

SUPERIORITY OF THE ORIGINAL ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

THE Scriptures mention three great Covenants, typified by the three wives of Abraham. These Covenants are represented in the order of those wives. Sarah was the first wife of Abraham – the only acknowledged wife. Then came Hagar, Sarah's maid-servant; and later Keturah. Sarah and Hagar each had one son, but Keturah had six. The Scriptures show that Abraham made Isaac his heir (Gen. 25:5), and that through Isaac both Ishmael and the sons of Keturah received their portion. The fact that Ishmael was born before Isaac did not alter the fact that Isaac was the heir.

From the very beginning, the Covenant which God had in mind was the one which is in operation in the Church – the Abrahamic Promise, or Covenant. St. Paul declares (Gal. 3:8) that God preached the Gospel to Abraham in advance, saying, "In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12:3; 28:14.) The same Apostle also shows that the original Abrahamic Covenant mentions two seeds, represented in the statement, "I will multiply thy seed (1) as the stars of heaven, and (2) as the sand which is upon the sea shore." (Gen. 22:17.) As Abraham here typified God, the Promise shows two classes developed as God's children – (1) Christ and the Church, on the spirit plane; and (2) the Restitution class of mankind, on the human plane.

St. Paul refers to these two seeds in Rom. 4:16,17, the one developed under Faith, and the other under Law and Works. The first, the Spiritual Seed, has been in process of development during this Gospel Age. The second, the seed according to the flesh, the Restitution class (with the exception of the Ancient Worthies, developed previous to the Gospel Age), will be developed under

the New Covenant and by its Mediator, according to Law and Works, and not by Faith merely.

The Law Covenant, made at Sinai, was a type of the New Covenant, and had for its mediator Moses, the man of God. This Covenant brought nothing to perfection, however, for its mediator, as well as the people, was imperfect. St. Paul explains that Israel, typified by Ishmael, did not receive the blessing, but that The Christ received it. Later, however, Israel is to receive a blessing, as the Apostle points out; and that blessing will be brought by the New Covenant, after the glorification of the Church.

The question naturally arises, If the Abrahamic Covenant contained the Divine Promise to the full, both for the Church and for the world, why did God arrange for two other Covenants; namely, the Law Covenant, instituted at Mount Sinai with Israel, and having Moses for its mediator, and the New Covenant, which is to follow, and under which the whole world is to be blessed?

PURPOSE OF THE ADDED COVENANTS

We answer that these two Covenants were added to further elucidate the Divine Purpose, and to help us to appreciate the operation of Divine Love and Justice.

(1) The Law Covenant was added to the Abrahamic Promise, or Covenant, as St. Paul explains, to fill up the time until the promised Seed should come, to whom the Covenant applied, and this was necessary because of sin, that the high Divine standard for the Seed might be shown. The Law Covenant with Israel rendered this very service; for it set up the standard which approved Jesus and condemned all others. It also helped to develop the Jewish nation toward God and righteousness, and to fit and prepare some of them for the glorious High Calling of the Gospel Age, which ultimately came to them, inviting them to Divine favor and joint-heirship with Messiah in the Millennial Kingdom.

The Law Covenant also provided certain typical transactions and prophecies, which have been very beneficial to Spiritual Israel during this Gospel Age, illustrating to us in these types and shadows of the Law, and enunciating to us in the prophecies of the Old Testament, various matters appertaining to the blessing of the Church during this Age, and that of the world during the next Age.

(2) Through the New Covenant – the second addition to the original, Abrahamic Covenant – the world is to get all of its blessings and favors of Restitution. This New [Law] Covenant has not yet been inaugurated; for the Mediator who is to inaugurate it, and to cause its blessings to reach every member of Adam's race during the Millennial Age, has not yet been completed. This New Covenant will be inaugurated in the end of this Gospel Age, and its work will embrace the entire period of the Millennium.

Jesus, our Redeemer and Head, is the appointed Mediator of the New Covenant by virtue of the merit of His own sacrifice at Calvary. He could have sealed it and begun at once its operation, had not the Father "provided some better thing for US" (the Church, the Bride of Christ, whom God foreknew as Jesus' members), than for the Ancient Worthies. This is the Mystery – that the Gospel Age has been devoted to the development of the **Body** of the Mediator. – Ephesians 3:3-6; Colossians 1:27. [R5300 : page 260]

THE CHILDREN OF THE OATH

The Scriptures clearly show that our Lord was the Messiah, the long-promised Seed of Abraham. (Luke 1:32,33,55,72-74; 2:11; John 1:41; 4:25,26.) "The Church, which is His Body," is also developed under the original Abrahamic Covenant, which God **bound with an oath**. St. Paul calls it "the hope set before us, which we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." (Heb. 6:13-20.) Again, he says to the Church, "Ye, brethren, as Isaac was, are the

children of the Promise." (Gal. 4:28.) The Church are the children of the *Oath*.

Our begetting Promise, through Christ, to the *new nature*, is very different from that by which the Jews were constituted the House of Servants, and wholly different from those promises by which restored Israel and all the families of the earth will be brought to human perfection through Restitution processes, as children of the Keturah, or New Covenant. Since our Lord was developed under the Abrahamic Covenant, the Church also *must be* developed under that Covenant; for the Spiritual Seed cannot be the child of *two* mothers. It is written, "In *Isaac* shall thy Seed be called." – Gen. 21:12.

THE NEW COVENANT EVERLASTING

It is very evident that the world does not enter into New Covenant relationship with God individually at the beginning of the Millennial Age, and will do so only at the end of that Age. Throughout that period, the matter will be strictly and solely in the hands of the Mediator. During that time He will uplift mankind, and make them individually and collectively (as many as are willing) worthy of God's everlasting life and blessing. So then, we see clearly that the end of the Millennial Age will be the end of the Mediatorship of Christ, and will mean the personal and individual New Covenant relationship of each one of the world.

There is another view, however, which should have our consideration, and that is this: The same New Covenant that starts with the beginning of the Millennial Age will continue through all eternity. There is not to be an additional New Covenant at the end of the thousand years of Christ's reign. This New Covenant will be operated, not directly between God and man, but through the Mediator. In this Covenant, God agrees that He will remember the sins and iniquities of the world no more, that He will have nothing against them, and that they may have His blessings the same as

though they were personally received of Himself. They will be received through their Representative, The Mediator, The Christ.

The whole world during the Millennial Reign will be in Covenant relationship with God, in exactly the same **[R5301 : page 260]** way that Israel was in Covenant relationship with God – through the Mediator. The Law Covenant persisted after Moses died. So this New Covenant will continue after Christ shall have finished His work. The whole world will be under that Covenant arrangement. But before God finally accepts them, He will give them a test to see how many of them will be found worthy of everlasting life. Hence the test at the close of the thousand years is a test by *Jehovah*, a test to prove the worthiness of each to enter into everlasting covenant relationship with Him. They will not be tested as a nation or as a race, but each individual must establish his own right to this covenant relationship – a *new* covenant relationship in that the original, similar relationship was vitiated by Father Adam's disobedience.

Throughout the thousand years of Messiah's Reign, He as Mediator has absolute control of the whole human family. His Law and His arrangements, in full harmony with those of Jehovah, will be the ones that will be operative. They will be more favorable than any arrangement *Jehovah* could *directly* make; for mankind being imperfect, would be incapable of perfect thoughts and words and deeds for awhile, and Jehovah's Law cannot recognize sin in any degree.

The Mediator will have mankind fully under His control and regulations for the purpose of uplifting all who *will*. This will include the right, also, to destroy in the Second Death any who will not obey. He can exercise the full powers of an autocrat in the matter. No one will have any authority but Himself. The Son having *bought* the world, He will be an Autocrat for those thousand years. The Kingdom will be a Reign of compulsion. This

will be necessary for the correction of the world in righteousness, with a view to their perfecting.

A FULL TRIAL GUARANTEED TO ALL

The Scriptures are clear in their declaration that God has purposed from the beginning that mankind shall have another, an individual, trial for everlasting life, wholly free from the injury received by them as a result of the failure of Adam in the first trial. Provision has been made for this, so that Justice can sanction the arrangement. To this end, Christ tasted "death for every man." He "gave Himself a Ransom for all, to be testified in *due time*." The *due time* for some is in the present Age. The *due time* for others will be in the Messianic Age.

Those who die during the thousand years of Christ's Reign will be those only who will have had a full trial. They will be those who remain unconverted, those whose *wills* are not right. But God purposes that none shall perish because of ignorance, misunderstanding. Therefore God has made full provision for the enlightenment of all (I Tim. 2:3-6), and that all who will be obedient shall be saved; and this full opportunity will be brought to all through Christ's Kingdom.

If, under the Messianic Reign, some will die a hundred years old, who are still imperfect, not fully restored to perfection, how can such be said to have had a *full* trial? The answer is that God's arrangement for every member of the race is that Christ in His Mediatorial Kingdom will help them out of their fallen condition, *if they will*. The condition required is that they shall accept and seek to obey the Divine will. After coming to a clear knowledge of the Truth, all such will be helped out of their weaknesses, allowance being made for all their failures through imperfection. But those who would sin wilfully under such knowledge and opportunity, would do the same if they had full knowledge and ability.

This last class are spoken of as angels, or messengers, of Satan and Sin; for whoever wilfully and intelligently sins against the Divine arrangement is of Satan's spirit. All who develop such disobedient wills shall go into the Second Death. There is nothing further for them. The whole Plan of Salvation is with a view to rescuing those who with knowledge and opportunity will be glad to come into harmony with God and to walk in the ways of truth and righteousness.

THE THREE GREAT COVENANTS IN BRIEF

As heretofore stated, the Abrahamic Covenant is first in order of time and importance. This Covenant has two parts. The first applies to the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, The Christ, Head and Body – the antitype of Isaac, or, in another figure, of Isaac and Rebecca. These are the Seed of Abraham – the Seed of Promise – not fleshly, but Spiritual. **[R5301 : page 261]**

The second part of the Covenant applies to the world of mankind – "all the families of the earth." These are to be blessed by the Spiritual Seed with an opportunity of becoming Abraham's natural seed, and heirs, with him, of the earth and the fulness thereof. The conditions upon which they may obtain God's favor, and a Restitution to all that was lost, are that they shall exercise faith, and render obedience to the Divine provision which will be represented in Messiah's Kingdom, when it shall be inaugurated.

The Seed of Abraham – Jesus and the Church – is the legitimate Heir of this Abrahamic Covenant, wholly regardless of the Law Covenant which was made with Israel at Sinai, or of the New Law Covenant that is to be made with Israel at the close of the Gospel Age.

This Abrahamic Covenant has no mediator; but the Law Covenant had Moses for its mediator, and the New Law Covenant

will have Messiah, the Spiritual Heir of the Abrahamic Covenant, as its Mediator.

The Abrahamic Covenant needs no mediator; for there are no terms and conditions upon which to base a mediation. In it God merely declared His purpose to find a Seed of Abraham, by certain selective processes of His own, and to bless and honor this Seed in connection with the remainder of mankind. This especially selected Seed of Abraham, as the Apostle points out, is Christ and the Church – God's Elect. – Gal. 3:8,16,29; Rom. 8:29,30.

GOD'S SELECTION OF THE SPIRITUAL SEED

God has taken certain steps whereby He is making a selection of those worthy and pleasing to Him, to constitute this Messianic company. His arrangement for finding these is shown by the Scripture which, referring to this call of the Gospel Age to membership in that Seed of Abraham, says, "Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a Covenant with Me by sacrifice." (Psa. 50:5.) This Covenant of sacrifice of the human will, and of all the rights and privileges and liberties of the flesh, proves a most drastic test, and demonstrates to the Lord the very peculiar people whom He desires to be the Spiritual Seed of Abraham. They become a Spiritual Seed by renouncing the flesh and all its rights and liberties – even unto death.

The Head of this Seed is the portion which contains the life for the entire Body. All the members added to Him needed, first of all, to be justified by His merit. These were not justified under the Law Covenant, which made nothing perfect; nor were they justified under the New Covenant; for it is not yet completed. But the blood which by and by will be effective for the sealing of the New Law Covenant for Israel and the world, is effective now, in advance, for the justification of those accepted as the Body of the Mediator. This is possible because these Body members were selected from the same human family as the rest of mankind.

Therefore the blood which by and by is to seal and make operative the New Covenant to the world, is the same blood, or merit of Christ, which justifies freely all those now called to be saints, and joint-heirs of Jesus.

SECOND AND THIRD COVENANTS – TYPE AND ANTITYPE

The Second Covenant, in order of time, was the Law Covenant. (Exod. 19:3-8.) This was an addition to the Abrahamic Covenant, which addition could not interfere with the original Covenant. It was *typical*. It had a typical mediator, typical sacrifices of bulls and goats, a typical Atonement Day, a typical Holy and Most Holy.

The third and last is the New Law Covenant, to be instituted in the future. (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:6-13.) This cannot set aside, or make null or void, the original Abrahamic Covenant of Grace, any more than could the Law Covenant of Sinai. The New Law Covenant cannot be introduced, sealed, made operative, until the Abrahamic Covenant shall have brought forth the Seed of Abraham and invested Him with glory, honor and Divine majesty. Then this antitypical Moses, The Christ complete, Head and Body, will mediate between God and the world of mankind for a thousand years.

The basis of this New Covenant's blessings will be the merit of Messiah; but this merit will not be presented on behalf of the world, or to seal the New Covenant for Natural Israel and mankind, in order to the Restitution blessings, until first the entire Seed of Abraham, Head and Body, shall have been completed; and it cannot be completed until all the sacrificing has been finished. The sacrifice of the Head was finished eighteen centuries ago, and was typified by the bullock, in the Atonement Day sacrifices of Israel. The sacrifice of the consecrated Church, His members, who have been accepted by Him, has been going on now for eighteen

centuries, and was typified by the goat, in the sacrifices of the same Day of Atonement.

Not until the Messiah shall have finished all of His sacrificial work of the Gospel Age, not until the last member shall, under His hand, have passed from the earthly condition of membership to the Heavenly condition, will the sufferings of The Christ be finished, will the sufferings which He left behind be filled up; and not until then will He usher in the blessings of the Messianic Kingdom. And those blessings will be secured to mankind by the great Mediator's applying the merit of His sacrifice on their behalf.

