point is reached in the seventh from Adam in each line and in marked contrast when we consider this Enoch and this Lemech. We Christians need to remember and practice what our Lord said in prayer to His Father:

I have given them thy word, and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, as I am not of the world (John 17:14).

Enoch is a type of those who shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:15-18) before the Lord comes in glory to execute judgments in the earth. Noah points to those who shall be preserved for the millennial earth. This Lemech gives us the world away from God, which, as it was swept away in judgment in Noah's day, shall be judged in its present state when Christ comes in glory to set up the kingdom reign of 1000 years.

The meaning of the names in Lemech's family shows a satisfaction and complacency of being away from God. The sons of Lemech, the self-sufficient strong one, by Adah, are an ornament to him. Jabel and Jubal indicate progress is being made. There is another side, another aspect to these things, brought before us by Zillah. Though there is a *shadow* (Zillah) over all (for death is not eliminated), and Tubal-Cain reminds us that all is, really, the issue of Cain who willfully went out of the presence of Jehovah, it is *pleasant* (Naamah) not to have to do with God -- however fatal.

The world is fully expressed in Lemech, his wives, and his off-spring. This is fully expressed in *the seventh* from Adam in the line of the seed of the serpent -- thus the line is not followed further as in Enoch's case.

It has been remarked that gold and silver is not mentioned. Perhaps Tubal-

Cain did work with those metals. The point is that they are not mentioned, as in keeping with what is meant to be suggested to our spiritual exercise regarding this family of the seventh from Adam in Cain's line. In the types, gold speaks of divine righteousness and silver speaks of redemption.<sup>62</sup>

#### ANOTHER PICTURE BASED ON WHAT LEMECH SAID TO HIS WIVES

And Lamech said to his wives:

Adah and Zillah, hear my voice,

Ye wives of Lamech, listen to my speech.

For I have slain a man for my wound, and a youth for my bruise.

If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold:

Lamech seventy and seven fold (Gen. 4:23, 24).

Previously, comment was made about Cain being a picture of the Jews slaying Christ. Cain slaying Abel is a picture of the fallen first man slaying the second man. In the trial of the fallen first man to show that he was not recoverable, the trial took a certain form in the persons of the Jews. Finally, they, using the Gentiles, slew Christ, as Peter charged (Acts 2:23). Meanwhile, they, like Cain's line, are preserved from extinction. Concerning what Lamech said, E. Dennett wrote:

In the history of Lamech we have on man's part self-will in lust. He had two wives, and vengeance in self-defense; but, I apprehend, an intimation in God's judgment, that as Cain was the preserved though punished Jew, his posterity at the end, before the heir was raised up and men called on Jehovah in the earth, would be sevenfold watched over of God. Lamech acknowledges he had slain to his hurt, but shall be avenged.

Thus far is a citation from the well-known *Synopsis*. A few words may be added in further explanation. The "self-will in lust" of Lamech is seen in his wilful departure from the institution of marriage in Paradise (Gen. 2:24). He acted in self-gratification in having two wives. He also, as pointed out, avenged himself, and that at the cost of the life of his enemy. The two forms of evil, on account of which God afterwards sent the flood, viz., corruption and violence (see Gen. 6:12, 13), are both combined in Lamech. Hence he acknowledges that he had slain a man to his wounding and hurt; for these things must bring down the judgment of God. But Lamech also, as descended from Cain, is a type of the Jew of a later day; and, inasmuch as he is introduced before the "heir is raised up" -- that is Seth, who becomes a figure of Christ (for it is in His days, in the kingdom, that men will call upon the name of Jehovah) -- there can be but little doubt that the sin of Lamech is a foreshadowing (as also the sin of Cain) of the wickedness of the Jews in rejecting and crucifying Christ. In this light all is plain. The sin was great when the Jewish nation by wicked hands crucified and slew their Messiah; and it was most surely to their "wounding," and to their "hurt"; for to this day they abide under the

judgment of God on account of His blood. (See Matt. 27:25.) Notwithstanding, great as has been their iniquity, God preserves them, and avenges, and will avenge them "seventy-and-sevenfold" on any nation that may seek to destroy them from off the face of the earth.<sup>63</sup>

### *Some General Remarks on Cain's World*

(From J. N. Darby.)

We may try to make the best of the world; but we must all feel that something has come in, something that has brought in death and judgment. Happiness cannot be associated with sin, any more than sin can be associated with God. As for man, though he seeks to buoy himself up with his sins, and to delude himself with the lie of Satan, sink he must, sooner or later, under the power of the sin and death that has come in. He is just spending his energies to make the world pleasant without God, and himself comfortable and rich in it, to die out of it.

The world he cannot keep. He may build a city for himself, as Cain did (Gen. 4:17), and call it after his own name (Cain called his city after the name of his son); but it will be with him as David speaks,

Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. Nevertheless man being in honor abideth not; he is like the beasts that perish. This their way is their folly; yet their posterity approve their saying. Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them (Psa. 49).

Cain did not like the sense of the wrath of God lying upon him. Gone out from the presence of Jehovah (Gen. 4:16), he had become so great in the earth that he could build a city. Man never likes to be in the truth of his condition. Cain likes not to be "a fugitive and a vagabond," and he tries to build a city, and he does build a city, in the endeavor to make the world as pleasant as he can without God. It might be said, What harm was there in building a city? In the first place there would never have been the necessity for this in paradise. Moreover it was a proof of insensibility as to this sin against God; it showed quiet contentment under the effect of that punishment which at first he had felt was greater than he could bear; it was the last expression of total alienation of heart and affection from God. Driven out from the presence of God, he sets about to establish himself. He seeks for himself a home, not with God in heaven, but on the earth, from which God had pronounced him "cursed." He makes himself master of a city, where God had made him "a vagabond."

And mark further the faculty man has of making himself happy in his

62. See *Types and Symbols of Scripture*, available from Present Truth Publishers.

63. *The Christian Friend* 1888, pp. 163, 164.



estrangement from God. We find amongst the family of Cain not only “the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle” (Gen. 4:20), but “the father of such as handle the harp and the organ” (Gen. 4:21), and “the instructor of ever artificer in brass and iron” (Gen. 4:22). Now there is nothing wrong in working brass and iron; neither is there any harm in sweet sounds (we read in the book of Revelation of harpers in heaven); but what Cain was doing was this -- he was making the world pleasant without God.

These are the efforts of man, who has settled himself down in a world where judgment has placed him, and who is trying to make himself as happy and the world as pleasant as he can without God, till death and judgment overtake him. If I saw a man who had committed some wicked crime against his father, the next day playing on musical instruments, should I say there was no harm in that? Such was Cain's world. And is it not like your <sup>64</sup> world? Is there any difference between your soul and Cain's world? Is it a better world because God's Son has been crucified in it? Has that act on the part of man made it more acceptable to God? (because that has happened since the days of Cain) Where is the difference? They had their “harps and organs”; and so have you. They had their “artificers in brass and iron”; and so have you. It was Cain's world then away from God, and it is Cain's world still. The like tree produces like fruit. Man is carrying on the world by himself, and for himself, endeavoring to keep God out of sight, as much as possible to do without Him, lest He should get at his conscience and make him miserable.

Can you find any difference between Cain's world without God and your world without God? You may object that you are not without God, that you are called by the name of Christ -- are Christians, and have a religion also. Cain had a religion. He was a religious man, as religious as Abel. But he had no love to God; he had no faith. He was a religious man, but not a godly man.

It is a strange introduction to this picture, the setting forth of Cain as a worshiper, and a worshiper moreover of the true God. We read,

And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Jehovah (Gen. 4:2, 3).

There is no mention made of false gods before the flood. Cain was a worshiper of the one living and true God. Soon after the flood there were idolaters; and then God called out a separate people as witnesses of His character to make good His name and grace. But there is not any mention made of false gods before Josh.

64. The believer is “not of the world”; his home and citizenship are in heaven, and his walk down here on the earth should be in the distinct consciousness, and in the distinct confession, that he “seeks a country” (Heb. 11:14). This is of the last importance: anything of the earth is of that which rejected Christ.

24:6-8, “Your fathers worshiped other gods”: a fresh crime, a fresh snare of the enemy, which called for new measures on the part of God. Satan had come and slipped himself in between man and God, and was the one that was really worshiped, though under the name of gods; and the call of Abram was the call and witness of “the most high God.”

Your “artificers in brass and iron “ are worshipers of the true God. So was Cain. And he took some pains too. He offered that which he had been toiling for in “the sweat of his brow.” He was a “tiller of the ground,” and he “brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Jehovah.” He did not bring that which cost him nothing (2 Sam. 24:24); nay, his worship cost more of toil than that of Abel. He came in the way of nature, offering the fruit of his toil and labor; and you have done the same. This is ever the character of false worship. Religiousness does not take a man out of the character of Cain; it the rather brings him into it. So that you have not got one step in that way out of the character God has marked as that of Cain. ♦ <sup>65</sup>

## *Cain, Sin, and Crime*

Concerning Cain's crime and punishment, the following from J. G. Bellett is helpful:

There is the light of righteousness or holiness. But the refusal of it is not without remedy. In that light the Lord God had come into the garden and called, “Adam, where art thou?” Adam could not stand it; for he had sinned. It was intolerable to him. He had come short of that glory. He retreats from it. And then the Lord God shines in another light. The promise is made. The character of the glory is changed. God seats Himself in a light which the sinner can approach, and, believing, Adam comes forth.

This was the light which Cain despised, the light of salvation, the light of the promise, the light in which God shines before men outside the garden. And Cain is therefore cursed as Adam had not been. As it is said of another generation, “Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish.”

All this is the solemn history of the first unbeliever. But the treasury of corrupt nature that was in him spends itself in further ways of wickedness. In him was rising that spring which was to give out “its superfluity of naughtiness.” He lies after all this, and justifies himself. “I know not,” says he; “am I my brother's keeper?” For “the lusts of his father he would do”; and when the devil “speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”

All this, however, and even more than this, was man, and not Cain merely. It was the ruined heart of man exposing itself. And because it was

65. “Cain, His World, and His Worship, *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 12:317-320.

this, because it was the common nature that was thus disclosing itself, the Lord takes the judgment of it away from man. “Whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold”; for none are without sin.

Thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself.

All are in the like condemnation. No one can take up the stone and cast it at another. And in order to express this great principle of truth, and that God alone has either title or competency to deal with sin, the Lord will not allow any man to touch the fratricide. By this divine writing on the case, all are to go out convicted, one by one, and leave the sinner with God (John 8).

For the ends of government, when government in the earth becomes the divine purpose, it shall be said, Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed (Gen. 9:6). But this is not so as yet. And for the teaching of the common pravity, that all of us may be humbled by the common conviction, that “we have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” not one of the whole human family is allowed to touch this wicked Cain. And so to this day, when government has been divinely set up, it is not sin that it deals with. *Crimes*, or offences against public order, and *wrongs* done to individuals, may be judged by man; but to take vengeance on *sin* would be the assuming of personal guiltlessness. “He that is *without sin* among you, let him first cast a stone at her.” God has to deal with sin *alone*.

### ***Genesis 4:25-26: A New Line Appointed***

Gen. 4 gives us the origin and history of Cain's line, but before we come to the next section (Gen. 5), The Word of God tells us of God's acting in sovereign grace in view of this development of the world in self-willed departure from God (Rom. 1:20, 21).<sup>67</sup> Thus, after looking at the history of Cain's line, what is for Jehovah? Eve's expectation according to nature produced Cain -- only evil. We now have the appointed man, Seth, brought before us. Instead of Eve's “I have acquired a man with Jehovah” (Gen. 4:2), we have here, I suggest, Adam naming the child, and the recognition that the sovereign *Elohim* had stepped in in grace, having appointed one in the place of Abel. Abel speaks of the first man killing the second man, and in the ways of God Christ was slain by the Jews -- using wicked hands of the Gentiles (Acts 2:23) (and Pilate's washing his hands did not relieve him of guilt). Thus, the world is guilty of the crime. Seth points to Christ in resurrection.

The seed of the serpent (Cain) thought to have gotten rid of the hated seed of the woman (Abel). But God's purpose to glorify Himself in Christ, in the

heavenly and earthly spheres, will not be thwarted. His appointments ensure this. Thus Seth (meaning appointed), continues the line. This appointment is like Christ in resurrection. And from Seth flows a godly line.

Moreover, Seth named his son Enosh, meaning mortal man, or fallen man. The correct recognition of the true case of man's state before God is most important. “Then people began to call on the name of *Jehovah*.” Thus is dependency expressed by the godly while the line of Cain walks in independence of God.

Those of Seth's line do not form a called-out people, of course; *calling* began with Abraham. However, Seth's line is distinctly marked and were for the pleasure of Jehovah. What is for the pleasure of Jehovah has its source in Himself, as does all that is suitable to Him.

So we see the parents of Seth acknowledging dependence in the place where sin had brought them. They understood that God acts sovereignly. Therefore they rightly named Seth, and Seth in *his* family acknowledged the true state of fallen man by naming his son Enosh. This is the way of blessing for all saints whatever position they may occupy in the unfolding of God's purpose to glorify Himself in Christ.

66. *The Patriarchs*, London: Morrish, pp. 23-25, n.d.

67. Perhaps it is well to say that though Rom. 1 is specifically about the post-flood world, we have the principles of the world traced in Gen. 4.

## Chapter 4

### *The Godly -- Maintaining Separation: Gen. 5*

We have just considered how at the end of Gen. 4, Elohim acted sovereignly in appointing Seth for Abel, in the face of the world's development away from Himself. In Gen. 5 the line is traced from Adam to Noah and his three sons. From Adam to Noah there are 10 generations. Scripture calls particular attention to the seventh in this line: Enoch, concerning whom there is comparatively much to say, as with Noah when we consider the Noahic Covenant.

We have considered the case of Cain killing Abel as the first man killing the second man; and that the Jews, by Gentile hands, and as representative of the fallen, first man, killed the second man, the Lord out of heaven. Seth is Christ in resurrection. To Christ belongs a godly line.<sup>68</sup> In Enoch we see reflected the rapture of the saints before the judgment of the flood. In Noah we see a preserved remnant through the coming judgments in the earth. For those who are instructed according to the Word of God in the NT concerning what lies before us, these shadows of what is coming can be seen. For a false system like Covenantism, all this will be rejected, if not mocked.

At the end of this chapter there is a chart of pre-deluvian chronology. I do not accept the notion that Gen. 5 is a genealogy and therefore not a chronology.

### *Genesis 5:1-5*

(From W. Kelly)

... Now suppose the different-document hypothesis a fact, and this chapter had ever followed Gen. 1 - 2:3, as the immediate sequel, how insipid such a continuation as the opening of Gen. 5! We say nothing of omitting such all important particulars as are ignored between the two, as we have already noticed. If on the contrary we receive these scriptures as they are, the new departure on ground similar to the earliest section most suitably calls for a tracing down from Adam through Seth to diluvian times, just as we have it. The intervening history which brought out God not simply as such, but as Jehovah Elohim, and then in the usual style of Jehovah, where special relationship is treated with rebellion against it, made it all the more requisite to resume the genealogical line from its source till God judged creation.

68. While saints who compose the assembly of God are part of a godly line, the assembly has its own distinctives. To make the whole of the godly line from Adam to the end to be the church is utterly wrong. All saints are "saints" and are "just" and are born of God, but such designations do not in themselves constitute the church. Commonalities do not erase distinctives.

Even here it is far from mere repetition, which it might seem to the careless reader. For Gen. 1:26 says that God said, Let us make man in our image after our likeness, and reiterates not His "likeness" but "image" twice in v. 27. Here it is said that, in the day of His creating man, He made him in the likeness of God. Both were true, but they are not the same statement; and an imitator or later redactor being uninspired would rather have made them identical. He Who knew the whole truth could and did use each appropriately; as we may see for the form here employed, when v. 3 comes before us. But the shade of difference is undeniable, understand it or not as we may.

Further, here only are we told that God "called their name Adam (man) in the day they were created." It was Adam before the fall who called the woman Ishah, because she was taken out of Ish. It was Adam, after the fall but also the revelation of the woman's Seed, who called his wife's name Eve (Chavvah), because she was the mother of all living. Unbelief might have naturally called her Death, as the mother of all dying. But Adam looked in faith for her Seed Who entitled him and them to better things than he and she had any right to. But here it is the racial name, common to both, which God called in the day of their creation. How wise is every change, every difference, embodied in God's word! And how foolish the incredulity that can see nothing beyond the discrepancies of different hands, none of them inspired in any true sense!<sup>69</sup>

... When Elohim made man, Gen. 1:26, He proposed it to be in His image, after His likeness. So He created him in His image, as it is said twice (v. 27). And we have already seen, that, as likeness resembles, image represents: a distinction which it is of moment to seize, as it holds everywhere in scripture. The "likeness" consisted of qualities corresponding to God, as no other nature on earth had; the image was man's place in presenting Him to others {i.e., representative}, as not even angels of heaven did or could. As man was made upright, so he was called to dominion over the lower creation. Angels fulfil His word and do His pleasure, yet they only minister, never rule. But now that the head of the race was fallen, he "began in his likeness, after his image." It was in his own likeness, not God's; and it was not Cain but Seth that is said to be "after his image." Adam was represented by Seth, though he could not be said to be begotten after Elohim's likeness but Adam's. Yet it still remains true that man, even though fallen, is the image and glory of God (1 Cor. 11:7). Hence the guilt of murder demanded death, for it was the extinction of what represented God on earth, even when man was no longer after His likeness (Gen. 9:6). The comparison of our v. 1 makes it all the plainer: "in the likeness of God made He him" (Adam). The "image" of God was the emphatic point in Gen. 1:27, and even in v. 26 takes precedence, however important the "likeness" which sin destroyed for Seth, whom Adam "began in his

69. *The Bible Treasury*, 20:2, 3.

likeness, after his image.” The race is fallen.

What progeny Adam had during this early time we are not told, but simply that his “days after he begat Seth were eight hundred; and he begat sons and daughters.” How little is said of the line of faith, especially if we compare the striking picture which the preceding chapter furnishes of the world’s rapid progress in all that life which nature deems worth living!

“And all the days which Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died” (v. 5). There is not the slightest sound reason to doubt the longevity here attributed to antediluvian man. Man was made to live, not to die; his death came in through sin, The truth of life will appear when the Second man takes the world-kingdom (Rev. 11). Those who live righteously when He reigns shall continue through the thousand years, none dying save under curse for rebellion; and the righteous, as scriptural principles imply, are at last changed, without passing through death, into everlasting incorruption; as Christians are entitled to expect who are alive and are left to the coming of the Lord, before His displayed kingdom begins (1 Thess. 4, 1 Cor. 15). Lengthened as the span of years may seem, compared with the measure which the prayer of Moses (Psa. 110) lays down as the ordinary rule of human life, they were but “days” of Adam or any other here recorded. After Adam they were begotten, and they begot; they lived and they died. This sums up the history of most; but of this more when we review the account of others, as well as the exceptions.<sup>70</sup>

### *Genesis 5:6-20*

(From W. Kelly)

Josephus and certain Arabian writers, quoted by Hottinger, allege details of the ancient worthies here enumerated; which are not worth repeating, because they are destitute of real authority. The inspired writer all the more impressively gives the same simple outline of these lives so prolonged. Two exceptions occur of most notable character which claim appropriate heed in their places. The general line is all that now comes before us. Divine purpose is the key to both. It explains alike the mention which looks so meager, and the special record in the cases of Enoch and Noah. It accounts for the omission of all particulars in the general genealogy beyond the direct line of the chosen people, and so especially of the Messiah, God’s salvation, light for revelation of Gentiles, and glory of His people Israel. The rest of their progeny, however numerous or distinguished in a human way, are merely merged in “sons and daughters” they begot . . .

It is in vain for men to decry the longevity of the men before the deluge, and,

though diminishing, after it. Oriental and other nations long retained the tradition, however disguised, pointing to the primitive facts. To argue that it is contrary to the known laws of physiology is only the resort of narrow-minded and ignorant unbelief. For God if He pleased could easily by change of conditions reduce man’s life from 900 years to 90. It is a question of fact for which His word vouches. Nor is there any need to labor on behalf of the plain statements of scripture; for man unfallen never partook of the tree of life; and, when fallen, he was driven out lest he should. The gradual experience of men since the deluge is of no validity against the immensely greater age of mankind as scripture avers before that great event, whatever the physical or secondary causes may have been before or after, as they are presumptuous who deny it.

We are not in a position to ascertain where God has said so little; but there were reasons we can appreciate why in the early history of mankind their prolonged span of life was of incalculable moment. It was in their high interest that the origin of the race should be attested, as well as of the earth and heavens, and of all creatures in them; still higher was it to hear of the fall and its solemn results; highest of all, to know that He, alike the Creator and in moral relationship with man, had interposed in a way not more righteous than graciously revealing a suffering Deliverer, the woman’s Seed, to destroy the enemy: the victory of good over evil for all who believe as well as creation. What can be conceived of such great weight for God and man as to convey aright this pregnant revelation of grace, and to those so immediately concerned as the fallen race, or at least such as had ears to hear? And how was a revelation as yet oral to reach the family of Adam effectually save by the longevity which characterized that early day? For Methuselah lived to tell Shem what Adam communicated from God Himself, and Shem lived to repeat all to Abraham and Isaac: <sup>71</sup> facts and prospects briefly expressed, of plain meaning, and profoundly important.

Then again one can understand how favorable the lengthened span of life in those days was to carrying out God’s word in blessing the first pair, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over fish of the sea, and over bird of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. Thus not only is the fact unquestionable for all that respect revelation, but the wisdom, not to say necessity, of that exceptional condition, is pretty apparent.

The fact is, so far from the truth are those who judge solely from present experience, that man was naturally made at the outset to live. Death was sin’s wages, not then a physiological necessity. God had provided the means for prolonging his life if obedient; but deprived him of that means peremptorily when

70. *The Bible Treasury*, 20: 18.

71. {Meanwhile idolatry had grown while Shem lived. The ungodly did not like to retain God in their knowledge (Rom. 1:21).}

fallen. For what greater misery, or moral anomaly, than an everlasting life of sin? Death therefore is in no way a debt of nature but of sin; and here we read its knell for each even of those who stood aloof from the evil way of Cain, the ancestors not of Israel only but in due time of the Messiah. Of Adam, so of Seth, Kenan, Mahalaleel, Jared, it was alike said "he died."<sup>72</sup> Now that man is a sinner, it is the one event that happens to all in the seen world; in the unseen there will be another still more solemn. "For it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this judgment" (Heb. 9:27).

How sad, were this all! Not so however; it is only the first man . . .<sup>73</sup>

### ***Enoch: Type of Expecting the Blessed Hope: Genesis 5:21-24***

Examining the chart of the Chronology from Adam to the Flood at the end of this chapter makes plain the fact that regarding those named in the godly line outlived Enoch, except Adam, and Noah was born after Enoch was translated. No doubt there were many persons that knew Enoch and heard what he said regarding judgment on the wicked (Jude 14, 15).

We are told that Enoch walked with God for 300 years after he had begotten Methushelah (his firstborn) and begot sons and daughters (Gen. 5:22). There is much in this brief statement.

It has been noticed in some young Christians the sobering effect that the birth of a child has on them. A sense of Christian responsibility becomes deepened in them as a new life is entrusted into their care. Every child of God ought to have a deep sense of responsibility, at all times, yet this does occur and it gives joy to see it happen. Consequent on the birth of his firstborn, we read of Enoch walking with God for the 300 years until translated.

He was a family man for this 300 years and as a family man he walked with God. Nothing deterred him in that blessed course. It is something to ponder and take stock of ourselves.

He was a man *devoted* to Him with whom he walked. He was devoted in this

way steadily -- for 300 years.

He was a *consistent* man, walking steadily, not in a crooked way, not in a self-serving way.

He was a *separated* man, separated from ungodliness, from the corruption and violence continually growing until the flood of judgment must come and sweep it away.

He was a *God-pleaser*, not a man pleaser. Oh, how man-pleasing gets among God's people. The Lord Jesus never pleased Himself (Rom. 15:3). Of Enoch it was said:

By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before [his] translation he has the testimony, that he had pleased God (Heb. 11:5).

He was an *instructed* man in the mind of God. In fact, this was manifested when he named his firstborn. The name Methushelah means "When he is dead it shall be sent." Shortly after he died, the flood came. It seems therefore that Enoch did not expect to be in the judgment he prophesied, nor did he expect this son to be in that judgment. He did not set a date for anything.

In Jude we are told that he was the seventh from Adam. Yes, that is not the Enoch in the line of Cain, Cain's son. Suppose Jude had not said the seventh from Adam, would you have supposed that, reading Gen. 4, 5, you would come to the conclusion that Cain's son was prophesying such coming judgment? We Christians need to remember and practice what our Lord said in prayer to His Father:

I have given them thy word, and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, as I am not of the world (John 17:14).

Enoch is a type of those who shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:15-18) before the Lord comes in glory to execute judgments in the earth. Noah points to those who shall be preserved for the millennial earth.<sup>74</sup>

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74. The following remark by J. G. Bellett concerning the NT reference to Noah and Enoch bears on this difference in types:

. . . but it does seem to me that the Lord, *speaking of the Jewish election*, takes Noah for His text or type (Matt. 24); while the apostle, addressing the Church, takes his language the rather from the translation of Enoch (1 Thess. 4:17 ; 2 Thess. 2:1). For the Jewish remnant, like Noah, will be carried through the judgment -- the saints now gathering will be in the sphere out of which the judgment is to be poured. For we are taught again and again, as I have noticed before, that exercise of power in that day, in company with the Lord, is part of the glory of the saints. See Col. 3:4; Rev. 2:26; 17:14; 19:14. (*The Patriarchs*, London: Morrish, p44, note, n.d.)

72. {The eight-fold repetition of "and he died" surely denotes a character of walk proper to the godly line. It points to a recognition that the world is not our permanent home. A saint should realize this in a practical way in the soul, being exercised to have a walk that is for Christ's glory.

"Only one life, t'will soon be past;

Only what's done for Christ will last."

It is not merely being busy for Christ, but being here for Him, displaying the resurrection-life of Christ in us, for He is in us!}

73. *The Bible Treasury*, 20:33, 34.

(The following article is from *The Girdle of Truth* 3:105-114.)

## *Enoch*

Abel, the example of righteousness and of its fate in the world, we have seen cut off by the hand of violence, while Cain the murderer, “who was of that wicked one and slew his brother,” lived on and became the progenitor of a race distinguished by all the characteristics and aims of the men of this world. They were “the men of the world, who have their portion in this life”; the “men of progress” of their day. And accordingly they are celebrated for their energy in the building of cities, and the arts and embellishments of life have their birth-place amongst them. But faith looks to the future and unseen world, and expects the triumph of righteousness here only as the result of the judgment of the wicked who have corrupted the earth. Hence the posterity of Seth are marked only by the principle of their separation from the apostasy of Cain and his family. (“Then began men to call on the name of the Lord,” or to call themselves by the name of the Lord.) And besides this testimony, their history is only a record that they lived their days on earth, and died, leaving no monuments for their fame or traces of their greatness on the earth. Their “record was on high.”

Enoch, “the seventh from Adam,” was of this family, and is distinguished by his separation unto God, and by his testimony of the coming of the Lord to judge the wicked of the earth, and by the victory over death which closed his walk with God on earth and was the crowning triumph of his faith.

Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God took him.

By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

Adam, as the result of his sin, was driven out from the presence of the Lord; Cain in his worldly-mindedness voluntarily left that presence; but Enoch’s record is, that he walked with God -- not in a paradise as Adam, but in the midst of the increasing evil of the world and in the common every-day circumstances of ordinary life. He walked with God on earth, and God took him to dwell with Himself in heaven. Blessed and triumphant issue of a life of faith and of a separated walk with God!

One effect of Enoch’s walk with God is seen in his being made the depository of His counsels, as Abraham also was in a later day.

The Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?

But Lot, who was indeed delivered from the judgment of Sodom, which was revealed to Abraham and awakened in him the spirit of intercession, was not near enough to the Lord to receive His communications -- those blessed pledges of His confidence as well as tokens of His condescension and grace. Enoch testified of the coming of the Lord, and of the judgment it would bring upon the wickedness

by which he was surrounded, and from which, in spirit and conduct, he was separated by the power of faith that associated him in his walk with Him, concerning whose coming and judgment he witnessed. Though, doubtless, the flood was the immediate and proximate judgment on which his testimony bore, the Spirit of the Lord shows it reached beyond this to the Lord’s coming with His saints to judge that evil and apostasy at the close of the present dispensation,<sup>75</sup> of which the epistle of Jude so solemnly speaks. Unlike Noah, whose faith carried him through the judgment of the old world, Enoch’s faith rested in the hope of translation from the scene of evil on which the judgment was about to fall. He sees the judgment coming, and warns of its approach, saying,

Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgment, &c.;

but the rest of his own heart is found in a daily walk with God, in moral separation from all that was bringing on the judgment, and in the certain hope of being with God when it was executed.

So conversant are we with corruption and decay, and all the consequences of sin, that there is something wonderful in the thought of being taken, without the intervention of death, in our own persons, and living, from the scenes of this world, into the presence of God in that world where He manifests Himself apart from all evil in the goodness of His own eternal nature. But this is the very hope -- and form of its accomplishment -- which is set before us in the reception of the gospel. We are converted to wait for God’s Son from heaven.

We shall not all sleep.

We which are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Perfect is that victory which Christ the Lord of life has gained over death, so that He can say,

I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die.

Still, to be effective in the soul, Enoch’s hope must be coupled with Enoch’s walk. Who can question that the practical effect of those words, “so shall we ever be with the Lord,” is neutralized too often in the heart, by the lack of those affections toward the Lord, and of that confidence in Him which are alone awakened by an habitual walk with Him? How can the heart long for the presence of God in heaven that is not at home in His presence habitually through grace on earth?

But there are two things which are essential to a walk with God (for I am

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75. {The phrase “at the end of the present dispensation” is not quite accurate.}

supposing that the heart is established with grace): a knowledge of His character and will as revealed to faith, and an apprehension according to the judgment of God of the moral character of the scene around. If I am to “walk with God,” I must have a heart at rest in His presence through grace, and also affections and desires which can find their satisfaction in the known and apprehended character of God -- a heart that can delight in the contemplation of His goodness, and that can take pleasure in intercourse with Him as the eternal portion of the soul. Then also there is the reflective influence of this walk with God in the soul’s moral judgment of things.

If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth.

All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

Consequently a walk with God necessitates a separation in heart and spirit from the course of this world. The action of divine grace which puts the soul in relationship with God at first, is characterized as a deliverance from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father (Gal. 1:4); or, in the words of Christ, “I have chosen you out of the world” (John 15:19), and never can the subsequent walk with God, in the scene from which grace has delivered us, be in contradiction to this fundamental principle. And surely nothing can be more interesting than to see a man surrounded by evil and corruption, and in the midst of the trials and difficulties of common every-day life, with his heart so raised above everything around him, as to show that his resources are in God Himself, and his whole spirit, and conduct, and ways, molded and regulated by his walk with God, and by a reference to His will. For we must remember that in this testimony concerning Enoch and his faith, it was not that his person and worship were accepted, as in the case of Abel, but that his walk was sanctified and molded according to the perfect will of God.

For before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God.

His faith was not exercised merely with regard to the exigencies and circumstances of this life -- in which lower walk of faith, alas! so many fail -- but in raising his soul above these circumstances so as to be able to walk in harmony of spirit with God. And yet, on the other hand, there is the simple record of his earthly associations, in his having had sons and daughters, that we might not fail to see the one side and the other of our walk in this world with God. And it is observable that the declaration in Heb. 11:5, that Enoch, “before his translation, had this testimony that he pleased God,” gives occasion to the statement,

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Or, in other words, the faith which leads to a walk with God is not conversant with abstract truths, but with God Himself; and it leaves not the soul at a distance

from God, but brings into living, habitual contact with His infinite goodness, so that His being, and character, and moral dealings, are living and eternal realities.



## *Enoch Translated Before the Judgment on the Earth*

(From *The Girdle of Truth* 9:91-94.)

. . . Enoch, the seventh from Adam, is born, and he occupies the place of God’s witness for 300 years. He “walked with God” for 300 years, “and he was not, for God took him.” He was known as a prophet, warning of coming judgments, and in the spirit of John in the Apocalypse, testified of the judgments coming on men, because of their growing ungodliness. From God’s side he viewed the state of things on earth, and as Abel had testified how approach to God was to be obtained and acceptance known, so Enoch in acceptance (the word “walked” is synonymous with “well-pleasing” -- see Heb. 11) with God looks on the earth, and proclaims through His Spirit, in which he is himself in fellowship, what must befall man on earth, because of his departure from God. Looking from God’s side and knowing in himself what was compatible with God in His holiness and truth, he saw clearly that nothing less than terrible judgment could vindicate it, even what is fully depicted in Rev. 19. His was a glorious testimony. He walked with God for 300 years and proclaimed to men the judgment which, as worthy of God, should await them. *With* God and *for* God on the earth, he passes away from it as one beyond the power of death. His testimony is sealed by the announcement, now through his translation made for the first time, even that the heavens are opened to man, that he is to have a place, an inheritance *there*, even as Adam in his first estate had on the earth. The seventh generation from Adam is chosen to announce the glad tidings that God will deliver from death; yea that light and incorruptibility have come even now. The supremacy of grace over the penalty of man is declared. If Abel had died at the hands of his brother because he was accepted of God, Enoch is enabled through the same grace to show himself victorious over death, as Stephen did in principle, and he “is not, for God took him.” What instruction and interest does his testimony in every way convey to us!

Enoch’s son, whom he named Methusalah,<sup>76</sup> lived to the very year of the flood. Methusalah’s son Lamech lived to within five years of it. None from Seth

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76. The word Methusalah signifies, “he dies and it is sent,” or “at his death he sends it,” thus giving moral confirmation of the chronological fact that his life, which was 969 years, reached to the very verge of the judgment, which Enoch his father doubtless, foresaw, when he thus named him at his birth, the very year he began to “walk with God” (see Gen. 5:21, 22).

down died before the translation of Enoch. We may conceive the effect that this increased light must have had on this living chain. The story of Abel was part of the history of each on earth, but the translation of Enoch presented a new and wondrous consummation to all their hopes and desires. What a revelation it must have been to those who must have felt the judgment on man, now the more aggravated since the unnatural death of Abel. Adam is now dead, but all his posterity in God's line do not pass away until after the translation. Even Adam lived to within fifty-seven years of it. What a day it was! And what strange joy it must have diffused among the godly, and what full and gracious unfoldings of His mercy for God to vouchsafe at that early day!

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Noah, a type of the future godly Jewish remnant, will be considered in the next chapter.

### *Genesis 5:25-32*

(From W. Kelly)

It is but little that is said of Adam's line through Seth. They lived many days on the earth; they begat sons and daughters, besides the one who continued the succession; and they died. This gives great significance to all that is said beyond. Thus we saw the strong moral difference expressed in Seth's case compared with Adam. But the vivid contrast appeared in Enoch, the witness and manifest enjoyer of life which shone out in his walk, and superior to the power of death, as it pleased God to prove, when his comparatively tried pilgrimage closed in a sort altogether heavenly.

His son was Methuselah.

And Methuselah lived a hundred and eighty-seven years and begat Lamech; and Methuselah lived after he begat Lamech seven hundred and eighty-two years, and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years; and he died" (Gen. 5:25-27).

In his instance it might have seemed that man was exceptionally to reach a millennium. But not so. This is reserved for the reign of the Last Adam; and He will make it good throughout His world-kingdom as the rule, and not the exception, for such as welcome Him when He appears to reign in righteousness. Mighty and beneficent the change in that day, when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea! {Isa. 11:9} It is in vain to reason from the first Adam experience, the prolific source of unbelief.

He is Jehovah Who deigned to become a shoot out of the stock of Jesse and a branch out of his roots {Isa. 11:1} shall hear fruit in days to come; in virtue of Him shall Jacob

take root; Israel shall blossom and bud; and they shall fill the face of the world with fruit {Isa. 27:6}.

For in truth He also is the root of Jesse.

And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse: standing as an ensign of the peoples: it shall the nations seek; and his resting place shall be in glory {Isa. 11:10}.

Then, when he that had the power of death is bound, and the Conqueror reigns over the earth, man shall fill his days. And Jehovah will rejoice in Jerusalem and joy in His people; and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying {Isa. 65:19}. There shall be no more thenceforth an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the youth shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed {Isa. 65:20}. And as Christ is the key to our understanding the scriptures now, so will He be the One in that day to put down evil in power and righteousness, and to bless man subject to His scepter.

And Lamech lived a hundred and eighty-two years and begat a son; and he called his name Noah, saying, This [one] shall comfort us concerning our work and concerning toil of our hands because of the ground which Jehovah hath cursed. And Lamech lived after he begat Noah five hundred and ninety-five years, and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy-seven years; and he died (Gen. 5:28-31).

Here again the Holy Spirit pauses on the occasion of Noah's birth; and his father was made to utter an oracle about his son. The prophetic spirit is evident in Lamech's utterances. <sup>77</sup> Noah he recognized as the witness of comfort for man's work and toiling hands. And so Noah is the type of Him Who will govern and bless the habitable world to come, after it has passed through His judgment of those that defile or destroy the earth. Lamech acknowledges the righteous dealing of Jehovah no less than Enoch does in his prophecy recorded by Jude. But the difference is characteristic. Enoch speaks openly of the Lord's coming with myriads of His saints; for a heavenly portion only adds to the sense of coming judgment of all, and not only in their works of ungodliness which they ungodlily wrought but in the hard things which ungodly sinners spoke against Him. Lamech was given, though more darkly, to see in Noah the pledge of consolation for the earth, after the judgment of the quick has done its work.

They are the complement one of the other; and both look on to a day not yet

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77. {We have previously noted that there were two Enoch's, one in each line. The first was in the line of the first man and the other Enoch, the seventh from Adam, was in the godly line, the line of the second man. There is a similar case concerning the two Lamech's. The first was in Cain's line, the first man's line, the seventh from Adam. This Lamech is in the godly line and is the ninth from Adam. "First that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual."}

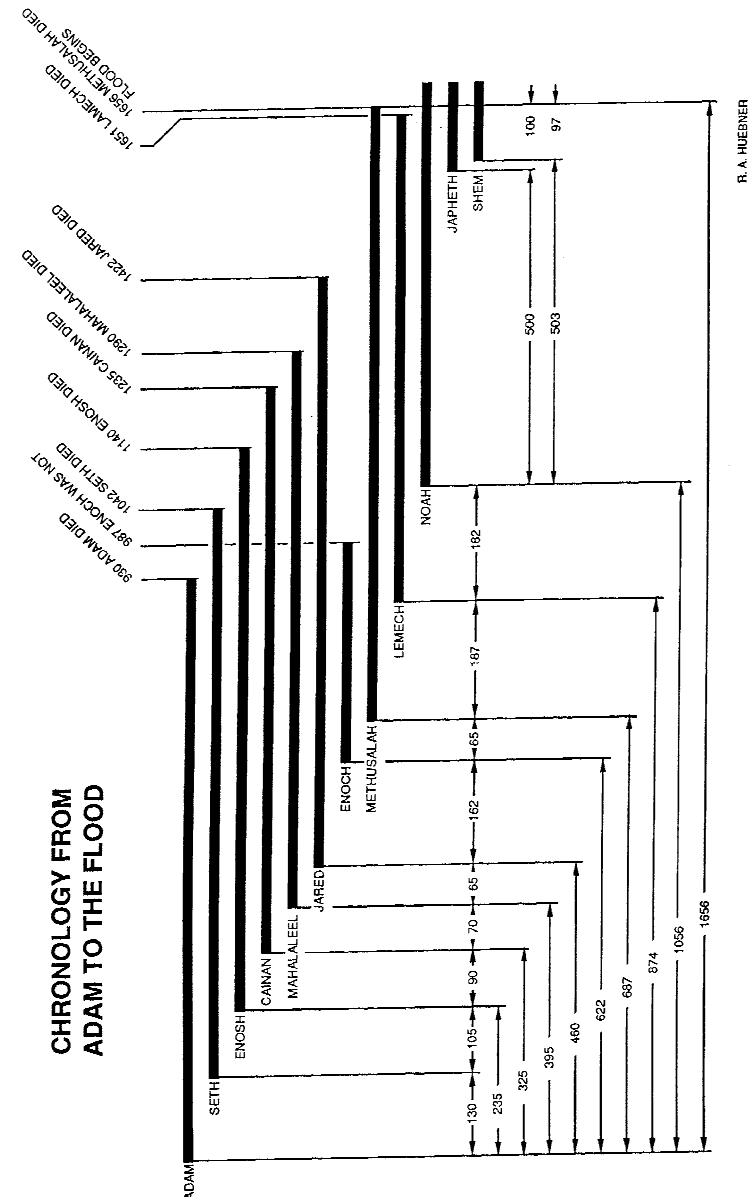


come ; for a judgment in providence makes nothing perfect more than the law did. They are shadows of what is coming, and not only of destruction at the Lord's hand, but of comfort to follow for this toiling earth. It is well to accept the pledge; it is better still not to rest in that measure, but to await the full blessing Christ alone is competent to bestow. Then Jehovah's work will appear to His servants, and His glory upon their children; then the beauty of Jehovah their God shall be upon His people, and He will establish the work of their hands upon them; yea He will establish the work of their hands. No doubt to share Christ's position on high in the Father's house is incomparably more, and this we shall have who share His rejection; but it is wrong to overlook and worse to deny the blessing He will also pour on the earth, and on the ancient people, and on all peoples, in that day of glory.

Nor is there any question that on Christ's first advent and on His infinite work of atonement all depends for blessing to souls now, and for glory in the heavens and the earth at that day, because therein God was glorified in Him even as to sin, the otherwise insuperable block in the way. But while owning this fully and finding now in Him life, peace, joy, liberty, relationship with God as children and union with Himself our glorified Head, through the Holy Ghost given, the more ought we to be freed from every hindrance and testify with might from above His coming, not only to take us on high, but to execute judgment on a guilty world and a guiltier Christendom, and to bless the earth gloriously and Israel and all the nations; and so much the more, because we see the day approaching.

We need not dwell on Noah more now, but just observe what we are told in v. 32: "And Noah was five hundred years old [son of 500 years], and Noah begat Shem, Ham; and Japheth." Shem is first named, not because he was eldest, which Japheth was, but as in the direct line of the blessings of Israel.<sup>78</sup>

## Chronology from Adam to the Flood



78. *The Bible Treasury*, 20:65, 66.

## Chapter 5

### *The Judgment on Man by the Deluge*

#### *The Ways of God and the Deluge*

There is a very clear distinction between the ways of God before and after the deluge. Since the fall, there has always been a people of God, and the world of the ungodly. God has never left Himself without a witness. The prophecies of Enoch were the instruction of the people of God in those days, and the hope of the faithful in our days. Nevertheless, in those times, there was no manifested judgment, no nation, no external call, which formed believers or an elect people into a body acknowledged before God; and there was consequently no development of the principles of the character of God. It was a fallen race; and the fallen nature of man showed itself, and followed its course in spite of the witness of God; and God did nothing until (the evil being intolerable) He swept them from before His face, by a judgment which none could escape, save the little band in the ark; and the world, swallowed up in the waters, perished. God “repented that he had made man,” for “the earth was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence,” and God destroyed it.<sup>79</sup>

In the epoch from Adam fallen to Noah, God had left man to his evil acquisition of the knowledge of good and evil, with its attendant acquired conscience -- a bad conscience, as we have seen. There had also been acquired “sin in the flesh” as Rom. 8:3 calls the principle of evil that became resident in the soul consequent upon the fall. The trial of the fallen, first man during this epoch -- to show that he was not recoverable -- is given in Gen. 6:1-7. So much for man’s progress and development! So much for leaving persons to their conscience! On the other hand, God had sovereignly communicated the new nature (of which John 3:1-12 speaks) to some during this epoch and that is why there was something for Him. All that is for Him has its source in Him. We may recognize that such were “just” persons (see Heb. 11:40 and Heb. 12:23 -- “spirits of just [men] made perfect”), were “saints,” and were born of God. This is not what constitutes the body of Christ, though those who constitute that body are also just, saints, and born of God. It is of God’s will, “the fruit of his own mind,” that anyone is born of God.

While the world began with Adam, an important change took place consequent upon the flood. 2 Pet. 3:6 says:

... through which [waters] the then world, deluged with water, perished.  
But the present heavens and the earth . . .

79. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 2:132.

80. This is considered in detail in *The Sovereignty of God in the Election of Lost Men*, available from the publisher.

In contrast to the “*then* world,” i.e., in contrast to the pre-flood world, this indicates a new order *now* for the world which continues on until the postmillennial conflagration leading to the new heavens and new earth (2 Pet. 3:10-13) occurs. **Government** was placed into the hands of man and this continues until the end of the present world.

We are shown how soon Noah failed in governing himself, and how his several sons treated this, but government in the hands of man continues, as does man’s failure regarding it. But government will be taken up by Christ for the millennial reign, and perfectly carried out by Him. Indeed, all wherein man has failed is taken up by Christ for God’s glory. It is really a very sorry thing to see Christians teaching that Christ is reigning now (amillennialism). Among the many erroneous consequences of that system is that God has not been, and will not be, glorified regarding the government given to Noah. Is it possible that some can bring their minds to construe post-cross history as an exhibition of God-glorifying manifested in government?

### *Genesis 6:1-4:*

#### *The Awful Wickedness*

#### *The Awful Violation of the First Estate*

In Cain’s line we saw the development of the “then world.” In Gen. 6:1-7 we have the awful moral conditions that developed since Cain murdered Abel. In a footnote it was pointed out that the sons of God spoken of here were some of the fallen angels. This seems too much for the mind of many, since they cannot understand how this can be, so their conclusion is that it is not the case -- as if they can explain how it can be that angels have appeared as men in the OT. W. Kelly wrote:

There is a slight difference in the popular view, some holding the sons of God to be great men, or nobles; others, the progeny of Seth.

But it is impossible to deny that “sons of God, in the early books of the Bible (Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7), are found appropriated to angels. So in slightly different form of the Hebrew we read in Psa. 29:1, and 89:6. When the prophet Hosea predicts in ch. 1:10 (or 2:1) what the apostle Paul applied (Rom. 9:26) to the present call of Gentiles during the eclipse of Israel, the phrase is pointedly distinct, besides its having no retrospective bearing. Indeed in the Alexandrine MS. of the Septuagint version of Gen. 6: 2, for υιοι the Vatican is read of οι αγγελοι. But apart from this, which goes rather beyond the place of a translator, there is no ground from OT usage to question that the application of the phrase is to angels, and not to men even if faithful and righteous. And the apostolic reference is indisputable. Peter and Jude, regarding the awful crisis at the end of this age in the light of this scripture, though from quite different aspects, bear the concurrent

testimony of the Holy Spirit that angels were here intended by “sons of God.”

This to a believer in divine inspiration is decisive. God knew all and cannot lie. Difficulties there assuredly are to us, who know little of what is possible to beings so far transcending human estate. But we learn even from the reserved terms employed in the original text and the inspired comments that angelic commerce with mankind was exceptionally heinous in itself and in its results. God therefore avenged the flagrant departure from all the bounds He had laid down for the indigenous dwellers on high, as well as for the creatures of earthly mold by a judgment that slumbered not nor spared either. For it is evident that the fruits of the iniquity no less than the guilty mothers perished in the deluge; while the appalling sentence of consignment to everlasting bonds under darkness befell such angels as kept not their own first estate, to await the great day’s judgment. Their lot, so different from that of the devil and his angels, marks the enormity of their sin for which God cast them into Tartarus (2 Pet. 2:4). They had so daringly abused their liberty that they were handed over to the gloomiest custody; unlike the rest of the fallen angels, who have even access to heaven and accuse the saints and deceive the whole habitable earth as yet.

### *Jehovah’s Long-suffering Nearly Ended*

In v.3 we see that God would give 120 years before the flood. The situation of this verse between vv. 1, 2 and vv. 3, 4 indicates that it has to do with the coming judgment, not the length of time for man’s life after the flood.<sup>82</sup> The 120 years seems to be a special period of the patience of God, His long-suffering, in the trial of the first man. Lemech and Methushalah were still living during this period; but the period began before Japheth, Noah’s eldest, was born.

It was a period of God’s Spirit striving with man, but the end was in sight.

81. *The Bible Treasury*, 20:81. See also *ibid.*, 13:169; J. N. Darby, *Notes and Comments*, 1:50-53.

82. An exponential decay curve may be drawn through a plot of the ages of persons after the flood, starting with Shem and ending with Aaron (died at 119) and Moses (died at 120) and Joshua (died at 110) -- as if the ages of Aaron, Moses, and Joshua indicated that Gen. 6:3 speaks of this. And then there was a further drop, to 70 years, as indicated in Psa. 90:10. But this does not seem to be the true explanation of the 120 years. Rather, it points to the patience of God. Regarding His patience, judgment for the murder of Christ has not taken place for well over 1900 years.

The curve is quite interesting. No doubt God was working to reduce the life of man and we do not know how it was effected. It is known that when a stable system is disturbed by receiving a shock, the system seeks a new point of stability, following an exponential curve in the process.

The earth also may have received a very large shock accompanying the flood. It seems that the earth itself is in an incomplete process of righting itself from a huge shock that caused the axis to move considerably. Like a spinning gyroscope that is deflected and seeks to have its axis recover its former position, so with the earth. Such curves have been published by “young earth” scientists. The work is based on the Australian astronomer, George Dodwell.

Methushalah would die the year of the flood. It seems as if it was an apostasy from any light that man had, from God’s clothing the nakedness (exposure) of man with the skins, the lesson in Abel’s sacrifice, and the warnings of Enoch, who was translated before this period. In Gen. 6:3 we learn that God’s Spirit was striving with the ante-deluvians. In 1 Pet. 3:18-20 we learn that it was the Spirit of Christ doing so, through Noah. W. Kelly has commented at length concerning the Spirit of Christ preaching through Noah, to the ante-deluvians, in the series from which I have frequently quoted.<sup>83</sup> He rightly denounces the notion that Christ went personally somewhere (perhaps to the middle of the earth where He preached to spirits in prison there). The truth is that it was the Spirit of Christ that preached through Noah to those persons before the flood; and who, disobeying the Word, are kept in prison until the judgment. Christ was:

. . . put to death in flesh, but made alive in [the] Spirit, in which also going he preached to the spirits [which are] in prison, heretofore disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was preparing . . . (1 Pet. 3:18-20).

And why would Christ go personally to preach to those in prison who had refused the word in Noah’s day? -- for a ‘second chance’? At any rate, here is how W. Kelly regarded the notion:

The heterodoxy we are considering treats these very persons, if not all the wicked dead, as kept for hearing Christ to save them from judgment! Can one conceive grosser ignorance, and, what is worse, more arrant trifling with solemn scriptures, or a more evident desire to bring their meaning to nought?<sup>84</sup>

### *The Nephilim and the Gibborim*

Regarding v. 4, W. Kelly wrote:

As to ver. 4, the construction is not without difficulty. It appears to distinguish between the Nephilim<sup>85</sup> or giants in those days, as afterwards also, and the Gibborim, mighty ones or heroes, who were the fruit of the union of the sons of God with men’s daughters. In fact, notwithstanding the dark confusion of the old heathen remains, traces of this distinction are not wanting; though nothing can be more marked than the superiority of scripture in the very little it says on this painful subject over the traditional lore respecting the Giants and the Titans, which the later poets jumbled

83. *The Bible Treasury*, 20:97, 98; and see his book, *Christ Preaching to the Spirit’s in Prison*, as well as his *Epistles of Peter*, in loco.

84. *The Bible Treasury*, 20:98.

85. The name has been derived from “felling” or “falling.” Aquila has ἐπιπροντες, Symmachus βίαιοι, as the LXX, γίγαντες for both the Nephilim and the Gibborim.

inextricably. Num. 13:33 of itself easily accounts for the clause here parenthetically marked. It may run, without parenthesis, "And also after that the sons of God . . . : these [are] the mighty ones which were of old, men of the name," thus distinguishing the giants and these heroes. One shrinks from boldness in speaking of such a phrase; but the latter part distinguishes a class which was not found afterwards: "These [are] the heroes, who [were] of old, men of renown." These, as being of quite a different source and character, had a fame peculiar to themselves for might. The reputation they acquired of old was not founded on mere stature, like that of the Nephilim.

In result it is clear that the bounds of creation were wickedly traversed by certain angels, and thus a peculiarly evil corruption introduced among men, where evil in its ordinary character grew apace as we are afterwards shown. But that unnatural amalgam touched the rights of Jehovah, though outwardly He had left man to himself since his expulsion from Paradise; as it played its grave part in calling for divine intervention in the governmental act of the deluge of which Genesis speaks, but in those deeper, lasting, and unseen ways which the epistles of Peter and Jude reveal in unison with NT truth for eternity. The evasive reading of the passage which many pious ancients and moderns have adopted to escape its only fair interpretation, because it conveys what is to us beyond measure strange, if not incomprehensible how it could be, is nothing but a makeshift of unbelief. Received simply, it gives the sure, though purposely reserved, revelation on the darkest scene of old, the true source of what was expanded, after its wonted fashion in Jewish tradition and Pagan mythology. In scripture the evil was dealt with in holy judgment; among men it became the basis of fame for beneficent might on man's behalf in vain struggle against envious but superior gods: no untrue description of beings who were really demons. "Jehovah, what is man that Thou takest knowledge of him? or the son of man, that Thou makest account of him? Man is like a breath, his days are as a shadow that passeth away. Bow Thy heavens, Jehovah, and come down."<sup>86</sup>

Those of the fallen angels

who had not kept their own original state, but had abandoned their own dwelling, he keeps in eternal chains under gloomy darkness, to the judgment of the great day (Jude 6);

and Peter speaks of it also (2 Pet. 2:4). This matter was one reason for the judgment of the deluge over the earth.

## ***Genesis 6:5-8: Man's Condition***

*Man Wicked in Practice and in Heart*

86. *The Bible Treasury*, 20:98, 99. See also J. N. Darby, *Notes and Comments*, 1:51-53.

Verses 5-8<sup>87</sup> speak of another reason for the flood, with which we will couple the statement in Gen. 6:11. In v. 5 two matters are noted.

1. The wickedness of Man was great on the earth. No doubt this included what we considered above. In v. 11 we read:

And the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was full of violence.

These are the two great characters of evil. The corruption started in the garden of Eden and in Cain we see the corruption in offering to Jehovah from the fruit of the cursed ground. Then we see the violence in his killing Abel. These things had reached a crescendo by the time of the flood. Thus we have described what man had done.

2. In v. 5 there is the description of man's state of soul:

. . . and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart only evil continually.

This is what is within man as fallen. In the fall he acquired "sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3), as it is designated in the NT. This is the spring from which the corruption and violence flow. The sub-conscious tendencies and the conscious tendencies of the innermost being are only evil continually. The "heart," used in Scripture to point to the affections, is where the evil root that produces evil fruit resides. Man loves sin.

Gen. 6:5 gives us the state of man after he had been left to the conscience, and the knowledge of good and evil, acquired (not dispensed) as a result of the fall. The fact that God had His elect during this epoch does not indicate otherwise, but shows that God quickens souls as He will.

After the fall, man was left without government, which was dispensed by God after the flood for restraint of evil (Rom. 13), though man fails in governing as in all else. Government remains to be taken up by Christ in the millennial reign and God will be glorified in it. Gen. 6:5, then, gives us the true condition of man brought into bold relief under the condition of being left to himself. It may be said, but that is because he was left to himself rather than receiving divine guidance. Well, under the Mosaic Administration, man in the flesh, in the persons of Israel, was guided, yes cultivated, by Jehovah in many ways, yet at the end of that trial the first, fallen man put the second man to the cross, using the "secular arm" (i.e., government) as the instrument to do so. Rom. 8:7 gives us the state of man evidenced by the trial under the law. What would one expect in view of Gen. 6:5? Such Scriptures as Gen. 6:5 and Rom. 8:7 shows the incorrigibility of fallen man, hence the necessity for the sovereign grace of God to quicken the lost. A man needs a new nature from God, as was told to Nicodemus (John 3). The

87. The reader would profit from reading W. Kelly on these verses in *The Bible Treasury* 20:113-114.

Covenantist notion that the saint does not have both an old nature and a new nature means that God works to improve the old. The truth is, there is nothing for God to work on. He must sovereignly implant a new nature (1 Pet. 1:23). Such texts as we are considering also show the fallacy of the self-flattering notion that the lost have moral free-will. It is the pretension not to be totally lost.

Satan has these two characteristics: violence, seen in him as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5:8); and, corruption, seen in him as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14). These features also mark the Antichrist as a man of blood and deceit (Psa. 5:6).

It is well for us to dwell a little longer on our awful state as fallen. W. P. Mackay wrote:

He saw that their “wickedness was great.” Man thinks little of wickedness, and much of what he can do. God thinks little about what man can do, but much about his wickedness.

“Every imagination!” Sweeping statement! There was no exception. It was not that man had many bad imaginations. He had none good. The original Hebrew makes it very strong, . . . the whole mind, including purposes and desires. It comes from a root meaning to frame or form. The whole moral formation of man was evil; there was no remaining grain of good, not one divine ray, lighting up the surrounding darkness; a moral chaos as real, dark, formless and void, as the physical chaos of Gen. 1:2.

“Only evil,” unmixed in its character as universal in its spread. Here we can find no palliation, no mingling of good and bad, “only evil.”

“Evil continually.” The evil was in all places, of all kinds and all times . . . The thoughts of youth and old age equally evil; the thoughts of morn, noon, and night “continually” evil. The actions are not mentioned, for the whole root of the tree was rotten. What a moral cesspool man has become! And this is the opinion of the holy God, while they can boast of their arts, science, and culture, their great giants and great deeds, and can cultivate their fine arts, with the organ and the harp; make money with their sheep and cattle, and build their monuments in brass and iron.<sup>88</sup>

This evil within man’s being is unalterable. It is not improved by the new birth. What is flesh remains flesh. In the new birth God sovereignly simultaneously implants a new nature and faith -- and the person is brought to repentance.

In Gen. 8:21 we see that when Jehovah smelled the sweet odor of the burnt-offering he said:

. . . the thought of man’s heart is evil from his youth.<sup>89</sup>

This is said at the beginning of the post-flood world. The judgment of God that

fell upon the “then world” did not, of course, change “sin in the flesh” in fallen man. The fallen, first man is incorrigible, and “sin in the flesh” is never ameliorated or modified, though Reformed Theology (which recognizes only one nature rather than the two natures in the believer) may teach otherwise. Nor is fallen man able to be subject to the law of God (Rom. 8:7), though Arminianism may say otherwise in its pretension that man is not totally lost.<sup>90</sup> But in the burnt-offering Jehovah had before Him Christ for His pleasure and devotion, even unto death, yielded up to Him on the cross. Though man was incorrigible, He would not again so smite every living thing as He had done in the flood. Christ rendering Himself up for the satisfaction and glory of God, on the cross, was the basis on which God could righteously act towards man in salvation, according to His purpose to glorify Himself in Christ in the heavenly and in the earthly sphere.

### *Jehovah Repenting and Grieved in His heart*

In Gen. 6:6 we find two matters:

**1. Jehovah repenting that He had made Man on the earth.** It is well to be clear concerning what God repenting means. Clearly, it does not mean that God had done some evil thing or had an evil thought. We see in Num. 23:19 in the God-controlled prophecy of Balaam, that God does not repent (see Rom. 11:29). That refers to *divine purpose*. On the other hand, concerning God’s *governmental ways with man* during the trial of the fallen, first man, to show that he was not recoverable, we find some statements concerning God repenting. See Ex. 32:14 and Jer. 18:7-10, for examples. J. N. Darby remarked:

It is not as if some change took place in God, but that the aspect of His mind is changed towards an object that has itself changed.<sup>91</sup>

It has been rightly observed that after the cross we do not read of God repenting about something. Why? It is because the trial of the first man ended at the cross and therefore God now enjoins all everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30). God’s dealings with man as under trial are finished; all must now repent or perish. The trial of the first man is concluded and therefore God is no longer changing His ways with man as if lost man has not been tested under all conditions.

**2. It grieved Jehovah in His heart.** Does God have pleasure in the death of the wicked? See Ezek. 33:11. Think of the Lord Jesus weeping over Jerusalem.

88. *The British Herald*, June 1874, p.67.

89. See also 1 Chron. 28:9.

90. See my, *God’s Sovereignty in the Election and Salvation of Lost Men*, available from the publisher.

91. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 19:84.

## *The Judgment on Man and the Lower Order, With Exception*

The Spirit had spoken in Noah, a preacher of righteousness, as before Enoch had warned of judgment to come. Judgment is certain but man will not heed, for he loves sin. But God's holy hand is the executor of holy moral government, and warnings spurned bring sure destruction. In faith, a huge ship was being built. Likely there had not yet been rain and man reasons in favor of continuing in his sinful course, filling up the measure of judgment to be poured upon him. The time arrived for God to vindicate his Word and sweep away every vestige of unbelief. And as Adam's fall had affected the lower order, so the flood affected the lower order over which man had been set.

It is not intended here to enter into details of the flood. We know not how high mountains were before the flood, but we are assured they were all covered.<sup>92</sup> We know not where all the water resided for this, but we are assured that it was so as God said.<sup>93</sup> Man and his science, arts, and pleasures, his skills and talents, has totally rejected the claims of God -- and in the face of testimony of Methuselah, and perhaps Lemech, who could have spoken with Adam, and others who knew Adam, and those removed but one generation from Adam --

For as they were in the days which were before the flood, eating and drinking, marrying and given in marriage, until the day on which Noe entered into the ark, and knew not till the flood came and took all away (Matt. 24:38, 39).

"Knew not" are solemn words.<sup>94</sup> There was not one iota of divine knowledge in them. They were all devoid of the least fear of Jehovah. Yet, ending this

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92. A Christian who was a scientist, assuming Mt. Everest was as high before the flood as now, objected to the idea of a world-wide flood, and said that the atmosphere would be too rarified with the ark at that height. It was a slip, of course, because the whole atmosphere would lift up to the surface of the water.

How should the language of Scripture be changed in order to indicate that it was a "local" flood, not world-wide? Note that if it was a local flood, afterwards God said:

... neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood, and henceforth there shall be no flood to destroy the earth," (Gen. 9:11).

Is that mere redundancy or are there two things being stated? Well, the flood divided two worlds, "the then world" and the world that now is (2 Pet. 3:6, 7).

93. Regarding the "kinds" that went into the ark we do not know where that fits in present day taxonomy, but hardly at the species level.

94. This reminds us of the scoffers noted in 2 Pet. 3:3-6 who deny the Lord's coming in judgment, claiming that there had been no world-wide flood of God's intervention in judgment in the past. Thus shall there be a repetition of Noah's day, as Matt. 24:38, 39 says. Traditions concerning a flood have been found spread world-wide. The ignorance of it is due to, as Peter wrote: "through their own wilfulness." It is willful disbelief.

description of the horrible sins and the condition of man's heart is a happy note regarding Noah:

But Noah found grace in the eyes of God (Gen. 6:8).

Why? was he inherently better than others? Not so. It was Jehovah's grace *upon* him and that wrought *in* Him for the pleasure of Jehovah. As did Enoch, Noah walked with God:

This is the history of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect among his generations: Noah walked with God (Gen. 6:9).

Perfect is not flawless, or sinless, as we might use the word, but upright (cp. Job 1:8). Each saint must walk with God according to the light that God has given for the time. The truth that He gives is the truth most opposed at the time for which it is given. What is the truth given to us now? What is the truth most opposed now?<sup>95</sup>

The circle in which Noah moved saw a man altogether different from themselves. Morally, they were like Cain, away from the presence of Jehovah. Yet here was one consciously in Jehovah's presence, walking with God. Concerning man as lost, there is not a just man on the earth. There cannot be such unless God steps in in sovereign grace, communicating a new nature and faith. Noah was a bright trophy of that grace, a man of faith:

By faith, Noah, oracularly warned concerning things not yet seen, moved with fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which [is] according to faith (Heb. 11:7).

God spoke to him, and spoke of "things not yet seen." That may refer to rain and flood, by which judgment would swallow up the ungodly, things which had not been seen by Noah. Faith lays hold of what God has said concerning things not yet seen (Heb. 11:1). Noah's faith in things not yet seen had to do with *God's moral government*, the coming flood of judgment. And when the flood was past, God committed to him human government for the restraint of evil.

There was a period of time, then, when Noah prepared an ark:

What is often said of Noah's carpentry is man's imagination. Yet he had plenty to do, he had plenty of time. But let us bear in mind that, as to preparing the ark, it is not necessary to suppose that he and his sons did it all by themselves. Such things are not much if no doctrine be founded on them.<sup>96</sup>

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95. See *God's Counsel for the Time is the Truth Most Opposed*, available from the publisher.

96. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 19:87.

## *Noah: Type of the Godly Remnant in the Tribulation*

(From *The Girdle of Truth* 9:94-96, 143-159.)<sup>97</sup>

482 years elapsed between the translation of Enoch and the deluge. Methuselah, the son of Enoch, lives to the year of it, and Lamech, the son of Methuselah, is the father of Noah, whom he thus named in prophetic faith, which reached on to a time beyond that of which even Enoch had foretold, even the days when the earth, now cursed, should again be blessed by the Lord, and when the heavens should rule. "This same," he says (i.e., Noah, which signifies rest),

shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hand's, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed.

He had found nothing but toil here, and he does not, like Cain, attempt to improve the earth. He had no hope from it in its then condition, having seen the growing misery of all around him. But he had also seen the translation, the victory of God's witness not only over the earth, but over the penalty of death. He had, doubtless, hearkened to the prophetic warning of Enoch as to the coming judgments, and he is allowed to discern in the distance a happier scene beyond those judgments; a time of rest even for the cursed earth. In token of this he names his son Noah; he who was to pass through the deluge unscathed and be blessed anew in a purged earth; even as it will be with those whom Noah typified, in the days of millennial rest which will succeed the judgments which Enoch had foretold, and which that of Lamech and Noah's day had foreshadowed. Lamech did not die till within five years of the flood, and when the ark must have been well nigh completed, having, perhaps, assisted in its construction. His age is significant being 777 years; the number seven being, as we know, that used in Scripture to denote perfection; and the three sevens stand out in contrast to the three sixes (666) given in Rev. 13, as the number of the Beast -- the "Man of Sin."<sup>98</sup>

Lamech is properly the last before the flood and outlived all his forefathers except his father Methuselah, who, as living up to the last year, indicates, I should suppose, that the line of testimony should be unbroken to the last, and thus brings us in the year of the world to the flood, . . .

Long before the death of Methuselah the building of the ark had begun, and

97. J. G. Bellett's *The Patriarchs* is an excellent book. He has a chapter on "Noah" which may be read with profit.

98. {The writer is mistaken concerning the man of sin (2 Thess. 2) being the first beast of Rev. 13. The man of sin is the second beast of Rev. 13, the false prophet, the Antichrist, i.e., the mouthpiece of the first beast, the one whose number is 666. The first beast is the coming Roman prince of Dan. 9:26, 27, the Lucifer of Isa. 14.}

Noah had thereby inaugurated the new and peculiar testimony committed to him. How long before the flood this took place we cannot determine, for if it were for 120 years, as some have supposed, how can we understand the word of God to Noah, when directing him to build:

And thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.

For 120 years before the date of the flood, Noah's sons were not born. Moreover, it is not material to fix the date when the building commenced, it is only important to bear in mind that long before the death of Methuselah, who was the continuing link from Enoch, Noah, a "preacher of righteousness," had begun by word and act to announce to the world that God was about to deal with it, and that righteousness must be manifested when evil is dealt with, and while condemning the world on the one hand, he, according to divine instruction, prepared an ark for the saving of his house. The evil of man had now betrayed itself in wanton disregard of the line of holy separation which was due to God. Man allied himself as he chose; his lust was the arbiter of his actions. God's claims he set at defiance, his violence was great upon the earth, and every imagination of his heart was evil continually. The terrible character of man's nature was now exposed. It is manifested to God, and it grieved Him to His heart that He had set man, that which He had formed like unto Himself, on the earth. A most momentous moment is this for us to ponder on, and then gather up at this early date, on the one hand, the inconceivable repulsion with which God now viewed man, and, on the other, what He, notwithstanding, in His eternal goodness, purposes to do with man.

Noah is chosen of God to be the witness of His mind, and as such God directs him to build an ark, gives him the measurements of it, details who and what the occupants of it shall be, and announces,

Behold I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life from under heaven, and everything that is in the earth shall die.

Noah and his house alone of mankind are to be saved, and that through means of the ark. The testimony to be maintained is, that God will destroy all men except one whom, with his house, He will save out of the overwhelming judgment, to take his place again on the restored earth. Noah, accepting what is worthy of God touching the earth and man on it, maintains this testimony, which, as is evident, is twofold; one relating to the judgment and the time of it; and the other, after the judgment has passed away. One, comprising the building of the ark, and Noah's leaving it after the waters had dried up; the other, dating from Noah's occupancy of the restored earth.

First let us trace out how Noah maintained the testimony connected with judgment. Before there were any indications of judgment, nay, when men ate and

drank, bought and sold, married wives, &c., and did as they pleased, apprehending no special catastrophe, Noah, walking with God, and having learned His mind, practically avows what is worthy of Him; and while maintaining his true place *for God*, at the same time and by the same act maintains the true place *for himself*. “Moved with fear” he prepares an ark -- for how many years I do not say, but for many -- testifying by every hammer-stroke he gave to it that his hopes from earth in its then condition were at an end; announcing thereby to all his belief in the coming judgment, and, in God’s purpose, to save himself out of it. If he falters, he has lost his own true place, and his true place for God; for it was worthy of God that all here should come to an end. And this was necessarily the first part of his testimony, as a preacher of righteousness and a witness against those who gave no heed to him and his preparations. How he must have looked on everything around him, all soon to be submerged in judgment, while his own hopes rested in God’s provision for him out of it all! He carried out distinctly and fully the divine measurements. His *all* he knew would be there. His expectations, completely turned from the earth, all centred in the ark, where all that was valuable to him, all that of God he could surround himself with, was to be. This he declared, and this in practice he maintained. Many were the years, and much must have been the toil and exercise of mind, while, like another Paul (in Philippians), he had not yet attained, but yet this “one thing” he did in order to attain. He presented to an unbelieving world, that the ark would not only save him and his house, but contain in it every order of creature. No work of the Creator’s hand would be lost, and none would he be deprived of, but it was all to be *within* the enclosure which God was providing for it; and from earth he ceased to expect anything. On he worked towards the completion of that which comprised, confined, and concentrated all his thoughts and energies. God had done with the earth, and man as he then was on it; and this Noah strictly and unequivocally bore witness of. If he had betrayed any hope from the earth, as it then was, he would have failed in being a witness of God’s mind, for he could neither have prepared the ark nor condemned the world. He must not flinch or falter, or deviate from one of God’s instructions to him. The testimony, to be maintained at all, must be perfect in all its parts. What a life was his! What a position he held! One singularly apart from all human hopes and desires, which were centered, and all his labors expended, on that which alone was worthy of God, and in which he had been instructed through God’s revelation to him. What a testimony at this early date! Even that God could sustain a man on the earth, not as Abel, in acceptance, and persecuted to death because of it; nor as Enoch, walking with God, apart from everything on it, and in the hope of being translated out of it; but, as in Noah’s case, assured of judgment coming on the earth -- nay, more, knowing that, as under sentence, it was already judged in the sight of God -- yet equally assured of a place of inviolable security for himself in the ark; thus simply and definitely presenting to us, even now, how we should rest in Christ in a world under judgment because of His death; for in Him, our ark, we

are in spirit out of this world, while the Holy Ghost convicts it of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.

The second part in this the first line of Noah’s testimony now follows (Gen. 7:16). God <sup>99</sup> has shut him in! and there, amid the overwhelming judgment, relentless in its course, he testifies to the heavenly hosts, knowing in himself full and perfect security, though death and judgment reign universally and without restriction. For a year, which comprises all the vicissitudes of season and climate, and this typifies one natural life, Noah remains in the ark floating on the waters. For many years he had testified to men on earth of his hope of safety, and entirely apart from their hopes, had occupied himself solely and exclusively with the ark, but now he is in that which he had for so long been preparing, and through it he surmounts the waters of desolation of which he had predicted, and which now prevail upon the earth. How wondrous is this two-fold testimony to us when read in the light of the glory of Christ? How beautifully and significantly these two parts of the first line of Noah’s testimony come out and unite in their application to ourselves! For though with Noah the two lines were successive, with us they exist at one and the same time, even as Paul in Philippians and Paul in Ephesians. In the one he is building the ark, counting everything but dross to win Christ; his hopes as to earth are at an end, and Christ, whose death sealed the judgment of this world, is simply and entirely his object. In the other he is *in* the ark -- “seated in heavenly places in Christ,” in whom he is blessed with every spiritual blessing.

Noah, therefore, while personally a type of the remnant of the latter day, who will be borne scathless through the time of judgment, and possess the renewed earth, presents a testimony which in a still more comprehensive way in its two-fold features, answers to what our own should be. The saints now fulfil the Noahic testimony by witnessing on the one hand that while *waiting* for the judgment Christ is their only object and hope, and on the other that the judgment of the earth being sealed by His death, we are *in Him* above all the ruin and death here. If we do any other thing than seek to win Christ, we are not in our own true place, nor are we in our true place for God; and if I am not sensibly in Him, “*shut in*,” knowing that all that is valuable to me from the Creator’s hand is *there* -- inside -- and not looking outside for anything, I am denying what is worthy of God in ending all flesh. I am not a witness, for Him, or rejoicing in His grace towards me. I may have light enough to see my place, but failing to maintain it, I cannot be happy in myself, or a witness for Him; for I do not accept that which alone is worthy of Him. Noah in heart, life, aim, and position, declared that it was worthy of God that the end of all flesh should come before Him, and he himself

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99. {It is instructive to note the use of divine names in Gen. 6:17 as an indicator of the excellency of Scripture. *God* is used concerning the direction of the animals; *Jehovah* is used concerning God’s care for his servant, Noah, and so we read “Jehovah shut him in.” Really, the multiple document sources notion, while silly, is worse than silly.



be saved in the ark. In like manner it is for us to declare that the judgment of this world is come, and that we through grace shall not come into judgment; that it is worthy of God that in Adam all should die, and in Christ all should be made alive; and that He is the depository and centre of every blessing, so that it is as vain for us to look for anything outside Him as it was for Noah to look outside the ark, when all that belonged to him, or that he needed, had been brought into it, and the waters of judgment were overwhelming all the rest. And so we shall find as we go on, every faithful servant of God, from Noah down, is ruled in his walk and finds his own blessing in maintaining what is worthy of God; and thus their own souls grew and were enlarged in the greatness and goodness of God to themselves. For as we maintain what is worthy of Him, so do we enjoy it in ourselves; and as we enjoy it, so do we maintain it.

After a full year, after patience and hope had been exercised and proved, Noah leaves the ark for the restored earth, and here the second line of his testimony commences. On the purged earth he takes his place in type of the millennial saints, and he sets forth by offerings of every clean beast and fowl (Gen. 8:20) on the altar, man's true place with God's as to worship, and the relation in which through sacrifice and redemption man should stand with God. This infantine expression of man's true place is acknowledged by God, and He renews man's term on the earth with a large mitigation of the original penalty and in the sweet savor of the sacrifice, man becomes the object of fresh and multiplied blessings, while a second trial is ensured for Adam's race and that with the promise,

I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, neither will I again smite any more every living thing as I have done; while the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

God blesses Noah and his sons, and makes him the representative of government. Every created thing is delivered into his hand, and every moving thing was to be for meat, while it is also added,

and surely your blood of your lives will I require, at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man, at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man; whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God made he man.

It is important to gather up the elements of the testimony which Noah was called to support. Man is on his trial again, and for a moment fills the place appointed of God. The bow in the cloud is the token from God of His new arrangement with man, as He said,

I will establish my covenant with you, neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood. Neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.

Noah for a moment maintains this testimony, a faint expression of that time {the

millennium} when

the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

And very interesting is it to connect ourselves with God's great purpose at such an early date, and to discern how the things unfolded now, or which are about to be manifested, had an existence, and had been witnessed of characteristically by man ages ago; thus intimating the nature of God's purpose eventually.

But it was only for a moment that Noah maintained this testimony untarnished. Man's sufficiency in this his new trial and under new circumstances, is again found wanting. He drops into nature, and is exposed by his own son, who, in proclaiming his father's shame, shows man's advance in evil, and that man's nature is not only weak and foolish in itself, but that it is insensible to its shame.

Noah lives 349 years on the earth after leaving the ark, and this period embraces the building of Babel (man's effort to make for himself a name on the earth), little more than 100 years after the flood! This new form of man's evil -- systematic and combined purpose -- to be independent of God, and to make a name for himself, takes place on the earth so lately cleared of all that was of man, and under the very eyes of him who had been the witness of its destruction, and, with his house, was the sole survivor. So great and universal had been the judgment that for a whole year or more no man had set foot upon the earth; yet now, on the new earth, how rapidly man's evil and presumption had sprung up and ripened. Man's purpose now is in advance of and very different from that of Cain, who acknowledged a claim from God, yet being ignorant of what that, His claim, was; not understanding the distance between himself and God, he proposed to meet it by a work of his own. But here, the builders of Babel assume entire independence, and seek to effect it by systematic combination. The terms of the new covenant are entirely overlooked, and Noah, like Paul, survived to see the total failure of the testimony entrusted to him. How checkered was his life, and yet how fine the line of his testimony! Nor did he pass away from the earth till another and new order of testimony was ready to be revealed. For more than 200 years after the division of the earth, in the days of Peleg, did Noah live. He died two years before the birth of Abram, and whose father, Terah, was then 128 years old. God always continues one line of testimony until there is a full manifestation of man setting it aside. Noah's does not terminate at the building of Babel, where first the great full purpose of man's independence was developed; for he who had seen and witnessed of God's dealings and purposes respecting man, is continued on the earth for more than 200 years after the judgment on Babel. God's witness on the earth is still Noah; he who had demonstrated in such a terrible way God's judgment, and who had commenced again when God made a new trial of man on the earth; even he lives to see the development of man's evil in a more

independent form than ever; and that mercy from God only exposed the more the estrangement of man's heart. God has no other testimony for the earth at such a time. Noah's is the suited one during the action and course of this evil. From the confusion of languages the various kingdoms were first formed; but the point for us to bear in mind, is that God vouchsafed no new line of testimony until the evil of man in the judged earth, which every one knew had been judged (no event was ever so universally known or admitted under heaven as the flood), was fully developed.

The faithful had still Noah to look to and rest in as their guide from God; but after his death Terah, I conclude, in faith calls his son Abram the "great father," as the expected one to lead the people of God into the line for him, suited to the evil which had now grown to its height universally on the earth.

Before the death of Noah the two great kingdoms of the earth were founded -- the kingdom of Egypt and that of Assyria. Thus we see of what long continuance was the Noahic testimony, and it is most interesting and instructive for us to bear in mind the moral conveyed in its continuance for such a period without any addition. Nothing else could God present to the faithful until the independence of man was fully developed and until as kings they had laid hold of the earth, and were governing it without Him. Then Noah dies, and two years after Abram is born, who is called to set forth a new line of testimony, . . . ♦

## Chapter 6

### Genesis 8:20 - 9:17

#### Noah and His Sons on the Changed Earth

##### Introductory Remarks

In passing through the flood of judgment, Noah and his sons are a type of the preserved Jewish remnant that go through the great tribulation and on to the millennial earth.

We might just notice the fact of the eight souls being saved through water is used by Peter regarding baptism, in which there is an analogy, or correspondence, to baptism (1 Pet. 3:21). Baptism is a "figure," which does not mean a type.

With Noah entering on the new earth we have a type of Christ in the millennium. Noah acts in a priestly way in offering burnt-offerings, and following this the power of government is put into his hands. In the future, after the nations fall under judgment, in the millennium Christ will be a priest upon His throne (Zech. 6:13). The candelabra in Zech 5 is a symbol of Christ as the great millennial light, the oil pointing to the Spirit, and the two olive trees to the two offices as priest and king. It is an amazing symbol. But not only will He be a priest (after the order of Melchisedec) on His throne (the Davidic throne); there are also two great principles which God is unfolding in the world that will be perfectly united and carried out under Christ's millennial reign:

In this world there are two great principles: *rule* in the hands of men -- and *separation from the world* by the call of God.<sup>100</sup>

In Noah rule is placed in the hands of man; and as we shall see, in Abraham there is *separation* from the world *by the call of God*. These, committed to man's responsibility, are marred until Christ makes all good to the glory of God in the millennium. In Israel there was the union of these two things. Why? Because these things are given to man under trial to show that he is not recoverable, that he fails in them, but that these things will be made good by Christ, the second man glorifying God in them. Israel under the Mosaic order was the first man, in such a favored position, under trial. And it again illustrated the order: first that which is natural, afterwards that which is spiritual. The Lord Jesus Christ *must* reign and give righteous expression to all wherein man has failed.

Innocency had not been regained; rather, the unquenchable evil of the heart ruled by sin in the flesh had been given an exposition in the earth being filled with corruption and violence. Regarding Noah, the change in the ways of God with man at this point is noted by J. N. Darby:

In the midst of the ruin and judgment God points out the way of salvation

100. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 2:132.

through the judgment. The remnant taught of God profit by it. The flood is brought upon the world of the ungodly. Up to this, though the seed of the woman had been promised, sacrifice brought in, and testimony given, there were no special dealings of God with man. It was man walking before God in wickedness, no calling out, no law, no judgment. The world, man, was judged (save Noah and his family) and its deeds were hidden under an overwhelming flood. The judgment of God is accomplished; but He remembers His mercy.

In Gen. 9 begins the history of the new earth. God blesses the earth more than before; and the answer to the sweet savor of the sacrifice assures the world that a universal deluge will never recur. God makes a covenant with the creation to this effect. Government is established in the hand of man, and death begins to furnish him with nourishment. It does not appear to me that, before this, there had been either government or idolatry. There had been sin against God, violence without restraint against one another, and corruption; the two perpetual characters of sin, amongst men, and even in Satan as far as may be. God cared for His creation in mercy; but with Noah new principles were brought out. The sacrifice of Christ (in figure) becomes a ground of dealing with the earth, not alone of accepting man, as in Abel; and on this a covenant is founded. That is, God binds Himself in grace, so that faith has a sure ground to go upon, that on which it can count.

### *Noah's Sacrifice*

As was indicated in the above quotation from J. N. Darby, there is a difference between Abel's offering and the sacrifices by Noah. No doubt it was burnt-offerings in both cases. But Abel's offering had personal acceptance in view while Noah's offerings had God's dealings with the new earth in view, not a matter of personal acceptance as in Abel's case, though that need not be excluded. "And Jehovah smelled the sweet odor," i.e., an 'odor of rest.' The burnt-offering is propitiatory in aspect. It speaks of Christ's rendering to God a satisfaction for the outrage of sin against His nature and glory. It "met the mind of God, as to His sense of sin, by the perfectness of the sacrifice." And on this basis Jehovah would go on with the earth until the time comes for the new heavens and new earth, meanwhile not destroying the earth again by a flood. And as long as the earth continues the seasons, and day and night, would continue.

Man, of course, remained as incorrigible as he was, as Gen. 8:21 notes: "for the thought of man's heart is evil from his youth." J. N. Darby noted:

The Lord had seen that the imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually, and the Lord said, "I will destroy." But now, the sweet savor of the sacrifice was the ground of action -- what drew out the heart of God -- moved it in grace, and could because righteously; hence, though seeing all the evil, acts on the sweet savor. If I deal according to what man is, I must always curse, for the ground of cursing is always there as spoken of (Gen. 6:5, 6). Hence "I will not again," do it, or act as moved by what is in man (for there is only evil), but on the ground of the sacrifice offered. Here as to the world, for the old world was, as to dealings of God, left to itself, only with a testimony, and was founded (besides Cain) on "He drove out the man." This world was passed away, and sacrifice was the basis of God's dealings in testimony as to this.<sup>102</sup>

The OT sacrifices were provisional until the seed of the woman gave Himself on the cross. They were not, of course, intrinsically meritorious but pointed forward to the once-for-all sacrifice. And Rom. 3:25 should be kept in mind regarding the sins of OT saints.

### *Noah's New Headship*

We now come to the changes directed by God for the present order.

And now a fresh subject comes before us. As creation had been visited by a deluge because of man, but was promised immunity from its recurrence because of the sacrifice, man, too, whose sin brought down the judgment, should reap benefits from the sacrifice.

And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

God speaks again to Noah, but He speaks to his sons likewise; to them for the first time. Till they had come through the flood they had, as it were, no place before Him. He communicated his mind to Noah, and to him only. Now they have a standing before God, as it were, and He speaks to them, but with Noah. Apart from Noah they had no place; but when speaking to him now He speaks to them likewise, and in language to which men, since the fall, had been strangers. "God blessed Noah and his sons." At creation He blessed the moving creatures of the waters, and the fowls of the air: on the sixth day He blessed man; and on the seventh, the Sabbath day. The fall took place, after which God blessing anything was language unheard of. Now a change takes place: what induced the change? The burnt offering, which rose up a sweet savor to God. On that ground He could, He has blessed sinful creatures. "To be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth," had been part of God's blessing in Eden; "to be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth," is His blessing after the flood. His purpose does not change. He created man for this object, and He would

101. *Synopsis*, 1:18.

102. *Notes and Comments*, 1:55.

have him fulfil it. The flood seemed to have put an end to it; but His counsel shall stand, and here it comes out. Time cannot alter it, nor the malicious machinations of the enemy frustrate it. He sent Noah and His sons abroad on the earth to fulfil His purpose, by replenishing it. Yet there is a difference, and a marked one. To Adam God added:

and to subdue it, and to have dominion over the fish of the sea,  
and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that  
moveth upon the earth (Gen. 1:28).

The Son of Man will exercise this sovereignty when He reigns (Psa. 8). To Noah and his sons God promises to put the fear of them on all the animals on land and water. All should feel fallen man's superiority, though he had not the commission to subdue them. To the first Adam was that given; by the last Adam will it be carried out; for such a commission is not entrusted to a fallen creature.

And here, in connection with the sacrifice, God conveys to man a grant of every living creature:

Into your hand are they delivered; every moving thing that liveth  
shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all  
things.

All the resources of the earth are thus placed at his disposal, both what it produced and what it carried on its surface -- a vast change from the language in which God addressed Adam after the fall, and a fuller grant than that which He bestowed on him in Paradise. After the fall, He took from man the fruits which he had so misused, and sent him forth from Eden to eat the herb of the field; now He gives him to eat of everything. By sin man lost; in virtue of the sacrifice, God could be a bounteous giver. But it is not merely recovery; it is more. In Eden they could eat the fruits of the ground; in the new world they could eat of everything -- an illustration of the truth conveyed in the lines,

In Him the tribes of Adam boast  
More blessings than their father lost.

Further on, in the history of the world, when Israel stood before God on the ground of their responsibility, to be blessed if obedient, a restriction in the articles of food took place; a distinction was made between the clean and the unclean, and the former only were allowed them. But when the sacrifice had been really offered up and accepted, and God began again to deal with man on the ground of the sweet savor which ascended up, all curtailment of the articles of food is removed, for

whatsoever is sold in the shambles that eat, asking no questions  
for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness  
thereof (1 Cor. 10:25, 26).

Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be  
received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God  
and prayer (1 Tim. 4:4, 5)

-- God's word to Noah, setting it apart for our use, and our prayer to Him.

What a difference there is between dealing with man according to what he is or deserves, and acting towards him according to the acceptableness of the sacrifice! Noah and his sons now experience the latter, as Adam, and all before the flood, had proved the former.<sup>103</sup>

## *Blood Belongs to the Creator*

**Only, the flesh with its life, its blood, ye shall not eat (Gen. 9:4).**

In a quotation above it was noted that "death begins to furnish him with nourishment." That refers to man being given meat to eat. Only, the eating of blood was prohibited. It represents the life and life belongs to God. What is introduced that we might learn from it is that *life feeds on death*. We Christians have a new life -- life in the Son. It was necessary that He bear our sins and that He die in order for this to be so. He being dead already, the last act by lost man was to thrust the spear into His side, and as J. G. Deck wrote in a hymn:

The very spear that pierced Thy side,  
Drew forth the blood to save.

So does God control the creature as to turn hatred to His own glory. From that side came blood and water, the water signifying that the sacrifice cleans the soul from the *filth*, the dirtiness, of sin, and the blood signifying cleansing from the *guilt* of sin. In John 6 we have the eating of His flesh and the drinking of His blood.

Drinking the blood is added because this is available as a dead Christ -- the blood out of the body. Hence the monstrous character of the refusal of the cup in Romanism, as well as the doctrine of concomitancy (that is, that the blood is in the bread or alleged body of Christ). The forbidding of blood in the Old Testament denoted that man in the flesh could not meddle with death. Life belongs to God. Our drinking Christ's blood shows that through His death we come in freed from flesh as dead; and that death thus is life and liberty to us, deliverance from the old man and its guilt too, to us who have received the quickening of John 5.<sup>104</sup>

This of course is figurative, but it shows we feed on His death with our new life in the Son. *Life feeds on death*.

Coming back to eating blood, it is forbidden. And this is repeated in Acts 15. Life belongs to God. Blood being forbidden also means blood-puddings and blood wurst. The blood is to be poured out. Life belongs to God.

103. *The Present Testimony*, 2:262-264.

104. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 13:387, 388.

## The Death Penalty

Animals kill and eat other animals. Since the flood man is permitted to kill and eat animals. Animals are not responsible to the creator as man is, of course. However, if an animal kills a man, the animal is to be killed. And so is it if a man murders another man. The order from the Creator given to Noah is that He requires the death penalty for murder. The necessity for this is, of course, anticipated because the old nature (“sin in the flesh”) is carried by Noah and his sons in the present world. The sword of government supposes the existence of sin. While traditions of the flood have been collected from many places in the earth, Rom. 1 shows that man did not glorify God and fell into folly in their thoughts. Unbelief has a wilful element in it.

Government in man’s hands applies to the present order of the earth on through the millennium. However, there will be a short period of governmental apostasy just before the millennium, when the Beast receives power directly from Satan (Rev. 13:4). Meanwhile, the Western nations are removing capital punishment while scientism endeavors to deny the universal flood (2 Pet. 3:4) and philosophy throws off the ancient institutions given by God (see Psa. 2). The argument that capital punishment does not deter is besides the point. The argument that mistakes are made is answered by asking, whose fault is that? There is more than mistakes made: man *corrupts* the judicial system and the time to answer for it to the Creator will surely come. God has ordered capital punishment with His giving the sword of government. In this man fails but in the millennium capital punishment will be righteously carried out under Christ’s rule (Psa. 101:8; Isa. 65:20).

The reason given for capital punishment is that man is made in the image of God. That is, he is God’s representative in this world; and if killed by a beast or murdered by another man, the death penalty is prescribed. Thus says He who has authority over man, His representative in the world. This was not, as we have noticed, the order before the flood. The corruption and violence of the pre-flood world reach a crescendo that was stopped by the flood. Now, those such as Cain were to be executed. We can see in Cain’s murderous act the despising of the image of God in Abel.

## *Establishment of the Covenant, and Its Sign*

It was Jehovah that said that He would not again smite every living thing (Gen. 6:21). I am writing this a few weeks after the undersea earthquake which produced the awful tsunamis which wrecked their death-dealing fury on several hundred thousand souls in the Indonesian and Sri Lanka area. Gen. 8:21 is an assertion of God’s control over the earth, as are the words of Gen. 9:14: “when

I bring clouds over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud, and I will remember my covenant . . .” But does man remember? The course of the earth is in His hands and there will be no universal deluge.

Regarding the covenant, it is Elohim, the creator and preserver of the earth, that said that “the waters shall not henceforth become a flood to destroy all flesh” and the bow in the cloud “is the sign of the covenant.” It is not expressly stated or denied that there had been no bow before the flood. The case was either that God attached a meaning to the bow that it did not have before, or it was a new phenomenon.

This covenant is referred to as “the everlasting covenant” (v. 16). Does that mean there will be rainbows on the new earth in the eternal state? Of course not. It means that this will be so as long as the present earth exists. Verse 12 says the bow is for “everlasting generations.” Does that mean men will multiply on the new earth in the eternal state? You ask, why say such things? -- because there are Christians who think so, at least as regards Israel on the new earth. But all these statements about everlasting, concerning the earth, or God’s earthly promises for Israel, mean *as long as the present earth exists* -- not beyond that. Concerning the covenant with Noah, Gen. 8:22 has in view the duration of what God is saying regarding this covenant -- clearly as long as the present seasons last. Thus, the government then given to man is in effect now, and will be, until the dissolution of the present heavens and earth.

The covenant was with Noah, his sons, and with the animals. Elohim had before Him the sweet odor of the burnt-offerings of Noah, and we should view the covenant as an expression of His pleasure in what those offerings represented -- what Christ was as wholly offered up to God. God’s delight centers in Christ. And this is not unconnected with the announcement of the seed of the woman, for the preservation of this present order has in view that coming One to glorify the Father on the earth, and finish the work He was given to do (John 17:5). Consequently He would form the present heavenly work and then come to earth again to take up the reins of government for God’s glory, with Israel at the center of the earthly administration.

It is true that God acted from Himself in giving this covenant but we ought to reserve the word grace for “the covenants of promise” (Eph. 2). Thus, we may distinguish those from this one by thinking of the Noachic covenant as a covenant of mercy. It has in view all of Noah’s posterity.

## Chapter 7

### *Failure in Government*

#### *Failure in Self-government*

So that let him that thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall (1 Cor. 10:12)

J. G. Bellett wrote:

Endowed and blessed, enriched and honored -- instructed too, and ordained as "the power" under God, and with all this, at ease, in conscious safety, "no evil or enemy occurrent," Noah is seated in the new world. A new trial of man, under new circumstances, was proceeding; and, as with Adam in Eden, nothing is left undone on God's part. The oxen and fatlings were killed, and all things were ready. But where is man's sufficiency? If Adam failed before him, and lost the garden; if Israel failed after him, and lost their land of milk and honey; it may be said to Noah, "Lovest thou me more than these?" In Christ, and in Him only, are unfailing fidelity and strength. And Noah, like the rest, fails, and the virgin soil of the new world is quickly tarnished by the very first foot that trod it.

And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard, and drank of the vine, and was drunken, and he was uncovered within the tent.

Noah himself is put to shame; the very first man, the Adam of this new system, begins the history of this second apostasy, like his first father.

The "little fire" is thus kindled; but it is for "a greater matter." Noah is put to shame; but Ham, his son, glories in the shame. That was a terrible advance in the progress of evil.

Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without.

It was a terrible advance in evil; this was not simply the being "overtaken in a fault," but "rejoicing in iniquity." The common moral sense rejects this --

Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on their shoulders, went backwards, and covered the nakedness of their father.

And the saint himself is soon restored. Noah awakens from his wine. He that was overtaken recovers himself, through the Spirit, and the grace of God gives him a great triumph -- a very precious and glorious triumph indeed, for the restored one judges his judge, and condemns his accuser --

Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

This is something more than recovery -- it is triumphant recovery. Even the apostle's fine word, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" scarcely measures it; for that is only the silencing of the accuser, while this

is turning back on the pursuer.

Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall rise . . . Then she that is mine enemy shall be trodden down as the mire of the streets. <sup>105</sup>

To this we add from the pen of W. Kelly.

Humiliating as the fall of Noah was, far was he from being forsaken of our faithful God, Who knows how to restore and can make even the weakest to stand. When restored, Noah had fresh honor put on him. We may be assured that the righteous man deeply judged himself, and not the less because it gave occasion to Ham's impiety, if it also brought out the reverent sorrow of Shem and Japheth. There was no waiting in their case as in Jacob's for the Spirit of prophecy on his dying bed. It would seem to have ere long followed that event in his circle which led to the striking prediction here given. It is the first prophecy properly so called which man was given to utter recorded in Genesis. The word given in Gen. 3:15 is of a yet higher nature. It was worthy of Jehovah Elohim to make known, in judging the old Serpent, His gracious purpose in the woman's Seed. Nor is the poetic strain of Lamech to his wives more than typical of the future, though most interesting in that way. Here it is strictly a prophetic prayer.

As Peter, honored among the twelve, was reinstated after his still more grievous and inexcusable sin, so was Noah given to present the broad outlines of what should befall his sons throughout the ages, yet in an aspect precisely suiting that government of man on earth, which he was the first to exercise, and which God would sustain notwithstanding the fault of its representative. Enoch was inspired to prophesy in a wholly different vein of the judgment which the Lord, when He comes with myriads of His saints, will execute on all the ungodly here below. This, however surely uttered at that early day, and appropriate then, was fittingly reserved for its best place of permanent record and warning in the Epistle of Jude. But that of Noah is just where it should be no less certainly, and of a character and scope exactly in keeping with the context.

And he said, Cursed [be] Canaan; and he said, Bondman of bondmen be he to his brethren.

Blessed [be] Jehovah God of Shem, and Canaan be bondman to him;

God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in tents of Shem, And Canaan be bondman to him (vv. 25-27).

Appearances were long as usual against the truth. Experience seemed to favor the sons of Ham. His grandson Nimrod, as we know from the next chapter, "began to be a mighty one in the earth." "He was a mighty hunter [or plunderer], before Jehovah." It became a proverb. Wherefore it is said, Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before Jehovah. Babel, that ominous tower

105. *The Patriarchs*, London: Morrish, pp. 89, 90, n.d.

of confusion, was the beginning of his kingdom, and his kingdom did not stop there. No doubt an evident curse, which none could deny but an infidel, fell on Canaan, when because of their enormous wickedness the guilty cities of the Plain were destroyed by fire out of heaven. But even this was far from being an event of Noah's age, nor growing out of a condition of things yet existent, nor affording any such contact with the then circumstances as rationalists pretend prophecy requires. There was of course a true link which the Holy Spirit saw between Ham's sin, and his descendants' corruption; but it was in no way the mere immediate fortune-telling to which this deplorable unbelief would pervert the prophets. Still less can it be said of Canaan reduced to the lowest bondage, as when Israel took possession of the land of promise. Yet scripture is plain that both the curse and the blessing are not complete till Israel re-enter the land under Messiah and the new covenant, to be rooted there and blessed as long as the earth endures.

And in that day there shall be no more a Canaanite in the house of Jehovah of hosts.

Undoubtedly for the earth, and God's government, Shem has the richer promise, as that day will establish and proclaim. But all history even in the past attests God's enlarging Japheth, the great colonizer of the earth, and in the strongest contrast with Shem as to this. For he was not only to spread nationally as Shem never was, but to dwell in Shem's tents. Europe and the north-east of the old world sufficed not, nor yet the new world of America, Australia, &c., but he must also encroach on Shem's tents in the east. So it was to be, according to this earliest oracle; and so it has been to the letter, as no foresight of man could have anticipated. This closes the divine account of Noah:

And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years ; and all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years, and he died (vv. 28, 29).

The reader may note the exquisite propriety of "Jehovah the God of Shem" in v. 26, and of "God" only in v. 27 for Japheth, where enlargement in providence is meant rather than the promised blessing of special relationship with Himself. And here is an internal ground, in addition to grammatical reason, against the idea, which many like the late Mr. S. Faber adopted, that the same verse means (not Japheth's, but) God's dwelling in Shem's tents. Had this been intended by the Spirit of God in Noah, would it not have been said Jehovah Elohim, rather than simply Elohim? <sup>106</sup>

As with most other things in Scripture, fanciful minds have supposed all sorts of things not stated in the text regarding Ham's coming upon his drunken father (cp. Prov. 20:1) and naked. He saw him naked and went and told his brothers and that is just what it was. But it was a breach of family order and respect, no light thing in God's eyes. Arrestingly, in Gen. 10:18 the words "And Ham is the father of

Canaan" appear. The offspring of Canaan would inhabit the land that was given to Israel (see also Deut. 7:1; 9:3; Judg. 4:23; 18:9, 10; 29:17; see also Josh. 9:21-27). Lev. 18:3 refers to the practices of the Egyptians and the Canaanites, both Hamites. Attempts are made to have it that Canaan did something wrong, in order to account for the curse on Canaan instead of Ham. But we read, "And Ham the father of Canaan saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren outside." Is that not plain enough? We note the reappearance here of nakedness and its being covered. Had Shem and Japheth learned something from what God had done with Adam and Eve?

The question concerning why Canaan was cursed rather than Ham was answered as follows:

G.E.S.O. -- (1) Why did Jehovah curse Canaan, when Ham, his father, seems to have been the guilty one (Gen. 9:22, 25)?

(2) Does Canaan's curse apply governmentally to all black or colored peoples or only to the descendants of Canaan?

(1) Scripture does not state that Jehovah cursed Canaan, but that it was Noah who said, "Cursed be Canaan; let him be a bondman of bondmen to his brethren." Noah did not curse Ham, for the blessing of God had already been bestowed upon him at the beginning of the post-diluvian world, for in Gen. 9:1 we read, "God blessed Noah and his sons." Noah therefore would not curse one whom God had blessed, but acted according to the law afterwards established by Jehovah at Sinai (Ex. 20:5, 6) of visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon their sons to the third and fourth generations. Noah therefore cursed Canaan who was Ham's youngest son.

Throughout subsequent scripture history the Canaanites are notorious for their flagrant idolatry and their shameful immorality. The evidence of the destruction of the cities of the plain (Gen 19:24, 25) abides in the Dead Sea from that day to this as a witness to the world of Jehovah's wrath against the appalling iniquity of Canaan's descendants. The land of Canaan was assigned by God to Abraham and his seed as their dwelling-place for ever, its wicked inhabitants to be ejected or destroyed.

But not until the millennial reign of righteousness and peace under the rule of the glorified Messiah of Israel will the curse of Canaan have its completed fulfilment. Then, according to the prophecy of Zechariah, "in that day there shall be no more a Canaanite in the house of Jehovah of hosts" (Zech. 14:21).

(2) We believe that Noah's curse upon Canaan applied only to Canaan as expressly stated, and to his descendants (Gen. 10:15-19), and not to Canaan's brothers (Cush, Mizraim and Phut, Gen. 10:6). We may be sure there was good reason why Noah's curse was pronounced upon the Canaanite branch only of Ham's family, but it is not disclosed in scripture

106. *The Bible Treasury* 20: 369, 370.

what that reason was.<sup>107</sup>

## *Genesis 10, 11* *Failure in Government*

It is not intended to go through each verse but to survey these two chapters regarding the developments that preceded the call of Abraham into a path of separation.<sup>108</sup>

### *The Table of Nations and Israel*

The other matter of interest regarding Gen. 10, 11 is the connection of numbers of these peoples with the of the coming 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel, and the nations particularly having to do with Israel. In 1840, J. N. Darby remarked:

... the nations, the descendants of Noah, will be ranged either under the beast or under Gog -- the two principal powers; if you consult Gen. 10:5 you will read, "By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands." In the generations of the sons of Japheth are named Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Mesec, and Tiras. Of these we get Gomer, Magog, Tubal, Mesec, under the same names in Ezek. 38 as followers of Gog; you will also find there Persia which was united to Media (Madai), and from whose hands it received the crown (as we are told in Dan. 8 and other places), so that there only remain Javan and Tiras to be accounted for. Those mentioned above are the nations which comprise Russia, Asia Minor, Tartary, and Persia (all the people, in short, of which the empire of Russia is composed, or which are under its influence). They are described as under the dominion of Gog, prince of Rosh (the Russians), Mesec (Moscow), and Tubal (Tobolsk).

The children of Ham are pointed out in Gen. 10:6. Of these, Canaan has been destroyed, and his country turned over to Israel; Cush (Ethiopia) and Phut are also found (Ezek. 38:5; see margin) under Gog; those of Cush only in part, and for the reason that one part of the family of Cush established itself on the Euphrates, the other on the Nile, that is, north and south of Israel. Those of the north are then, by their position, in direct relation with the partisans of Gog. Mizraim, or Egypt (for Mizraim is none other than the Hebrew name for Egypt), and the remainder of Cush and the Libyans, you will find in the scenes of the last day; Dan. 11:43.

As to the children of Shem (Gen. 10:22), Elam is the same as Persia, of which we have already spoken. Asshur is named in the judgment, which will take place in the last times (Micah 5:6; Isa. 14:25; ch. 30:33); also in the conspiracy of Psalms 83, and in other places. Arphaxad is one of the

ancestors of the Israelites. We know nothing of the family of Joktan. It is supposed to be a people of the East. Aram, or Syria, was displaced by Asshur, and is found under the title of the king of the North. The same remarks, it appears, may be made of Lud. Javan (Greece) is to be in the last combat; Zech. 9 : 13. Of all the nations, Tiras is the only one besides Joktan, which is not named as to be in this great judgment. We speak only of the word of God. Profane authors unite Tiras and Javan in Greece; but with this we have not to do. In the present day, we may observe Russia extending her power exactly over the nations who will be found under Gog.<sup>109</sup>

Dan. 11 introduces us to two other powers, to which we must direct our regards; they are the king of the South, and the king of the North. The chapter contains a long account of already accomplished events, as to their wars, etc.; but after this come the ships of Chittim (v. 30), and then there is an interruption in their history. These kings were the successors of the great king of Javan (Greece): the one, possessor of Assyria; the other, of Egypt. The object of their fightings was Syria and the Holy Land. In vv. 31-35, the Jews are introduced as set aside during a long period of time (see v. 33). It is said,

And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end; because it is yet for a time appointed;

and then (v. 36),

And the king shall do according to his own will:

this is Antichrist. In v. 41, we have him in the land of Israel, in that territory which is the cause of the difference which exists between the king of the North and the king of the South.

And at the time of the end, shall the king of the South push at him.

That is, after a long interval, behold again the king of the South brought, in this chapter, upon the scene. And this has historically occurred only four years ago, after an interval of nearly two thousand years. The greater part of the nations who, as we are told, are to be at the feet of Gog, are now coming under the dominion of Russia;

and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind.

Antichrist will be the object of the attack, at one and the same time, of the king of the South, or Egypt; and of the king of the North, the possessor of Asiatic Turkey, or Assyria. I do not say who the king of the North will be at the end; but we see that the circumstances and the personages described in the prophecies which have reference to this time appointed -- "the time of the end" -- begin to appear. It is nearly two thousand years since there has been a king of the South {Egypt}; and it is but a few years that he has

107. *The Bible Monthly* 26-27:169.

108. Notes on Gen. 10 by W. Kelly are given in *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 1, and notes on Gen. 11 in New Series 2.

109. We must take care to distinguish the Gog of Ezekiel {premillennial} from the Gog and Magog in the Revelation {Postmillennial}.



appeared anew: In the same way a great people has appeared, of which the world a century ago hardly knew the existence, and which now rules over the exact countries of the Gog in Ezekiel. We do not desire that you should fix your attention too much upon events which are taking place in our time; it is only when we have explained the prophecy, that we advert to the circumstances which pass around us. All nations have their attention occupied about Jerusalem (Zech. 12:3), and know not what to do about it. The king of Egypt wants to call the whole country his own; the king of the North is unwilling to cede it (the Turk being the actual king of the North, or Assyria). The kings of the North and South dispute for the same country, which they fought over two thousand years ago. This is just what the prophecy says is to occur at "a time appointed." We do not mean that all this yet comes out plain; for example, the ten kings cannot be enumerated and Antichrist has not yet appeared. But the principles which are found in the word of God are acting in the midst of the kingdoms where the ten horns are to appear: that is, we find all western Europe occupied about Jerusalem, and preparing for war; and Russia, on her side, preparing herself, and exercising influence over the countries given to her in the word; and all the thoughts of the politicians of this world concentrate themselves on the scene where their final gathering in the presence of the judgment of God will take place -- where "the Lord shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor," Micah 4:12.<sup>110</sup>

### *The Tower of Babel and Idolatry (Gen. 11:1-9)*

God had said to Noah and his sons to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" (Gen. 9:2) but instead men resisted being scattered abroad as shown in building the tower of Babel. That disobedience resulted in God confounding their ability to communicate, which led to the formation of nations and also the establishment of idolatry. When this had advanced to a point for God to introduce calling and separation, God called Abraham into a place and walk of separation from "thy land, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, to a land I will show thee" (Gen. 12:1).

There is no reason to think the tower was meant to be high enough to escape another deluge. It was centralization, involving a city and the tower, in defiance of the word of God to fill the earth. It was an advance upon the evil that had already manifested itself. J. G. Bellett wrote:

We have already watched the infant springing of it {evil} in Noah himself, and the advanced form of it in Ham. Its further growth is next to be seen in the builders of Babel, some hundred years after the flood. And an awful exhibition it is.

At the birth-time of this new world, Noah's altar was raised, witnessing

faith and worship -- but now the city and the tower are reared, witnessing defiance of God and the affected independency of man. And the answer of heaven to these things is just as different. Noah's altar brought down words and tokens of peace and security -- the cry of the city and the tower now bring down judgment. Corruption here, and vengeance from on high, mark the scene, instead of worship here, and blessing from God. Then it was, that the Lord hung the bright token of His covenant in the heavens, but now He is sending abroad over the earth the witnesses of His righteous anger.

But this is not all. The tower is over-topped, high and proud as it was. The builders may be scattered, but their principles survive. Judgment does not cure. All the apostate mind that quickened that proud and rebellious confederacy, gathers itself rapidly for its perfect work and display in one man. For soon after the scattering (it may be about thirty years) Nimrod, a grandson of Ham, plants his standard on the very spot which had witnessed the judgment of God.

The beginning of his kingdom was Babel. (Gen. 10:10. He unfurls his banner in the very face of Him "to whom vengeance belongs," and cries, "Where is the God of judgment?" He was as the fool of Psalms 14 -- "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." He begins to be a mighty one in the earth. "Before the Lord he hunted." In defiance of God he sought conquest and power. He added house to house and field to field, in the desire to be lord alone. Erech and Accad and Calneh are mother-cities, and mighty Nineveh with Rehoboth and Calah, and that great city Resen, are but colonies in the system of this vaunting apostate. He had no heart for any portion which God could give him. He undertook to provide for himself, to be the maker of his own fortune, that his dignity and honor should proceed from himself. And such an one is the man of the world to this day. His intellect or his industry, his skill or his courage, makes him what he is, and provides him what he cares for. Such was this distinguished apostate, this earliest representative and type of that one who, in closing days, is to do according to his will, and fill the measure of man's iniquity.

It is a serious sight for the watching and observance of our souls. Are we, beloved, waiting for other and purer scenes? and are our hearts upon such enjoyments as God can sanction, and Jesus share with us?<sup>111</sup>

We learn elsewhere in Scripture that idolatry came in before the call of Abraham to the path of separation. Writing on Rom. 1 J. N. Darby noted the reasons for the wrath of God

With regard to the heathen, the apostle gives two reasons for this wrath. First, the testimony of creation (Rom. 1:19, 20); and, secondly, that, knowing God, they did not wish to retain Him in their knowledge but preferred idolatry (vv. 21-24). For the invisible things of Him are seen, that is, His eternal power and Godhead, perceived by the things that are made from the creation of the world; so that what can be known of God is

110. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 2:340-342.

111. *The Patriarchs*, London: Morrish, pp. 92, 93, n.d.

manifested among them, and consequently they are without excuse (v. 20). This does not imply that they know God according to His nature, but that they should have known Him as Creator ; unless one is blind, a Creator is seen in the creation.

But God has not only revealed Himself as Creator. Noah did not only know Him as such, but also as a God with whom man as a responsible being had to do, as a God who had judged the world for its wickedness; who took note of man's ways, and who would not have unrighteousness and violence. At the building of the tower of Babel they had learnt to know Him as a God who had scattered them, because they desired to become independent in their own wisdom, and powerful in their own strength. Such a God, however, the heathen would not retain in their knowledge or acknowledge; they made themselves gods such as man could make, gods which favored their passions; and instead of glorifying the true God, or being thankful to Him, they relapsed into the darkness of their own hearts.

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

And because they would not maintain the glory of God, but gave it up for their lusts, God gave them over to these lusts. He gave them up to shameful passions in which they did things unbecoming nature itself, and filled with all ungodliness and controlled by their passions, they not only did such things themselves, but with deliberate wickedness they found pleasure in those that did them. There were, it is true, some who judged these infamous ways (Rom. 2:1), but they did the same, and thus condemned themselves, and became subject to the just judgment of God, while also they despised the riches of His goodness and patience, not perceiving that this goodness led them to repentance. Instead of yielding to this leading, with a stubborn and impenitent heart, they treasured up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath.<sup>112</sup>

Another important element now stands out in the history : the introduction of *idolatry*. Not only does Satan, as tempter, make man wicked, but he makes himself into a god for man, in order to help him to satisfy his passions. Having lost God, with whom, nevertheless, he had been in relation, and had made a fresh beginning in Noah, man made a god of everything in which the power of nature showed itself, making of it a plaything for his imagination, and using it to satisfy his lusts. It was all he had. Even that part of the race that was in relationship with Jehovah (Gen. 9:26) is specially noticed as having fallen to that depth (Josh. 24:2). Terrible fall! Although man could not free himself from the consciousness that there was a God, a Being who was above him, and though he feared Him, he created for himself a multitude of inferior gods, in whose presence he would seek to drive away this dread, and obtain an answer to his desires,

112. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 3:320, 321.

hiding that which always, in reality, continued to be an "unknown God." Everything took the form of 'God' in man's eyes; the stars, his ancestors, the sons of Noah, and members of the human race still more ancient and less known, the power of nature, all that was not man but acted and operated without him -- the reproduction of nature after its death, the generation of living creatures. The true God he had not; yet needed a God, and in a state of dependence and wretchedness, he made gods for himself according to his passions and imagination, and Satan took advantage of it. Poor mankind without God! Then God interposed sovereignly, reducing also, as we may note in passing, the length of man's life by half after the flood, and by as much again in Peleg's time, when the earth was methodically divided.<sup>113</sup>

What God had in view consequent upon the development of nations and idolatry was Israel, as J. N. Darby observed:

No sooner did God manifest Himself in His providential judgments, than Satan presented himself also as God; he made himself, as it were, God. Is it not written,

The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to God?

Satan made himself the god of this earth. Josh. 24:2:

Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time . . . and they served other gods,

said the Lord to the Israelites. It is the first time that we find God marking the existence of idolatry. When it made its appearance, God calls Abraham; and thus, for the first time, appears the call of God to an outward separation from the state of things here below; because Satan having introduced himself as influencing the thoughts of man, as the one whom man was to invoke, it was necessary that the true God should have a people separated from other people, where the truth might be preserved; and consequently all the ways of God towards men turn upon this point -- that here below God called Abraham and his posterity to be the depository of this great truth, "There are none other gods but one" (see Deut. 4:35). Consequently, all the doings of God upon the earth have reference entirely and directly to the Jews, as the center of His earthly counsels and of His government. This is shown us in Deut. 32:8. It was according to the number of the children of Israel that the bounds of the nations were set. It was with reference to Israel that He gave them their habitations.<sup>114</sup>

113. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 34:12, 13.

114. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 2:347; see also 22:340, 341.

## Chapter 8

### *Summary of God's Ways Regarding the Earth Under Government from Noah to Abraham*

(This summary is by J. N. Darby.)

❖ It is important to consider what subjects the scripture previously presents; they were substantially two — Adam and Noah; creation, and creation secured by government. That Adam was placed at the head of natural creation will be called in question by none. That Noah stood as the representative head of government I learn from the committal of the sword to him, or at least from the revelation of the principle to him, “Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.” There might be repentance in these things, though in gift and calling of God there could be none. He was not declared as the God of Adam, or as the God of Noah; but He was the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; “this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations,” Ex. 3:15. Creation, in point of fact (as to its existing estate), was repented of --

God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually; and it repented the Lord that he had made man upon the earth, and it grieved him at his heart; and the Lord said, *I will destroy*;

and He did destroy, sparing favored Noah; as it is written,

I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them (Gen. 6:5-7).

But God's calling is His purpose, and He hath sworn in His holiness, and He will not repent.

The natural good of creation in the hands of the first man had not only proved fallible and corruptible, but it had failed, and become corrupted; and destructive judgment had been executed upon it by the hand of God, few, that is eight souls, being spared, together with what was with them in the ark, out of all in whose nostrils was the breath of life. To Noah (as I have before said) the principle of government was communicated, in order to restrain evil in its effects; that violence might no more cover the earth, but that in detailed instances the wrath of God might be vindicated against it -- life belonging unto Him. Sin, however, in its principle, still remains at work, exhibiting itself in the failing of Noah the saint, and in the recklessness of the disrespectful father of Canaan.

As regards this part of the history previous to Abram (that is, the earth under

government), we have the fact recorded of the division of the earth amongst its various nations and families; this we find in Genesis 10, where the fact is stated, the origin of which we find explained only in ch. 11. But first let us consider the fact -- the earth was divided (a new and not a necessary circumstance for it as placed under government) into distinct nations, separated by place, language, and (as to the various lower branches), we may add, more immediate origin. Thus, whatever may have been the particular changes since, the earth under government assumed the form which it now bears. Various indeed, in particular parts, might be the interchange, division, or growth of power; but the characteristic state of things continued to be the same, and in fact its great features were indelibly impressed. Indeed not only is this the case, but it is interesting to observe, that if we take the list of nations spoken of as gathered together under the wilful king in the latter day, and under Gog in Ezekiel we shall find ourselves brought back to the same nations, and tongues, and families, which are presented to our view at the outset, as the immediate consequence of the establishment of this principle of government in the hands of Noah, and as formed into actual condition by the sin of Babel. The rest of the intermediate scripture is the history of calling and grace.

To the sin of Babel I would now turn. In the history of Babel we have shown the sin of man, under the circumstances in which the one family of man was then placed; even in assuming the earth to themselves; in seeking to make a name, lest they should be scattered; a city, which they purposed should be an abiding monument and centre of power, but on which God writes *Babel*. Until they were scattered abroad, they had one speech, and one tongue, and thus they were practically one family, having a common bond of association. But the lust of ambitious selfishness was at work, and this union was broken to pieces. Hence they were separated and (the earth subsequently being formally divided among them, Gen. 10:25; 11:18), they became, to every intent and purpose, distinct nations. Although its origin was sin, and its character confusion, the reaching out of grace was shown in the testimony of the day of Pentecost, as extended toward the world, and as contrasted with anything towards the Jews merely; this I remark in passing, but it is not on this that I would now dwell.

But although circumstances were thus altered, the principle of government remained untouched; however it might be exercised, righteously or unrighteously, it was placed in the hand of man, “not bearing the sword in vain,” “the minister of God *to execute wrath*.” It might be exercised according to its institution, in repressing evil, although merely by power; but even this in the sin of man was not the case; the result is described in Psa. 82.

God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; He judgeth among the gods.

How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?

Defend the poor and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and needy.

Deliver the poor and needy; rid them out of the hand of the wicked.

They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are out of course.

I have said, Ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High.

But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.

Arise, O God, judge the earth, for thou shalt inherit all nations.

The judges of the earth had all gone *incurribly wrong* -- they neither heard, nor yet understood. God was obliged, therefore, to take the matter into His own hands; He was obliged to arise and to judge the earth. Thus is shewn the failure of power in the hands of man from another part of scripture, as is also shewn in Dan. 7, etc.

We have thus brought before us in Genesis, up to ch. 12, creation, and then its failure and its judgment; next we have government of the renewed earth introduced for its peace, in consequence of evil having been proved in man. Man's pride, rebellion, and self-sufficiency, are shewn: together with a judgment, which did not alter the principle of the dispensation (for had it been otherwise, evil would have been without check), which was to continue until God should take it into His own hands, but which exhibited how man failed under it, in its common form; how under the consequent judgment it assumed the form of distinct nationality; and how the lust of personal ambition and power, or of obtaining a great name, was associated with the divinely sanctioned principle of government, and thus came into existence the beginning of kingdoms; however unrighteously this principle was exercised, it still continued to be unalterably recognized of God. Here were all the principles drawn out, and the scene was closed.

The circumstances might vary, but there was no change in the principle till God takes the matter into His own hands. Countries and kindreds were now formed; and inasmuch as they were separated one from another by the spirit of intelligible association, so much the more were they united in stronger personal and local interests; selfishness became national, and adverse interests became (not simply personal) but those of countries, and peoples, and tongues.

But into the midst of all this there was a new principle introduced. The calling of God -- a principle and a power which, while leaving these untouched, acted paramount to them all -- to natural relationship, and to formed associations.

Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee.

Here is distinctly shown the calling of the "father of the faithful." Country and kindred were recognized as existing; how they were formed in creation, and under government (as established in Noah), and the subsequent circumstances, we have already seen.

They were now left just as they were. They were not meddled with. In fact, in their own place (though corrupted), and as having instamped upon them that

they had been God's ordinances, they were both distinctly maintained. There is not to this day any abrogation of them, nor indeed ever will be in principle, though they will be transferred to Christ, and under Christ they will be unto righteousness and blessing. "A king shall reign in righteousness," and although the queen and Jewish partner of His glory shall be taught to forget her father's house (being called through grace, not descent), yet the offspring of the remnant shall be blessed with them; instead of the fathers shall be the children. However, therefore, evil may have overrun them, both government and relationship, home, etc., are principles in no way rejected, nor could they be abstractedly. But the calling of God acts paramently to them, or else there could be no other principle, and the prevailing of man's evil in them would be left unremedied.

But in the wisdom of God, the corrupted state of things was no longer judged or acted upon, but the witness of better things was introduced; had they been judged, then must have been the end in utter destruction, or the premature assumption of all into the hands of Supreme power. Yet even that by which evil was to be suppressed, that is, government, being corrupted, was now become the instrument of evil. Hence entirely new hopes could alone be introduced, and not merely a present amendment, for that must have come to the same end; but new principles, not destroying the sanctioned and appointed instruments of God, for such destruction would have proved, not so much the evil of man, the creature, but the evil and foolishness of the Creator's appointment. This appointment was left just where it was, to be judged in due time upon the maintainers of it. But in grace another principle was introduced—the leaving in self-sacrifice all these things for better hopes. The existing ties of country and kindred are recognized, but in THE CALL OF GOD there is set up a paramount claim: --

The Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house. <sup>115</sup> ❖

### *Excursus on Omitting "Cainan" from Noah's Line*

The name Cainan appears in the genealogy of our Lord in Luke 3:36 but it does not appear in the Hebrew MT, though it is present in the LXX. <sup>116</sup> Those who, for whatever their reason, desire to push back the date of the flood and the creation of the earth (which they take to be between 6000 and 10,000 years ago) seek to capitalize on the idea that there are gaps in the chronologies of Gen. 5 and 11,

115. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 19:122-127.

116. For information regarding the matter, see Darrel L. Bock, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Luke 1:1 - 9:50*, Grand Rapids: Baker, pp. 358, 359, 1994.

calling them genealogies. The alleged omission of Cainan is used as showing omissions to be the case, thus extending the time backwards. The validity of this, it is said, can be seen, for example, from the fact that in the genealogy in Matt. 1, three sets of 14 generations are given, and some names are demonstrably omitted in order to accomplish this. That is true, but Matt. 1 is not a chronology. It is also pointed out that David is used twice in Matt. 1, thus validating the use of Shem twice in column 1 and 2 below (would that validate the use of Noah twice in columns 1 and 3?). The names are placed in column 1 and 2 below as indicating that the name Cainan is needed for the symmetry. But it is not needed for symmetry, as we can see from column three without the name of Cainan,<sup>117</sup> and indicates the proper place of Noah, as we saw JND indicate at the start of the above quotation, namely:

Adam and Noah; creation, and creation secured by government.

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3
1. Adam	1. Shem	1. Noah
2. Seth	2. Arphaxad	2. Shem
3. Enosh	3. Cainan	3. Arphaxad
4. Cainan	4. Shelah	4. Shelah
5. Mahalaleel	5. Eber	5. Eber
6. Jared	6. Peleg	6. Peleg
7. Enoch	7. Reu	7. Reu
8. Methushelah	8. Serug	8. Serug
9. Lemech	9. Nahor	9. Nahor
10. Noah	10. Terah	10. Terah
(Shem, Ham, Japeth)	(Abram, Nahor, Terah)	(Abram, Nahor, Terah)

Columns 1 and 3 are the proper way of viewing this -- omitting Cainan. Column 2 removes Noah from his proper place in favor of a chronological notion. There are, of course, other chronological issues but they will not detain us. I have no chronological scheme here.

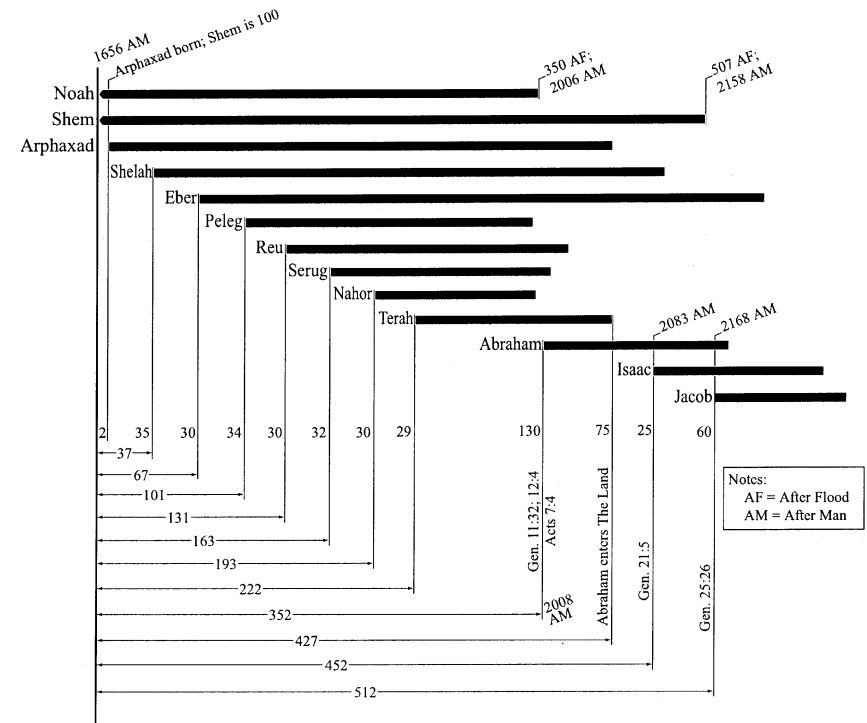
Shem was not the firstborn, but was of the line of special blessing. So with Abram, he also was not the firstborn. It is characteristic in Genesis that it is not the firstborn that has the first place. "First that which is natural, afterwards that which is spiritual." That is the case with Abram, listed first, though not the

firstborn.

## Excursus on the Chronology from the Flood to Abraham

The flood began in the 600<sup>th</sup> year of Noah (Gen. 7:11). It ended in the 601<sup>st</sup> year of Noah's life (Gen. 8:1). However, since Gen. 9:28, 29 tells us that Noah lived 350 years after the flood and all his days were 950 years, the 350 years given for after the flood must start from the beginning of the flood. Therefore all dates

### CHRONOLOGY FROM THE FLOOD TO ABRAHAM



dated from the flood are referenced to the beginning of the flood on the following chart.

117. As was pointed out by C. G. Ozanne, *The First 7000 Years*, New York: Exposition Press, p. 214, 1970.

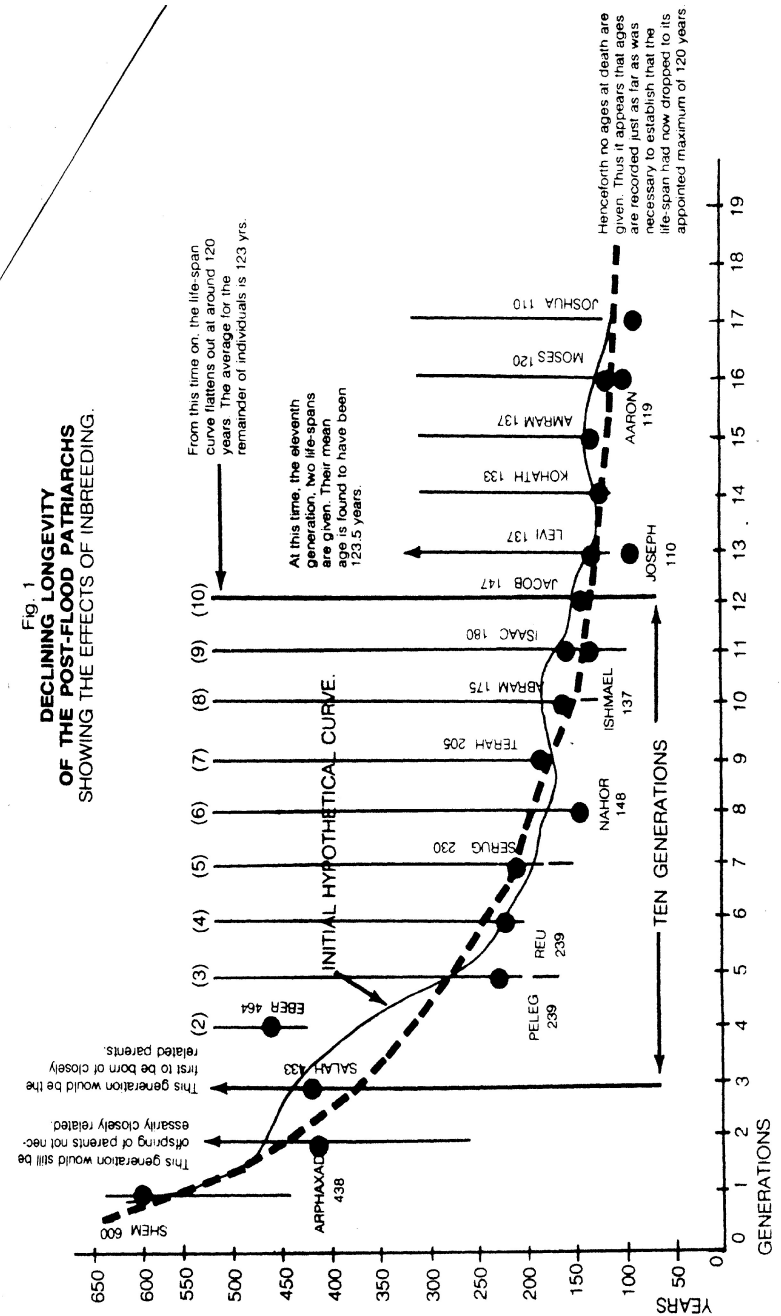
## Excursus on the Declining Longevity

### Attending God's Judgment

Following the flood man's longevity declined in an exponential manner. It is common in nature that when a steady-state system is shocked, a new steady state is sought in an exponential fashion. What caused the decline is not stated in Scripture. Such phenomena are grist for speculation as scenarios are posited to possibly account for them. Here, it is noted that along with God's institution of government, man's life is shortened. However, when Christ takes governmental power in the millennium, longevity will be greatly increased.

The chart is taken from one of Arthur Custance's *Doorway Papers*. Since Moses wrote in Psa. 90:10 of man's longevity being 70 years, the lower end of the curve should, no doubt, be lower yet though it is true that the persons shown on the curve lived to the ages indicated.

Fig. 1  
DECLINING LONGEVITY  
OF THE POST-FLOOD PATRIARCHS  
SHOWING THE EFFECTS OF INBREEDING.



## Chapter 9

### *The Call of Abraham*

#### *Background to the Call (Gen. 12:1)*

Not only was there the confounding of the languages, the scattering of the people, and the formation of nations, clearly, idolatry, i.e., demon worship (1 Cor. 10:20), had found a place in Shem's offspring, and Terah the father of Abraham was an idolater.

And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith Jehovah the God of Israel: Your fathers dwelt of old on the other side of the river, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods (Josh. 24:2).

As Adam had lived to see the increasing evil, so did Noah as may easily be seen on the chart *From the Flood to Abraham*. In the midst of this situation God called Abram from his land, his kindred, and his father's house. He did not go directly to the land of Israel, and when he finally arrived there we learn from Gen. 12:1 that "Jehovah had said" he should leave these things. We are not told details how Jehovah made this call to Abraham known to him -- though it was a sovereign action of God upon him.

Note that "Terah took Abram his son," etc. Jehovah had not called Terah yet he acted as if *he* had been called, but he muddled the call. He was neither the subject of the call, nor of its character. To be involved with such is to hinder the call in those who *are* called. Lot, Terah's grandson, had not been called to this path of separation, but Terah took him also. Terah seems to have wanted to go, but part way, and Lot came along also.

Abram lived at Haran for some time until his father died when Abram was 75 years old (Gen. 12:4). It was then that Abraham obeyed the call to the separated path. In the providence of God there had arisen the character of this world as the background against which the great principles of calling and promise are displayed.

#### *Introduction of Calling and Promise:*

#### *Calling is Out of the World, and Leaves the World Where It Is*

The following is by J. N. Darby

❖ Countries and kindreds were now formed; and inasmuch as they were separated one from another by the spirit of intelligible association, so much the more were they united in stronger personal and local interests; selfishness became national, and adverse interests became (not simply personal) but those of countries, and peoples, and tongues.

But into the midst of all this there was a new principle introduced. The calling of God -- a principle and a power which, while leaving these untouched, acted

paramount to them all -- to natural relationship, and to formed associations.

Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee.

Here is distinctly shown the calling of the "father of the faithful." Country and kindred were recognized as existing; how they were formed in creation, and under government (as established in Noah), and the subsequent circumstances, we have already seen.

They were now left just as they were. They were not meddled with. In fact, in their own place (though corrupted), and as having instamped upon them that they had been God's ordinances, they were both distinctly maintained. There is not to this day any abrogation of them, nor indeed ever will be in principle, though they will be transferred to Christ, and under Christ they will be unto righteousness and blessing. "A king shall reign in righteousness," and although the queen and Jewish partner of His glory shall be taught to forget her father's house (being called through grace, not descent) {Psa. 45:10}, yet the offspring of the remnant shall be blessed with them; instead of the fathers shall be the children. However, therefore, evil may have overrun them, both government and relationship, home, etc., are principles in no way rejected, nor could they be abstractedly. But the calling of God acts paramently to them, or else there could be no other principle, and the prevailing of man's evil in them would be left unremedied.

But in the wisdom of God, the corrupted state of things was no longer judged or acted upon, but the witness of better things was introduced; had they been judged, then must have been the end in utter destruction, or the premature assumption of all into the hands of Supreme power. Yet, even that by which evil was to be suppressed, that is, government, being corrupted, was now become the instrument of evil. Hence entirely new hopes could alone be introduced, and not merely a present amendment, for that must have come to the same end; but new principles, not destroying the sanctioned and appointed instruments of God, for such destruction would have proved, not so much the evil of man, the creature, but the evil and foolishness of the Creator's appointment. This appointment was left just where it was, to be judged in due time upon the maintainers of it. But in grace another principle was introduced -- the leaving in self-sacrifice all these things for better hopes. The existing ties of country and kindred are recognized, but in THE CALL OF GOD there is set up a paramount claim: --

The Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house {Gen. 12:1}.

We have then, in the calling of God, the assertion of a paramount claim on God's part upon an individual in grace, leaving everything out of which he was called without further change; only calling *him* out of it. This is one very strong, distinct,

and new principle, not previously revealed, consequent upon, and acting in, an especial and paramount way, in reference to the existing relationships, which had arisen out of what was previously ordered and appointed. No declaration of blessings or principles to men where they were, but the calling of them out thence, and thus a personal calling is what we find. The principle further established in it mere personal obedience, upon the ground of this call, to individual responsible action.

God had said to Abraham, Get thee out.

Here on the word of God the individual responsibility of obedience attached. It necessarily and avowedly involved the breaking of subsisting relationships in person, *as to his own interest in them*, but without affecting them, as they stood in themselves, in the least. He was to leave his country, and his kindred, and his father's house. They might still continue just what they were before (they might, or they might not) this was a question of Providence; obedience to the words and calling of God was the only point in grace to Abram, the only point to be considered by him. The word of God led the way in the direction which was given, and gave the promise to him as that which should encourage him in acting. "Into a land that I will show thee"; this was the certain hope of certain faith, by which a man is made entirely a stranger where he was before at home. It was indeed merely a promise, but it was a promise which involved not only the certainty of God, but also the guidance of God unto the thing promised -- "to a land that I will show thee."

Let us turn more to the detail of this calling of God; we have seen already that its grand distinguishing feature was *separation from the world*.

The Lord had said to Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house {Gen. 12:1}.

This was the substance of the present character of the calling, as acting upon a nationalized world; and thus was brought forward the specific character of the church.

There was involved then in it the immediate favor of God, not in present comfort, but in personal calling. The personal revelation of Himself to Abram, as it were, identified him with Himself and with His purpose, and with the blessing of an appointed inheritance. This calling, however special and personal, however distinguishing in favor, necessarily involved obedience. The call of blessing to Abraham was a call to get out of *his* country unto a land which God would show to him, and thus it necessarily involved obedience. Whatever the power which acted on his mind might be, obedience was the result; for in the very terms of the call it was manifest -- no obedience, no blessing. He was (to use the words of scripture) "sanctified unto obedience," for there was nothing else now given but the command, "Go out" -- "the Lord had said." It was not to gratify the present selfishness of Abram's nature, saying, "this is thy country," but it was "Get thee

out of thy country" -- to go where? "to a land that I will show thee." It implied, therefore, implicit confidence in God for faithfulness, power, and love. Taking Him for the security and the portion (as the scriptures reveal it), he went out, not knowing whither he went. It is on this that the Spirit of God so specially rests as characteristic of his approved faith. By separation from the world, on the ground of implicit confidence in God, he lost everything, and got nothing but the word of God, sealed of course to his soul (for his faith rested in it) by the power of the Spirit of God. The God of glory had appeared to him in the matter, and God would shew to him the land. So Abram departed.

Here then is the pattern and character of the church, and also of the individual believer; they are called of God in faith out of all that into which the world and nature have been formed (and while not meddling with these things, or disowning them in their place, but recognizing in them God's ordering hand, and moreover the sin of man): trusting in a promise not at once fulfilled, but taking God, and God alone, as the security, the warrant, and the guide; it is faithfulness, as being assured of the present loss of all things, and the present gain of nothing; it is a walking by faith, and not by sight, not only as regards present things relinquished, but also as to things hoped for -- things to come -- "for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" But they are sufficiently assured of God; and in Him, and knowing Him, or rather being known of Him, they are ready to give up all for His word. Thus it was not the reward that was taken as the portion, but God, the promiser of the reward, and therefore it was *faith*. The object was as simple as the security. "They went forth to go to the land of Canaan"; the result was as certain as He who called was sure;

they *went forth* to go into the land of Canaan, *and into the land of Canaan they came*.

Such is the history and the character of the church of God in its calling. Called out by God into separation from the world, which it leaves just where it was to go into a land of promise -- a land which God will show it -- it walks by faith, and not by sight, going forth to go thither, and thither surely coming, according to the calling and power of God.<sup>118</sup> ♦

♦ Let us turn now to God's ways in promise. The earliest revelation of God (on the fall) was a declaration that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. It was not a promise to Adam, but a revelation of another than him, who should destroy the power which he, by his unfaithfulness, had let in to rule on the earth. On this, individual faith could rest, and we know did rest, in the Enochs and the Noahs; we may trust in Adam himself and many others of his posterity. Still the world grew desperate in wickedness, and God deter-mined to destroy what He

118. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 19:126-129, article "Abram."



had created, and brought in the flood upon this world of the ungodly. The world began anew, and alas! it was soon seen, sin with it. But God would not allow that they should be unrestrained. Man built the tower to have his own way, and not be dispersed; and God confounded his language and dispersed the race, forming countries, and tongues, and languages. Mighty hunters there might be, and have been; but a divided world and antagonistic races. But the world had gone away from God and, as we know from Joshua, had begun to worship demons. And now Abraham is called. There was no law, no condition, no righteousness, no requirement of it. He is called to break with and quit the providential order which God Himself had established in the world, his country, and his kindred, and his father's house. Country was that new thing of God's establishment, which His judgment on Babel had formed -- God's order in the world. Abraham was to leave it; not to act against it, but to be apart from it for God in the world. This was a most important point, and becomes so the more we examine it. It takes Abraham up on ground independent of the common responsibility of men. The world lay under it; sin was there, and a judgment to come. Grace here works. Abraham is called out from among them, and separated from them, and positive revealed blessing is deposited there, and entirely and exclusively there.

This was an immense fact. It is not man responsible and liable to judgment. It is not merely grace working, so that a man may have, individually, share in divine life, and divine favor, and heaven; but one called publicly out from the whole system of God {God's providence}, and made the head of a race (now a spiritual one), and all blessing deposited in him, and wholly in him. This was a new thing on the earth. In a general way one may look at Israel as the natural seed according to the promise, but the details of that part of the history need not detain us here. They were according to flesh, and the seed of promise was definitely to be accounted heir.

But it is this principle itself which is important. Grace calls out one to be the head of a new race, in which the blessing of God was to be "the blessing of Abraham." This had nothing to do with judging on the footing of responsibility; or any rule or measure given on which that judgment was to be founded. This may be a deeper motive for faithfulness and service than any other, but so it is. But it is one called out from a responsible world which is under judgment for its failure {}, not to give an exact rule by which that failure can be measured, but to set sovereign blessing in him, and by subsequent revelations, in his Seed. As Adam was the head of a sinful and condemned race, Abraham was the head of a blessed race, of whom it could be said,

now are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise.

This, by grace, will be true even of Israel in its day; they tried to have it by the works of the law {under the Mosaic Covenant} and so lost it, but God will, for all that, faithful to Himself, accomplish His promises. But this for the moment I

pass by.

It suffices to point out here the position of Abraham, called to be the deposit and stock of promise and blessing,

Get thee out of thy country and out of thy kindred, and out of thy father's house, to a land that I will shew thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing. Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee, and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed (Gen. 12:1-3).

Blessing characterized his calling. He is blessed and a blessing. Blessing is measured out by dispositions towards him. And he is the one source of blessing to all the families of the earth. This is a very remarkable position and a most blessed, and, in its character, a divine one, which we shall do well to consider as regards ourselves. I will suggest a word or two in a moment. But, remark here how divine a one it is in its nature. God is blessedness in Himself. It characterizes Him. He is the source of it to all who have any. This was, derivatively, just Abraham's place. He was made blessed, in this sense had blessedness on the earth, distinctively and especially so; he was the source of it to all the families of the earth. If there was a curse, it was only for enmity to this. This is a most precious, and in character divine, place for a creature; a creature blessed no doubt, and quickened of God; but thence only the more precious because the more real.

Thus the place of blessing is definitively settled as of pure grace without law -- grace abounding over the whole sinful condition of man, and flowing from and measured by the self-originated fulness of divine love, of which it was the display and revelation. This is what characterized it in Abraham -- grace putting man in a divine place of blessing.

But this comes more distinctly and blessedly out when we proceed to consider the way in which it was accomplished.

It was confirmed <sup>119</sup> to the Seed, that is, to Christ; and that, as we shall see, by an obedience and in a way far beyond all legal obedience which might have fulfilled the duties incumbent on the first Adam, and been contained authoritatively as duties in the law. The promise was given to Abraham in ch. 12. It is confirmed to the seed in ch. 22, after Isaac had been offered up. Abraham was called to surrender all he loved, all the promises where God had deposited them; for in Isaac his seed was to be called; an entire surrender of self -- "thine only son, whom thou lovest" -- and of all even that God had given him, as founded on life in this world, in the seed he had received of God according to promise. He must reckon on God alone and resurrection, and give up all in life down here. And he does. Isaac is surrendered in devotedness to God, and God

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119. To Christ, not "in Christ."

trusted for promise which must be in resurrection. This was all out of the very reach and nature of law. It was not the claims of obedience to legal righteousness in man, but absolute surrender of self and righteousness and all to God. All was offered up in sacrifice. Law obeyed is life accomplishing its duties. This was the surrender of self and promises and all to God -- the sacrifice of all to God. It was the well-known figure of Christ's offering up Himself (only in Him it was really accomplished) and rising from the dead. Then, not till then, the promise was confirmed to the seed. That is, the promise was confirmed to Christ on the ground of an obedience infinitely above all law, and as having passed through death (and law has power over a man only as long as he lives), and as risen from the dead, and to us in Him. <sup>120</sup> ❖

### *Summary of What Was Said Above*

It is important to understand the ways of God with man. There was creation of man, then the fall and its fruits, then judgment by the flood. In view of the violence and corruption that had filled the earth previous to the flood, government was committed to man in the renewed earth. Then man's supposed self-sufficiency lifted itself up (Gen. 11) and is judged. Yet, government continues in the earth, however perverted, until Christ comes in power and glory, Who will exercise it in righteousness. Meanwhile, man is continually demonstrating His incompetence to rule.

The judgment comes (Gen. 11), and nations are formed. The lust and pride which was judged by God (Gen. 11:1-9) passes to the first conqueror, Nimrod (Gen. 10:8-10). From then on government is carried on in the divided kingdoms of men, and even though so often unrighteously, yet God recognizes *rule* as a divinely appointed institution. In the due time, Christ will take up rule and glorify God in it.

Along with the developing power of Nimrod, man departed into idolatry (Josh 24:2; Acts 14:18; Rom. 1) and demon worship (Deut. 32:17; 1 Cor. 10:20).

Into such a worldly condition brought about by the first man there was introduced the call of God. (1) *Father's house* and (2) *kindred*, which are the fruit of created relationships, as well as (3) *country* formed by associations consequent upon the scattering by God's judgment in confounding the languages, are untouched, not changed, by the call of God. These three things are left where they are. The call of God does not change the order or condition in the earth or reform

any of these three things. The call of God leaves them where they are. God does not introduce remedies, for there is no remedy until His Anointed reigns in Zion before His ancients in glory (Isa. 24:23).

The call of God is the claim of grace to leave all where it is and as it is. The call of God is consequent upon the development and perversion of these very three relationships and could only be brought forward in the ways of God when, because of the failure and perversion by man regarding these three things, they formed the background against which the call of grace into a path of separation in walk comes. The call of God by sovereign grace bows the heart in obedience and breaks the hold of these things. The call of God is a call into the path of obedience, separation, communion, worship, testing, and inheritance, but with that the loss of present things. This call Abraham obeyed (by grace) and he thus confessed that he was a stranger and pilgrim in the earth. Are you a stranger and a pilgrim in the earth (1 Pet. 2:11), or do you entertain schemes for making this world a better place and remedying the evils in these three things?

### *No New Administration Was*

#### *Introduced with Abraham*

There is no introduction of a dispensation or administration in connection with Abraham. And while the introduction of promises is most important, "promise" is an adjunct to calling. Hence, if one were to speak of a dispensation in this connection, 'dispensation of calling' would be more appropriate. However, neither calling or promise in itself constitutes an administration. On the other hand, calling may constitute an element in an administration, as the administrations of law and of the fullness of times. But "promise" and "calling" by themselves do not institute a period of time during which God is testing man, as such. With the call of Israel, united with government, we do have an administration wherein "the first man" was tested and failed in both calling and government united (and in all dispensed by God, such as priesthood, judges, and kingship). Moreover, the test included man's ability to realize the promises through his own efforts. But this failure did not annul the promises given before to Abraham (Gal. 3:17-20).

Meanwhile, government, given to Noah, as head of the world that now is, in connection with that government, continued on while God dealt with the patriarchs.

120. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 21:304-307, article "Not Law but Promise." See also 16:68-76; 22:346, 368-370; 29:84n, 96; 34:13, 14; 5:385; 2:134-137, 348. See the article "Abram, Gen. 12, 13," by W. Kelly, in *The Bible Treasury* 10:193-198.

## Chapter 10

### *The Eight Recorded Communications of God With Abraham*

#### *Introductory Remarks*

The Abrahamic Covenant is to be understood as an unconditional covenant; meaning, that the promises of God given to Abraham will be unconditionally fulfilled. This stands in contrast to the Mosaic Covenant which is a conditional covenant; meaning, that the promises of God will not be fulfilled to those under the Mosaic Covenant if they do not keep the terms of the covenant required of them to obtain the promises. The fulfilling of the Mosaic Covenant depended upon two parties. There was only one party to the Abrahamic Covenant.

Therefore I refer to such covenants as the Abrahamic Covenant as *gracious covenants*, because *sovereign grace undertakes* to make good the promises. Three other such covenants are the covenant with Phinehas, with David, and the New Covenant. The Mosaic Covenant is a works-based covenant. Its purpose was two-fold: (1) to show that Israel could not by works obtain the promises given in the Abrahamic covenant; (2) it was part of the trial of the first man to show that he was not recoverable from the fall. He was not able to keep the law (which shows the absurdity of the Arminian notion that 'God's commands are man's enablement,' defiantly stated in the face of the exposure of man under the law).

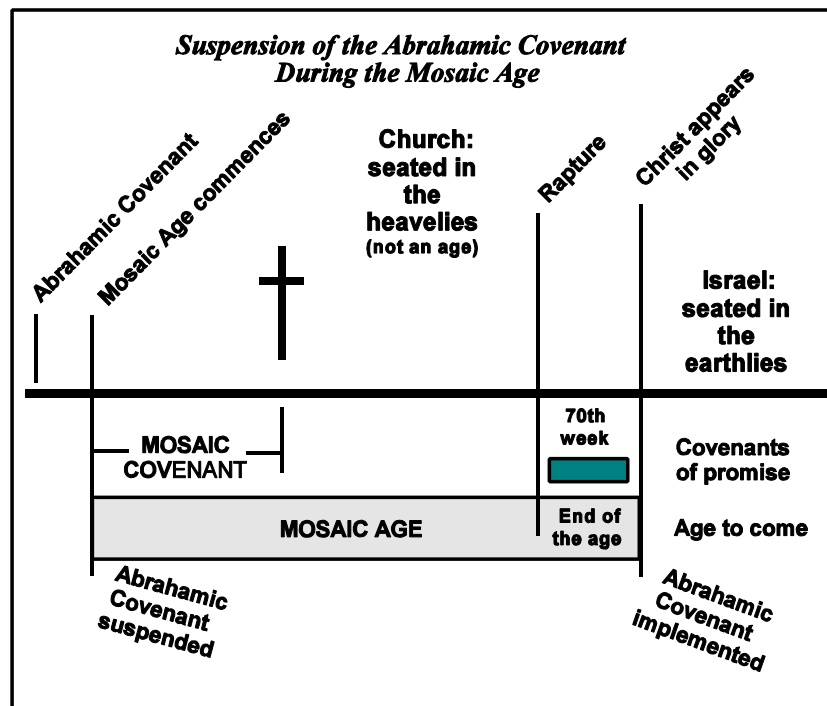
The Mosaic Covenant did not annul the promise to Abraham and thus the promise still remains to be unconditionally fulfilled:

(15) Brethren, (I speak according to man,) even man's confirmed covenant no one sets aside, or adds other dispositions to. (16) But to Abraham were the promises addressed, and to his seed: he does not say, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed; which is Christ. (17) Now I say this, A covenant confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which took place four hundred and thirty years after, does not annul, so as to make the promise of no effect. (18) For if the inheritance [be] on the principle of law, [it is] no longer on the principle of promise; but God gave it in grace to Abraham by promise. (19) Why then the law? It was added for the sake of transgressions, until the seed came to whom the promise was made, ordained through angels in [the] hand of a mediator. (20) But a mediator is not of one, but God is one. (21) [Is] then the law against the promises of God? Far be the thought. For if a law had been given able to quicken, then indeed righteousness were on the principle of law; (22) but the scripture has shut up all things under sin, that the promise, on the principle of faith of Jesus Christ, should be given to those that believe (Gal. 3:15-21).

In the ways of God, the Abrahamic Covenant was placed in temporary

suspension by the introduction of the Mosaic age. That age began with the Mosaic Covenant; and though the cross was the end of the Mosaic Covenant, the Mosaic age continues on. "The end {or completion} of the age" (Matt. 12:32; 13:39, 40, 49; 24:3; 28:20) refers to the completion of the Mosaic age (during which Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week will occur), called "this age" (1 Cor. 2:8; Eph. 1:21; 1 Tim. 6:17; Heb. 6:5). The Abrahamic Covenant remains in suspension during the entire Mosaic age; and meanwhile, i.e., now, God is gathering a heavenly people seated in the heavenlies. This will be followed by the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel and then the Seed of the woman, the Seed of Abraham, the Seed of David, will come in power and glory to inaugurate "the age to come" (Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30; Eph. 1:21), the kingdom on earth -- a kingdom in which the covenants of promise will be made good to Israel.

The chart below is intended to illustrate the suspension of the Abrahamic Covenant during the Mosaic age, that age running from the establishment of the Mosaic Covenant until the Mosaic age is displaced by the age to come.



### Brief Summary of God's Ways with Abraham

Before quoting a summary from the pen of J. N. Darby regarding Abraham, let us observe that after the developments recorded in Gen. 10-11, the lives of the four most prominent persons, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, bring before us great truths regarding the path of the Christian:

Abraham: election, calling, and promises;

Isaac: sonship;

Jacob: discipline;

Joseph: sufferings, and the glory to follow.

These things point to the portion and pathway of Christians. In the lives of these

persons there also are things that are typical of Israel and the Church. And besides that, we have types of Christ, as especially seen in Gen. 22 in the only son, a figure of Christ in death and resurrection; and in the life of Joseph, in the events from being sent from the vale of Hebron (meaning, fellowship, or communion) to see how his brethren did, until his exaltation over Egypt and the dealing with his brethren who had rejected him and cast him into the pit where there was no water. These are all precious to the soul, but not treated of in this book. Following the summary of the path of Abraham, will be a summary of the eight communications with Abraham and then some particulars regarding the unconditional promises.

Then we see the settling out of the world in nations from the three sons of Noah (Gen. 10). There is the world in nations and families, and this happening by the judgment of God upon their setting themselves up to be independent of God at Babel, making themselves a Shem or name. Then we see Abram brought in by Shem's genealogy, which is merely a peg to hang it on, as it were (Gen. 11). But he is an elect one, called out, and the promise is given him to be the head of God's race in the earth.<sup>121</sup> Then he, having followed the calling of God, is in the place of promise, a stranger and a worshiper: through pressure of circumstances he gets out of that place, loses his worship, gets into the power of the world, but is delivered out of it (Gen. 12). We have then his entire abnegation as to the world, and a full revelation of the sphere of promise, or subject of promise (Gen. 13). Then we see Abram's victory over the world, and the revelation of Melchizedek as priest, when the victorious kings are defeated (Gen. 14). Thus millennial blessedness is brought in, and this closes that part of the history, when we have come to the royal priest blessing Israel, and God the possessor of heaven and earth. The broad abstract principles finish with Gen. 14.

Then in Gen. 15 we see righteousness connected with faith for the first time, and also the promise of the seed, a covenant founded on death, with details of the land. Then in Gen. 16 we see a fleshly attempt to have the seed in the flesh. But in Gen. 17 grace acts. God reveals Himself by His dispensational name to Abram, giving him promise of the seed, and the seal of circumcision on it. "A father of many nations have I made thee." Confirmation is given, followed by Abraham on high in communion with God, and when the world is to be judged, he is a prophet interceding inside with God. Peter's comment on this is, "the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out

121. {He means the head of a spiritual race of called out ones to a path of separation from the world. There had been no such calling before Abraham regarding saints on earth.}

of temptation.” This is down below. So we have Enoch, the heavenly man, and Noah, the earthly remnant; now we have Abraham the heavenly man, and Lot the earthly remnant {these are types}. This is a second witness.

Now in Gen. 20, though I have a little more difficulty in my own mind about it, Abraham is seen failing, in respect of those that were strictly the vessel of promise, to Abimelech who was within the land. The Philistines have always that character, it would seem, those who were professedly within. It is failure before those who are outwardly in the place of promise, the denial of the truth of the church of God. Abraham says, “she is my sister,” and not my wife. It is only in David’s time that the Philistines were rightly dealt with and put down ultimately.<sup>122</sup>

As Lot by going to Zoar saves himself in a little city, being afraid to go to the place of faith; so we have in Gen. 20 a rebuke put upon Abraham in respect of Sarah, the vessel of promise. The world knows very well that the church ought to be for the Lord.

In the next chapter (Gen. 21) the son of promise is born, and legalism, or the legal covenant, with the child of flesh is cast out, that is, Hagar and Ishmael; now Abimelech, or the Philistine, who is in the place of promise, the son being born, becomes subservient to Abraham. The borders of the land are given. Abraham figuratively takes possession of the land of promise, and worships. He plants a grove too -- the only time he ever does so. He was only in a tent before; now he plants a grove, which was Abraham’s act, but had specific reference to the seed and taking possession of the land.

After Gen. 14 is the place of the break really, because there we get to the millennium; then come the details in connection with Abraham’s conduct and the promise of the seed.

Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac at Mount Moriah begins a new series (Gen. 22), which gives us thereon the promise confirmed to the one Seed, not to the numerous seed, but the promise of blessing to all nations (in Gen. 12) confirmed to the Seed; and this after death and resurrection, which furnishes a completely new principle. Abraham has given up the promises according to life here, and taken them in resurrection, “accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure” (Heb. 11). All was taken up in resurrection, founded upon sacrifice to God.

Then in Gen 23, we see the old vessel of promise dies. Sarah is not the church now {i.e., in that situation} in any sense, but the Jews; the vessel

122. {This follows David’s coming from Hebron to Zion, typical of Christ coming forth from heaven to Jerusalem, who will settle affairs in “Palistine.”}

dies, that is, Israel is really set aside.

Isaac being the heir of everything, Abraham sends down what represents the Holy Ghost -- Eliezer -- to get a wife for his risen son. Isaac is on no account to go back to the old land; he represents the risen Christ. So Abraham sends down his chief servant to get a wife out of the place of his own family for the heir of promise. Eliezer confers gifts on her, and brings her out, all things being given to the son and heir. Abraham sends his other sons away, but Isaac’s wife is brought into the place of the vessel of promise, Sarah’s tent. This is all the history of Isaac (Gen. 24).

The Jews were the vessel of promise, and now the church is become so {because we are one with Christ, the Seed of Abraham}.<sup>123</sup>

We see from this that the life of Abraham is typical. To this the following notice of the typical place of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph is added:

Within the chosen family, Abram is the depositary of promise, the root of the olive-tree of testimony; Isaac figures the son in resurrection and heavenly places, after the sacrifice; as Jacob sets forth Israel’s history, an outcast from the land, but brought back again. In Joseph we see the beloved of his father, handed over by his brethren to the Gentiles, but out of the depth of humiliation exalted to the right hand of the throne, whence in famine he ministers to both Jew and Gentile. But further we see him who was separated from his brethren, and then glorified in another and a larger sphere, making himself known to his brethren in sovereign grace and earthly blessing, when they are brought down, in the person of Judah, to own their sin against their guileless brother and their loving father. So rich are the germs of truth in Genesis -- the wonderful introduction to the Bible.<sup>124</sup>

## *Grouping of the Eight Recorded Communications with Abraham*

“After these things” (Gen. 15:1) sets off the above first three of these communications as a group in Gen. 12-14; and “after these things” occurs again just before the eighth communication (see Gen. 22:1), thus grouping communications 4-7 (Gen. 15-20), while the eighth divine communication stands as something new -- it being based on Isaac, the only son, and heir, resurrected, typically speaking. “After these things” occurs again at Gen. 22:20, bringing us to the fourth section in Abraham’s life (Gen/ 22:20-25:18) in which there are no recorded divine communications.

Each of these three groupings has a distinctive, typical character.

123. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 19:104-106

124. *The Bible Treasury*, 15:65.

**Group 1**, Gen. 12-14, takes us from the call of Abram into a path of separation (ch. 12) to the millennial blessing (ch. 14). These chapters give us Abram's public walk. When considering Gen. 3, we noted that no promise was given to Adam, though faith could rest on what God said to the serpent in Gen. 3:14, 15. Indeed, there really was no promise in the sense we are speaking of it, until Abraham. He is the great depository of promise, separated into a place of special privilege in the earth. In short, the leading points are:

- (a) The calling, position and failure of faith -- the dependence and renouncement of faith -- and the effect of worldliness -- triumph of the heir of the world, and the royal millennial blessing in Christ in heaven and earth {ch. 14}.<sup>125</sup>

The whole history closes at the end of this chapter {14}, with Melchizedek, and the revelation of God in His final character in time, or dispensation -- Possessor of heaven and earth -- victory after failure -- and full final blessing, and praise, and that in the King of righteousness and King of peace.<sup>126</sup>

- (b) The public walk of Abraham, the altar being prominent.  
(c) The promise of the land is prominent.

**Group 2**, Gen. 15-21, gives us Abraham's private walk and communion with Jehovah, made known to him as El Shaddai (Gen. 17:1) before Whom he is to walk. Abraham had promises in Gen. 12-14; now the word "covenant" is introduced as is the son of promise for heirship in promise (the second man). But he who typifies the fallen first man is born first. Thus, we have the natural first (Ishmael), then the spiritual (Isaac).

- (A) The righteousness of faith is brought before us (Gen. 15:6) as is the mark of death on the first man, circumcision (Gen. 17:10). Then, we have also the bondwoman and her offspring cast out, of great typical significance as Gal. 4 shows us. Thus all rests on promise and covenant. Finally (end of Gen. 21), Abraham has the superior place. All has the final blessing of Israel in view, though we Christians learn much of principles concerning the path of faith in a walk of separation.
- (b) The private life of Abraham, communion being prominent.  
(c) The promise of, and birth of, the heir is prominent; the bondwoman and her son cast out.

These two groups give us the seven communications, a complete view as the number seven suggests. We now come to something new, the eighth.

**Group 3** (Gen. 22:1 - 22:19), only a single chapter, brings before us the final

recorded communication, involving the offering of the son, figuratively received again in resurrection, and the promise confirmed to the great Seed of Abraham (Gen. 22:18) -- for all blessing flows from a resurrected Christ.

The final part of Abraham's life, in which Isaac has importance, is Gen. 22:20-25:18).

*The First Three Communications:  
The Promise Given; and,  
Involves No Tests of Abraham's Faith*

**GOD ACTING SOVEREIGNLY FROM HIMSELF:**

**Abram a separated witness for Jehovah before others.  
Abram's personal wants. Abram's worship.**

Typically: The Call of God to Separation

**ABRAM'S PUBLIC**

*PROMISES*

- (1). Gen. 12:1-6: **Election, Calling, and Promise**

**Jehovah's call obeyed.**

The separated Abram will be made a great nation (an earthly blessing) and be a blessing to all the families of the earth (a spiritual blessing). Both blessings are unconditional, as are all the promises to Abraham. He builds an altar.

- (2). Gen. 12:7-8: **Pilgrim Character and Worship**

**Promise of an  
earthly blessing.**

Abram's seed will have the land of Canaan. He builds an altar.

- (3). Gen. 13:14-17: **Separation, Heirship, and worship (see # 6).**

**A three-fold cord.**

125. Notes and Comments 1:129.

126. Notes and Comments 1:66.

The separated, faithful Abram, and his fruitful seed, will have the land in perpetuity. He moves to Mamre in Hebron (communion) and builds an altar.

***The Fourth Through Seventh  
Communications:  
The Testing of Faith and  
The Promise fulfilled to Faith***

**GOD ACTING SOVEREIGNLY IN VIEW OF THE TRIAL OF FAITH:**

**Abraham's Communion and intercession.**

Typically: God's purpose in **THE SECOND MAN**  
and His ways with **THE FIRST MAN**.

**ABRAHAM'S PRIVATE**

**COVENANT**

- (4). Gen. 15: **Covenant introduced: its  
fulfilment *through* death** (see # 8)

**What God is for Abram.  
Abram's wants met.  
Promise of  
THE SECOND MAN.**

Following victory over the world, Melchisedec revealed, millennial blessedness pointed to, God, possessor of heaven and earth (Gen. 14), then (Gen. 15) the Heir, the great Seed of Abraham, according to promise, the unconditional covenant based on the sacrifice of Christ, the covenant regarding the land; and also a numerous posterity. The *promise* concerning **THE SECOND MAN**, precedes God's *ways* with **THE FIRST MAN**.

- (5). Gen. 17: **Circumcision, the sign of the covenant**

**What God is in Himself.  
Circumcision: the sentence of  
death on  
THE FIRST MAN.**

Almighty God with Abraham, who is to walk before Him, as his resource. Circumcision, the seal of the covenant, is given. Abram's and Sarai's name changed. The promise of Isaac, with the seal of circumcision, who will have the covenant. Abraham, the father of many nations, and heir of the world (the earthly promise renewed; subsequently confirmed to Isaac (Gen. 26:3, 4), and Jacob (Gen. 35:10, 12)). And, Ishmael will be a great nation.

- (6). Gen. 18: **Heirship, worship, and intercession** (see # 3)

**Communications of grace.  
THE SECOND MAN announced.**

In Mamre;  
communion connected with the tent rather than Lot in the gate of Sodom. Promise of the heir -- Sarah shall have a son directly, though "beyond a seasonable age" (Heb. 11:11). Abraham is the intercessor.

- (7). Gen. 21:12: **Not law, but the son of promise**

**THE FIRST MAN cast  
out; bondage and  
the law set aside.**

The bondwoman (Mt. Sinai) and the son of the bondwoman (the law, by which the promise could not be realized) cast out, "for in Isaac shall a seed be called to thee." See Gal. 3, 4.

***The Eighth Communication:  
Isaac Resurrected, Typically Speaking***

**GOD ACTING SOVEREIGNLY**

**IN VIEW OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION**

Typically: The Father giving the Son,  
and the Son raised from the dead.

**ABRAHAM'S GREATEST TRIAL***RESURRECTION*

- (8). Gen. 22: **covenant fulfillment *in* resurrection** (see # 4)

**THE SECOND MAN  
in His resurrection place  
makes good the  
Abrahamic Covenant**

Abraham builds an altar. The son given and received in figure from the dead. The promises will be made good by Christ in resurrection, who is the great Seed of Abraham; and therefore not fulfilled in the OT. Gen. 22:18 speaks of Christ; really, of Christ in resurrection. To Him, as *the* Seed, the promise is confirmed (see Gal. 3:3-16). The spiritual part of the promise (in Gen. 12:2, 3) is repeated only once, and that in ch. 22.

## *A Summary of God's Covenant with Abraham*

Let us look at a summary statement by J. N. Darby concerning the Abrahamic Covenant. This will help us to see the connections of the eight recorded communications of God with Abraham.

\* \* \* \* \*

Now I would enquire in how far the covenants unfold these things. The Abrahamic covenants (though wider in the scope and testimony, as we have seen, than the local blessings and promises to Israel, as the apostle also so fully argues) contained none of these things. They proposed the person of the

Redeemer, the promised Seed; they proposed the blessing of all nations, but they went not beyond Abraham's being the heir of the world. This may disclose brighter things now that the veil is rent; but in the promises and covenants given to Abraham, he did not outstep as yet in expression the limits of what belonged to the first Adam, because the second Adam (who was also the Lord from heaven) was not revealed, and was simply testified of as the seed of Abraham in whom this blessing should come, whatever it was.

These promises and covenants are in Gen. 12 and 15, and confirmed in Gen. 17 and 22. The first promise runs thus:

And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless him that blesseth thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Afterward the Lord appeared unto Abram and said, "To thy seed will I give this land": here we have nothing beyond the earth and the families by whom it has been divided.

In Gen. 15 we have the promise of a seed, numerous as the stars of heaven, and (after stating the circumstances in which they would be intermediately placed) the giving of the land to them, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, confirmed by the covenant of the Lord passing between the pieces of the victims.

In Gen. 17 this is established as an everlasting covenant with Abraham (his name being changed), and with his seed after him, throughout their generations -- that God would be a God to him, and to his seed after him; and that He would give to him, and to his seed after him, all the land wherein he was a stranger, for an everlasting possession; and that He would be their God. And circumcision was given to Abraham as a seal.

In Gen. 22 we have the confirmation of the promise to the seed.

In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is by the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

In the latter part of this promise we have the confirmation of the blessing of the families of the earth to the seed, that is Christ; which was (in Gen. 12) made originally to Abram. Still (whatever be the manner of its accomplishment), it reaches not beyond the original promise to the families of the earth; nor is He, in whom it was to be fulfilled, revealed otherwise than as the seed of Abraham. The other promises, and the formal covenant, are all of the land, and of a seed numerous and prosperous, who should inherit it, and be a blessing. In all this (however unconditionally it establishes that) we have nothing beyond that which is earthly. The promises and covenants in Abraham



are established upon grounds which cannot be shaken -- not the stability of a professed obedience, but the stability of the declared promise of God -- two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, His promise, and His oath. Whatever intimations of circumstances or gathering of hope there might be, the covenants themselves expressed no more. They were confirmed to Isaac, Gen. 26, and to Jacob, Gen. 28; but no particular remark is called for as to the terms of the covenants in them.<sup>127</sup> ❖

## Chapter 11

### *The First Communication*

**Jehovah's call obeyed.**  
*Genesis 12:1-3*

In connection with the call of Abraham to a path of separation *from* what had developed in the world as given in Gen. 10-11, he entered *into* the land of the altar and the tent. Some lessons for us concerning this is found in the following article.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **THE CALL OF ABRAM; THE LAND OF THE ALTAR AND THE TENT**

Genesis 11, 12

There is no reason to suppose that Abram escaped the idolatry that had crept into the family of Shem. The words of Joshua to the gathered tribes at Shechem confirm us in this thought:

Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and *they served other gods* (Josh. 24:2).

Under the debasing influence of demon-worship they had come. If in the midst of the gross darkness that was spreading itself abroad God, the *living* God, had here and there a witness, Abram was not one. This makes the sovereign grace of God the more conspicuous, for it was out of this thickening gloom Abram was called. The God of glory appeared unto him, and called him with a mighty voice. How and under what circumstances, whether by dream or vision, we are not told. But there stands the great, grand fact. What a revolution this must have wrought in the soul of this man! What an awakening! How contemptible the idols he once served, and with what loathing he would turn from them! What a sense too must he have had of the grace of God, who had dealt with him in this unlooked-for way. It is a wonderful moment when for the first time God makes Himself known to a sinner. So Abram found it beyond doubt ; so the sinner at Sychar's well (John 4:26); so Saul of Tarsus; and so every sinner since.

127. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 3:47-48.

But this was not all. He who had thus revealed Himself to Abram bade him quit his country, his kindred, and his father's house, and go into a land which He would show him. Obedience to the call of God involved separation from his then present surroundings. The links with Ur of the Chaldees must be broken. Cherished associations, social and religious -- associations interwoven with his earliest and tenderest memories, these must be relinquished if Abram would walk in the path to which God had called him. But God filled the vision of his soul, and he hesitated not, but obeyed and went out, not knowing whither he went.

The believer of today is the subject of the same gracious and powerful call. In him is exhibited the sovereign grace of God. Not because of any personal worth has he been called out of the great crowd and out of the moral darkness that once enveloped him. The secret must be sought for in the eternal love of God, supreme and sovereign in the way it acts.

Here let me ask a question of the Christian reader. Have you distinctly before your soul the blessed truth that you have been called of God -- *called out*, called with a heavenly calling? {See Heb. 3:1; 1 Cor. 15:48.} Before your conversion you were of the world, sharing its condemnation, and marching gaily enough to its awful doom. Then God was unknown, the Savior unknown, the Holy Spirit unknown, and your mind blinded by the god of this world. Out of this state God, who called Abram, has called you, and now light, life, and liberty are yours. You do not hope for pardon of your sins, for you have received it; you do not hope to become a child of God, for you are one; and being a child you are an heir; heir of God, and joint-heir with Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:17). Wonderful words! the blessedness of which is only known in part even when they have been dwelt upon for a long, long time. This, however, is not all; for He who has saved you has severed your connection with the scene around, that you might be a witness for God in the midst of a world that knows Him not. *Do you see this?*

At first Abram did not fully rise to the height of God's call. He left Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan, but into Canaan he came not. They reached Haran, and dwelt *there*. Nor is it hard to divine the reason of his stopping short. Natural ties were not without their influence; and those who stood within his family circle, but were not the objects of the same special and divine call, held him back. And thus it often is. "Suffer me *first* to go and bury my father," was the answer of one to whom the Lord had said, "Follow Me" (Luke 9:59). So with Abram, he lingered at Haran till Terah died. Then the words of God's call seem to have rung in his ear afresh. Then he remembered his short-comings, and once more "they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came."

Family ties are powerful still. How many are hindered and impeded in

their upward course because of these. "What will they think and say and do at home if I should take this step?" is the question anxiously debated in secret by many a heart. Faithfulness to God requires that the step should be taken; obedience to His word demands it; a heavenly voice says "Come," and the path lies clear before them. They are called to Canaan, but they stop at Haran; they fear the consequences of a further move; they dread being branded as *extremists*, and shrink from encountering the opposition which their action would provoke. Courage, dear souls, courage!

He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me (Matt. 10:37).

Such are the words of our Lord.

But now we see Abram in Canaan. Here God appears to him the second time, with a further unfolding of His gracious purposes. Nothing of this kind was vouchsafed to him in Haran. If we would enjoy heavenly intercourse we must be in the pathway of God's pleasure.

He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him (John 14:21).

Can anything compensate for the loss of these divine manifestations to the soul? In immediate connection with this Abram built an altar unto the Lord. For the first time we behold him as a worshipper. In Haran he had no altar, for how shall a man *worship* who is conscious of stopping short of the place to which God has called him? Pray he might, and great his need of prayer; but worship is another thing, and this can only be truly offered when the soul is in communion with God, and when the conscience does not condemn. Divinely-given intelligence concerning many a precious truth of Scripture is not enough to constitute a man a worshiper. Without this no doubt our worship will be defective, but intelligence alone never yet reared an altar to the living God. True unhindered worship can only flow from one deeply conscious of the riches of divine grace, and who seeks in uprightness of heart and without reserve to answer fully to the mind of God.

Here also is the first mention of Abram's *tent*. If the altar speaks of worship the tent tells of pilgrim-life. Henceforth in the history of the patriarch they are found in close connection. It is ever so. If we know what it is to worship God in the Holiest as one whose conscience has been purged by the blood of Christ, if we know aught of worshipping the Father as one who stands in the relationship of a child before Him, called too unto His eternal kingdom and glory by Jesus Christ, we cannot but be pilgrims here. No labor of his own can make a man a pilgrim any more than his own works can make him a

worshiper. To you, my reader, it may not be necessary to say that it is possible to assemble in the stateliest edifice ever consecrated to Christianity, to engage in the most imposing ritual, to take part in its most solemn service -- it is possible to have the whole being thrilled with the deepest religious emotions by the plaintive peals of the organ and the exquisitely modulated voices of the surpliced choir, and yet there shall not be one note of praise, not one atom of spiritual worship in the whole thing. Christian worship indeed is of another order. Intended for God's ear alone, it must be in accordance with Christian truth, and offered in the power of the Holy Spirit, otherwise it is but an empty sound, which may please the ears of men, but is nothing short of an abomination in the sight of God. So a man might withdraw himself from worldly society, rigidly abstain from everything that militates against a religious life, clothe himself in the coarsest garb, live on the plainest food, shut himself within the walls of a monastery, and do nothing but pray, fast, and do penance all the day long, and after all be no more a pilgrim than a player at a pantomime or a jockey on the racecourse. A true pilgrim may be arduously engaged in daily toil, working with his hands the thing which is good, but his heart finds its treasure in another sphere. His portion is in heaven -- citizenship, home, and dear surroundings, all are there -- and as the exile-patriot longs for the land of his birth, so the heart of the pilgrim-saint longs for the heavenly land. In spirit he is there already -- links with earth are broken; and he can sing --

“’Tis the treasure I’ve found in His love  
That has made me a pilgrim below.”

In Haran Abram led no pilgrim life. Out of Ur of the Chaldees he had come, but he had not reached the land of the altar and the tent. So now, many a saint holds himself aloof from the world, and cares neither for its pleasures nor its plans. You could not say he was worldly; neither could you say, as to the state of his soul, that he was {typically speaking} heavenly. He is tarrying at Haran. Some tie binds him to that place, and coming short of Canaan, he misses the joys that are found there.

In the closing part of Gen. 12 we see how the marks of a worshiper and a pilgrim may soon be lost unless we are sustained in unwavering faith in the separate place to which we have been called. A grievous famine arose in the land, and Abram's faith is tried. Alas! he goes down to Egypt to sojourn there, and his altar and tent disappear. What room was there for these under the shadow of the world's wing? The feebleness of his faith shows itself further in his devices to ensure his own safety. Deeper and deeper in the mire would he have sunk had not God appeared on his behalf and rescued him from the position into which he had been betrayed by his lack of faith. So Abram quits Egypt, and is once more found in Canaan, even at the place where his tent had been at the beginning, at the place of the altar, and there Abram called on the

name of the Lord.<sup>128</sup> ❖

\* \* \* \* \*

Does going “down” (Gen. 12:10) to Egypt (type of the world), and “up” out of Egypt (Gen. 13:1) have a moral bearing? When in Egypt, the man of faith did not own the full relationship with Sarah (typifying grace). From Egypt (type of the world) Abraham also acquired a Hagar in the house. Is there no lesson in these things? <sup>129</sup>

An important principle may be seen in connection with Abraham's failure in his departure down into Egypt and then in Gen. 13 getting back up to the place from which he departed. The principle is:

**The point of departure is the point of restoration.** <sup>130</sup>

That is the great principle of recovery when there has been departure. While Abraham had a Hagar in the *house*, Lot (who went to Egypt with Abraham (Gen. 13:1) seems to have gotten Egypt into his *heart* (cp. Gen. 13:10). Our failures may damage others, though we might be restored.

Above, the article applied the calling to the Christian as an individual. The call of God also has a bearing on the assembly of God, so a brief extract is here brought to bear on this.

It was not to gratify the present selfishness of Abram's nature, saying, “this is thy country,” but it was “Get thee out of thy country” -- to go where? “to a land that I will show thee.” It implied, therefore, implicit confidence in God for faithfulness, power, and love. Taking Him for the security and the portion (as the scriptures reveal it), he went out, not knowing whither he went. It is on this that the Spirit of God so specially rests as characteristic of his approved faith. By separation from the world, on the ground of implicit confidence in God, he lost everything, and got nothing but the word of God, sealed of course to his soul (for his faith rested in it) by the power of the Spirit of God. The God of glory had appeared to him in the matter, and God would show to him the land. So Abram departed.

128. *Simple Testimony* 6:85-92.

129. Man and woman are used typically throughout Scripture. Regarding this typical use, J. N. Darby observed:

. . . *men* who are types represent the energy of faith, the spiritual energy of the church, under the circumstances in which the type represents it, or perhaps its failure therein; and that *females* who are presented to us as types represent the state and condition of the church (*Collected Writings* 19:129).

130. There are two other principles that especially go with this one:

1. The mere passage of time does not change the character of a moral action.
2. A moral stream never rises above its source.

These principles are of broad application.

Here then is the pattern and character of the church, and also of the individual believer; they are called of God in faith out of all that into which the world and nature have been formed (and while not meddling with these things, or disowning them in their place, but recognizing in them God's ordering hand, and moreover the sin of man): trusting in a promise not at once fulfilled, but taking God, and God alone, as the security, the warrant, and the guide; it is faithfulness, as being assured of the present loss of all things, and the present gain of nothing; it is a walking by faith, and not by sight, not only as regards present things relinquished, but also as to things hoped for -- things to come -- "for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" But they are sufficiently assured of God; and in Him, and knowing Him, or rather being known of Him, they are ready to give up all for His word. Thus it was not the reward that was taken as the portion, but God, the promiser of the reward, and therefore it was *faith*. The object was as simple as the security. "They *went forth* to go to the land of Canaan"; the result was as certain as He who called was sure; "they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, *and into the land of Canaan they came*." Such is the history and the character of the church of God in its calling. Called out by God into separation from the world, which it leaves just where it was to go into a land of promise -- a land which God will show it -- it walks by faith, and not by sight, going forth to go thither, and thither surely coming, according to the calling and power of God.<sup>131</sup>

## Called by the God of Glory and Given Promises

(2) And he said, Brethren and fathers, hearken. The God of glory appeared<sup>132</sup> to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, (3) and said to him, Go out of thy land and out of thy kindred, and come into the land which I will show thee. (4) Then going out of the land of the Chaldeans he dwelt in Charran, and thence, after his father died, he removed him into this land in which ye now dwell (Acts 7:2-4).

By faith Abraham, being called, obeyed to go out into the place which he was to receive for an inheritance, and went out, not knowing where he was going (Heb. 11:8).

The "faith chapter," Heb. 11, does not speak of failures. Balaam, the diviner,

was compelled to say, "I have not beheld iniquity in Jacob," when he looked down on Israel from the height of the mountain (Num. 23:14, 21). And when our God and Father looks at us "in Christ" He sees only what meets with His pleasure. Yet in conduct, there was only One Who always did those things that pleased the Father (John 8:29).

The appearing of the God of glory to Abram was not because of any motion Godward on his part or because he deserved it. He was of the line of Shem, fallen as others had into idolatry (Josh. 24:2), and that while Noah yet lived. It is important that it be observed that in this it was the act of God. Abraham must set forth the truths of election, calling, and promise. It was in Shem's line that God had purposed to bring in blessing. Out of the nations formed, and out of the idolatry practiced, Abram, a Shemite, received the three-fold call of separation. It was sovereign grace on God's part, acting sovereignly from Himself, as gracious, as sovereign, and as unconditional as the covenant into which he brought Abram. Abram was to leave the things out of which he was called into a path of separation, where they were. He was sovereignly blessed by God, and called to be a blessing. Abram faltered on the way to Caanan, as we have seen -- nature gets in the way of the call of God. J. N. Darby wrote:

Just so it happens to a heart which has not understood that it must give itself wholly to God. It gives up a great deal for duty, it receives nothing. When the question is of following God, it keeps something for itself. Nevertheless, grace acted towards Abraham, but thus it is that one often plunges oneself into doubt.

The Lord had said, Get out and come into the country that I will show thee. Abraham, not having done so, might have said, What will become of me? I have not left my father's house: what will befall me? I have only followed half way the command of the Lord; I have not done all that He said to me; my heart not being in it, I have here neither the word nor the promises, I am about to perish in Charran. But such was not God's thought. Now, in ch. 12:1-4 it is said: "So Abraham departed as the Lord had said to him." All goes well. Lot goes with him; Abraham was seventy-five years old. They come not to Haran to live there, but "into the land of Canaan they came." That is to say, as to us, as soon as we will do God's will, all goes well, God takes care for all. Before this, Abraham had stayed at Haran, and there was no blessing. It is only when his father Terah is dead that he goes forth and comes into Canaan. This is what we see in the four first verses of ch. 12. We may remark how God presents Himself to Abraham. He does not reproach him. The obstacles are removed; he is put in the way of faith . . .

In v. 2 God had said to him: "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee"; in v. 3: "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." God will be glorified, and He will bless; two precious things, for He

131. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 19:128-129

132. {This was a divine manifestation, perhaps what is called a theophany.}

glorifies Himself by blessing. He encourages Abraham in the way of faith, by identifying himself with the blessing. He engages him to trust in Him; "I will bless them that bless thee." Thus Balaam cannot curse; and in Jesus we are blest. God Himself conducts us, and identifies us with the blessing of Christ. The church may be tried, may encounter difficulties; but the blessing resulting from it is assured in Christ.

God then brings Abraham into Canaan: what is there for him there? Nothing as yet to be possessed. The Canaanites are there; enemies all around in this land of promise. He has only his faith for his pains, not a place where to set his foot on, which properly belonged to him. Stephen tells us so in Acts 7:5:

And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on; yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child.

This also happens to the church. In the land of promise we find the wicked spirits, and we are pilgrims here below. Abraham also was a stranger and a pilgrim. He had not where to set his foot. It is a little hard to the flesh to have forsaken all and to have found nothing. But he cannot yet possess the country. This happens to us as well as to the Jewish people, who went up to the wilderness, and find but a wilderness. Man must sacrifice all he loves, and rise to the height of the thoughts of God. But thus it is that the call and the deliverance make us strangers even in the very land of promise, until the execution of judgment be come.

We read in Heb. 11:8:

By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

There is that which characterizes his faith. "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country; for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." In drawing him by the path of faith and renunciation in the land of promise, God gives him nothing; but He sets him on a position elevated enough to see the city which hath foundations.

God draws us also into the wilderness; and when we are there, He gives us nothing; and if we ask for anything, God answers: It is not good enough. The disciples would have liked to remain and for Jesus to remain; but Jesus tells them, It is good enough for your heart, but not enough for Mine; I would not that you should remain where you are; but where I am, there ye shall be also. He desires a complete felicity for His own. He tells them, before leaving them, I go to prepare a place for you. For where I am, I desire that "there ye may be also."<sup>133</sup>

Concerning Abraham's being called out of country and from father's house, it is in the millennium, when Israel realizes the covenants of promise, that the nations will be blessed and also the families of the earth shall be blessed. These things await the time when God shall anoint, or install, His king upon Zion, the hill of his holiness (Psa. 2:6). Then, the scepter being in the hands of Adonai, He shall rule, and His people shall be willing in the day of His power (Psa. 110), for God shall bring them into the bond of the covenant (Ezek. 20). Then shall all Israel be saved (Rom. 11:26); they shall all be righteous (Isa. 60:21).

The church also has calling and promise but in a higher way than Abraham -- higher than Abraham as the heavenlies are higher than the earthlies. Because the church has calling and promise, and Abraham had calling and promise, does that mean the callings are identical? Does it mean that the promises are identical? Certainly not. But the principle of calling and promise we also have.

The church is not directly in view regarding the call of Abraham, though we learn from him as a type. The Abrahamic Covenant is for the earth. We are seed of Abraham because we are one with the great Seed of Abraham. Millennial, saved Gentiles will not be one with Christ, they will not be "in Christ." They will be under Christ and have an order of blessing suitable to having a subsidiary place regarding Israel, through which the government of Christ will be administered on earth.

Christians need to understand that being "in Christ" is not the same thing as new birth or the same thing as salvation. It is something more, something additional, and is for those who have the heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1) and are seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6).

Regarding God blessing Abraham, J. N. Darby remarked:

. . . he was blessed of God so as to be a model and pattern of blessing; so we, through infinite grace, in a much higher way, that in the ages to come, He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness towards us by Christ Jesus {see Eph. 2:7; 3:21}. Hence Paul, in the personal consciousness which we have of it through the Holy Ghost, says, "Would God that not only thou, but all who hear me this day were both almost and altogether such as I am, save these bonds" {Acts 26:29}. He was a conscious model of blessing, and that is the true Christian state, nor does any aright, else, truly honor God, when we think of the grace given to us in Christ -- in His own Son; things that angels desire to look into are for us -- a place in Him above creature name -- and not merely glory, but blessed in Him, one with Him and loved as He is loved, and in the same

blessed relationship as He is in with the Father.<sup>134</sup>

## Abraham the Root of the Olive Tree

See Rom. 11:16-26. The olive tree is a figure of the line of privilege in the earth and the branches speak of persons that may be born of God or merely there by profession only. Hence, branches may be removed. The subject of the olive tree is too large to deal with here. Suffice it to say that the root of the olive tree is Abraham. "Holy" in Rom. 11:16 refers to being set apart to God; but in the olive tree it does not refer to inward holiness of soul, but being set apart to God in a place of privilege.

It was previously pointed out that Abraham was called to separate from what had developed concerning the formation of nations and the introduction of idolatry: namely, the world; and Abraham was called into a path of separation from it. This call to a separated path was on the basis of God introducing calling and promise. That was a new development in the ways of God.

The calling of Abraham to this path of separation from the world placed him a position as head of a seed of promise and head of heirship according to promise. And this is why it is important to see that Adam received no promise from Jehovah Elohim. Calling and promise are linked together. The depository of calling and promise was Abraham, not Adam (what call did he receive? None.) Thus, something new was begun with Abraham. The Covenantist notion that Adam was given a promise and that promise "came to expression" with the Abrahamic Covenant is false. *Calling* and *promise* are linked together. Adam did not have this calling to a path separate from the world. Indeed, that was an impossibility. The new place regarding Abraham was stated thus by J. N. Darby:

But it is this principle itself which is important. Grace calls out one to be the head of a new race, in which the blessing of God was to be "the blessing of Abraham." This had nothing to do with judging on the footing of responsibility; or any rule or measure given on which that judgment was to be founded. This may be a deeper motive for faithfulness and service than any other, but so it is. But it is one called out from a responsible world which is under judgment for its failure not to give an exact rule by which that failure can be measured, but to set sovereign blessing in him, and by subsequent revelations, in his Seed. As Adam was the head of a sinful and condemned race, Abraham was the head of a blessed race, of whom it could be said, "now are ye Abraham's seed, and

heirs according to promise." This, by grace, will be true even of Israel in its day; they tried to have it by the works of the law and so lost it, but God will, for all that, faithful to Himself, accomplish His promises. But this for the moment I pass by.

It suffices to point out here the position of Abraham, called to be the deposit and stock of promise and blessing, "Get thee out of thy country and out of thy kindred, and out of thy father's house, to a land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing. Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee, and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Blessing characterized his calling. He is blessed and a blessing. Blessing is measured out by dispositions towards him. And he is the one source of blessing to all the families of the earth. This is a very remarkable position and a most blessed, and, in its character, a divine one, which we shall do well to consider as regards ourselves. I will suggest a word or two in a moment. But, remark here how divine a one it is in its nature. God is blessedness in Himself. It characterizes Him. He is the source of it to all who have any. This was, derivatively, just Abraham's place. He was made blessed, in this sense had blessedness on the earth, distinctively and especially so; he was the source of it to all the families of the earth. If there was a curse, it was only for enmity to this. This is a most precious, and in character divine, place for a creature; a creature blessed no doubt, and quickened of God; but thence only the more precious because the more real.

Thus the place of blessing is definitively settled as of pure grace without law -- grace abounding over the whole sinful condition of man, and flowing from and measured by the self-originated fullness of divine love, of which it was the display and revelation. This is what characterized it in Abraham -- grace putting man in a divine place of blessing.<sup>135</sup>

## The Lord Jesus Died for the Nation of Israel

It is important to bear in mind that the future, distinctive place of Israel was provided for in the Lord's death. Caiaphas,

being high priest that year, prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation; and not for the nation only, but that he should also gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad (John 12:51, 52).

The text does not tell us every purpose of Christ's death, but names two here. One of the reasons for Christ's death is that the nation of Israel have a righteous place before

134. *Notes and Comments*, 1:63. See also p. 125 for some important observations concerning these things.

135. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 21:305-306.

God. Paul also speaks of two purposes, not the same two purposes, but he does speak of one of them, namely the special blessing for Israel:

The nations will have mercy, but not on the basis of promises *to them*. Gentiles are strangers to the covenants of promise (Eph. 2:12).

Zechariah, one of the godly remnant of Israel in the past, who awaited the consolation of Israel, also prophesied of the future blessedness of Israel:

(67) And Zacharias his father was filled with [the] Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying, (68) Blessed be [the] Lord the God of Israel, because he has visited and wrought redemption for his people, (69) and raised up a horn of deliverance for us in the house of David his servant; (70) as he spoke by [the] mouth of his holy prophets, who have been since the world began; (71) deliverance from our enemies and out of the hand of all who hate us; (72) to fulfil mercy with our fathers and remember his holy covenant, (73) [the] oath which he swore to Abraham our father, (74) to give us, that, saved out of the hand of our enemies, we should serve him without fear (75) in piety and righteousness before him all our days (Luke 1:67-75).

The godly remnant in our Lord's day all were expecting a kingdom for Israel as the prophets stated. They had no basis to expect something different. The death of Christ had in it provision for that future place for Israel. Let us remind ourselves again to whom the covenants and the promises belong:

. . . my kinsmen, according to flesh; (4) who are Israelites; whose [is] the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the law-giving, and the service, and the promises; (5) whose [are] the fathers; and of whom, as according to flesh, [is] the Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen (Rom. 9:3-5).

Notice that it is not stated that Christ belongs to Paul's kinsmen according to the flesh. No; it says, "of whom."; not, "whose is." God acts in spiritual blessing through Christ outside Israel, but not by covenants (of promise) because Scriptures states they belong to Israel. And so, the Abrahamic Covenant belongs to Israel; Gentiles are not included in the covenant.

## Chapter 12

### *The Second and Third Communications*

#### The Second Communication

**Promise of an  
earthly blessing. (Gen.  
12:6-8).**

Concerning the second communication (the first when actually in the land), it is noted that the enemy is in the land of promise. The Canaanite was there, those who sprung from Ham and were cursed. Matters were not in accordance with the purpose of God concerning the land, nor will they be until Christ comes to reign.

When the God of glory had appeared to Abraham, he had been told that he would become a great nation (and be a blessing). It was now promised to him, unconditionally, that the land he was in would be given to his seed, though the enemy had it in possession. J. N. Darby said:

In v. 7 God appears to Abraham; it is a fresh manifestation. He says to him: "Unto thy seed will I give this land." He renews the promises in a more definite way; He had already brought him to live and walk in dependence on Himself; now, He shows him the land and renews to him the promises, explaining to him the accomplishment of them. He will give the land to his posterity. In our case, it is heaven. God wills that we also should be in blessing, walking in dependence on Him . . .

When we are come out of this world and of that which keeps back our heart, then He can receive us. Abraham being thus separated from his earthly ties, He shows him the city which hath foundations. The great principle we find here is that, these Canaanites (to us the wicked spirits) not being yet driven out, we are strangers in the land; but, on the other hand, Abraham being in the land, the Lord appears to him. He had the revelations from God, no longer to make him walk (it was no longer a question of manifestation for the walk), but for him who has walked in order that he might enjoy God Himself.

I have wished you to observe, that God begins by making the conscience act. Afterwards He gives the enjoyment of Himself and of converse with Him after we have walked; such is the difference. The God of glory appeared indeed to Abraham in Ur. Thus perhaps He reveals Himself to our souls to draw them. But after that, He will have the conscience touched, and completely separates us from all that nature would retain, or by which nature would retain us, and that we should

walk as called of God and belonging to Him, that the heart may thus peacefully enjoy Him in communion with Him when we have walked.

God can speak to Abraham, not now to make him go on, but that he may enjoy Him and converse with Him; and, further, to communicate to him all His thoughts as to the fulfilment of the promises. God will bless. Here is his position. He has walked with God, but as yet possesses nothing of the inheritance in the place to which God has led him. The enemies are there. But the Lord appears to faithful Abraham. In the enjoyment there of this communion and of this hope, Abraham builds an altar to Him who thus appeared to him.

God introduces us into the position of promises, in order that we should render Him worship, and make us understand distinctly how He will accomplish His promises. When Christ shall appear, then we shall also appear with Him in glory. We shall have all things with Him.

The portion of God's child is communion, intelligence of the counsels of God for the enjoyment of what God will accomplish. Thou shalt be a stranger, but I will accomplish my promises in giving the land to thy posterity. "And Abraham builded an altar to God who had appeared to him." His first manifestation made him walk; this makes him worship in the joy of communion in the land of promise whereinto faith introduced him, and in the intelligence of the promise relative to it. We see God by faith, and how by-and-by He will fulfil the promise. He makes us see Jesus, the true "Seed" and "Heir" of all things, and gives us the enjoyment of it in our souls.<sup>136</sup>

## The Third Communication

### Promise of an earthly blessing.

In Gen. 13:1-4 we see Abraham recovered from going down to Egypt (the world) and returning to the point of departure from the mind of God for him to "the place where his tent had been at the beginning."

Typically speaking, we saw in Enoch the heavenly man with the heavenly expectation, while in Noah we see the preserved, earthly remnant. In Abraham we have a type of the Christian walking in a heavenly manner, while in Lot we see the path of an earthly minded believer. However, it is not to the purpose to trace all of the many practical lessons we might learn from the life of Abraham

and of Lot.

The worldly believer (speaking typically), Lot,<sup>137</sup> was now no longer with Abraham, not walking in separation, but in company with the wicked, and even sat in the gate of Sodom, the place of rendering judgment. Abraham had given place of choice to Lot and Lot chose according to the flesh. He has many imitators today. It is to their great loss, as it proved to be to Lot. Abraham had left the matter in the hands of Him who had sovereignly chosen him and thereon receives the third communication from Jehovah.

There is a moment when our own faith is put to the test: often we walk by that of others; but our own state must be tried. Lot, a believer, chooses the world (and contrary to every right feeling), and vexes his righteous soul in the midst of what was the very object of coming judgment. As soon as the worldly-minded believer and his portion are together, the distinction, made by faith and faithfulness in the disinterestedness of heavenly happiness and grace, where God was a sufficient portion, was given effect to by the worldly wish of Lot. Abram is told to go over the whole place of promise, and know its length and breadth; northward, southward, eastward, and westward, all its extent -- it all was his. That is, when once the heart has left all that selfishness would have of what might seem within the limits of the land, but was taken by the carnal heart to please itself, the full extent and blessed details of what we are to enjoy with God is made known to us -- and experimentally. We have here, then, after the general character of the life of faith, and failure in it, an important experimental element of it: after failure and restoration to communion by grace, and complete victory over, and renunciation of the world, such a sense of the value of the heavenly and unseen things, as frees from the influence of the world. The consequence is, an escape from being entangled in what is the scene and object of judgment, and a full experimental knowledge of the inheritance of faith. Note, Abram escapes, and gets the increased privilege by walking in the path of faith, where there is no perception of the consequences. Abram had yielded through weakness and want of faith in trial; but his heart was right, and after the trouble his fault had occasioned, and his restoration, the very effect of this humbling experience is to give the superiority to all worldly influence which saves him entirely from the fatal mistake of Lot.<sup>138</sup> Here the Lord, though He does not appear as when He called, or revealed Himself in the land of promise, speaks to Abram. And Abram, after removing his tent, builds an altar where he comes to

137. Recall that he had gone down to Egypt with Abraham (Gen. 13:1) and appears to have gotten Egypt into his heart (Gen. 13:10).

138. We have failure in each of these features of divine life. He does not quit his father's house, and therefore stops half-way, and is no way in the place of promise; and he goes down into Egypt. In the third case, Lot represents the failure, and Abram maintains his heavenly ground.

136. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 16:73-75; see also *Notes and Comments*, 1:126-127 (regarding his comments, keep in mind that he is speaking of Abraham as typical of Christian).



sojourn. For our worship is in the measure in which we enter into the details of our portion from God.

We have here three, in a certain sense four, of these altars, in what we have hitherto read. Firstly, the one built on the Lord's revelation of Himself in the land, which gives the general character of the worship of faith. Secondly, one showing the permanent abiding character of worship in his strangership. In Egypt, out of the place of promise and faith, none; then (what made me say, in a certain sense a fourth), the return to the place of strangership and worship in the place of promise; and, lastly, when his exercised heart had renounced all but God, and God (the worldly-minded believer having chosen the well-watered plain) had made him realize all the extent of the scene of promise, he builds an altar there to worship the God who had bestowed all on him, assured him in the possession of it, and given him the present knowledge of and enjoyment of it in hope.

But renouncing the world is the path to victory over it; the choosing of it is captive subjection to its power. Lot is carried away captive by the powerful ones of the earth, along with those among whom his worldly propensities had led him. Abram, free and walking in the faith of God, has more force from Him than all the kings, conquerors or conquered, and delivers Lot and the kings who could not help themselves. The full victory of faith is here presented -- ours is not with carnal weapons, when it is gained; and what is figured will only be fully accomplished in connection with the Jews. This brings Abram under Melchizedek blessing, God taking the character, which is properly millennial, of possessor of heaven and earth. Praise and blessing constitute the priestly work of Melchizedek. This is the victory of faith, and the full blessing of Christ (priest and king over God's universal dominion) being established -- all enemies being overcome.<sup>139</sup>

Gen. 12-14 forms a series that is summarized thus by W. Kelly:

For the first time we see the efficacious principle of a separate witness, to whom God conveyed a promise, and a promise too that had to do not only with what was unseen but with what all could see. After coming out at God's word, the latter was indeed the earlier of the two; for what Heb. 11 shows is that, first of all, Abram was acted on by faith to leave the country to which he belonged, and when he came into the land that God promised to give him, then, his eyes were lifted higher still. Thus does the

Spirit of God show us the introduction of the great principle which God has never given up since, but has always been carrying out. He set it publicly before Israel in an earthly way, and now He is giving it effect after a heavenly sort. This seems to be the subject of Gen. 12, 13, 14. That it is concluded there is manifest from this, that we have a scene which brings distinctly before us the last great conflict -- the battle between the kings of the earth, and the victory which the man of faith enjoys by the power of God, even over the powers previously victorious. In short, it is there we have the type of the great "Priest upon his throne" {Zech. 6:13} in Melchizedek, active toward God as well as man, blessing man in the name of the "most high God," and blessing the "most high God" on the part of man. All this will assuredly find its due place and season when Christ appears in glory.

To this I have referred in a brief summary, to show you that there is a complete whole in these chapters, starting with the call, and ending with the glory; so that we have the general public picture of the life of faith, -- with its worship, its drawbacks, failure, and recovery: the disclosure of the earthly mind too, its covetousness, and its disasters; faith's triumph over the world it had left behind, and the sudden appearing of Him who will display the glory of God in the blessing of man, and the harmony of heaven and earth; all brought before us within the compass of these three chapters.<sup>140</sup>

While Gen. 14 does not give a further communication from God to Abraham, there are some important typical pointers in it, and the introduction of Melchizedek. We must take note of this next.

## ***Genesis 14: The Introduction of The Melchisedek Priesthood***

### ***Introduction***

The exercise of Christ's heavenly priesthood in the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 8:1, 2) is not the same as the exercise of the earthly, Melchisedek priesthood in the millennium. Though it is the same Person who functions in these two priesthoods, that does not make the functions the same. As the present heavenly sanctuary is high above the earthly sanctuary in the millennium, so does the present, heavenly, high priesthood of Christ differ from His earthly, Melchisedek priesthood in the millennium when He is priest upon His throne (Zech. 6:13). Christ is now, in His Person, a priest after the order of Melchisedek but He is not now functioning as the Melchizedek priest. His taking the

139. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 19:137-138.

140. *The Bible Treasury*, 10:241.

public *office* to function in it awaits millennial times.<sup>141</sup>

**Presently**, Christ is a high priest according to *a heavenly order* in the heavenly sanctuary. He is High Priest over believers now, all believers now forming a heavenly priesthood. He functions in an Aaronic *manner* -- though He is not a priest of the Aaronic *order* -- in His heavenly priesthood. His priesthood is to maintain us in our infirmities (not intercession for sin) and to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in connection with worship. We worship, in spirit, in the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 10:19, 20), where He is “minister of the holy places and of the true tabernacle” (Heb. 8:2), where He leads the singing in the assembly, being in the midst (Heb. 2:12; Matt. 18:20).

**In the millennium**, Christ will function as high priest in the earthly sphere according to the order of Melchizedek, *an earthly order*. Under the Melchizedek high priesthood, the sons of Zadok will have the principle place (in fulfilment of the gracious covenant made with Phinehas (the son of Eliezer, the son of Aaron the priest) in the priesthood composed of the sons of Aaron, a select priesthood that does not include all Israel, nor include any believing Gentiles.

The Melchizedek priesthood involves the combination of kingship and priesthood in Christ. He has this in title now, but is not in actual function until the millennial reign. He is not reigning now (contrary to Covenant Theology). He is on His Father’s throne now (Rev. 3:21), not His own throne. He is not reigning now (though King in title), nor exercising the related priesthood, though He has that in title also. Thus, the kingship and the Melchizedek priesthood of Christ await the millennial reign. The Melchizedek priesthood will be displayed as part of His earthly glory.

We shall see in Gen. 14 that the character of the Melchizedek priesthood is expressed in blessing, as Melchizedek brings the bread and wine -- refreshment and joy. Meanwhile, Christ’s present, heavenly priesthood is one of intercession and sustainment -- while advocacy is for sins committed (1 John 2:1).

### *Who Was Melchisedec?*

Christ’s Melchisedec order of priesthood will not change high priests as was the case in the Aaronic order, of course, because Christ is such a priest in the power of an endless life. The way Melchisedec is presented in Gen. 14 points

to this. Some Christians think Melchizedec was a mystical thing. Nothing in Gen. 14 is mystical. There is a divine purpose in the way Melchisedec is presented in Gen. 14. Speculation in divine matters is spiritually unhealthy and dangerous, as giving scope to man’s imagination rather than bowing in subjection to what God has said, and keeping silence where He has not revealed something such as in this case. Perhaps JND had this in mind in how he answered the question:

*Ques.* Who was Melchizedec?

Melchizedec.

*Ques.* Was he Christ?

No; because he was “made like unto the Son of God” {Heb. 7:3}. He is purposely made mysterious.

*Ques.* What of his descent?

I don’t know. He is put there, and that is all I know, with neither beginning of days, nor end of life as to priesthood. The sons of Aaron were limited and began at twenty-five or thirty years old, as they may have been initiated for five years. But that is a contrast.<sup>142</sup>

The Melchizedek priesthood of Christ is intransmissible, in the power of an endless life, and the way in which Melchisedec is presented in Gen. 14 is to serve as a type and has this fact in view. He was king of Salem, i.e., Jerusalem (Psa. 76:2).

### *Why Was Melchisedec Introduced at the End of Gen. 12 - 14?*

We have noted that there are eight recorded communications of God with Abraham. Gen. 22 is the eighth. The other seven divide into three and four. The first three are found in Gen. 12-14, having to do with Abraham’s public life for God’s glory, as a witness of His call to a path of separation (see Gen. 12:1) -- the next four communication having to do with his private life.

So, what transpired as recorded in Gen. 14 brings us to an end point concerning the things indicated by the public life of Abraham (Gen. 12 - 14); *the events in Gen. 14 point to an epoch yet future*. They point to the coming of the time when the natural seed of Abraham will all be spiritual seed of Abraham and will be established in blessing under the priest upon His throne (Zech. 6:13). We have here:

1. a remarkable introduction of a campaign of war (the first named in

141. Another example of such a distinction is this: when Christ entered the world He was the second man (1 Cor. 15:47) in His Person, but it was in resurrection (not in incarnation) that He entered into the second man’s place in the ways of God, as having displaced the first man.

142. *Notes and Jottings*, p. 31.

Scripture);<sup>143</sup>

2. a successfully carried out deliverance of a righteous, but unseparated, man (Lot);
3. Abraham's refusal of reward from the world; and,
4. the remarkable introduction of a highly typical personage, Melchisedec, a priest (the first priest named in Scripture);
5. the king of Salem, i.e., Jerusalem (cp. Ps. 76:2) (mentioned for the first time in Scripture) -- thus, *a priest upon his throne at Jerusalem*.

Briefly, the events in Gen. 14 point to the power of Christ depicted by Abraham's conquering the hostile powers, delivering the righteous, taking nothing from the world, and recognizing a characteristic feature of the millennium: the Melchizedek priesthood of the King of Jerusalem.

Concerning Gen. 14, W. Kelly wrote:

It is a prophetic type. In that land there will be a mighty conflict at the end of this age ; and in it the guilty people of the Lord will be involved ; and when the victory seems to be won that sweeps them away, the mighty power of God by a greater than Abram will interfere. Then that blessed One whom we await, not merely for our own joy and glory in the heavens but for changing the face of the earth and all things on it, will answer both to the victorious Abram, and to the blessing Melchizedek. It is our Lord Jesus at His coming again, and this at the issue of the world's conflicts when all will be reversed to the glory of God . . .

But when our Lord Jesus appears as Melchizedek by-and-by, then will be the day for our glory with Him ; and the various traits here prefigured will coalesce in Him, not merely the sole dignity of the priest but the exercise of the priesthood in its character of blessing. Then will be the answer to Abram's putting down of the victorious powers of the world, the deliverance of the poor though faulty people of the Lord (shown by Lot), and finally the bringing out the symbol of what God gives not only for the sustenance of His people, but for their joy -- the bread and the wine of that day. So it is that the Lord will then act; for this will be one of the wonderful differences between the Lord Jesus as the priest on His throne and all others that have ever governed in this world. It is the sorrowful necessity of those that govern now, that they must take the means of maintaining their dignity and grandeur from the people whom they govern ; that even the poorest contribute to that which the

world owns as greatness and majesty. It must be so; it is the necessity of earthly glory which never can rise above its source for the haughtiest monarchy of the world is after all founded, whatever the sovereign gift and ordinance of God, on the least contributions of the least people on the earth. But when creation is arranged according to the mind of God, and when His kingdom comes in its proper power and majesty, how different! It will be His prerogative to supply all. The instinctive sense of this was what made the people wish the Lord Jesus to be king when He was here below. When He miraculously fed the multitudes with bread, they as it were said, That is the kind of king we want—a king that will give us plenty of bread without our working for it.

And doubtless the day is coming when the kingdom will be so ordered. That which the corrupt heart of man would like very well now, to avoid toiling in the sweat of his face, the Lord will give, according to His own goodness, when man is bowed down as well as broken and the riches of His grace are no longer made the cloak of his selfishness to God's dishonor. This is one of the great distinctive features of that future kingdom, and Melchizedek shows it here. It is not only that there is food for the hungry, but he brings out bread and wine for the conquerors. That is, it is not merely the meeting of the necessities of man, but God acting after the victory is won according to His bounty and as is due to His own glory. And so it is that in the great day of the coming kingdom God will do these wonderful things on man on the earth. But mark His wise and righteous way -- *not* before the cross, the mighty work of the Son, is a fact; *not* before the Spirit of God has wrought to bring the souls of those very men into the acknowledgment of Him that wrought it, and into the appreciation of the value of that atonement which was accomplished on the cross. God will have wrought this work in the remnant of His people whom He will make a strong nation, when the day arrives for the Lord Jesus to manifest Himself in the exercise of His Melchizedek priesthood - - not merely to be the antitypical Melchizedek, for this He is now. But now He is not yet bestowing His Melchizedek favors; but when that day comes, it will be, I repeat, for the exercise of the priesthood, and not merely the glory of that one sole priest. The need of man too will be secured in that day. The people will be prepared for blessing. If there will be power and glory, it will be the portion of a people poor in spirit, confessedly contrite and broken down, sensible of the mercy that God had shown their souls, and made honest enough by grace to confess their sins, a people in short that will have found all their boast in that Savior whom they once despised and in that which was their abhorrence. Then it will not be a base and selfish seeking of what merely suits themselves and allows them to vegetate in idleness. Not so; but it is the day for the King to lavish what He has Himself wrought, and for God to manifest what was ever in His heart. For God has always longed to bless men ; but He awaits the day when He can righteously as well as freely bless them. Alas! man has never yet been in the state wherein he can be blessed. For to bless him when his heart is at enmity to God, where would be the good

143. Someone wrote:

The 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of Genesis presents the first recorded battle in the Scriptures, and there is the surest warrant to view it as typical of the last.

"The Melchizedek Priesthood of Christ," in *The Present Testimony* 3:308.

of it for man, not to speak of God? Would it not be, on the contrary, the grossest mockery to pour out blessing on man who, being unrenewed and unrepentant, must after all be cast into hell? Such is the state of every man naturally; no showers of blessing from above, if this were all, could change the soil. In his natural state he is not fit for heaven, nor even for the earth under the reign of our Lord Jesus, but only to be cast into the place that is prepared for the devil and his angels. But in the day that is coming the Lord will have a people born of God, washed every whit clean, and rescued out of the hand of the spoiler, by His own redeeming grace and power, and then we see the Lord Jesus bringing out all that will manifest the goodness of God and glory of God, making the heart of man to rejoice before Him, and his face glad for ever. Then shall man know what is the God he has to do with, when he sees reversed and set aside and rooted out every vestige of Satan's old lie that God does not take pleasure in goodness and in lavishing the fruits of it on man here below.

This then is the scene that is soon to open, surpassing fable indeed, and yet true. Mark too how all confirms it in the context. Christ is the antitype of Melchizedek, the king of righteousness and afterwards of peace.<sup>144</sup> Then will be the day of peace founded on righteousness. But further He is the "priest of the most high God." Glorious title! It is not merely "Jehovah," nor merely "Almighty." The almightiness of God comes out in protecting His poor pilgrims; and His character of Jehovah, as of old in judgment when the people were under the first covenant, so under the second, particularly when He shows Himself the unchangeable God, who cleaves to His purpose of blessing a people that were alas! changeable more than all others on the earth. But "the most high God" -- what is its force? Just this. When all other oracles are dumb, when every false god becomes like Dagon, a fallen and dishonored stump before the true ark and Him whose glory dwells there, then and then for the first time, since Satan foisted idol-worship into the world, shall every idol vanish out of it, and their worshipers be ashamed before the only true God. Then shall God have His place as "the most high God."<sup>145</sup>

144. {This order of righteousness *first*, then peace, is a divine, moral order, and certainly true in Christianity also ( James 3:17).}

145. {Psa. 83 gives the confederacy of the enemies round about Israel (as in Zech. 14:2) then subjected to the overflowing scourge (Isa. 28:15, 18), the Assyrian (the rod of His indignation, Isa. 10:5). But Psa. 83 goes on to describe Jehovah's fury poured out upon the enemy and concludes with:

That they may know that thou alone, whose name is Jehovah, art the Most High over all the earth.

The gods many and the lords many (1 Cor. 8:5) shall all be judged, and the heavens cleared, too, of (continued...)

Yet He is not only this, but "the possessor of heaven and earth." When will that be, and what will display His possession of heaven and earth? We all know He is now in real title; but when is the due testimony to it on the earth? Where the power that enforces it? As far as one sees, man is the possessor of the earth now; and if one bows to scripture, who can deny that the devil is the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air? It is only faith can say that God is really so; but in that day it will be evident to all. His possession of heaven and earth will be manifest when the Lord Jesus comes. For whence does He come? Not from Bethlehem then, but from heaven He will come from God's right hand and put down all contrary powers here below, and the heavens and earth, long severed, will be manifestly at one. The mind of heaven will be no longer as now in contrast with the mind of the earth. Then will come the reconciler, the blessed One that will unite, for God's glory and under His own sway, "all things, whether they be things in heaven or things on earth" -- even in Him "in whom we have obtained an inheritance."

This then is the evident meaning of the glorious fore-shadowing brought before us in this divine tale of Melchizedek.

I need dwell no more on the history, except to point out one moral feature, the beautiful manner in which Abram, thus blessed, and deeply affected by both God's dealings on the one hand and this remarkable confirmation of his faith on the other, answers the king of Sodom, who, feeling all thankfulness for the mighty intervention of divine power through Abram, offers generously to give Abram the goods. But Abram at once chews us that faith is more generous still, knowing what it is to be rich toward God, and refusing to tarnish His testimony by anything that would enable the king of Sodom to say "I have made Abram rich." At the same time he pleads for the others. Whatever may be the self-renouncing grace of Abram, he in the largeness of his heart forgets not what is due to those who had not his faith. He pleads for Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre who had helped him. It was only and quite right that they should participate in

145. (...continued)

the Enemy. Christ shall head up "the things in heaven, and the things upon the earth" in the "administration of the fulness of times" (Eph. 1:10), i.e., the millennium. The Most High God is the possessor of heaven and earth (Gen. 14:22) and all will be administered by the Son of Man, for He is the Most High God.

Of course, the Father is the Most High, the Son is the Most High, and the Holy Spirit is the Most High, as They are also each Jehovah. But the Son, who is the *Word*, and as such is the expressor and expression of what God is, is the One who became the Son of Man, so into His hands all judgment is committed because He is the Son of Man (John 5:22). All power has been given to Him (as man, in resurrection) in heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18). It is His in title and awaits the time of administration in His hands. Each of His titles will be in action and display in the millennial epoch. Bear in mind that His title as Son of Man, embracing the heavenly as well as the earthly, is of wider import than that of King of Israel, or of Melchisedek priest.}

the spoil.<sup>146</sup>

We might also note that regarding our Lord's appearing in glory to strike down His enemies, and in His subsequent peaceful reign, he combines in Himself what is typified by David as a man of war (righteousness) and Solomon's reign (peace) (Isa. 9:6, 7).

### *Melchisedec Was Before, and Greater Than, Aaron*

The fact that Melchizedec is brought before us in the Word of God long before Aaron was in his appointed office is significant. This fact parallels the fact that the unconditional promises and covenant to Abraham were given long before the giving of the law in the Mosaic covenant. The Abrahamic covenant and promises have to do with the purpose of God for the earth. The law came in meanwhile as part of the trial of the first man to show that he was not recoverable. The law could not displace the promises (Gal. 3:16-20). Observe, the Aaronic order of priesthood was part of the system when man was under trial to show that he was not recoverable. The Melchisedec order is God's purpose for the earth regarding His glory in Christ in the earthly sphere. The promises to Abraham, and the Melchisedec priesthood, will both be made good by Christ when the new covenant is in effect in the millennium.

But not only that; we read:

... and, so to speak, through Abraham, Levi also, who received tithes, has been made to pay tithes. For he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchisedec met him (Heb. 7:9, 10).

The superiority of the Melchisedec priesthood over the Aaronic priesthood is thus affirmed. What pointed to God's purpose in Christ was first recorded; then the Aaronic order came in; then (concerning the earth) God's purpose for His glory in Christ's earthly priesthood will be established in due time. This is an important order to observe, for it is not confined to only the matter of Priesthood. It applies to kingship also, and Melchisedec in Gen. 14 points to this also. Kingship was before God concerning His purpose to glorify Himself in Christ in the earthly sphere. The people asked for a king, and kingship failed -- but will be made good by Christ in the millennium. So, government was put in man's hands. We well know the failure. Government will be taken up by Christ in the millennium. In fact, everything wherein the first man has failed, God will make good through Christ.

### *What Is the Meaning of "Melchisedec, King of Salem" (Heb. 7:2)?*

Melchisedec means "king of righteousness." The order stated in Heb. 7:2 reminds us of James 3:17:

But the wisdom from above first is pure, then peaceable . . .

Note well the words "first" and "then" in both texts. Never reverse God's order. Saying, "but we are under grace," does not change that. What do you mean by such a response? -- that for the sake of "peace" you, who has been sanctified (set apart) to Christ's obedience (1 Pet. 1:2) may be impure, unrighteous? The character of the Christian's obedience is Christ's obedience. You have not learned what grace is if you think it brings us to a place where we may be unrighteous and God condones it. What could you be thinking? Grace brings us to walk as Christ walked; and in His walk there was no impurity, no unrighteousness.

Psa. 110 should be read in connection with this. His power, exercised in righteousness, will bring in world-wide peace. There we see kingship and the Melchizedec priesthood combined in the day of Christ's power.

### *Zechariah's Vision of the Kingly and Priestly Offices of Christ*

There are numerous ideas of what the lampstand and the two olive trees represent. We are helped to understand by the fact that in Zech. 3 we have Joshua the high priest dealt with. Thus priesthood is before us. In Zech. 4 we have Zerubbabel, of the line of King David, presented as the builder of the House of Jehovah at that time (see Hag. 2:1-9 in this regard). He laid the foundation stone and he will finish the work of building, bringing forth the headstone (Zech. 7:7), the final stone placed in the building. In this he is a type of Christ, for he will build the millennial temple (replacing the one in which Antichrist sat (2 Thess. 2)) as seen in Ezek. 40-48.

However, Israel was in ruins and the son of David was not on the throne. It is only Christ who can combine the office of priest (Joshua) with that of King. Zech. 6:12, 13 state:

Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts, saying, Behold a man whose name is [the] Branch; and he shall grow up from his own place, and he shall build the temple of Jehovah: even he shall build the temple of Jehovah; and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

146. *The Bible Treasury*, 10:225-228.

So, if Christ and His glory is before our souls as it ought to be, we will not find something of man, of his offices, or his testimony, or his doings, in the vision of Zech. 4, except **the Man**, whose name is **the Branch**. The priesthood of Zech. 3 and the kingship (though in failure) of the son of David in Zech. 4 are brought together in Christ, as priest upon His throne. This is His millennial position. He will fill the earth with His light through these two combined offices. This great light is seen in the golden lampstand. The two offices are seen in the two sons of oil, depicted by the two olive trees. Each olive tree has a branch by which each respective golden pipe, or tube, sends oil into the golden bowl above the golden lampstand. I can hardly think of the golden bowl not being full of oil at all times. The golden bowl is like the person of Christ, full of the Holy Spirit, for the golden oil signifies the Spirit of God whom the Lord Jesus received without measure (John 3:34).

From the golden bowl above the lampstand there are pipes going to the lampstand to feed the light. There are 7 x 7 pipes, 49 in all. Seven pipes go to each of the seven lamps. Fulness, completeness, plentitude -- that is what is depicted. Thus the light is feed by the two sons of oil, the two offices of Christ as Priest and King.

Note that in JND's translation of Zech. 4:12 we read of "the golden tubes that empty the gold out of themselves." Yes, it is oil, but here called "gold." The oil points to the Holy Spirit, and He is a divine Person, to which the term "gold" here points, indicating what is divine.

It is instructive that the vision having been presented in Zech. 4:1-3, the prophet having asked about the meaning, the answer is:

Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts (Zech. 4:6).

The power of the Spirit in the two offices (in the two sons of oil) is fed into the golden bowl (Christ). From the golden bowl the oil fed in perfection multiplied (7 X 7 pipes) to the seven lamps of the golden lampstand. The light and glory of Christ's person discharging these offices to Jehovah's glory will fill the earth; and the knowledge of Jehovah will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9). Man, in responsibility, has failed in these offices (even as Zech. 3 and 4 indicate), but He will unfailingly glorify Jehovah in them -- as He glorifies God in all things wherein man has failed.

## *The Two Witnesses*

The two witnesses in Rev. 11 are not Moses and Elijah (nor Enoch, etc.) though they have a Moses-like and Elijah-like ministry (Rev. 11:6) during the last half of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week (1260 days), during the time that Antichrist has control of Jerusalem. Enoch and Elijah went to heaven and thus have bodies

suitable for that the place of glory. Moses will have been resurrected at the time of the rapture of the saints (cp. Heb. 11:40). The two witness will be killed -- resurrected persons will not die again.

The circumstances, then, in which the two witnesses are, is the reign of Antichrist over Jerusalem. Antichrist, the man of sin of 2 Thess 2, the king of Dan. 11:36-39 (King in Israel), is the false prophet of Revelation. He is the second beast (Rev. 13:11-18), the mouth-piece of the first beast, who is the coming Roman prince of Dan. 9:26, and Lucifer of Isa. 14. The second beast has two horns like a lamb, but speaks as a dragon. He pretends to be a priest upon his throne, for he is director of religious affairs for the Western power under the first beast, the Roman ruler of the revived Roman Empire. Thus, he pretends to the two offices of Christ as King and Priest -- depicted by the two horns. In Scripture symbology, horns denote power.

The two witnesses are witnesses to Christ's coming to take His two offices as King and Priest -- which Antichrist claims as his.

These are the two olive trees and the two lamps which stand before the Lord of all the earth (Rev. 11:5).

Standing before the Lord of all the earth shows us that this is not a heavenly testimony as now, but connected with God's ways in the earth for His glory in Christ in the earthly sphere.

The testimony of the two witnesses is not something identical with what we have in Zech. 4, but it is quite related as being a testimony to Christ's two offices brought before us in Zech. 3 - 6. They will understand that it is not by might nor by power but by Jehovah's Spirit (Zech. 4:6) that all will be fulfilled, Who is also the works of power they themselves display. Rev. 11 characterizes these two by their testimony to the coming King-Priest upon His throne; i.e., what they testify to marks them as two olive trees and two lampstands. These are features of Christ that will be displayed in glory in the coming kingdom. Their testimony has, then, a character in opposition to the Antichrist at Jerusalem as well as a character pointing to the offices of the coming Messiah.<sup>147</sup> This is testimony to that which Zech. 4 shows symbolically in fulfilment in Christ.

The testimony takes place in Jerusalem (Rev. 11:8), where the two offices of Christ shall be established, i.e., the city of Melchizedec, king of Salem (Gen. 14:18; Psalms. 76:2). There shall the Priest of the Most High God (Gen. 14:18-20; Psalms. 83:18) reign before His ancients in glory (Isa. 24:23) as priest upon His

147. The godly remnant will, at the same time, again be preaching the gospel of the kingdom (which was put in abeyance consequent on the rejection of Christ), that the king is coming and the kingdom is about to appear.

throne.

Before passing on, let us note something about their end. As did the Lord Jesus complete His testimony (John 17:4), so do these two complete theirs (Rev. 11:7). Then the same power that executed Christ in Jerusalem, kills these two, in the same city, characterized as Sodom and Egypt. Jerusalem's iniquity will have ripened for judgment under Antichrist and the mass of the Jews. As in Christ's case, the two witnesses rise from the dead and go up to heaven in a cloud.<sup>148</sup> They will shortly thereafter find themselves in the company noted in Rev. 19:14.

There is no attempt here to be exhaustive in treating the Melchizedec priesthood of Christ, but to outline its bearing. Thus, we must yet relate His Melchizedec priesthood to the gracious covenant of the priesthood made with Phinehas. We have elsewhere noted that there are four gracious (unconditional) covenants:

1. the covenant to Abraham;
2. the covenant to Phinehas concerning the priesthood;
3. the covenant to David concerning kingship; and,
4. the New Covenant in contrast to the Old Covenant, the Mosaic.

These will all be fulfilled when Christ is Priest upon His throne.

### *Distinction of the Heavenly and the Earthly Priesthood of Christ*

Christ's present priesthood is of a heavenly character and His Melchizedec priesthood is an earthly order, as was the Aaronic order. Concerning earthly priesthood, the Aaronic order was anticipatory of the work of Christ on the cross. The Melchizedec order is found on the once-for-all finished work on the cross (and Christ's resurrection, of course). A summary of the distinction was written by J. N. Darby:

Christ is not a priest according to the order of Aaron; His priesthood is not according to that order; but the exercise of priesthood in Hebrews is wholly according to that type. He enters into the holiest not without

148. None but saints saw the cloud receive the Lord out of their sight. The two witnesses ascend in the sight of their enemies to whom they had witnessed. That did not cause the enemies to repent. As W. Kelly remarked, the human heart is invincible.

blood, only here His own;<sup>149</sup> that was what Aaron did. Aaron did not make himself a priest, nor did He [make Himself a priest]. Aaron passed through the tabernacle into the holiest, so did He {pass} into a better, made without hands. Aaron was consecrated to offer to God, so must He have something. Aaron was a minister of the sanctuary, so is He {Heb. 8:1, 2}. They served to the example and pattern of heavenly things, He {serves} in the heavenly things themselves. The tabernacle and its service were the pattern and type of the heavenly things in which Christ now ministers. The epistle compares Him to Moses and Aaron. He is the high priest of our profession. Now take the Melchizedec priesthood in its exercise as presented. It is {exercised}, after all enemies are subdued; that {Christ's priesthood} in Hebrews is expressly not so; they {i.e., the enemies} are not under His feet. Melchizedec offers no sacrifice; Christ has {offered Himself {Heb. 7:27}}: Melchizedec goes into no sanctuary; Christ does here {Heb. 6:19, 20; 9:12, 24}: Melchizedec is a priest upon his throne {Zech. 6:13}; Christ here is not {upon His own throne, but on the Father's throne (Rev. 3:21)}, but on the right hand of the majesty on high {Heb. 1:3}: Melchizedec brings out blessing on earth; Christ here does not: with Melchizedec, the rod of God's strength goes out of Sion {Psa. 110:1-4}; here it does not. Though every way superior {to the Melchizedec priesthood} the priesthood of Christ in Hebrews has every element of the Aaronic priesthood as a type, which is stated to be a pattern of these heavenly things {Heb. 8:5} in which Christ is exercised; not one of {those things

149. {JND. intends no such teaching as that Christ took His blood to heaven and made propitiation there. He was dead already when the blood and water from the side flowed forth. The shed blood rent the vail, so to speak; i.e., it was rent in virtue of that blood. There is no basis to say that there was any interval between the shedding of the blood and the rending of the vail. Indeed, Luke 23:45 might mistakenly be understood to teach that the vail was rent even before Christ died. That would be quite erroneous. Luke brings things together in a moral order, or connection, or flow. Here, then, it is a whole complex of things brought together as a moral whole. No such thing as a presentation of the blood taking place in heaven, to make propitiation there, is presented, but rather negated by this.

The fact is that the moment the blood was shed, the power, and value, and glory, of it was before the throne of God instantly, and the response immediately was the rending of the vail from the top to the bottom. Propitiation was completed on the cross and nowhere else. W. Kelly rightly called the notion that Christ took the blood to heaven in the disembodied state, in order to make propitiation there, a "ghostly fable" and "fundamental" evil. See my, *The Work of Christ on the Cross and some of its Results.*

applying to} the Melchisedec.<sup>150</sup>

In answer to a question, J. N. Darby wrote:

*Ques.* Is there nothing for us of heavenly blessing through the Melchisedec character?

I know nothing of it. There is nothing now in connection with Melchizedec except patience. Melchizedec is king as well as priest, but he has not yet taken to Him His great power and reigned. The object here {in Hebrews} is to show how completely Judaism is set aside. That part of it {of Hebrews} that contains instruction for us is the Aaronic comparison. When the [millennial] temple comes, it will be Melchisedec; but in Hebrews it is tabernacle, not temple.<sup>151</sup>

The object in Hebrews was to show an end to the Aaronic *order* of priesthood, a hereditary order, and transmissible; it being replaced with the Melchizedec *order*, a continuous, intransmissible order, a more excellent order. Keep in mind that the Aaronic and the Melchisedec priesthoods have to do with the earth. Moreover, the replacement of the Aaronic by the Melchizedec order does not mean that the Melchisedec order is functioning now. That is not the point in Hebrews; rather, Christ being saluted as a priest after the order of Melchisedec (in resurrection) shows that the Mosaic system is set aside. That is the point in Hebrews. The exercise of the Melchizedec priesthood awaits Christ coming from heaven to reign as King -- combining the exercise of Kingship and the Melchisedec priesthood as priest upon His throne (Zech. 6:13). Concerning *order* of priesthood and its exercise, Christ's present priesthood is heavenly. The character of this heavenly priesthood was not spoken of by the OT prophets. However, the earthly order of priesthood, i.e., the Melchizedec order, *is* spoken of in the OT. This is in keeping with the heavenly/earthly distinction of Christ's glories.

I affirm, then, that the OT, in speaking of Melchizedec, does not point to Christ's present priesthood of the heavenly order in the heavenly sanctuary. I say this because some have indicated that they think that there is a present functioning of the Melchizedec priesthood of Christ. It is a mistake, without scripture support, and tends to mix the heavenly with the earthly. Since writing this, I found these remarks by J. N. Darby:

*Ques.* With what, then, was their {OT saints'} faith connected?

They were looking for Christ, and for the promises of God.

All else is revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures, except the truths

of the church and of the present priesthood of Christ. They speak of Christ's death, resurrection, ascension, and of the promise of the Spirit to individuals, and also of the Melchisedec priesthood, but not of the church, nor of Christ's priesthood in heaven. Psa. 110 is Christ's priesthood on earth. But now He has gone through the heavens into the holiest; Melchisedec has nothing to do with going into the holiest {above}.

"The Most High" is the millennial name of God, and this name He has with Melchisedec (Gen. 14). And in Psa. 110, we read that "the LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion," that is when Christ takes His Melchisedec character; and then, in v. 5 it says, "Adonai" (not Jehovah) "at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath." Christ's priesthood is after the order of Melchisedec, and He is a priest who lives for ever; but now He has gone into the holiest, just as of old Aaron went in.<sup>152</sup>

Meanwhile, the Jews wait until He comes out of heaven, and then He will be their King and their Melchisedec priest upon His throne (Zech. 6:13).

150. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 115:231. Some detail concerning these distinctions were given by W. Kelly in *The Bible Treasury* 10:226, 227, an article well worth reading. See also the writings on *Hebrews* by these writers.

151. *Notes and Jottings*, p. 33.

152. *Notes and Jottings*, p. 303.



## Chapter 13

### Genesis 15: The Fourth Communication

**What God is for Abram.  
Abram's wants met.  
Promise of  
THE SECOND MAN.**

#### *Abraham's Personal Walk with God*

The words "After these things" in Gen. 15:1 marks Gen. 12-14 as a major section in the history of Abraham as well as the beginning of a new, major section encompassing the next four communications of God with Abraham -- which are connected with his private walk. Accordingly, Gen. 15-21 bring out another grouping of instructions for us, both as to moral lessons to be learned from the life of Abraham that concerns his *private* walk, compared to Gen. 12-14 which brings before us the *public* walk of Abraham. In all, there is the unfolding of the ways of God for His glory in Christ in connection with election, calling, and promise.<sup>153</sup>

The word altar is found in Gen. 12:7, 8; 13:4, 18, but not again until Gen. 22:9. It is not claimed that Abraham built no altars between these time; it is a matter of what God has recorded in His word for the purpose of teaching us. Thus, the altar is found in connection with the first three recorded communications of God, in the section dealing with Abraham's public life. The altar is not mentioned in the section which speaks of Abraham's personal life (Gen. 15-21), for this section brings before us Abram led more fully into personal *communion* with God while the previous section has more of the character of *worship* -- therefore the altar.

#### *The Word of Jehovah Came to Abram in a Vision; and, the*

153. An article, "The Communion of God with Abraham in Gen. 15, 17 is found in *The Bible Treasury* 1:126, 127; also 8:194; 17:16; 9:273; 10:241; New Series 12:65. Also see *Notes and Comments from the Notebooks of J. N. Darby* 1:68-71; *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 19:98-100;

### *Promise of Heirship (Gen. 15:1-5)*

It has been noted how Jehovah approached Abraham in Gen. 15:1 as compared with Gen. 17:1. Here, personal needs occupy the soul of Abram.

It seems to me that the disinterestedness of Abraham, at the end of chapter 14 {"refusal of anything from Sodom" <sup>154</sup>}, was the reason of God's saying to him in grace, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."<sup>155</sup> At first sight one might have thought that Abraham would have nothing to do but to rejoice with ineffable joy at the thought that God Himself was his reward; but he says, "What wilt thou give me?" God condescends in grace, when it is a question of a real need founded on promise. But there is an element which stamps its character upon that grace: "I am *thy* shield, and *thy* exceeding great reward"; the blessing does not go beyond the personal needs or privileges of Abraham. Quite naturally his heart enters into this, and it is the development of the need of his heart according to its own state. It is immense grace, but grace which, in a certain sense, is measured by the needs of the creature. In Gen. 17 God says, "I am the Almighty God." He does not say, "I am thy. . ." It is what He is in Himself: "walk before me, and be thou perfect" (upright). Abraham falls on his face, and God talks with Abraham. He promises him the son, and afterwards reveals to him, as to a friend, what He is about to do. Then Abraham, instead of making requests for himself, intercedes for others. It

154. JND. J. G. Bellet wrote:

Sodom was the *world* in this day. The Lord Jesus in His teaching, gives it morally that place, just as another generation had been the world in Noah's day. See Matt. 24; Luke 17. They are like figures, presenting to our thoughts "this present evil world," which is ripening itself for the judgment of God.

At such a crisis, however, in this day of the judgment of Sodom, or the overthrow of the cities of the plain, as in every other like day, there are two incidental matters to be deeply pondered by our souls; there is *deliverance out of the judgment*, and there is *separation before it came*. There is Lot and there is Abraham. Lot is delivered when the hour of crisis comes; Abraham is separated before it comes.

All this is much to be weighed in our thoughts. *Judgment, deliverance, separation* -- these are the elements of action here, and these are full of meaning, and of application to our own history as the Church of God, and to the world around us.

(*The Patriarchs*, London: Morrish, p. 119, n.d.)

*The Patriarchs*, by J. G. Bellett, is a very valuable book.

155. {Perhaps Jehovah being his shield has in view any future reprisals being taken against him for his victory over the world (typically speaking). Jehovah being his reward has in view his "refusal of anything from Sodom." }

may also be remarked that Gen. 15 does not go beyond Jewish promises; in Gen. 17 he is the father of many nations. It is the difference between the goodness of God, which is connected in grace with us and our needs, and communion with Him.<sup>156</sup>

It is instructive for our souls to understand the difference between the communications of Gen. 15 and 17:

There is a difference between the communications of chapter 15 and chapter 17. God does not, so to speak, personally visit Abram in chapter 15. He communicates to him what He is for him in a vision, a great and special blessing, but evidently different from the personal revelation of chapters 17 and 18. The two communications have this essential difference: in chapter 15 God declares what He is for Abram, in chapter 17 what He is: and this last leads to much deeper communion, and a larger unfolding of grace and imbuedness with the mind of God, than the revelation of chapter 15. This latter makes Abram's wants and desires the measure of His blessings, or, at least, they characterize these latter. Hence Abram is thrown back upon himself. God meets him there in full grace, but meets his wants and wishes. Now this is most precious. God shows His most tender condescension. He inspires us with confidence: we can tell Him our wants, open our hearts to Him, in consequence; and all the communication that results, while it makes us know God better, leads us up to that knowledge of Him which makes us see our own littleness in what we have presented to Him as the object of our desires, and gives us to find our joy in Himself, and draw our feelings towards others from Himself, and our assimilating enjoyment of what He is for ourselves.

Thus, when God had spoken to Abram of His being his shield, and his reward, Abram says, "What wilt thou give me?" The first want of his is presented to God. God had told Abram He Himself was his reward; but where our feelings and need are referred to, if God presents Himself as our portion, the human heart will turn, by the very confidence that is produced in it, to its own thoughts and its own desires. Abram's reward led Abram to Abram's wants and feelings and wishes. Though God, and even because God, had said He was his reward, the love and goodness was felt, but did not put aside, nor lead Abram, beyond, what Abram desired to have from that goodness, if it was there. God knew all this, and used it for the occasion of bringing out His own thoughts and purposes. This is the grace, then, that comes down to the heart of man himself, and draws it out in confidence towards God, but thereby leaves it in the circle of its own wants and feelings; but its wants and feelings, such as they can exist in connection with God; but then, remark, not going beyond this world, beyond what man wants as conscious of his position here.

The interference of God in goodness to us in this sphere is full of

sweetness, but it is not in its object heavenly. As a man upon this earth, Abram wanted a son to continue his name, and posterity to inherit and enjoy the promises. God was fully minded to give this. The natural wish and desire of Abram, Abram connects with the testimony of divine favor. God had, in the revelation which Abram had received when in the land, promised a seed to Abram connected with the inheritance of the land. Abram naturally wished to associate the promised blessing and glory with his own descendants. If his desire had been merely to enjoy God in heaven, such a wish had had no place; the moment his thoughts rested on earth, and God had promised him blessing there, such wish came in. It fell in with God's purposes, but took, necessarily, if the blessing was to be made precise, an earthly character. Our wants, whatever character they may have, necessarily have their place on earth. We may bring God into them, but it is into them we bring Him, and there indeed He is gracious enough to come.

I have said, that the answer of God when making His promise precise, necessarily took an earthly character. The fifteenth chapter of Genesis makes this evident. The numerous seed and limits of the land are given. Some principles are also given full of blessing, but which characterize the position of Abram; most blessed in themselves, but still meeting man's need and weakness, not properly communion in the truest and highest sense. God was communicating with Abram, and Abram speaking with Him; but it was not communion in the sense of the enjoyment of God Himself, and in conformity to His nature. Righteousness is imputed to Abraham; blessed truth! How could he stand before God, or be the blessed one of God, without it? He believes in the power of resurrection in God, and in His faithfulness to perform His promise, and it is counted to him for righteousness. It is the first time this great and all-important truth is taught in Scripture, or even the word for it found; and, I doubt not, intentionally so, though we know there were believers before. But now, in the great root of the tree of promise, this fundamental truth was to be brought out. The very ground of man's blessing was laid here, but it was still meeting man's need. He could not be before God or inherit the promise without it. He had it not in himself. God counts his faith to him as such.

Next, to assure the feeble heart of man, God binds Himself by covenant. Most gracious condescension, indeed; but what does it meet in this wondrously condescending grace? -- "Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" God then, while nature and man pass through the dark shadow of the power of death (and this Christ as man has done for us), passes between the pieces, and binds Himself in a covenant of death to accomplish this desire of the believer's heart, according to His own thoughts; and promise lays the sure foundation of it in Christ. The very limits of the land are pointed out, the power of those that held them is naught. In this very remarkable passage, we learn the blessed and perfect assuring of man in the righteousness of faith, and the immutability of the covenant; only it is not communion in life, but earthly, and meeting need,

156. *Letters of J. N. Darby*, 1:244, 245.

though the thing given was pure grace.<sup>157</sup>

Let us emphasize the fact that the heir and the land are brought before Abram (and us) in vv. 4, 5. Without the great Heir there would be no possession of the land. All centers in Christ, whether the earthly sphere, as here, or the heavenly which is ours -- though *in Christ* all things are ours (1 Cor. 3:21, 22) for we are one with Him (Eph. 2:15 etc.).

## *The Promise of the Numerous Seed (Gen. 15:5)*

Below, the anti-millenarian allegation that the land promise was either fulfilled in Joshua's day, or in Solomon's day, will be shown to be false. Here, we shall look at the allegation that the seed promise was fulfilled in Solomon's day. Of course, one who does this is aware that prophets after Solomon's day prophesied of Israel's future blessing, so these must be turned into something other than what they are. Thus, by spiritual alchemy, such prophecies are transmuted into prophecies concerning the church. That leaves no future for Israel under Christ's millennial reign. It is alleged that we are in the millennium now. Some millennium!

We will hear from O. T. Allis concerning this. Before we do, let us again hear what he said about literal interpretation of the prophets of Israel:

The Old Testament prophecies if literally interpreted cannot be regarded as having been fulfilled or as being capable of fulfillment in this present age.<sup>158</sup>

So, approaching Scripture from the standpoint of the mythical Covenant of Grace, Scripture is forced to mean otherwise than it teaches regarding the future for Israel. Therefore he wrote:

As to the *seed*, it is to be observed that the very words which appear in the covenant (Gen. 13:16, 15:5, 22:17) are used of the nation of Israel in the time of Solomon; "sand" (1 Kings 4:20), "stars" (1 Chron. 27:23) and "dust" (2 Chron. 1:9) are the standards of comparison. This would indicate that the promise was regarded as fulfilled in this respect in the golden age of the Monarchy. That it was so fulfilled is confirmed by the words of Heb. 11:12.<sup>159</sup>

Solomon's reign is a type of the millennial reign and we see many things in it pointing to that reign. The Covenantist construing the typical into the actual is not surprising however erroneous.

It was already indicated that the prophets of Israel after Solomon's day spoke of

157. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 19:140-142.

158. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 238.

159. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 57.

the promises in a way that shows that they were not yet fulfilled, and Covenantists get rid of this with their hermeneutic of spiritual alchemy. However, this in no way changes the fact that these prophecies do remain to be fulfilled and invalidate the Covenantist interpretation.

The prophets after Solomon predicted:

As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me (Jer. 33:22).

And their seed shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are a seed that Jehovah has blessed (Isa. 61:9).

Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea which cannot be numbered . . . (Hos. 1:10).

The attempt to spiritually alchemize such things is absurd. Think of the prophets bringing these things before the Jews but they were speaking of the church about which the Jewish hearers knew absolutely nothing. What was a Jewish hearer supposed to think he was being told? The Covenantist hermeneutic that spiritually alchemizes these things into some kind of church blessing raises the question of God's honesty in misleading Israel by such words.

What was Mary to think when the angel told her that the fruit of her womb would have the throne of David and reign over the house of Jacob (Luke 1:32, 33). Can you really think she was supposed to know that this was about the church? If not, was God deceiving her?

Zacharias, filled with the Spirit, prophesied (Luke 1:67) concerning what God spoke

by [the] mouth of his holy prophets who have been since the world began; deliverance from out enemies and out of the hand of all who hate us; to fulfil mercy with our fathers and remember his holy covenant, [the] oath that he swore to Abraham our father . . . (Luke 1:71-73).

He did not understand what he was saying? He did not know that the seed promise and the land promise were long since fulfilled? -- and that only the Gentile blessing remained to be fulfilled? He was disadvantaged by not having a Covenantist there to explain his own prophecy?

Israel's "fulness" yet lies ahead (Rom. 11:12) though blind now "in part" (Rom. 11:25). Yet shall they be grafted back into their own olive tree (Rom. 11:23) when the Deliverer comes out of Zion and He turns ungodliness away from Jacob (Rom. 11:26).

In the future Jacob shall take root; Israel shall blossom and bud, and they shall fill the face of the world with fruit (Isa. 27:6).

This is as certain as

If my covenant of day and night [stand] not, if I have not appointed the ordinances of the heavens and the earth, [then] will I also cast away the seed of Jacob, and of David my servant, so as not to take of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and of Jacob: for I will turn their

captivity, and will have mercy on them (Jer. 33:25, 26).

Rom. 11 assures us that Israel, as such, is not cast away so as not to be recoverable under His sovereign grace. Their future reception will be as life from among the dead (Rom. 11:15).

All these references, and more, considered together, show us that 1 Kings 4:20, 1 Chron. 27:23, 2 Chron. 1:9, and Heb. 11:12 indicate a partial fulfilment; or perhaps better expressed, an ‘earnest’ on God’s part of what shall be in the future for Israel under Christ’s reign.

### ***The Word of the Lord Believed – Abram Reckoned Righteous Apart from Circumcision and Law (Gen. 15:6)***

After these things **the word of Jehovah** came to Abram in a vision . . . (Gen. 15:1).

And he **believed Jehovah**; and he reckoned it to him [as] righteousness (Gen. 15:6).

The emphasis has been added in these texts to draw attention to the fact that this is not as in Gen. 12:7 -- that Jehovah appeared to him. It is a matter of “the word of Jehovah” and His word is to be believed by faith. Verse 6 is the expression of faith. It is here that the fact that faith is reckoned to one as righteousness is first brought out. True it is that faith was exercised by saints before this point in time. Enoch had the testimony that he pleased God, and we read that without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain (Heb. 11:4). But regarding the OT, the Spirit has chosen to bring out the matter of *belief* (faith) being reckoned as righteousness in Gen. 15 (every Scripture is perfect in its place), doing so in connection with “the word of Jehovah came to Abram.” It should be observed that this takes place following Gen. 14 where Abraham’s judgment of the world, and his refusal of it, is so fully evident. After that, he gets the promise of the heir and the numerous seed (Gen. 15:4, 5). What a blessed principle for us: the world judged and refused, the inheritance before us! God, too, has an Heir, and He has made us co-heirs with Him. Let us judge and refuse the world, as did the father of the faithful.

The great fact of Abram’s faith being reckoned as righteousness is used by the apostle in Rom. 4 to show that Abraham’s faith was reckoned as righteousness *before* he was circumcised, showing that God can reckon as righteous those that are not circumcised in the flesh, such as Gentile believers now (Rom. 4:11, 12). Abraham *walked in faith* while he was uncircumcised (Rom. 4:12). Of course, it is divine design in God’s ways with Abram, for much more that Abram is in His view.

Observe also that the so-called “Christ’s righteous law-keeping” was not transferred to Abram as his righteousness.

Moreover, it is certain that Abram did not receive the promise by law:

For [it] was not by law that the promise was to Abraham, or to his seed, that he should be heir of [the] world, but by righteousness of faith (Rom.

4:13).

When considering Gen. 3, we observed that Adam never had the law of ten commandments. The notion is a Covenantist figment. We now take note of the fact that that notion reverses God’s order, namely, that promise precedes law (Gal. 3:17) -- as that notion also contradicts His word in John 1:17.<sup>160</sup> The Mosaic Covenant, a conditional covenant, cannot add conditions to the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant. The law provided opportunity, in the trial of the first man, to show that he was not recoverable, to show that he could not obtain the promises by the flesh assaying to carry out the commands of God. The order is: first the promises (to Abraham), then the flesh attempting to obtain them and failing (the law), then the promises sovereignly made good by Christ, the Second Man (in the millennium) (and in the present interim, forming a heavenly people). This order is found regarding Isaac and Ishmael. In Gen. 15 we have the promise concerning Abraham’s heir to be born to him (Gen. 15:4). Abraham took matters into his own hands (Gen. 16) and Ishmael was born of the Egyptian handmaid. What does this point to? It is the flesh seeking to realize the promise. In the subsequent history we find Ishmael and Hagar cast out -- and Isaac, the seed of promise, established as the heir (see Gal. 4:28-31). To put the Christian under law for any purpose, such as for sanctification, is like bringing Hagar and Ishmael back into the house for the purpose of making some contribution to maintaining order in the house. Rom. 7:4 shows us to be dead to the law since we are connected with the One who has been raised up from among the dead. Why, the putting the Christian under law is like bringing

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160. Also, we read in Rom. 5:13, 14:

for until law sin was in the world; but sin is not put to account where there is no law; but death reigned from Adam until Moses, even upon those who had not sinned in the likeness of Adam’s transgression . . .

“Until law” clearly shows that the law of ten commandments was not in the world of Adam. “Until law” means until the law came by Moses. The teaching of Scripture is both express and consistent about this matter of when the law was first given. It is false theology to allege against the plain statements of Scripture that the law was written in man’s heart from Adam on. (And where is there evidence in Scripture that anyone kept the Sabbath, if indeed the Sabbath-law was written in the heart?). The fact comes out plainly in Gen. 15:6 that grace preceded law -- and then law came in 430 years after Abraham’s entry into the land. The first man failed under that trial and now the Second Man is established in His place, and soon He will make good the Abrahamic Covenant, a gracious covenant.

Adam *transgressed* against a stated commandment not to eat of the certain tree. Moreover, there has resulted confusion from not differentiating the word “put to account” here, from impute or reckon elsewhere in Romans, as JND pointed out in a footnote to Rom. 5:13:

This is a different word from that translated ‘reckoned’ in ch. 4:22, 23 (both ‘imputed’ in A.V.). There, a man is judicially estimated such and such: here, a particular fault is put to a person’s account. The former is found in Gal. 3:6 and 2 Cor. 5:19; this only in Philem. 18.

Hagar and Ishmael into the house after Gen. 22 where we see, typically speaking, the Son raised from the dead, the risen Heir of all that the Father has.

Promise came to Abraham apart from the matter of obtaining righteousness by the law, but the law raises that question and God therefore has the character of a Judge, which character was never displayed in relationship with Abraham. How different the principle: (1) God promising unconditionally, and (2) working to obtain the promises with God being a Judge.

We Christians have promise that predates the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). These are made good in the Second Man, but God dealt with the fallen, first man first. That is the history in the OT. Christ in resurrection is the Second Man *in His place* (personally He was the Second Man when come here in incarnation) and in Him these promises are made good. The OT is not salvation-history continued in the NT; the OT is the history of the ways of God with man, the history of the fallen first man.<sup>161</sup>

I have read the idea that Heb. 11:12 has Abram in view here. The fact is that Abram was able to father children as Gen. 16 shows. Meanwhile, Sarah's plan, after the flesh, was tried as Abram according to nature was still able to father children and thus might have an heir. It was the flesh helping God, so to speak, in order to realize the promised blessing. Heb. 11:12 has Gen. 17 in view where it is clear that he could no longer naturally father children. The promise was not realized through the flesh acting, intruding itself.

Abram had acted in faith from the first (Heb. 11:8), when the God of glory appeared to him (Acts 7:2). In Gen. 15, the place where the second section of his life is recorded, the section concerning his private walk, it is stated that he believed Jehovah and it was reckoned as righteousness -- **in connection with the promise of the heir to be his son**. This son was typical of the great Son and the mind of the Spirit here is to point to faith in God's provision of His Son.

## *God's Covenant with Abraham Introduced:*

### *The Basis for the Covenant*

Gen. 15:6 is the basis for the introduction of the covenant. The truth that faith is reckoned as righteousness has come out here regarding Abram: righteousness before, and apart from, circumcision and the giving of the law.

Thus, he can be the father of the faithful who are circumcised, and of us who are one *in Christ*, but uncircumcised with that made by hands, though circumcised as in Christ (Col. 2:11). The promise of an heir is given, for the promise being made good depends on this -- pointing to Christ. The Abrahamic Covenant cannot exist without the sacrifice of Christ; thus there are sacrifices pointing to the sacrifice of Christ, and God alone passes between the pieces.

It is important to understand that the context is *Abram's wants* (v. 2) and that the character of the covenant and its ratification is in keeping with this as the context for what is brought before us.

In Gen. 17, the Abrahamic Covenant is given in connection with the *revelation of the name of God, the Almighty*, before whom Abraham was to walk in the path of faith.

## *The Covenant Ratified by Death*

There is no basis here to think that Abram doubted Jehovah. He believed what Jehovah said in vv. 4, 5. Abram's question was the occasion for types of Christ to be brought forward in connection with the certainty of God's promise. The promise was now to be en-covenanted,<sup>162</sup> so to speak, by death typically pointing to the great Heir given in sacrifice on Calvary -- pointed to also by the typical sacrifice of the heir of Abraham in Gen. 22. The covenant was ratified by death, and by Jehovah alone, only the symbols of His presence passing between the pieces, thus the covenant being unconditional.

The animals and birds of sacrifice point to characteristics and moral features in Christ (as in the offerings of Lev. 1-5 and elsewhere. The three animals being three years old point to the fulness of Christ in *sacrifice*; as the three measures of meal in Gen. 18:6 point to the fulness of Christ as the *food* of God and His people. The sacrifice of Gen. 15 comes before the food of Gen. 18. The heifer, points to Christ as the perfect Servant of God (Christ in Mark), the female goat points to Christ as a victim (Christ in Matthew), the ram points to Christ in the energy of devotion (Christ in Luke), and the birds point to the One from heaven (Christ in John).

The smoking furnace may be thought to point to the affliction of Israel in

162. This points to a difference between covenant and promise, but no uncertainty in fulfilment is meant. In the seven things that belong to Paul's kinsmen according to flesh (Rom. 9:3-5) promises and covenants are distinguished. The promises to Abraham are unconditional, as is the Abrahamic Covenant. Not only is that clear in Genesis, it is clear from Rom. 9:3-5, Num. 23:19, and Rom. 11:32.

161. The reader will be helped by reading "On the Government of God and His counsels in Grace," *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 32:227-244.

Egypt (as the writer below) because of what is said in Gen. 15:13-17. But it seems to me that the passing of both the flaming fire and the smoking furnace between the pieces points to Calvary where God was, and where His judgment against sin burned like the smoking furnace.

J. N. Darby remarked:

... man's nature, such as we are, can have no part in it; hence it involves death as to this, He brings us out into another scene and state where we enjoy the profit. Abraham passes under the horror of great darkness, and sleep, to come under the promise of blessing, and receive it, in this way of severity. Christ therefore has, in accomplishing this, died, and risen again to enjoy and enter into it.

Death must pass upon nature, when God gives blessings, secured according to His {nature}, in righteousness; this also becomes real deliverance from sin. God becomes (is in this and becomes) the light (of life), and the furnace of His people, to consume all that connects with the life of sin.

It is a wonderful display of God's ways and dealings, basing blessing on Himself, in connection with sinners, through the work and sacrifice of Christ Himself; the Holy Ghost realizes all this in our souls. Romans and Galatians, in a more elementary way, are just the development of this, and the doctrine in them as found elsewhere in Paul; other consequences are attached to it in connection with the Person and title of Him who wrought it.

The driving away the birds (v. 11) seems the guarding the perfectness of the Victim of sacrifice from all contamination or imperfection; the living, working Christ as man does this, for Abraham is the living dying man.<sup>163</sup>

### ***Only One Party to the Covenant, Thus Unconditional: Only Tokens of Jehovah's Presence Passed Between the Pieces***

Reading Jer. 34:18-20, we see that man passed between the parts of the sacrifice for a conditional covenant, indicating man was a party to that covenant. That fact made the covenant conditional on man's performance. Concerning the Abrahamic covenant, it was only the tokens of Jehovah's

presence that passed between the pieces. Abraham did not pass between the pieces. There is only one party to the Abrahamic Covenant and it is thus unconditional.

### ***The Promises Addressed to Abraham's Seed***

But to Abraham were the promises addressed, and to his seed {i.e., Christ} (Gal. 3:16).

Gal. 3:16 connects Abraham and the great Seed together. The promises were addressed to Abraham's seed as well as to Abraham. The promises were not conditional for Abraham but unconditional for Christ, the great seed of Abraham. There is no such distinction made.

The realization of the promises must be undertaken by the great Seed of Abraham, Christ. None of the promises could be realized before the seed came to Whom the promises were addressed. Thus, none were fulfilled in the OT, under the conditional Mosaic Covenant; and that means that the land promises have never yet been fulfilled to Israel.

For I say that Jesus Christ became a minister [of] the circumcision for [the] truth of God, to confirm the promises of the fathers; and that the nations should glorify God for mercy (Rom. 15:8).

Scripture does not split off the promises for Israel so as to have them fulfilled before the cross and leave the promise concerning the nations for after the cross, for the Church, as Covenant Theology does.

In fact, the great Seed, the son of God, died for the nation of Israel as Caiaphas unwittingly prophesied:

... prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation ... (John 11:51).

The Jews, representative of the first man under trial to show that he was not recoverable from the fall, and expecting the kingdom in a carnal way, had Christ crucified. They have no claim to anything. They are dependent on sovereign grace alone, as are Gentiles, as Rom. 11:32 shows. The God of promise will undertake, in Christ, to make good, by sovereign grace, what He promised.

... and so all Israel shall be saved. According as it is written, The deliverer shall come out of Zion; he shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this is the covenant from me to them, when I shall have taken away their sins. As regards the glad tidings, [they are] enemies on your account; but as regards election, beloved on account of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God [are] not subject to repentance (Rom. 11:26-29).

163. Notes and Comments, 1:69-70.

## *The Promises to Abraham Were Unconditional*

J. N. Darby wrote:

There was another important element in the ways of God, contrasting with the law, and that is *the promises*. These began with the Fall itself, but as a principle in the ways of God, <sup>1</sup> with Abraham, when the world was already fallen, not only into sin, but into idolatry, Satan and demons having taken possession of the place of God in man's mind. Now Abram's *election*, his *call*, and *the gift of the promises* made to him, were all connected with grace. Thus Abram followed God <sup>164</sup> towards the country that God pointed out to him, but in it he possessed not whereon to set his foot. This introduced another vital principle, that of living *by faith*, receiving God's word as such, and counting upon His faithful goodness. The promise evidently depended upon grace; it was not the thing given, though this was assured by the word of God; and faith counted upon the promise, and more or less clearly introduced the thought of blessing outside the world; otherwise, he who had faith obtained nothing by his faith. The consciousness of God's favor was doubtless so far something, but it depended upon faith in His fidelity as to what He had promised. But in connection with promises there is an important point to notice: there are unconditional, and there are conditional promises. The promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, were unconditional; whereas those made at Sinai were conditional. God's word never confounds them. Moses calls to remembrance the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel (Ex. 32:13); Solomon, what came in under Moses (1 Kings 8:51-53); Neh. 1, refers to Moses; Neh. 9, first to Abraham as the source of all, then to Moses, when it becomes a question of God's ways. It is of this difference that the apostle speaks in Gal. 3:16-20. Under the law, when there was a Mediator, the enjoyment of the effect of the promise depended upon the faithfulness of Israel, as much as upon the fidelity of God; but then all was lost from the outset. The fulfillment of the simple promise of God depended upon His fidelity; in this case, all was sure. We learn further, by the passage alluded to in the Epistle to the Galatians, that it is to Christ, the Second Man, that the promises made to Abraham were confirmed, and they will be fulfilled surely -- all of them Yea, and all Amen -- when His day, which the prophets had ever in view, shall come. But here the difference, already pointed out, between the government of this world and sovereign grace, again finds its application. The grace that sets us in heaven is not prophesied of at all; prophecy belongs to what is earthly, and so far as relates to the Lord Jesus, contains the revelation of what He was to be upon the earth at His first coming; and then continues with what He will be upon the earth when He comes again, without alluding to that which should take place in the interval between those two events. Still, the facts

164. He only partially did so at the outset; but I speak here of the ways of God.

as to the Person of the Lord are announced in those Psalms which reveal to us more of His personal history; His resurrection (Psa. 16), His ascension (Psa. 68), His session at the right hand of God (Psa. 110); and as to the Holy Spirit, they teach us that Christ would receive it as man -- that the gifts are not only gifts of God, but that Christ would receive them "in Man," that is, as Man in connection with mankind. On the other hand, except the desires of David in Psa. 72 and 145, where the subject treated of is what concerns the Lord's Person, the Psalms do not take up the state of things that shall follow His return; whilst in the prophets, this future state is amply described in the fulfillment of the promises made to the Jews, and its consequences for the Gentiles. There is another point that may be noticed: when the prophets on God's part give encouragements to faith for the time then present, and to meet trying circumstances, the Spirit of God uses this to penetrate into the future, when God will interpose in favor of His people. <sup>165</sup>

## *Two Classes of Promise*

The bearing of the promises to Abraham is this:

In Galatians the promises to Abraham were to Christ and to Christ only: that is the whole of the apostle's argument. There were two classes of promises and all go with Abraham. Abraham is the beginning of promise. If we go back a little, there were no dealings of God before the flood. He turned man out of the garden, if that can be called a dealing, but nothing between that and the flood. Then when God brings in the new world, in Noah He brings in government to restrain man; there is the power of the sword. After this, that it might be understood all was pure grace, God begins with promise . . .

There were two classes of promises; that a great nation should spring from him and his seed, to be as the stars of heaven (that is not "thy seed," or one). But in Gen. 12, God says, "in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed," that is not Israel. Then we find that promise confirmed in Gen. 22. It is never said, "to thee" and thy seed, "to Abraham," but "in thee." But when Isaac had been offered up and been received in resurrection, then he says in Galatians, "to Abraham and to his seed were the promises made." Gen. 12 gave it to Abraham, and Gen. 22 confirmed it to the Seed. The promise is made to Abraham personally in ch. 12, and confirmed to the seed, Isaac, in chapter 22, and that is a figure in which Christ had died and risen. That was confirmed *to* Christ (but not in Christ), and the law which came later on could not disannul or add to it. Hence therefore you cannot bring in the law now; law cannot be tacked on to promise. Then you see there was only one Seed, and that is Christ, and then he adds, If I am in Christ, I have the promise. That is the way he

165. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 34:4-5.

brings the Gentile in. The Jews were the natural seed, but he says, the promise of the blessing was to the one person, Christ. Very well, I am in Christ, then I have the promise; “If ye be in Christ, then are ye Abraham’s seed and heirs according to promise.”

It is not a promise to the Gentiles, but one confirmed to Christ and then to the Gentiles in Christ, through the Spirit. Gen. 15 is specific to the Jews, and in Gen. 22 is promise to the seed. The stars of heaven are the Jews only, as Moses says, “Behold ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude” (Deut. 1). It is a great thing to see what the Lord is pointing out in a passage. And He takes two illustrations of a great number -- what we see in the heavens, and what lies on the sea-shore.<sup>166</sup>



We should understand that these promises were unconditional, contrary to covenant theology. Covenant theology puts Christians under the law as the rule of life, thus bringing legalism which recognizes the flesh (and the standing of the first man) and gives it some place. It also would have the promises to Abraham be on some condition. But God sovereignly promised and pronounced to Abraham His “I will.”

Here positive promise begins, not merely the revelation of a deliverer who should destroy the works of the devil on the one hand, and a conscience knowing the evil in which it walked on the other, but a positive promise to a given object, “in thee”; so that the grace which called him out of the world singled him out also as its heir, and the vessel of the blessing of God in it.

The promise was unconditional and absolute. God gives it as the revelation of a purpose He will accomplish, and addresses it to Abraham, so as to fix the person in whom it was to have its accomplishment. God interferes in blessing, reveals His intention to confer it dependent on His own faithfulness alone. He blesses because He is pleased to bless, and blesses him whom He calls out to enjoy it. The promise extends out too, remark, to the whole world as to the sphere of its application. “In thee shall all nations be blessed.” It is universal in the sphere of its application, absolute in its character, and its accomplishment dependent on the sole faithfulness of God.

In figure there was a development of this, which casts fresh light on the ways of God. Isaac is offered up, a remarkable type of the offering of Jesus, of the Father’s not sparing His Son. He is received again from the dead in a figure, and presents a risen Christ after the accomplishment of His sacrifice. Thereupon the promise is confirmed to him. The promise of the blessing of the nations was not given to Abraham and his seed. It was made to Abram alone in Gen. 12; and so in Gal. 3 we read in the original, “And to Abram were the promises made, and to his seed.” So again, the promise which was confirmed before of God to Christ (not in Christ).

166. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 26:306-307.

Hence it is the apostle insists upon its being one, for the promises to Abraham, as father of the Jews, were made in common to him and to his seed together; and it was promised that the seed should be as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is by the seashore, innumerable. Whereas the promise of the blessing of the nations was given to Abram first, and then confirmed to the one seed, Isaac, figure of Christ sacrificed and risen again, with no mixture of anyone else, nor mention of a numerous posterity.

But to return. The promise was absolute and unconditional, the announcement of the accomplishment of blessing on God’s part through the one promised Seed, an accomplishment dependent on His own faithfulness alone. The question of righteousness in those who were to enjoy it was not raised. God’s grace in blessing was revealed, and, we may say with the apostle, in Christ; but the sin of those who should enjoy it was untouched, conscience left without resource, or without raising a question indeed about it. The revelation of a deliverer and the promise of God were now brought together, but the state of him who was to be blessed was not entered on in any way. Such was the force of the unconditional promise made to Abraham. It made the blessing of the nations certain: the question of righteousness was not raised. God had promised to Abraham, and confirmed it to the one Seed. His faithfulness would perform it.<sup>167</sup> ❖

### *The Law Was Conditional; but, the Promises Were Not*

For if the inheritance [be] on the principle of law, [it is] no longer on the principle of promise (Gal. 3:18).

Now, if you do not have a false theological scheme hindering from seeing it, it would be seen here that promise stands in contrast to law, because they differ in their principle. In what way? The securing of the inheritance is affected by the difference in principle. In what way? Gaining the inheritance on the basis of law would be obtaining it by *law-works*, negating obtaining it by promise. Promise is *sovereign-giving* in grace; law-performance is earning the inheritance. If Israel secured the blessing on the basis of law-works, they did not obtain it on the basis of promise.

. . . but God gave it in grace to Abraham by promise (Gal. 3:18).

### *A Mediator Is Not of One, but God Is One*

167. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 22:368-369.



Why then the law? It was added for the sake of transgressions, until the seed came to whom the promise was made, ordained of angels in [the] hand of a mediator. But a mediator is not of one, but God is one (Gal. 3:19, 20).

Sin was in the world before the law {Rom. 5:13} was given by Moses (John 1:17). The law brought sin out into bold relief by giving it the character of transgression against stated prohibition. The giving of the law involved a mediator, namely, Moses. There was a mediator because there were two parties to the Mosaic Covenant. It was a conditional covenant. “A mediator is not of one”; when there is only one party there is no mediator. We are told, regarding the promises to Abraham:

But a mediator is not of one, but God is one (Gal. 3:20).

This shows that God was the only party to the Abrahamic promises and covenant. It is unconditional.<sup>168</sup> Therefore God is bound to sovereignly fulfil the Abrahamic Covenant to Abraham’s seed, and to do so through the Seed to Whom the promises were made as well as to Abraham.

### ***If Israel Inherited under Law, it Was Not by Promise, and Faith Is Made Vain***

If the land promises were realized in Joshua’s day, or in Solomon’s day, it was really not on the basis of promise; Israel earned it by keeping the conditional Mosaic Covenant. That is absurd. The whole point of the trial of the first man, to show that he was not recoverable from the fall, is lost on those who so claim that the promises were realized by Israel under the law.

For [it was] not by law that the promise was to Abraham, or to his seed, that he should be heir of [the] world, but by righteousness of faith. For if they which [are] of law be heirs, faith is made vain, and the promise is of no effect (Rom. 4:13, 14).

### ***Scripture Says That the OT Worthies Did Not Receive the Promise***

And these all, having obtained witness through faith, did not receive the promise . . . (Heb. 11:40).

When we bow to what God has said we receive light. Abraham did so, and so

he realized that there was a great Seed to come who would make good the promises:

Your father Abraham exulted in that he should see my day, and he saw and rejoiced (John 8:56).

Israel shall have the promise in Christ’s day, i.e., what we call the millennial reign of Christ, when everything shall be under His headship (Eph. 1:10).

### ***Zacharias, Filled with the Spirit, Knew That Israel Had Not Realized the Promise***

. . . and remember his holy covenant, [the] oath which he swore to Abraham our father . . . (Luke 1:72, 73).

It would be absurd to think that Zacharias thought that the land promises were fulfilled under the Mosaic Covenant, but the promise of Gentile blessing remained to be fulfilled by the Messiah. You cannot see how absurd it would be to project such a notion on Luke 1:67-79?

The expectation of the godly remnant when Christ came has been considered in detail in *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 1. Our Lord confirmed their expectation.

### ***The 400 Years and the Fourth Generation of Gen. 15:13***

The general view is that the 400 years refers to the same thing as the 430 years in Ex. 12:40 and Gal. 3:17. Any difficulty with the 400 years as placed on the following chart are only exacerbated by making it refer as a “round number” to the 430 years. It is a fact that the chronological data does show that there were 400 years from the mocking by Ishmael until the Exodus.

Ishmael, the son of the Egyptian woman, mocked Isaac at his weaning, and this begins the period of affliction. In Gal. 4:29 the mocking is referred to as persecution. Christians ought not to mock others.

Note that it is the seed of Abram that would be afflicted, not Abram. The 400 years is not to be made the 430 years.

The nation that the Jews served was, of course, Egypt, and Jehovah judged the Egyptians in the 10 plagues. When Israel was to leave, they “asked,” not borrowed, from the Egyptians, and came out with great property.

Abraham was in the presence of the Amorites (a summary term here for

168. In a paper written in 1831 J. N. Darby showed that the Abrahamic Covenant was unconditional (*Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 3:41, 42). He had shaken off Covenant Theology.

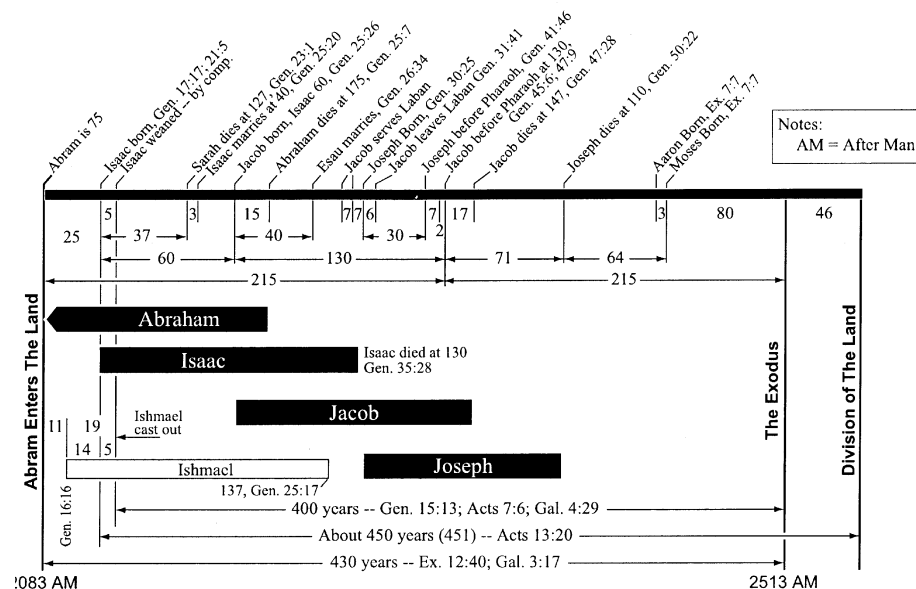
the inhabitants of the land),<sup>169</sup> but Jehovah would synchronize His acts such as to allow the iniquity of the inhabitants of the land of promise to come to its fulness of iniquity, like a pimple comes to a “ripe” point. Even when the Exodus occurred, that iniquity had not yet reached that ripe point for Jehovah to use Israel in His governmental dealings against the Amorites (see Lev. 18:24-30; 20:22-24; Deut. 18:9-14). As a consequence of Israel’s refusal of the true report of two of the twelve spies, they went round the wilderness, for they also must feel the divine government resulting from disbelief. God who controls all synchronized the various events for Israel’s entry into the land when the iniquity of the Amorites was full.

It was the fourth generation that entered the land 40 years after the Exodus. That generation that entered the land was under 20 years of age when they left Egypt at the Exodus. There were lines of descent that quite exceeded four generations from the time of Jacob’s entry into Egypt, but we are able to determine a line of four. Kohath came into Egypt with his father Levi. Thus there is Kohath, Amram (who married Jochebed, his aunt), Aaron (who married Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah), and Aaron’s son Eleazar, who was among those who entered the land (Josh. 14:1).

The age of mankind had been dropping after the flood; yet, Abraham died at “a good old age,” at 175.

Concerning Ex. 12:40, the point is that the *sojourning* of the children of Israel, those who resided in Egypt, was 430 years, but not exclusively in Egypt; and this includes the time from Abraham’s entry into the land to *sojourn* there, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the time up to the Exodus. Confining *sojourning* to only Israel in Egypt is a mistake. The point is not that the Israelites spent 430 years in Egypt. That idea contradicts Gal. 3:17. The law was given 430 years after Abraham entered the land. The chronological data on the chart interlocks excellently.

## CHRONOLOGY FROM ABRAHAM TO THE EXODUS



169. Sometimes other numbers summarize the nations: three (Ex. 23:28); five (Ex. 3:17); and seven (Josh. 24:11). I suppose that the number has significance according to the Scripture usage of the numbers. In Gen. 15:19-21 there are ten, the number of responsibility. The first man is the man of responsibility and the Second Man is the man of God’s purpose. When the land promise is made good to Israel, it will be when Christ comes in power, cleanses the land, and reigns before His ancients in glory.

## *Genesis 16:*

### *A Great Moral Lesson Concerning the Ways of God With Man*

The morally instructive details of Gen. 16 will not occupy us here. But a great moral lesson may be learned here. Let it be observed that at this point in time Abraham was still able to father children, so the flesh acted to use that fact to realize the promised seed by human expediency.<sup>170</sup> Note that the flesh was involved to obtain the promise of the heir. The promise and the flesh are mixed. Ishmael is the result of the mixture. He represents the child of the law (Gal. 4:21-31), his mother representing the legal covenant. Promise and law are opposed to each other (Gal. 3:18). Yet, the law is the backbone of the alleged covenant of grace. Typically speaking:

Following the counsels of the flesh, Abraham desires for a moment the fulfilment of the promise by the law; that is to say, by Hagar. But thus he learns that it is impossible that the child of the law should inherit with the child of promise . . . It was necessary that Abraham should again experience, in the case of Ishmael, that the law produces sadness and anguish.<sup>171</sup>

What we learn in connection with the promise of the heir is this:

1. God gave the promise -- sovereignly, unconditionally.
2. The flesh seeks to obtain the promise by self-effort.
3. When the flesh has been proved incapable of obtaining the promise, God acts sovereignly to make good the promise.

We learn this in the history of Abraham in connection with the heir of promise, for after both Abraham and Sarah could not longer have children naturally, God stepped in to make good His promise.

We must note that the same three points are true of Israel regarding the Abrahamic Covenant.

1. God gives the covenant -- sovereignly, unconditionally.
2. Under the conditional Mosaic Covenant, Israel as representative of the first man under trial to show that he was not recoverable from the fall, was typical of the flesh assaying to obtain the promises by self-effort.
3. Fleshly Israel proved incapable of obtaining the promises; God will act sovereignly to make good the promises when Christ turns away ungodliness

from Jacob (Rom. 11:26) and puts Israel under the new covenant.

We see that seeking to obtain the promise by Hagar foreshadowed Israel's seeking to have the promise by the law.

Fleshly results necessarily followed what Abraham did. What was done has results that are seen today in the mid-east. Ishmaelites and Hagarenes will be in the final assault against Israel as part of the Assyrian confederacy (Psa. 83:6; see also Psa. 79), prior to Israel's establishment in the land in accordance with the Abrahamic Covenant. Yes, the sovereign God overrules all in order to bring out His own glory in Christ, whether in the heavenly or in the earthly sphere.

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<sup>170</sup>. It would be a mistake to bring Matt. 5:32 and Matt. 19:9 into this. Neither is the law, "which made nothing perfect" (Heb. 7:19) to be brought into this. Under the law, Levirate marriage was sanctioned. We do not have that in Christianity.

<sup>171</sup>. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 16:49.

## Chapter 14

### *The Fifth Communication*

**What God is in Himself.  
Circumcision: the sentence of death  
on THE FIRST MAN.**

### Summary of the Fifth Communication with Abraham: Gen 17

In Gen. 17 we have a fresh revelation of the Lord to Abram, and, I think, are upon higher and holier ground. It is not here calling, or worship, or the world and victory over it in Lot (Gen. 12-14 <sup>172</sup>), or a revelation by the word of how God would accomplish His earthly promises, and what His people should go through (Gen. 15) -- not what God was for Abram, but what He was Himself. It is not, I am *thy* shield and *thine* exceeding great reward; but I *am* God Almighty. This is not all He was, but it is what He was -- His own name; and Abram is called upon to walk correspondently to this name. Hence, also, he does not worship or request anything from God, however high the privilege, but Elohim *talks with him*. The various parts of His purposes are unfolded, and what Abram is to be before Him in whom he believed. It is the starting-point of God's history of His connection with, and ways in, the world, Jew and Gentile starting from His original sovereign title. That which brings in the Gentiles as well as Israel is before us. It is not the individual seed of promise, as in Gen. 22, to which the promise of ch. 12 was confirmed, but the title of God with the first vessels of promise as root of a people set apart to God. In general God's covenant was with him. It is not a legal binding, but a free engagement of God in grace, according to His own mind, that Abraham should be the father of many nations. It is in three parts. God would be a God to Abraham, and to his seed after him; the land wherein he was a stranger is to be to him and to his seed after him; and nations and kings should come out of him. All these promises are

172. In Gen. 12 it is the path of faith, though with failing, that failing the not owning the separated relationship of God's people (the church) to the heir of the world. Then Gen. 13, 14 the believer in a worldly place taken as his portion, the victory of the separated ones, the faith which would not take a shoe-latchet. Gen. 15 the revelation of a numerous seed and Israel's place. Gen. 16 the attempt to have the promise in flesh -- Hagar. See Galatians.

without condition; but principles are set forth binding on Abraham, and expressive of the character of those who enjoy the privileges of God -- circumcision and free sovereign promise. Circumcision in contrast with law (see John 7: 22), but expressive of the death of the flesh (cp. Rom. 4:10-13), <sup>173</sup> and next, the promise of the seed is given; but this when Abraham, as to the body, was now dead; and as the character of circumcision was peremptory -- for flesh cannot have to say to God in light -- so was it as to the promise; it was to the son of promise. Though God might outwardly bless the seed according to flesh, the covenant was exclusively with the heir of promise. Death of flesh (for we are away from God), and simple sovereign grace, are peremptory. The *barren* woman must be the mother of thousands. Abraham rejoices in the promise, and acts obediently in the order of God. <sup>174</sup> ♦

### *Abram Walking Before El Shaddai and Elohim Talking with Him*

#### **“There Are Three Principles or Characters of Revelation”**

J. N. Darby has noted three things as given in Gen. 12, 15, and 17:

There are three principles or characters of revelation; first, the personal dealings and relationship, as in ch. 12, Jehovah calling -- revealing Himself in the land -- appearing to Abraham, so as to draw him out in various ways, in relationship to Himself. Next the word of the Lord; and this was the foundation of faith, on which righteousness was counted. Then God, as such {Gen. 15}, for now Abraham could be righteously before Him, puts Abraham in a known position of covenant standing, as a system of blessing in grace to him and to his seed, and he has the seal of the righteousness which is by faith. God here talks with Abraham and he gets his dispensational place. <sup>175</sup>

173. I read v. 12 thus: “And father of circumcision [that is, of true separation to God, such as God owns], not only to those of the circumcision, but to those who walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.” That is, God recognizes them (believers from among the Gentiles) as being truly circumcised. {We are circumcised in Christ (Col. 2:11; cp. Phil. 3:3).}

174. *Synopsis*, 1:32-33. For Gen. 17, see W. Kelly, *The Bible Treasury*, 10:257-260.

175. {Here only Abraham is fully put in his place, not his personal place of blessing -- that is in chapter 12 -- but full relation place towards others—nations—seed—land—and God Himself, as of God. -He is the Adam of blessing towards those below him, as he was of responsibility—the father of us all before God ; that, Adam never was—he was the father of us all driven out from God—only now of course it is spiritually and in Christ. That is Galatian doctrine and Rom. 4, yet Paul there treats the covenant of this chapter as founded, as regards Abraham, on the faith of ch. 15 -- *quod*

(continued...)

Remark well the character of the different revelations to Abraham in chs. 15 and 17. The first is what God is for Abraham, and Abraham asks what he is to have; the Lord in grace tells him this. But in ch. 17 God says what He is, the name by which He makes Himself known, and thereon it will be found that, though God gives the present hope of the heir, Abraham's place is not to ask for himself, but that of communion with God -- God talks with him -- eats with him {Gen. 19:1ff}, and, though reverently, Abraham is familiarly in intercourse with Him, and then, according to this position, intercedes for others {Gen. 19:16-33}. This is a sweet and important difference. <sup>176</sup>

### *Abraham Walking Before El Shaddai*

And Abram was ninety-nine years old, when Jehovah appeared to Abram, and said to him, I [am] the Almighty · God: walk before my face, and be perfect<sup>177</sup> (Gen. 17:1).

It has been well-emphasized that Jehovah did not say, 'I am *thy* Almighty God' for He is more than just being Abraham's Almighty God. Indeed, He who stood in relation to the fathers of Israel as Shaddai, and as Jehovah with Israel, is Father to Christians (2 Cor. 6:17, 18), as He will be known as the Most High God in the millennium. <sup>178</sup>

175. (...continued)

*nota.* But this refers to the righteousness—God takes this place with a personally accepted one, and that was by the word of Jehovah -- it was faith (*Notes and Comments*, 1:77).

176. *Notes and Comments*, 1:76, 77.

177. {I.e., uprightly.}

178. Answering a higher critical notion of F. W. Newman regarding Ex. 6:3, J. N. Darby wrote:

As regards God's saying, "But by my name Jehovah was I not known to them," the meaning is as simple as possible. The words are -- "And Elohim spake unto Moses" (in the previous verses it is "Jehovah," showing how unfounded is the supposition of their belonging two distinct documents),

and said unto him, I am Jehovah: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.

Now here we have Elohim, Jehovah, El-Shaddai, all spoken of the one supreme God as different names, and then the Lord declares, exactly according to Genesis, that to the patriarchs He had revealed Himself as El-Shaddai. (See Gen. 17; 35:11.) This was the name the power of which He was specially to make good in their favor, in protecting them in their wanderings, "what time they went from one nation to another people."

Now that He was calling His people, He reveals Himself to them by another name, as the ground of relationship and of the expectation of faith on their part, as the existing One "who was, and is, and is to come," though still the Almighty. He who now promised would live ever to perform, unchanged and unchangeable. Jehovah was God's proper and

(continued...)

Some thirteen years had passed since the birth of Ishmael, the one born according to flesh (cp. Gen. 16:16 with Gen. 17:1 and Gal. 4:29). We live with our failure until, and if, God lifts the consequence. Meanwhile, self-judgment is our proper place. Steps to relieve ourselves of the fruit of failure will result in further discipline. In the case of Abram and Sarah, the Angel of Jehovah sent Hagar back so that she and her son to be born have a place in the house of Abram, temporarily.

In Gen. 15:2 God had said to Abram:

Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield, thy exceeding great reward.

It was what He was for Abraham, as meeting the needs of his heart. Subsequently, the failure recorded in Gen. 16 occurred and no doubt Abram came to understand that Ishmael was not the Heir and judged himself for what occurred. Accordingly, in Gen. 17:1 we see Jehovah, the one true Elohim, bringing Himself before Abraham as the Almighty God, El Shaddai, the All-powerful One, who can provide for all he needs in the pilgrim path.

God's bringing before Abraham His name as El Shaddai on this occasion of His fifth communication with Abraham has in view Abraham's recognition that:

- (1) Ishmael is not the son of promise, and
- (2) that nature is past the point of being able to produce the heir promised in Gen. 15, as he himself says in Gen. 17:17. <sup>179</sup>

179. (...continued)

peculiar name with His redeemed people. He had never taken this name as the ground of His dealings with Abraham, nor laid it as the basis on which his faith was to act.

In the New Testament, God takes yet another -- that of *Father*. Hence He says, "I will be a Father, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." That is, God (Elohim), who had the two former names, Jehovah or "Lord," and Shaddai, "Almighty," now took this special one of Father with the saints. From the first calling out of the world to be separate from it, God Almighty, Jehovah, Father, characterized successively the position which God assumed for faith. Nothing can be plainer. I believe He is now God Almighty; but it is not the name by which He is known to me: He is known to me by the name of Father. "To us there is one God, the Father." If this be all German discoveries are worth, they deserve to be designated by a name which I shall not, however, permit myself to give them. I am sure they are not distinguished by any intelligence of the bearing of the work they are exercising their wits upon, nor the force of the expressions contained in it (*Collected Writings*, 6: 190).

179. W. J. Lowe remarked:

The occasion, in Gen. 17, of Abraham's felt incapacity, when nature both as to himself and Sarah had practically negated all hope in death, was the suited moment for God to reveal Himself to Abraham as the "Almighty God," and to make known His creative and quickening power, and reveal what it was to have to do directly with Him who "quickens

(continued...)

In his recognizing the incapacity of nature, he had been waiting on God. There is, then, a different character to what is brought out in Gen. 17 than in Gen. 15.

In the 17th chapter it is not meeting man even in respect of His own promises and man's wants. There it is, "I am the Almighty God," &c.; not a word of "thy." It is not, I am "thy" Almighty God. He was that, but He was much more. It is what He is. God reveals Himself, saying in effect to Abraham, "You have not to do with promises, you have not to do with wants; you have to do with me." "Walk before me, and be thou perfect." Let there be the full answer to what I am.

What God wants is to take us out of it all to enjoy Himself. He has given us a nature capable of enjoying Himself. He is a Father and we are children. When He says, I am holy, our hearts reply, O what a comfort. Not a particle of sin will be in His presence.

He is love -- to be sure He is, and it is shed abroad in my heart, and I am living in it and on it. God talked with Abraham. I get not merely promises, but communion.

In the 15th chapter Abraham says, what wilt thou give me? In the 18th he is interceding for others. If you are living in the sense of your own need, your prayers will turn round yourself; but when there is that kind of confidence which is found in communion, besides prayer for your wants, you will be able to intercede for others; there will be the intercessional link. In the 15th chapter Abram remains Abram; in the 17th his name is no more Abram, but Abraham.<sup>180</sup> ♦

Not only did Jehovah reveal Himself by a new name, El Shaddai, He changes Abram's name to Abraham in accordance with the relationship to which he is introduced. Abram was to walk before El Shaddai in that character and in connection with what is brought before him; for this his name must be changed to suit this revelation of the divine name. (Sarai's name must also be changed.) In connection with the previous communication there was sacrifice. Here, circumcision is brought in (Gen. 17:19-11).

## *The Rule of Life for Abraham*

The "moral law" was not the rule of life for Abraham. The law was given by Moses (John 1:17). Believe what God states! It was not yet given. Concerning Abraham's rule of life, JND wrote.

So with Abraham: the revelations God made to him of Himself, realized by

179. (...continued)

the dead and calls those things which be not as though they were." (Cp. Heb. 11:11, 12.) (*Life and Propitiation*, Present Truth Publishers: Jackson, 2004 [1885], pp.17, 18.)

180. *The Girdle of Truth*, 4:59-60.

faith, would form the guide and rule of his conduct. "I am the Almighty God, walk before me and be thou perfect." Conscience surely was there, but the original and constant revelations of God impressed their character on his walk by faith. All these are partial revelations. Yet it was thus the elders obtained a good report; they walked by faith.<sup>181</sup>

## *Elohim Talking with Abram*

And Abram fell on his face; and God talked with him (Gen. 17:3).<sup>182</sup>

There is in Scripture notice of reverential postures and attitudes, not to be confused with asceticism, from which we are to learn. There is a holy reverence that becomes us as expressed in posture and dress and speech. Here we see Abraham on his face.

Concerning these precious words about God's talking with Abram, W. Kelly wrote:

Notice further the expression of communion. "God talked with him." It is so put purposely by the Spirit of God; for He had nowhere else used this language before. It serves, I have no doubt, expressly to show nearness of intercourse; and a very weighty thing it is. Such is the force we see in 1 Tim. 4, where we are told of the wondrous place into which we are brought, far beyond that of Abram (though the scene we have before us may be viewed as a kind of premonition and shadow of it), that "every creature of God is good," -- "for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer," that is, free intercourse with God in His grace.

Here in Abram's history we have it. If the "word of God" comes in Gen. 15 and in the chapter which follows as we have seen, now we have this familiar intercourse with God in ch. 17. The word "prayer" there, as is well known, is not the ordinary expression of wants. It is not the word for supplication; which has its own place and a very important one too. However blessed we may be, we never get out of that need here below. Were any one to assume now that, because we have intimacy of fellowship in Christ, we cease to be in the place of need, and no longer are called to persevere in prayer as the expression of our dependence on God, need one say what a dishonor to Him is done, and what a downfall must be at hand? But still there is something more than prayer; there is the enjoyment of intercourse; and where souls do not enter into that, where they cannot get near enough to God, so to speak, and do not

181. *Collected Writings*, 10:177.

182. J. N. Darby wrote:

Note. -- That after stating that it was Jehovah which appeared {v. 1}, it is always Elohim {v. 3, etc.} -- God in Himself, as such; it is wholly on the ground of His sovereign purpose and action (*Notes and Comments*, 1:74).

habituate their souls to His talking to them in His word, and their free pleading before Him, which is what the Christian is entitled to now (I am not speaking of formally kneeling down and presenting our needs, but of being able to draw near to God and speak about everything), there is a great lack in the private personal life of the Christian.

It is well to note that, the intercourse in the scene before us is the fruit of God's revealing Himself more perfectly to the soul. Thus all was founded, not on a fresh start taken by man, but on His gracious ways with the soul. It is far from the vain idea of a self-consecration, or the higher life that men prate about, however one may share their protest against the habit of others to go on sinning with a measure of content or at least with a sense of necessity that so it must be. The reverse is seen here; even God's unfolding. Himself by a fuller revelation of His name. He was making Himself known in a way that never was heard of before. It is one thing for man to summon up from his own mind what he would say to God; quite another what God says about Himself as the suited revelation for the blessing of a man's soul. Here there can be no doubt about its character. He appears to Abram, and says "I am the Almighty God." He does not even say He is the Almighty God to him. It was not called for. When a soul is young in the ways of grace, God links Himself with him, vouchsafing various helps to the soul that yet knows Him feebly, unable to enjoy Him unless He stretches out His hand to help the struggling sinking soul. But it is not so here. Abram did not want it at present. He had learned both about himself and about God, and he shows the profit of it here. Now that God says "I am the Almighty God," it is enough for Abram. No doubt He adds, "I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly," but the way in which He reveals Himself is not so much what He was to Abram, but what He is in Himself. When justified by faith, we are entitled to enjoy this. We can joy in God (not only in the blessing but the Blessor) through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore it is that, though in the first dealings of God with our souls, there is no one that has not found it an immense thing to know Him as Father -- the "babes" (1 John 2:18) being distinguished by this very thing, they "know the Father," and there being no Christian who does not enjoy Him as such, no matter how long he may be in the ways of the Lord -- yet I am persuaded that when a soul advances in the knowledge of divine things, there comes out, not merely the cleaving to Him as Father, but the ability to "joy in God."

But if one has to do with worldly men, they do not know what you mean when one speaks of God as his Father, save as the Father of everybody. They use this which is true to deny His special relationship to the Christian. It is then no small thing for the soul to know that "God is my Father," to cry in the Spirit Abba Father; but it is another thing, where all questions are settled, and we are able peacefully to enjoy Him as God. This is assuredly of great moment and will be found to be true in the ways of God with our own souls. It is evident that our Lord Jesus meant that we should find and enjoy it; for if we refer to the message on the

resurrection day, He says, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father" -- but this is not all, -- "and to my God and your God." I do not believe it is possible to enjoy "His God and our God" until we have known what it is to look up with perfect rest in Christ and in conscious relation to God as "His Father and our Father." In short, all true, real, believing, enjoyment of God as such follows the enjoyment of the Father.<sup>183</sup>

## The Covenant

In ch. 17 we have God in His Own Supremacy {El Shaddai} -- in chs. 18 and 19 the Lord {Jehovah and Adonai} in His covenant actings and in promise and judgment {on Sodom and Gomorrah} -- ch. 17 is the proper revelation of God to Abraham as such, and bringing him, and his family, into covenant with Him because they were his family.<sup>184</sup>

## The Father of a Multitude of Nations (Vv. 4-6)

### THE SOVEREIGN, GRACIOUS COVENANT

We have already seen that Jehovah was the alone party to the covenant, and that fact is known because only the tokens of His presence passed between the pieces of the sacrifice. The use of the word covenant is found in Gen. 15:8 and here in Gen. 17:2 -- where Jehovah as El Shaddai fills full His covenant with Abraham in its details.

He pronounces five times "I will" to Abraham and two times more regarding Sarah (Gen. 17:16).

In v. 4 the Almighty God declares, "It is I: behold my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of a multitude of nations." This applies not only to Isaac and Ishmael, but to the offspring of Abraham noted in Gen. 25:25:1-6.

### ABRAM'S NAME CHANGED

Abram means "high father" or "father is exalted." What we are by nature is set aside by God. He is named Abraham, "father of a multitude." The change in name, as with Sarai's name also (v. 15), is in connection with the revelation of Jehovah as El Shaddai, the Almighty God. Abraham was to walk before God in accordance with that name of relationship to himself:

In Gen. 17 we have the revelation of God Himself to Abram. Jehovah appears, but He does not appear as formerly, to call on him to leave all, and come to the land; nor merely to communicate promises. He reveals Himself in what was to be His own name of relationship with Abram -- Himself under this name -- and gives Abram a name in connection with

183. *The Bible Treasury*, 10: 258, 259.

184. *Notes and Comments*, 1:136. Elsewhere, he observed: "that after stating that it was Jehovah which appeared, it is always "Elohim" -- God in Himself, as such; it is wholly on the ground of His sovereign purpose and action" (*Notes and Comments*, 1:74n).

Himself. This is the highest way of revelation. To us it is the communication of a still better name, a far nearer relationship. The Father's name is revealed to us by the Son, and we are called sons. This is the best and highest possible revelation of God in relationship, for it is that of the Father to Christ the Son Himself. Still we have, as to Abram, this kind of revelation. God does not here reveal what He is for Abram, but what He is. Abram was to walk before Him known in that character. "I am the Almighty God -- walk before me." Hence Abram falls on his face, and does not ask for anything to meet the desires of his own heart. *God talks with him.* Such is the character of this wondrous interview. Jehovah reveals His intentions, and gives Abram a name in connection with them. God does not bind Himself through sacrifice, He only assures to Abraham the various blessings. But He puts Abraham into the condition of intercourse with Himself, as belonging to Himself, by the sign of the death of the flesh (there, of course, in figure, still he is thus placed in the enjoyment of the relationship). Thus God is revealed to Abraham, and Abraham brought into personal relationship with God. He knows Him as none else does.<sup>185</sup>

It may also be remarked that ch. 15 does not go beyond Jewish promises; in ch. 17 he is father of many nations. It is the difference between the goodness of God, which is connected in grace with us and our needs, and communion with Him.<sup>186</sup>

### ***Everlasting Covenant to Be God to Abraham and His Seed (Vv. 7,8,19,21)***

The *everlasting* covenant to be God to Abraham and his seed does not refer to the eternal state but to as long as the present heavens and earth exist -- once implemented. The Abrahamic covenant was not implemented while Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were sojourning, nor while Israel was in Egypt. Nor was it implemented after the Exodus. After the Exodus a conditional covenant was implemented, the Mosaic Covenant. The fact is that the promises to the fathers could not be gained by the conditional covenant. The cross resulted in the present work of God in forming a called-out, heavenly people, and when that is completed, God will take up a Jewish remnant, having turned away ungodliness from Jacob (Rom. 11:26), having purged out the rebels (Ezek 20), bringing them into the bond of the covenant (Ezek. 20), and making good the four gracious covenants -- with Abraham, with Phinehas, with David, and the New Covenant -- when Messiah reigns before His ancients in glory (Isa.

185. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 19:142-143.

186. *Letters of J. N. Darby*, 1:245.

24:23).

### ***The Seal of Circumcision, the Present Seal of the Spirit, and Israel and Saved Gentiles in the Millennium***

#### **Room Left for Gentile Salvation Apart from Physical Circumcision**

Circumcision signifies the cutting off of the first man from before God. It is done upon the organ of man's reproduction of his offspring -- who are like himself: fallen and not recoverable by his own effort.

Abraham was reckoned as righteous before he was circumcised. There came a point in his life when he received circumcision as the seal of the righteousness of faith:

(9) [Does] this blessedness then [rest] on the circumcision, or also on the uncircumcision? For we say that faith has been reckoned to Abraham as righteousness. (10) How then has it been reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. (11) And he received [the] sign of circumcision [as] seal of the righteousness of faith which [he had] being in uncircumcision, that he might be [the] father of all them that believe being in uncircumcision, that righteousness might be reckoned to them also; (12) and father of circumcision, not only to those who are of [the] circumcision, but to those also who walk in the steps of the faith, during uncircumcision, of our father Abraham (Rom. 4:9-12).

God has so ordered matters that there might be Gentiles included in the spiritual race begun in Abraham.<sup>187</sup> He was reckoned righteous *before* receiving the seal of his faith, namely, circumcision (Gen. 17). Thus, circumcision was not the source of his righteousness. Circumcision was the sign of God's grace to Abraham. Moreover, circumcision is a covenant:

And he gave to him [the] covenant of circumcision . . . (Acts 7:8; see Gen. 17:10).

All his seed was to be circumcised; Abraham and his seed were to keep the covenant by having in their flesh the sign of the Covenant. So even under the

187. See *Synopsis*, 4:99, 221, 275; *Collected Writings*, 29:334, 335.



conditional Mosaic Covenant the physical seed needed to be circumcised.<sup>188</sup> The Mosaic Covenant was a trial of the first man to show that he was not recoverable from the fall. This was a conditional covenant -- and the ways of God with man in this covenant were that Israel engaged to secure the promises on the basis of conditions. ***The lesson, so much not-learned by most Christians, is that Israel was under trial to show that the first man does not answer to what circumcision signifies.*** While circumcision was a sign of God's grace to Abraham, not so with Israel. They were circumcised in accordance with the presumption of the first, fallen man, to answer to its meaning by sinful flesh presuming to carry out the precepts of God. It amounted to a sign of their presumptuousness. Hence, admonitions to the people that they needed to be circumcised in heart (Deut. 10:16). Under the unconditional New Covenant, the meaning of circumcision will be made good to Israel by sovereign grace (Rom. 11:25; etc., etc.). In the good of the Abrahamic Covenant, the new Israel will have circumcision as Abraham had it: a sign of the grace of God made good to them.

Note that Israel's being circumcised under the conditional Mosaic Covenant does not mean that they were under the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant at the same time. What confusion of God's ways that would be. The Abrahamic Covenant was put in suspension by that change from the unconditional to the conditional. Meanwhile, nothing has reinstated the Abrahamic Covenant so that any "Messianic Jews" who are part of one body which is under no covenant, are, nonetheless under the Abrahamic Covenant, as justification for circumcising their eight-day old male children.<sup>189</sup> Not one of the four gracious covenants is in effect now, nor was anyone ever under an unconditional covenant and a conditional covenant at one and the same time.

The proof that the Abrahamic Covenant was suspended is Gal. 3:18:

For if the inheritance [be] on the principle of law, [it is] no longer on the principle of promise; but God gave it in grace to Abraham by promise.

Israel under the conditional Mosaic Covenant undertook to realize the

188. For the physical seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, circumcision in the flesh is the sign of death upon the first man. From time to time the question is asked concerning Moses:

*Ques.* The failure of Moses to circumcise his child before going into Pharaoh's presence -- what would that show?

That I cannot go and deal with the deliverance of God's people out of the world, if I have not accepted death for myself to start with. It was before the law, and not by it, that they had circumcision, and where there is the promise of grace and blessing, this we can only receive through death and circumcision (*Notes and Comments*, p. 439).

The *household* was to be marked by what spoke of death, as we learn in Gen. 17 and is confirmed in Moses' case.

189. Those who are members of one body have been circumcised (Col. 2:11).

inheritance on the principle of law. They could not at the same time undertake to realize the inheritance on the principle of promise.<sup>190</sup>

190. After pointing out that the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant remained in effect even after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had sinned a number of times, Renald E. Showers says that Psa. 105:8 11 and Luke 1:67-75 shows that the Abrahamic Covenant was in effect in David's day and Zacharias' day. That would mean that Israel was under two covenants at the same time, the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant and the conditional Mosaic Covenant. The incompatibility of being under both law and promise at the same time is made clear in Gal. 3:18 which states the fundamental difference in principle between law and promise:

For if the inheritance [be] on the principle of law, [it is] no longer on the principle of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

Promise and law cannot be mixed, one cannot obtain the inheritance in both ways simultaneously, nor can the respective covenants of promise and of law be in force simultaneously. What underlies this also is not understanding the true character of the trial of the first man, which is lacking in the Scofield system.

The cross did not change the age. The Mosaic system was ended, the Mosaic age runs on, but God is not doing an earthly-centered work now. He is forming a heavenly people. At "the end of the age," i.e., the end of the Mosaic age, he will form a Jewish remnant in view of the appearing of Christ in glory to set up the millennial kingdom. The cross did not end the Mosaic age (the church is not an age -- it is above ages) nor did the cross revive the Abrahamic Covenant, which covenant was suspended when the covenant of the law was established.

He goes on to say of Acts 3:25, 26:

. . . indicates his {Peter's} conviction that these Jews were still sons of the covenant and that the covenant was still in effect for them. The only way the Abrahamic Covenant was still in effect with the nation of Israel was if that covenant were unconditional (*There Really Is a Difference*, Bellmawr: Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, see pp. 63-66, 1990).

What we have been reviewing strikes me as the reasoning of a Jewish Christian who *wants* the Abrahamic Covenant in effect *now*, and this then justifies certain Jewish practices for Jewish Christians, including circumcising their eight day old male children. Peter did say that they were sons of the prophets, and of the covenant, but did not say "and that the covenant was still in effect for them" (nor did he say that the prophets were still in effect for them). He may wish to believe that, but Peter did not say that. They are sons of the covenant just as Paul stated that the covenants belong to his kinsmen according to flesh (Rom. 9:3, 4), but not meaning thereby that the covenants were in effect for them.

Being mindful of God's promises to Abraham was an encouragement to the godly in Israel while under the law but that also does not prove that the Abrahamic Covenant was in effect.

Circumcision in the flesh is for God's earthly people. God now has a heavenly people (1 Cor. 15:48; Heb. 3:1). Is the Jewish Christian of the earthly people or of the heavenly people? Positionally, in Christ, he is of the heavenly people; in practice he may violate it by claiming to be under the Abrahamic Covenant. Apparently "dispensational" "Messianic Jews" want one foot in each. Covenants are for the earthly people of God. Is part of the church under the Abrahamic covenant and another part not? The Abrahamic Covenant is for the earth and an earthly people with an earthly calling. Today, Jewish Christians have a heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1) and have been instructed to go outside the camp (Heb. 13:13). Leaving the camp does not mean dragging some of the camp along with them.

## *Jewish and Gentile Believers Now*

The Christian, who is heavenly (1 Cor. 15:48), is not under a covenant, for covenants are for the earthlies, for Paul's kinsmen according to flesh (Rom. 9:3-5). Presently, a Jewish believer is a Christian and not presently under an earthly covenant for the earthlies, with an earthly calling, for he has a heavenly calling:

Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of [the] heavenly calling . . .  
(Heb. 3:1).

That was written to Jewish believers.

Presently, *all* who are *in Christ* are seed of Abraham without physical circumcision, having circumcision in a higher way as being one with Christ, the great Seed of Abraham.<sup>191</sup> Abraham received circumcision as the seal of the righteousness of faith; while those who are circumcised in Christ are also sealed, but not with physical circumcision, of course:

(12) that we should be to [the] praise of his glory who have pre-trusted in the Christ: (13) in whom *ye* also [have trusted], having heard the word of the truth, the glad tidings of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, *ye* have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, (14) who is [the] earnest of our inheritance to the redemption of the acquired possession to [the] praise of his glory (Eph. 1:12-14).

Circumcision as a seal of the righteousness of faith is for an earthly people while the seal of the Spirit is for a heavenly people.

Our having "*pre-trusted*" refers to trusting *now*, ahead of the millennial blessing of which the prophets of Israel spoke. But we have vastly greater blessing than Israel and Gentiles will have in the millennium, each in their respective spheres. It is the seal of the Holy Spirit of promise through which we come into the blessing we have in Christ now, and He is the earnest, the down-payment, of what is yet before us. All those in Christ, Jewish and Gentile believers, resting on the Person and finished work of Christ, have this seal; and by the indwelling Spirit we are united to Christ in glory.

191. "Faith was reckoned to him for righteousness. But when? Was it when he was in circumcision or when still in uncircumcision? In uncircumcision. We see, then, in this old decisive example of Abraham that, according to the will and declaration of God, the faith of an uncircumcised man is reckoned to him for righteousness. Circumcision was given afterwards to Abraham as seal of the righteousness of faith which he had being uncircumcised, that he might be the father of *all* them that believe, as well of the uncircumcised (that after his example righteousness might be imputed to them also) as of the circumcised, so that he is the father of a *true* circumcision, not only of those who are of the circumcision, but also of all believers, who, in separation to God, walk in the footsteps of Abraham's faith which he had in uncircumcision" (J. N. Darby, *Collected Writings*, 33:327).

## *Jewish and Gentile Believers in the Millennium*

### **JEWISH BELIEVERS IN THE MILLENNIUM**

Christ has died and risen again for the blessing of all saints, but that all saints in all ages are therefore blessed with *identical* blessings is an idle speculation. For example, for the Christian, he has also died with Christ and been quickened with Christ, and seated together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:5, 6). This is true of none but Christians.

Jewish believers in the millennium will necessarily be circumcised with the circumcision made by hand, according to the Abrahamic Covenant, not with the circumcision in Christ as we (Col. 2:11), who have died with Christ (Col. 2:20; Rom. 6:8). That is distinctive Christian position -- not the portion of any millennial saints, Jew or Gentile (or OT saint for that matter). As J. N. Darby said in response to a question about this:

I do not think they will be circumcised in our way at all; though they will get the fruit of Christ's resurrection, it will not be in a dead and risen way, but as alive here on earth.<sup>192</sup>

### **GENTILE BELIEVERS IN THE MILLENNIUM**

Concerning saved Gentiles in the millennium, They will not be circumcised, since they will not be, of course, seed of Abraham. Nor will they be one with Christ, nor sealed with the Spirit. But as Abraham was accounted righteous because of his faith, apart from circumcision, so will they be accounted righteous (Rev. 7:13-17). The believing Jews will have the mark of death upon the first man (circumcision in the flesh); what about the believing Gentiles. Well, Scripture answers that question but a problem is the great mis-application of the Scripture which answers the question. The matter is a lengthy one involving the difference in the commissions given in the Gospels, which will not be considered here. Suffice it to point out that Paul stated that he was not sent to baptize (1 Cor. 1:17), though he baptized some. But He had no such commission. It is said that Matt. 28:18-20 is "the marching orders for the church"; but if so, it is most strange that it was not the marching orders for the Apostle to the Gentiles. Matt. 28:18-20<sup>193</sup> has to do with the future work of the Jewish remnant regarding the Gentiles, who are to be baptized and taught. As baptized, they will have the mark of death applied to them.

## *Circumcision on the Eighth Day (v.12)*

192. *Notes and Jottings*, p. 438.

193. It is suggested that the reader read J. N. Darby's remarks on this passage in his various writings.

Abraham was told to circumcise new-born ones on the eighth day (Gen. 17:12). The number eight points to something new, a new beginning. The Lord Jesus lay in the grave on the seventh day,<sup>194</sup> and rose on the morrow after the Sabbath, as the wave-sheaf of the firstfruits (Lev. 23:10, 11). The resurrection of Christ took place on an eighth day, the first day of a new week, the Lord's day. Circumcision points to the cutting off the first man, in his fallen, responsible, Adamic position from before God. Christ's dying, and afterward rising on the eighth day introduced a great change. It closed the Mosaic order, and also closed the trial of the first man. He rose as the first of the new creation, formed by His resurrection, thus taking the *place* of the second man.<sup>195</sup> Those *in Christ* are viewed by God as being spiritually circumcised in Him. See Col. 2:10-12. The eighth day points to the fact that the reality of circumcision is in death and resurrection.

The eighth recorded communication with Abraham is in Gen. 22, where Abraham receives Isaac from the dead, in a figure (Heb. 11:19). It points forward to something new. Christ's resurrection affects two spheres, the heavenlies and the earthlies (so to speak), in both of which something new will be displayed.

We Christians are circumcised with the circumcision of Christ, this circumcision meaning His death on the cross (Col. 2:11). This is true of all who are *in Christ*. None are *in Christ* but saints between Pentecost and the rapture of the saints. If any man be in Christ, it is new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).

Israel will be blessed under the Priest upon His throne (Zech. 6:13), the resurrected Christ, and this under the New Covenant. That epoch closes the covenants in the earth. But it is all administered under Him who rose on the eighth day, giving character to the new order of priesthood for Israel on earth, the Melchisedec order. The Aaronic order looked forward to, the Melchisedec order looks back on, the once-for-all finished work of Christ. (Regarding the present, heavenly work in connection with the Church of God, Christ is presently *exercising a heavenly priesthood* in, and suited to, the heavenly sanctuary. See Heb. 8:1, 2.) In the millennium Christ will be King upon the throne of David (cp. Rom. 1:3, 4), for it is in the resurrected Son of David that the Davidic Covenant is made good. These two offices of Priest and King are

symbolized in the vision in Zech. 4. The two sons of oil point to these two offices of Christ as fed by the power of the Spirit. Christ is this great millennial light, in the vision fed by 49 pipes (7 x 7) from the ever-full bowl of oil above the lampstand. (Christ received from the Father the Spirit without measure (John 3:34).) Such will be its display in the millennial earth. The final feast of tabernacles (booths), on the 1335<sup>th</sup> day (Dan. 12) brings millennial Israel to the longed-for blessing. It speaks of the joy of the kingdom. This feast has an eighth day, and that points to what lies beyond that future, mediatorial kingdom of Christ in this creation, pointing to the new heavens and the new earth.<sup>196</sup>

Israel will be in the good of the Abrahamic Covenant in the millennium and so will be circumcised bodily. They will all be as described in Rom. 2:28, 29 and 11:26 but that in itself is not the distinctive Christian position. Of course, it must be true for a Jew to be in the Christian position,<sup>197</sup> and will necessarily be true of Israel under the New Covenant.

But there is something else of great importance connected with the eighth day of the feast of booths, as we see in John 7:37-39. Consequent upon the resurrection of Christ and His taking His place in glory, the Spirit was sent down (in the special capacity for indwelling those who believed and for uniting them together in one body joined to the Head in heaven (Acts 2:32, 33; 1 Cor. 12:13)). This, too, is connected with the number eight, something new, and in this case with resurrection. Indeed, we have the resurrection-life of Christ (John 12:24; 20:22) as being grains on the risen stalk, forming one plant in Him.<sup>198</sup> This is the heavenly side of the eighth day. Indeed, in Christ we are new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).

The work of Christ and His resurrection, then, has its bearing on both the heavenlies and the earthlies. What is for the heavenlies is greater, and the church will subsist in its distinction eternally (Eph. 3:21). However, in the new earth (Rev. 21:1-5) we read of "men" and "the tabernacle of God" (i.e., the church) with men. The promises for Israel and the gracious covenants last as long as the present heavens and earth, i.e., as long as the moon and sun, but not in the new heavens and new earth.

194. There is no evidence of observing the Sabbath before the law. It was not part of the Abrahamic Covenant. The unscriptural observance of it by "Messianic Jews" comes from the Mosaic Covenant which has been done away. The unconditional Abrahamic Covenant was in suspension as soon as the conditional Mosaic Covenant came into being. It remains in suspension until the New Covenant is in effect in the millennium.

195. He was the second man as born into the world, but took the *place*, in the ways of God, of the second man in resurrection, as having displaced the first man -- consequently no longer recognized as having a standing under trial to show that he was not recoverable.

196. These things are discussed in some detail in my *The Seven Set Feasts of Jehovah*, available from the publisher.

197. All saints from Adam on were born of God, and will be in the future. The new birth does not place one in the church, though all in the church are, of course, born of God. The disciples waiting for the Spirit to come were born of God but had not yet received the indwelling of the Spirit, or the baptism of the Holy Spirit into one body. Things that differ must be differentiated!

198. See my *From New Birth to New Creation* for these matters.

## *Circumcision and the Christian*

Consider this from W. Kelly:

But God speaks of the seal of circumcision. It is not now something outside him, as we saw in the dead animals of Gen. 15, but

Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep, between me and you, and thy seed after thee, every man-child among you shall be circumcised.

What does it mean? Flesh mortified before God; the sentence of death put on man in His sight, and this in Abram's own person as well as in his seed afterwards.

Circumcision here accordingly is not introduced a legal way, any more than the sabbath in Genesis. It is really the answer in man to the grace of God. It is that which God has made the Christian's portion in our Lord Jesus, that "circumcision without hands," which God has given us in Him, for in Him we are circumcised. It is not the death of a victim now, but every child of Abraham takes the place of death by this sign, which typically sets forth our death with Christ, the perfect deliverance of the individual as dead with Him. Until one knows what it is to be thus dead, there is no possibility of knowing what it is to be free unto God. What a precious thing it is that this is precisely what God has made true in an incomparably better way to us now, bringing us into the calm and peaceful enjoyment of Himself, with the certainty that everything that is offensive to God -- our very nature as children of Adam -- has the sentence of death on it, not only pronounced, but executed! This is what one knows now as a Christian. It is no longer a sign, precious as this was to Abraham (and I pretend not to say how far he entered into it), but we are entitled to understand its truth; it is a part of that wonderful blessing in Christ that God has given us. It is not merely His meeting our wants; for I do not believe when it is a question simply of wants, that a soul ever enters into this sense of personal liberty and deliverance. But after having Christ for all our need and wretchedness, there is the further blessing that He is bringing us into, living intercourse with Himself now. We require some solid basis for this ; and God has given it to us in our death with Christ.

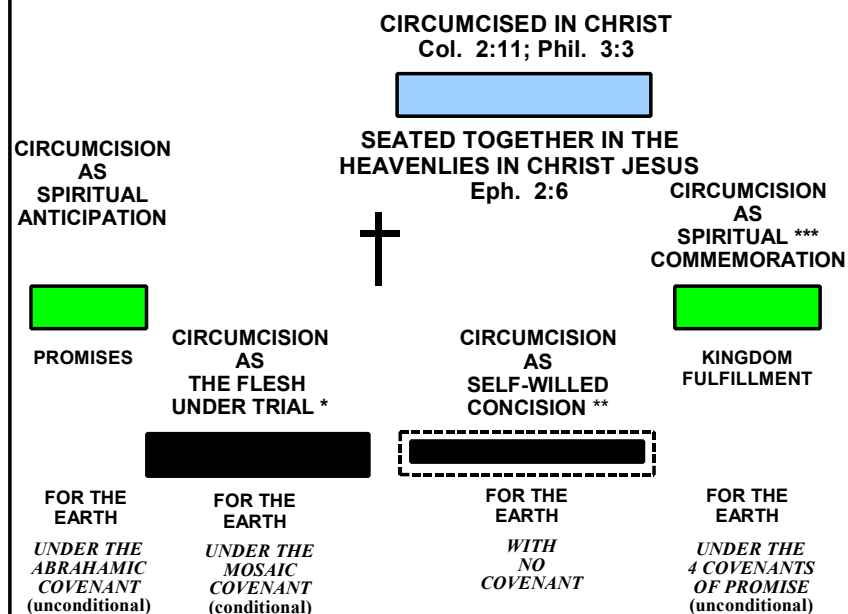
But this also you may observe: it is not our asking for a token. Who would have looked for such a thing as to be dead with Christ, or risen with Christ ? Never did such a thought enter the heart of man. It is all God's grace, His own perfect wisdom and goodness to our souls. Yet is it all the fruit of the work of Christ Jesus our Lord. It is not merely a man risen; there were persons raised from the dead: but what was that to Christ being raised? They would all have to die again. But now we have got to the knowledge of resurrection in a wholly different and far superior way to this, for Christ rose breaking the power of death for us, and we shall experience it soon as the consequence of that which He has done already.

As dead and risen with Christ, we are waiting for a resurrection like His from among the dead, or a change, which is the same thing practically -- when we shall be with Him, and be like Him, endued with the same incorruptness and glory according to the power of His resurrection. <sup>199</sup>

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199. *The Bible Treasury*, 10:259.

## *The Truth Concerning The Abrahamic Covenant and Circumcision in the Body*



\* **FLESHLY:** the flesh endeavoring under law to practice the meaning of circumcision as part of the testing of the first, fallen man to show that he was not recoverable. The cross ended the testing of the first man.

\*\* **CONCISION (PHIL. 3:2):** indicates that circumcision in the body for a spiritual purpose is a mutilation.

\*\*\* **SPIRITUAL COMMEMORATION:** for the earthly people it is circumcision; presently, for the heavenly people, the Lord's Supper is commemorative.

R. A. Huebner 2007

## *Abraham Believes, Sarah Does Not*

### *Sarai's Name Changed, to be the Mother of the Seed (vv. 15-16)*

Sarah means "my princess," her name by nature, what she is to man, not by grace as connected with the promised seed and heir. Her name is changed to "princess" that she might stand before God in that character as mother of the heir.

### *Abraham's Laughing and Sarah's Laughing (v. 17; Gen. 18:12)*

Abraham laughed and was bowed to his face before God. It appears he laughed out loud. It was the laugh of joy and gladness at the promise of a son. In his heart he knew that this was above nature, and he was amazed, but faith laid hold of what God said. In connection with this event, Abraham being about 100 years old, we read again that this faith was reckoned to him as righteousness:

(19) and not being weak in faith, he considered not his own body already become dead, being about a hundred years old, and the deadening of Sarah's womb, (20) and hesitated not at the promise of God through unbelief; but found strength in faith, giving glory to God; (21) and being fully persuaded that what he has promised he is able also to do; (22) wherefore also it was reckoned to him as righteousness (Rom. 5:19-22).

It may be in Rom. 5:13-22 the intervening years (13 of them) between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> communication are omitted; i.e., the failure is omitted.

This son of promise would displace Ishmael, born according to the flesh, but Ishmael was his son; so he said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before thee!" God intended a place for Ishmael, but before addressing that, God gave the name of the heir of Abraham, even Isaac, meaning "laughter." Isaac was not named in accordance with a laughter of unbelief, but in accordance with the laughter of joy and gladness which was the fruit of faith in what God just said.

Sarah did not enter into this joy in an anticipative way, at least immediately. We see in Gen. 18:12 a godly woman in the tent, yet not having shared in Abraham's laughter of joy. She, too, knew that this was above nature. She laughed in disbelief. She did so within herself, knowing this was above nature, but Adonai needed no ears to hear the heart's secret. She had been eaves-dropping; listening, at the tent door. She added to her inner laugh the denial of what Jehovah said, and He rebuked her: "No, but thou didst

laugh.” Notice that Abraham received no rebuke, for it was a laugh of joy.

### ***Ishmael Blessed (vv. 18- 22)***

Abraham believed God concerning the heir and realized that Ishmael, the firstborn, would be displaced. And such is a great lesson of Genesis, though rather than that being explicated as a teaching, it is warp and woof of the tapestry of truth pictured in Genesis. This points to what was explicated in 1 Cor. 15:46, 47.

Abraham, realizing the setting aside of Ishmael, desired of God a portion for Ishmael, his son. God granted this. Notice how He addressed the matter.

1. God first reaffirmed the birth of the son of promise and gave that son the name Isaac, meaning laughter, after Abraham’s laughter of joy (Gen. 17:17) concerning what God had said. God told Abraham that the covenant would be established with Isaac and his seed after him.
2. Only then did God speak of what He would do in *blessing* for Ishmael (Gen. 17:20).

These promises assume *no obedience, no condition*, on Ishmael’s part.

It is instructive to note that we hear of 12 princes that Ishmael would beget. We hear of that before hearing of the 12 sons of Jacob. Indeed, we also have an accounting of the 12 dukes of Edom (of Esau) before an accounting of the 12 sons of Jacob (see 1 Cor. 15:46, 47). The first man gets a place before the heir does.

3. Then in the following verse, God once again returns to the purpose of establishing his covenant with Isaac, to be born at the appointed time.

Then God left speaking with Abraham and went up from him.

### ***Abraham’s Household Circumcised (vv. 23-27)***

Here we have a fine lesson in the promptness of obedience to what God had said: “In the self-same day” (Gen. 17:26). All that was under his authority received the mark of death to the flesh, to the first man. May our households be also marked by what points to death for the Christian (not by circumcision made with hands).

Abraham, having been unable to father children, is circumcised. Circumcision is a mark of death placed upon the instrument through which the first man is reproduced in this world. The first man cannot bring forth the Second Man. The way the matter is expressed in the NT by the Apostle is this:

. . . his own body already become dead, being about a hundred years old, and the deadening of Sarah’s womb . . . (Rom. 4:19).

Thus, the son of promise was brought forth after nature had failed to do it.

Abraham’s circumcision took place some 13 years after the covenant was established with him (Gen. 15). It had nothing to do with making him righteous (Gen. 15:6), nor did the law have anything to do with making him righteous.

## Chapter 15

### *The Sixth Communication:*

#### *Gen. 18 With Comments on Gen. 19 - 20*

**Communications of grace.  
THE SECOND MAN announced.**

Previously we noted the difference between Gen. 15 and Gen. 17 -- ch. 15 bringing out Abraham's needs, and ch. 17 having the character of communion. In Gen. 18, further communion is brought before us. In Gen. 18 Abraham is seen as *the friend of God*:

And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing? (Gen. 18:17; see 2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23; cp. John 15:14, 15).

You let your heart out to a friend, not others, unless you are foolish.

Is not the notice that Abraham sat in the tent door (Gen. 18:1) while Lot sat in the gate of Sodom (Gen. 19:1) significant? "The heat of the day" points to trial, but Abraham maintained the pilgrim character -- while the worldly Lot sat in the gate (the place of judgment) in the evening. Typically speaking, it is the distinction between the Christian who walks in a heavenly manner and the earthly-minded one who walks in fellowship with the world.

Abraham looks up and sees three men stationed nearby. While Lot rose up when the two angels approached, and was hospitable -- "Some have unawares entertained angels" (Heb. 13:3) -- I suppose he eventually realized what these men were. The case is not so with Abraham, who perceived who the three were, and One in particular. Such was the result of communion. He "ran" to them and "bowed" himself to the earth before them. Such are the postures suitable to the divine presence, a thing especially much to be remembered when professing to be in the Lord's presence, or having His Word before us. Slovenliness of posture and of clothing would be seen as unsuitable.

Lot used a form of Adon (Gen. 19:2) addressing the strangers who arrived at Sodom; but Abraham addressed one of the men before him as Adonai (a plural of Adon) used only of God (Gen. 18:3). He was not entertaining unawares concerning who these men were. Two were angels but One was

Adonai -- which means sovereign Lord.<sup>200</sup>

We learn that he had in the tent what satisfies God.<sup>201</sup> There were three seahs of wheaten flour with which to make cakes. This invites attention to Matt. 13 where leaven was put into the three measures of meal. The three measures point to the fulness of Christ as the food of God and His people -- corrupted in Christendom. Here, the three measures were set before the three men in purity. Various saints in the OT had the three measures, such as Gideon and Ruth.

Then there was the calf, tender and good, which invites attention to the feast of the Father and the returned son in Luke 15.

They ate and asked where Sarah was (of course they knew!). So, Abraham had something else in the tent besides the three measures of meal; it was his wife. Do you suppose *that* does not point to something (Titus 2:5)? unpopular as it may be when men are casting off all divine restraints (Psa. 2).

Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be,  
Blessed above women in the tent (Judg. 5:24).<sup>202</sup>

And then comes the gracious, divine communication, that in the due time Sarah shall bear the son, though she was humanly past bearing (Gen. 18:11), as was now the case with Abraham also (Gen. 17:17). Nature had come to the end of its resource. The delays of El Shaddai, the Almighty God, delays so that it would be clear that nature could not provide the promised seed, are the platform upon which the provision of grace and power is displayed. Yes; and neither did nature bring about the union of the Godhood and manhood in the Person of Christ (Luke 1:35), the great Seed of Abraham, as of the woman, and of David also.

It appears that Sarah was eaves-dropping from within the tent. It led to unbelief. She laughed, not out loud, but within herself. Is there something to be learned about eaves-dropping in this?

But she did call Abraham "lord," not out loud, but in her heart (Gen. 18:12), which received its due commendation in 1 Pet. 3:6. And what might be

200. The Father is Jehovah, the Son is Jehovah, and the Spirit is Jehovah. Likewise, the Father is Adonai, the Son is Adonai, and the Spirit is Adonai.

201. It is true that Lot had unleavened bread (Gen. 19:3) and was a righteous man (2 Pet. 2:7), i.e., he was born of God. It is hard to discern that from the record in Genesis.

202. Never mind the complaints of those who said that she violated custom when she smote Sisera instead of sheltering him. The tent brings before us the pilgrim character we Christians have. It has been said that she smote him through the head with the tent pin of pilgrim truth. Yes, and with the hammer she evidently knew well how to use: "Is not my word like a hammer?" We must not allow customs to thwart what is due our Lord. Yes, bring down every high thought to the obedience of Christ.

learned from that by a heart submissive to what God says?

The divine ear heard that laugh which no human ear could have heard (Heb. 4:12, 13).

“Is any matter too wonderful for Jehovah” (Gen. 18:14)? See Jer. 32:17. The time was divinely appointed and so shall it be: “Sarah shall have a son.” Unconditional divine grace and power are thus expressed.

Sarah denied laughing. It was true that there was no audible laugh, but still it was untruthful. And the word directly addressed to her was, “No, but thou didst laugh.” Not all cases of untruthfulness recorded in Scripture are rebuked, but here it was rebuked, and we have God’s mind about it. Let us have truth in the inward parts (Psa. 51:6). Thankfully, God’s grace and power do not depend on us.

Such are the communications of grace and this is followed by the intercession of Abraham, in further communion with Jehovah. Let us note Gen. 18:21. The point is not that Jehovah had to educate Himself. Contrast this verse with v. 19 where He says of Abraham, “For I know him . . .” Verse 21 indicates the patience of God -- for the judgment of the wicked is His strange work (Isa. 28:21). And, He waits for iniquity to ripen for judgment (cp. Gen. 15:16).

The following interesting quotation is from J. N. Darby:

The Lord was there *incognito*, as we say, until the tent scene is over and the angels are gone, and then it is all open. While in the tent, Abraham addresses Him with full deference, but the Lord does not come out with the secret until He gets alone with him. Read Gen. 18:1-5. Abraham says, My lord, not My lords; he has perfect consciousness that One is superior, and his faith evidently sees through it all. In vv. 10, 14, it is, “I will return”; in v. 17, “Shall I hide?” and so on. “And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom, but Abraham stood yet before the Lord” (v. 22). He sends on these two angels, and we find them at Sodom directly afterwards. Then Abraham calls Him “the judge of all the earth.” He addresses Him as Adonay (in vv. 3, 27, 30, 31, 32), but it is Jehovah. It may be the administering power {Adonai means sovereign Lord}; but Abraham sees who the administrator is. I believe myself that all the appearances in the Old Testament are the Son’s.

If Abraham goes as far as he dares, God judges the whole thing, but spares the righteous. He was in the church’s place {typically speaking}, as Lot in the Jew’s place {typically speaking} was saved so as by fire. So Noah was in the Jew’s place, but Enoch gives the church’s place in the earlier history {typically, as removed before the judgment on the

earth}.<sup>203</sup>

I have heard it suggested that Abraham failed by not requesting that Sodom be spared for a number that would have spared the city. Hardly. Ten is the number of responsibility in Scripture (as in the case of the 10 commandments). Abraham’s intercession brought out that there were not even 10 righteous, and thus in the intelligence of communion he ceased interceding. He did not ask amiss. Yet, Adonai’s judgment on Sodom, which must proceed, would not consume the righteous with the wicked -- as was the case with Noah, though he was a man separated from the world which fell under divine judgment, while Lot was not a separated man. Why would a Christian not stand in separation from the world, a world fast heading to judgment? -- a world in which the first man murdered the Second Man. When He will reign, the situation will be changed, and we will reign with Him (Rev. 20:6).

## ***Genesis 19: The Deliverance of Lot and the Judgment on Sodom***

*Type of Our Place in View of  
the Judgment of this World*

The following article by J. G. Bellett is instructive concerning our position as Christians. The article following this one is by J. N. Darby.

## ***ABRAHAM Gen. 18, 19***

The elevation of Abraham in Gen. 18, 19, is something very peculiar. He seems to apprehend the divine Stranger and His angelic companions at once, needing no introduction, or notice, or revelation -- as Joshua, Gideon, and others, in like circumstances, did. “He was accustomed to the divine presence,” as one has said. This opens these wondrous chapters.

The Lord does not come to regulate him in any way, either to rebuke or instruct him morally. Abraham is before him in the place and character and attitude of one who was fully prepared for His presence.

Accordingly, the Lord makes His ways and thoughts known to Abraham, as a man would to his friend. He reveals secrets to him which do not concern

203. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 19: 101-102.



himself -- had they done so, in a sense Abraham would have been entitled to hear them; the Lord would surely tell them to him. But he has no personal concern in the matters communicated. They are the Lord's thoughts and purposes touching a city and a people with whom Abraham had no intercourse whatever. They were strangers to him and he to them -- and that, most advisedly. So that the Lord now deals with Abraham as a friend -- not even as a disciple, much less as a sinner, but as a friend.

Abraham apprehends this. He was entitled to do so. Grace expects to be understood, and surely delights in being understood. And so, if the Lord invite us we should go; if He draw nigh to us, we should draw nigh to Him.

And so it is here. The angels, seizing on the mind of their Lord, retire; and Abraham, doing the like, draws near, and there speaks for this city and people. He has nothing to ask for himself. No, surely. He had no confession to make or requests to prefer for himself, but as the Lord had spoken to him about Sodom, he now speaks to the Lord about it. He intercedes, as one near to God, as one who was at ease touching himself, and thus at leisure to attend to others.

Every feature in this picture is full of grace and dignity. There is nothing of feebleness or dimness here -- all is strength and elevation. But this is continued.

The next morning, as we read in Gen. 19, Abraham gets him up to the place where he had been speaking to the Lord about Sodom, somewhere on the hills of Judea, overlooking the plain of Jordan, or the vale of Siddim, where Sodom lay; and there he beholds the burning of that city under penal fire from heaven. He sees the judgment of the Lord. He sees it from on high, where he and the Lord had been talking together the day before.

Now this is of one character with all the rest. This is still elevation of the highest order. This is heaven's relationship to judgment, God's own relationship to it. Abraham was not rescued out of it like Lot; nor calmly taken through it like Noah; nor merely borne away ere it came like Enoch -- but beyond them all, he is given heaven's own place in relation to it. He looks down upon it executed on others, having nothing to say to it whatever, not having to be either removed from the scene of it before it come, or carried safely through it after it had come. He was in nothing less than heaven's own relation to it.

This is very great indeed. And this is the church in the Apocalypse; not as in 1 Thess. 4 simply, but beyond that; as in the Apocalypse. The crowned Elders there are on high, as the judgments take their course on the plain or earth below. Abraham-like, they behold the judgments as from God's place. It is not mere translation to heaven before they come, like Enoch (for that had taken place before) {type of our translation}, nor is it simply carriage through

them, when they had come, like Noah {type of the preserved remnant of Israel}; but they behold them executed, like Abraham from on high.

As Abraham's place in Gen. 18 had been the present place of the church, learning the secrets of God (see John 15:15), so his place in Gen. 19 is the Apocalyptic place of the church, surveying the judgments of the Lord on the earth. Abraham had the fact communicated to him first; and then he saw the accomplishment of that fact below, and apart from himself. In these things he is as the church of God.

But these wondrous chapters suggest a general thought upon divine judgments. We trace a series of them in scripture: as in the days of Noah; Lot; Israel in Egypt; Israel on the shore of the Red Sea; Deborah in the Book of Judges; the church on earth, as in 1 Cor. 11; the church in glory, as in Rev. 5; the elect remnant in Rev. 15; the heavens in Rev. 19. And on each of these occasions we see the people of God differently, or rather variously, occupied. And there is beauty, force, and significancy in it all; for the manner in which faith occupies itself will be found to be suited to the character of the judgment.

Noah witnessed divine judgment on sin, and his own deliverance, through grace, out of it. He worshiped, rendering a burnt-offering to the Lord (Gen. 8).

Lot was rescued -- saved so as by fire -- and suitably with such a fact, we get no altar or sacrifice, under his hand. He was pulled out of the fire, and that was all (Gen. 19).

Israel in Egypt, like Noah, witnessed divine judgment on sin, being, in like manner, themselves delivered by grace. And, like Noah, they worshiped, celebrating their redemption by a feast on a sacrifice, eating of the lamb whose blood was sheltering them (Ex. 12).

Israel on the shore of the Red Sea, different from this, were delivered from the hand of enemies, judgment on whom they were witnessing. They, therefore, had a song -- as well became them on such an occasion (Ex. 15).

Deborah was in the same conditions, the same relation to divine judgment. She witnessed God's judgment on the enemies of her people; and therefore, like Israel at the Sea, she and Barak had a song (Judg. 5).

The church on earth witness God's judgment upon sin -- and, by their feast, like Israel in Ex. 12, they celebrate their own redemption. They rehearse, with thanksgiving, the salvation of God, in the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11).

The church in glory witness God's judgments on the world, anticipating their own kingdom -- and consequently, like Israel at the Sea, or Deborah in the Book of Judges, they have a song prepared for their heavenly harps (Rev. 5).

The heavens triumph with a great shout, when she that had been corrupting

the earth with her fornication falls under the hand of the Lord (Rev. 19).

Here we have variety in the way in which faith occupies itself in a day of divine judgment. There are judgments on sin, and judgments on enemies ; and corresponding deliverances by grace and by power. It is seasonable to sing, when a judgment on enemies has been accomplished, and a deliverance out of it by power, but a judgment on sin, and our deliverance by grace (we ourselves having been guilty and exposed to the judgment), have rather to be celebrated in a worshiping, chastened spirit. There was, therefore, no song in Ex. 12; there is a song in Ex. 15.

But in the midst of all this, Abraham's act and attitude are as full of beauty and fitness and significance as anything we see in these cases. He surveyed a scene of judgment upon sin -- but he had not been in danger of the judgment, he had had no part in the sin that was judged. He had not been exposed to it. He had had nothing to say to the cities of the plain. In this his story differs from that of Noah—for Noah was in the scene of judgment -- and from that of Israel in Egypt, or of the church of God on earth. They, like him, witness of the judgment of sin -- but they had been exposed to it themselves, and were delivered by grace and the blood of Jesus. Not so Abraham in Gen. 19. He needed no personal deliverance from the judgment that had visited the cities in the plain of Jordan ; but he surveyed it. He had heaven's relation to it. He stood in the contemplation of it on that height where he had, the day before, been with the Lord.<sup>204</sup>

## LOT'S CHOICE

### A Word on Present Advantage

#### Gen. 19

There is much profitable instruction in tracing, in contrast, the characters of Lot and Abram. Both were saints of God, yet how different as to their walk! how different also as to their personal experiences in regard of peace, joy, and nearness to God! And there is ever this difference between a worldly-minded believer and one, through the grace of God, true-hearted. In the scriptural sense of the term (2 Pet. 2:8), a "righteous man," Lot was "vexing his righteous soul from day to day." Abram walked before God.

The Lord cannot but be faithful to His people, still He does mark in their path that which is of faith and that which is not of faith, and Lot's trials are the consequences of his unbelief. There is one thing very marked in his course

throughout -- great uncertainty and obscurity as to his path, and as to the judgment of God, because of not realizing that security in God which would have enabled him to walk straightforward, whilst there is no hesitation in things connected with this world. And it is thus with ourselves if we have not taken Christ for our portion heartily. Abram's was a thoroughly happy life -- he had God for his portion.

Lot is seen rather as the companion in the walk of faith of those who have faith, than as one having and acting in the energy of faith himself. This characterizes his path from the beginning. Therefore, when put to the test, there is only weakness. In how many things do we act with those who have faith, before having it for ourselves! It was thus with the disciples of the Lord, and the moment they were put to the test there was weakness and failure. The soul will not stand, when sifted through temptation, if walking in the light of another.

God's personal call of Abram at the first is mixed with a sort of unbelief in Abram, much like the reply in the gospel, "Lord, suffer me first to go home and bury my father." He sets out, but he takes Terah, his father, with him, and goes and lodges in Haran (he could not carry Terah with him into the land of Canaan). Now God had called Abram, but not Terah. He left everything except Terah, and entered into possession of nothing. But he tried to carry something with him which was not of God, and he could not. It is not until after Terah's death that he removes into Canaan, to where God had called him. (Compare Gen. 12:1 and Acts 7:4) "So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him, and Lot went with him . . . they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came."

Lot (though having faith) goes in the path he treads as the companion of Abram. As to actual position, he stands with Abram. He is truly a saint of God, though afterwards we find him treading the crooked path of the world's policy.

God blesses them. The land is not able to bear them so that they may dwell together (Gen. 13). They have flocks, and herds, and much cattle, and there is not room for them both -- they must separate. Circumstances, no matter what (here it is God's blessings), reveal this.

They are in the place of strangers, that is clear ("the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land"). They have nothing in possession, "not so much as to put a foot upon"; all rests on their valuing the promises (Heb. 11:9). They have just two things, the altar and the tent. Journeying about, and worshiping God, they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Abram confesses

204. *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 7:161-163.

that he is such; he declares plainly that he seeks a country,<sup>205</sup> “wherefore,” we are told, “God is not ashamed to be called their God.” (He is never called “the God of Lot.”) This acts upon the whole spirit and character of Abram.

The land is not able to bear them that they may dwell together, there is a strife between their herdsmen, they must separate. Abram says, “Is not the whole land before thee?” take what thou wilt, do not let us quarrel “if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left” -- the promise is my portion; I am a thorough stranger, the city of God is open in glory before me. His heart is upon the promises of God, and everything else is as nothing in comparison. It might seem a foolish thing to let Lot choose -- to give up to Lot the right to do so is certainly his own; but his heart is elsewhere, his faith goes entirely free from earthly advantage.

Not so Lot; he lifts up his eyes<sup>206</sup> -- the plain of Jordan is well watered everywhere, even as the garden of the Lord, and he chooses it. There is nothing gross or wrong in itself in his choosing a well-watered plain, but it just distinctly proves that his whole heart is not set upon the promises of God. Thus is he put to the test; and thus, in the way of the accomplishment of God's purposes, character is displayed. Abram's conduct has for its spring a simplicity of faith which embraces God's promises (Heb. 11:13), and wants nothing besides. Faith can give up. The spirit of a carnal mind takes all it can get. Lot acts upon the present sense of what is pleasant and desirable; why should he not? what harm is there in the plains of Jordan?<sup>207</sup> His heart is not on the promises.

The companion of Abram, he is brought to the level of his own faith.

But he will dwell in the cities of the plain if he chooses the rivers of the plain. It is not his intention to go into the city, but he will get there step by step. (He must find trouble in the place he has taken pleasure in.) There is not the power of faith to keep him from temptation. When there is not the faith that keeps the soul on the promises, there is not the faith to keep it out of sin. It is not insincerity, but people's souls are in that condition, and God proves them.

Abram's path all the way through is characterized by personal intimacy with God, constant intercourse with God, visits from God, the Lord comes to

him, and explains His purposes, so that he is called the “friend of God” (2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23); and this not only as to his own portion, but as to what God is going to do with Sodom -- the judgment He is about to bring on Sodom, though personally he has nothing to do with it, and the promise is his hope (Gen. 18). So now He tells His people what He is going to do about the world. Though their hope is connected with their own views, with the promises, and the heavenly Canaan, He takes them into His confidence as to what is to happen where they are not to be.

Lot the while is vexing his righteous soul -- does he know anything about the purposes of God? Not a word. He is saved, yet so as by fire; though a “righteous soul,” his is a vexed soul, instead of a soul in communion with God -- vexed “from day to day” (there is, so far, right-mindedness that it is a vexed soul). He is there before the judgment comes with his soul vexed ( whilst happy Abraham is on the mount holding conversation with God); and when it does come, how does it find him? with his soul vexed, and totally unprepared for it, instead of in communion with God about it.

“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation,” and He delivers “just Lot.” But whilst thus vexing his righteous soul with their unlawful deeds, the men of the city have a right to say to him, ‘What business have you here?’ (“this one came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge,” v. 9) -- ‘you are quarreling with sin in the place of sin.’ They have a perfect right to judge thus. All power of testimony is lost by reason of association with the world, when he ought to be witnessing to his total separation from it; there is vexation of spirit, but not power. When Abram got down into Egypt, he had nothing to do but to go right back to the place of the altar he had built at the first. Lot testifies, but he cannot get out of the place he is in; the energy that ought to have thrown him out is neutralized and lost by his getting into it; his daughters have married there; he has ties where his unbelief has led him. It is far more difficult to tread the up-hill road than the down-hill road.

Whenever the counsels of God are revealed to faith, it brings out the spirit of intercession. The word to the prophet, “Make the heart of this people fat” (Isa. 6), at once brings out, “O Lord, how long!” So here Abraham pleads with the Lord to spare the city. (But there are not ten -- there is not one righteous man in Sodom, with the exception of Lot.) As regards his own position, he is looking down upon the place of judgment. And in the morning, when the cities are in flames, he finds himself in quietness and peace on the spot where he “stood before the Lord” (v. 27), not at all in the place where the judgment had come, solemnized, indeed, by the scene before him, but calm and happy with the Lord.

The Lord sends Lot out of the midst of the overthrow. Angels warn him, and faith makes him listen. But his heart is there still. There are connections

205. In Gen. 12 Abram goes down into Egypt. This is evidently a mistake; for he comes back again to the place of the altar which he built at the first. He had no altar in Egypt.

206. “And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, 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 I give it, and to thy seed after thee,” etc.

207. A man says, What harm is there in the well-watered plains of Jordan? are they not the gift of Providence? I answer, The devil has planted Sodom in the midst of them.

that bind him to Sodom, and he would fain take them with him. But you cannot take anything with you for God out of Sodom, you must leave it all behind. The Lord must put the pain where you find the pleasure. "While he yet lingered"; there is hesitation and lingering in the place of judgment, when the judgment has been pronounced; he ought to have left it at once; but the place, and path, and spirit of unbelief, enervate the heart -- "the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters" -- the Lord being merciful unto him -- "and they brought him forth, and set him without the city." And now it is, "Escape for thy life, look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain, escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed" (v. 17). As for the goods, the sheep, and the much cattle, he must leave them all behind. If the Lord's faithfulness is shown in saving Lot, it is shown also in breaking the links that bind him to the place. His mind is all distraction; he says, "Oh, not so, my Lord. I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die." He has lost the sense of security in the path of faith. Such is ever the consequence of the path of unbelief in a saint of God, he thinks the path of faith the most dangerous path in the world. Lot has become used to the plain, and the mountain (the place where Abraham is enjoying perfect security and peace) is a mountain. The Lord spares Zoar at his request, and lets him flee thither, but on seeing the judgment, he flees to the mountain, forced to take refuge there in the end.

This is an extreme case; we shall find the same thing true in various degrees. Abraham could give up (that sacrifice always belongs to faith); but there are trials to the believer because of unbelief -- because he is a believer, but in a wrong place. Lot was a "righteous man"; but when he did not walk in the path of faith, he had vexation of soul and trouble -- a righteous soul, but where a righteous soul ought not to be. Observe his incapacity simply to follow the Lord. Observe also his uncertainty. So will it be with us, if we are walking in the path of unbelief, there will be trouble which is not our proper portion, but which comes upon us because we are in a wrong worldly place, the trial that belongs to unbelief. We may be seeking the compassion of the church of God, when we are only suffering, like Lot, the fruit of our own unbelief -- the simple path of faith having been departed from, because we had not learned to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. Giving up is our proper position, simple sacrifice, in the knowledge and present consciousness that "all things are ours." But the promise is "a hundredfold more in this present world," and that is not vexation of spirit.<sup>208</sup>

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208. *Collected Writings*, 19:145-150.

In Lot we see how near a man can be to damnation and yet be saved: in his wife we see how near one can be to salvation and yet be lost.<sup>209</sup>

### *Genesis 20: Type of Our Failure to Own Our True Relationship Before Professors*

What is recorded in Gen. 20 is not exactly the same thing as the failure in going down to Egypt in Gen. 12. The failure in Gen. 20 is before Philistines, which has its special significance. Yet, the Philistine origin is from Egypt, and represents the world in the place of profession, the place where Abraham was blessed and walked before the Almighty God. They here signify professors who are not among the righteous any more than was Baalam, who also spoke with Jehovah. J. N. Darby remarked:

Like Abram's going down to Egypt, we have unbelief working in respect of the path into which he had been called by grace, shewn, as it ever is, in reference to walking in the intimacy of the relationship in which God had set him, of which woman is the expression in the types. Here Sarah is the mother of the heir of the world, the wife of Abraham, according to promise, and, for Abraham, according to the church's hope, as we have seen (though Israel were the vessel according to flesh). This position he denies. Sarah is again his sister. This was worse than before, for she is, to faith, mother of the heir of the world. Abimelech was wrong, and acted to please himself, but acted unconscious of it. Abraham before God was in the falser position of the two. God warns Abimelech, and preserves Sarah by His own power, whom Abraham's want of faith had connected with the world; and Abimelech returns her, with the cutting reproof to the church, as here typified, that she at least ought to have known her own relationship to Christ. Still, in the main, Abraham was in the place of faith and blessing; and, as God's prophet, to whom none should do harm, intercedes for the faulty Abimelech, for here all is grace. There is another point to notice here, that this was an arrangement of unbelief when first he started from his father's house (Gen. 20: 13), so soon was the germ of unbelief at work in the called of promise. But God maintains the divine title to the allegiance of the church at all times. But now the heir is born, the heir of promise.<sup>210</sup>

The passage points to our failure to own the truth that is ours before professors in Christendom -- who will be cut out of the olive tree (Rom. 11:22). But we must also be faithful before those children of God who act like Philistines practically, or like Lot.

Duplicity was never found in our Lord. When He was asked who He was, He told them that He was what He said (John 8:25). There never was an atom's space between

209. J. C. Bayly, *The Bible Treasury*, 15:352.

210. *Synopsis, in loco*. C. H. Mackintosh's *Notes on Genesis* may be profitably read concerning this chapter, as will the book in general. See also *The Bible Treasury*, 10:321, 322.

what He said and how He acted.

Let us conclude with a few words of admonition from W. Kelly:

Then follows a new scene, where Abraham alas! fails once more. (Gen. 20) There is no power in forms to sustain the rich triumphs of faith. As on the one hand after failure God can bring into depths of grace which never were proved before, so on the other from the most real blessing there is no means of strength or continuance, but only in God Himself. No matter what the joy for one's own soul, or the blessing to others, power in every sense belongs to God, and is only ours in dependence upon Him. And now it was even more painful than before, because Sarah was the known appointed mother of the heir that was coming. There was no question as to her any more than about Abraham. He had been long the designated father, as she was later the designated mother. In spite of all Abraham, for reasons of his own, is guilty once more of denying the relationship. What is man? Beloved brethren, we know One, who at all cost formed the nearest relationship with us that deserved nothing less, and who will never deny it. May He have our unswerving confidence!

But Abimelech was evidently conscientious, and God took care of him, although the seriousness of the case was not weakened to his mind. God made known in a dream how matters really stood, that he must not touch the man's wife. "He is a prophet and he shall pray for thee" -- a most instructive instance of the way in which God holds to His principles. He will even honor Abraham before Abimelech, however he may act in discipline with Abraham. Perhaps Abimelech would be ready to say, "How can Abraham be a prophet, -- a man that tells lies in denying his own wife?" Nevertheless, said God, "he is a prophet;" but we may be assured of this, that the Lord in no way restrained the mouth of Abimelech from a severe reproof, when he said to Sarah, "Behold I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver: behold he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and with all other: thus she was reproved."<sup>211</sup> What a veil Abraham had been to his poor wife! He had better buy a veil for her with the thousand pieces of silver. It was a keenly cutting condemnation — a rebuke no doubt addressed to Sarah, but how it must have touched Abraham to the quick! The Bible has recorded the sin of the father of the faithful for the good of all the children. Where was the faithfulness of Abraham now? God first took care that his faith should not fail. May the sin be a warning to us, and the grace strengthen our faith

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211. There is some difficulty here as evinced by the differences of translators. Thus Benisch translates the last clause, "and thou mayest face every one," i.e. she was made right by the fine as an eye-covering. De Sola, Lindenthal and Raphall, in their version, go even further, "and unto all others as a vindication."

too!<sup>212</sup>

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212. *Lectures Introductory to the Pentateuch, in loco.*

## Chapter 16

### *The Seventh Communication:*

#### *Genesis 21:12-13*

**THE FIRST MAN cast out; bondage and the law set aside.**

#### *The Promised Son Born at the Appointed Time, The Handmaid and Her Son Cast Out, And Blessing through Abraham*

Gen. 21 is the final subsection in the second group of communications of God with Abraham. This chapter takes us from the coming of the promised seed, the true heir (vv. 1-7), to the casting out of the bondwoman and her son ("the fleshly heir") (vv. 8-21), and on to what points to the manifestation of God being with Abraham; i.e., to millennial tranquility, for it is then that the world will recognize that the blessing is in Abraham (vv. 22-32).<sup>213</sup> It is true that no shadow, no type, has the substance and fulness of the antitype, yet we see something of the body in the shadow. In Gen. 21, the heir of promise displaces the bondwoman and her son born of the flesh (cp. Gal. 4:22-31). The ultimate result of the coming of the heir is Gen. 21:22-34 pointing to taking possession of the land.

First, then, we will look at three articles by William Kelly from *The Bible Treasury*, surveying the whole chapter. After that, we shall consider several articles regarding Hagar and Ishmael, followed by some observations on the Covenantist attempt to get Hagar back into the house -- or, rather, keeping her in the house -- for the purpose of keeping order in the house.

#### *ISAAC -- The Son and Heir Born*

213. A summary statement of Gen. 21 is found in *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 19:105 and 153. See also his *Notes and Comments*, 1:85, 86. The reader might well read the *Synopsis, Notes and Comments*, 1:137-141, and W. Kelly's *Introductory Lectures* on the passages we are considering.

### **Gen. 21:1-7**

The set time was now come. The child of promise was at hand. Many and various had been the premonitions on the one side, and checks on the other; but at length in the face of weakness and drawbacks, of unfaithfulness with gracious overruling, the divine word is proved to be, as it is, unfailing and worthy of all trust.

And Jehovah visited Sarah as he had said, and Jehovah did to Sarah as he had spoken. And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son that was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. And Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac was born to him. And Sarah said, God hath made me laugh: everyone that heareth will laugh with me. And she said, Who would have said to Abraham, Sarah will give children suck? for I have borne a son in his old age (Gen. 21:1-7).

Here the usage of the divine designations {names} comes before us remarkably. To impute the difference to distinct authors is the despairing or malevolent resource of unbelieving ignorance. First of all "Jehovah" occurs with emphatic repetition (v.1). Governmental relationship was in question; and as Jehovah had promised, so also did He show Himself faithful to perform. But it was of no less moment in the next place to indicate that He who thus spoke was God in the supremacy of His nature (v. 2). Hence "Elohim" is employed, and throughout the chapter, till v. 33 where relative dealings properly demand the name of "Jehovah Elohim," as will be shown in due course.

But beyond controversy it was the birth of one who here typifies the Son of Ps. ii. 7, 12. This explains why there should have been so many prophetic intimations to prepare the way. This accounts for the serious consequences which followed for such as despised Him when come. So the prophet was given to say, more than seven centuries before the event (Isa. 9:6 and following):

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder. And they shall call his name Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Father of eternity, Prince of peace.

The prediction, glowing and glorious as it is, has nothing to do with His being First-born from the dead, Head of the body, the church, Who is the beginning. It belongs to His other Headship, as born into the world, the Firstborn of all creation [Col. 1:15]. For in all things He must have the supreme place {Col. 1:18}.

Hence we can see that Calvin only expresses the prevalent confusion of

these two relationships, when He says that in this chapter God has set before us a lively picture of His church.

Not so. It is not “the mystery” which is here foreshown, but the new covenant; it is the mother;<sup>214</sup> and not the bride. Consequently the Christian has already new covenant blessing in the death of the Saviour; but the scripture which most fully explains it to us (2 Cor. 3) points to its being in spirit rather than in letter; it will be formally with both houses of Israel in the day which fast approaches, and for ever. But Israel, however richly blessed in that day, will not have the union with Christ as His body, which is ours even now with Him Who is head over all things. And this involves the most important differences, as widely apart as heaven is from earth, of which this is not the place to speak more particularly. The distinction however cannot well be over-estimated.

Next in v. 3 Abraham called his new-born son Isaac. So he was now, whatever had gone before, whatever might come after. Any laughter of doubt had given place to the joy of grace. And Abraham certainly looked on with joy to wide, deep, and enduring results; he rejoiced that he should see Christ’s day, and he saw it and was glad {John 8:56}. How blessed will it be for Israel and the earth and all the nations and every creature of God! How different from the day of Massah and Meribah in the wilderness; when man hardened his heart and Jehovah was grieved long years with a generation that erred in their heart and knew not His ways! In that day what singing aloud to Jehovah, what shouting for joy to the rock of salvation, and coming before His face with thanksgiving and psalms! Yea, the heavens shall rejoice and the earth be glad; the sea shall roar and the fulness thereof; the field shall exult and all that is therein. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before Jehovah, for He cometh—for He cometh to judge the earth : He will judge the world with righteousness, and the people in His faithfulness (Psa. 96). Isaiah bears the same witness at intervals from his first chapter to his last, notably in 11, 12, 24-27, 30, 32, 35, 40-45, 49-55, 60-62, 65. So we may say in general have all the prophets spoken. So much the more lamentable is the unbelief which merges all in the church’s blessings, only to lose its heavenly bridal place to no end obscured by that groundless confusion.

But the joy of Abraham in no way weakened his duty of subjecting his son to the sign of death for the flesh. He circumcised Isaac duly when he was eight days old, “as God had commanded him” (v. 4). The eighth day points to resurrection in contrast with nature. Circumcision was instituted, not when

214. It may be noticed here that the error in question gave rise to the spurious reading πάντων at the end of Gal. 4:26, and to the no less unfounded misinterpretation of “Israel of God” in Gal. 4:16, as if the phrase meant all the saints, though two classes are here distinguished.

Ishmael was born, but in view of Isaac, the seal of the covenant. The principle was God’s righteousness. Man was judged as evil and flesh mortified.

It is notified in v. 5 that Abraham was a hundred years of age when Isaac was born. Faith had indeed to wait, but was in no way disappointed: God is faithful.

And Sarah said (v. 6), God hath made me laugh; every one that heareth will laugh with me.

She had laughed at first when Jehovah announced the set time for her to be a mother, and she added the shame of untruth when taxed with it (Gen. 18). But all is here changed by grace. God, she owns, made her laugh now. It was no longer within herself, but of Him; and others who heard would share her joy.

And she said (v. 7), Who would have said to Abraham, Sarah will give children suck? For I have borne a son in his old age.

Sarah is thenceforth, old as she was, become a child of wisdom; and wisdom is justified of all her children.<sup>215</sup>

## *Isaac Abiding, Hagar and Ishmael Dismissed.*

### *Gen. 21:8-21.*

God knows how to rectify the false position that springs from unbelief. We may therefore look to Him and His word, and have only to obey. But if this ever costs the flesh not a little, blessing surely follows self-denying submission to His will.

As the child born and the son given typified the Son of the Highest, it was meet that the occasion should be marked by consequences of the gravest. What can distinguish inspiration more than the lesson the apostle in Gal. 4:22-26 draws from that which seems on the surface a mere domestic occurrence?

For it is written that Abraham had two sons; one of the maid-servant, and one of the free-woman. But he that was of the maid-servant was born according to flesh, and he that was of the free-woman through the promise. Which things have an allegorical sense; for these [women] are two covenants: one from Mount Sinai, gendering unto bondage, which is Hagar. For Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answers to the present Jerusalem; for she is in bondage with her children; but the Jerusalem above is free, which is our mother.

This was God’s purpose, though none apprehend it save those who have Christ’s mind. Hence the unbelieving Jews fill the place, not of Isaac, but of

215. W. Kelly, *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 2:225, 226.

Ishmael. They are as far as possible from suspecting that they are only born according to flesh, and persecute him that is born according to Spirit. Yet they cannot deny that their mother is the Sinai covenant, and that they are cast out by God. They have the law's curse as transgressors; they have not a shred of the promise to cover their nakedness. Their own prophets declare that they are not God's people, and if without a false god without the True, as they have plainly neither land nor prince; and this because they rejected, first Jehovah, next His Christ.

But the apostle goes a great deal farther; and though he does not confound the believing Gentiles with Israel, like the theologians of Christendom, he shows that all who take their stand on law come under the curse (Gal. 3:10). Thus the principle applies in all its force, indeed emphatically, to Gentiles, who have not the excuse of inveterate Jewish prejudice. It is to fall from grace, through which alone can souls be saved. Law cannot save but condemn sinners; and if grace be mixed with law, the mixture is unavailing : grace only can save the guilty and lost. The Galatians who were bewitched to tack law on to grace, he solemnly warns of utter ruin, so sure that as many as are of works of law (i.e., on this principle) are under curse. After having begun in Spirit, how senseless for them to seek perfection in flesh! The law itself, in the tale of Abraham's two sons, convicts of folly those who thus abuse the law. Its lawful application (1 Tim. 1:9) is not to a righteous person, but to lawless and insubordinate, to impious and sinful, to unholy and profane, to whatever in short is opposed to the healthful doctrine Paul taught.

Hence the peremptory tone of the apostle to the endangered Galatians. He will have this "leaven" extirpated, whatever it cost. It was a deeper peril than the "leaven" which he enjoins the Corinthians to purge out. Not even a moral man could defend the gross inconsistency with Christ and His sacrifice of having the wicked man in their midst. But the fair show in flesh set up in the Galatian churches was subtler, and a denial of the grace which the gospel proclaims, when law had been proved to be simply a ministry of death and condemnation.

What then saith the scripture? Cast out the maid-servant and her son; for the son of the maid-servant shall in no wise be heir with the son of the free-woman.

The Judaizing Gentile is even more blamable than the Jew. Alas! the ritualism of the day is incomparably worse still and growingly apostate; for not content with the legal forms of Israel, it incorporates the idolatries of the heathen also, as in the adoration of the sacramental elements, &c.

Yet is it affecting to know God's goodness to Abraham's seed according to flesh. When the mother yielded to despair, and laid her son down to die at a distance from her, "God heard the lad's voice"; and His angel bids Hagar hold

him in her hand. Had not Jehovah called his name Ishmael, because He had heard her affliction? And as she was then by a fountain called Beer-la-hai-roi, Well of the living who was seen (or, seeth me) from the name of Him that spoke to her (Gen. 16), so now God opened her eyes to see a well of water whence she gave the lad drink. If she forgot the divine assurance of a numberless multitude in general to spring from her, and that Ishmael should dwell in the presence of all his brethren, God remembered him and declares that He will make him a great nation. So it has been. There they are with the same characteristics to this day.<sup>216</sup>

## JEHOVAH, GOD EVERLASTING

### Gen. 21: 22-34

Though the name of Isaac does not occur in this section, it is in no way a digression, but in strict pursuance of the divine ways on the occasion of his birth, the dismissal of Hagar and her son, and the recognition of Sarah's son as the sole heir of Abraham.

It was not only that due order of the household was now secured by the expulsion of the Egyptian and her mocking son, and that the child of promise abode without a rival; but an outward event follows of such significance that the Holy Spirit gives it here an imperishable place. The marked blessing that resulted drew the Gentile's heart, and the Philistine with due formality (for the commander-in-chief accompanied him) seeks the pledged friendship of Abraham. So it will be in days to come when the promises are accomplished in the Messiah; and thus far Isaac typifies Him. It was far otherwise when the Lord came the first time, and even the Jew rejected Him in dark unbelief and in bitter hatred that the grace which they refused should be preached to the nations. Unhappy and unholy, they please not God and are contrary to all men; and the wrath is come on them to the uttermost. But the day hastens when they judging themselves shall welcome by faith Him in Whom the promises are Yea and Amen unto the glory of God. Then shall Gentile kings be Zion's nursing fathers, and queens her nursing mothers (Isa. 49); then shall ten men take hold, out of all the languages of the nations, shall even take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you (Zech. 8).

Nor does Abraham at all repel the Gentiles. The Seed of promise received and honored leads to a new state of things for the earth. To the king Abraham

216. W. Kelly, *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 2:241, 242.



assents, and forms a covenant on oath and other solemnities. In the Seed are the Gentiles to be blessed. Woe to those that curse in that day! A witness of the change to ensue on the largest scale is here given by Abraham's reproving Abimelech. Now only does he speak of the wrong done by Abimelech's servants who had violently possessed themselves of a well dug by Abraham. And Abimelech bows meekly. Righteousness will reign in that day, and princes shall rule in judgment; yea, judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. For the Spirit will then be poured on Israel from on high; and He holds the inflexible sceptre over all the earth, the Righteous Servant and Atoning Sufferer, Who in that day shall be seen exalted, and lifted up, and very high. And Israel's seed shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which Jehovah hath blessed (Isa. 61). The limper shall no longer halt, but the first dominion be even to the daughter of Jerusalem.

The Well-of-the-Oath is the name Abraham gives as the permanent sign of the covenant made then and there. Typically it is a total change from strangership to possession, as it will be really in the days of the coming Kingdom. Nor do we hear of a tent now, though Abraham's calling on the name of Jehovah implies a fresh altar here. Only it is not now as the One Who appeared to Him in the far off land, and led him at length, separated to Him, into Canaan; nor is it the altar he built at Bethel any more than at Shechem, nor yet at Hebron. Here only is the striking change, which inspiration alone can account for, to "God everlasting" {*El olam*}. For so it will be when the displayed Kingdom comes in power and glory. Fallen and fading things will then give place to permanence and peace and blessing. For

Thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end. The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee (Psa. 102).

In unison with all this is the planting of a grove on Abraham's part. Here only do we read of such an act, the beautiful prefiguration of "that day" when the parched land shall blossom abundantly, and all the trees of the wood shall sing for joy.<sup>217</sup> ♦

## ***Cast Out This Handmaid and Her Son***

The following is from J. G. Bellett in *The Bible Treasury*, 8:113-115.

## ***HAGAR***

### **Genesis 16 - 25**

Abraham had already received the promise of a seed; so, by faith in that promise (trusting God as the quickener of the dead), he was now standing in righteousness before Him (Gen. 15:6).

That promise, I may observe, had not mentioned Sarah in connection with the Seed, but there was strong intimation that she was to be the mother.

However, be this as it may, Sarah's suggestion to her husband at the opening of Gen. 16 too clearly discloses the working of an unbelieving heart, and the principle of confidence in the flesh. For of course they measure each other. The more the simplicity of faith is surrendered and grace is refused, the law will either in its morality or religiousness be taken up.

For grace, or the promise, calls us out of ourselves, unto God and His resources. And Abraham had followed that call in Gen. 15. But now at the suggestion of Sarah he takes up himself again. He is back again in the flesh, or under {in principle, typically} the law, or becomes a dependent on his own resources. For these are all one and the same thing. Hagar is his confidence, and not the divine quickener of the dead.

This is very sad; but it is not destructive of his standing. Surely not. It betrays the bad mistrustful habit of the soul, and has to be rebuked and chastened, but Abraham is still the heir of God through righteousness by faith.

Very expressive, I judge all this to be, and very significant or typical also. For the law after this pattern entered through man's confidence in himself, Israel accepting this offer of it, and saying, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do" (Ex. 19:1 <sup>218</sup>); as Hagar is now seated in Abraham's house through the same want of faith and the same confidence in the flesh.

But there is much more of this same typical character. For Hagar's despising of her mistress is in the Lord's esteem highly out of place; and as He meets her in her wanderings, He knows her only as Sarah's maid, and sends her back with this injunction, "return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hand." She may get promises respecting the son that was to be born to her, but she is Sarah's maid still, and submission is her only duty. The law, too, has its hour. It may fill the house of God for a time, as Hagar and Hagar's seed now do the house of Abraham for fourteen years. But to the elect, or the heirs of promise, even the dispensation of the law still is, or was, only a servant. Sarah, likewise, may betray herself in other ways, in her undue impatience

217. W. Kelly, *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 2:257, 258. See also his comments in *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 2:145-149.

218. And we see in Josh. 24 the same confidence persisted in after experience.

against Hagar, as well as in giving her to her husband, but still the relationship is unaffected by all this. Hagar is still and only Sarah's maid, and as such she must reside in the family as long as she is permitted.

All this is strong decided teaching, and teaching of mysteries, as I have said. For Hagar, as we know (Gal. 4), is the law of the old covenant, which, though it filled and formed the house of God for its hour, was but serving some great purpose of instruction or discipline to the heirs of promise. And all the time there was a great underplot, so to express it, in this mystic house of the patriarch. In a divine sense it was surely the chief thing. Ishmael is born and circumcised, and, being the only child and heir apparent, he becomes the object no doubt of daily solicitude. But with God Ishmael is but second. He appears to be principal in the scene, but he is not really or divinely so. Accordingly neither he nor his mother is scarcely noticed by the Spirit or hand of God after this, while they reside in the house, till the due time for their dismissal comes. Abraham, through human or fleshy fondness, draws him forward for a moment under God's eye, and he is circumcised as any purchased slave would have been, but neither he nor his bondwoman mother is the Lord's object. The elect Abraham and Sarah, or persons and things connected with them, are His thoughts. His communications are with them, and His discipline spent upon them: they learn and experience their value in His esteem, and others are made to know it also (Gen. 17-20).

Is not this, in like manner, a word of instruction to us? Hagar and her child were in the house all this time. But Sarah and Abraham are God's objects. As again I may say, during the age of the law, the house of God was, it is true, manifested as under law, the law filled it with a material of its own workmanship, but there was all the while a hidden action of the Spirit with the elect -- the elect in the house were really God's objects.

These two stages in the way of the Egyptian bondwoman are thus very significant. Her entrance into Abraham's house as the mother of his first child Ishmael, and then her residence there for a season, have this mystic sense in them. But these things do not dispose of the whole history. We have still to look at her dismissal from the house.

Her child grew up to boyhood, and was, as I have suggested, no doubt, the object of family concern. But the current which had long run underground, or was known only in the counsels and promises of God, must appear and assert its course. Grace and the covenant must have their way and become principal in the scene. And therefore in due time, yea at the very right moment, "when the fulness of the time had come," Isaac is born.

The appearance of such a child was a great era. And soon was it found that he was set for a sign that should be spoken against, as well as for the joy of the elect. Abraham makes a feast, but Ishmael mocks over the same event. Here

was the revealing of hearts. One taunts what the other glories in. But Sarah is bolder still. She will not merely take part in Abraham's joy, but she is for judging the scorers. "Cast out the bondwoman and her son," says she. Here was another heart revealed, a great heart truly. Here was an energy of faith which far outdid even Abraham's. Abraham would personally and quietly enjoy the child of promise, but Sarah will not only do this, laughing with divine believing delight over him, but is for cleaning out by a summary dismissal all that would disturb his full unrivaled heirship of everything.

This was indeed great-hearted faith. This spoke the mind of God (Gal. 4:30.) This was interpreting the gift of God, the child of promise, aright. This was putting honor upon that gift as it well deserved. It was not a mother's fondness, but faith's boldness; for shall the gift of God be kept merely on a level, on the same floor as it were, with the fruit of human strength or the creatures of man's resources?

This great-hearted faith of Sarah is very encouraging, receiving too, as it does, the full and ready sanction of the Lord Himself. It is very happy to watch this. It is well when the soul can, with Abraham, rejoice over the accomplished counsels and promises of God. But it is better, when we can be so bold in the faith as with this joy to cast out from our hearts all spirit of bondage and fear, every fruit of nature and every confidence save in the sovereign and glorious resources of the living God -- God of all grace and salvation as He is -- when we can refuse to hear anything or to see anything that may hush or cloud that goodness and power of God by which He has brought Himself unspeakably near to our hearts.

From the presence of such a faith as this everything must retire and make room for God and His gift. Hagar is dismissed, and of course the mocking Ishmael. Sarah will have it so -- faith, rather, will have it so. And so will God; and Abraham, let fondness and nature be as reluctant as they may, must have it so likewise.

What precious mysteries may our souls thus feed upon while they meditate on Hagar's introduction to the house, her residence in the house, and her dismissal from the house, of our father Abraham!

But I would now also, for a little, trace the results of the birth of Isaac, of the appearance of the child of promise in the house of Abraham.

1. The immediate fruit of this appearance of Isaac, as I have been observing, is the dismissal of Hagar and her child.<sup>219</sup> And, as I also have observed, this is a mystery. "When faith came, we were no longer under a

219. {Actually, Isaac was about five years old when weaned. The Lord Jesus was here under the law for a time. What answers to the weaning is His resurrection.}

schoolmaster”; but the exhortation now is, “Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free.”

The Spirit of sonship displaces that of fear. There must be no room in the house for two children of such opposite tempers. Since Jesus had appeared {has been raised from the dead}, the elect stand in the righteousness of faith and wait for the hope it inspires (Gal. 5:6), and fear and bondage depart.

2. The future fruit of this great mystic event is the covenant of peace between Abraham and the Gentiles, Abraham on that great occasion taking the lead, and soon afterwards owning, for the first time, the earth as a beautiful or millennial scene, and the Lord God as the everlasting God, or the Father of the millennial age (Gen. 21).

In this way the immediate and the final results of the appearance or birth of the child of the freewoman are exhibited. But there is more to be observed in the history down to Gen. 25. Another thing is incidentally shown also -- the fortunes of the outcast child of the bondwoman.

At first he is all but dead, The provision with which he left Abraham’s house is all spent, and he is cast entirely upon God. But under His provision he grows up and thrives, as a man of the wilderness. There he dwells and has his occupation, and the prophecies which went before on him (Gen. 16) were made good. But in the principle and taste of his mind he returns, as far as he can, to his mother’s native land. She gets him an Egyptian wife.

All this is significant. For we know that Ishmael is, mystically, the children of “the Jerusalem that now is” (Gal. 4). And quite after this pattern of Ishmael, is it now with the Jew; for the Jew (or the nation of Israel) since the day of his dismissal from the house of God, since he ceased to be owned of the Lord in the land of his fathers, has been kept alive by the peculiar hand or provision of God. A full end has been made of other nations but not of Israel, and never will. For so runs the promise: outcast that people are, but not destroyed. They have, it is true, gone back all they could to the flesh out of which by profession through circumcision they had come; they have in principle returned, to Egypt, or found affinity with the ways of an uncircumcised world; but there they are to this day, kept by the present hand of God for the coming purposes of God, all their history marking the energies of a divine hand over them.

This is all significant: the wilderness of Ishmael is as much mystics’ ground as the land of Israel. But, further, during this growth of Ishmael in the wilderness, the house of God has been enjoying its liberty. Isaac has filled Abraham’s and Sarah’s heart with laughter. And all this liberty and joy was as much divine as the preservation of the life of Ishmael in the wilderness -- the one betokening the Spirit, the other the hand of God. God sanctioned this joy.

He would by no means have it otherwise.

And, blessed to tell it, it was a worshiping as well as a deep personal joy; for it could associate itself with any sacrifice. The father and the son, Abraham and Isaac, loved each other with the warmest affections, but at the bidding of the Lord they can go to the altar as the offerer and His Lamb {Gen. 22}. And it was also a joy that could dwell in thoughts of resurrection, and lay its objects in scenes beyond the grave. And it was holy jealousy as well. It refused all kindredness or Ishmael’s affinities with the world. Gen. 22-24 exhibit these qualities in Abraham and Isaac, while Ishmael is growing up no better than an Egyptian in the desert (Gen. 22-24).

This is, I believe, all deeply significant. Is it not the picture of what we in this age ought to be -- in a spirit of full gladness and liberty before our God, but also in a spirit of sacrifice, and in a spirit of separation from the world?

Finally, as I have already anticipated, in a little time the scene will change to glory or the kingdom. Abraham or Israel will be courted by the Gentiles and their kings -- the earth will be beautified, or planted with groves again, and the altar of the everlasting or millennial God (see Gen. 21) will be raised, while a covenant of peace binds all the families of the earth together; as here at the close Abraham’s seed, as by Keturah, are sent into distant lands, with gifts as from a father, though Isaac was at home the heir of his estate! (Gen. 25).

“Witty inventions,” surely, divine wisdom employs to teach our souls with joy and profit! ❖

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The following article from *The Present Testimony*, 9:370-372 adds to the above and contains help on the subject of law and grace.

## *The Dismissal of Hagar*

Gen. 16, 21

When Hagar was driven from the house of Abram by Sarah, the angel of the Lord met her, and told her to return and submit herself under the hand of her mistress. For it was very wrong in her to have acted in her mistress’s house as if she had been the principal person there. She was a mother, it is true, and Sarah was still without a child. Nevertheless, she was but a servant; and acting in any other character, she entirely forgot her place. The angel, therefore, reproved her, ordered her to go back, and charged her, while she remained in Abram’s house, to be in subjection to Sarah (Gen. 16).

This is a mystery. During the age of the Law, two elements were found

together -- that of *law*, and that of *grace*. There were the demands of righteousness, addressing themselves to man, and there were “the shadows of good things to come,” the witnesses of grace, revealing God in Christ. The Jew who made the law the principal of the two, mistook God’s mind; the Jew who used it subordinately, having his soul nourished by the tokens and witnesses of grace, was, so far, a Jew after God’s own heart.

This right-minded Jew is seen, for instance, in Nehemiah (see Neh. 8). The Law was read on the first day of the seventh month; that day (as Lev. 23:24 teaches us) in the Jewish year which witnessed grace or revival. The two elements were, therefore, on that occasion, brought into collision. At the hearing of the law the congregation weeps. But Nehemiah tells them not to weep, but to rejoice; and he tells them to do this on the authority of that day, the first day of the seventh month. And they do so, making the witness of grace principal, and using the Law subordinately.

This was according to God.

In due time the Lord comes; and, in the course of His ministry, He settles the question, or rather verifies the decision already made, between these two contending elements (see Matt. 12:5, 6). The Sabbath represents the rights and demands of the Law, the priests in the temple witness the ways and provisions of grace. The Lord declares how the Sabbath had to yield to the Temple, whenever their rights interfered with each other. And this was as though He were the angel of Gen. 16, telling Hagar to be under the hand of Sarah while she remained in the house of Abram.

The apostle in Rom. 2, I judge, teaches the same; for he rebukes the Jew for making his boast of the law, not knowing the “goodness,” i.e., the grace of God, in leading him to repentance. In the apostle’s thought (of the Spirit surely), the Jew who was then refusing Christ and the Gospel, was making the Law *principal*, instead of using it as the servant of grace. He was resting in the Law, ignorant of the riches of divine “goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering.”

But we are to go further with the history and with the mystery of Hagar. In process of time, one of the conflicting parties in the house of Abraham has to leave it, as we say, for good. Hagar is dismissed a second time, and there is then no angel or angel’s voice bidding her to go back. Sarah had now become a mother; and her son, the son of a freewoman, must occupy and fill the house all alone (Gen. 21).

And this is a mystery also.

In this present age <sup>220</sup> -- in these days of the risen, glorified Jesus, when the Spirit has been given to the elect on the title of all their sins being forgiven and Jesus ascended -- the Law is not to appear . . . We are dead to that wherein we were held. The handwriting of ordinances has been blotted out. The light and glory of the work of Christ must fill the house of God with one simple, bright, and gladdening element. Hagar has left Abraham’s house, and left it for ever.

And as the Lord, in Matt. 12, was like the angel telling Hagar, that while she remained in the house she was to be subject to her mistress, so the apostle, in the epistle to the Galatians, is like Sarah insisting on Hagar quitting the house for ever. For it is now, in this age {time} of a glorified Christ and of a given Spirit, no longer a mistress and a servant dwelling together under one roof, but a mother and her child, the freewoman and the heir. Scripture spoke in Sarah, as Gal. 4 tells us. It was the Holy Ghost who gave the word. And whether we look at the zeal of Sarah in Gen. 21, or the earnestness of Paul in Galatians, we learn the precious secret of the bosom of God, that He will have His elect in the adoption and liberty of *children*. Relationship, as well as redemption, is of the grace in which we stand. <sup>221</sup> ❖

220. {This present age is really still the Mosaic age. Before the age to come arrives, God is forming a heavenly people.}

221. {See also the article, “Ishmael,” in *The Bible Treasury*, 5:338, 339.

## Chapter 17

### The Eighth Communication: Genesis 22

**THE SECOND MAN  
in His resurrection place  
makes good the  
Abrahamic Covenant**

We have considered that the first three recorded divine communications end with Gen. 14 pointing to the millennium. Then, the second section of divine communications (four of them) with Abraham (Gen. 15-21) closed with the seventh divine communication, pointing to millennial peace. Once again, “after these things” (Gen. 15:1; 22:1), points to another section, the third of Abraham’s life (Gen. 22:1-19), this matter thus receiving a distinctive place. The phrase “after these things” occurs at Gen. 22:20, beginning another section of Abraham’s life (Gen. 22:20-25:18).

This eighth (a resurrection number) recorded divine communication centering in the sacrifice of the heir and receiving him from among the dead figuratively, and points to God’s great Heir in resurrection.<sup>222</sup> This brings forth not only the reaffirmation of Abraham’s seed being multiplied and being at the head of the nations (v. 17; in the millennium, of course), but that in Abraham’s great Seed -- Christ, in resurrection -- all the nations of the earth would bless themselves (v. 18).

It is important to recognize that in Gen. 22, the eighth recorded divine communication with Abraham, we have brought before us, in type, the basis on which God will make good the promises to Abraham -- which will be fulfilled in the millennium. The basis is, of course, the death and resurrection of Christ. ***This means that there was no fulfilment, partially or otherwise, before His death and resurrection.***

At the beginning of Abraham’s history, in connection with the first recorded, divine communication with him, we arrive at the first call to separation that we find in Scripture. In the eighth divine communication with Abraham, the last recorded, we find the first mention of love in Scripture. This

mention of love points to the love of the Father for the Son (cp. John 17:24).

### Abraham Takes Isaac (vv. 1-3)

Take now thy son, thine only [son], whom thou lovest, Isaac (Gen. 22:2).

By faith Abraham, [when] tried, offered up Isaac, and he who had received to himself the promises offered up his only begotten [son], as to whom it had been said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called (Heb. 11:17, 18).

Note that the word “only” is not used in the sense of generating a son, for the fact is that, physically speaking, Abraham had two sons. Gen. 22:2 is to be understood that Isaac was the unique son, the heir of Abraham.

Heb. 11:17 uses “only begotten”, the word monogenes, used of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Five times John speaks of the only begotten (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9) and it has nothing to do with the Father generating the Son, i.e., the notion of the eternal generation of the Son. Not that the notion of the eternal generation of the Son is fundamental evil, for the Eternal Sonship is affirmed. But the notion is untrue, and who knows what an eternal generation is. It is talk, and should never have been broached, for the two texts quoted above show that the thought in “only begotten” is not generation, but uniqueness of relationship between the Father and the Son, as reflected in Abraham and Isaac. The Son is Son in the Godhead, from eternity to eternity so to speak. The three divine Persons ever were Father, Son, and Spirit, and in Christianity we have the revelation of this. “Only begotten Son” is a name (John 3:18) of the Son in eternal Godhead glory and though He has taken manhood into His Person in incarnation, He is the only begotten Son! Only begotten Son is exclusive of others. First-begotten is a title that takes in connection with others.

First-begotten, or firstborn, used of Christ, is a title that the Son has acquired. If the Son enters the world, He has the title of firstborn of all creation (Col. 1:15). If He rises from the dead, He is firstborn from among the dead (Col. 1:18). And if He has brethren, He must be firstborn among many brethren (Rom. 8:29). Firstborn is a *title* of pre-eminence.<sup>223</sup> Only begotten Son is a *name* of unique relationship in the eternal God-head denoting unique relationship with the Father.

It is clear that in Gen. 22 we have a type of the Father giving His only begotten Son in death, and the Son’s resurrection typically set forth.

223. Luke presents the only begotten Son in the excellencies of His holy, dependent manhood. Monogenes is used three times in Luke where the Son helps someone with their only. It is very touching and precious to our souls to consider His sovereign grace, which also comes out as a characteristic feature in Luke’s gospel.

222. The place of the heir brings the heir (Isaac) into prominence in the remaining part of Abraham’s life.

## *God's Will Promptly Obeyed by the Separated Man*

C. H. Mackintosh wrote:

“And it came to pass that God did tempt Abraham.”<sup>224</sup> Why is it we never read such words as these, “It came to pass that God did tempt Lot?” Alas! Lot was never in a moral condition to warrant his being so highly honored. Sodom tempted Lot; but it was no temptation at all to Abraham. What a contrast between Lot in the cave, and Abraham on Mount Moriah! And yet they were both saved. But, ah! what a poor thing to be content to be saved! Ought we not to sigh after those spiritual heights which lie beyond? Should we not long to give expression to a more ardent devotedness? Oh! that our houses and our hearts were in a moral condition acceptable in the sight of God, so that we might enjoy habitual nearness to Himself, and unbroken communion with Him. This is our privilege, and we should never be satisfied with anything less.

It was a high honor conferred upon Abraham when God called him into the place of trial -- when He asked him for “his son, his only son Isaac.” It was an elevated point in the patriarch’s career, and that he felt it to be such we may judge from the spirit in which he responded to the divine call, and in which he repaired to the scene of sacrifice. “I and the lad will go yonder and WORSHIP.” Here the true spirit of devotedness most blessedly unfolds itself. To give up his only son -- the object of his affections -- the channel of all God’s promises -- to lay this one as a victim on the altar -- to see him consumed to ashes -- what was it all? Just an act of worship. This was real work indeed. It was no empty lip profession -- no saying, “I go, sir,” and yet not going at all. “Abraham believed God.” Here lay the secret of it all. He had learned to yield an unquestioning credence and an implicit obedience to the word of the Lord, and therefore when called to lay his Isaac upon the altar -- that Isaac for whom he had longed and waited and trusted -- when called to yield him as a sacrifice, he bows his head, and says, “I and the lad will go yonder and worship.”

224. {That is, God tried, or tested Abraham. God did not, and does not, create moral evil. God does not tempt man, or entice man to lust for something, or to do moral evil. See *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 15:29, etc.}

Thank God, that there ever lived such a man as Abraham -- that there was ever enacted such a scene as that upon Mount Moriah -- and that we have so vividly and forcibly presented to our hearts, the ground and the spirit of true devotedness!<sup>225</sup>

## *The Sacrifice of Isaac (vv. 4-10)* <sup>226</sup>

### *Go Yonder and Worship and Come Again to You (vv. 4, 5)*

The intention of Abraham was to go and sacrifice Isaac as God had said, in the faith that the son of promise would be restored to life. Heb. 11:19 says:

counting that God [was] able to raise [him] from among [the] dead, whence also he received him in a figure.

225. *Things New and Old*, 8: 189, 190.

226. J. N. Darby wrote:

The act is not given as a rule of morality nor of conduct in any way, but as a special case in which Abraham’s faith was put to the test. “It came to pass that God did tempt Abraham.” Hence there is no kind of analogy with “those who sacrificed their children to Moloch.” Men, through a perverse, unnatural, and cruel custom, gratifying the suggestion of their depraved nature, without any command whatever, accomplished of their own will this horrid barbarity, which was done as due to, and as liked and approved by, the god which their nature had pictured to them, as a practice pleasing to him. They got over conscience and affection through the hope of having their lusts and vengeance gratified, so as habitually to treat their children thus. It was their own practice to execute this cruelty -- *their state of mind*. In Abraham’s case it was not, nor ordered of God to be so. God had placed the promises in Isaac in a positive manner; and God puts Abraham to the test, to shew whether he had such entire confidence in Him, that he would give up all the promises as possessed (trusting that God would somehow and at all events accomplish them, and raise up Isaac again, for in him God had said that the promises of a seed should be accomplished), and obey God in an express command, let it cost him what it would. When this was proved, God suffered not the child to be touched.

What analogy has this with a practice of passing their children through the fire as agreeable to their self-made god -- an act done on their own part? There is no kind of similarity in the cases whatever. Would you say, that a man who hazarded his life to save his father (as the young Munro, who was bitten in two by a shark), was the same as justifying suicide, or pirates offering a man every voyage to a shark, to satisfy some supposed impure god of the sea, and gain men’s own ends? And mark how the express command of God (Abraham’s sole motive for doing it) is entirely left out here. In the other case it was the habitual violation of the tenderest and strongest moral obligation, to please a god who, if that habitually pleased him, was certainly a devil. Here it is a single case where the supreme and express claim of a God known as sovereign and sovereignly good by Abraham is not caviled with, however little he could account for such a command (*Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 6:128, 129).

Abraham told his young men that he and the lad would go yonder and *worship*. Service to the Lord is a good, and right, thing -- in its place, which is after worship -- but worship is first. Indeed, worship has a formative effect upon service. When service and/or preaching is put before worship, not only is the Father deprived of what He seeks, but service is correspondingly defective. The Son said:

But [the] hour is coming and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for also the Father seeks such as his worshipers. God [is] a spirit; and they that worship him must worship [him] in spirit and truth (John 4:23, 24).

J. N. Darby wrote:

WORSHIP always supposes the will broken.

In the preceding chapters we have seen Abraham in Egypt, and we have remarked, that so long as he was there he built no altar; but he came out of it, and then, having abandoned Egypt, he could build an altar to the Lord.

David sees the child sick who is dear to him; then he fasts and, prays, but he wrestles with God; his will was not submissive. When the child was dead, David changed his apparel, ate, drank, and could come to worship before the Lord, because the struggle that existed in his heart had ceased, and his will was broken.

Job, after those heavy afflictions, which are set before us in the first chapter, the loss of his substance and of his family, rends his mantle; it is true (Job 1:20); he did not sin in that, the Word tells us. His grief was lawful -- he was permitted to grieve for the loss of his children, but he arises and worships before God; he can worship Him, because his will is broken, and he can say: "Jehovah gave and Jehovah hath taken away; blessed be the name of Jehovah."

But in the chapter we have just read, We find something far above what we have in Job and David. They acquiesced in God's will, but their submission was passive; it required of them no act. Not so in Gen. 22. Not only must Abraham accept God's will, but, moreover, he must act against himself; he must, so to speak, sacrifice himself, for the sacrifice of his son was nothing short of that. God says to him, Offer up to me *thy* son, thine only son. The name of an individual contains in it for us all that concerns him and all our relations with him. "*Thy son*" -- this word kindled in Abraham the tenderest of feelings, and he had to sacrifice that son! Nay, more; this name recalled to him the promises of God, and it was in this son they were to be fulfilled, for God had positively told him, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called."

But he whose will is subjected to God, is satisfied of these two things. God will provide for it, and, I am with God. Every look to the flesh in the way of expectation, for the fulfilment of the promises, must be turned away, and God alone remain as the source of the life, the blessings, and the promise; as the One who never comes to the end His

resources, even in the very failure of all the means He Himself might have pointed out for the accomplishment of His promises . . . <sup>227</sup>

Not only did Abraham tell the young men that they would go and worship, but that he and the lad would come to them again (v. 5). So "they went both of them together" (v. 6). Is there no significance in that? Abraham had the fire and the knife -- judgment and death pointed to in this way. Isaac had the wood, even as our beloved Lord Jesus carried the cross.

Isaac was to be a burnt-offering. There is no sufficient evidence that before the law was given that there were sin-offerings. The burnt-offering was wholly for God, and spoke of the acceptance of the offerer by God's accepting the burnt-offering. In Lev. 1-5 it is the highest offering, that nearest to God, for the offerings are in the order of God coming out to man. In the gospels, each answering respectively to the offerings, it is man coming to God, thus in the inverse order. John's Gospel answers to the burnt-offering.<sup>228</sup> There we have so strongly brought before us the love of the Father for the only-begotten One, Who said, "the cup which the Father has given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11).

Isaac said:

Behold the fire and the wood (v. 7).

Yes, judgment was ready, and man deserves it as departed from God. The sinner's impending judgment is ready. But then the *question of questions* is raised by Isaac:

but where is the sheep for a burnt-offering? (v. 7).

Where is the sacrifice that will meet the claims of a thrice-holy God whose glory and nature is outraged by sin? And then there is the *answer of answers*:

My son, God will provide himself with the sheep for a burnt-offering (v. 8).

See John 1:29, 36, which appear in the gospel answering to the burnt-offering. Only God Himself can provide that which meets His glory and nature. Then, having expressed the great fact that God would provide, we once again read:

And they went both of them together (v. 8).

Oh, the preciousness of the type! The Father provided Himself with the sheep for the burnt-offering -- the One Who glorified the Father on this earth, and finished the work He was given to do (John 17:4). He gave Himself as the holocaust that rose up to God for God's glorification -- a sweet-smelling savor (Eph. 5:2). God was glorified even if no one was ever saved! Yes, the glory,

227. *Collected Writings*, 16:244.

228. The meal-offering, the perfection of Christ's person, runs through the four Gospels.

virtue, and value of Christ's Person as fully God and fully man, the God-man, imparted glory, virtue, and value<sup>229</sup> to the work on the cross; infinite in glory and value. God provided Himself with the sheep for a burnt-offering.

### *At the Place (Vv. 9, 10)*

Note here, that Isaac is not slain and laid on the altar, but laid on the altar to be slain -- in this, more exactly like Christ.<sup>230</sup>

Yes, the altar was reared and the beloved Isaac was bound. It was love that bound our Beloved to the altar, the Father's love and His. The first man nailed the second man to the cross. "Come down from the cross" on-lookers jeered. They thought the nails held Him there. Do you think our Lord Jesus fought them when they nailed Him to the cross?<sup>231</sup> Why, when those hammers described their arc in striking the nails, He was upholding the laws of centripetal and centrifugal action that control that very arc. Why, when they spit our Beloved in the face, He upheld that spit in its travel (see Col. 1:17). Very God and very man, He allowed the creature to unleash his hatred. The very holy One of Israel, who sitteth between the cherubim, come in holy manhood, was the very Lord of glory, the One they thus treated. Do you not think He laid down upon the cruel cross and let them nail Him to it?

All was voluntary. Indeed, it is important to insist upon it that He died as an act of His own will in obedience to the Father's will. No one took His life from Him (John 10:17, 18). Thus, we read:

When therefore Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished; and having bowed his head, he delivered up his spirit (John 19:30).

During the three hours of darkness His soul was made an offering for sin, imparting the value of His infinite Person to bearing it. When finished, He declared, with a loud voice (John 19:30), "finished," and bowed His head (it did not droop) and He delivered up His spirit. He did not bleed to death. We

229. In Lev. 16, in the holy of holies, we see the specially compounded fragrance rising up from the hot coals in the pan, coals taken from the altar of burnt-offering. The cloud of incense speaks of Christ's glory as the God-man given in death, rising up before the Shekinah and enveloping the Shekinah. As J. T. Armet wrote, righteousness can meet the claims of righteousness, but only a cloud can meet a cloud. The glory, virtue, and value of Christ's person came out, so to speak, from the hot coals of Calvary and rose up to meet the glory of Him the sitteth between the cherubim upon the mercy-seat. The blood was sprinkled before and on the mercy-seat, there where the cloud of the incense was. The precious blood of Christ has all the glory and value of His Person as its glory and value before the thrice holy God. This is the One that God provided, for He alone can provide what glorifies Him.

230. *Notes and Comments*, 1:86.

231. In the type we do not read of any resistance offered by Isaac (see Isa. 53:7).

read of no blood (careful here -- faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God) save that which came from the pierced side accompanied by the water. What came from the side of a dead Christ has the value of the accomplished sufferings in atonement, and the value of His death, as *its* value. There is water, signifying cleansing from the defilement of sin, for sin makes us dirty with spiritual defilement.<sup>232</sup> The blood expiates guilt, for sin means we are guilty before God, and fit for eternal judgment. The only blood of Christ spoken of in Scripture is the blood and water from the Lord's pierced side, and we do well to speak of no other blood than that of which God's word speaks.

Abraham's knife was raised up ready to strike, his obedience made fully evident, but he was stopped at the critical moment. The words in v. 12, "now I know that thou fearest God," do not denote divine ignorance, but rather that Abraham's faith was known by, and in, actual performance.

### *Isaac Received from the Dead in Figure (vv. 11-14)*

God spared not his own Son though Isaac was spared.

In Abraham we see in type (as every Christian knows) the Father offering up His Son, and now at this point we have the Son giving Himself. An obedient father had an obedient son; for, whatever others may think, I do not believe that the binding was to prevent resistance. To prevent involuntary struggling, it might have been and no doubt was, for that would naturally have occurred, when the knife was felt; but now Isaac was here an intelligent and willing victim. But every type is imperfect: for what created thing could set forth the excellency of the person or the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in perfectness? Hence the importance of our not interpreting Christ by the types, but the types by Christ, lest we should attach to Him the imperfections of the types. This has been done and teaching subversive of atonement and the personal glory of Christ has been based upon it, to the damage of many souls.<sup>233</sup> Isaac, beautiful a

232. If you tell your child not to tramp through the mud puddle and he does so, then two things are true of him. He has been made dirty by the mud, and he has been made guilty by disobedience. His filthiness and his disobedience must be dealt with. So the water and the blood from the side of the dead Christ respectively meets the defilement of sin and the guilt of sin.

233. This occurred about 35 years ago {i.e., 1848/1849}; but no time wears out, nor does true charity cover, the guilt of such a sin, nor indeed any, so long as it is unrepented of. Such charity is not charity at all, but cruelty to others, even to the individual himself, and it dishonors the Lord Jesus. "We may all alas! err; but he who knows the truth, and accepts what he knows degrades Christ, is deliberately preferring ease and companionship to Him, though he may dignify it with the name of love. Every effort to recover is right; but a step in acquiescence is a step in disloyalty to Him whom

(continued...)



type as he was in the scene before us, was imperfect in three momentous particulars at least.

1st. He did not know till the very last what was coming upon him. The Lord Jesus Christ did. “Lo I come to do thy will, O God . . . by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once” (Heb. 10:9). Oh what devotedness to His Father! what unspeakable love to us! It was more than a cruel and ignominious death that He suffered: -- He bore the judgment of God due to us.

2. A way of escape was found for Isaac. There was none for the Lord! “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matt. 26:39).

3. If Isaac had died, he would not have made atonement for one sin. There could have been no virtue in his death for he was only a man, and a sinner also. Cursed is the man that trusteth in man (Jer. 17:5); but of the Lord it is said (Psa. 2:12): Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him. He was God as well as man.

And now, my reader, does not such faith as we have been reviewing put as to shame? Well it may. Yet, if we have not the faith of Abraham or of David, we have the all-gracious all-faithful and Almighty God, the same yesterday and to-day and for ever. Let us look unto Jesus, the only perfect object and pattern of faith. Who could ever be tried as He was? Yet, when persecuted, crucified, and reviled, He patiently bore it all. Such contradiction of sinners He endured against Himself, i.e. to His own disadvantage and reproach. “If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross” (Matt. 27:40): so He was taunted, but He endured. Everlasting praise to His precious name.<sup>234</sup>

We must note that for Isaac a substitute was found, but none for Christ. A ram was caught by his horns in the thicket. The thicket is the result of sin. In Scripture, horns speak of power. While the sheep, or lamb, speaks of the passive side of the offering as enduring all, the ram, the male, shows us that there was also in Christ’s sacrifice what was energetic in devotion to the Father’s will. It was because of sin, and because of His power to come in as the substitute, that He came to be the great propitiation and the substitute. Concerning the believer, propitiation and substitution coalesce to form one

233. (...continued)  
none would dare to dishonor, if He had not come down in love.”

234. G. O., *The Bible Treasury*, 15:180.

great work made good to us by sovereign grace.

So Abraham offered up the ram instead of Isaac. He had said that “God will provide Himself with the sheep for a burnt-offering” (v. 8). God provided the male sheep and Abraham named that place (Moriah) Jehovah-jirah, meaning ‘Jehovah will provide.’ Verse 14 ends, “On the mount of Jehovah will be provided.” Yes, the display of every glory due God in heaven and in earth is provided based on the anti-type of the sacrifice on mount Moriah.

## The Promise Rests on Resurrection (vv. 15- 19)

Gen. 22 points to the fact that the promises will be made good through the resurrection of Christ. This is the reason that promise is reaffirmed consequent upon the offering of Isaac and receiving him, figuratively, in resurrection. It is the reason why the one, great Seed is spoken of in Gen. 22:18 -- Isaac pointed to Him who is the great heir of God.

## *The Many Seed (v. 17) and the One Seed (v. 18) of Abraham*

Gen. 22:17 refers to the many seed, the many progeny, of Abraham. This multiplied seed will be the head of the nations -- when, of course, all Israel is saved (Rom. 11:25-32). The gate, which speaks of the place of judgment, will be in Israel’s control.

In Gen. 22:18 we see the one seed, the great Seed of Abraham, Christ:

But to Abraham were the promises addressed, and to his seed: he does not say, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed; which is Christ (Gal. 3:16).

The Apostle here states that what we read in Gen. 22:18 refers to Christ -- not a mystical Christ (as in 1 Cor. 12:12), but Christ personally as man, yet of course God. There is an exactness observed in JND’s translation: “But to Abraham were the promises addressed, and to his seed.” This directs attention to Gen. 12:3: “and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed,” and Gen. 12:7, “Unto thy seed will I give this land,” repeated in Gen. 22:18 where Christ is in view; and said to Isaac (Gen. 26:4) and to Jacob (Gen. 28:14).

In Gen. 22 we have such a plain and beautiful type of the Father and the Son, pointing to the cross, and to the resurrection of Christ. It is in consequence of *this* obedience of Abraham that the one seed is brought forward as the instrument of blessing.

By faith Abraham, [when] tried, offered up Isaac, and he who had received to himself<sup>235</sup> the promises offered up his only begotten [son], as to whom it had been said,<sup>236</sup> In Isaac shall thy seed be called: counting that God [was] able to raise [him] from among [the] dead, whence also he received<sup>237</sup> him in a figure (Heb. 11:17-19).

As the risen One He blesses both Jew and Gentile. Presently, he forms Jew and Gentile, in Himself, into one new man (Eph. 2:15) in the formation of a heavenly people now. This occupies the interim between the termination of the Mosaic Covenant and the introduction of the New Covenant. In the millennium the distinction of Jew and Gentile will be maintained, but both will have a better place than in the OT, with Israel's portion being superior.

Note the important point that it is Christ in resurrection that will make good the Abrahamic Covenant -- thus there is no fulfilment in the OT.

\* \* \* \* \*

## ***Genesis 22:20-24***

Before turning to the subject of the Seed of Abraham, let us note a few typical things. We will not pursue the type of Isaac in any detail, nor anything of Jacob and Joseph. A few words on Sarah and Rebecca will suffice.

The words, "And it came to pass after these things," in Gen. 22:20, marks the beginning of the fourth section in Abraham's life. The chapter division (23) would have been better placed at Gen. 22:20. The four verses tell us that Abraham was apprised of births among his kindred, and Rebecca is noted among them. She was the one divinely appointed to be the wife of the heir of Abraham, after Isaac was figuratively slain and raised from the dead. This section, then, forms a preface to what follows. Sarah must pass out of the picture, and Rebecca, the wife of Isaac displace her.

## ***A Few Words on Sarah and Rebecca***

It is clear from Gal. 4:24 that Sarah represents the Abrahamic Covenant of promise in its character as of grace. While the Abrahamic Covenant was suspended when the Mosaic Covenant was put in effect, it was nonetheless in

God's ways concerning the birth of Christ, which was in keeping with the Abrahamic Covenant. Zacharias, though under the Mosaic Covenant, recognized this fact (Luke 1:71, 72), as did Mary (Luke 1:54, 55). The Apostle Paul confirmed this also when He wrote:

For I say that Jesus Christ became a minister of [the] circumcision for [the] truth of God, to confirm the promises of the fathers . . . (Rom. 15:8).

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235. {See footnote in JND translation.}

236. {Gen. 21:12}.

237. {See footnote in JND translation.}

## Chapter 18

### *The Abrahamic Covenant Does Not Unify Jews and Gentiles into One People of God*

Let us now look at the matter of the seed of Abraham. As an example of Covenantist reasoning on Scripture, we read statements such as this:

In brief, Romans 9 dispels the notion that physical lineage constitutes Israel as the people of God and clarifies the true nature of that people.<sup>238</sup>

Coupling this one-sided statement with the fact that God now blesses Gentiles and Jews leads Covenantists to say that Jews and Gentiles form one people of God. This is done by getting rid of the requirement of physical lineage from Abraham. Commenting on Gal. 3 through the lens of Covenantism, the same writer concludes:

These verses sanction the redemptive nature of the Abrahamic covenant. They confirm that covenant as the unifying factor between Jews and Gentiles and they substantiate the view that there is one people of God of all ages that share the covenants of Scripture which find their consummation in Christ.<sup>239</sup>

First, notice how the covenant substitutes for the true unifying factor regarding Jew and Gentile now: union is really by our being one in Christ as united to Him by the indwelling Spirit of God. The Spirit's coming at Pentecost effected this union with one another and with the glorified Head in Heaven (Acts 2:32, 33; I Cor. 12:13; etc.).

Secondly, the appeal to Rom. 9 is absurd on the face of it. We read:

. . . my brethren, my kinsmen according to flesh; who are Israelites; whose is the . . . covenants (Rom. 9:3, 4).

It was *after* the body of Christ was formed and the Jew and Gentile formed one body (Eph. 2), we are explicitly told by the Apostle this: the covenants belong to a Jewish physical lineage; namely, Paul's kinsmen according to flesh. The Covenantist spiritual alchemy cannot change Jewish physical lineage into something Gentile, spiritual or otherwise. However, this is not to say that Jewish physical lineage is the only requirement for Israel to realize the covenants that belong to Paul's kinsmen according to flesh. We have been over this ground previously. When the four gracious covenants of promise are realized by Israel, all Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:25-32; Isa. 60:21; etc.). They will be under the New Covenant (Heb. 8:8-13). They will be both the physical seed and the spiritual seed of Abraham, all of them true Jews (Rom. 2:28, 29), circumcised outwardly and inwardly, though not circumcised "in letter," which means according to the law as *under the Mosaic Covenant*. The law will be written in their

238. John P. David, "Who Are the Heirs of the Abrahamic Covenant?" *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 29:2, p. 159 (2005).

239. *Ibid.*, p. 161.

hearts under the unconditional New Covenant. As physical seed of Abraham they will be outwardly circumcised. As spiritual seed of Abraham they will be inwardly circumcised. Thus they will answer to the meaning of circumcision which Israel did not under the conditional Mosaic Covenant, under which Israel assayed to inherit on the basis of performance.

### *Christ in Resurrection Blesses Beyond Israel*

As risen from the dead, Christ has entered into a new place, or sphere, not limited to His relationship on earth as of Jewish descent. In the resurrection place, or sphere, law and circumcision in the flesh do not apply. Indeed, the Christian is circumcised in Christ (Col. 2:11) and is dead to the law (Rom. 7:4) as having died with Christ.

To Covenantists, the unacceptable meaning of the actual Christian position and distinctive blessing is this: these distinctive Christian blessings are apart from any connection with law and covenant. The truth is that Christ can, and does, act in blessing apart from law and/or covenant. The Christian is not under the law in any sense, nor is he under any covenant. J. N. Darby wrote:

It was confirmed<sup>240</sup> to the Seed, that is, to Christ; and that, as we shall see, by an obedience and in a way far beyond all legal obedience which might have fulfilled the duties incumbent on the first Adam, and been contained authoritatively as duties in the law. The promise was given to Abraham in chapter 12. It is confirmed to the seed in chapter 22, after Isaac had been offered up. Abraham was called to surrender all he loved, all the promises where God had deposited them; for in Isaac his seed was to be called; an entire surrender of self -- "thine only son, whom thou lovest" -- and of all even that God had given him, as founded on life in this world, in the seed he had received of God according to promise. He must reckon on God alone and resurrection, and give up all in life down here. And he does. Isaac is surrendered in devotedness to God, and God trusted for promise which must be in resurrection. This was all out of the very reach and nature of law. It was not the claims of obedience to legal righteousness in man, but absolute surrender of self and righteousness and all to God. All was offered up in sacrifice. Law obeyed is life accomplishing its duties. This was the surrender of self and promises and all to God -- the sacrifice of all to God. It was the well-known figure of Christ's offering up Himself (only in Him it was really accomplished) and rising from the dead. Then, not till then, the promise was confirmed to the seed. That is, the promise was confirmed to Christ on the ground of an obedience infinitely above all law, and as having passed through death (and law has power over a man only as long as he lives), and as risen from the dead, and to us in Him.<sup>241</sup>

240. To Christ, not "in Christ."

241. See also *Collected Writings*, 10:62, 63, 67, 151, 153; 12:278; 19:94; 22:369; 26:307; 27:3; 29:98; 31:334; 32:258; 34:14, 76; *Synopsis*, 1:25, 37; 4:266, 267; *Letters*, 2:173, 442.

The promises to Abraham and the Abrahamic covenant maintain the distinction between Israel and the nations. The mystery of Christ and the church was a secret in OT times (Rom. 16:25; 25; Col. 1:26; Eph. 3:5, 9). There could be no church, which is Christ's body, until the One to be the Head was in glory (Acts 2:32, 33; 1 Cor. 12:13). Accordingly, the mystery has been revealed subsequent to Christ's resurrection and exaltation in glory. In resurrection He *now* unites in Himself Jew and Gentile in one body (Eph. 2). That was not the order in the OT, nor will it be the order in the millennium when Israel realizes the promises and the covenants, etc. (Rom. 9:3-5; 11:25-32; 15:8; John 11:51, 52; Luke 1:67-79).

The fact is that the fulfilment of the promises to Abraham and the covenants of promise are incompatible with being part of the mystery of Christ and the church. These are distinct in character and find their realization in different epochs. The reconciling both Jew and Gentile in one body is not in the Abrahamic promises or covenant (nor in the prophets of Israel). Also, the promises and covenants contain matters which cannot be realized in the church, which is Christ's body. The effort to merge them must necessarily lower what is higher and distinctive in the church, lower down to a Judaistic and Christian mixture. Justice is not done to either the church's portion or the Jewish portion. Distinguish them properly as to character and epoch and God's glory in the Second Man will be more clearly seen, as well as our place "in Christ." One is earthly, the other heavenly, both of which will be under Christ's headship in the administration of the fulness of times (Eph. 1:10); i.e., in "the age to come" -- the millennium. God has one purpose: to glorify Himself in Christ, in the heavenly and earthly spheres, all united under one headship, in the administration of the fulness of times, i.e., the millennium (Eph. 1:10).

As another has written:

Thus, the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant depends on an event more significant, more meaningful, more powerful than the terms of that covenant itself – it depends on the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Persons interested in the Abrahamic covenant should study, not the science of covenants but, the cross of Christ.<sup>242</sup>

### *How Are Christians Seed of Abraham?*

. . . for ye are all one in Christ Jesus; but if ye [are] of Christ, then ye are Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise (Gal. 3:28, 29).

We Christians are Abraham's seed by being one with and in Christ Jesus, i.e., being one with the great Seed of Abraham. It is only during the present work of God in gathering a people for His name, out of the nations (Acts 15:14), that believers are one in Christ Jesus. Being in Christ Jesus is distinctive of the work God is doing *now*. Concerning the life imparted to the believer now, the Lord Jesus illustrated it this way:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it abides alone; but if it die, it bears much fruit (John 12:24).

He speaks of Himself as the grain of wheat, which, having died, comes forth as the risen stalk upon which there are grains. This text points to several facts:

1. There was no such connection with Him before He died and rose as there was after He died and rose: i.e., He abode alone. Thus, all OT saints, as well as the disciples before His death and resurrection, were not in the position indicated by the grains on the risen stalk.
2. The grains on the risen stalk indicate believers being one in life with Him. The life of the risen stalk is in the grains. Thus, the condition described by the words "it abides alone" is no longer true. Believers now, during God's present work, are one with Him as illustrated by John 12:24.
3. Without developing this subject here, let it be said that what is illustrated in John 12:24 is having *life in the Son*. That denotes the character of the life (a theme of the Apostle John). *Life in Christ* denotes the new place before God in which we have that life. (That new place, or position, "in Christ," is a theme in the Apostle Paul's writings.)

From this we may see that believers are one in Christ Jesus, He who is the great Seed of Abraham. It is thus that we also are seed of Abraham.

Our union with Christ is not "a faith-union." Union with Christ is by the indwelling of the Spirit, though that could not be where there is no faith. This is a spiritual matter, not a physical one. Christ is seed of Abraham when in life here on earth, but there was no oneness with Him (John 12:24); and He is Seed of Abraham also in resurrection. We are one with Him in His resurrection state. We are not physically circumcised, though we are spiritual seed of Abraham. We are circumcised in Christ's death (Col. 2:11). This is spiritual circumcision for the spiritual seed of Abraham that is one with Christ. Neither saved Jews or saved Gentiles in the millennium will be "in Christ," or one with Christ, or indwelt by the Spirit as the seal. This is distinctive of believers now.

242. Paragraph added by editor.

## How Are Christians Sons of Abraham?

(6) Even as Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. (7) Know then that they that are on the principle of faith, these are Abraham's sons; (8) and the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations on the principle of faith, announced beforehand the glad tidings to Abraham: In thee all the nations shall be blessed. (9) So that they who are on the principle of faith are blessed with believing Abraham (Gal. 3:6-9).

Gen. 15:6 is quoted in Gal. 3:6. Abraham's faith was reckoned as righteousness -- before he was circumcised, and long before the law came by Moses. Clearly, he was on the principle of faith before God (v. 7), not before God on the basis of circumcision or of law.

The Scripture foresees (v. 8), because Scripture presents the mind and

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243. The idea of a "faith-union" with Christ might lead to such an astonishing view as expressed by Daniel P. Fuller:

. . . Abraham himself is the "seed of Abraham" by virtue of union with Christ, even though the revelation he received told him nothing about Christ. We can say that Abel, Enoch, and Noah were likewise seed of Abraham, though Abraham was their seed in the sense of being their physical posterity (*The Unity of the Bible*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, p. 337 (1992)).

No one who understands that union with Christ is by the indwelling Holy Spirit, sent here at Pentecost for that function, could pen such notions. No union with Christ could be until He came, did the work on the cross, ascended into glory, and sent the Spirit (John 14, 16; Acts 1; Acts 2:32, 33; see 1 Cor. 12:13; 6:17). We are a distinctive heavenly people of God (1 Cor. 15:48) with a heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1). Israel is an earthly people, who will be a spiritual, earthly people in the millennium. But Covenantism says this:

If, however, we define "Israel" as true Israel or Old Testament believers . . . There is an organic, living relationship between Old Testament believers and New Testament believers. They are one body joined together under one head, the Lord Jesus Christ (Keith A. Matheson, *Dispensationalism Rightly Dividing the people of God?* Phillipsburg: P&R, p.39 (1995)).

The believers of all ages are one body (Eph. 4:4) . . . (Ibid., p. 26).

Our position is that the true or invisible Church is the whole body of the elect of all ages. The visible manifestation of this body in Old Testament times was the nation of Israel, and in New Testament times it is the Christian Church in all its various denominations and branches which truly look to Christ as Saviour. Old Testament Israel, as the congregation of God's people set aside from the Gentiles, was the forerunner of and developed into the Christian Church in which the earthly distinction between Jew and Gentile disappears never to be re-instituted (Lorraine Boettner, *The Millennium*, Philadelphia, Presbyterian and Reformed, p. 241, 1957).

Of course, this must necessarily include saints from Adam down to Abraham, and include such as Melchisedec also. You can see from this why Daniel P. Fuller had OT saints before Abraham as seed of Abraham, absurd as such statements are. OT saints were part of one body (?), though there was no Head, because Christ had not yet come. It must have been a headless body. Such is the power of spiritual alchemy.

purposes of God, and He foresees. Scripture's prescience is God's inscriptured prescience. The good news, the glad tidings, announced to Abraham was not what in the NT Paul calls "my gospel," but the fact that in Abraham "all the nations shall be blessed." This is accomplished through the great Seed of Abraham, Christ in resurrection. Christ's resurrection makes it possible for us to be one with Him (John 12:24) so that we can enjoy blessing in the special heavenly way with Him, *now*, while leaving an earthly order of blessing suitable to the saved Gentiles in the millennium, yet distinct in place from Israel when all are saved (Rom. 11:26).

Keep in mind the context of Gal. 3, which is Gentiles who are *now* blessed in Christ, not millennial Gentiles. Moreover, being in Christ involves many more blessings than this.

## Millennial Gentiles Not Seed of Abraham

These three points also show that Gentiles, as such, in the OT, could not be seed of Abraham. In the millennium there will be saved Gentiles who will not be seed of Abraham (Rev. 7: 13-17). The godly Jewish remnant in Daniel's 70th week, Israel, when all Israel are saved (Rom. 11:26), and the Gentiles who will be blessed in the millennial kingdom (Rev. 7:13-17) will not be "one in Christ Jesus." Those saints are not participants in the truth depicted by the grains upon the risen stalk (John 12:24). Their places before God are according to the earthly arrangements of God, not according to the heavenly place we have now as "in Christ." Being in Christ Jesus is a distinctive, present position of believers. The Jews of the godly remnant during Daniel's 70th week, however, will be the seed of Abraham because of being of the physical line of Abraham by birth, but they also will be born again, though not standing in known acceptance before God. But then, with all the ungodly purged out, the nation of Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:26) and under the New Covenant. Then they will all be the spiritual seed as well as the physical seed of Abraham, but still they will not be in Christ, one with Christ. The blessed millennial Gentiles will not be seed of Abraham because they will neither be in Christ Jesus, nor of the physical line from Abraham.

So, we Christians are Abraham's seed but not by physical descent. We are a spiritual seed, but of a *heavenly order*. Of course, saved Israel in the millennium will be spiritual too, of an *earthly order*; but they are physical seed also, and to them, as being Paul's kinsmen according to flesh, belong the seven things stated in Rom. 9:4, 5. Lumping everything spiritual together is not the way of apprehending the truth. We must distinguish the things that differ as

well as recognize what is common.<sup>244</sup>

Gentile saints in the millennium will not be “in Christ,” but they will be blessed in accordance with the promise to Abraham in Gen. 12:3 b:

and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed,

confirmed in the great Seed of Abraham, Christ, in Gen. 22:18:

and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves . . .

These distinctions regarding the seed of Abraham are graphically illustrated in the following chart.

### *We Christians, the Seed of Abraham, Are Not Thereby Made Jews*

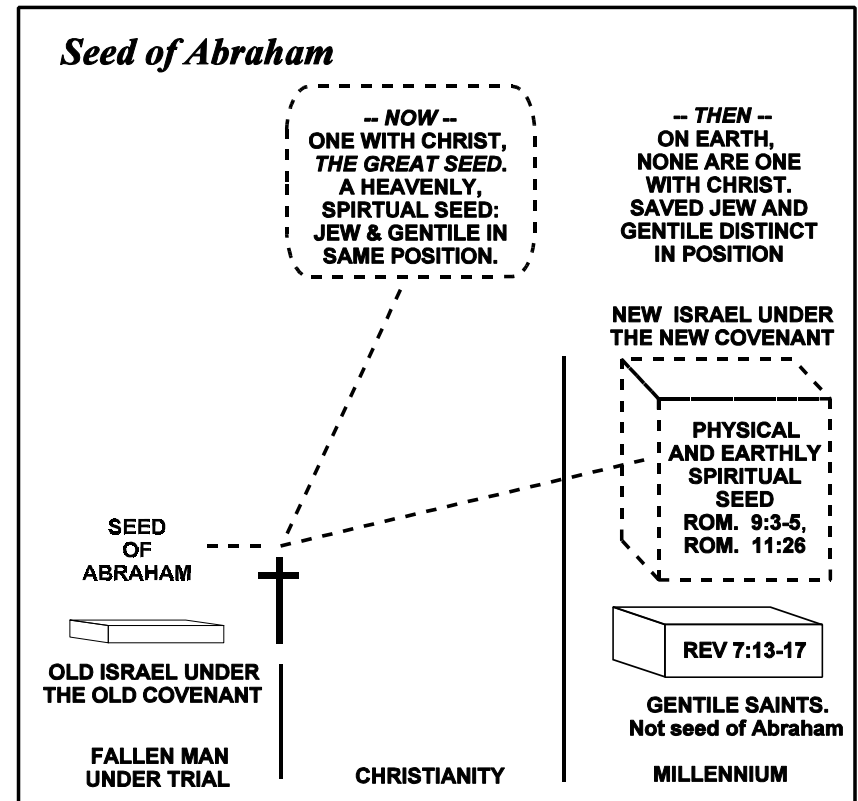
It is impossible for a Gentile to become a Jew, or a spiritual Jew, by being “in Christ”:

There is no Jew nor Greek; there is no bondman nor freeman; there is no male of female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus: but if ye are of Christ, then are ye Abraham’s seed, heirs according to promise (Gal. 3:28,29).

Not only does the Gentile not become a Jew “in Christ,” but the Jew, as “in Christ” is no longer a Jew! Those in this position (i.e., “in Christ”) are Abraham’s seed.

Note that our designation as “seed of Abraham” is not a statement of church position. While those who are “in Christ” are members of Christ’s body, they are *besides that*, seed of Abraham. Being “seed of Abraham” does not express the unity of one body in Christ, formed by the Spirit at Pentecost.

It is well to keep in mind that all that is essential to ourselves as members of Christ’s body does not come from, or through, Israel.<sup>245</sup> So we see those who are seed of Abraham in the body, but it is not by being seed of Abraham that they are in the body of Christ.



### *Heirs According to Promise*

The proper translation of Gal. 3:16 is:

244. Some things common are that all are born again and are saints. But that is not what constitutes the church, though, without that, of course, a person could not be of the church which is Christ’s body. It is a mistake to think that there is only one order, or character, of blessing for all saints; or, that all saints form one church from Adam on.

245. *Letters of J. N. Darby*, 3:240-242; *Collected Writings*, 26:307.

But to Abraham were the promises addressed, and to His seed: he does not say, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed; which is Christ {J. N. Darby translation}.

That does not mean the same as “to Abraham and his seed.” Such words do not allow for the distinction of the promise addressed to the Seed, Christ (Gen.22:18).<sup>246</sup> Certainly the temporal blessings were made to Abraham and his seed, but what we have in Gal. 3:16 is the promise to the great Seed of Abraham, and that *left room* for us as being one with the Seed without in the slightest hinting of such a thing as being one with the Seed. But there is not promise addressed to Gentiles.

We Christians are “*heirs* according to promise” because we are one with Him who is the great Heir. The Gentile saints in the millennium, not being one with the great Heir, will not be “*heirs* according to promise,” though blessed in their place consonant with to the promise in Gen. 12:13b and 22:18.

There is more to the statement, concerning our being “*heirs* according to promise,” than something related to Abraham: see Eph. 3:6, 11; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus

1:2. These are promises before the foundation of the world while the Abrahamic promises are since the foundation of the world. This distinction found in Scripture does not affect the certainty of the respective promises, of course, for they all involve the integrity of God; but the distinction between the heavenly and the earthly is maintained in accordance with God’s great purpose to glorify Himself in Christ, in the heavenly and in the earthly sphere. The heavenly promises were hidden things until revealed in the NT and have Christians in view.

Moreover, we read:

For whatever promises of God [there are], in him is the yea, and in him is the amen, for glory to God by us (2 Cor. 1:20).

How precious to our hearts is the affirmation of the certainty of the promises being made good in Him who is the yea and the amen. “*Whatever* promises of God” includes *all* the promises of God, whether for the heavenly or the earthly sphere. And so united to Christ are we believers that the God of all grace couples us with His beloved Son, as the Spirit states: “for glory to God by us.” In the next verse we read:

Now he that establishes us with you in Christ . . .

Thus the believer is firmly attached to Him in whom whatever promises of God there are, He is the yea and the amen. We are heirs of God and joint-heirs

with Christ (Rom. 8:17). We share with Him, and glorify God in this. God is pleased to be glorified in those who have not a thing but that with which He has conferred upon them, and He is glorified by us. Indeed, we are His workmanship (Eph. 2:10) and “when the Christ is manifested who [is] our life, then shall *ye* also be manifested with him in glory” (Col. 3:4). Such is the pleasure of God.

This is the distinctive place of the church, which is His body, which is His bride, the wife of the Lamb. The church is not the aggregate of all from Adam on, or all from Abraham on, to the end of time, but that specially formed company begun by the mighty baptism in the power of one Spirit into one body (1 Cor. 12:13; Acts 2) uniting to the resurrected and glorified Head in heaven (Acts 2: 32, 33). There was no body of Christ before, which would be a headless monstrosity. There were no grains upon the risen stalk forming one plant with Him, the life of the risen stalk flowing in the grains (John 12:24).<sup>247</sup>

### *What Happened in the Ways of God to Bring This to Pass?*

The promise has its character as a promise from God: unconditional, certain, and to be implemented in connection with the unfolding of the ways of God with man. In connection with the unfolding of His ways with the first, fallen man, God brought the first man (in the persons of Israel) under the trial of the law, under a conditional covenant, in order to manifest the first man’s totally lost condition and that the first man has forfeited any claim to the promises. This trial which came in much later after the promises (Gal. 3:17-20) could not disannul the promises of God to Abraham. The unconditional promises cannot be annulled by conditional promises. The first man’s fallen and irremediable condition was constantly displayed under that trial of the Mosaic Covenant, manifested itself in the rejection of the Christ and in the rejection of the revelation of the Father in the Son (John 15:23, 24). The first man killed the Second Man. Let that truth get into our hearts via our conscience. Thus, the first man was proved irremediably, totally lost. This closed the history of God’s trial of the first man; the world stands judged (John 13:31, 32), and the whole world lies in the wicked one (1 John 5:19). The rejected Second Man entered His place in resurrection and now we have the history of the Second Man. This is the difference between the OT and the NT; the difference between the responsible man and the Man of Purpose. Thus, we

246. In Gen. 12:3 there is no mention of seed, but that was addressed to Abraham only -- and Gen. 12:3b was confirmed *to* (not “in”) his seed, Christ, in Gen. 22:18. Every Scripture is perfect in its place.

247. This is the life John calls abundant life, or life in abundance. It is the character of life and does not refer to an active life of service, etc. A believer confined to bed by arthritis has this life in abundance. I suspect you will not find the truth about abundant life in Abundant life churches and centers.

now have revealed the ways of God with respect to His purpose to glorify Himself in Christ in the two spheres, the heavenly and the earthly. Those “in Christ” are connected with Him in the heavenly sphere. When *that* work of God is completed, then He will begin with the earthly sphere and through the resurrected and glorified Second Man make good the earthly promises and the four gracious covenants (to Abraham, Phinehas, David, and the New Covenant).

\* \* \* \* \*

Thus are the distinctive prerogatives of the ethnic seed of Abraham preserved, for God is obliged by His own righteousness to implement them in due time.

### *What about Abraham Being the Father of Us All?*

J. N. Darby wrote:

But there was yet another proof that righteousness does not come from works of the law; namely, the example of Abraham, who had the promises before the law was given or promulgated. The apostle makes use of this part of Israel's history and privileges in order to establish his main principle. “What shall we then say of Abraham?” he asks. “For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” Thus the principle of justification by faith is fully established in the example of Abraham. It is not of works; were it so, then the reward would have to be regarded, not as of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but *believeth* on Him that justifies the ungodly, faith is reckoned for righteousness. And it was with David as with Abraham. (The apostle adduces the example of these two men, because they form the chief sources of Israel's blessing.) David also describes the blessedness of the man whom God justifies without works, saying, “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord doth not impute sin.” Acceptance in Christ goes farther, it is true; but here, with regard to man's responsibility, we have the truth expressed, that for those who believe in Christ all is accomplished. Sin is not imputed to them at all; they are free from all guilt; there is no more any charge against them for ever. Of our position in Christ the apostle speaks later on. To be accepted in a new position in Christ, according to the value and acceptance of *Christ* before God, goes farther than justification. But this justification is perfect for us as responsible men.

But now arises the question, Is this blessing only for Israel? The example of Abraham decides this also. Faith was reckoned to him for righteousness. But when? Was it when he was in circumcision or when still in uncircumcision? In uncircumcision. We see, then, in this old

decisive example of Abraham that, according to the will and declaration of God, the faith of an uncircumcised man is reckoned to him for righteousness. Circumcision was given afterwards to Abraham as seal of the righteousness of faith which he had being uncircumcised, that he might be the father of *all* them that believe, as well of the uncircumcised (that after his example righteousness might be imputed to them also) as of the circumcised, so that he is the father of a *true* circumcision, not only of those who are of the circumcision, but also of all believers, who, in separation to God, walk in the footsteps of Abraham's faith which he had in uncircumcision.

Moreover, the promise that Abraham should be the heir of the world was not given through the *law* either to him or his seed, but through the righteousness of *faith*; for the law came much later. Thus the whole history of Israel proves that it is not through the law that one participates in blessing, but through faith. For if they which are of the law, as such, are heirs, then the promise is annulled, and by faith which Abraham received it is in vain and without result. More than this, the law worketh wrath; for where no law is, there is no transgression; sin indeed exists, but one cannot *transgress* what is not commanded or forbidden. But the apostle further develops from the Scriptures this fundamental principle of the blessing of believers from the Gentiles. He says, “Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end promise might be sure to all the seed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of *us all*” (believers of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews), “before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were” (v. 16, 17). These words contain a new truth. They point to the power of resurrection, to power of giving life where all lies in death, to creative power. This power admitted the Gentiles also. Abraham counted upon it when his body was in a manner already dead, Sarah's womb likewise. All depends for faith upon activity of this power which brings about what God wills. It is not only that there is presented a mercy-seat for all those who draw nigh through faith in the blood of Christ to the place where God meets with the sinner, but there is a power which there, where there was nothing, creates children for itself of dead souls. Still there is a difference between Abraham's faith and ours. He believed, and rightly so, that God *could* raise the dead; we believe that God *has done it*. And this is a very important difference. Abraham was right believing God's own word; we have the same faith, it is founded upon a *finished* work, and there the soul finds rest. Christ is risen. He, who was once offered for our offences, has been raised again that we may believe and be justified. <sup>248</sup>



## *How Does the Law of Moses Relate to These Things?*

Because it is of great importance to see that we are blessed in accordance with promise, and not by law in any way -- we being seed of Abraham by being one with, and in, Christ, the great Seed of Abraham, raised from among the dead -- an extract from J. N. Darby follows.

\* \* \* \* \*

Blessing characterized his {Abraham's} calling. He is blessed and a blessing. Blessing is measured out by dispositions towards him. And he is the one source of blessing to all the families of the earth. This is a very remarkable position and a most blessed, and, in its character, a divine one, which we shall do well to consider as regards ourselves. I will suggest a word or two in a moment. But, remark here how divine a one it is in its nature. God is blessedness in Himself. It characterizes Him. He is the source of it to all who have any. This was, derivatively, just Abraham's place. He was made blessed, in this sense had blessedness on the earth, distinctively and especially so; he was the source of it to all the families of the earth. If there was a curse, it was only for enmity to this. This is a most precious, and in character divine, place for a creature; a creature blessed no doubt, and quickened of God; but thence only the more precious because the more real.

Thus the place of blessing is definitively settled as of pure grace without law -- grace abounding over the whole sinful condition of man, and flowing from and measured by the self-originated fulness of divine love, of which it was the display and revelation. This is what characterized it in Abraham -- grace putting man in a divine place of blessing.

But this comes more distinctly and blessedly out when we proceed to consider the way in which it was accomplished.

It was confirmed<sup>249</sup> to the Seed, that is, to Christ; and that, as we shall see, by an obedience and in a way far beyond all legal obedience which might have fulfilled the duties incumbent on the first Adam, and been contained authoritatively as duties in the law. The promise was given to Abraham in Gen. 12. It is confirmed to the seed in Gen. 22, after Isaac had been offered up. Abraham was called to surrender all he loved, all the promises where God had deposited them; for in Isaac his seed was to be called; an entire surrender of self -- "thine only son, whom thou lovest" -- and of all even that God had given him, as founded on life in this world, in the seed he had received of God

according to promise. He must reckon on God alone and resurrection, and give up all in life down here. And he does. Isaac is surrendered in devotedness to God, and God trusted for promise which must be in resurrection. This was all out of the very reach and nature of law. It was not the claims of obedience to legal righteousness in man, but absolute surrender of self and righteousness and all to God. All was offered up in sacrifice. Law obeyed is life accomplishing its duties. This was the surrender of self and promises and all to God -- the sacrifice of all to God. It was the well-known figure of Christ's offering up Himself (only in Him it was really accomplished) and rising from the dead. Then, not till then, the promise was confirmed to the seed. That is, the promise was confirmed to Christ on the ground of an obedience infinitely above all law, and as having passed through death (and law has power over a man only as long as he lives), and as risen from the dead, and to us in Him.

In the meanwhile (but 430 years after the promise {Gal. 3:17}, as we have seen, and hence leaving it in full vigor) the law came in, and required human obedience to the exact rule of righteousness: in a word, it declared (under pain of God's curse for failure) all that man ought, as such, to be and to do. It came in by the bye to bring out transgression, it made sin exceeding sinful, and, from the inability of man to establish righteousness for himself before God, it brought him under the curse. The authority of this righteous claim could not be disregarded, and Christ bore its curse; that, while maintaining its authority, the curse brought by it might be removed. His death, which met and satisfied its curse, took from under it all that are in Him. For they died with Him in that in which they were held, and rose in the liberty in the which He had made them free, the law having no further claim or dominion over them as risen which it held as long as they lived. But they had died and were now risen, to bring forth fruit to God, in connection with their new husband, Christ risen from the dead. Hence too sin had not dominion over them, because they were not under law but under grace.

Thus man's righteousness, which, if there had been any, would have been under law, was out of the question. The curse had been the fruit of the trial. The Scripture had concluded all under sin.

But the obedience of Christ, spotless and blameless under law as He had been, went infinitely farther than law, and indeed was on another principle. It was the voluntary surrender of self and life to glorify God. That self and life, which law would direct, and the love of which became the measure of love to others, was wholly given up. The curse and wrath due under law and to sin were undergone. "Therefore," could Christ say, "doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again" {John 10:17}. Of this the law knew nothing. It was absolute obedience in the total surrender and devotedness of self to God's glory and purposes and our salvation. And God was glorified in Him: God was, and hence God has glorified Him in Himself.

249. To Christ, not "in Christ."

And man is entered into the glory which the Son had with the Father before the world was {John 17:5}, and is entered righteously. God has displayed His righteousness in setting Christ, the man who had glorified Him, at His right hand. Thus divine righteousness is established in giving Christ the glory which He deserved through His work for us. But then we must be in this place of glory, for it was for us He did it, and He must see of the travail of His soul in bringing into His own glory those whom His Father had given Him. We wait therefore for the hope of righteousness by faith, the hope that belongs to righteousness; and what that is we see in the glory into which Christ has entered, where the righteousness of God has placed Him as man.

Thus grace could reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. It was a glorifying God in the giving up Himself, and that to death, and the curse, and wrath, through the Eternal Spirit offering Himself up without spot to God, and God in righteousness setting Him in glory at His right hand. Thus man took this place in righteousness, according to the purpose of God, we being made sharers therein by grace; and now, having seen the full result in glory founded on righteousness through Christ, let us see what the blessing is.

It is the fruit of God's promise to Christ, the Seed. Whatever God's heart could do to shew His love, and that, His love to Christ, and according to the claim Christ had on it, that is the blessing. God, in whom is blessedness, was showing how He could bless, as in Eph. 2, that in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. Christ was the One to be blessed. He was the Seed to whom the promise was made. He was the One who -- sin being come in -- had established God's glory in love, majesty, righteousness, truth, inevitable judgment, salvation, as no innocence could have given occasion to; yet at His own cost. Hence man is in glory. The blessing is the Father's love to Christ, and the glory in which He is, in virtue of that and of having glorified His Father. Such is the place into which we are brought by faith. He in Himself, in Person, the only-begotten, is the Firstborn -- as re-entered into glory -- of many brethren. He brings many sons to glory.

This blessedness we have in the present sense of divine love; the love of God shed abroad in our hearts; God dwelling in us and we in Him; the consciousness, through the Holy Ghost, that we are in Christ and Christ in us; in the consciousness that we are sons, through the Spirit of His Son sent forth into our hearts, crying, Abba Father; the looking for glory, to be like Him and with Him; the consciousness of the Father's love resting on us as on Jesus. More than the promise of the Father to Christ, showing His love to the Son, and having our place in Him before the Father and enjoying His own love, we cannot think of. God has made Christ as Man, and us in Christ, the pattern of what His blessing in love is. As it was said of Joseph, "In thee shall Israel

bless, God make thee like Ephraim and Manasseh."

And this fulness of love constituting our blessedness flows forth in love in the expression of it to brethren; and to sinners it flows out. "Thou shalt be a blessing; and in thee shall men be blessed."

How brightly does the consciousness of this shine in Paul! "Would to God that not only thou, but all who hear me this day" (there was overflowing uncalculating love) "were" -- what? -- "not only almost but altogether such as I am, save these bonds." There was the consciousness of such blessedness that the best thing divine love could wish was that they might be as he was. Oh what true consciousness of blessedness, what genuine love! Oh, how different in spirit, temper, tone, foundation in righteousness, divine outflowings of grace, the love of God satisfying itself in good, from "Do this and live," were it even done!

There is righteousness, but not man's, under the law, whoever has accomplished it, but God's in setting Christ at His right hand in glory, who had given up Himself and all promised, as come in the flesh, for God the Father's glory, according to the everlasting purpose of blessing and displaying Himself in blessing; of which Christ, the promised Seed, first of all was the object; then, if we are Christ's, we also are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise. And how the divine Person of Christ comes out to view in this! For God, in a certain sense, was debtor to Him for the maintenance of His glory-yea, for the only full bringing it out in redemption. So that, as we have seen, He righteously enters into it as man. But to whom can God be debtor in any sense? Who can make a "therefore" for God to act upon or love? But Christ in the divine counsels has.

I conclude, then, that life, righteousness, and the inheritance do not come under law, nor by the law: I cannot have righteousness by it, nor be under it at all, if I have it by Christ according to promise. Nor have I righteousness by any one's fulfilling it for me, for then it would be under and by the law; but if righteousness come by the law, then CHRIST IS DEAD IN VAIN. <sup>250</sup>

### *The City for Which Abraham Waited*

. . . for he waited for the city which has foundations, of which God is [the] artificer and constructor (Heb. 11:10).

. . . but ye have come to mount Zion; and to [the] city of [the] living God, heavenly Jerusalem; and to myriads of angels. The universal gathering; and to [the] assembly of the firstborn [who are] registered in heaven; and

to God, judge of all; and to the spirits of just [men] made perfect; and to Jesus, mediator of a new covenant; and to [the] blood of sprinkling, speaking better than Abel (Heb. 12:22-24).

For Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which [is] now, for she is in bondage with her children; but the Jerusalem above is free, which is our mother (Gal. 4:25, 26).

These Scriptures do not refer to “the holy city, Jerusalem,” which is not a literal city, but rather is “the bride, the Lamb’s wife” (Rev. 21:9, 10), seen in millennial display, and “the holy city, new Jerusalem” in Rev. 21:2, in the eternal state, for the church is eternally distinct (Eph. 3:21).

These three Scriptures speak of the city for which Abraham waited. It also is not a literal city. The city he waited for is “the Jerusalem above,” also called the “heavenly Jerusalem,” distinguished from the “assembly of the firstborn,” i.e., the church. The subject is treated in *Elements of Dispensational Truth*,<sup>251</sup> vol. 1, chapter 6, “Zion and the Jerusalems,” from which the following brief extract is taken:

The city, then, in Hebrews signifies the place of permanency and fellowship above, with the living God. All brought there are brought there by sovereign grace. It is the dwelling place of all the redeemed of all ages resulting from sovereign grace which is seated there; though in addition to that, the church has also a special place.

The Jerusalem above, the heavenly Jerusalem, is the seat of grace, the sphere and scene of the fruits of grace, the company of the redeemed in heaven in the presence of the living God, followed and worshiped here below in transient life, but then enjoyed, and adored in permanent dwelling with Himself. It is a city prepared for faith.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had the promised land in title, not in actual possession. Nor were the nations spiritually blessed through them at that time. In Heb. 11:13 we are told:

All these died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off and embraced [them] . . .

The promises not realized by them were nonetheless “embraced,”<sup>251</sup> though they knew that they were afar off. Concerning Abram, J. N. Darby remarked:

. . . he went forth to go into the land of Canaan and came there, while God did not give him so much as to set his foot on {in possession}. And

251. In the face of the Scripture statement that the patriarchs embraced the promises, (“promises” includes the land promise), Phillip Mauro, an amillennialist, attempted to alchemize the promises:

. . . the nature of the promises was such as to turn their thoughts *entirely away from the earth*, and to raise in their hearts the expectation of a country “better” than the very best of earth (showing that the promises themselves were *spiritual and heavenly in character*) (*The Hope of Israel* . . . , p. 35).

The fact is that the promises were spiritual and earthly in character, for the land promise is earthly.

so it was he had to look for something else: not that he ever gave up the land.

The city for which Abram looked stood very much as the glory in Peter practically {2 Pet. 1:3}, but his calling was to the land.<sup>252</sup>

Concerning Abraham, he knew that there would be One who would make good the promises:

Your father Abraham exulted in that he should see my day, and he saw and rejoiced (John 8:56).

The day of Christ is spoken of in Phil. 1:6, 10; 2:16; 1 Cor. 1:8; 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:14). The day of Christ is the heavenly side of the millennial epoch, while “the day of the Lord” is the earthly, judgmental side. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob shall have their proper portion in Christ’s day, with Christ.

The patriarchs knew the day was far off. Meanwhile they were in the land, and confessed that they were strangers and sojourners on the earth (Heb. 11:13).

In view of that confession, then, their minds were turned to a heavenly country:

For they who say such things shew clearly that they seek [their] country (Heb. 11:14).

They had opportunity to return to the country of their origin,

. . . but now they seek a better, that is, a heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God; for he has prepared for them a city (Heb. 11:16).

Since the promises were not to be realized in their lifetimes, they could have had a country by returning to their country of origin, but they rather sought a heavenly country.

252. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 19:93.

## Chapter 19

### *Amillennialist Effort to Make the Abrahamic Covenant Conditional: The Reformed Approach to the Old Testament*

In *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 1, we reviewed O. T. Allis' treatment of the book of Acts in his *Prophecy and the Church*, which he thought settled matters in favor of Amillennialism. Here we will review his alleged proofs that the Abrahamic Covenant is conditional.

He truly said:

The Old Testament prophecies if literally interpreted cannot be regarded as having been fulfilled or as being capable of fulfillment in this present age.<sup>253</sup>

How else was a Jewish hearer supposed to understand the prophecies? He had not the slightest basis to think the prophecies meant what Covenant Theology's spiritual alchemization says they mean. Let me once again remind the reader of Vern S. Poythress' remark regarding Ezek. 44-46:

Was the Old Testament hearer obliged to say that the passage must be interpreted in the most obvious way?<sup>254</sup>

What basis did the OT hearer have to understand it other than the most obvious way (i.e., literally), but rather by his Covenantist way? And what is his way of understanding? Willem Van Gemeren tells us that Covenantists approach the prophets of Israel from the standpoint of the unity of the Covenant of Grace. He wrote:

The Reformed exegete approaches the prophets from the perspective of the unity of the covenant.<sup>255</sup>

First, "The Reformed exegete" *imposes* "the unity of the covenant" upon the text, leading to eisegesis instead of exegesis. Secondly, the Covenant of Grace does not exist in Scripture. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). Christian faith knows nothing of the mythical Covenant of Grace. Yet, before this immense, imaginary, theological construct the OT prophets of Israel's future must give way from being understood "in the most obvious way,"<sup>256</sup> the only way the hearers could have understood those prophecies.

253. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 238.

254. *Understanding Dispensationalists*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, p. 105, 1987.

255. "Israel as the Hermeneutical Crux in the Interpretation of Prophecy (II)," *Westminster Theological Journal*, 46: 269 (1984).

256. In literal interpretation, allowance is made for symbolical and figurative language.

And thus not only must the prophecies of the prophets of Israel be perverted from being "interpreted in the most obvious way," the obviously unconditional Abrahamic Covenant and promises must be made to be conditional -- even as the conditional works-covenant, the Mosaic Covenant, is conditional. But since there are no conditions stated regarding the Abrahamic Covenant, the way it is made conditional is that the Abrahamic Covenant presupposes obedience, and that is a condition of fulfillment.

### *O. T. Allis' Six Points to Prove the Abrahamic Covenant Conditional*

#### The First Point

In this he shows that "a condition may be involved in a command or promise without its being specifically stated." "*May be*"; even if that be so, it does not logically follow that every promise of God *must be* conditional; or that therefore the gracious covenants for Israel *must be* conditional.

#### The Second Point

O. T. Allis correctly stated:

It is true that in the express terms of the covenant with Abraham, obedience is not stated as a condition.<sup>257</sup>

Of course that is the fact; and it stands in marked contrast with all the stated conditions of the conditional Mosaic Covenant. Does that difference have significance? No, not for him.

It is interesting that our Reformed brethren, who speak much about God's sovereignty in "the five points of Calvinism,"<sup>258</sup> are against God's sovereignty making good the realization of the unconditional covenants for Israel. So, these Covenantist Calvinists put us into the position of asserting the sovereignty of God against their Arminian-sounding arguments regarding the Abrahamic Covenant.

O. T. Allis continued:

But that obedience was presupposed is clearly indicated by two facts. The one is that obedience is the precondition of blessing under all circumstances . . . The second fact is that in the case of Abraham the duty of obedience is particularly stressed. In Gen. 18: 17f. it is plainly stated that, through His choice of Abraham, God proposed to bring into being, by pious nurture, a righteous seed which would "keep the way of the LORD," in order that as

257. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 33.

258. This is considered in my, *The Sovereignty of God in the Salvation of Lost Men*, available from the publisher.

a result and reward of such obedience “the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.” The supreme test of Abraham’s faith was when he was commanded to offer up Isaac; and after he had stood the test successfully, the covenant promise was renewed to him in fuller and more emphatic terms, closing with the words, “because thou hast obeyed my voice” (22:18). When the covenant was renewed to Isaac, it concluded with what we may call the Old Testament obituary of Abraham, “because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws” (26:5). It was because of the obedience of Abraham that the promise was repeated to his son, who had himself learned on mount Moriah the extent of the obedience required of his father.<sup>259</sup>

**First of all**, as a Calvinist, he believes in God’s unconditional election. That means there is no condition regarding man that conditioned God’s election. This is true. Note that God’s election of the Christian believer involved promise:

. . . in hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the ages of time (Titus 1:2).

. . . according to promise of life, the [life] which [is] in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 1:2).

. . . that [they who are of] the nations should be joint heirs, and a joint body, and joint partakers of [his] promise in Christ Jesus by the glad tidings (Eph. 3:6).

Here was God’s promise that was unconditional. Therefore a promise of God can be unconditional. There is no reason for rejecting the unconditionality of the Abrahamic Covenant except the exigencies of a mythical Covenant of Grace imposed upon Scripture.

In Heb. 9:15 we read:

. . . the called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

And in Rom. 9:28:

. . . to those who are called according to purpose.

The called,<sup>260</sup> i.e., the elect, receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. On what basis do Christians receive their portion?

As his divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that has called us by glory and virtue, through which he has given to us the greatest and precious promises, that through these ye may become partakers of [the] divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (2 Pet. 2:3, 4).

**Secondly**, it is interesting that he refers to various things occurring *after* Gen. 15

in order to conditionalize the covenant of Gen. 15.<sup>261</sup> Those things do not condition what previously transpired in Gen. 15 (or in Gen. 12:1-3, and 7) making that conditional.

Besides that, some years after Gen. 15, God unconditionally told Abraham:

Sarah thy wife shall indeed bear thee a son; and thou shalt call his name Isaac; and I will establish my covenant with him, for an everlasting covenant for his seed after him (Gen. 17:19).

The thesis is that Abraham was in the covenant because of his obedience. Concerning Isaac’s being in the covenant, if you say that God had it in view that He was going to work through Isaac’s obedience, you are, in effect, stating that obedience<sup>262</sup> is an *instrumentality* (not the cause) through which God works -- so you have not proven that obedience was the *condition* of what God promised in Gen. 17:19 concerning one not yet born being in the covenant. In this Scripture we have an example of God’s sovereign choice being the basis for inclusion in the covenant, not Isaac’s obedience.

Let it be emphasized that the obedience of Isaac was not a condition of the promise made regarding him before he was born. Isaac was blessed because God

261. Later in his book he says that God’s blessing is “definitely connected with the command, Get thee out of thy land” (Gen. 12:1) “and with the fulfilment of the command” (Gen. 12:4), showing that the covenant is conditioned on Abraham’s obedience (*Prophecy and the Church*, p. 56).

It has not yet been found that Gen. 12:1 says, “*If* thou goest . . . *then* I will . . .” Moreover, in Gen. 15:7 Jehovah said to Abraham:

I am Jehovah who brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to possess it.

Josh. 24:3 says:

And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the river, and led him throughout the land of Caanan, and multiplied his seed and gave him Isaac.

Heb. 11:8 says,

By faith Abraham, being called, obeyed to go out into the place which he was to receive for an inheritance, and went out, not knowing where he was going.

Faith is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8) and faith obeys:

. . . for it is God who works in you both the willing and the working according to [his] good pleasure (Phil. 2:13).

God works through the faith which He has implanted. The obedience of faith has its source in the faith which God sovereignly implanted; and that obedience partakes of the character and source of that faith. It is God’s gracious working. Give God the glory! So what is the problem with Covenantists? Willem Van Gemeren told us:

The Reformed exegete approaches the prophets from the perspective of the unity of the covenant (“Israel as the Hermeneutical Crux in the Interpretation of Prophecy (II),” *Westminster Theological Journal*, 46:269 (1984).

Covenantists *impose* this mythical covenant of grace upon all of Scripture.

262. See J. N. Darby’s paper, “Obedience the Saints Liberty,” *Collected Writings* 28:103.

259. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 33.

260. There is in Scripture a call of invitation (which man refuses, Luke 14:17, 18)) and a call of election (Rom. 8:28). See *The Sovereignty of God in the Salvation of Lost Men*, available from the publisher.

chose to bless him so that His “purpose according to election might abide,” just as in the choice of Jacob, not Esau (Rom. 11:9-13). Obedience is an instrumentality through which God works in the lives of His saints. This is true concerning Gen. 22:18 and Gen. 26:5 also. Abraham’s obedience is emphasized as being the father of the faithful (Rom. 4:16-17).

Let us keep in mind Phil. 2:13:

. . . for it is God who works in you both the willing and the working according to [his] good pleasure.

God implants faith when He quickens souls dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2). OT saints had faith and a new nature from God. It is through that divine implantation that God worked in the lives of OT saints, producing obedience and the working of His good pleasure in them.<sup>263</sup>

God’s workings do not excuse man’s disobedience and responsibility to obey. Still, the Abrahamic Covenant was not conditioned by Abraham’s obedience anymore than his election was conditioned by his obedience -- though his obedience evidenced his election, yet Abraham’s obedience was wrought through God’s gracious workings through implanted faith. We cannot obey God except by the implanted faith. Give glory to God!

What God did in Gen. 15 is not conditioned by what happened afterwards. He unilaterally bound Himself in the most solemn, unconditional way, by sacrifice, being the only party to the covenant, His tokens passing between the pieces (see also Gal. 3:15-20).<sup>264</sup>

### The Third Point

We come now to O. T. Allis’ third point:

That obedience was vitally connected with the Abrahamic covenant is shown with especial clearness by the fact that there was connected with it a sign, the rite of circumcision, to the observance of which the utmost importance was attached. Cutting off from the covenant people was the penalty for failure to observe it. It was truly “a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had* yet being uncircumcised” (Rom. 4:11). But the rite was in itself an act of obedience (1 Cor. 7:19). The circumstance that

263. Thomas Edward McComisky also understands the Abrahamic Covenant to be conditional and seeks to harmonize promise and obedience thus:

The seeming disparity between the eternity of the promise and the role of human faith and obedience can be resolved when one recognizes the promise to be unconditional insofar as it relates to God’s purpose, but conditioned on a living faith when it relates to the nation or the individual (*The Covenants of Promise, A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants*, Grand Rapids: Baker, p. 65, 1985).

God gives the promise and He gives the faith to believe His promise. He never gave the OT nation of Israel faith. That is reserved for the *nation* under Christ’s reign in the millennium.

264. See *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 3:41, 42.

circumcision later came to be regarded as typifying a legal righteousness, “circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin” (Phil. 3:5; cf. Rom. 2:25, Gal. 5:3), only serves to emphasize the fact that its observance was an act of obedience to the revealed will of God as well before the law was given as afterwards.<sup>265</sup>

By obedience being “vitally connected with the Abrahamic covenant,” I take it that he means Abraham’s obedience was a term of the covenant -- as if Abraham and Jehovah had made an agreement that the covenant was conditional upon Abraham’s obedience. He had acknowledged that obedience was not a stated condition, but his Covenantism will not allow him to regard the Abrahamic Covenant as unconditional, because that points to a future fulfilment contrary to his amillennialism.

The fact that Abraham was circumcised years after he was reckoned righteous (Gen. 15:6) has its importance in view of claims made by those of the legal covenant (see Rom. 4). Here, we note again that circumcision took place *after* the unconditional covenant was given in Gen. 15 and cannot change the terms of that covenant or be a term of the promises then given. Gen. 15 was the time for Jehovah to introduce circumcision as a condition of the covenant, and say so. But no; rather, Jehovah allowed time to elapse. Circumcision was not a term of mutual agreement in the Abrahamic Covenant.

Brethren (I speak according to man,) even man’s confirmed covenant no one sets aside, or adds other dispositions to (Gal. 3:15).

Adding a disposition is exactly what O. T. Allis is attempting to do with circumcision. Yes, Abraham obeyed Jehovah when told to circumcise but that was a result of God’s working in his soul, not a condition of the covenant in Gen. 15. No one questions that Abraham’s circumcision was an act of obedience. That is not the issue, which is: was obedience a term, or stipulation, of a covenant with two parties? Not only were there not two parties (Gal. 3:15-20), but Rom. 4:11 speaks of circumcision as the seal of Abraham’s faith, not as a seal of the covenant.

Let us compare the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants.

**Abrahamic.** The seal of the covenant was given in Gen. 15. That covenant was sealed by sacrifice when Jehovah’s tokens passed between the pieces. We might say that circumcision was a sign of the covenant. The failure to circumcise was a breaking of the covenant (Gen. 17:14).<sup>266</sup> Circumcision was not the seal of the Abrahamic Covenant. Scripture states in Rom. 4:11 that circumcision was the

265. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 34.

266. We might note that cutting off a person for not being circumcised does not set aside the national character of the covenant and promises.

seal of Abraham's faith.<sup>267</sup> Circumcision points to judgment of, and cutting off, the flesh. The just shall live by faith (Hab. 2:4).

**Mosaic.** In Ex. 19:5-8 we have agreement concerning the two-party, conditional covenant. In Ex. 24:3-8 we have the covenant sealed by blood. The Sabbath was the sign of that covenant (Ex. 31:13-17. Whoever worked on the Sabbath was to be executed (Ex. 32:15).

The Christian is circumcised by having died with Christ (Col. 2:11-12), a thing not true of any millennial saint. Our circumcision is connected with the Christian not being of the world. The seal that the Christian has is the indwelling Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:12, 13), a thing not true of any millennial saint. The Christian is not under any covenant -- He is heavenly; covenants are for the earth.

The seal of the New Covenant is Christ's blood (Luke 22:20). As the seed of Abraham, all Israel will be circumcised. Circumcision in the flesh signifies separation to God in the world. Every one of them will answer to it spiritually, as Jeremiah said: "Circumcise . . . your hearts" (Jer. 4:4).

#### The Fourth Point

His fourth point, concerning C. I. Scofield and Israel's presence in the land, need not detain us. The land promise, as the others, will be made good by the great Seed of Abraham in due time.

#### The Fifth Point

His point five, concerning Esau, is summed up in his concluding question:

How could his {Esau's} disobedience deprive his descendants of the

267. J. N. Darby wrote:

. . . Now our thesis is, that God counted Abraham to be righteous by faith. But was he circumcised when this took place? Not so; he was uncircumcised. Righteousness then is by faith, and for the uncircumcised through faith -- a testimony that was overwhelming to a Jew, because Abraham was the *beau ideal* to which all his ideas of excellence and of privilege referred.

Circumcision was only a seal to the righteousness by faith which Abraham possessed in uncircumcision, that he might be the father of all believers who were in the same state of uncircumcision, that righteousness might be imputed to them also; and the father of circumcision -- that is, the first model of a people truly set apart for God -- not only with regard to the circumcised, but to all those who should walk in the steps of his faith when uncircumcised. For, after all, the promise that he should be heir of the world was not made to Abraham nor to his seed in connection with the law, but with righteousness by faith. For if they who are on the principle of law are heirs, the faith by which Abraham received it is vain, and the promise made of none effect; for, on the contrary, the law produces wrath -- and that is a very different thing from bringing into the enjoyment of a promise . . . (*Synopsis*, 4:99).

blessings of the covenant, if the covenant did not require obedience?<sup>268</sup>

Two things to consider are:

1. And not only {that}, but Rebecca having conceived by one, Isaac our father, [the children] indeed not being yet born, or having done anything good or worthless (that the purpose of God according to election might abide, not of works, but of him that calls), it was said to her, The greater shall serve the less: according as it is written, I have loved Jacob, and I have hated Esau (Rom. 9:10-13).

It was not "the purpose of God according to election" that Esau be included in the covenant.<sup>269</sup> Esau was by nature a sinner, as were his descendants. Everyone misses covenant blessings unless elected of God to have them. Man is totally lost.

2. The words, "And not only [that]" in the above quotation, refer to God's choice of Isaac. How could Isaac's obedience determine that he was to be in the covenant? for before Isaac was born God had stated to Abraham:

*But my covenant will I establish with Isaac* (Gen. 17:21).

The matter of who would be in the covenant line was determined before Isaac or Jacob and Esau were born, as Rom. 9:10-13 clearly shows. The truth lies in God's purpose according to election, not in obedience as a condition of the covenant.<sup>270</sup> Election is first, and obedience is after, God working in the elect; Isaac's election first, obedience after; promise first, obedience after. Let us maintain Scripture's order.<sup>271</sup> God implants a new nature and faith, at the same time. God quickens a

268. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 36.

269. Neither were Abraham's children by Keturah in the covenant.

270. Covenantists have exercised themselves concerning the conditionality of the alleged covenant of grace. A survey of the history of this is given by Peter Golding, *Covenant theology The Key of Theology in Reformed Thought and Tradition*, Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, pp. 132-137.

Clearly, obedience is a stated condition of the Mosaic Covenant -- to which there are two parties. God did not communicate faith to all in the nation, as He will do for the nation in the millennium. Rather, the nation was left to itself to perform, for it was a part of the trial of the first man to show that he was not recoverable from the fall.

Since the conditional Mosaic Covenant is viewed as in a progressive line from the Abrahamic Covenant, and since the various covenants -- including the two-party, conditional Mosaic Covenant -- are allegedly the outworking of the Covenantists' covenant of grace, it would seem to me that consistency requires that therefore the covenant of grace itself must be conditional. Thus, it follows that all covenants which are displays of that over-arching covenant of grace must be conditional. That would account for why the basic, fundamental difference between the one-party, unconditional Abrahamic Covenant and the two-party, conditional Mosaic Covenant is not acceptable.

271. I note that Calvinists also put hardening and reprobation out of order. In Scripture, hardening and reprobation follow *after* wilful disregard for God and His warnings. It is a consequent, judicial act of God. In Calvinism, "reprobation" is a name, or description, actually given by them to a prior decree of God to reprobate the non-elect; and this decree is the reason for hardening. Unconditional

(continued...)

soul and implants faith at the same time. Failure in a saint's walk, as in Abraham's case, is addressed by God in His governmental/disciplinary ways with us.

### The Sixth Point

His sixth, and final point, in trying to make obedience a condition of the covenant is to say:

The certainty of the fulfilment of the covenant and the security of the believer under it, ultimately depends on the obedience of Christ . . .<sup>272</sup>  
Obedient faith in a Saviour to come was the righteousness of Abraham quite as much as it was the righteousness of Moses, of David, . . . and the same obedient faith in a Saviour who has come is the righteousness of every saint of the present gospel age.<sup>273</sup>

Is this supposed to show that the Abrahamic Covenant was conditional on obedience because Christ was obedient?

"Obedient faith" in a saint is a divine, sovereign implantation from God when He quickens a soul. Is there such a thing as disobedient faith? Whatever is not of faith is sin (Rom. 14:23). Yes, of course everything depends on Christ. That does not make the promises to Abraham conditional, but it does mean that Christ will undertake to bring Israel into the good of the unconditional promises (Rom. 11:26, etc., etc.).

When it is said that the Abrahamic Covenant is unconditional, it is meant that it is wholly dependent on God for implementation. Christ is God. The unconditional covenants are dependent on Him. In Gen. 22 we have a type of Christ given in sacrifice and raised from the dead. Then we have the promise confirmed to the great Seed of Abraham. It is in resurrection that He will undertake to make good the promises. He is the Second Man, and into His hands have been placed the making good the covenants of promise. As the conditional Mosaic Covenant was the measure for the first, fallen man, to show he was not recoverable, so the unconditional covenants for Israel are in the hands of Him who is God, the Son. Thus, in the future God Himself will put forth sovereign power and grace, in Christ, to bring Israel into the bond of the covenant (see Ezek. 20; Rom. 11:26-29, etc.).

\* \* \* \* \*

In all this we see the ways of God:

1. First, there was the unconditional promise (Gen. 12), confirmed to the Seed -- Christ (Gen. 22). This depended on sovereign grace.
2. Then, came the conditional covenant, the law given 430 years later, under which the promises became conditional (but which could not annul the unconditional promises, or add to, or modify, what was unconditional to Abraham), to show that the first man could not obtain the promises by his effort. This depended on Israel's faithfulness.

271. (...continued)  
election of the believer? yes. Decree of Reprobation against the finally unrepentant? no.

272. {It depends on the obedience, death, and resurrection of Christ.}

273. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 36.

3. Finally, the unconditional promises are taken up by Christ, the second man, to make them good by divine sovereignty. This depends on God's faithfulness to His unconditional promise.

This abases man and glorifies God. Give God the glory.

## Fulfilment When the Entire Nation of Israel is Saved

### *The Unity of Israel's Promises*

We do not need to artificially break up the fulfilment of the Abrahamic Covenant into two parts, alleging in an utterly arbitrary manner that the promises for Israel were fulfilled while they were under the legal Mosaic Covenant, and that the part regarding the Gentiles is fulfilled in the church now. The reason this is done is because the Covenantists' system compels them to deny that the Abrahamic Covenant is unconditional on account of that leads to an unconditional fulfilment to the Jews, the literal seed of Abraham<sup>274</sup> (yet that is what Rom. 9:3 states: "my kinsmen, according to flesh, who are Israelites").

Once again we remind the reader of these words from O. T. Allis:

The Old Testament prophecies if literally interpreted cannot be regarded as having been fulfilled or as being capable of fulfillment in this present age.<sup>275</sup>

When we do not spiritually alchemize what the prophets of Israel really said about the people, transmuting their words into church blessings (involving Judaizing), it is clear that Israel will all be righteous under Messiah's reign. That is, when we do not impose upon the prophets the false hermeneutic of the non-existent "unity of the covenant" of grace, why even the Jews who were not saints, as well as those who were, understood the prophets to be speaking of Israel's future, and not about the church, of which they could know nothing. By embracing God's gracious recovery of Scripture truth through J. N. Darby we are delivered from the false methods and erroneous views.

## *The Entire Nation Shall Be Righteous*

The entire nation of Israel in the OT was never composed of only saved persons. They were never "all righteous." The promises concerning Abraham's seed have not yet been fulfilled for the nation. Also, note that most of the following Scriptures were written after Solomon's day. There are *national* blessings for Israel, not only blessings for individuals.

And the redeemer will come to Zion and unto them that turn from

274. See O. T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 42.

275. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 238.



transgression in Jacob, saith Jehovah. And as for me, this is my covenant with them saith Jehovah: My Spirit that is upon thee. And my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed

, saith Jehovah, from henceforth and forever (Isa. 59:20-21).

For I do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, of this mystery, that ye may not be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the nations be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved. According as it is written, The deliverer shall come out of Zion; he shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this is the covenant from me to them, when I shall have taken away their sins. As regards the glad tidings, [they are] enemies on your account; but as regards election, beloved on account of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God [are] not subject to repentance. For as indeed ye [also] once have not believed in God, but now have been objects of mercy through the unbelief of *these*; so these also have now not believed in your mercy, in order that *they* also may be objects of mercy. For God hath shut up together all in unbelief, in order that he might shew mercy to all (Rom. 11:26-32).

[As] I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, verily with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, will I reign over you. And I will bring you out from the peoples, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out; and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there will I enter into judgment with you face to face. Like as I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I enter into judgment with you, saith the Lord Jehovah. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant. And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me; I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, but they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I [am] Jehovah (Ezek. 20:33-8).

Jehovah shall send the sceptre of thy might out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power . . . (Psa. 110:2, 3).

For I say that Jesus Christ became a minister of [the] circumcision for [the] truth of God, to confirm the promises of the fathers (Rom. 11:8).<sup>276</sup>

But this he did not say of himself; but being high priest that year, prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation (John 11:51).

. . . and Jehovah has laid upon him the iniquity of us all (Isa. 53:6).

I will remove the iniquity of this land in one day (Zech. 3:9).

276. Of course, there are not only promises regarding Israel, but others also. All is dependent on Christ:

For whatever promises of God [there are] in him is the yea, and in him the amen, for glory to God by us (1 Cor. 1:20).

Read Jer. 33. Then:

Thy people shall be all righteous: they shall possess the land forever – the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. The little one shall become a thousand, and the smallest a mighty nation: I Jehovah, will hasten it in its time (Isa. 60:21).

Behold, days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day of my taking them by the hand, to lead them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they broke, although I was a husband unto them, saith Jehovah. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and will write it in their heart;<sup>277</sup> and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will pardon their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more. Thus saith Jehovah, who giveth the sun for light by day, the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for light by night, who stirreth up the sea so that the waves thereof roar, -- Jehovah of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith Jehovah, the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever (Jer. 31:31-34).

Just think of treating Ezek. 40-48 with the hermeneutic of spiritual alchemy and transmuting that into meaning the church.

## *Israel Shall Be Regathered a Second Time*

Israel shall experience a second regathering. The first regathering, out of Babylon, was but a faint pointer to what shall happen when God undertakes the second regathering, which is yet future:

And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to acquire the remnant of his people which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall lift up a banner to the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth (Isa. 11:11; see Isa. 66:7-9).

277. {The law will be written in their hearts. The law is not written in the hearts of Christians. If it were, they would be Sabbath keepers, and have to use spiritual alchemy to transmute the seventh-day Sabbath into a first-day of the week Sabbath, as Covenantists do. *Christ* is written in the heart of the Christian.

This was written before the first time, i.e., before the return from the Babylonian captivity of 70 years. Moreover, it was written after Solomon's day. At that time they came from Babylon, not all these places named in this Scripture. It will be another return, "the second time" (Isa. 11:11) when Christ comes to reign in the millennial kingdom.

The first return, from, Babylon, was merely provisional -- but a token -- and in their utter weakness, while still under the trial of the first man to show that he was not recoverable from the fall. Once again failure soon set in. Yet, the prophet Zechariah brought before them many features of the coming glory, including the beautiful occurrence of the future application of the great day of atonement to them (Zech. 12:8-14). Speaking as one gathered back to Jerusalem the first time, he prophesied that Jehovah would yet chose Jerusalem (Zech. 1:17; 2:12; see also Isa. 14:1).

Israel must yet experience their national election, for the national adoption is theirs (Rom. 9:3-5). Jehovah shall yet choose Jerusalem, while it presently appears to be becoming a burdensome stone for all nations (Zech 12:3); this will bring in

the day of Jehovah's vengeance, the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion (Isa. 34:8).

The nations oppose it but Jehovah will set his King upon Zion, the hill of His holiness (Psa. 2). Meanwhile, before that King sends the scepter of His might out of Zion, He sits (with respect to enemies) at Jehovah's right hand (Psa. 110). At the right time He will come forth, as described in Rev. 19, and we shall be in His train. Then the mouths of purged, delivered, righteous Israel will be filled with the praises of Psa. 148-150.<sup>278</sup>

### ***The Four Gracious Covenants Remain to Be Fulfilled to Israel***

It is then that the four gracious, unconditional "covenants of promise" (Eph. 2:12) will sovereignly be made good to the nation, all saved (cp. Rom. 9:3-5; 11:26), when grafted back again into their olive tree (Rom. 11):

1. the Abrahamic Covenant;
2. the Priestly Covenant with Phinehas (Lev. 25:12:13);
3. the Kingly Covenant with David; and,
4. the New Covenant with the two houses of Israel, then reunited

(Ezek. 37).

Christ will combine kingship and priesthood in His Person when He is the Melchizedec priest upon His throne (Zech. 6:12, 13). Then the offspring of Phinehas, i.e., the sons of Zadok shall minister before Jehovah (Ezek. 44:15), and a scion of the house of David will be the Prince (Ezek. 37:25). Then shall it be true of Jehovah's Christ, who is Jehovah also:

. . . for Jehovah of hosts shall reign on mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients {i.e., Israel} in glory (Isa. 24:23).

. . . and the counsel of peace shall be between them both (Zech. 6:13).

### ***God Has Always Kept the Abrahamic Covenant in View***

When Moses warned the people of what would befall them, he said:

In thy tribulation, and when all these things shall come upon thee, at the end of days, thou shalt return to Jehovah thy God, and shalt hearken to his voice, -- for Jehovah thy God is a merciful God, -- he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them (Deut. 4:30, 31).

In their failure to carry out the conditional Mosaic Covenant, God is going to fall back upon another (allegedly) conditional covenant -- the Abrahamic Covenant?

The "end of days" refers to the end of the Mosaic age. We live in the Mosaic age, not a church age. The church is heavenly and above ages, though here below concerning testimony in responsibility. The expression "the end of the age," found in the NT, refers to the end of the Mosaic age.<sup>279</sup> This is yet ahead, and God will act on the Abrahamic Covenant.

Think of all the stiff-necked and rebellious behavior of Israel. Think of God's mercies to them. On what basis did He show mercy? Was mercy shown on the basis of the conditional Mosaic Covenant?

And Jehovah was gracious unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and he would not destroy them, neither did he cast them from his presence up to that time (2 Kings 13:23).

Think about that -- he had mercy on their failure under the conditional Mosaic Covenant because of His (allegedly) conditional covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? But such is the result of Covenantism. The truth is, that though Israel was not under the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant, God ever kept His gracious covenant with the fathers before Him. Finally, the time came to put

<sup>278</sup>. Among the many misuses of Scripture that Covenant Theology leads to is to put imprecatory Psalms in the mouths of Christians.

<sup>279</sup>. This is discussed in *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 1.

Israel under the time of the Gentiles (Luke 21:24) which began with Nebuchadnezzar and will end when the smiting stone falls on the feet of the image, even our Lord's coming in power and great glory (Matt. 24:30; Lk. 21:27). Yes, finally, the penalty of the broken Mosaic Covenant must fall upon the nation. But the prophets of Israel knew that the Abrahamic Covenant was unconditional:

Thou wilt perform truth to Jacob, loving-kindness to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers, from the days of old (Mic. 7:20).

Can you really believe that the prophets, knowing Israel's failure under the conditional Mosaic Covenant, therefore relied upon another conditional covenant in order to Israel's blessing? Did the godly Mary do that?

He has helped Israel his servant, in order to remember mercy, (as he spoke to our fathers,) to Abraham and to his seed forever (Luke 1:54, 55).

Did the godly Zacharias do that?

... to fulfill mercy with our fathers and remember his holy covenant, [the] oath which he swore to Abraham our father, to give us ... (Luke 1:72, 73).

That was the expectation of the godly remnant in Israel at that time. They understood what Covenantists do not, the the promises to Abraham are unconditional. There have been Covenantists who have denounced that expectation as "carnal." Could it be that this is a case of reversal?

For if the inheritance [be] on the principle of law, [it] is no longer on the principle of promise; but God gave it in grace to Abraham by promise (Gal. 3:18).

## Chapter 20

### *The Promise of the Land to Abraham and the Promise of the Blessing of the Nations*

Before taking up the matter of the land promise in the Abrahamic Covenant, let us note how the anti-millennarian scheme (Amillennialism) deals with the Jewish and Gentile aspects of the Abrahamic Covenant. The anti-millennarian scheme embraces manufactured covenants such as the Covenant of Grace, the Covenant of Redemption, and also a covenant with Adam after he fell (based on

Gen. 3:15; but Gen. 3:15 was not addressed to Adam and/or Eve). Note that the anti-millennarian scheme considers the promises for Israel were fulfilled when Israel was under the law, and leaves the promise for the blessing of the nations for the present time, to be fulfilled in the church.<sup>280</sup> Thus, the Jewish side of the unconditional covenant with Abraham is viewed as fulfilled under the conditional Mosaic Covenant.

We see in this scheme that results are produced for God in the first man while he was under trial, under the law, to show that he was not recoverable.

Moreover, this scheme means that the promise of the coming of the great Seed of Abraham did not need to be fulfilled in order for the fulfilling of the part of the Abrahamic Covenant concerning Israel. Surely in this scheme the first man has been substituted for the Second Man.

In Gen. 22 Isaac is received from the dead in a figure (Heb. 11:19). But the great Seed of Abraham must be received in reality -- in resurrection -- before any of the Abrahamic Covenant could be fulfilled. See the promises in Gen. 22:17, 18, where both the promise regarding Abraham's seed and the promise concerning the nations are together. The truth is that both will be fulfilled together when Christ reigns in the millennial kingdom.

We Christians are not in view in the Abrahamic Covenant. Our place in Christ is part of the mystery of Christ and the church, and our being seed of Abraham is because we are made one with the great Seed of Abraham, a distinctive true only of saints now.

### *The Land of Promise*

In Gen. 15, in the most solemn way, Jehovah bound Himself by sacrifice to covenant, giving the land of these 10 peoples<sup>281</sup> named in Gen. 15:18-21 to Abraham's seed.

The boundaries specified are "from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates" (Gen. 15:18). Scholars dispute what "the river of Egypt" means, whether the Nile or a wadi. Bruce K Waltke wrote:

280. For example, O. T. Allis concisely stated it thus:

As regards the *nations*, it can hardly be said that the fulfilment had more than begun {in the OT}. The note of world-wide blessing is sounded prophetically in the Old Testament. Actually it hardly appears in the the pages of the Old Testament history. Consequently, we may say that, in the respects in which the Abrahamic covenant particularly concerned Israel, it can be regarded as having been fulfilled centuries before the first advent, while in its universal aspect, in which it concerned all the nations of the earth, it was scarcely fulfilled at all during the Old Testament period (*Prophecy and the Church*, p. 57).

281. Ten is the number of responsibility (as in the 10 commandments), and these nations were failures in the land and were to be cast out; yes, and Israel, too, was cast out.

Since the text uses “river” (*nāḥār*), not “wadi” (*nahal*) the Wadi-el-’Arish that divides Canaan from the Sinai is not in view (contra Num. 34:3-5; Josh. 15:2-4). On the other hand, neither is the Nile (*yē’ōr*) in view. Probably the text refers to the Nile’s most easterly branch that emptied into Lake Sironbis, not far from Port Said. It is unlikely, however, that even in Solomon’s day, Israel’s border extended to this boundary.<sup>282</sup>

## *Not fulfilled in the Days of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*

Incredible as it may seem, an amillennialist, G. L. Murry wrote:

There is ample proof to be adduced from the Word that God fulfilled to Abraham and to Abraham’s seed the promise that they should possess Caanan. Today the ashes of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob mingle with the soil of the “Cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre . . . in the land of Caanan,” which Abraham bought “for a possession of a burying place.” He possessed Canaan during his earthly life, and his ashes rest in Caanan until the resurrection. The same can be said of his seed, Isaac and Jacob, “The heirs with him of the same promise.” Surely God has fulfilled his promise to Abraham to give him and his seed a permanent place in the land.<sup>283</sup>

What leads an opponent of the truth of this matter to such an absurd conclusion that the land promise was that they would be buried in Caanan? He was solving the promise that the land would be theirs “forever,” doing so in the sense of “forever” meaning until the resurrection at the end of time. We will consider “forever” at the end of this excursus.

The fact that Abraham bought land shows that He did not possess the land, though he possessed it in title. Stephen said:

And he did not give him an inheritance in it, not even what his foot could stand on; and promised to give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when he had no child (Acts 7:5).

## *Not Fulfilled under the Conditional Mosaic Covenant:*

### *Could Not Be Fulfilled While the First Man Was under Trial to See If He Was Recoverable*

Those who understand that the first man was under trial up to the cross to show that he was not recoverable from the fall, realize that God did not, and would not, fulfill the

*unconditional* land promise to Abraham under the *conditional* Mosaic covenant when Israel was under trial under law .

For [it was] not by law that the promise was to Abraham, or to his seed, that he should be heir of [the] world, but by righteousness of faith. For if they which [are] of law be heirs, faith is made vain, and the promise is of no effect (Rom. 4:13, 14).

For if the inheritance [be] on the principle of law, [it is] no longer on the principle of promise; but God gave it in grace to Abraham by promise (Gal. 3:18).

It is serious error to teach Christians that the inheritance was obtained under the law. It places results for God’s glory in man’s doings and efforts instead of in the sovereign grace of God undertaking to make good His promises by Christ’s action.

. . . historically, God threatened the Jews to set them aside -- looked at as placed under the dispensation of the law -- and that He did set them aside in consequence of their sins. Jehovah never forsakes the unconditional covenant which He made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and He often recalls it in grace. Read Deut. 4:23-31; 8:19, 20; 28:63-68; 29:28; 30:17, 18. All these passages shew plainly that judgment has fallen upon Israel by reason of their sins. By this judgment the relationships formed between God and Israel under the law, these relationships, the existence of which depended expressly on the people’s obedience (Ex. 19:5), have been entirely interrupted and even terminated. The first covenant, that of Sinai, has been suppressed -- abolished, as the Epistle to the Hebrews says, in order to give place to another.<sup>284</sup>

## *Under the Law Israel’s Tenure of the Land Was Conditional*

The difference between the unconditional promise of the land (Gen. 12:7; 13:14, 15; 17:8, 9; 26:3, 4; 28:13; 35:12) and the promise of supremacy over the nations (Gen. 22:16-18; 27:29), compared with the conditional arrangement while under trial by the law to obtain these promises, is at once evident by reading Deut. 28. Deut. 28:1, 2, 10 (and Lev. 26:16, 17) mention the conditional supremacy over the nations. Deut 27:3 notes the conditional occupation of the land (see Deut. 28:63, 64; Lev. 26:33).

Ex. 19:4-9 shows Israel engaging for the accomplishment of the promises on the condition of their obedience. Without doubt, Israel’s tenure of the land was under the conditions prescribed by the law of Moses. *Conditional* tenure of the land cannot be the fulfilment of the *unconditional* promise to Abraham (see also Deut. 9:5, 7).

It is no way of escape to say that Gal. 3:17, 18 refers only to the spiritual part

282. A. Malamat, “Aspects of the Foreign Policies of David and Solomon,” *JNES* 22 (1963):1-17 (*Genesis, A Commentary*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, p. 245, 2001).

283. *Millennial Studies*, p. 27.

284. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 4:276.

of the promises but does not include the promise of the land. Gal. 3:16 says:

But to Abraham were the promises addressed and to his seed {meaning Christ}.

The promises are bound up together and it is the great Seed of Abraham that will yet make them good, to the glory of God. Long ago J. N. Darby wrote:

If you say the spiritual promises are without condition, by parity of reasoning the temporal ones are. There is as much certainty in the promise made to Abraham, "to thee will I give this land," as in those which have been made in favor of us Gentiles.<sup>285</sup>

Who gave Covenantists the right to divide the promises to suit their theological system?

A survey of the issue was presented by J. N. Darby in 1840:

. . . Israel placed themselves in relationship with God, in . . . their own righteousness -- the principle of the law -- by virtue of which, acknowledging that we owe obedience to God, we undertake the doing of it in our own strength; for the history of the people of Israel is, whether in its largeness or details, but the history of our hearts.

Ex. 19. Here was an immense change taking place in the state of Israel: until then the promise made to them had been unconditional. If you cast your eyes over the chapters from 15 to 19 you will find that God had given them all things gratuitously, and even in spite of their murmurings; as the manna, water to drink, the sabbath, etc.; and that He had sustained them in their combat with Amalek at Rephidim. He recalls all this to their memory: "ye have seen," says He to them, "how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself; now therefore, if . . ." This is the first time, in the relationship between God and Israel, that the little word *if* is introduced.

Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me: for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.

But the moment a condition comes in, our ruin is certain, for we fail the first day; and this was the foolishness of Israel. In vain God gives His law, which is "holy, and just, and good." To a sinner His law is death, because he is a sinner; and from the moment that God gives His law conditionally -- namely, that something is to come to us by keeping it, He gives it, not because we can obey it, but to make us more clearly comprehend that we are lost because we have violated it.

The Israelites should have said, It is true, most gracious God, we ought to obey Thee; but we have failed so often, that we dare not receive the promises under such a condition. Instead of this, what was their language? "All the words that the Lord hath said, will we do." They bind themselves to fulfil all that Jehovah had spoken; they take the promises under the

condition of perfect obedience. What is the consequence of such rashness? The golden calf was made before Moses had come down from the mount. When we sinners engage ourselves to obey God without any failure (although obedience is always a duty), and to forfeit the blessing if we do not, we are sure to fail. Our answer should always be, "We are lost"; for grace supposes our ruin. It is this entire instability of man under any condition, that the apostle wishes to show (Gal. 3:17-21) when he says, "A mediator is not a mediator of one." That is, from the instant there is a mediator, there are two parties. But God is not two; "God is one." And who is the other party? It is man. Hence the accomplishment depends on the stability of man, as well as of God; and all comes to nothing.

There being nothing stable in man, he has of course sunk under the weight of his engagements; and this is what must always happen. But the law cannot annul the promises made to Abraham; the law, which was 430 years after, cannot abolish the promise; and the promise was made to Abraham, not only of a blessing to the nations, but also of the land, and of earthly blessings to Israel. The reasoning of the apostle, as to spiritual promises, applies equally to temporal promises made to the Jews. We see that Israel could not enjoy them under the law. In fact, all was lost as soon as the golden calf was made. Yet the covenant at Sinai was founded on the principle of obedience. Ex. 24:7:

And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood . . ."

Here is a covenant ratified by blood -- and upon this foundation -- "We will do all that the Lord hath said." You know that the people made the golden calf, and that Moses in consequence destroyed the tables of the law.

In Ex. 32 we see how the promises made before the law were the resource of faith. It was this which sustained the people by the intercession of Moses, even in ruin itself: and by means of a mediator, God returned to man after his failure (vv. 9, 10).

It is a stiff-necked people: now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation.

Then Moses besought the Lord:

Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.

Thus, after the fall of Israel, Moses beseeches God, for His own glory, to remember the promises made to Abraham; and God repents of the evil which He had thought to do.

Turn to Lev. 26. This chapter is the threat of all the chastisements

285. "Hopes of the Church of God," Collected Writings of J. N. Darby, 2:348.

which were to follow the unfaithfulness of Israel. Verse 42:

Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham; . . . and I will remember the land.<sup>286</sup>

God returns to His promises made unconditionally long before the law; and this is applicable to the last time, as we shall presently see.

There are two more covenants made with Israel during their wanderings in the wilderness. That under the law having been broken, the intercession of Moses made way for another (Ex. 33:14, 19), of which we have the basis in Exodus 34: 27:

And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words; for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.

Observe, *with thee*; for there is a remarkable change in the language of God. In Egypt, God had always said, “My people, my people.” But when the golden calf was made, He uses the word which they had used -- “Thy people which thou broughtest up out of the land of Egypt”; for Israel had said, “This Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt,” Ex. 32:1. God takes them up in their own words. What happened? Moses interceded, and, so to speak, he would not permit God to say, “Thy people,” as of him; but he insisted upon *Thy people*, as of God’s people.

Now then, it is a covenant made with Moses, as mediator. Here comes in the sovereignty of grace, introduced indeed when all was lost (the condition of the law having been violated). If God had not been sovereign, what would have been the consequence of this infraction? The destruction of all the people. That is, though the sovereignty of God is eternal, it is revealed when it becomes the only resource of a people lost by their own ways: and this sovereignty manifests itself through the means of a mediator.

There is still another covenant in Deut. 29: 1:

These are the words of the covenant, which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb.

And the subject of this third covenant with the Israelites is this: God makes it with them, in order that under it they, being obedient, might be able to continue to enjoy the land. They did not keep it, and so they were expelled from the territory. They were installed in it at the epoch of this third covenant, and by the keeping of it they would have been maintained there. See Deut. 29:9, 12, 19.

Thus we get the principle on which they entered at all into the land of Canaan. But we have also seen that before the law God had promised them

286. See also, for this appeal to promises apart from conditions, Deut. 9: 5, 27; 10:15. In Micah 7:19, 20, these same promises made to Abraham constitute the prophetic hope. And the faithful Israelite, Simeon (Luke 2:25, etc.), recalls them as the ground of confidence to Israel, who, in these promises, might rest on the faithfulness of God.

the land for a perpetual possession, by covenants and promises made without condition; and it is owing to these promises, by the mediation of Moses, that Israel was spared, and at last enjoyed the land -- enjoyed it, we say, on the terms of the third covenant, made in the plains of Moab.

After the fall of the Israelites in this promised land, there remains still to be applied to them, as to their re-establishment, all the promises made to Abraham. After this people had failed in every possible way towards God, the prophets show us clearly, that God has promised again to restore them and to establish them in their land, under the Lord Jesus Christ as their king, to receive in Him the full accomplishment of every temporal promise.<sup>287</sup>

## The Boundaries of the Land Under Joshua

We must now examine whether possession of the covenanted land was realized by Israel under Joshua. The summary of what may be said on this point is that the boundaries noted in Gen. 15:18-21 were not realized either under Joshua or under Solomon. The Abrahamic promises and covenant remain to be fulfilled by divine, sovereign action in Christ, the great Seed of Abraham.

Several texts referring to the land boundaries are: Ex. 23:31; Deut. 1:8; 6:23; Josh. 1:4. Texts which are used to support the notion that the land promise was fulfilled under Joshua are these:

And Joshua took the whole land, according to all that Jehovah had said to Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions, by their tribes. And the land rested from war (Josh. 11:23).

And Jehovah gave to Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they took possession of it, and dwelt in it (Josh. 21:43).

1. We have seen, above, that Scriptures written after the reign of Solomon tell us that Israel will yet be blessed in the land.
2. We have also noted that Israel entered the land on the basis of conditions of the covenant given through Moses (Lev. 26:16, 17; Deut. 28:1, 2, 10; Ex. 19:4-9; 23:7-31) and that therefore their tenure of the land was not the fulfilment of the unconditional covenant with Abraham (cf. Gal. 3:17, 18).

In Josh. 7:11, 12 we read:

Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them . . . I will no more be with you unless . . .

Thus, it is plainly indicated that their progress was conditional. The covenant is the one which “I commanded *them*,” not the Abrahamic covenant. This conditional situation is again noted in Josh. 23:12-16 where there is another reference to the “covenant of Jehovah your God which he commanded you.” See also Judg. 2:1-3. See Neh. 9:22-31 which also indicates their conditional tenure of the land. Jer. 32:23 says that Israel “have done nothing of all that thou commandest them to do.”

287. “The Hopes of the Church of God,” *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 2:349-352.

No one gains God's unconditional promises by works of law.

3. Josh. 21:43 does not mean that Israel had actually all the territory of the enemy. All one had to do was to start reading at the beginning of the chapter:

Behold, I have divided unto you by lot for an inheritance, according to your tribes, these nations that remain, from the Jordan, as well as the nations that I have cut off, as far as the great sea toward the sun-setting. And Jehovah your God, he will expel them from before you, and dispossess them from out of your sight; and ye shall take possession of their land, as Jehovah your God hath said unto you (Josh. 23:4, 5).

So the actual situation was that there remained enemies to dispossess. Indeed, the possession of the land of the Jebusites was promised to Abraham (Gen. 15:21) but the stronghold of Zion, the citadel of the Jebusites was never taken until David's day.

Moreover, Judg. 1 makes it quite clear that there was much land yet to be taken. Then, read Judg. 3:1-5.

So Josh. 21:43 cannot be construed into a contradiction of these Scriptures just cited. Josh. 21:43 is a statement meaning that Israel had the land in *title*, not in actual possession.

A parallel case concerning where "possession" mean possession *in title* only involves Abraham himself, for we all know that he did not in fact hold the land of promise in actual possession:

. . . and Jehovah thy God shall bring thee into the land that thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it . . . (Deut. 30:5).

By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as a foreign country, having dwelt in tents with the Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with [him] of the same promise . . .

All these died in faith, not having received the promises (Heb. 11:9, 13).

No OT reference to Israel possessing the land means that they possessed it as promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but they, Israel, had it *in title*. Give our sovereign God the glory! Israel will possess the land *in fact* under Christ, by His sovereign action to implement the promises when He reigns before His ancients in glory (Isa. 24:23).

We conclude this section with the following from J. N. Darby:

The whole extent of the country is given to Israel, and each tribe has his share; the portion, therefore, which fell to each tribe was given them in full right by Jehovah Himself. Their borders were marked out; for the Spirit of God takes notice of everything in distributing the spiritual inheritance,<sup>288</sup> and gives each according to the mind of God. There is nothing uncertain in God's arrangements. But we find that not one tribe drove out all the enemies of God from His inheritance, not one realized the possession of all that God had given him.<sup>289</sup>

288. {Perhaps the writer was thinking of a typical application.}

289. *Synopsis*, 1:286.

## *The Possession of the Land in the Reign of Solomon*

### *Solomon's Borders and the Promise of the Land*

And Solomon ruled over all kingdoms from the river to the land of the Philistines, and as far as the border of Egypt: they brought presents and served Solomon all the days of his life (1 Kings 4:21; see also 2 Chron. 9:26; cp. 1 Kings 8:65).

Unto thy seed will I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates . . . (Gen. 15:18).

G. Morrish wrote:

The S.W. border of the promised land was from "the river of Egypt." Gen. 15:18. Here the word is *nahar*, and would seem to allude to the most eastern branch of the Delta of the Nile, called the Palusaic mouth. In Num. 34:5 "the river of Egypt" has the word *nachal*, signifying a winter torrent and is supposed to refer to the Wady el Arish, 31° 8' N, 33° 50' E.<sup>290</sup>

So J. A. Savage:

The whole of Palestine, from the river of Egypt (the Nile) to the great river Euphrates, will be distributed among the restored twelve tribes . . .<sup>291</sup>

Some scholars think that the river of Egypt in both of the above Scriptures refers to the same river. Others believe it means the Nile only in Gen. 15:18.

Solomon's kingdom terminated on the border of Egypt, i.e., at the river mentioned in Num. 34:5. The wilderness of Shur was outside of Solomon's borders.

Ex. 23:31 says, "And I will set thy bounds from the Red sea . . ." This was under the Mosaic, conditional covenant. Solomon's borders did not reach to the Red Sea, much less to the Nile. Moreover, this is evidence that the "river of Egypt" in Gen. 15:18 means the Nile river, for if it does not mean that, then the land covenanted under the conditional Mosaic Covenant was greater than the land covenanted under the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant -- making conditional blessings greater than sovereignly imparted blessings.

The fact is that under the Mosaic covenant, the land was theirs in *title*. They never fully possessed it. Only the One greater than Solomon will make good the title when He regathers cast-out Israel to the land.

290. "River of Egypt," *Morrish's Bible Dictionary*, p. 670.

291. *The Scroll of Time*, p. 152.

## *What About Neh. 9:7, 8 and Jer. 32:23?*

Read the whole of Neh. 9 and see (v. 16ff) the disobedience of the people. Connect Neh. 9:7, 8 with Josh. 21:43. In point 3 of the discussion of Josh. 21:43 we learned from the context, and other Scriptures, that what is meant is that God kept His word in the conditional covenant, but Israel did not (as we see in Judg. 1; 3:1-5). In Neh. 9 we see the same thing: God was faithful; Israel was not; the land promise was not realized under the conditional Mosaic Covenant. How many times does this have to be pointed out?

Well, once more, at least, regarding Jer. 32:23. The case is the same as Josh. 21:43 and Neh. 9:7, 8. Israel possessed the land in *title*. And what did Jer. 32:23 say?

... they have done nothing at all that thou commandedst them to do ...

And in the face of the overwhelming evidence of Israel's on-going disobedience, some anti-millennarians tell us that the land promises of the Abrahamic Covenant were realized -- by this rebellious people under a conditional covenant. Theology is an amazing thing.

Note that Neh. 9:7, 8 and Jer. 32:22 refer to God's promise to bless Abraham. Note, too, that God took up the unconditional promise with Israel on a conditional basis in order to manifest the heart of man, that it is unrecoverable from the fall -- though Israel was hedged about with His holy law and oracles. The Abrahamic Covenant, in all particulars, remains to be made good by the great Seed of Abraham when He comes and turns away ungodliness from Jacob (Rom. 11:26) by sovereignly granting individual and national repentance to Israel (Zech. 12). God will sovereignly bring them into the bond of the covenant (Ezek. 20) in the day when He will "perform truth to Jacob, loving-kindness to Abraham" (Mic. 7:20).

It is evident in Scripture that God exalts His sovereignty and abases fallen man. Strange it is, then, that some who profess to glory in "the doctrines of grace" (Calvinists), will have it so that the first man, man in the flesh, tried under a conditional covenant, gained a promise of God under it. Such is the result of theology at war with God's word, and spite of claims or appearances to the contrary, allows, if not fosters, a place for the flesh after all.

## *Scriptures After Solomon Contradict the Claim*

Some anti-millennarians think that the promises concerning the land promised

in the Abrahamic Covenant were realized in the reign of Solomon.<sup>292</sup> Note that this allegation implicitly rejects the idea of other anti-millennarians that the land promises were fulfilled in Joshua's day.

Scriptures after Solomon's reign concerning the land, and the regathering of Israel, considered together, show us that Scriptures such as "sand" (1 Kings 4:20), "stars" (1 Chron. 27:23), and "dust" (2 Chron. 1:9) indicate a partial fulfilment, or perhaps better, an "earnest" on God's part -- while under the conditional Mosaic Covenant -- concerning what shall be true under the reign of the greater than Solomon in the millennial kingdom yet to come -- under the fulfilment of the four gracious covenants.

After Solomon, it is stated that:

Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea which cannot be measured or numbered; and it shall come to pass, [that] in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, it shall be said unto them, Sons of the living God (Hos. 1:10).

"In the place where it was said to them" is in Israel. That is where they shall be called "sons of the living God." This is the "adoption" that belongs to Paul's kinsmen according to flesh (Rom. 9:3-5). Anti-millennarians can find a fulfilment in Solomon concerning Israel, but whenever similar things are said afterwards they have recourse to spiritual alchemy and transmute those later texts into references to the church (as "the spiritual Israel.") A Jew, of course, would never suspect that shift, would he? Was God deceiving him concerning the future blessings for Israel? Well, but it was for a future "spiritual Israel" composed of Jews and Gentiles. Did the Jewish hearers have the slightest clue about that from the words they were hearing? Not at all; it is a Covenantist myth -- and a deception of the hearers. That the Spirit makes an application of principles in quoting certain OT texts in the NT is quite true, but that leaves the actual accomplishment to the future reign of Christ.

Aspects of Solomon's reign are typical of Christ's millennial reign. In keeping with this, there was a wide territory under Solomon's rule, pointing to Christ's fulfilling the promises to Abraham. However, Solomon's reign and the territory over which he ruled do not fulfil any part of the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant. The prophets that were after Solomon make quite clear that the land promises were yet to be fulfilled: Isa. 60:15-22 (especially v. 21); Jer. 32:37-40; Ezek. 11:17-20; 37:12-14, 21, 25; Amos 9:13-15; Obad. 17; etc.

Several prophets said:

Thy people shall be all righteous: they shall possess the land forever (Isa. 60:21).

292. For example, O. T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 57.



And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith Jehovah (Amos 9:15).

I will assuredly plant them in this land with my whole heart and with my whole soul (Jer. 32:41).

In the future Jacob shall take root; Israel shall blossom and bud, and they shall fill the face of the world with fruit (Isa. 27:6).

The distribution of the promised land is seen in Ezek. 47, 48. The attempt to spiritually alchemize Ezek. 40-48 is absurd. Think of the prophets bringing these things before the Jews but they were speaking of the church about which the Jews knew absolutely nothing.

The seed of Abraham shall yet be established in their promised land and the seed multiplied (Isa. 60:21, 22) for Jehovah will gather them again (Isa. 43:5, 6; Jer. 46:27, 28; 31:35-40), and they shall possess nations and inhabit desolate cities (Isa. 53:4; 65:18-26). The nations will acknowledge the first place of that seed (Isa. 61:9). That seed shall remain before Jehovah as long as the sun and moon endure (Isa. 66:22).

And the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah, saying, If ye can break my covenant [in respect] of the day, and my covenant [in respect] of the night, so that there should not be day and night in their season, [then] shall my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites, the priests, my ministers. As the host of the heavens cannot be numbered, nor the sea measured, so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me (Jer. 33:19-22; see 14-18 also).

Three of the four gracious covenants that belong to Israel are touched on here, as well as the Noahic Covenant: with David, with Phinehas ("Levites, the priests"), and with Abraham, regarding his seed. The host of the heavens refers to the stars, of course. These three gracious covenants for Israel will coalesce under the New Covenant with the house of Judah and the house of Israel (Jer. 30:31-34; Heb. 8:8-13), for that really does not mean the church, as anti-millenarians claim it does. See also Psa. 132:13-18.

And their seed shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are a seed that Jehovah hath blessed (Isa. 61:9).

## Several Other Covenantist Solutions

There are Covenantist solutions to the land promise problem that implicitly grant what has been shown above, namely, that the land promise was not fulfilled in the OT. Here are two of them.

## The Eternal State Solution to the Land Promise

Robert L. Reymond takes the approach of first minimizing the land promises and then asserting that they will be fulfilled in the new heavens and new earth -- thus contradicting O. T. Allis and others who claim that the land promises were fulfilled in the OT:

But the land promises were never primary and central to the covenant intention, and a literal and complete fulfilment of these promises under Old Testament conditions was never envisioned by God. Rather the fulfilment of the land promises must be viewed as arising from the more basic and essential soteric promises, and for their fulfilment they will have to await the final and complete salvation of God's elect in the Eschaton (Rom. 8:19-23).<sup>293</sup>

This is baseless assertion except for the fact that God never envisioned the fulfilment of the land promises under the Mosaic Covenant. By the Eschaton he means the new heavens and new earth. Rom. 8:19-23 points to the millennial period when Christ who is our life will be manifested and we will be manifested with Him in glory (Col. 3:3, 4).

He goes on to quote from O. Palmer Robertson who wrote that "The promise of the land would be fulfilled by nothing less than a restored paradise . . . (Isa. 11:6)." Isa. 11:6 refers to the time of the literal millennial reign, which he rejects, so Isa. 11:6 must somehow be figurative of the eternal state.

## The Catch-all Solution to the Promised Land

John P. Davis claimed that:

Though God promised to Abraham a specific piece of geography, Abraham apparently understood it as more than geography (Heb. 11:16, 39-40),<sup>294</sup>

Heb. 11:16 is dealt with elsewhere; and concerning Heb. 11:39-40, the promise will be fulfilled in the millennium, not in his transmutation of the land promise into God's kingdom activity. He has the promise somewhat fulfilled, yet not consummated -- for he also transmutes the land promise to theologically signify God's kingdom activity, which has both a present bearing and also continues in the eternal state:

Land is the sphere of God's kingdom activity.

This land promise retains a fulfilled, yet not consummated aspect. There are indications within Scripture that the land promise is fulfilled (Josh. 1:13; 11:23; 21:43-45), not yet consummated (Josh 13:1-7; Psa 95; Heb. 4:6-11), and yet to be consummated in a new cosmos (Heb. 11:39-40).

293. *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, Nashville: Nelson, p. 513, n 19, sec. ed., 1998.

294. John P. Davis, "Who Are the Heirs of the Abrahamic Covenant?" *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 29:2, p. 157 (2005).

. . . Joshua 21:44-45 indicates that to a measure the promise was fulfilled in Joshua's day, in Solomon's day (1 Kings 8:56) and in Nehemiah's day (Neh. 9:7-8). However, since the land promise is eternally operative, each and every generation looks for the promise of rest in 'land'.<sup>295</sup>

Such is the alchemical power of the Covenantist hermeneutic: "a specific piece of geography" is transmuted in "God's kingdom activity." So there were three occasions where the land promise was fulfilled "to a measure" in the OT -- i.e., not actually fulfilled -- and will not actually be fulfilled to Paul's kinsmen according to flesh (Rom. 9:3, 4). In reality, then, the "specific piece of geography" promised to Abraham was not realized in the OT, never will be realized, so it is spiritually transmuted in this Covenantist scheme to be realized by the church now as "God's kingdom activity," and also in a new cosmos, i.e., the eternal state. For a Covenantist, this is God's fulfilment of the land promise to Abraham of "a specific piece of geography." Let it be said that we have here theological imagination, like the wild boar of the woods, trampling down God's word and elevating mental activity in divine matters, pretending to be spiritual.

### ***Could Not Be Fulfilled until after Israel's Scattering***

In Lev. 26, Jehovah had warned Israel of God's judgment and scattering among the nations. Then Jehovah said:

If then their uncircumcised heart be humbled, and they accept the punishment of their iniquity, I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land (Lev. 26:41, 42).

The scattering occurred after Moses' day, after Joshua's day, and after Solomon's day. God's remembrance of the land, i.e., His promise concerning it, will occur *after* the time Covenantists allege that the land promise was fulfilled in the OT. In fact, it will occur when

. . . all Israel shall be saved. According as it is written, The deliverer will come out of Zion: he shall turn ungodliness away from Jacob (Rom. 9:26).

Note what Zech. 3:9 states:

. . . and I will remove the iniquity of this land in one day.

This will be at the time when,

Thy people shall all be righteous: they shall possess the land forever (Isa. 60:21).

Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power . . . (Psa. 110:3).

Let us note that while Israel's blessing hinges upon their individual and national repentance, yet future (see Zech. 12 for its occurrence), it is God who sovereignly undertakes to secure that repentance. Is it not difficult to deny that God grants repentance?

And when they heard these things they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then indeed God has to the nations also granted repentance to life (Acts 11:18).

Him has God exalted by his right hand as leader and savior, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins (Acts 5:31).

See Deut. 30:1-9; Psa. 14:7; 102:13-16; Isa. 1:24-26; 11:11-16; 14:1, 2; etc.; Mic. 7:19, 20; Luke 1:67-75.

### ***The Land Under Christ in the Millennial Reign***

We conclude with these comments from W. Kelly:

The rest of the chapter {Ezek. 47} is occupied with the arrangement of Israel according to their future place in the land; and here Henderson cannot but return to "the literal Canaan and the literal tribes," as alone meeting the demand of the unbiased expositor. The counsels of God stand. Joseph, whatever the dark history of his sons meanwhile, must have his portion; the title of flesh failed, Reuben forfeited his birthright; but not the original gift of grace. So the prophet begins the distribution . . .

{Ezek. 48}. It must be evident to every dispassionate mind that the distribution of the tribes in the land, from Joshua to the ruin of the kingdom, wholly differs from what is here predicted, and that nothing answering to the prophecy can be alleged since . . .

It will be observed that, as in the days of Joshua, the land was divided by lot; so it will be in the day when a greater than he takes the kingdom. The oblation is a wholly new feature of this redistribution of Israel, when He comes whose right is the crown, and whose prime care is the sanctuary of Jehovah. Prince, priests, and Levites shall be there, each in due place in relation to the city and the sanctuary. For it is no question here of heaven or the heavenly city, new Jerusalem, that comes down out of heaven from God, but of the earth and the land. The temple is as marked here as it is emphatically absent in Rev. 21. So there are not, nor could be, priests or Levites, feasts or sacrifices, in the heavenly city of the Apocalypse any more than in Christianity now. In Ezekiel there are essential and indelible traits, which are only intelligible to those who, believing the prophets, look for the age to come {i.e., the millennium} before eternity, and the fulfilment of prophecy in the blessing of Israel and the Gentiles under the reign of the Lord Jesus, when He shall have come with all His saints in glory. Unbelief of the truth is natural, and reasoning against it is not difficult, but the word of God remains as plain and sure as ever; and blessed are they who,

295. *Ibid.*, p. 157.

confessing the future joy and rest which await Israel on earth, converted in the grace and faithfulness of God, are the more free to await the Son of God from heaven. our Deliverer from the coming wrath. To see with distinctness the place of the earthly people, first under the old legal responsibility, next under the Messiah and the new covenant, helps greatly those who through grace now believe against the efforts of Satan, who would darken and destroy, if possible, their intelligence and enjoyment of their own proper blessedness and calling on high, as the body of Christ and bride of the Lamb. Mysticism is thus avoided, and scripture received in simple faith.

One more section leads us to the close of the prophecy . . . (vv. 30-35).

This then is the last and chief glory -- the presence of Jehovah in the city of His choice. In this Israel shall boast above all their privileges; and justly, for it is the complement and crown of all. How bright an end of their long wanderings, and of their manifold sorrows! How worthy of His redeeming grace, who will cleanse away the guilt which shed it, when they turn to Him in faith, discerning and owning at length their self-destructive folly in the light of His love, who never wavered but died for them so many centuries before they broke down in shame and contrition before Him!<sup>296</sup>

### *The Possession of the Land “Forever”*

“Forever,” “everlasting possession,” and “everlasting covenant” are used concerning the promises and the Abrahamic Covenant. The anti-millenarian schemes of fulfilment to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by being buried in Caanan, or fulfillment in Joshua’s day, or fulfillment in Solomon’s day, have been shown to be false. In addition to the reasons given for rejecting the attempted solution of fulfillment in Joshua’s or Solomon’s day, we ask how the word “forever” or “everlasting possession” was fulfilled? Clearly it was not fulfilled. The land has never been held by Israel in any way answering to these words (Gen. 13:15; 17:7, 18, 19; 1 Chron. 16:15-18; 2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 60:21). Long after Solomon’s day, the word of Jehovah by Jeremiah said:

I will assuredly plant them in this land with my whole heart and with my whole soul (Jer. 32:41).

The Jews had no basis to understand these words in any other way that what is stated. Once Jehovah undertakes to gather Israel “the second time” (Isa. 11:11), once Israel is grafted again in their own olive tree (Rom. 11:25-32, etc., etc.), then they will have the land forever, i.e., uninterruptedly in the present earth until its dissolution.

We must take note not to fall into the absurdity that the word “forever,” etc., regarding the Abrahamic promises, has in view the eternal state. The Abrahamic

Covenant is for the present earth, not the new earth. Once Israel sovereignly obtains the inheritance under Christ’s reign, it will be maintained as long as the sun and moon shine, and no longer than that.

If those ordinances {the present sun and moon that Israel saw} depart from before me, saith Jehovah, the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me forever (Jer. 31:36).

This tells us two things: (1) Israel shall be a nation as long as the sun and moon give light; and, (2) since in the dissolution of the present heavens and earth those ordinances will depart from before God, so Israel will cease to be a nation. Israel is earthly and its distinctive place will pass away with the dissolution of the present heavens and earth.

Isa. 66:22-24 has, as does the OT blessings, the present heavens and earth in view. It is describing something about the millennium as a new order, not the new heavens and new earth of 2 Pet. 3. In the new heavens and new earth there will be no carcasses of men to look at (v. 24). The resurrection of judgment will have previously taken place and unbelievers sent into eternal punishment. There will be no new moons and sabbaths (v. 23) in the eternal state; nor propagation of the children of Israel, nor sacrifices, etc., etc. Eternal propagation is a Mormon myth, not sober Christian teaching. So, let us keep in mind that the things for Israel are in the present earth -- and no longer than that. However, the church will be eternally distinct (Eph. 3:21); and in Rev. 21:2 we see her coming down out of heaven from God, and being “with men,” not with earthly nations, and not with earthly Israel. Such distinctions as were on earth will no longer be. But the heavenly church remains distinct eternally.

### *Conclusion*

The imposition of the notion of the unity of the mythical covenant of grace upon Scripture appears to have created a problem concerning the land promises in the Abrahamic covenant. The conditional/unconditional character of the Abrahamic Covenant has not been solved, nor has the issue of the land promises been resolved, by Covenantism.

But Scripture has shown us that the natural seed of Abraham shall be regathered a second time (Isa. 11:11) and possess the land “forever,” i.e., as long as the present sun and moon continue. Also we learn that this natural seed of Abraham shall all be righteous (Isa. 60:21; Rom. 11:26; Heb. 8), for Christ will purge out all the rebels (Ezek. 20). Prophecies given after the reign of Solomon concerning Israel’s final, permanent possession of the land were noted, even as Hos. 9:15 says:

I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith Jehovah thy God.

The NT confirms the future portion of Israel: Luke 1:54-56; 68-75; John 11:51,

296. *Notes on Ezekiel*, London: G. Morrish, pp. 265, 268, 271-271, 1876.

52; Rom. 9:3-5; 11:25-32; 15:8; Heb. 8:8-13 -- which is quite consonant with the OT silence concerning Christ and the Church (Rom. 16:25, 26; Col. 1:25, 26; Eph. 3:5-10), and the fact that the covenants and promises belong to Paul's kinsmen according to the flesh (Rom. 9:3-5).

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**Chapter 21**

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***Promises Made to Israel, and  
the Manner of Their Accomplishment***

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The following article is from *The Bible Treasury*, 16:10-13.

***Promises Made to Israel, And  
the Manner of Their Accomplishment -- Isaiah 1***

Some passages of scripture upon the destiny of the Jews, which at our last meeting there was not time to quote, will terminate our sketch of historical prophecy in the history which God has given us of the future. I would again remind you of that important fact, that Jewish history is especially the manifestation of the glory of Jehovah. To ask, In what does this history concern us? is to say, Of what use is it that I should know what my Father is about to do for my brethren and the manifestation of His character in His acts? It is evident, from the place which the subject occupies in His word, that their affairs are very dear to our God and Father, if they be not to us. It is in this people by the ways of God revealed to them, that the character of Jehovah is fully revealed, that the nations will know Jehovah, and that we may ourselves learn to know Him.

The same person may be king of a country, and father of a family; and this is the difference between God's actings towards us and the Jews. Towards the church, it is the character of Father; towards the Jews, it is the character of Jehovah, the King. His faithfulness, unchangeableness, His almighty power, His government of the whole earth. All this is revealed in His relationship towards Israel; and thus it is that the history of this people lets us into the character of Jehovah.

Psa. 126:

When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion . . . then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them.

See, on the same subject, Ezek. 39:6, 7:

And I will send a fire on Magog, on them that dwell carelessly in the isles; and they shall know that I am the Lord [Jehovah]. So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord [Jehovah], the Holy One in Israel. Verse 28: Then shall they know that I am the Lord [Jehovah] their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen; but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there.

The way in which the Father reveals Himself to our souls is by the gospel, by the Spirit of adoption; but Jehovah makes Himself known by His judgments -- by the exercise of His power on the earth. I have said, that the Father reveals Himself by the gospel, because the gospel is a system of pure grace -- a system which teaches us to act towards others on the principle of pure grace, as we have been acted on by the Father. It is not "eye for eye, tooth for tooth"; it is not what justice requires, the law of retaliation, or equity; but a principle according to which I ought to "be perfect, as my Father is perfect." But it will not be mere grace, that is, suffering evil and doing good, in the government of Jehovah. Jehovah, without doubt, will bless the nations; but the character of His kingdom is, that "judgment shall return unto righteousness" (Psa. 94:15). At the first coming of Jesus Christ, judgment was with Pilate, and righteousness with Jesus; but when Jesus shall return, judgment shall be united to righteousness. The people of Christ now, the children of God, ought to follow the example of the Savior (that is, not expect or wish that judgment should be in the rigor of righteousness; but they should be gentle and humble in the midst of all the wrongs which they suffer on the part of man). United to Christ, they are indemnified for all their wrongs in the strength of His intimate love, which comforts them by the consolations of the presence of His Spirit; and, more than this, by the hopes of the heavenly glory. On the other hand, Jehovah will console His people by the direct acting of His righteousness in their favor (see Psa. 65:55), and by re-establishing them in earthly glory.

The Jews, then, are the people by whom, and in whom, God sustains His name of Jehovah, and His character of judgment and righteousness. The church are the people in whom, as in His family, the Father reveals His character of goodness and love.

We have already touched upon the events which will happen to the Jews in the last time, by the quotations from Jeremiah, chs. 30 to 33. I will now cite a few other passages to the same effect, following the order of the prophets.

Dan. 12:1 . . . It is the presence of him who will act for the people of Daniel, that is, for the Jewish people. There are a few remarkable traits in this prophecy. First, God in His power, by the ministry of Michael, is to stand up for the children of Daniel's people; and it is to be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation. In this we have a clue to Matt. 24 and Mark 13:19.

The resurrection (Dan. 12: 2) applies to Israel. "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." You find the same expression in Isa. 26: "Thy dead shall live . . ."; and in Ezek. 37:12. It is a figurative resurrection of the people, buried as a nation among the Gentiles. In this revival it is said of those who rise, "Some to shame and everlasting contempt." This is what will happen to the Jews. Of those brought out from among the nations, some shall enjoy eternal life, but some shall be subject to shame and everlasting contempt (Isa. 66:24). At the time of the accomplishment of this prophecy all of Daniel's people are not brought up from among the nations. In a word, on the one hand, God is

standing up for His people in a time of distress; and, on the other, a remnant is delivered: such is a summary of Dan. 12.

In Hos. 2:13 unto the end, we see that the Lord will receive Israel, will bring her into the land, after having humbled her, but, having spoken to her also after His own heart, He will make her such as she was in the days of her youth; that Jehovah will make a covenant with her, and bless her in every kind of way on this earth, and will betroth her unto Himself for ever. There is an interrupted chain of blessings from Jehovah Himself down to the earthly blessings poured out in abundance upon Israel, who are the seed of God (for this is the force of the word Jezreel). On this account there is added (v. 23), "I will sow her unto Me in the earth." For Israel will become the instrument of blessing to the earth, as life from amongst the dead. At this time all is hindered by sin; spiritual wickedness is now "in heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12); and every description of misery abounds, accompanied though it be with many blessings (for God makes "all things work together for good to them that love Him"); but at that time there will be a fulness of earthly blessings.

Hos. 3:4, 5:

For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days.

They shall have neither the true God nor a false god (so it is with them now); but after that they shall seek Jehovah and David -- the Well-beloved or Christ.

Joel 3:1, 16-18, 20, 21. After having spoken of the nations at the time of the return of His people from captivity (vv. 1-15), and the judgments exercised upon the Gentiles, God speaks in the latter verses of the Jews. Jerusalem is to be holy; Jehovah will dwell in Zion; He will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel. This will be their case when the judgment of God shall fall upon the nations.

Amos 9:14, 15:

And I will bring again the captivity of my people . . . and I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up.

This is not yet accomplished. Verses 11, 12, are quoted in Acts 15, not for the purpose of showing that the prophecy had then come to pass; but to prove that God had all along determined upon having a people from out of the Gentiles; and that, therefore, the language of the prophets agreed with that which Simon Peter had been relating of what God had done in his days. It is not the accomplishment of the prophecy, but the establishing of a principle by the mouth of the prophets, as well as by the word of the Spirit through Peter.

Micah 4:1-8. Nor is this yet brought, to pass. It is, so to speak, a

topographical description of Jerusalem, when her first dominion is restored. In Micah 5:4, 7, 8, the name of Christ is respected and great to the ends of the earth; Israel everywhere the dew of divine blessing, and coming off victorious against all who oppose them.

With regard to Micah, you will remark (as we observed in a former lecture) how, in Micah 7:19, 20, the Spirit adverts to the promises made to the fathers without condition.

Zeph. 3:12, to the end. What language is this? God is said to be “silent [see margin] in His love”; He is so moved that He is “silent.” On whom does He lavish all this? Read v. 13:

The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies, neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.

Jehovah is in the midst of them, and nothing can disturb them.

Zech. 1:15, 17-21. Mention is here made of the four monarchies that scattered Israel, as themselves scattered by the force of the judgments of God.

Zech. 9:9 to the end:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem : behold, thy King cometh unto thee . . .

This, you will assert, is already accomplished. No; only in part. The Holy Spirit in the New Testament (John 12:15) cites this passage, but with the omission of the words “He is just, and having salvation” (saving Himself, margin). Jesus, in fact, cared not for Himself. When they said to Him, mocking Him, “If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross,” He took no notice. He hid not Himself from grief; far from saving Himself, He saved us; He spared not Himself that we might be spared.

Zech. 10:6 unto the end. When was it that Israel had been as “though the Lord had not cast them off”? Never yet.

Let us now turn to some passages which will show that, though the people of Israel will be restored in their land, there will only be a remnant saved.

Zech. 12:2 mentions a time of war, even of all the peoples round about, the peoples of the earth, against Jerusalem: but God will defend the city and its inhabitants in a miraculous manner, and the nations will be destroyed (v. 9). The Spirit of grace and supplication shall be poured out upon the remnant of Israel -- “all the families that remain”; and “they shall look upon Him Whom they have pierced, and mourn.”

Isa. 18. Whatever critical difficulties exist in this chapter, its great object is too evident to be obscured by any rendering whatever. The rivers of Cush are the Nile and Euphrates. The enemies of Israel, in the Biblical part of their history, were situated on these two rivers.

There is, in this prophecy, a call made to a country which is beyond them, to a distant land which had never, at the time of the prophecy, come into association with Israel. The prophet had then in his view some country which would come later upon the scene.

Isa. 18:3. God bids all the inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, to take cognizance. The nations are to have their eyes upon Israel; they are summoned by God to pay attention to what was taking place as to Jerusalem; they are all interested in her fate. The world is invited to watch the judgments about to take place. In the meanwhile (v. 4) God takes His rest, and lets the nations act of themselves. Israel will have returned into their land (vv. 5, 6).

It is a description of Israel returning to Judea by the help of some nation at a distance from the scene itself, which is neither Babylon nor Egypt, nor other nations which meddled in their affairs of old. We say not that it is France, or Russia, or England. The Israelites return to their land, but God takes no notice of them. Israel is abandoned to the nations; and when everything would indicate as if they were going to bear fruit anew (v. 5), behold the sprigs and branches cut down, and left to the fowls of the air to summer on, and to the beasts of the field to winter on (which terms are designations of the Gentiles). Nevertheless, at that time a present of this people shall be brought to Jehovah of hosts, and from this people “to the place of the name of the Lord of hosts, the mount Zion.”

Psa. 126:4. “Turn again our captivity, O Lord.” Zion and Judah will be first brought back. The captives of Zion were already brought back when this prayer was presented to God (v. 1); they are but the earnest of what God will do in the restoration of all Israel.

But here it is fitting to touch on the manner of God’s dealing with the houses of Judah and Israel in their judgment and dispersion. The first to be gathered are those who rejected Jesus, those who are guilty of His death. The ten tribes, as such, were not guilty of this crime; they had been already dispersed before the introduction of the four monarchies or world-empires into the rule of the earth. It was the Assyrians who led captive the ten tribes, before Babylon had existence as an empire. . . . those who rejected the Christ will be subjected to the Antichrist; they will make “a covenant with death, and an agreement with hell” (Isa. 28:15). But their covenant will destroy all their hopes. Having united themselves to Antichrist, they will undergo the consequence of this alliance, and at last will be destroyed. Two thirds of the inhabitants will be cut off in the country of Judea itself after their return (Zech. 13:8, 9).

But with the ten tribes the occurrences are different, as we know from Ezek. 20:32-39. Instead of two parts cut off in the land, the rebels -- that is, the disobedient and rebellious ones among Israel -- will not enter at all into Canaan. God does with them, as He did with Israel upon their rebellion after coming out from Egypt; He destroys them without their even seeing it.

Thus there are two classes, so to speak, of Israel in their return. First, the Jewish nation, properly speaking -- namely, Judah, and those allied with them in the rejection of the true Christ; they will be in connection with the Antichrist, and of them two-thirds will be cut off in the land. Secondly, those of the ten tribes coming up, of whom some will be cut off in the wilderness on their way into the land.

Matt. 23:37-39. This prediction, delivered by Jesus Himself, gives us the assurance of the coming of Jesus to restore Israel, and to reign in their midst:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, . . . your house is left unto you desolate . . . till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Israel will see Jesus, but it will be when this word of Psal. 118:26 shall go out of their mouth. The Psalm itself gives a happy picture of their joy at this time; and out of it the Savior drew the announcement of the judgment which He pronounced against the Jewish rulers upon their rejection of Him:

The stone, which the builders refused, is become the head stone of the corner.

Out of this Psalm, also, is drawn the joyful salutation with which the little children welcomed Him in the temple with Hosannahs -- fit precursors of those who, in happier times -- yet to come, will receive the hearts of little children, and will confess that Savior formerly rejected by their fathers! It is this Psalm which celebrates the exaltation and blessing of Israel -- the blessing due to the faithfulness of Jehovah alone; whilst it points out the sin of the nation in rejecting "the Stone" which was to become the foundation of God in Zion; but which was also, by the unbelief of the nation, the "Stone of stumbling" and of judgment.

Besides these two classes of Israelites, who will return by providential agency, but still of their own free accord, the Lord after His appearance will gather together from among the Gentiles the elect of the Jewish nation, who will be yet among the nations; and this return will be accompanied with great blessing. (See Matt. 24:31; cp. Isa. 27:12, 13, and 11:10, 12.)

We subjoin two principles, very simple and clear, which distinguish all preceding blessings (as, for instance, the return from Babylon) from the accomplishment of the prophecies of which we have been speaking. These two principles are -- first, that the blessings flow from the presence of Christ, the Son of David; secondly, that they are a consequence of the new covenant. Neither the one nor the other of these conditions was fulfilled at the return from Babylon, nor have they been since.<sup>297</sup> The gospel does not occupy itself with the earthly

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297. {The return from Babylon was not the regathering of Israel that we speak of in connection with the millennium. Isa. 11:11 says:

(continued...)

blessings of the Jews, which is the subject matter of these prophecies.

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297. (...continued)

And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] the Lord shall set his hand the second time to acquire the remnant of his people which shall be left from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the isles of the sea.

There was a return from the Babylonian captivity; that was the first time. There still remains the second, and final, regathering of Israel, and then shall the covenants of promise be made good to Israel by Christ.}

## Chapter 22

### *God's Promises to Abraham, and His Grace to the Church*

The following article is from *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 2:243-345, 359-361:

No one denies that the promises made to Abraham flowed from the grace of God. But it is a serious mistake, affecting our faith, our communion, and our conduct, to confound these promises to Abraham with God's promise in Christ by the gospel spoken of in Eph. 3:6. It is agreed that the Abrahamic covenant involved security, acceptance, favor, and friendship with God, for its objects. The question is, whether the Epistle to the Ephesians, for instance, does not reveal a far deeper and higher purpose of grace, which was never promised to Abraham, but was intentionally kept hid until the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, consequent upon the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ to the right hand of God in heaven. Neither reason nor tradition will help, but hinder, the solution of the question. But, what saith the scripture? Let us compare the two things, which I affirm to be totally distinct in range and character, though both find their source necessarily in the manifold grace of God.

The call and first revelation of the promise to Abram is found in Gen. 12:1-3,

Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

Subsequently, Jehovah appeared unto Abram and said, "Unto thy seed I will give this land" (v. 7). What can be plainer? A particular land given to Abram and his seed, a great nation, and a great name; blessing from God to Abram, and he a blessing to others; God treating men as they treated Abram; and in him blessing secured to all the families of the earth. Blessings natural and spiritual to Abram and his seed, and so even to the Gentiles {though not directly as covenanted} are, I believe, conveyed in this inalienable promise, part of which is repeated in still clearer terms in Gen. 13, and confirmed by sacrifice in Gen. 15. Then we have circumcision enjoined as the covenant sign in Gen. 17, where the name is changed to Abraham, "for a father of many nations have I made thee"; and, finally, after the son of the bondwoman is cast out, {then} in Gen. 22, we have Isaac, the son of the free-woman, the child and heir of promise, raised up from the dead in a figure, and the oath. See Heb. 6:

By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will

bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies: and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice (Gen. 22:16-18).

All the nations, or Gentiles, are to be blessed in the seed, but they and the seed<sup>298</sup> are quite distinct parties. The nations blessed therein are no more to be confounded with the Seed, than are the enemies whose gate the seed is to possess. There is blessing for both; but are the nations blessed in exactly the same way and in exactly the same degree as the seed? If it be so, where is the honored place of Abraham's seed; where is their peculiar privilege in virtue of the promises to the fathers? Or, after all, do they stand on one level of common indiscriminate blessing? If it be not so, and the seed is to have its own special promised place by divine favor, above all the nations who are blessed in it, then is it evident that the covenant with Abraham is one thing and "the mystery" is another, wherein no such differences are found; but the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and joint-partakers of God's promise in Christ by the gospel. The believing Jew from the heights, and the believing Gentile from the depths, of their earthly estate, are ushered into an unheard-of sphere of heavenly oneness in Christ, which is made good by the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth. Such is "the mystery," as far as regards the church.

For the doctrine of Ephesians is not merely justification by faith, and the death of Christ, as the basis of this divine righteousness, the sole ground on which stand all the saved from the beginning to the end of time: in Romans, we have that fully discussed, and applied to past, present, and future dispensations. Much less do we find here the death of Christ connected in a special way with the Jewish nation, or even with the spared Gentiles who may be saved during the future reign of the Messiah: of these things the Psalms and Prophets abundantly treat. But we are taught in Eph. 2:11-18, that, beside and apart from these applications of the death of Christ, there is a new and most glorious use to which the wisdom and the grace of God have turned it. He has founded on the cross, and effected by the Holy Ghost thereon given, a novel and heavenly structure, without parallel in the millennial period, and without precedent in the ages and generations which closed with the crucifixion.

Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus, ye, who sometime were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

298. In the most blessed and important sense, the Seed is Christ (Gal. 3:16). But, literally and quite truly, the seed means the Jews, as the Holy Ghost shows in Acts 3:25. Either sense suits the argument in the text.



For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances: for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and he came and preached peace to you who were afar off, and peace to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father {Eph. 2:11-18}.

Now, it is plain from scripture that the distinction of Jew and Gentile, with all its accompaniments, was set up of God, had His sanction so long as the earth in any way was owned (Matt. 10:5), and will be resumed when the church is caught up, and God begins to interfere immediately, and acts not, as now, in mere secret providence with the course of human things here below. The moment He enters upon the visible proof that there is a God Who judges the earth, the Jew appears first in responsibility -- in guilt, no doubt -- but first, assuredly, in blessing, by virtue of the promises to the fathers.

Accordingly the new covenant already ratified in the blood of Christ, but suspended in its application, save to a remnant of the Jews and an election from the Gentiles, who are together brought into and form the church, and enjoy its blessings -- this new covenant, when it takes effect in all its value and in its literal results, will not neutralize but sanction the divinely ordained separation of the Jew from the Gentile, and the supremacy of the former above the latter.

I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah (Jer. 31:31).

Is there a word said in this covenant of obliterating the difference of Jew and Gentile, of forming both into one new man, and of introducing them on the same level of intimacy to the Father? On the contrary, there is not a syllable about the Gentiles, but an emphatic assurance of blessing to the Jew, Jehovah undertaking to put His law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts {Heb. 8:10, 10:16}; to be their God, and they to be His people; all of them to know Him from the least to the greatest {Heb. 8:11}, for He will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

There is no question that abundant blessing will flow to the Gentiles.

Yea, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek Jehovah of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before Jehovah. Thus saith Jehovah of host, in those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you (Zech. 8:22, 23).

And it shall come to to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, Jehovah of hosts, and to keep the feast of the tabernacles (Zech. 14:16; Mic. 3, 5, 7:16; Jer. 3:17; see also Ps. 77, 96 - 106, &c.).

That is, the covenant order of blessing will be the Jews in the inner ring, and the Gentiles in the outer, when all lands make a joyful noise unto Jehovah.

Nothing can be more certain than the fact that Israel, sanctified by having Jehovah's sanctuary in their midst, will be kept aloof from and above the Gentiles, instead of both being made one body in Christ. That is to say, the abolition of Jewish exaltation above the Gentile is only for the church of the heavenly places. It was not so before Christ came the first time; it will not be so when He comes again. The space between these two boundaries is filled up by the formation of the church, where is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all: not a mere collection of all the individuals in every different dispensation, but a body now gathered into one by the presence of the Holy Spirit on earth, and united with the Lord Jesus Christ in His heavenly glory. Neither of these things could be till Jesus was glorified (John 7:39; {Acts 2:32, 33}; 1 Cor. 12:13). It was then that Christ took His place above as Head, and then that the church began to be called here below,

built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. 2:20-22).

As the difference just insisted on is of all importance, let us look at Isa. 59:20, 21; 60:1, 2, 3.

And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith Jehovah. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith Jehovah: My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith Jehovah from henceforth and for ever. Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples: but Jehovah shall rise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

Here also it is clear that, in the coming dispensation to which the Holy Spirit in Rom. 11 applies the passage, pre-eminence over the Gentiles is guaranteed to Israel.

The wealth of the Gentiles shall come unto thee" (Isa. 60: 5).

The Holy One of Israel . . . hath glorified thee. And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee.

Therefore thy gates shall be opened continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted (Isa. 60:11, 12).

Compare also the rest of this chapter, as well as Isa. 61 and 62. One portion of the

first is so decisive and striking that it may be well to cite it.

I will make an everlasting covenant with them; and their seed shall be known among the Gentiles (is this the same common position?) and their offspring among the peoples: all that see them shall acknowledge them that they are a seed which Jehovah hath blessed.

Here, plainly and indisputably, we have the literal fulfilment of the promises to Abraham and his seed; but it is evident that the terms of the prophecy, equally with those of the original covenant, are irreconcilable with the notion of identical blessings to Jews and Gentiles, all difference between them being utterly nullified.<sup>299</sup> On the contrary, great as may be the privileges to the nations of the earth, resulting from these promises, decided and blessed superiority will be the indefeasible prerogative of Israel. The Gentiles are to serve them, and the nations that will not shall perish. All this is in perfect accordance with the Abrahamic covenant whose accomplishment in any strict sense is yet future without one feature of resemblance to the church, which is entirely above such distinctions. For the Christian it is grace.

The prophecy of Zecharias (Luke 1:68–79) is evidently Jewish in its sources, its associations, and its hopes, as indeed had been the previous announcement of Gabriel to him (vv. 13–17).

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, &c. (is this the mystery which, from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God?) that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us (is this the character or manner of salvation to the church?); to perform the mercy promised to our fathers (are they really our fathers, or fathers of the Jewish people?), and to remember his holy covenant, the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, &c.

It is conceded that many of the blessings are common, such as “in holiness and righteousness before him,” faith resting on Messiah and the new birth; for there are, of course, general principles which characterize all the people of God in all ages. But I affirm that, as a whole, this prophecy, as yet unfulfilled, and clearly based upon the oath sworn to Abraham, is not in any way a charter of church privilege. To say that it is, would be, in effect, to efface the peculiar doctrine of such Epistles as to Ephesians and Colossians; or, in other words, to deny unwittingly the being and proper character of the church of God.

Moreover, it was no secret that the nations were to be blessed. It was as ancient a promise, we have seen, as that which secured the peculiar seat of honor

to Abraham's seed. It was repeated to Isaac (Gen. 26:4) and reiterated to Jacob (Gen. 38:14). A Jew ought not to have thought of Jehovah's pledge of blessing to his race without remembering that he himself was to be the channel of blessing to the nations. Will it be affirmed that this most familiar assurance of blessing to the Gentiles in the promised seed, published frequently and undisguisedly (as the apostle Paul showed) in Moses, and the Psalms, and the prophets, is the same thing as “the mystery” which has been “hid from ages and from generations, but is now made manifest to the saints” (Col. 1:26)? Is that secret and silent which was published from age to age and rehearsed from generation to generation? Can a simple and familiar covenant, revealed so often by Jehovah, and so often appealed to by His people, from the book of Genesis till the last prophet wound up the Old Testament canon (Mal. 1:11) -- can this be deemed a “mystery,” altogether concealed from the sons of men? Surely not. Gentile blessing therefore, as involved in the Abrahamic covenant, which was the constant expectation of Israel, wholly differs from “the mystery of Christ”; which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This mystery was not revealed before. It is now disclosed. From the beginning of the world it was (not known to God's people, but) hid in God (Eph. 3:9).

Indeed, we have only to read Matt. 16:18 in order to see that, even in the Lord's life-time here below, the church did not exist save in the purpose of God. It was His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus, but actually existed only after His death and resurrection. During His ministry He was not even beginning to build it: “Upon this rock I will build my church.” Hence it is said in Col. 1:18:

He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead.

Christ Himself, in resurrection, was the beginning. Souls had been born again; sinners had been brought by the faith of the Savior. But the church was a new body formed by the Holy Ghost, after its risen Head took His seat in heaven. Hence Heb. 12:23 distinguishes the church from the “spirits of just men made perfect” (i.e. the Old Testament saints), as plainly as from myriads of angels, a general assembly. Scripture applies the term “Church of God” only to the saints of the present period. The congregation of Jehovah, Israel, was wholly different.

Is it maintained then that election, redemption, faith, life, saintship, are peculiar to the church? By no means. The church of God shares these and other blessings with all the faithful of all times. But this does not make all the faithful to be the church; nor can it annul the peculiar standing which is traced as the church's portion, in Eph. 2, 3, 4. It is admitted fully that to us, members of Christ's body, it can be said, “All are yours.” Of the new covenant, though, strictly speaking, made with the house of Israel, we yet enjoy the blessing; and if we are Christ's, then are we Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. But it by no means follows that millennial Israel, for instance, though

299. At most identification is only involved in that wonderful hint of “thy seed” {“as of one”) in Gen. 22:18, in contrast with the numerous seed in v. 17, of which the apostle avails himself in Gal. 3: 16. This is now only for the Christian in the gospel.

enjoying the new covenant and the Abrahamic promise still more literally than ourselves, will have any portion in that mystery, or secret of God, which is distinct from either.

Scripture speaks of the faith of Abel, of Enoch, of Noah; but that the Abrahamic covenant was in operation as to them is assumption and false. Faith ever rests upon the word, i.e. the revelation of God; and the Abrahamic covenant was not disclosed until the time of Abraham, though the Savior had been pointed to from the first (Gen. 3:16). Saints previously rested on a revealed Redeemer, not on an unrevealed covenant.

The real stumbling-block, as appears in scripture, has ever been, not so much the Jewish channel of outward testimony traced in Rom. 11 as the temporary leveling of Jewish prerogative, and the grace which gathers out of Jews and Gentiles, alike children of wrath as traced in Eph. 2. The ordinary notion, which prevails to the present, is a specious form of the same self-conceit which vexed the church from its early days.

The "new covenant" and "new testament" are merely various versions of the same Greek phrase, *καινή διαθήκη*, of which the former is always, I believe, the right rendering, as regards the use of the full phrase in scripture. If so, the reasoning about the testator has no place save in the parenthesis of Heb. 9:16, 17 which seems owing to "inheritance" immediately preceding, besides being an admirable turn given to that other and familiar sense of the word *διαθήκη* singly. I do not believe the new covenant to be identical with the Abrahamic covenants, which are more extended in their scope, though, so far as Israel is concerned, they may coincide; but it is needless to discuss the point at this time.

Nor is there such an idea in the Bible as the grace-giving testament. The grace of God brings salvation, even to such as were strangers from the covenants of promise. There is no doubt that the shedding of blood is essential to the remission of sins, and that the new covenant is much more too. Eph. 2, as we have seen, introduces other truth. Nor is it scriptural to say, that "the promise" and "the new covenant" are convertible terms, though they may be intimately blended.

But we can heartily agree that unconditionality stamps the Abrahamic covenant, as the apostle so strongly insists in Gal. 3. It is evident that, when the Judaizers insisted upon the law, the apostle could appeal most powerfully to the promises of God, given so many centuries before the law (Gal. 3); when they insisted upon circumcision, he could triumphantly point to the faith which their father Abraham had, being yet uncircumcised (Rom. 4). If therefore God now justified the uncircumcision through faith, it was no more than He had done in the case of faithful Abraham. Nor could any objections be more completely silenced. But to say that the Abrahamic covenant is the channel of God's grace to us argues an inadequate view of our wretchedness as outcast dogs of the Gentiles, as well as of the bright heavenly atmosphere into which we are brought, when baptized,

Jews or Gentiles, by one Spirit into one body.

On the head of glory, Eph. 3:21 seems to show that the church, as the reflection of Christ's heavenly glory, will not lose its singular blessedness "throughout all ages, world without end" {Eph. 3:21}. And Rev. 21:1-8 appears to confirm the idea that, even in the everlasting state, the holy city, new Jerusalem, is distinct from though connected with the men who people the then purged universe. It is true that the Old Testament speaks of Jehovah marrying Israel, and Israel's land. Is it really meant that this equalizes them or their land with the Bride, the Lamb's wife? But here one may pause. The grand principle has been already asserted.

## Chapter 23

### *Conclusions on Government and Call*

The following article is by J. N. Darby:

#### ***THE CONNECTION OF THE CROSS WITH THE ENTIRE DEVELOPMENT OF GOD'S WAYS WITH MAN***

Whatever brings out the perfectness of the blessed Lord's work, and the way in which it is adapted to the whole moral condition of man, while glorifying God in respect of that condition, and thus bringing man into association with God's glory -- whatever shows the connection of the sacrifice of the cross with the entire development of God's ways with man confirms the faith of the saint, and enables him to admire the wisdom of God with increased intelligence and a deeper spirit of adoration. I send you therefore a few, I trust, plain thoughts as to the way the cross bears on the previous history of man, the manner in which it is linked up with it all, in connection with some of the statements of Galatians 3 as to the order in which law and promise came.

In the first place, to say nothing of the eternal counsels of God or of the promise of eternal life given us in Christ Jesus before the world was ( precious as the consideration of it is, as founding our hopes on the sure thoughts of God Himself), we have from the outset, when sin had entered, the blessing and the deliverance established in Christ, the second Adam, not in any promise to the first.

"The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." The Seed of the woman was the second Adam, and, as is evident, not the first. The first is quite passed by. Man, the first Adam, was neither righteous nor holy. He was innocent, which excludes both righteousness and holiness. He had not the knowledge of good and evil. Righteousness discriminates between good and evil in the relationship in which we stand towards others, whether God or the creature, and acts in the sense of responsibility, according to the claim which such relationships have on us. Holiness hates evil intrinsically in itself; delighting in purity, in God's nature, it abhors all that is discordant with it.

God is righteous, because He appreciates infinitely all that is due<sup>300</sup> to every relationship in which any being stands to another, and, above all, all beings to Himself. The highest manifestation of righteousness, the absolute manifestation of it in perfection, was His receiving Christ to Himself. He is holy, because He perfectly knows good and evil, delights in good, and abhors evil. We should at once be morally shocked if one spoke of God's being innocent ( that is, ignorant of good and evil), and justly so. Now man was innocent. He enjoyed the goodness of God with thankfulness, alas! how short a time, and his ways towards others would have been the fruit of natural relationship where no evil was. Affection and loving care would have flowed out, without being cast on a sense of duty, because affection had ceased to prompt what the relationship in its perfection supposed.

But this was not to last; he soon fell into the knowledge of good and evil, and a bad conscience, which feared to meet God. He was no longer innocent. Conscience has a double character, which we do not always distinguish; the sense of responsibility to another; and the knowledge of good and evil in itself. The latter element was absent from Adam's mind before his fall. The sense of responsibility was there, the debt of obedience; it was in the nature of his relationship with God; but distinguishing things as good and evil in themselves had no place in his mind. To have eaten of the tree was no evil whatever in itself: he would have eaten of it as innocently as of any other in itself. God had forbidden it, and all depended on that command. Adam innocent was formed to understand responsibility, to obey. To avoid a thing, where there was no command because it was evil, was unknown to him. He was innocent, ignorant of evil to be avoided. In his mind nothing evil in itself existed to be avoided.

He got conscience by the fall, which made it a bad one. Henceforth he distinguished things as wrong in themselves. He was in many things a law to himself, his thoughts accusing and excusing one another. If he forgot God even -- it is hard to forget Him altogether when passion is over, natural when passion acts; for passion is forgetfulness of Him and of duty -- but if he forgot God, conscience was there to tell him of wrong done. Righteousness, however the maintenance of it might be dreaded, had now its place and claim in his mind; and holiness, however absent it might be from him, had a meaning and a name through his knowledge of the evil it abhorred, which made it terrible in God in whom it could not but be found. Such was fallen man, lost, ruined, by his perverse will. He had listened to Satan, and trusted and believed him rather

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300. Hence, in sparing Mary in her supposed fault, it is said, "Joseph, being a just man." For righteousness estimates the claim another may have on us, the weakness of another, of ourselves, the feelings of a good towards a fallen man, so that summum jus summa injuria. Cruelty, or hardness of feeling, is not righteousness more than the allowance of evil would be.

than God, whose favour he had willingly sacrificed for the pleasure of eating an apple, and the presumptuous hope of being as God in His knowledge of good and evil. As a principle, he got that knowledge in subjection to the evil he knew, and with the loss of his sweet natural relationship in innocence to God and all around him.

He was fallen, sinful, disobedient, guilty, and under judgment. To such a sinful and rebellious being promise could not be, and was not, made. It would have been sanctioning evil with blessing.

But a blessed hope is set before him as the object of recovering faith. The second Adam is set up; to him the promise (if promise we should call it) is made. He is announced as the destroyer of the serpent's power, as the first Adam had been the victim of its subtlety. The Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.

Thus, the first dealing with man after the fall was the setting up of the second Adam, the Lord Christ, as the destroyer of him who had subverted the first. The first was passed by. He was neither the vessel of promise, nor the heir of blessing. Individually he may have laid hold on the hope of the second Adam, but there was no restoring promise to himself. Another was set up in his place, to whom and for whom faith should look.

Such, then, was the position of man; sin, conscience in the sense of knowledge of good and evil, and (sin being there) a guilty and defiled conscience, and the revelation of a deliverer. The perverse will which had brought in the sin was not corrected by the conscience of evil, nor the revelation of a deliverer. It expanded itself with the expansion of humanity, and corruption and violence filled the earth.

And here I must distinguish, without enlarging upon it, between God's government of the earth and the result of sin as to relationship with Himself, and the salvation and deliverance which is the remedy for it. As regards government (that is, present effects upon earth -- the ways of God), man, instead of paradise, finds an earth of toil and pain, and woman sorrow and grief of spirit in that which was natural joy to her. As regards the full effect of sin, both are alike driven out from God's presence, and the way of the tree of life closed to them. They themselves dread the God who should have been the spring of joy to them. The deluge which closed the scene of antediluvian wickedness was the judgment of the earth, the display of God's government of it. Eternal salvation and glory is quite another thing, as is everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power. All, it is true, will be in Christ's hands. He will judge and govern, and He is the eternal Saviour; but the two things are quite distinct, though brought into connection in His Person, and so in the saints when the glory comes. The just distinction of the two will clear the mind on many points.

But God pursued the development of His ways in grace for the instruction and blessing of man.

Having called Abraham, and led him out from his country, kindred, and father's house, and appropriated him to Himself as His own, so to speak, in the world, as taken out of it, He gives him the promise. He becomes the father of the faithful, and the root of the olive-tree of God. The chosen and called one becomes the depositary and stock of promise.

Here positive promise begins, not merely the revelation of a deliverer who should destroy the works of the devil on the one hand, and a conscience knowing the evil in which it walked on the other, but a positive promise to a given object, "in thee"; so that the grace which called him out of the world singled him out also as its heir, and the vessel of the blessing of God in it.

The promise was unconditional and absolute. God gives it as the revelation of a purpose He will accomplish, and addresses it to Abraham, so as to fix the person in whom it was to have its accomplishment. God interferes in blessing, reveals His intention to confer it dependent on His own faithfulness alone. He blesses because He is pleased to bless, and blesses him whom He calls out to enjoy it. The promise extends out too, remark, to the whole world as to the sphere of its application. "In thee shall all nations be blessed." It is universal in the sphere of its application, absolute in its character, and its accomplishment dependent on the sole faithfulness of God.

In figure there was a development of this, which casts fresh light on the ways of God. Isaac is offered up, a remarkable type of the offering of Jesus, of the Father's not sparing His Son. He is received again from the dead in a figure, and presents a risen Christ after the accomplishment of His sacrifice. Thereupon the promise is confirmed to him. The promise of the blessing of the nations was not given to Abraham and his seed. It was made to Abram alone in Genesis 12; and so in Galatians 3 we read in the original, "And to Abram were the promises made, and to his seed." So again, the promise which was confirmed before of God to Christ (not in Christ). Hence it is the apostle insists upon its being one, for the promises to Abraham, as father of the Jews, were made in common to him and to his seed together; and it was promised that his seed should be as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is by the seashore, innumerable. Whereas the promise of the blessing of the nations was given to Abram first, and then confirmed to the one seed, Isaac, figure of Christ sacrificed and risen again, with no mixture of anyone else, nor mention of a numerous posterity.

But to return. The promise was absolute and unconditional, the announcement of the accomplishment of blessing on God's part through the one promised Seed, an accomplishment dependent on His own faithfulness alone. The question of righteousness in those who were to enjoy it was not

raised. God's grace in blessing was revealed, and, we may say with the apostle, in Christ; but the sin of those who should enjoy it was untouched, conscience left without resource, or without raising a question indeed about it. The revelation of a deliverer and the promise of God were now brought together, but the state of him who was to be blessed was not entered on in any way. Such was the force of the unconditional promise made to Abraham. It made the blessing of the nations certain: the question of righteousness was not raised. God had promised to Abraham, and confirmed it to the one Seed. His faithfulness would perform it.

After this came the law, redemption having been prefigured in the exodus and the passage of the Red Sea. The law raised the question of righteousness -- it claimed it on the part of God. The promise was addressed to those under it on condition of obedience. "If you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine, and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation . . . And all the people answered together, and said, All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do."

Here then the blessing was made dependent on the obedience of man. The mediator was not of one, but between two parties; and the covenant rested not simply on the infallibility of one who promised, but upon the obedience of another party also. For God is one: a mediator implies two parties; and here the accomplishment of the blessing rests on the condition of the obedience of the human party. The law then raised the question of righteousness which the promise had not at all. But on man's part there was utter failure as to it, and the law worked wrath and brought men under a curse.

Thus, up to Christ, we have conscience, promise, and law -- law coming in by the bye (pareiselthe), after the certain and infallible promise to the Seed, to raise the question of righteousness on God's part with man, stating the rule of it if man was to accomplish it for God, what creature-righteousness (if such there were) ought to, and must be. It came in between the promise and its fulfilment for the necessary and important object, an object which could not be passed by, of righteousness before God being laid down as needed, to make good God's claim of it against man, but against man already a sinner.

I may add, before speaking of Christ's death, that He came as a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises to the fathers (for circumcision was not of Moses, but of the fathers); that is, He presented Himself as the accomplishment of the promises made to them in connection with men living in the flesh; so that, if received (that is, if man had not been utterly and wholly alienated from God), the blessing was there, both for Israel and all nations to be blessed also in the promised Seed -- the gathering of the peoples to Shiloh come in Israel -- the staves of beauty and bands would not have been broken. But the truth was, man was an utter sinner, his carnal mind

enmity against God; and Christ, whatever grace He came in, could not but be God manifested in flesh, and light in the world. Without law man was lawless, under law a law-breaker; and when light and grace came, yea, God Himself, in lovingkindness and truth, he was the rejecter of all in which blessing was.

Thus, however, promise also was rejected by the Jew who had it, and all was utterly lost for man; there remained no link between him and God; or rather the proof was now afforded that there was, and could be, none between God and man in the flesh. This -- for He was perfect love -- was, I doubt not, the sense of what was expressed by Jesus in the words, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" The love was there, full, perfect, active in His heart. He shewed it in all that He did, in all it could be shewn in; but as to the proper effect of its power, its true object -- the reconciling man to Himself, it was, so to speak, driven back into Himself; blessed be God! unweakened, but driven back, finding no response in man's heart, nothing to which it could attach itself there, in the selfish enmity which reigned there. For His love He had hatred.

But the death of Jesus opened the full flood-gates to reveal all God's love, and accomplish all God's purposes. He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. He glorifies God about sin there, and accomplishes righteousness in the highest and divine sense; that is, He meets the fullest claims, and secures and makes good the perfect display of the divine nature and character, and this in respect of sin. So that grace reigns through righteousness, and not merely to present blessing but to eternal life through Jesus Christ our lord. And now see how the death and present position of Christ<sup>301</sup> meets the whole previous unfolding of the grounds on which man stood with God. Sin is put away by the sacrifice of Himself; conscience is perfectly purged according to God's own knowledge of good and evil; righteousness is established before God, the accomplishment of the promise is established. in His Person. Man had no righteousness for God, but Christ, dead and risen again, is of God made unto us righteousness.

The true heir of promise is there, and can take all the promises up in righteousness, which gives us also a title to enter into them, His position answering to Isaac's when the promise was confirmed to him after his being offered up in figure. All the promises of God are Yea and Amen in Him, and we are in Him. God having established us in Him who has taken His place in the power of a new life, as the Head of a new race belonging to Him by faith, righteous in Him, as we were sinners in the first Adam. And this reaches out (according to His promise) to sinners of the Gentiles as to the Jews, through

301. Of course the believer alone has an actual portion in it; I speak of the value of the work in itself.

the putting away of sin, and the communication of a life as new to one as to the other. There was no link between God and the old man, nor union between a sinless Christ and sinful flesh, though Christ was a true man come in the likeness of it. But there is a link between a believer and Jesus risen, in a new life given to the believer, in which, by the Holy Ghost, he is united to Him who in righteousness is before God in heavenly places. Christ's death writes death on all, absolute death -- all are dead. There is nothing in man, as he is in himself, in common with divine life in Him (hence the apostle knew Christ no more in that way, present in the world, alive in the midst of men in the flesh, the Messiah of promise alive here below); but in that same death there is the answer to the whole condition of man in the flesh as a sinner; and, in taking the new position of life in accomplished righteousness in resurrection, Christ lays the ground of righteousness in a new way (God's righteousness, not man's, though wrought out in Him who was, and is, a man, and recognized by setting that man at God's right hand), so that grace can go out according to it to the glory of God by us.

Thus sin is put away, conscience purged, the curse of the law gone for them who were under it, righteousness wrought out, that the blessing and the promise might come in all fulness on believers through Jesus Christ. All that was brought out in need before on man's part, or promised on God's, was such, on the one hand, and finds its accomplishment, on the other, in Christ; and all the moral elements, on the ground of which God had dealt with man, are brought out, and established in grace in Christ -- promises which man could not take up in righteousness, nor God righteously confer on him, yet which He surely must fulfil, as His own promises now run freely in all their fulness, on the ground of an everlasting and divine righteousness, and flow forth from divine love to believers, found as sinners among Jews or Gentiles, according to the import which is given to these promises by the death and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. The order is: sin<sup>302</sup> -- conscience (death and separation from God) -- promise -- law, raising the question of man's righteousness (law broken, and promise despised) -- Christ's death (sin put away, the law's curse removed, conscience purged, righteousness divinely wrought out), and then He risen, as the head of a new race, in the power of the Spirit and eternal life -- the promises enjoyed according to the divine counsels and divine righteousness; Christ being Himself the heir, after the pattern of the offered and risen Isaac, and believers in Him cleansed from sin and divinely righteous by that which was wrought before they were grafted in Him, after the power of a new life, and in the energy of the Holy Ghost.<sup>303</sup>

302. Here Christ is already announced, and Adam passed by, looked at as head of the race.

303. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 22:365-373.