

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT NOT THE NEW COVENANT

WHAT answer should we give to those who are now endeavoring to "teach" that the Abrahamic Covenant, which had no mediator, was merely a promise on God's part and not a Covenant at all? They claim that God's promise to Abraham was merely a preliminary statement and that the New Covenant was sealed and made effective by the death of our Lord Jesus, and that he, as the Mediator of the New Covenant, mediates first between God and the Church, and that during the Millennial Age, he will mediate further between God and the world of mankind.

It seems scarcely worth while to make any answer at all to such an unreasonable and unscriptural presentation of the matter so far as "teachers" are concerned. However, bold statements and misapplied texts sometimes carry weight with the unstable and Scripturally unlearned; hence we feel justified in examining this question publicly. As for the claim that a promise is not a Covenant, that is doubtless true in a legal sense, as between men. So an attorney would say that a mere promise without consideration would be of no binding force in the human courts of law, because men's minds and plans are subject to change; and that any man may change his intentions and not be held responsible for his change, if there were no binding agreement or covenant or consideration given. But surely this is not true of any promise of God, who cannot lie, whose promise cannot be broken. God's promise, therefore, is most absolutely a covenant and binding agreement. All the weight of Divine veracity binds it. But, lest human weakness and unbelief should doubt the Divine Word, God condescended to make his promise a Covenant in the most binding and authoritative manner conceivable. He bound his promise with an oath.

The Scriptures over and over again refer to God's words with Abraham, not only as a promise, but as a Covenant. As, for instance, before it was made, God said to Abraham, Come out of thine own land into a land that I will show thee, and I will make a Covenant with thee. It was in harmony with that promise that Abraham removed to the land of Canaan, where God declares that he did make a Covenant with him, to the effect that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. The prophet tells us that that Covenant was confirmed three times to Abraham with an oath--again to Isaac and again to Jacob. (See Gen. 17:19; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14.) This which the Apostle styles The Promise (particular and special above all promises) is also called a Covenant thirteen times in the Book of Genesis alone, besides numerous other references which anyone can find with a concordance.

It seems strange indeed that a desire to establish a theory could warp the judgment of any Christian Bible student to such an extent that he would endeavor to ignore the greatest of all imaginable Covenants on record--the Covenant on which all of our hopes as Christians depend. Hearken to the Apostle Paul's estimation of this Covenant as stated in Hebrews 6. Urging the

Israelites to patience and faith that they might inherit the promises, St. Paul says, "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself,...for men verily swear by the greater and an oath for confirmation is the end of all strife. In this matter God, desiring more abundantly to show unto the heirs of the promise the immutability [the unchangeableness] of his counsel [or purpose], confirmed the promise by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." The Apostle thus shows that the Abrahamic Covenant (without a mediator, because it was unconditional) was firmly bound in a manner that would be satisfactory even amongst men, namely, by an oath.

How much more convincing is God's oath, making sure, unchangeable that basic Covenant made with Abraham, assuring the heirs of the promise ("us") that ultimately all mankind will receive a blessing, and that it would come through us. (Gal. 3:29.) The Apostle tells us that that oath was intended of God for us rather than for Abraham, to give us strong consolation, that we might lay hold firmly of the hope set before us in that promise--that Abrahamic Covenant. He adds (v. 19) that we have this hope as an anchor of the soul sure and steadfast within the veil, whither Jesus has entered as our forerunner, to whom we are approaching--as members to our Head. He is the Head of that Seed of promise. We, the members of his Body, will shortly follow him beyond the veil and share his glorious work of blessing the nations, beginning with Israel, under a New Covenant. We, as the adopted members of the Body of Christ, are directly the beneficiaries of the original Covenant, whose other features of blessing the world will all be worked out through us-- under the New Covenant arrangement with Israel.

Surely there is no consistency or reason in ignoring this great Oath-bound Covenant made in Abraham's day, consummated by the Divine oath. If it were not a Covenant, or if, as a Covenant, it was not ratified or made operative until the days of Jesus, why should the Apostle say that the Law Covenant was added to the Abrahamic Covenant 430 years after the Abrahamic Covenant was made? Evidently St. Paul considered the Abrahamic Covenant well established, for he adds that the Law Covenant afterwards instituted could not disannul the Abrahamic Covenant (Gal. 3:17). It must have been a thoroughly completed Covenant, firmly bound with the Divine oath, else the statement that it could not be disannulled would be an untruth.

Hearken again to St. Paul's discussion of the matter with the Galatians. He says, "This I say, that the Covenant, that was confirmed ("previously ratified"--Strong's Lexicon) before of God in Christ, the Law [Covenant], which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." As showing the inferiority of the Law

Covenant in comparison to the Old (original) Abrahamic Covenant, St. Paul tells us (Gal. 4:22-31) that Abraham's two wives, Sarah and Hagar, were allegorical; that the son of Sarah represented The Christ, the Church, Head and Body, while the son of Hagar represented the nation of fleshly Israel. He says, "Which things are an allegory: for these are the two Covenants; the one from the Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Hagar, which corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children." On the contrary, he declares that Sarah corresponds to Jerusalem which is above and free, the mother of us all. He adds, "We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise." (V. 28) It required nearly seventeen centuries for the development of Hagar's son, Fleshly Israel, under the Law Covenant. The Son of Sarah [the original or Abrahamic Covenant], has already been more than eighteen centuries in process of development. Through him all nations shall be blessed. He secured earthly-life-rights by his obedience; he sacrificed or laid these down at Calvary; he during this age has made them available to his "Body," and soon will again have laid them down sacrificially. Then he will be ready to give them as a legacy to Natural Israel and the world.--Rom. 11:31.

Israel realized the value of this Covenant made with Abraham: it constituted the basis of all their hopes and faith and trust. They supposed that the Law Covenant needed to be added to it, and therefore they accepted it as an amendment; but they continually trusted, hoped, in the original Covenant, as St. Paul says, "Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God, hope yet to come." (Acts 26:7) It was after Israel had become discouraged with their inability to keep the Law that God encouraged them, by assuring them that he would make a New Covenant with them, which would operate more favorably--more to their advantage. And so he will. By the end of this Gospel Age, after having selected the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, the New Covenant with Israel will go into effect. As it is written, "This is my Covenant with them, when I shall take away their sins. The Deliverer (Mediator, Prophet, Priest, King) shall come out of Sion (the Gospel Church) and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob (natural Israel)."-- Rom. 11:26,27.

Undoubtedly then we may assure all who have the hearing ear, that the Gospel Church is not the seed of two mothers or Covenants, but of one, and that that one is the Sarah Covenant, the old, original, oath-bound Covenant. Sarah had but one child, Isaac, who typified The Christ, Head and Body--the heir of all. "We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise"--heirs of the great privilege of blessing all the families of the earth, as members of the great antitypical Mediator of Israel's New Law Covenant, which will displace and supersede the old Law Covenant.

"AFTER THOSE DAYS I WILL MAKE A NEW COVENANT"
In Jeremiah 31:33 we read, "after those days," as setting a date for the New Covenant. Why is this? And what days must precede the making of the New Covenant?

God foretold that if Israel would be faithful he would bless them in every sense of the word, but that if they would walk contrary to him, he would walk contrary to them and chastise them "seven times for their sins." (Lev. 26:28.) This expression in this connection is, with variations, repeated three times. In one instance the word "MORE" is used. "I will chastise you seven times more for your sins." The Hebrew word rendered more, according to Strong's translation, would properly be rendered "continuously."

This threat of punishment we interpret to mean, not that the Lord would give Israel seven times as much punishment as they should have, but that he would punish them seven times (seven years) more (continuously) for their sins. These seven times or seven years were not literal years surely, for they received more punishment than that on numerous occasions. The seven times we interpret as symbolical years, in harmony with other Scriptures--a day for a year, on the basis of three hundred and sixty days to a year. Thus the seven times would mean 7×360 , which equals 2520 literal years. And the word more or continuously would signify that this period of 2520 years would not be the sum of all their various years of chastisement at various "times," but this experience of 2520 years of national chastisement would be one continuous period.

Next we should ask, Has there been such a continuous period of disfavor in Israel's national history? The answer is, Yes. In the days of Zedekiah, the last king to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord, the Word of the Lord concerning the matter was, "O, thou profane and wicked prince, whose time has come that iniquity should have an end: Take off the diadem! Remove the crown! I will overturn, overturn, overturn it [the crown, the kingdom] until he comes whose right it is, and I will give it unto him." (Ezek. 21:25-27.) This period of 2520 years, or seven symbolic times, will expire, according to our reckoning (DAWN-STUDIES, Vol. II., Chap. IV.) in October, 1914. In other words, the period of Gentile times, of Gentile supremacy in the world, is the exact parallel to the period of Israel's loss of the kingdom and waiting for it at the hands of Messiah.

Messiah at his First Advent found them unready as a nation to be his bride, to share with him as the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, and it has required, as God foreknew and foretold, all of this intervening period to select Spiritual Israel, the royal priesthood, the "holy nation," the "peculiar people," the Body of Christ, the Body of the Mediator between God and mankind.

These are the "days" referred to in Jeremiah's prophecy respecting the New Covenant, "after those days"--after the "seven times" of Israel's chastisement will come the time of God's favor under the New Covenant, with its better Mediator --the great prophet, Priest, Mediator, Judge and King-- Jesus the Head and the Church his Body, Jesus the Bridegroom, and the Church his Bride and joint-heir.

Note how this corresponds to a nicety with St. Paul's explanation in Romans XI. He points to the fact that all

of God's blessings were in the Abrahamic Covenant, which as a root had developed Israel as a nation--the seed of Abraham according to the flesh. The living Israelites were branches of that olive tree (vs. 16-21). Had they been in the right heart condition, "Israelites indeed," they would as a whole have been accepted by Christ as his members--allowed to remain members or branches in the olive tree, which represented Abraham's Spiritual Seed. But they were not ready, and hence all except the few who became Spiritual Israelites were broken off, because of unbelief. During this Gospel Age the places of the broken off branches have been filled by called and chosen ones of every nation, people, kindred and tongue. Thus Spiritual Israel has become the "holy nation" or kingdom class, under the headship of Messiah, as his prospective Bride or Body or Royal Priesthood.

The Apostle reminds us (vs. 25-29) that Israel's rejection from Divine favor is not perpetual, but merely in respect to this High Calling to membership in the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, membership in the Body of Messiah, the great antitypical Prophet, Priest, Mediator, King, who, when complete in the end of this age, will begin the great work of blessing all the families of the earth. The Apostle assures us that in the Divine Plan Israel will have a share in that work of blessing the world, but on a lower plane than that of the Spiritual Seed. They, as the natural seed of Abraham, will be the first to receive blessings from the glorified Mediator under the New Covenant which will be made directly with that nation, as foretold by the Prophet Jeremiah (31:31) --"after those days" of the sealing of that Covenant by the great Mediator with his blood.

St. Paul refers directly to this New Covenant to be made with Israel at the end of this age (v. 27), saying, "This is my Covenant unto them (natural Israel), when I shall take away their sins." (Rom. 11:27.) The taking away of their sins is a necessity for them, before they can receive this New Covenant, because God makes no Covenant with sinners. Israel's sins were not cancelled by our Lord when he ascended up on high and appeared in the presence of God for us-- according to the type sprinkling the blood on the Mercy Seat for the sins of those for whom it was applied--us, "the household of faith"--not them, not Israel in the flesh, nor any others, than "us."

According to the type a second sin-offering was to be made; "the Lord's goat" was also to be sacrificed by the Priest and its blood sprinkled upon the Mercy Seat, not for the household of faith, but "for all the people." That Lord's goat, as we have seen, typified the Church, the Body of Christ, made acceptable for sacrifice through the merit of Christ's blood and sacrificed by our High Priest throughout this Gospel Age. We delight in this sacrifice and "present our bodies living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, and our reasonable service," because we are assured that if we suffer with him, and be dead with him in his sacrificial death, we shall also live with him and reign with him in his Mediatorial Kingdom, which will bless Israel and the world.--Rom. 12:1.

This same expression, "after those days," occurs in connection with Joel's prophecy of the outpouring of the holy Spirit. Through him the Lord declares the ultimate pouring out of the Divine blessing, the holy Spirit, upon all flesh; but he informs us that it will be "after those days." It is still future; hence here is another evidence that this expression, "after those days," signifies after the completion of the work of the selection of the Church--the Bride of the Messiah--the Mediator, the Christ. The Lord proceeds to say through the prophet that his holy Spirit would first be poured out upon his special servants and handmaidens, "during those days." And it has been so: ever since Pentecost, the holy Spirit has been for the servants and handmaidens of the Lord, and for no others. It cannot reach the others-- the world of mankind in general--until "after those days." The same thought is expressed by the Apostle when he says that "our Lord is a propitiation [a satisfaction] for our sins [the Church's sins--throughout this Gospel Age], and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" [in due time].--I John 2:2.

This secondary application of the merit of our Lord upon the Mercy Seat, on behalf of the world, corresponds to the second sprinkling of the blood on the Atonement Day--"the blood of the Lord's goat"--"his own blood" "on behalf of all the people," sealing for them, consummating, the New Covenant.

Why has the New Covenant been so long delayed? We reply that, although it was promised centuries before Christ, it did not become an assured fact until our Lord Jesus died. His death was sufficient to have sealed that New Covenant and at once to have brought in restitution blessings to Israel, and through Israel to the world in general, if the Redeemer, when he ascended on high, had so applied the merit of his sacrifice. But it is evident that he did not so apply it; first, by the fact that Israel's restitution did not begin there, and has not begun yet, and will not begin until "after those days." Secondly, it is proven by the other fact that the merit of Christ's sacrifice, which was not given to Israel for the sealing of Israel's New [Law] Covenant, was given to another class, to a new nation, to Spiritual Israel, and has been applicable to and brought manifest blessings to her during all these centuries of the Gospel Age.

So, then, in the Scriptural language, that which our Lord did do in connection with the promised New Covenant between God and Israel at his first advent, was that he became a "surety" and guarantee for its later fulfilment. (Heb. 7:22.) From that time, therefore, the New Covenant may be considered as assured or legislated or guaranteed, but not put into force, because, as the Apostle declares, a testament or will is of no binding force until the death of the testator. In harmony with the Divine Plan the Redeemer applied the merit of his sacrifice to a special class "called" and "drawn of the Father" during this Gospel Age, to be members, to join with him in his sacrifice. These were to receive of his fulness, his merit, as the atonement for their sins, and then they were to drink of his blood or share

in his death, that his blood or the merit of his sacrifice might as a blessing pass through them and permit them by sacrificing restitution blessings to attain the divine nature and glory. (2 Peter 1:4.) None of these may keep the blessing of restitution privileges. Each was obliged in advance to pledge his life in sacrifice with his Lord before his final acceptance and begetting of the holy Spirit to joint-heirship with the Head in his glory, honor and immortality. So then the reason that the New Covenant promised in Jeremiah's day and assured by our Lord's death has not yet gone into effect and become operative in restitution blessings to Israel and the world is, that the death of the testator has not yet been fully accomplished; for the testator, through whom Israel will get that great blessing of the New Covenant, is not our Lord Jesus alone, but The Christ, Head and Body.

To this agree the words of the Apostle again, namely, that natural Israel will "obtain mercy through your [Spiritual Israel's] mercy." (Rom. 11:31.) The laying down of the restitution rights received by us from the Lord through faith in his blood is our sacrifice of the same, the dying of the Testator's Body. (2 Cor. 4:10.) Israel is to be the beneficiary of this testament, this legacy, this will, the merit of which is all as Jesus said, "in his blood," in his cup, which we must drink.

BAPTIZED INTO MOSES--BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

If the Church are to be members of the great Mediator, why are not Israel, who were baptized into Moses, (1 Cor. 10:1,2) thus made members of the Mediator of the Law Covenant?

The Divine arrangement which used Moses, Aaron, the tribe of Levi and all Israel as types is complex, so that the unlearned and unstable are in danger of wresting them to their own injury. Whoever will begin with the Passover type of the deliverance of the first-born and proceed with the history of the typical people down to the time when they entered Canaan and then turn to the death of Christ as the antitypical Passover lamb and attempt to parallel the experiences of the Church and the world with the experiences of Israel, will find himself thoroughly confused until he comes to understand that in Israel a number of types mingled and overlapped.

For instance: Recognizing the Passover lamb as typical of our Lord Jesus and his death; and recognizing the first-born of Israel spared "in that night" as typical of Spiritual Israel, we know that "that night" typified this Gospel Age. We know also that the following morning typified the Millennial morning. The deliverance of Israel through the Red Sea would therefore seemingly typify the final deliverance of the whole world of mankind from the bondage of sin and death, typified by Pharaoh and his army. Similarly the overthrow of Pharaoh's army would seemingly represent the ultimate destruction of Satan and every evil influence at the close of the Millennial Age. That was the end of that type.

With the end of that type another began; for the march of Israel toward Mt. Sinai, where they entered into covenant relationship with the Lord, typified the

approach of the Gospel Church and of the whole world to the condition of things pictured by St. Paul in Hebrews 12--the end of this Age, and a time of trouble and the establishment of the New [Law] Covenant with Israel for the blessing of all the families of the earth. And following this, the wilderness journey constitutes still another type representing God's people and the failure of many to enter into his rest, because of lack of faith. Subsequently the smiting of the rock by Moses and his not being permitted to enter the promised land is yet another type. The crossing of Jordan is still another type. The appointment of Joshua, the new leader, instead of Moses, is still another type. The falling of the walls of Jericho is still another type. Israel's conquering the various enemies in the land of Canaan is still another type.

Coming back now to the first-mentioned of these types--the one which began with the killing of the Passover lamb, the sprinkling of its blood, the eating of its flesh during "that night" in which the firstborns were passed over and spared--we notice that the feature of the type which has to do with "the Church of the Firstborn" and this Gospel Age was passed before the time when the Israelites as a nation were baptized into Moses in the sea and in the cloud. Consequently that baptism into Moses evidently pictured, not the baptism of the Church of the Firstborn into Christ's death, but the baptism of the whole world of mankind into Christ's life during the Millennium.

The Church passes from justification of life into sacrificial death with the Lord to become members of the Mediator's "Body." But the Israelites passed through the sea and the cloud, not into death, but into liberty--into freedom as a nation. That baptism into Moses evidently therefore represented the deliverance of the groaning creation into the liberty wherewith Christ proposes to make free all who will come unto him in response to his drawing during the Millennial Age. Thus the Apostle tells us that, as Jesus already is the Head of the Church, which is his Body, so ultimately he will be the Head of all creation, because it is the will of God "to gather together in one all things under one Head." -- Eph. 1:10.

This we have sought to illustrate in the Chart of the Ages in DAWN-STUDIES, Vol. I. In the pyramid of that chart we show our Lord Jesus the Head, the Church his Body, the Great Company, Fleshly Israel restored, and ultimately all nations brought under the one Headship. The same thought that the world will become Christ's in the possessive sense is expressed by St. Paul. When telling of the resurrection he says, "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust--Christ the firstfruits; afterwards they that are his at (during) his presence." (1 Cor. 15:23.) The Apostle expresses the same thought that the world will be brought under the control and under the name of Christ, saying, "In whom the whole family of God, both in heaven and in earth, is named."--Eph. 3:15.

So then in this type of Israel's being baptized into Moses we have a suggestion of what belongs to the Millennial Age, but no suggestion whatever appertaining

to the Church of the Firstborn during this Age--no suggestion of a baptism into Christ's sufferings and death. Indeed, nowhere in that type is the association between the Head and the members shown. It merely pictures to us the Lamb of God slain, and our privilege of being spared or passed over from death into life in this Gospel Age--before the general deliverance of mankind from the power of sin and death.

MUST ADAM FIRST BE REDEEMED?

Accepting the Scriptural presentation that "By one man's disobedience sin entered into the world, and death as a result of sin, and thus death passed upon all men, for that all are sinners" (Rom. 5:12-19); accepting also the declaration of Scripture, "As by man came death, by man also comes the resurrection of the dead" (I Cor. 15:21); also the assurance that "As all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive" (I Cor. 15:22), shall we understand that Adam must first be redeemed and atoned for before any of his children can receive reconciliation? If so, should we understand that Adam was included amongst the believers, the household of faith, on whose behalf Jesus, our great High Priest, appeared and made satisfaction for sin when he appeared in the presence of God for us?

Most assuredly we should not! St. Paul did not mention Adam in his list of Ancient Worthies in Hebrews 11. On the contrary, our expectation for Adam is that as a man of the world class, "all people," his sin will be atoned for in the end of this age, when the great High Priest shall antitypically sprinkle his blood on the Mercy Seat for the sins of the whole world, "all the people," as at the beginning of this age he made atonement for our sins--the Church's. Our expectation also is that Father Adam will be one of the last to be awakened from the sleep of death and be brought forth to the privileges, blessings, opportunities and testings of the Millennial Age.

Our thought is that the restitution blessings will begin with the generation living at the time of the inauguration of the Mediator's Kingdom; that it will deal first with these and bring them to a measure of recuperation before beginning with any of those who sleep in

the dust of the earth; and further that those of the sleepers who went down into death most recently will be the first to come up, while those who went down first will be the last to come up. In other words, the first shall be last and the last shall be first. Our thought is that quite probably the awakenings of the world will be in response to the prayers of their friends during the Millennium; and that those living at any time will be specially interested in praying for such as were their acquaintances or relatives. We can see no reason why Father Adam should take any precedence in connection with the work of redemption. While it is true that he was the man through whom sin and death entered the world, nevertheless amongst the thousands of millions of his children he has no pre-eminence in the sight of Justice, whose record respecting humanity we understand to be: One man's sin--penalty, Death.

Likewise, although our Lord Jesus is the one who paid our penalty, yet Justice in her records would probably take no particular note of that fact, but would merely enter the record, One holy, harmless, undefiled man died and made appropriation of the merit of his death for the household of faith. Later we may assume the records of Justice read, The merit of the one man who died, the Just for the unjust, which was appropriated to "the household of faith," having been laid down again sacrificially, is now applied again--this time "on behalf of all the people" not included in the first application.

The sacrifice of the man Christ Jesus was sufficient for the sins of the whole world, and that ultimately it will be made available for the cancellation of the sins of the world is because Justice in the condemnation merely sentenced Father Adam as a man and has paid no attention to his children in the way of separate condemnation, but counted them all as members of the one man. Hence the death of Jesus could have been applied for anyone of Adam's race, or for any number of them, or for all of them, including Adam. And this last will be the ultimate result. ▲