

Sabbath School Today
With the 1888 Message Dynamic
The Promise God's Everlasting Covenant

Lesson 6: Abraham's Seed

Some millions of Christians around the world are studying about the New Covenant versus the Old Covenant. They will be wonderfully helpful lessons if we can tell the difference between the two Covenants. But if we end up confusing the Old with the New or vice versa, we'll be worse off than when we started. There are only two Covenants and every individual in the world is "under" one or the other. They are as different as night and day, yet are often confused.

* Those under the Old Covenant, no matter what their profession of religion might be, are in "bondage," says the Book of Galatians. Spiritually speaking, they are slaves (4:21-25). Their spiritual condition is identical to that of ancient Israel after Mount Sinai. They profess to be God's people, they try to keep His commandments, they think they worship Him, but their "Christian experience" is up and down, often down. Ancient Israel was constantly backsliding, repenting, asking for forgiveness, trying again, enjoying only brief interludes of revival. Jesus describes the Old Covenant experience of His last days church as being

“lukewarm.” He says the situation is so acute that it makes Him feel like throwing up (Rev. 3:14-19).

* The only possible way that we in these last days can become fully reconciled and “hot” in our devotion to Him, is to trade in our Old Covenant way of thinking for New Covenant truth. It is embarrassing to Jesus to have to confess before the vast unfallen universe that He seems unable to bring His church out of its lukewarm condition. Surely the great sacrifice He made on His cross should elicit from His people on earth a greater devotion! The problem that Jesus has is like that of a bridegroom who loves a bride-to-be but can’t motivate her to go to the altar with him and say “I do.”

* In fact, the Book of Revelation specifies that to be precisely the log-jam that is holding up the finishing of God’s great plan of salvation (19:1-8). Only a clear understanding of the glorious New Covenant can set us free from our lukewarm, half-hearted devotion. May the Holy Spirit make the truth clear!

Every beautiful truth that God teaches us in His Bible has been twisted and distorted by the master enemy, Satan. His clever deceptions have even been injected into the teaching of God's New Covenant.

* The truth as the Bible teaches it is so simple that a child can easily grasp it. When God Himself makes a “covenant,” it is always a simple, straightforward promise on His part. No gimmicks, no small print, no

“bargains” struck, no “ifs” that can be used to get Him off the hook so He can wriggle out of keeping His promise. In fact, when God makes a “covenant,” He goes the second mile and swears an oath that puts His own life and His throne in pawn if He doesn’t do what He promises (see Gen. 15:7-18; Heb. 6:13-20). That promise of God was made to Abraham, and confirmed by His solemn oath. God would give him the whole earth for “an everlasting possession” together with the righteousness necessary to inherit it.

* When the Lord promised Abraham, He stipulated no “bargain” or “transaction” terms. It was a give-and-take relationship—God would do all the giving, and Abraham would do all the taking. And how did he “take” the blessing? Totally by faith. “Abraham believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness” (Gen. 15:6; remember, we are Abraham’s “children”).

* But for nearly 4000 years both Abraham and his descendants have twisted and distorted this simple good news. Abraham proposed to God that he help Him out of His difficulty by adopting Eliezer, a slave, to be his “heir” (15:2-4). God said No! Then Sarah, embittered because she couldn’t get pregnant, proposed that she help God out of His difficulty by adopting a slave-girl’s son from Abraham as her own (16:1-4). Again God said No! (17:1-19). The Lord insisted that everything would be His doing 100 percent.

* And here is where the battle has raged these four millennia. We are all “born in sin,” inheriting a sinful nature (Ps. 51:5; Rom. 7:14-17). It’s easy NOT to believe. Faith humbles our hearts! The result? We ourselves have invented the “old covenant,” our promises to God. Somehow we MUST help save ourselves!

I wish when I was a teenager I had understood that God’s great promises to Abraham were to me also. Nobody told me! My whole life would have been different. All that God promised Abraham was precisely what worried me. (Teens are the most worried people on earth). I wanted to be “a great nation,” that is, I wanted to be “somebody.” I didn’t want to be a cipher in humanity. I wanted to live for a purpose, to amount to something. Was I sinful? Of course I was! But the desire to be “somebody” is also God-given; and He wants every teen to hear His promise, “I will make of you somebody important!”

* I also needed to hear Him tell me, “I will bless thee.” That would have lifted a load of fear from my heart. (I suppose you think I was pretty dumb; well yes, I was). And yes, I wanted to hear Him tell me that He would make my name “great” in some meaningful way—if only to some one girl or woman who would become my wife. I didn’t want to be a glob of jelly, a “blah” young man. I wanted to be “some one” in those eyes of hers!

* And yes, sinful though I was, I did indeed dream of God doing for me what He promised to do for Abraham, “And thou shalt BE a blessing.” From early years I dreamed of becoming a missionary somewhere. I didn’t know how, but I wanted to be a useful person in God’s great plan for the world. Oh, I would have been so happy if I had known that all along God was promising ME these wonderful things He promised Abraham!

* All seven of those fantastic promises in Genesis 12:2, 3 would have rejoiced my young heart if only I had known that God was telling ME all that! I would have stood taller and walked more sprightly had I known. I would have studied better, developed my abilities more efficiently.

* And best of all, if I could have known that God was promising little me that someday I would fellowship with Christ in “all families of the earth being blessed,” that by His grace I would be an agent He would use in some little but meaningful way to convey that “blessing” everywhere I would go—oh, the New Covenant would have made all the difference in my thinking and my life.

* Now, how about passing on those New Covenant promises to some child or teenager?

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SECOND QUARTER 2021

SABBATH SCHOOL INSIGHT #6

MAY 8, 2021

"ABRAHAM'S SEED"

"If we stick with scripture, we will not have a moments difficulty in ascertaining who the seed is" (EJ Waggoner, Everlasting Covenant, p 42). If we don't stick to scripture, we will wander around through a wilderness of misunderstanding and likely miss the point.

The apostle Paul understood these passages about Abraham well. He came to his understanding through the revelational teaching method of the Holy Spirit Who inspired these passages.

“For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Galatians 1:12

So, what does the inspired commentary of Paul tell us about the covenant promised seed of Abraham?

“And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, ‘In you all the nations shall be blessed.’” and “Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “And to your Seed,” Who is Christ.” Galatians 3:8,16. (emphasis supplied)

Paul saw clearly, as should we, that the main point of the covenant given to Abraham by God, was the promise of the gospel and that the “seed” that was promised is Jesus Christ.

Yes, it is true that from Abraham came Isaac and Jacob and the twelve sons of Jacob and all their descendants. These were Abraham’s descendants that lived in the land of Canaan. But the covenant promise was not these nor the literal land of Canaan. How do we know this?

We know this because scripture tells us that none of Abraham’s literal descendants received the promise.

“And all these (speaking of Abraham’s descendants), having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise” Hebrews 11:39.

Yes, they were a special chosen people and yes, many of them lived by faith in the coming promised One and many did not. Many kept their eyes fixed on themselves and their presumed status of being Abraham’s descendants and took their eyes off of the covenanted One. Here is a great example of this problem in scripture.

"They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone.....I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father. They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill Me, a Man Who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. You do the deeds of your father." John 8:33, 37-41

Jesus was telling these literal descendants of Abraham that they were not Abraham's children. They were not the children of promise and this was evidenced by their lives. They literally were trying to kill the Seed of promise, Jesus.

The "seed" was Christ in Whom Abraham believed and had faith in. The descendants that make up the "dust of the earth" promise to Abraham are those who, like Abraham, have faith in the Seed.

"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise". Galatians 3:26-29

These "heirs according to the promise" have made up the remnant in every generation. It is these heirs, in the last generation, that will make up the remnant today. The chosen people of God today, like those of yesterday, will continue the repeated cycles of apostasy followed by repentance, followed by a period of obedience, followed by apostasy, etc. as long as we rely on anything other than Christ. Heritage and history, accomplishments and status, doctrinal wealth and possessions of a most precious message, of themselves will leave us in this never-ending cycle until we are immersed in Christ and put Him on.

Notice this contrast between those that are "heirs according to the promise" and those that are not, as described in a letter from Ellen White to her husband James. She was attending a tent meeting in California and the Lord revealed the hearts of some in attendance.

"Those who came forward are assembled in several tents to seek God more earnestly. The feeling has been deepening since the meeting commenced, and yet they do not walk out as they might and believe for present salvation. They look to themselves and seek to make themselves righteous by their good works and they do not walk out by faith,

believing that Jesus will do that work for them which they cannot do for themselves, if they should try their lifetime. Genuine conversion unites the heart in clinging faith to the Friend of sinners. The heart is joined to the heart of infinite love. The life of the truly converted is knit by hidden links to the heart of Jesus. Because Christ lives, he will live also. His destiny is bound to Jesus. He is kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.” (Lt26-1880.12)

The “genuine conversion” described above is the experience of those who have not bowed the knee to Baal nor kissed his face. This described the remnant of whom the enemy of souls is furious with.

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 12:17

Are you Christ’s? Have you been baptized into Christ? The question isn’t were you submerged in water? The question is have you been baptized into Christ? Have you been immersed in Christ or have you simply been sprinkled with Him? Do you live in the present reality of the finished and finishing work of Christ? Have you allowed the living Christ to abide in you in the person of His Holy Spirit? Do you live and move and have your being in Him? These are all things that we clearly cannot do for ourselves and these are the ways of the “heirs according to the promise”. When we do this at last, the cycle will be broken.

May we all be immersed in Christ and know the baptism of the Holy Spirit today. In so doing we will be part of the “dust” promise that was given to faithful Abraham.

~Kelly Kinsley

“None but God can subdue the pride of man’s heart. We cannot save ourselves. We cannot regenerate ourselves. In the heavenly courts there will be no song sung, “To me that loved myself, and washed myself, and redeemed myself, unto me by glory and honor, blessing and praise.” But this is the keynote of the song that is sung by many here in this world. They do not know what it means to be meek and lowly in heart, and they do not mean to know this if they can avoid it. The whole Gospel is comprised in learning of Christ His meekness and lowliness.” (Letter 73, 1896)

“What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself. When men see their own nothingness, they are prepared to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ. When they begin to praise and exalt God all the day long, then by beholding, they are becoming changed into the same image.” (Letter 73, 1896)

“For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. "Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God Who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments;" Deuteronomy 7:6-9