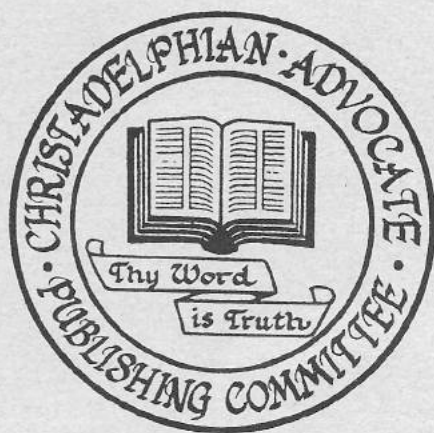


The Place of the
Abrahamic Covenant
in the Salvation
of Mankind



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Chapter 1

FOREWORD

When we come to discuss the "salvation" of mankind, we must define what we mean by "salvation". The great enemy of mankind is death. Sooner or later we all die; we cease to exist and this cessation is permanent unless some provision is made for an escape from this condition. If, somehow, we can be saved from this eternal oblivion, then we have a remedy for and a solution to the fact of death which we can rightly call "salvation".

If all mankind is subject to death after a lifetime which is infinitely short when measured against eternity, we must enquire why God created Man and Woman in the first place. We must tread very lightly when we attempt to probe the mind of the Almighty and yet He has revealed enough of His plan and purpose with the Earth and mankind upon it, to give us an insight into the reasons for the Creation.

God is revealed as *The Great Moral Perfection* of the universe. When Moses beseeched the Lord: "Shew me thy glory" (Ex. 33:18) God did not put on a spectacular display of power and might for Moses to behold. Rather the Most High revealed his great moral perfection by stating: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin..." (Ex. 34:6). Similarly, when the Psalmist commented upon the greatness and "wondrous things" of God, he observed: "But thou, Lord, art a God of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth." (Psa.86:15).

Fellowship

When God created Adam, there was no being in the Garden of Eden with whom Adam could have companionship. While the animals were around him, they had no moral capacity. They could not respond, in kind, to Adam's need for a kindred spirit. It is for this reason that Adam was described as living "alone". (Gen. 2:18) Accordingly, God created Eve for the purpose of providing a companion fit to fill the emptiness in the life of the man. At this point, Adam and Eve not only had fellowship with one another, but they also had fellowship and communion with God and the angels.

When sin and death entered into the world because of the sin of Adam, their fellowship with God was breached; they were driven out of the Garden and all their posterity have inherited a proneness and proclivity to sin. This inherited sin-nature has continued to form a barrier between God and Man. Sin and its product, death, is the problem to be solved.

The healing of the barrier between God and Man was divinely provided by the appearance of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Although stricken with the same sin-nature as all other members of the human race, he lived a life of perfect obedience to his Father's will. He perfectly manifested to all men, the mind and moral attributes of the Father as it was revealed centuries before to Moses. Through his resurrection, those who come to God in the appointed way, through his Son, Jesus Christ, gain reconciliation to God and become his sons and daughters by adoption.

The purpose of God (in a nutshell) is stated in Acts 15: " It was God's original concern to secure a People from among the Gentiles to bear his Name. " (verse 14 ; Moffatt) The People that God is seeking, is a People who reflect His moral attributes by believing what he says and by obeying his commandments. " The Father seeketh such to worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:23) With such the Father can have true fellowship - People of like-mindedness. On such, God is anxious to bestow his divine nature.

Now it is obvious that even God cannot *create* individuals with the capability of moral *choice*, who will automatically elect to serve Him. If they were pre-programmed to do His will, they would be mere automatons and therefore could not give the satisfaction to God which stems from a voluntary free will. The People whom the Father seeks, must have a complete free will of their own, and yet who voluntarily come to the Almighty in the way that He has appointed.

In the book of Revelation, it is recorded: " For thou hast created all things and for thy pleasure, they are and were created. " (Rev. 4:11). There are two Greek words which are translated by the English word *pleasure*. The first is *hedone* from which we get our word, *hedonism*, which means sensual indulgence.

The second Greek word is *theleo*, which carries the meaning of *satisfaction* or *delight in*. The purpose and satisfaction which the Almighty derives from the creation of mankind, is the development of a People with whom he can enjoy eternal fellowship because they exhibit the similar qualities of mind and character which are embodied in the One Who Inhabits Eternity.

Chapter 2

COVENANTS AND WILLS (TESTAMENTS)

There would be no point in God creating Mankind without a purpose. And there would be no point in God having a purpose with the Creation if such a purpose was not communicated and revealed to such creation.

Although the purpose of God was revealed to the immediate descendants of Adam, all except a very small minority, corrupted his way and " every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually." After the universal Flood, a new beginning began with one righteous man, Noah, plus his immediate family of seven others. It was not long however, before God's purpose was again confronted by the sin of man, resulting in the confusion of tongues at the tower of Babel.

Finally, another righteous man appeared among the peoples of the earth. His name was Abraham. It is recorded of him : "Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes and my laws." (Gen. 26:5). This five-point analysis is no mean, trivial or ordinary recommendation!

Because of the righteousness of this man, Abraham, the Almighty decided to work out the salvation of mankind in and through Abraham and his seed or descendants which, in effect, was through the nation of Israel, the Jews. It must be recognized *that Jews* were called, and *not* Gentiles; a covenant was made *with Jews, and not* with Gentiles; The promises were given *to Jews and not* to Gentiles; that salvation is *of the Jews, and not* of the Gentiles; that this salvation is to be openly manifested *through the Jews, and not* through the Gentiles; and that the Gentiles receive and inherit the covenanted blessings with the true seed of Abraham only as they are grafted into the Commonwealth of Israel.

The covenant of God with Abraham is the foundation of the entire revelation of Salvation. It has a fundamental and living connection with the Salvation of mankind. We read in Romans 1:16 that " *The Gospel* is the power of God unto salvation ..." We read in Galatians 3:8 that " *The Gospel* was preached before unto Abraham..." We read in Mark 1:14 that ' Jesus came into Galilee preaching *The Gospel* of the Kingdom of God. " Here is a Scriptural interlocking of *The Gospel* of salvation with the Abrahamic Covenant and the Kingdom of God.

The choice of God to work out the salvation of man through Abraham and his descendants, the Jews, is decisively proven by such Scriptures as Deut 7:6; Deut.14:2; Rom.11:28; Rom 9:11 etc. This selection is not to be regarded as an act of favouritism, but as founded on *divine wisdom* which adopted it as the best means , under the circumstances in which fallen humanity was placed, to reach, consistently with moral freedom, the largest portion of mankind, having in view the ultimate establishment and triumph of the Kingdom of God on earth.

The preaching of *The Gospel* of salvation to Abraham was formalized by God

by means of entering into a covenant between himself and Abraham. It is the objective of the balance of this publication to explain the terms and ramifications of this “ Abrahamic Covenant “. It is a sad fact that more ignorance and misunderstanding exists in relation to the covenants than perhaps any other portion of the Bible.

Definition of covenant

A covenant is a legal agreement, promise or contract (either written or verbal) between two or more parties to do or not to do a certain act or work which is specified in the terms of the agreement.

Whenever two parties conclude an agreement in a formal manner, it is done by means of a legal covenant which is binding upon the parties involved. In the case of a covenant between God and Man, because God cannot default, it is also called a *promise* and for this reason, the Abrahamic Covenant is called by both terms and can properly be called, “A Divine Legal Instrument”.

Definition of a will or testament

Unlike a covenant, a will or testament, is an instrument involving only one party. A will (testament) is a legal instrument disposing of one’s personal property after death.

Unfortunately, the Greek word *diatheke* is used in Greek for both a covenant and a will. When Jerome translated the New Testament into Latin, he translated the Greek word *diatheke* by the Latin word *testamentum* and this was carried over by the KJV translators as the English word, *testament*.

A will or testament can be ratified by only one party. No one else is involved and the document is signed by the testator - that is, the person making the will. The will or testament does not become operative or enforceable until the testator dies. Once the testator dies, the terms of the will cannot be altered and the administrators and executors of the estate must strictly adhere to the terms of the will. A divine *covenant* is a proper legal entity but a divine *testament* is an absurdity because if God is the testator, he cannot die and therefore, the testament would never become operative. It is for this reason that most translations of the Bible (other than the Authorized KJV version) translate the NT usage of *diatheke* by the word *covenant* or *agreement* rather than by the word *testament*¹.

¹ For instance, the KJV in Matt. 26:28 reads, “ For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” Virtually, all other translations read, “ For this is my blood of the new covenant ...”. So also, other passages in the NT. The Abrahamic instrument was a two-party covenant not a one-party testament.

Glossary

It is necessary for an understanding of the Abrahamic Covenant to set down a "Glossary of Constituents" of a covenant. We have already defined what a "covenant" is, now we set forth the constituent parts of a covenant.

PARTIES Those involved in making the agreement or contract.

RECITALS While not legally part of the covenant, it is customary to "recite" statements of fact or circumstances related to the formation of the agreement and explaining the reasons for it.

CONSIDERATION Something given or promised by one party in exchange for something to be promised, given or performed by another party. In modern business contracts, in order to make the instrument legally binding, a "consideration" must be given as a token of "good faith".

TERMS Provisions stating the nature, scope and undertakings of the covenant.

OATH An appeal to a deity in witness to the inviolability of a promise or truth of a statement. A covenant given under oath, reinforces the intent of the parties.

HEIRS An heir of a covenant is one who inherits a benefit which is nominated in the terms of the covenant.

SEAL An impression, device, sign or attestation that an agreement was entered into after careful thought and deliberation and not under trivial circumstances.

CONFIRMATION In order to finalize a covenant, an act of confirmation must be performed by the parties to guarantee the performance of the terms thereof.

RATIFICATION The covenant is not legally operative until it is ratified. In the case of a business contract, this would mean the signatures, duly witnessed, of the parties thereto. Immediately upon the fixing of the signatures, the covenant is now binding upon the parties.

Chapter 3

A DIVINE LEGAL INSTRUMENT

Brother John Thomas refers to the Abrahamic Covenant as a *Divine Legal Instrument*. (Exposition of Daniel, p.43) What follows is an attempt to set forth the Covenant in a form that delineates its details in a formal manner.

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT A DIVINE LEGAL INSTRUMENT

This covenant made this day in the year + 2000 B.C. BETWEEN :

PARTIES

The Lord God Almighty, Yahweh Elohim, who dwelleth in the heavens, The party of the first part, and,

Abraham, Son of Terah, Son of Nahor, Formerly of Ur of the Chaldees, and dwelling in the land of Canaan; The party of the second part.

RECITALS

WHEREAS God had said unto Abraham, “ Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee. “ and,

WHEREAS Abraham obeyed this injunction.

CONSIDERATION

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the performance by Abraham of all of God’s commandments, THIS COVENANT WITNESSETH THAT:

TERMS

1. God will make of Abraham a great nation. (Gen 12)
2. God will bless Abraham and make Abraham’s name great and Abraham shall be a blessing. (Gen 12)
3. God will bless them that bless Abraham and curse him that curseth Abraham.
4. In Abraham shall all families of the earth be blessed.
5. God covenants to give to Abraham and to his seed, all the land of Canaan forever. (Gen 13)
6. God covenants to count the faith of Abraham for righteousness. (Gen 15)
7. Abraham covenants to walk before God in an upright and blameless manner. (Gen 17)

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8. God covenants to multiply Abraham exceedingly. (Gen 17)
 9. God covenants to make Abraham the father of many nations. (Gen 17)
 10. God covenants to cause Kings to be among Abraham's progeny. (Gen 17)
 11. The Almighty covenants to be a God unto Abraham and to Abraham's seed forever. (Gen 17)
 12. God covenants to allow the seed of Abraham to join in the covenant herein. (Gen 17)
 13. God proclaims the terms of the Covenant more particularly in the OATH hereinafter set forth: (Gen 22:16-18)

OATH

WHEREAS Abraham has not withheld his son, his only son,

The LORD GOD ALMIGHTY makes OATH and says, swearing by Himself, that I will:

- a) Bless Abraham
- b) Multiply Abraham as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is upon the seashore.
- c) Give possession of the gate of HIS enemies to the singular seed of Abraham.
- d) Bless all nations of the earth in Abraham's (singular) seed. (Gal 3:16)

Sworn by angelic visitation before Abraham to demonstrate the immutability of the Covenant. (Heb 6:17)

HEIRS

This covenant shall endure to the benefit of, and be binding upon, the parties hereto and upon Abraham's seed who voluntarily join in the covenant herein. (Gal 3:29)

SEAL

In witness hereof, Abraham agrees to seal this covenant by circumcising every man-child among his household and his progeny.

CONFIRMATION

Abraham, at the request of God, took an heifer of 3 years old, and a she-goat of 3 years old, and a ram of 3 years old, and a turtle dove and a young pigeon and divide the animals in the midst and when the sun went down and it was dark, behold a smoke furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. (Gen 15:17) (Jer 34:18).

RATIFICATION

This covenant shall not become fully operative and effectual until the coming and the shedding of the blood of the perfectly righteous seed to whom the promise is made. (Jesus Christ: Gal 3:17-19. Rom. 15:8)

Covenant-Making Parties

Is it proper to make a comparison between the divinely-given Abrahamic covenant and covenants such as men have made over the course of time in their business dealings? The writer to the Hebrews makes this kind of allusion to human covenants: "For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath..." (Heb. 6:15-17)

Therefore as the Scriptures themselves establish a connection between the covenants of men and the covenant God made with men, it is appropriate that we should examine the nature of covenants in order to come to a better understanding of the Abrahamic covenant.

The reason that God made an oath, after the manner of men, was to provide the highest possible assurance to those who would be the heirs of salvation of the certainty of His intentions. However, let it be clearly stated that, in making reference to human covenants there is one sense in which there is no comparison to the Abrahamic covenant. God and man are not equal parties when it comes to covenant-making. God initiated the covenant in saying, " I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly". (Gen. 17:2) Abraham responded by his obedient carrying out of circumcision for himself and all the men of his household.

We wish now to comment on certain terms of the Covenant.

Term # 3 Gen. 12:3 states: " I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee.. ". In these days when anti-Semitism is rife in our society and when the nations of the world have virtually isolated the Nation of Israel making it " stand alone ", Christadelphians need to be reminded that anti-Semitism has no place either locally or nationally, in our thinking. Israel is still the chosen people of God and to this day provide the principal witness to the veracity of the Bible. (Isa. 43:10).

Gen. 12:3 continues by saying, " In thee (Abraham) shall all nations of the earth be blessed. " The phrase, *in thee* should be particularly attended to.

There are only five men in the whole Bible with whom the preposition " in " is associated. They are : Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Jesus Christ. It is necessary to understand that the word " in " when used in association with

these three men, carries the connotation of constitution. Let us look at the last-named man: Christ, first.

When the Bible speaks of a person being “in Christ” it is obvious that it must be in a figurative sense. Just as Jesus reminded Nicodemus that the expression, “born again” was not literal but figurative, so the expression “in Christ” is also figurative. It does not mean that the person is inside of Christ, but rather it means that the person is *constitutionally* attached and conjoined to him. It expresses a new relationship, predicated on belief and obedience, that did not exist before.

In order for the new relationship to be established, there must be a means for in-duction according to a prescribed formula. The formula for induction into the Christ-body of believers is by a valid baptism in water. Upon arising from the waters of baptism, the candidate is then “In Christ” *constitutionally* and is entitled to all the benefits of the new relationship ¹.

The Scriptures also speak of the human race as being “In Adam” and two of the five men are combined in I Cor. 15:22 : “ For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” All men are constitutionally “ in Adam “ at birth. Adam’s sin breached his relationship to God. He was driven out of the Garden of Eden. All of his posterity are born outside the Garden and inherit a proneness to sin and the inevitability of death.

One of the terms of the Abrahamic Covenant is : “In THEE shall all families of the earth be blessed.” Now we examine the second person to whom the constitutional term IN is associated. The concept of “In Abraham” is one of the most misunderstood expressions in the whole Bible.

The reason for the misunderstanding is that the only inheritors of the kingdom of God (from this dispensation) are the seed of Abraham. No others qualify as being the “heirs of salvation”. (Heb. 1:14)

The blessings nominated in the Covenant are confined to Abraham and his seed. Unless a person qualifies as a “ seed of Abraham” he has no part nor lot in the blessings of the Covenant. Only people who are described as “ heirs” of the Covenant become beneficiaries of the promised benefits.

In this connection, the situation is something like being a beneficiary or heir under the terms of a will or testament. It does not matter how nice a fellow one is or how strongly one feels that one is entitled to the legacy of the deceased, unless one is named as an heir and beneficiary in the will, any claims to heirship are null and void.

Similarly, unless a person (somehow or other) becomes a seed of Abraham and hence an heir of the covenant, that person cannot participate in the benefits

¹ For a comprehensive catalogue of the effects of baptism see Appendix # 1 on page 16

and blessings contained in the Covenant. It is necessary to recognize that in both a will and a covenant, there is a definite exclusivity. The exclusiveness is determined by whether or not a person qualifies as a legal heir or not.

Now it is perfectly obvious that Gentiles are not part of the posterity of Abraham, a Jew. Therefore, unless divine provision is made for Gentiles to become beneficiaries under the terms of the Covenant by means of becoming a seed of Abraham, they are excluded from the promised blessings.

Fortunately, divine provision has been made for Gentile participation and this will be discussed later in this monograph.

Before leaving this part of our discussion, another distinctive feature of the Abrahamic Covenant should be recognized. In one part of the Covenant, God promised that : “ In **THEE** “ (Abraham) shall all families of the earth be blessed”. (Gen 12:3). In another part of the Covenant, God promised: “ **IN THY SEED** shall all nations of the earth be blessed.” (Gen 22:18) It is obvious from the context of this latter quotation that the *seed* is singular i.e. one person. This can be shown by the usage in the previous verse, “and thy seed shall possess the gate of **his** enemies”. (Gen. 22:17 KJV). The use of the word *his* denotes a singular seed. This is in contrast to the use of the word *their*, which denotes a plural seed and is so used in Genesis 17:7.

The apostle Paul identifies who this singular seed is : “ God did not say, ‘and to seeds ‘ as if speaking of many, but ‘ and to your seed ‘ since he spoke of only one - and this is Christ.” (Gal. 3:16. Weymouth)

This is an apparent paradox. On the one hand God promised that the blessing of all nations of the earth would come to those “ In Abraham “.

On the other hand, God promised that the blessing of all nations of the earth would come to those “ In Christ “. This enigma is solved by the apostle Paul in Gal. 3:29: “ If ye be Christ’s, **THEN** are ye Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise. “ Paul had just previously in Gal. 3:27 announced that the formula for induction into Christ was baptism: “ For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ...” From this it is evident that a valid baptism puts a person constitutionally “ In Christ “ and **then** he is also constitutionally “ In Abraham “. (A man cannot be in one without being in the other).

To summarize: A valid baptism into Christ puts a person constitutionally in Christ. This rite also constitutes the person a legal seed of Abraham. Being in this legal position, the person then becomes an heir of the covenant and a full beneficiary of the promised blessings which involve a resurrection from the dead and a potential eternal inheritance necessitating the bestowal of immortality.

Besides Adam, Abraham and Jesus Christ, the constitutional word **in** is used

in Scripture in the case of both Isaac and Jacob. The Abrahamic covenant was, by extension, conferred also upon Abraham's son and grandson. The divine dictum was: "in Isaac shall thy seed be called". When the Almighty extended the Covenant to Jacob (Israel) the two ideas namely: "In thee" and "In thy seed" are combined by God when he said to Israel: "In thee AND in thy seed, shall all families of the earth be blessed." The atonement of Jesus Christ (the singular seed of Abraham) is the means by which the multitudinous seed of Abraham are going to be blessed.

The kingdom of God is the institution that will administer the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Baptism: Before - The Act Itself - and After

The act of baptism, immersion in water, has properly been described as the watershed of a person's life. Jesus' dictum: "Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5) stands just as unchangeable today as it did when the master uttered it.

Before Baptism

Belief of the gospel is the first condition of salvation and of a valid baptism. A short definition of the Gospel is: The things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ (Acts 8:12). The apostle Paul informs us that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth it (Rom. 1:16). He further discloses that the Gospel was preached before to Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed (Gal. 3:8). In order to believe a matter it is necessary that it be understood and accepted.

In order that a baptism be valid therefore, it is necessary that the things concerning the Kingdom of God in all its bearings be understood and believed.

In addition, the things concerning the name of Jesus Christ must be understood and believed, particularly the fact that God provided the evidence of His power over the grave inasmuch as He raised Jesus from the dead and that Jesus was the firstfruits of them that slept. It was exceedingly appropriate for Jesus then to declare, I am the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25).

Furthermore, the candidate for baptism must commit himself to develop the mind of our Lord, to love righteousness and hate iniquity, to work in the Lord's vineyard and to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts.

The Act of Baptism Itself

When the candidate is validly baptized by immersion in water, the following results and benefits emanate at once.

BAPTISM

1. Our relationship to God changes. We become sons of God. Rom. 8:16; Gal. 4:5
2. We become united with Jesus Christ, i.e., we change from "in Adam" to "in Christ" Rom. 6:3; I Cor. 15:22; Gal. 3:27
3. We join in the Abrahamic and Davidic covenant. Gen. 17:7; Isa. 55:3; Gal. 3:27-29
4. We become HEIRS of the everlasting covenant by adoption and engrafting.
 - Rom. 8:15 Adoption
 - Rom. 11:17 Engrafting
 - Rom. 8:17 Heirship
 - Gal. 3:29 Heirs according to the promise
5. We are baptized into Christ's death and receive remission of past personal sins. Rom. 6:3; Acts 2:38
6. We are buried in water, raised in Christ, and we commit ourselves to:
(1) Walk in newness of life; (2) Obedience to God. Rom. 6:4; Rom. 6:11-13; Col. 2:12; I John 5:3
7. We are reconciled to God:
 - (A) From the estrangement resulting from the transgression of Adam. Rom. 5:8-12, 19-20; Rom. 3:23-24
 - (B) From the alienation arising from our own personal sins. Rom. 3:25; Col. 1:21
8. We are washed, sanctified, justified. I Cor. 6:11
9. We are made free from the law of sin and death by the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Rom. 8:1-2; Rom. 5:18
10. We have the certain promise by our Master of THE RESURRECTION of the dead : to appear, together with all those having been in covenant relationship with God, faithful and unfaithful, at the judgment seat of Christ. Rom. 6:5; II Cor. 4:14; Rom. 14:10-12; II Cor. 5:10

RESULTS OF THE FOREGOING

11. If found faithful: to receive the reward of eternal life in Christ's Kingdom. Rom. 8:11-18; Matt. 25:34
12. If found unfaithful : to be cast into outer darkness, eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord, forever perished in the second death. II Thess. 1:7-10; Heb. 10:26-31; Matt. 25:41; Rev. 21:7-8.

Chapter 3 (A)

DIGRESSION ON THE WORD HEIR

The Bible uses several related words which are directly involved in the Abrahamic covenant. These are:

Heir(s); inheritance ; inherit ; joint-heirs; fellow-heirs;

An *heir* is defined as:

“One who is entitled to receive a future endowment of quality from a predecessor; one who is entitled to succeed to a possession of any property or assets by reason of being named in a will or covenant.”

It is necessary to make several observations about heirship.

1. The assets that an heir receives are an entitlement under **law**. One who inherits property or assets under the terms of a covenant does so because it is a **legal** requirement. The heir is a rightful future recipient of the property named in the covenant.
2. An heir is involved in the principle of the exclusiveness and limitations provided in the terms of the covenant. If the covenant names a certain person or persons as heirs, those, **and only those**, have a legal right and entitlement to the declared assets. All others are excluded.
3. The parties to the covenant have the privilege to name or refrain from naming those who they wish to obtain the entitlement, property or assets. Once the covenant is ratified, no changes in the entitlement can be entertained. Unless a person is specifically named in the covenant as an heir, that person has no legal rights of inheritance and cannot expect redress under law.

In the case of the Abrahamic covenant, the heirs are specifically named. They are: (1) Abraham himself.(Gen. 15:8). (2) Jesus Christ. (Gal. 3:19). (3) Those who have joined in the covenant and are the true seed of Abraham. (Gen. 17:8).

Because of this unspeakable privilege, the heirs of the Abrahamic covenant are described as the **heirs of salvation** by the writer to the Hebrews. (Heb.1:14).

INHERITANCE

The word *inheritance* appears frequently in the Bible. It is closely allied to the word *heir* since an inheritance is the rightful entitlement that comes into possession of the heir.

If a Protestant were asked, “ What is the Gospel of salvation “, the reply would be, “ The forgiveness of sins by the atonement of Jesus Christ “. This reply, while necessary for Biblical understanding, is not sufficient. The reason

that it is not sufficient is that the Apostle Paul states that the Gospel was preached to Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. (Gal 3:8)

If the terms of the Abrahamic covenant are closely examined, it is seen that there is no mention, specifically, about the forgiveness of sins. What is specifically mentioned is that Abraham and his seed are destined to inherit the land of Israel for an everlasting possession. The promise concerns real estate. The forgiveness of sins is implied because it is unthinkable that an unforgiven sinner could be rewarded with an eternal inheritance.

The Gospel of the Kingdom of God concerns both the forgiveness of sins in Christ Jesus and also the inheritance of the Holy Land by the seed of Abraham. Let us examine three Scriptures which bear on this point:

1. When Paul was reiterating, before Agrippa, his experience on the road to Damascus, he quoted the words of Jesus who instructed him as follows:
"To open their (the Gentiles') eyes... that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." (Acts 26:18)
2. In writing to the Ephesians, Paul, again, declares both sides of the Gospel message:
"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. (Eph. 1: 7)
"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance.... " (Eph. 1:11)
3. The same emphasis is contained in the letter to the Colossians:
"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.." (Col. 1:12).
"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins..." (Col. 1:14)

A person can be personally sinless in the eyes of God (for example, newborn babies) and yet destitute of any hope of receiving an eternal inheritance. But one cannot receive the eternal inheritance (promised to the seed of Abraham) without receiving the forgiveness of sins through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

Baptism into Christ accomplishes both provisions: The newly-baptized person arises from the water with sins forgiven - a new creature in Christ Jesus. In addition, by being baptized into Christ, the person becomes an adopted seed of Abraham and an heir of the everlasting covenant which entails a promise of an eternal inheritance in the Holy Land covenanted to Abraham and his seed.

INHERIT

The English verb connected with the noun *heir* is *inherit*. Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. " And again, " He that overcometh shall inherit all things..." (Rev. 21:7) The writer to the Hebrews declares, "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." (Heb. 6:12)

The promise of inheriting is limited to the heirs who are nominated in the covenant. It is an exclusive arrangement with clearly-defined limits.

JOINT-HEIRS and FELLOW-HEIRS

The word, *joint-heir* appears only once - in Romans 8:17, " And if children, then heirs; heirs of God and **joint-heirs** with Christ..." "

The word *fellow-heir* also appears only once - in Ephesians 3:6, " That the Gentiles should be **fellow-heirs**, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel. "

The Greek word that the KJV translates by the two above words is *sugkleronomos*. This is composed of two Greek words: (1) *sun*, which means, "denoting a union by association, companionship or instrumentality.

(Strong # 4862). The other Greek word is, (2) *kleronomos*, which means, "an inheritor, a possessor, an heir. (Strong # 2818)

Putting these two words together, the meaning is "*participant in common, heir together, or heir with*". (Strong # 4789). In other words, more than one party is involved in the inheritance.

Romans 8:17 leaves no doubt that those called to be saints, the children of God, participate jointly in the inheritance with Jesus Christ. Ephesians 3:6 leaves no doubt that Gentiles, who have been baptized into Christ, participate jointly with Abraham and Christ in the covenanted inheritance.

In other words, the beneficiaries of the inheritance promised in the terms of the Abrahamic Covenant, consist of Abraham and his seed, namely Jesus Christ, and those who are called to be saints in his name. It is an arrangement divinely ordained to be exclusive and limited in its outworking.

It should be clearly noted that while the Lord Jesus has ascended to heaven and has been given a name which is above every name, nevertheless he remains , to this day, as an heir of the things covenanted - namely, his inheritance of the Land of Israel.

Chapter 4

THE FIVE SEEDS OF ABRAHAM

In the Bible, the word *seed* carries the idea of children or descendants proceeding from a progenitor. The Hebrew word is *zera* which means posterity, progeny, offspring. The Greek word is *sperma* which has almost the same meaning as its Hebrew equivalent.

It is necessary to remember that the English word *seed* can be either singular or plural depending on the context. There are several English words like this, for example, deer and sheep. Whether one is referring to one descendant or a multitude of descendants, the same word, *seed*, is used. The context determines the number of the meaning.

Since the beneficiaries under the terms of the covenant are called "The seed of Abraham" it should be noted that the word "seed" is used in five different senses with respect to the progeny of Abraham.

Seed # 1

The word "seed" is synonymous with the words progeny, descendant, offspring, and posterity. Any persons who have Abraham as their ancestor can properly be called "The seed of Abraham". Like the English words, fish, sheep, deer etc, the word "seed" can be either singular or plural. The context in which the word is used, determines whether a single descendant is referred to or whether the text refers to a multitude or group of descendants.

Abraham had at least three wives. From Sarah was born Isaac. From Hagar was born Ishmael and from Keturah were born at least six sons who are nominated in Gen. 25:2: Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah. Children from all three wives can be rightly described as "the seed of Abraham". They all proceeded from "the loins of Abraham". All of these, in turn, had progeny, which, as the generations descended, amounted to millions of peoples.

The first child born to Abraham was Ishmael. (Gen. 16:11) His mother was a non-Israelite, an Egyptian named Hagar. Later on, Esau, the brother of Jacob (Israel) married one of the daughters of Ishmael. As time went on the progeny of Ishmael and Esau became intermingled and today, they constitute the Arab nations surrounding the modern nation of Israel. Since Abraham was their progenitor, they are, as far as natural descent goes, the seed of Abraham.

Abraham also had sons at a later date by Keturah. One of these was Midian. The Midianites, along with the other descendants of Keturah, intermarried with the Ishmaelites and are part of the Arab nations today.

Seed # 2

The second son born to Abraham was Isaac. Abraham was one hundred years old and Sarah, his wife, was ninety years old when Isaac was born. Since Sarah had long since passed the menopause, her conception of Isaac was a direct result of the miraculous intervention of God. Hence, he is called by the Apostle Paul, *A child of promise*.

With Isaac, we are introduced to a Biblical concept which we will call, *The Principle of Exclusiveness*. Just as in a will or testament, the testator may exclude certain of his children (for one reason or another) so, in the Covenant with Abraham, The Principle of Exclusiveness became operative.

Although the terms of the covenant provided that the seed of Abraham would be heirs and beneficiaries of the covenanted blessings, nevertheless, the seed of Abraham from Hagar and Keturah were specifically excluded from heirship. **Sonship** does not automatically confer and guarantee **heirship**. In other words, they were disinherited, that is, they were deprived from coming into possession of certain rights which would normally devolve upon them as a result of descent.

When Sarah saw the son of Hagar mocking Isaac on the feast-day of Isaac's weaning, Sarah said unto Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son, for the son of this bondwoman shall not be **HEIR** with my son, even with Isaac." (Gen. 21:10). Although this pronouncement was "very grievous" in Abraham's sight, God confirmed the dictum of Sarah, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called". (Gen.21:12). Although Abraham had many sons, from this point onwards, the only descendants who were qualified, reckoned or deemed as **HEIRS** of the covenant, were Isaac and his progeny.

By this pronouncement, Ishmael, and his progeny, were excluded as beneficiaries and **HEIRS** of the covenant which God had made with Abraham. While it is quite true that Ishmael and Esau and their progeny had Abraham as their progenitor, and were therefore part of the natural seed of Abraham, legally, they were cut off from the covenant and excluded from its terms.

The only descendants of Abraham that were qualified for **HEIRSHIP** were in the line of Isaac and Jacob. The lines of Ishmael and Esau were excluded.

The covenant was later confirmed to Isaac (Gen. 26:3-5) and later still to Jacob (Gen. 28:13-14) whose name was subsequently changed to Israel. (Gen 32:28) The same Principle of Exclusiveness became operative between Jacob and Esau as it was formerly operative between Isaac and Ishmael. **HEIRSHIP** under the terms of the covenant was exclusively in the line of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel). Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. (Gen.25:33).

The effect of the Principle of Exclusiveness was that of all the descendants or seed of Abraham, only the descendants in the line of Isaac and Jacob qualify

for heirship under the terms of the covenant. All the rest, the Ishmaelites, the Hagarenes, the Midianites, the Edomites, etc., are excluded.

Seed # 3

When Jacob's name was changed from "Jacob" to "Israel" (Gen. 32:28), the descendants of Jacob were henceforward called "The Children of Israel" or Israelites. Since the true "Seed of Abraham" was confined to the line of Isaac-Jacob (Israel), as far as the covenant was concerned, the heirs and beneficiaries were restricted to the Children of Israel. This people were later referred to as "Israelites" and later still as "Jews".

Does this mean, then, that the whole nation of Israel were to become heirs of the Abrahamic covenant? By no means. The reason for this is that another Divine Principle of Exclusiveness was operative, namely, "They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." (Rom. 9:8)

We need to digress here and discuss the significance of the word *counted*. A synonym for *counted* is reckoned, treated as, or deemed. What Paul is saying is that, out of the multitudinous Nation of Israel, (the Jews) only those who were "children of the promise" that is, those who had faith in the covenant, were deemed, reckoned and counted as the true seed of Abraham.

In other words, just because a person is a descendant of Jacob by the accident of birth, does not automatically entitle him/her to heirship under the terms of the covenant. As Paul argues in Romans 9 : 6-7, "For they are not all Israel which are of Israel."

A concept is introduced here that takes some explanation. What does Paul mean by saying "They are not all Israel." Frequently, in the Bible, the term *Israel* has a spiritual connotation. It is an equivalent expression for God's elect; the saints; the redeemed. When Jesus saw Nathaniel, he exclaimed, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile". (John 1:47). Paul refers to the saints in the Galatian ecclesias as "The Israel of God". (Gal.6:16)

Very frequently in the Psalms, the word "Israel" is used to describe the true children of God by faith, in contradistinction to the natural descendants of the patriarchs, who are styled "Jacob." An instance: "When the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob (the natural seed) shall rejoice and Israel (the spiritual seed) shall be glad. (Psa. 14:7). "Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac, and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and unto Israel for an everlasting covenant." (Psa. 105:9-10). And again, "For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure". (Psa. 135:4)

Therefore when Paul observes, "They are not all Israel which are of Israel" we could explain this concept by turning the sentence from back to front. The

expression “of Israel” is tantamount to the expression “the natural descendants of Jacob” in short, the Jewish people or the Nation of Israel. What Paul is arguing is this: Just because a person is a Jew, a natural descendant of Jacob, does not qualify him for the designation of a true Israelite - that is, a saint in the eyes of God.

He further goes on to say, “Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children.. “ Here the word *children* is another expression for “children of God” - true Israelites or saints of the Most High. Natural descent, of itself, confers no heirship of the Abrahamic covenant.

Paul concludes this portion of his explanation by adding, “They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God.” The “children of the flesh” - the natural descendants - are here contrasted with “the children of God” - the spiritual seed, the true saints of the Almighty.

Paul’s final summation is: “the children of the promise are counted for the seed”. While all naturally-born Jews are the fleshly descendants of the patriarchs, the only ones of this multitude that are deemed or reckoned to be qualifiers for the inheritance nominated in the covenant are those who are “children of the promise” - that is, those who have faith in the promises as exhibited by the faith of Abraham and who walk in his steps.

We are now in a position to define the Seed # 3 of Abraham. The only natural Israelites who will inherit the promises are those who become heirs of the Abrahamic covenant through faith therein and who “walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham”. They constitute the called, the chosen and the faithful; “Israelites indeed”; the “Israel of God” - the true spiritual seed of Abraham.

Examples of the natural seed of Abraham who are counted for the true or spiritual seed of Abraham are such men as Moses, Daniel and Samuel. Examples of the natural seed of Abraham but who have no part nor lot in the eternal inheritance are Korah, Ahab and Jeroboam.

Seed # 4

As mentioned above, the word “seed” can be either singular or plural. The context is the determining factor in its usage.

When the covenant was extended to Abraham and recorded in Genesis 17, the context demands that the word “ seed “ be construed in the plural sense. “I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations.... (Gen.17:7). The usage of the word “their” in conjunction with the word “ seed “ indicates a plurality of descendants.

A similar usage is found in Gen. 17:8, “And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, ..all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, and I will

be **THEIR** God.”

If this is the case, why did the Apostle Paul make such a point in Galatians 3:16 that the promised seed was in the singular number and was, in fact, one person, namely Jesus Christ? “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, ‘ And to seeds ‘ in the plural, but in the singular, ‘ And to thy seed (singular) - which is Christ”.

The answer to this question is found in Gen. 22:17 where the extension of the covenant under oath is recorded, “Thy seed shall possess the gate of **HIS** enemies.” The usage of the word **HIS** indicates that the “seed” referred to is just one person and the Apostle leaves us in no doubt that this singular seed is Jesus Christ.

In passing, we should note that the whole argument of Paul in proving that Jesus Christ is the singular seed of Abraham and that it is through him that all nations of the earth will be blessed is totally lost in the translation of both the RSV and the NIV. In both of these versions, the translation of Genesis 22:17 is set forth, not as a singular seed but as a multitudinous seed. This manipulation of the text, effectively nullifies the reasoning of Paul in Galatians 3:16. Under divine inspiration, Paul identifies Jesus Christ as the (singular) seed referred to in Genesis 13:15:

“For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed for ever”.

The “land” that Abraham saw in four directions is present-day Israel. It was promised to Abraham; to his greater Son, Jesus Christ; and by extension, to the heirs of the covenant, namely, baptized believers.

The apostle further emphasizes his point in Galatians 3:19 where he argues, “Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come **TO WHOM** the promise was made”. It is important to note that the apostle does not say, “**ABOUT WHOM** the promise was made”. He is very specific that the covenant was made to Jesus Christ personally in its primary application, and that he is also promised the Land of Israel along with the spiritual seed of Abraham.

It is Jesus who is going to “possess the gate of his enemies” and it is through Jesus that “all nations of the earth shall be blessed”. (Gen. 22:17-18) The Scriptures place especial emphasis on the connection between Jesus Christ and the Everlasting Covenant. Not only is he described as “*the messenger of the covenant*” (Mal.3:1) but he is described as **A COVENANT** in Isaiah 42:6:

“I the Lord... give thee for **A COVENANT** of the people, for a light unto the Gentiles”.

Seed # 5

In addition to the covenant conferring eternal benefits, personally, upon both Abraham and his seed - Christ, provision was made for the true seed of Abraham to join in the covenant and so become beneficiaries under its terms. This provision is set forth in Genesis 17: 7 , “ And I will establish my covenant between me and thee **AND THY SEED AFTER THEE IN THEIR GENERATIONS** for an everlasting covenant....”

We have seen men like Moses, Samuel and Daniel did join in the Abrahamic covenant by faith and by walking in the steps of Abraham. These men were all Jews - natural descendants of Abraham in the line of Isaac and Jacob. They will be recipients of the blessings of the covenant which includes a resurrection from the dead, and an eternal inheritance in the Holy Land. This implies the forgiveness of their sins through the redemptive work of the singular seed, Christ.

The Great Question, the Mystery, the Enigma to be solved is this: How can a Gentile, who is not descended from Abraham by natural birth, ever become a beneficiary of a covenant that confers benefits exclusively on **Jews**.

A vital part of the Book of Ephesians is devoted by Paul to explain the solution to this Mystery. The explanation is contained in Eph. 3:2-8 which we will now discuss in detail.

Paul begins in verse 3 by declaring that the explanation of The Mystery was granted to him by direct divine revelation. Furthermore, says Paul, The Mystery in former ages “was not made known unto the sons of men”. He then continues in verse 5 by announcing that The Mystery has been revealed to his holy apostles (of whom Paul was chief).

Paul then discloses, in verse 6, to his readers (and us) the divine solution to The Mystery. An understanding of the solution is so vital to Gentile believers that it is necessary to explain it in detail.

- Ephesians 3:6: **(1) THAT THE GENTILES**
 (2) SHOULD BE FELLOWHEIRS,
 (3) AND OF THE SAME BODY,
 (4) AND PARTAKERS OF HIS PROMISE,
 (5) IN CHRIST,
 (6) BY THE GOSPEL.

Paul makes six points in his explanation which need expansion :

1. “That the Gentiles” The Mystery in essence concerns how Gentiles can join in the Abrahamic Covenant and thus become heirs of the blessings contained therein.
2. “Should be fellowheirs” We should next discuss the ramifications of the word “Heir”. An heir is one who is entitled to inherit and is the rightful future recipient and beneficiary of the blessings and property set forth in the Covenant. The Principle of Exclusivity is operative under the terms of the Covenant. The heirs of the Covenant are beneficiaries and all others are excluded. Unless a person qualifies as an “ heir “, the blessings contained in the Covenant are not available to that person.
When the word “ fellow” is prefixed to the word “ heir “ there is an implication that there are at least two groups of people who qualify as “ heirs “. When they are both recipients of the blessings under the terms of the Covenant, then they can rightfully be called, “ fellow-heirs.” The first group of people who qualify as heirs of the Covenant are taken from the natural seed of Abraham - people like Moses, Samuel and Daniel. These are, Israelites indeed, children of the promise, heirs of salvation etc.

The second group of people who qualify as heirs of the Covenant are Gentiles who join in the Covenant in the appointed way by faith and become the seed of Abraham by adoption. Weymouth translates this section: “ I mean the truth that the Gentiles are joint heirs with us Jews..“

The “appointed way” for Gentiles to become the seed of Abraham is by adoption. This principle of adoption is such an important principle that we want to make a special explanation of it in a separate section- on page 28.

3. “And of the same body “ Strong’s concordance makes this comment on the word *body* (Greek *sussomos*) : “ a fellow member of the Christian community”. Writing to the ecclesia at Corinth, Paul says: “ Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular”. (I Cor. 12:27). The community of believers called the body of Christ, consists of Abraham’s seed numbers 3 and 5 above. By baptism into Christ, Gentiles then, at that point of time, become Abraham’s seed by adoption, heirs of the Covenant and members of the body of Christ.
4. Partakers of his promise The Mystery is now solved ! Gentiles, by divine provision, can now be partakers, co-participants with Jews, beneficiaries and heirs of the promise. Here the word *promise* is a synonym for Covenant. Unlike a human Covenant, God cannot break his covenant and therefore it rises to the status of a promise.

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5. In Christ. The only route by which a Gentile can become an heir of the Covenant is in and through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The Abrahamic Covenant was ratified and brought into force by the sacrificial blood of Christ. By nature, a Gentile is a “stranger from the Covenants of promise” (Eph. 2:12). But when a Gentile is baptized into Christ, he is baptized into his death (Rom 6:3). This is the divine formula whereby a Gentile becomes Abraham’s seed by adoption and an heir of the covenanted blessings.
 6. By the Gospel In order for a baptism into Christ to be valid, it must be preceded by a belief in the Gospel, that is, a belief in the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. *The Gospel* is an integrated system of doctrinal beliefs which Paul describes as “the power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1: 16)

To summarize Paul’s teaching in this explanatory Scripture: First comes a belief in The Gospel including the things concerning the Kingdom of God which arise out of the Covenants of Promise. Next comes a valid baptism into Christ. By this act, a Gentile becomes not only a member of the body of Christ but he also automatically becomes an adopted seed of Abraham who is entitled to the eternal blessings and benefits which accrue to a rightful heir of the Covenant.

Chapter 5

THE BIBLICAL PRINCIPLE OF ADOPTION

There are two ways that a person can have children and descendants. One is by natural procreation within a family and the other is by the institution known as *adoption*. Adoption is defined as the voluntary acceptance of a child of other parents to be the same as one's own child. Once a child is adopted by its surrogate, legally-recognized parents, it enjoys all the rights and privileges including the right of inheritance, as other children by natural birth.

It is perfectly obvious that if Gentiles are to be deemed and counted to be Abraham's children, progeny and seed, it must be by the process of adoption since Gentiles spring from a different progenitor.

It would be scarcely possible to define the process of the adoption of Gentiles into the family of Abraham, better than is done by the apostle Paul in Galatians 3:26-29. After discussing the vital role of baptism into Christ, the apostle makes this declaration:

"If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise".

One of the terms of the Abrahamic covenant was the right for the seed of Abraham to join in the covenant and so become beneficiaries and heirs under its provisions. Gentiles accomplish this by being baptized into Christ, thus becoming Abraham's seed by adoption.

On four other occasions, Paul refers to the fact that Gentile believers are the adopted children of God and therefore become an adopted seed of Abraham and a participant in and beneficiary of the blessings nominated in the terms of the covenant. (Romans 8:15; and 9:4; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5)

Chapter 6

ADOPTION AND GRAFTING

When discussing the position of Gentiles at birth, the apostle Paul declares in Ephesians 2:12 :

“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”.

Anyone familiar with covenant-making knows that if a person is a “stranger” from a covenant, he cannot be an heir or beneficiary under its terms. This is the position of Gentiles at birth. We have shown that the divine institution enabling a Gentile to become an heir and beneficiary of the Promised Blessings is by belief and baptism into Christ. As the apostle says in Eph 2:13:

“But now in Christ Jesus, ye who were sometimes afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. Now therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God”. (v. 19)

There are two kinds of children. Firstly, is a begotten child, that is, a child who is a member of a family by virtue of being born of the father and mother of the family unit - an offspring by procreation. Secondly, is an adopted child, (adoptee) that is, a child born of parents other than the father and mother of the family unit of which the child is a member, by virtue of the child being adopted into that family unit.

Both kinds of children enjoy certain rights and privileges:

1. Both are entitled to the name of the family.
2. Both are ranked as heirs-at-law.
3. Both are ranked as legitimate and legal members of the family and are subject to the entitlements pertaining thereto.

The adopted child is thus legally constituted and from the point of adoption onward, the entitlements including heirship, are governed by the force of law. In some respects, the adopted child is more selected than the natural-born inasmuch as the adopter has a choice and a decided preference for the adoptee which the adopter does not have in the case of a natural-born child.

The legal process that enables this new relationship to be accomplished is called in the Scriptures: **ADOPTION**.

Conditions of adoption

Usually children are adopted in infancy and the adoptee has nothing to say about the matter. But adoption can take place at any age. Augustus Caesar was nearly 20 years old when Julius Caesar adopted him. At that point, Augustus

was in a position to decline the adoption if he so desired. Augustus had the choice of whether he would accept the offer of adoption. He chose to accept and so became the legal heir of Caesar which paved the way to his succession to the throne of Rome.

Once adoption is legally completed, it is irrevocable. You cannot adopt a child and then at a later date, decide to un-adopt it. Besides Augustus Caesar, many historical figures have been the subjects of adoption : Moses, and even Jesus himself appears to have been adopted by Mary's husband, Joseph. (Luke 2:48).

When a man is baptized into Christ, he becomes the subject of a legal adoption into the family of Abraham. Not only is he now "in Christ" but he also is "in Abraham". He becomes the seed of Abraham by adoption and therefore, is entitled to the inheritance promised in the covenant.

It would be difficult to make this process and its results any plainer than does the apostle Paul in Romans 8: 14-16.

"For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God...ye have received the spirit of adoption ...the spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God".

Again:

"God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons...and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ". (Galatians 4:4-7)

The only possible way for a Gentile to become part of the seed of Abraham and an heir of the covenant, is by the legal process of adoption. This is accomplished by belief in the Promise and by baptism into Christ.

The only begotten son of God is Jesus Christ. All others who have the unspeakable privilege of being called sons and daughters of God, are such by virtue of the legal process of adoption by which they are ranked as heirs-at-law.

GRAFTING

The apostle Paul illustrates the principle of adoption by the use of a figure. He uses the figure of the grafting of branches from a wild olive tree into a cultivated or "good" olive tree in Romans chapter 11.

Dendrologists know that wild fruit trees generally are hardier and more able to withstand cold, disease and drought than are domesticated fruit trees. Therefore it is prudent to graft a branch from "good", cultivated fruit tree into the structure of a wild fruit tree in order that the "good" branch may take on the resistant qualities of the wild tree. It would be pointless to graft a wild fruit branch into a cultivated tree for two reasons: (1) the grafted branch would only produce wild inferior fruit, and (2) the engrafted wild branch would become

less resistant to disease etc. as it adapted to its new environment.

In the apostle's illustration, he argues that the process of adoption into the family of Abraham, is contrary to that which a knowledgeable horticulturist would practise.

The "good" olive tree is a figure used by Paul to represent the spiritual seed of Abraham as nominated in the covenant. The wild olive tree is used by Paul to represent the Gentiles. The "root and fatness" of the good olive tree is a figure of the blessings accruing to the heirs of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Unless a "Gentile branch" of the wild olive tree is grafted into the "Good" cultivated Israelitish tree, it is impossible for the wild olive branch to partake of the "root and fatness" of the good olive tree. This "grafting" is another term (using a different metaphor) for adoption.

THE CALL OF THE GENTILES

Although there were rare cases of Gentiles becoming proselytes and joining the commonwealth of Israel in the Old Testament (Rahab and Ruth), the first Gentile convert recorded in the New Testament was Cornelius.

Peter was given a special revelation from God that the way was now being opened for Gentiles to come within the bonds of the covenant through Jesus Christ. Up until this way was opened to Gentiles, salvation was virtually confined to the nation of Israel. When Jesus instructed the twelve, he specifically charged them, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles...but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel". (Matt.10:5-6). And Jesus himself advised the woman of Canaan, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel".

(Matt 15:24)

Despite the spectacular vision-revelation given to Peter concerning the acceptability of the Gentiles, Peter was "astonished" because that on the *Gentiles* also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 10:45) Immediately after this outpouring, Cornelius and his household were baptized and became adopted children of Abraham and brothers of Christ. Acts chapter 11 is Peter's defence to Jewish believers as to why he had accepted Gentiles into the faith.

Later, at the Council of Jerusalem, Peter rose up and said unto them, "Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, *that the Gentiles* by my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel and believe". (Acts 15:7). Paul reminded the Galatians that Christ had redeemed them from the curse of the Law of Moses in order "That the blessing of Abraham might come *on the Gentiles* through Jesus Christ.." (Gal 3:14) This is another way of saying that by baptism into Christ, Gentiles, by adoption, become heirs of the blessings covenanted to Abraham and his seed.

Chapter 7

THE ALLEGORY OF HAGAR AND SARAH -Galatians 4:22-31.

The allegory of Hagar and Sarah is very enlightening when we come to explain the Call of the Gentiles. However, before discussing the allegory, we should define two figures of speech that are used in this passage of Scripture.

Analogy Where the meaning exceeds the literal. Analogy denotes a resemblance of relationship: e.g. "Learning enlightens the mind". There is a relationship between learning, light and mind. Just as Light affects the eye, so Learning has an effect upon the mind. A comparison is made between the similarity of like features of two things or concepts.

Allegory A poem, play or word-picture etc., in which the apparent meaning of the characters and events is used to symbolize a deeper moral or spiritual meaning. An allegory is an extension of a simple metaphor and is always in the past tense. The comparison is by implication rather than directly stated.

THE ALLEGORY OF GALATIANS 4

The allegory of Galatians 4 is an excellent example of the interconnections of the five seeds of Abraham. The "actors" in the allegory are:

1. The natural seed of Abraham, by Hagar, in the line of Ishmael.
2. The natural seed of Abraham, by Sarah, in the line of Isaac.
3. The spiritual seed of Abraham taken from the line of Isaac.
4. The principal seed of Abraham - Jesus Christ.
5. The Spiritual seed of Abraham taken from the Gentiles by adoption.

In the development of the allegory of Galatians 4, a number of analogies are used: Two of these are presented in Gal. 4:22-23:

22 *For it is written that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.*

23 *But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.*

Analogy # 1-Hagar compared to Sarah.

Hagar, the bondwoman, was an Egyptian handmaid to Sarah. She was virtually a slave-girl whom Abraham took as a concubine at the suggestion of his wife. (Genesis 16:2)

Sarah, Abraham's wife was barren, she could not conceive a child; she could not experience "travail with child" and she was, therefore "desolate". Being the legitimate wife of Abraham, she was a "free woman". She enjoyed the

privileges of a wife and would be the “boss” of Hagar.

Analogy # 2-Ishmael compared to Isaac.

Ishmael was the son of Abraham and Hagar. He was “born after the flesh” inasmuch as his mother was given to Abraham by Sarah when it became obvious that Sarah was unable to conceive. Sarah later regretted her decision because when Hagar, learning that she herself was pregnant, despised Sarah.(Gen.16:4)

Isaac was later born to Abraham and Sarah when Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was ninety. God miraculously activated the womb of Sarah when she was long past the age of child-bearing and hence, Isaac is called “A child of Promise “. Unlike Ishmael, who was conceived by a fertile slave-girl, Isaac’s conception required the miraculous intervention of God.

Next Paul introduces two additional comparisons in Galatians 4:24-26 to further develop the allegory:

24 *Which things are an allegory; for these are two covenants; the one from Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar*

25 *For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.*

26 *But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.*

Analogy # 3- The Mosaic Covenant compared to the Abrahamic Covenant.

The Mosaic Covenant was given in Mount Sinai. Why does Paul say it “gendereth to bondage”? The Law of Moses was very restrictive on human behaviour and very demanding upon its subjects. Touch not; Taste not; Handle not; were ordinances which Peter said, “Neither our fathers nor we are able to bear”. (Acts 15:10). All Israelites were born under the Mosaic Covenant and were under obligation to observe its precepts however onerous or “gendering to bondage” they might be.

The Abrahamic Covenant is described in the allegory as “free”. Immediately after Paul discusses the allegory, he defines what he means by “free” :

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage”. (Gal. 5:1)

Those Jews who have joined in the Abrahamic Covenant by baptism into Christ, are no longer under the ritual obligations of the Law of Moses which Paul describes as a “yoke of bondage”. In addition, they, as well as Gentiles, are free in another sense which Paul describes in Romans 8:2:

“For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death”.

The Mosaic Covenant could not confer eternal life as Paul observes in Galatians 3:21 : “If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law”. On the other hand, the Abrahamic Covenant was ordained to eternal life by a resurrection from the dead for those who are constituted the true seed of Abraham.

Paul continues his argument by comparing two mountains.

Analogy # 4- Mount Sinai compared to Mount Zion (Jerusalem).

Mount Sinai was the site at which the Law of Moses was delivered to the children of Israel after their crossing of the Red Sea in their flight from Egypt. Up to this point in Paul's argument, he describes Hagar as the mother of the seed of Abraham, the Ishmaelites, who were excluded from the blessings of the Covenant. Now, he equates Mount Sinai with Hagar, and portrays Hagar as the mother of natural Israel-the Jews. - “Jerusalem which now is and is in bondage...”!!

Mount Zion is one of the principal mounts on which the City of Jerusalem stands. In the allegory, Paul equates the metaphorical City of Jerusalem, that is, “which is above” and, “which is the mother of us all”, with Sarah and **contrasts** it with the City of Jerusalem, “that **now** is”. Frequently, in the Scriptures, the saints, the elect of God, Israelites indeed, the spiritual seed of Abraham - are spoken of as the municipality of Jerusalem:

“And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband”. (Rev. 21:2)

Again:

“But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels”. (Heb. 12:22)

Again:

“and they shall call thee (the saints) The city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel”. (Isaiah 60 :14)

To repeat: it is at this point in Galatians 4 (verses 25-26) that the apostle Paul converts the history into an *allegory*. Up to this point, Hagar is seen to be the mother of the seed of Abraham, the Ishmaelites, who were disinherited from the blessings of the Covenant. Now, he makes Hagar the mother of natural Israel - the Jews. “Hagar answereth to Jerusalem which **now** is and is in bondage..”.

Just as the accident of birth did not endow the Ishmaelites with the covenanted heirship, even though they were the seed of Abraham through Hagar, neither does the accident of birth endow the Jews with the covenanted heirship even though they were the seed of Abraham through Sarah and Isaac.

Paul at the first, describes Sarah historically as the mother of the natural seed of Abraham through Isaac. These are the Jews - Jerusalem which now is. But *allegorically*, Sarah is not their "mother" at all. She becomes the "mother" of spiritual Israel most of whom are Gentiles having come into Sarah's family by adoption.

Analogy # 5- Persecution of Natural Israel and Spiritual Israel.

Ishmael was about 15 years old when it came time for Sarah to wean Isaac. It was customary to hold a feast to celebrate this event at which Sarah observed Ishmael mocking or laughing with scorn at Isaac. In reference to this incident, Paul says, "He that was born after the flesh (Ishmael) persecuted him that was born after the spirit (Isaac)". And then he adds, "even so it is **now**".

When is "**now**" ? It is estimated that the letter to the Galatians was written about 58 A.D. During this period, beginning with the ministry of Jesus, the Jews (the Jerusalem which now is - which have Hagar as their allegorical mother) persecuted the saints (the Jerusalem from above - which have Sarah as their allegorical mother). The Jews (the natural seed of Abraham, born after the flesh, that is, allegorically from Hagar) persecuted the saints (the spiritual seed of Abraham, born after the spirit, that is, allegorically from Sarah).

Because of Ishmael's mocking (persecution) he was "cast out" and deprived of his right to be an heir of the blessings of the Covenant. As Paul argues, "the son of the bondwoman (Hagar) shall not be heir with the son of the free woman (Sarah)". Allegorically, this means that the natural-born Jews (as such) are not the heirs of the everlasting covenant. This inheritance is reserved for the sons of Sarah who are born after the spirit.

AN EXPLANATION OF GALATIANS 4:27

This is a direct quotation from Isaiah 54:1, which reads:

"Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord".

Two women are under discussion in this verse: Sarah and Hagar. During Sarah's normal child-bearing period, before the menopause set in, she could have no children. She was "barren" and "desolate". On the other hand, when Hagar became Abraham's concubine making Abraham the "husband" of Hagar and constituting Hagar the "married wife" of Abraham, she conceived Ishmael in the proximate natural course.

How is the apparent enigma to be explained? How could a woman who is barren have many more children than a woman who is child-bearing?

The answer is that ALL of the children of the "barren" woman are born after

the spirit and not after the flesh. The first child born to the “barren” woman was Isaac. He was miraculously conceived by the spirit of God. Since that time, ALL of Sarah’s children are also “born after the spirit” and are heirs by adoption.

Once the divine way of salvation was opened to Gentiles by the mouth of Peter (Acts 15:7), the number of adopted children of Sarah and Abraham greatly increased. In the last 150 years, since the publication of *Elpis Israel*, the adopted children have largely come from Gentiles. Very few have been adopted from the stock of natural Israel.

PUTTING IT MATHEMATICALLY

In this allegory, the Apostle Paul almost makes a “mathematical” comparison in which four parties are involved:

1. The seed of Abraham (by Hagar) in the line of Ishmael.
2. The seed of Abraham (by Sarah) in the line of Isaac (Jews)
3. The natural Jews (allegorically, sons of Hagar.)
4. Spiritual Israel (Allegorically, sons of Sarah.)

The allegory is really comparing two relationships. The first is the relationship between the seed of Abraham in the line of Ishmael {Arabs} with the seed of Abraham in the line of Isaac. Paul points out that Ishmael was disinherited, “cast out” because of his “persecution” of Isaac, which resulted in the inheritance devolving upon Isaac.

The next comparison is the relationship between Natural Israel and Spiritual Israel. Natural Israel had Isaac as their progenitor. But **sonship** does not automatically confer **heirship**. This is another way of saying that not all “of Israel” (that is, natural-born Jews), are “Israel” (that is, the Israel of God; Israelites indeed; the elect).

Just as the accident of birth constituted both Ishmael and Isaac to be the seed of Abraham, nevertheless, by Divine fiat, the inheritance under the Covenant was conferred upon Isaac. Similarly, all Jews in the line of Isaac are constituted the seed of Abraham, nevertheless, the inheritance under the Covenant is confined to the spiritual seed of Abraham who exhibit the faith and practice of their forefather. In this dispensation, it is by baptism into Christ that believers are constituted Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise. It is not by the accident of birth. It is by the method of adoption that Sarah is said to have MANY more children than Hagar. These adopted children of Sarah are born after the spirit and it is in this sense that the true believers are her children and that she is “the mother of us all”.

CHAPTER 8

RESURRECTION AND THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

In *Elpis Israel*, Brother Thomas demonstrates a principle of Biblical interpretation that is especially pertinent concerning the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. The principle is this:

The teaching of a doctrine by promising or declaring something that necessitates it.

One of the terms of the Abrahamic Covenant is very specific :

*“Lift up now thine eyes and look from the place where thou art - northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land that thou seest, to thee will I give it **and to thy seed forever.** Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and the breadth of it; **for I will give it unto thee.** (Gen 13: 14-17)*

It is perfectly obvious that Abraham is not now in possession of the land of Israel. He is dead and buried in the sepulchre at Hebron, Israel. In fact, Voltaire raised this fact as an objection to the inspiration of the Bible, because the promise of inheriting the land , given to Abraham, personally, had not been realized.

The dilemma is stated by Stephen in Acts 7:5: “ And he (God) gave him none inheritance in it (The land of Israel) 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. “

The only way that God can fulfil his promise to give Abraham possession of the land is by a resurrection of Abraham from the dead.

To indicate this, and the certainty of the resurrection, God gives us his Memorial, which was to be “unto all generations” (Exod. 3:15). “Thus shalt thou say unto all the children of Israel: The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob hath sent me unto you; this is my name forever and this is my memorial unto all generations”.

What meaning is couched in this most sublime memorial ? This: I am the God who is faithful to my covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and to fulfil it I will raise them from the dead. That this is the meaning, is confirmed by Jesus Christ himself.

When the Sadducees came to Jesus denying *the resurrection*, his refutation consisted of citing the incident of Moses at the burning bush:

“Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he called the Lord, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead but of the living; for all live unto him”. (Luke 20:37-38).

This memorial was given as proof “that the dead are raised”. The immediate proof is offered in the cases of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob because they were the personal parties to the covenant. But it is also extended to Jesus Christ, himself, as the preeminent seed “to whom the promise was made” (Gal. 3:19).

Furthermore it is a guarantee of the resurrection from the dead of the seed of Abraham who join in the covenant by baptism into Christ. The memorial itself is adduced as proof, decisive, that such a resurrection will occur. Why is this adduced? Because the covenant necessitates a resurrection. Without it the covenant cannot be fulfilled. By calling himself the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, (who were dead), God pledges Himself to a strict performance of his covenant, namely, that the patriarchs, personally, shall inherit the land of Israel.

By extension the inheritance devolves upon Jesus Christ and to present-day believers who are his brethren and sisters.

The Apostle Paul on Resurrection

When the Apostle Paul addressed the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, he cried out:

“Of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.”
(Acts 23:6)

When Paul appeared before Agrippa as recorded in Acts 26:6, he testified:

“And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers..”

When Paul was a prisoner in Rome, he declared to the chief men of the Jews:

“Because that for the hope of Israel, I am bound with this chain.”

On these three occasions, Paul was affirming the same doctrine in three different ways. He was not being “all things to all men” by giving one reason before one group of accusers and another reason before another group of accusers. He was giving a “a reason of the hope that was in him” by citing complementary phases of the same doctrine.

Putting these discourses together, we have an equation between three concepts:

- (1) The resurrection of the dead.
- (2) The Abrahamic Covenant - the promise made of God unto the fathers.
- (3) The Hope of Israel.

These three fundamental concepts are inextricably linked together in the public utterances of the Apostle to the Gentiles.

The Case of the Resurrection of Christ.

In the famous speech, on the Day of Pentecost, recorded in Acts 2, the Apostle Peter exclaimed: “God hath raised (Jesus) up having loosed the pains of death;

because it was not possible that he should be holden of it”.

Frequently when Acts 2:24 is explained, a serious error is given as to the reason why Death could not hold the Lord Jesus Christ in the grave. The usual explanation is that Jesus had the following attributes:

- a) He was a perfectly righteous man.
- b) He always did those things which pleased the Father.
- c) His moral life before God was impeccable.
- d) He was a lamb without spot or blemish.

Since all of the above are true, the explanation proceeds to declare that because the Master exhibited these attributes, God was under obligation to raise Jesus from the dead. God is portrayed as having no choice in the matter if God's own fairness, justice and righteousness were to be upheld. God owed Jesus a resurrection and a bestowal of the divine nature on the sole grounds of Jesus' perfectly sinless character. (If sinlessness is the sole requirement for salvation, then all babies who die at birth should be granted eternal life!)

There is a fatal flaw in this explanation because, at bottom, it clearly teaches the unScriptural doctrine of salvation by works. Salvation is invariably described scripturally as the gift of God. No man, not even the Lord Jesus Christ, can earn salvation. *“For by grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast”*. (Eph. 2:8-9)

God was not indebted to Jesus because of the Master's righteous life. Christ's elevation to the divine nature was not the payment of a debt owed by God, but rather it was an unspeakable gift which the Almighty was pleased to bestow upon his only begotten Son.

But we are informed that *“it was not possible that he (Jesus) should be holden of it (the grave)”*. What factor made it impossible? We do not have to speculate as to the reason since the very next word in Peter's exposition is the word *for*.

The apostles frequently give reasons for their statements. It is enlightening to note words like *for*, *since*, and *because*. Skipping over them carelessly allows the truth to escape. The connective, *for*, is a translation of the Greek word *gar*. Liddell & Scott note that the chief usage of *gar* is to introduce a reason and carries a meaning close to our word *because*. In order for us therefore, to ascertain the reason why the grave could not hold Jesus, all we have to do is read on! Peter fully explains in his argument beginning at verse 25, the reason for the impossibility for Death to hold Jesus.

In summary, the reason that Peter gives is this: **That the covenant God made with David might be implemented.** The whole argument developed by Peter is how the Davidic covenant - which is an extension of the Abrahamic covenant - was ratified and confirmed by the death and resurrection of our Lord.

The pith of the argument is contained in verses 30-31:

“Therefore being a prophet and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit upon his throne; he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ....”

The writer to the Hebrews informs us that “it is **impossible** for God to lie” (Heb 6:8) therefore if the grave was allowed to “hold” the body of Jesus, God would then be found to be a liar. Since it is impossible for God to lie, it was absolutely **necessary** that God raise Jesus from the dead in fulfilment of the Davidic Covenant which God had sworn with an oath to bring to fruition.

Perhaps we could paraphrase Peter’s argument in this way: It was impossible for the grave and death to hold Jesus in the tomb. His resurrection from the dead by God was necessitated because God had made an oath-bound covenant with David that He would raise the Royal Seed from the dead to sit on the throne of Israel for ever. If God failed to perform this term of the covenant, He would be a liar and a covenant-breaker. Since it is impossible for God to lie, He raised Jesus from the dead through the blood of the everlasting covenant.

Does Peter ignore the fact that Jesus lived a perfectly normal life? God forbid. In verse 27, Peter, quoting the Psalms, describes Jesus as “*Thine Holy One*” In its fullness, this places God’s Son in a position of moral perfection. He truly was a lamb without spot or moral blemish. His mind was perfectly in tune with the mind of the Almighty. Because of his perfect moral character, Jesus was a perfect sacrifice for sin. Since without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, it was required that the blood of a man who was completely victorious over sin be shed in order to cleanse us from all sin and also to effect Jesus’ own redemption from death.

In addition to the function of Jesus as a perfect sacrifice for sin, it was also necessary that the Everlasting Covenant be confirmed and ratified by his death. One of the principal features of the Atonement was the ratification of the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants . Hear the Apostle Paul on this point:

“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers”.
(Romans 15:8)

A full explanation of this divine teaching is given by the writer to the Hebrews at chapter 9:16-17:

“For where a covenant is made, the death of the appointed sacrifice is necessary to be brought in; for a covenant is confirmed or ratified only over dead victims or sacrifices, since it hath no force while the appointed sacrifice is living”.

(Bro. W.H. Boulton’s translation after Weymouth)

Christ was the perfect “*appointed sacrifice*” to confirm and ratify the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants. Now one of the terms of these covenants is the promise of a resurrection from the dead and both are ordained to eternal life. Since Jesus ratified these covenants by the shedding of his blood in his death, it was not possible that the resurrection of his dead body should fail to take place by the power of Him whose covenant is immutable.

The **provisional** ratification of the Abrahamic Covenant took place during the life of Abraham and is recorded in Gen.15:10. In ancient times, a covenant was ratified by taking a clean animal, and cutting it in half. Then the two contracting parties separated the two halves and walked between the parts.

(See Jer. 34:18-19 for more on this custom.)

Just as the sacrifices under the law of Moses could never take away sins, so the provisional ceremony, surrounding the covenant in which Abraham was a participant, could never ratify the everlasting covenant. Both ordinances required the death of Christ to make them fully operative and effectual. Upon the death of Christ, the everlasting Covenant was confirmed, ratified and became fully operative. No longer were provisional and contingent ordinances and rituals required because the true divinely-appointed sacrifice had now been offered by the shedding of the precious blood of Christ.

For this reason, the writer to the Hebrews, when speaking of the resurrection of Christ, identifies that which is truly effectual in bringing about resurrection, namely, the operation of the everlasting covenant:

*“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, **through the blood of the everlasting covenant**, make you perfect in every good work to do his will....”*
(Heb. 13:20)

Chapter 9

RESURRECTION AND THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

When the Apostle Paul delivered his lecture to the Jewish synagogue in Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13), he was offering evidence that Jesus was indeed the Messiah of Israel and that God had raised him from the dead as proof of his Messiahship.

After citing the fact that the risen Lord had been seen by witnesses that were still alive, he then argued that the resurrection of Christ was a direct fulfilment of prophecy. The prophecy which he cites is the Davidic Covenant:

“And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David”. (Acts 13:34)

One might well ask, “What have the Sure Mercies of David got to do with the resurrection of Christ? How could the Sure Mercies of David be used as a proof of the resurrection of Christ?”

The “Sure Mercies of David” is another name of the Davidic Covenant. Solomon ended his prayer at the dedication of the temple (II Chron. 6:41-42) with these words, “Remember the Mercies of David thy servant”. Immediately **before** these final words, Solomon quoted Psalm 132 : 8-10. Immediately **following** in verse 11 of Psalm 132, David wrote, “The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set up thy throne”. This is a direct quotation from the terms of the Davidic Covenant as recorded in II Samuel 7:12-16.

While this is not the place to expound the Davidic Covenant, we might make these observations concerning the import of some of the terms thereof:

1. David was to have a descendant, the throne of whose kingdom would be established for ever.
2. This descendant was to have God for his father.
3. David was guaranteed a resurrection from the dead to personally witness the permanent re-establishment of his throne, house and kingdom. David's resurrection was implicit in the covenant because he was promised that his kingdom was to be re-established “**before thee**”. (The RSV and the NIV nullify the teaching of the Davidic Covenant by translating **before thee** by **before me** {God}).

There is no doubt that the descendant referred to was David's greater Son, Jesus Christ as proven by Hebrews 1:5. The Davidic Covenant - the Sure Mercies of David - also guarantee the resurrection of Christ by implication. The throne of Christ's kingdom could never be established **for ever** as long as

Christ remained in the grave! But there is more. Is the Davidic Covenant confined to David and Jesus? The answer is found in Isaiah 55:3:

*“Incline your ear and come unto me; hear, **and your soul shall live**; and I will make an everlasting covenant with **YOU**, even the Sure Mercies of David”.*

Here is a direct equation between the Davidic Covenant and the Sure Mercies of David. But the point is that the promise is not confined to David and Christ but is extended to “every one that thirsteth” and come to the waters {of baptism} (Isa. 55:1) - “I will make an everlasting covenant with **you**, even the Sure Mercies of David”. The “**you**” includes, by extension, those who are associated with Christ by baptism into his saving name.

In summary, the teaching is that those who come into covenant relationship with the Sure Mercies of David by baptism into Christ are assured of a resurrection from the dead just as David was assured and just as resurrection actually occurred in the case of Jesus who was brought forth from the dead “through the blood of the everlasting covenant”. (Heb. 13:20).

Chapter 10

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

There are several words used in the Bible which carry a connotation of royalty: king; kingdom; reign; crown; majesty, etc.

The things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ constitute an epitome of the ingredients of the Gospel which must be believed prior to baptism. (Acts 8:12) The Kingdom of God is the terminal event portrayed in the fundamental prophecy connected with Nebuchadnezzar's Image:

"In the days of these kings shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. (Daniel 2:44)

The Abrahamic Covenant and its extension - the Davidic Covenant - both contain essential information concerning the Kingdom of God. Only a hint was given to Abraham when the Lord said, " Kings shall come out of thee" (Gen.17:6)

It remained for a much more detailed explanation of the Kingdom of God to be covenanted to David.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN HISTORY

The Kingdom of God *in its initiatory form*, was established as a Theocracy (Deut 5 etc.) at Sinai with the children of Israel as its subjects. It was a form of government under the sole Headship of God himself. In brief, the legislative, executive and judicial power was vested in the Almighty. In their civil, religious, social and family relations, they were to acknowledge and be obedient to His expressed will. In short, according to the Mosaic constitution, the Children of Israel were constituted a kind of republic under the immediate dominion of God, forming a strict theocracy.

This form of government existed for over 500 years and was changed when the Israelites demanded a visible King like the nations round about. The first king was Saul and the last king was Zedekiah - 587 B.C. The kingdom reached its zenith under David and Solomon. The Davidic throne and kingdom was called the Lord's. Thus, in I Chron.28:5, it is "*the throne of the Kingdom of the Lord over Israel*"; in II Chron.13:8, "*the Kingdom of the Lord*"; and in I Chron 28:5, the king is placed by God "*on his throne to be King for the Lord thy God*". The King was expressly designated, "*The Lord's Anointed*" (I Sam.24:6; II Sam.19:21 etc.) Of Solomon it is said, "*Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him*". (I Chron. 29:23)

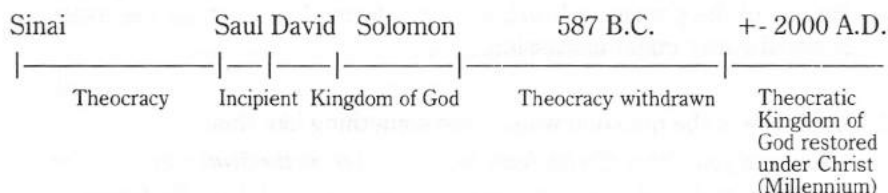
It was during the reign of David that the Davidic Covenant was contracted

between God and King David. The covenant spelled out the following facts concerning the Kingdom:

1. The Kingdom of God was destined to be “ established “ by a future descendant of David.
2. The throne of this restored Kingdom was to be “ for ever”.
3. The future King was to have God as his father as well as being a seed of David.
4. The future throne and Kingdom were to be established for ever “before thee” that is, in David’s presence. This promise *necessitates* the resurrection of David from the dead because David was informed that these future events would take place after his days were fulfilled and he slept with his fathers. (II Sam. 7:12)

TIME STUDY OF THE KINGDOM

From this information we can set down a time diagram of the Kingdom of God:



PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE THEOCRACY

The prophets of God consistently and constantly warned the kings of Israel and Judah that their wickedness and disobedience would bring an end to the Kingdom of God in its incipient stage. Perhaps the best-known warning is that given by Ezekiel to King Zedekiah:

“ Thou profane wicked Prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, Thus saith the Lord, Remove the diadem, and take off the crown, this shall not be the same; I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him”. (Ezekiel 21:25-26)

From this warning we are informed that “ it “ (the Kingdom of God) was to terminate - not in perpetuity, but **until he come whose right it is**.

There is no question about whose “ right “ it is because in the Angel’s announcement to Mary, he said,

“Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. he shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give to him the throne of his father David; And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there shall be no end”. (Luke 1:32-33)

The Restoration of the Kingdom

After the resurrection of Jesus, the disciples asked him a very cogent question: “Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6) From this question and Jesus’ answer we draw the following facts:

1. By use of the word *thou* it is evident that Jesus is the central figure in the question.
2. By use of the phrase *at this time*, we ascertain the certainty of the matter. It was only a question of timing - not a question of reality.
3. By use of the word *restore*, we know that the kingdom existed at a period in the past and that its restoration was anticipated by the apostles. (The word *again* is not in the original Greek text.)
4. By use of the phrase *to Israel*, we are informed concerning the exact national entity under discussion.

A paraphrase of the question would read something like this:

“Now that you, Jesus Christ, have been raised from the dead and are alive for evermore, has the time arrived when you will re-establish the throne of David, bring back a theocratic monarchy to the Nation of Israel and assume your rightful office as King of the Jews?”

Notice that Jesus, in his reply to the question, did not contradict a single concept posed by the question. The only uncertainty contained in Jesus’ reply was the matter of timing. All the other elements in the question remained intact and certain.

Both the Old and New Testaments consistently predict the re-establishment of the throne of David and the world-wide dominion of the Kingdom of Israel.

Often Isaiah 9:6 is quoted: “Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace”.

But read on !

“Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.”

The Psalms are eloquent on the fulfilment of the Davidic Covenant:

"I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations". (Psa. 89:3-4)

"The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David, he will not turn from it: of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne". (Psa 132:11)

The climax is described in Revelation 11: 15:

"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ and he shall reign for ever and ever".

THE SONG OF THE REDEEMED

"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou are worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev 5:9-10)

"To participate in the honour and glory of this kingdom, it is necessary to be adopted into the family of Abraham, by *believing the things* which concern the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, and *immersion* into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

(*The Revealed Mystery*. John Thomas. Part III. His italics).