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## THE OATH-BOUND COVENANT

– MARCH 2. – GENESIS 15:5-18. –

"He is faithful that promised." – Hebrews 10:23.

IN VARIOUS TERMS the Lord eight times repeated to Abraham His Covenant. Today's Study directs our attention to God's oath, whereby that Covenant was confirmed to Abraham. And St. Paul calls our attention to the fact that these numerous repetitions and specifications of the Covenant, as well as God's oath attesting, were intended specially for us – for Spiritual Israel – "that who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us [in the Gospel]; which hope [expressed in the Covenant made with Abraham and confirmed with an oath] we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." – Hebrews 6:18,19.

Thus the Apostle declares that this Covenant has not yet been fulfilled and that Christians, no less than the Jews and the whole world of mankind, are vitally interested in its fulfilment. We may have wondered, Why did God repeat the Promise so frequently to Abraham, and then confirm it to Isaac and to Jacob, etc.? But when we see that this Promise, as a nutshell, contains the entire Plan of God for human Redemption and Restitution, as an acorn contains an oak tree, this explains to us the Divine particularity. It explains to us also why this Promise made to Abraham is continually referred to by the Apostles in their presentation of the hope for the Church and for the world.

The Promise primarily was to Abraham himself – "Lift up now thine eyes,...to the north, and to the south, and to the west, and to the east; all the land which [R5178 : page 43] thou seest, to thee will I give it, and thy seed after thee." Although God's providence led the children of Israel into that land, and although it was given to them

by Joshua to be their inheritance, this did not fulfil the conditions of the Promise. The Israelites did not have permanent possession of the land. Time and again it passed under the rule of the Philistines, the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, etc.; and now for many centuries it has been under the rule of the Turks.

The Jews have now no more right to that land than had the Canaanites, Amalekites and others whom they drove out, except through this great Oath-bound Covenant made to Abraham. How foolish, therefore, do those intellectual Jews appear who disclaim Abraham as a mythical character, and who wholly distrust God and the promises that He made to Abraham, and who, nevertheless, claim the Land of Promise! It is not *their* Land of Promise, and never will belong to any except those who hold to the Promise. – Romans 4:11-14.

### **ABRAHAM'S THREE WIVES TYPICAL**

While Abraham and his wives were all real personages, their affairs were so supervised by the Almighty that they became types. Thus Abraham was a type of God, and Isaac a type of Messiah. Isaac's wife, Rebecca, typified the Church, the Elect Little Flock of this Gospel Age, for whom God has provided joint-heirship with the Redeemer in His great Kingdom, and through whom, as the Seed of Abraham, all the families of the earth will be blessed. – Galatians 3:29.

As Abraham was a type of the Almighty, so his wives were types of God's three great Covenants, through which all of His blessings will come by and by. St. Paul explains that, as Sarah was barren, so the primary, or chief, Covenant of God was barren for a long time – until Jesus came. Meantime, Hagar representatively became the wife, and attempted to bring forth the heir of promise, but failed. St. Paul declares that in this Hagar typified the Covenant made with Israel at Sinai, which failed to bring forth the real Seed of Abraham, competent to bless all the families of the earth.

As Hagar was a bond-maid, she typified the bondage of the Law Covenant; and her child Ishmael, Inspiration points out, typified the Jewish people. They were indeed related to God, but as children of a Covenant of bondage. As later on, the barren Sarah brought forth the son of promise, so, St. Paul explains, God's original Covenant in due time brought forth the true Heir, Jesus – Messiah.

In one figure, all the followers of Jesus are reckoned as His members, under Him as their Head, as the Apostle says, "We brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." In another figure, Jesus is pictured as a Bridegroom, and His followers a Bride company. This picture is shown in Rebecca, who became Isaac's wife, and joint-heir with him to the riches of Abraham and the promises to his seed. In the type Sarah died prior to the time that Isaac married, which signifies that this primary Covenant of God, made with Abraham, will reach its fulfilment in the bringing forth of the completed Messiah, Head and Body, Bridegroom and Bride. These will be the Seed of Abraham, through whom all nations will be blessed.

### **ABRAHAM'S ALL GIVEN TO ISAAC**

In the type Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac, through him making provision for Ishmael and for his other children by his third wife, Keturah. In the antitype God bestows all His fulness upon Christ, The Messiah, and through Him makes provision for the Natural Israelites and for all the families of the earth – all who are to be blessed through the antitypical Isaac – The Christ.

The inspired interpretation is that Hagar and Sarah were types of the Law Covenant and of our covenant of this Gospel Age, which gives us assurance that Abraham's third wife, who was taken after the death of Sarah and who bore him many children, typified the New Covenant, which the Bible declares will soon be inaugurated – at the close of this Gospel Age. Under that New Covenant and at the hands of the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, The Christ, during the

thousand years of the Messianic reign, all the families of the earth will be blessed. Such is the length, the breadth, the height and depth of God's Love for humanity, and His provision for their future!

Thus seen, God's Promise to Abraham had only a partial beginning at Mount Moriah, and the development of the real Seed of Abraham had only its start in Jesus, and the real Seed which is to bless the world, according to His Promise, is not yet complete. Our hope is that this Spiritual Seed will soon be completed by the First Resurrection. Then, the secondary part of the Promise, which relates to the natural man – the world in general – will begin to be fulfilled; because then the Messiah class, the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, in power and great glory beyond the veil, will set up a Kingdom – begin to exercise Messianic power and authority and thus begin to bless the world.

Messiah's reign, according to the Scriptures, is to last a thousand years. Its effect will be the binding of Satan, the restraining of sin, the scattering of ignorance and superstition, and the general enlightenment of mankind. Under that enlightening influence, the "knowledge of God will fill the whole earth as the waters cover the great deep," until none shall need to teach his neighbor, because all will know, understand and appreciate the Divine arrangement and the privileges then possible to them.

Under that reign, not only the living will be blessed and led back to health, perfection and everlasting life, but all that are in their graves will be awakened and come forth to similar knowledge, privileges and opportunities. Only thus could those families of the earth be blessed who died, before Abraham's time and since, in utter ignorance of God and His glorious arrangements.

### **AS THE STARS AND AS THE SAND**

Only of late have Bible students discerned that Abraham is to have two seeds, exclusive of the Ishmaelites of the Law, or Hagar

Covenant. "Thy Seed shall be as the stars of heaven, and as the sands of the seashore." The stars of heaven fitly picture to us a glorified Christ and His Church, the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, changed from human nature to Divine nature, from earthly conditions to heavenly conditions. These are the heirs of Galatians 3:29, and are referred to by St. Paul again when he says, "As star differeth from star in glory, so is the resurrection of THE dead." – 1 Corinthians 15:41,42.

But God's glorious Plan will only begin its accomplishment in the glorification of the Church. All the families of the earth, like the sands of the seashore, will be privileged to come into relationship with God under Messiah's Kingdom. All who will then knowingly and wilfully reject the Divine arrangement will be cut off in the Second Death. But all who then will accept the terms of Messiah's Kingdom and become obedient thereto will be gradually brought to perfection, and because of faith and obedience become identified with God and become the earthly, or human seed of Abraham, blessed with human perfection and everlasting life in an earthly Eden.

### **GOD'S OATH TO ABRAHAM**

Professor Dods has ably pointed out that the procedure of cutting animals in two parts and passing between **[R5178 : page 44]** them was an ancient form of solemn obligation or contract – an oath. Thus God adopted the strongest possible symbolism for assuring Abraham and all his posterity that His Covenant to bless Abraham and his Seed will never be broken. Incidentally, a prophecy was made, showing that it would be four hundred years before Abraham's posterity would have even a semblance of Divine favor, and that meantime they would be under the yoke of bondage to Egypt, and then would be brought forth.

St. Stephen, evidently voicing the sentiment of all the Apostles, noted the fact that God's promise to Abraham had not been fulfilled

up to that time, even though the Israelites had possessed Canaan off and on for centuries. The promise reads that the land shall come to Abraham and to his seed after him. St. Stephen noted the fact that Abraham never owned enough of Canaan to set his foot upon. His reasoning is that after Messiah and His Bride shall be glorified as the Kingdom, then Abraham will come forth from the dead to inherit the land and bestow it upon his posterity. But the antitype, we have seen, will be larger; for the whole earth shall be the Paradise of God, and the Land of Canaan, to all who shall return to harmony with God, and through faith and obedience be accepted as the seed of Abraham.

