

A few years ago, when I was at the Indianapolis State Fair, I was challenged by some Christian fundamentalists who looked upset with some of the things in our booth. They sternly asked, "What's your message?" I replied with the angels' summary of the Abrahamic Promise...

Luk 2:10 Fear not [God is not a God to be feared]: for, behold [pay attention], I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

I told them, "The rest of the Bible explains why this statement is true!"

We will be discussing some features of the Abrahamic covenant that make this statement true.

As we know, God promised to make a covenant with Abram upon his entering Canaan, which Abram did at age 75.

Gen 12:2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

Gen 12:3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

God promised several blessings to Abraham's seed.

Gen 12:7 the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land:

Gen 15:5 ... Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: ... So shall thy seed be.

After 10 years with no children, no seed, Sarah gave Hagar, her bondwoman or maid, to Abram to father a son, whose name was Ishmael.

But God had told Abraham, that the promised seed would come through Sarah...

Gen 17:19 And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.

Abraham was 100 and Sarah 90. This was an amazing miracle and proved that nothing was too hard for the Lord.

When Isaac was a man (30), Abraham was told...

Gen 22:2 And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

Abraham did not falter or murmur but obeyed completely.

Heb 11:19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

God stopped Abraham, and told him...

Gen 22:16 And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:

Gen 22:17 That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

Gen 22:18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Soon after, Sarah died, and Abraham sent Eliezar to find a bride for Isaac from Paddan-Aram (Haran).

Upon Rebecca's return, Isaac took her into Sarah's tent and she became his wife. (Gen 24:67)

Abraham later took another wife, Keturah, and had six more children.

Paul tells us that the first two wives of Abraham represent two covenants.

(We will talk about the Keturah covenant a little later.)

As Sarah went barren for many years, so the primary seed of the Sarah feature of the Abrahamic covenant went barren for millennia.

Hagar was used to attempt to bring forth the seed of promise, but her child was not what God intended.

Most of Israel either rejected the Law covenant [pictured by Hagar] as undoable or, merely did the letter of the Law. Many did only the things that were convenient for them, things that didn't interfere with their fallen human ambitions. They didn't appreciate the righteousness and beauty in the Law.

God told them...

Psa 50:16 ...What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?

Psa 50:17 Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee.

Jesus spoke of their hypocrisy:

Mat 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the Law, judgment, mercy, and faith:

God prophesied of this condition...

Isa 5:1 ...My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill:

Isa 5:2 And he fenced it [with the Law], and gathered out the stones [difficulties] thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine [the Abrahamic promise], and built a tower in the midst of it [the oversight of the prophets], and also

made a winepress therein [to gather righteous fruitage]:
and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it
brought forth wild grapes. [poison berries].

As a result...

Isa 5:6 ...I will lay it waste... I will also command the
clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

Isa 5:7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house
of Israel,

The Law Covenant was 430 years after the Abrahamic
Covenant (Gen 12:3), but it could not bring forth the seed of
promise.

The Sarah covenant was the covenant of grace, of faith. This
original Abrahamic covenant could bring forth the promised
seed, in God's due time.

Gal 4:4 But when the fullness of the time was come, God
sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,
Gal 4:5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we
might receive the adoption of sons.

Being born under the Law, Jesus was obligated to keep the
Law.

His keeping the Law proved that he was the perfect man,
entitled to human life, forever.

Lev 18:5 Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live

But at 30 years of age, he laid down his human life in sacrifice to do God's will. He became a divine new creature to be developed under the Sarah feature of the Abrahamic covenant.

At his death, the ransom-price for Adam, the value of his sacrificed human life, was still his.

Joh 10:18 No man taketh [my life] from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.

He would now use it to justify his body members who would follow him in the same path, and in the same covenant of sacrifice as shown in Lev 8:14-35.

Though the Law covenant failed to bring forth the promised seed, especially among fallen Israel, it failed with great success because the Law showed Israel, and especially the Israelites indeed what true righteousness is. Those who could see the spirit of the Law, dearly appreciated it.

As David said,

Psa 119:97 O how love I thy Law! it is my meditation all the day.

Psa 119:112 I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes always, even unto the end.

David could look forward to a world where all mankind loved and kept these righteous laws, and loved the True God who gave these laws for the blessing of mankind.

As Paul said...

Gal 3:24 Wherefore the Law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

The Israelites indeed could see the divine standard of the Law and Jesus, the anointed of God, who was keeping it.

On the day of Pentecost Peter spoke to all the House of Israel...

Act 2:36 ...that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

They were pricked in their hearts. Peter told them

Act 2:38 ...Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Spoken by the Prophet Joel

Joe 2:29 ...upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

These were the Israelites indeed, the fully consecrated ones who transferred from Moses to Christ...

F434

To every "Israelite indeed," already thus consecrated and bound to Moses even unto death, and with all their hopes of life anchored in him, it was but a small remove to accept Christ in his stead, and as his antitype; and to understand that their pledges under the Law to Moses were now transferred by divine arrangement to Christ, the surety of the New Covenant which they engaged to serve.

After 36 AD, the opportunity was opened wide to both Jews and Gentiles to come into Christ through faith in the blood of Christ, which will bring them to the Father with imputed justification for making an acceptable consecration, to become Jesus body members.

These are also developed under the Sarah feature of the Abrahamic covenant, according to their faith.

They are not judged according to the letter of the Law, which they cannot do, but as Paul tells us:

Rom 8:4 That the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

These appreciate the spirit of righteousness, and desire to mortify the deeds of the flesh in their human vessels.

Rom 8:13 ...if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

God tells his children...

Pro 23:26 My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.

Paul speaks of the seed of Abraham in Galatians

Gal 3:16 - Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ.

But Christ is the head and body...

Gal 3:29 - And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

So we are part of this seed of Abraham which will bless all the families of the earth.

The Christ head and body are the Stars of Heaven class of 144,001 divine beings who will have the privilege to bless all the families of the earth.

Isa 2:3 For the Law will go forth from Zion, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

This speaks of the Two Phases of the Kingdom.

The heavenly phase, here called Zion, is made up exclusively of the Christ head and body.

Although there will be other spirit beings associated with the Heavenly Kingdom, they will not be in the Kingdom.

R2052

The "great company" do not belong to the Kingdom at all. They will be associated in some way not explained, but will not be part of the Kingdom real, nor yet of the earthly or representative Kingdom.

Only those who were faithful in their part of the sin-offering, the "little flock" will be in the heavenly phase of the Kingdom.

SM 680

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom," said the Master. (Luk 12:32.) Only the Royal Family will get the Kingdom."

"All others will be the subjects of the Kingdom."

We'd now like to look at the Earthly Phase of the kingdom and look at its work as it progresses to achieve the final result of blessing all the families of the earth.

Looking back at the Sarah [faith] feature of the Abrahamic Covenant, we can see that there were in fact children of this covenant before the spiritual seed was developed.

Paul tells us of these in Heb 11 – the Ancient Worthies.

Heb 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Heb 11:2 For by it [faith] the elders obtained a good report.

By faith, by faith, etc.

Heb 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Heb 11:39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise [the earthly promises]:

Heb 11:40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

Some of these Ancient Worthies lived before the Law Covenant and even before Abraham. They received their "Good Report" and "pleased God" by their faith – shown by their trust.

It is interesting that the word "Faith" appears in the Old Testament only twice. But the word trust appears 107 times.

H2620 - to flee for protection; to confide in: - have hope, make refuge, (put) trust.

H982 - to trust, be confident or sure: - be bold, careless (Free from care or anxiety)

This “fleeing for protection” should not be confused with “fear” as a person may look for any port in a storm. Instead, these sought protection in the one true God, in whom they had full confidence and trust, come what may.

As Job said,

Job 13:15 Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:

This faith was expressed in their actions and trust in God.

As in the “Three Hebrews” (Hananiah, Azariah, Mishael) who said – “

Dan 3:17-18 ...our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace... but if not, We will not serve thy gods.

These Ancient Worthies were under the Sarah or Faith covenant, rather than the Law covenant

R4330 – ANCIENT WORTHIES UNDER FAITH COVENANT

“a few individuals of that nation, rising by their faith superior to that [Law] Covenant, trusted not to it, but to the original Covenant of Mercy, Grace--the Sarah Covenant. These are the Ancient Worthies mentioned by the Apostle.”

According to their works they were condemned by the Law Covenant, but according to their faith they were acceptable to God, along the lines of the Sarah Covenant, even though

they could not receive their blessing under it, until first the promised Seed should come and the blood of that Covenant be shed.

The Gospel Church **and** the Ancient Worthies have not been judged according to their works, but according to their faith--works having been demanded to the extent of ability, as attesting faith.

Thus we see that the influence of the original [Sarah] Covenant, after electing a Faith Seed, both natural and spiritual, will, through these by the New (Law) Covenant, bless a far greater number than by any other method conceivable.

Two Bands of God's heroes

Ancient Worthies and the Christian Worthies – the same class at heart – but with different opportunities.

Both developed under the Sarah covenant – the Faith Covenant – the Faith Seed

Br Russell teaches about the two phases of the Kingdom in

A288-292

“the Kingdom of God will be of two parts, a spiritual or heavenly phase and an earthly or human phase. ... its presence and power will be mightily manifested, chiefly through its human representatives, who will constitute the earthly phase of the Kingdom of God.”

“And those so highly honored as to have a share in it will be the most exalted and honored of God among men. These are the class ...whose judgment day was previous to the Gospel age.”

“Having been tried and found faithful, in the awakening they ...will at once receive the reward of their faithfulness--an instantaneous resurrection to perfection as men.”

“And that these Ancient Worthies will be in the human phase of the kingdom and seen of mankind is fully attested by Jesus' words to the unbelieving Jews who were rejecting him. He said, "Ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the Kingdom of God." [Luk 13:28-29]”

“It is through these two phases of the kingdom that the promise to Abraham is to be verified ..."Thy seed shall be as the sand of the sea, and as the stars of heaven"-- an earthly and a heavenly seed, both God's instruments of blessing to the world.”

“This proves the double fulfilment of the promise in the development of the two seeds, earthly (human) and heavenly (spiritual), which will constitute the two phases of the kingdom.”

These will also be part of the Royal Family...

Psa 45:16 Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.

Natural Israel cannot initially be part of this earthly seed of Abraham. They will still be an unrighteous, ungodly class at the beginning of the Mediatorial Kingdom and must first be cleansed...

D625p1

“While Israelites in various stages of unbelief will be gathered back to Palestine under divine favor, according to promise, yet none shall be in any degree reckoned as a part, or even as supporters of, or associated with the earthly phase of the Kingdom, except as they shall first recognize Christ Jesus as the Son of God, the only Redeemer and Deliverer for Israel and the world.”

D625p2

“The beginning of the earthly phase of the Kingdom ...will, we understand, consist wholly of the resurrected holy ones of olden time--from John the Baptizer back to Abel--"Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the holy prophets.”

As Paul said of this work...

Rom 11:26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob

Jacob, Israel, will need cleansing and teaching and to be given a “new heart and spirit”.

The Red Heifer is a picture of what the Ancient Worthies did in the past and what they will do in the future.

T110p1

“In that the red heifer never wore a yoke, [Num 19:2, Gal 5:1] it represented a class of justified persons--made free from the Law Covenant.”

God justified them through faith as children of faithful Abraham.

The heifer was red – showing that the Ancient Worthies were not sinless.

The heifer was burned - picturing the ignominy heaped upon them by Israel and the world.

Three things cast into the burning heifer

Num 19:6 And the priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer.

T110

“The casting of these three into the midst of the burning would imply that... the merit of the precious blood, the cleansing of the truth, and the gift of everlasting life to be accounted to them through faith; and that subsequent to their death they would be recognized as cleansed, justified, accepted.”

When would this be? – not when they are dead, but at their resurrection!

The future job of the Ancient Worthies (Red Heifer) is to clean up others... Here is how and when

Note carefully that the unclean do not apply the ashes of the red heifer to themselves.

The clean person must cleanse the unclean.

And initially, the only clean persons will be the Ancient Worthies. The “Just men made perfect.” (Heb 12:23)

Num 19:18 And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave:

Num 19:19 And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day

The cleansing was for those who had contact with death. This pictures the defilements of Adamic death from the fall. Selfishness, pride, hatred, envy, etc.

T111

“All the blemishes of the fallen condition are so much of contact with death; all constitutional weaknesses and blemishes through heredity are contacts with death and

from all of these the ashes of the Red Heifer are to be used for the cleansing of all who will become the people of God.”

“Each pardoned sinner, desiring to be cleansed perfectly, must not only wash himself with water (truth), but must also have applied to him the instructions of these “princes.”

The Ancient Worthies, this Red Heifer class, this Faith Seed, developed under the Sarah Covenant, will work with natural Israel to cleanse them from their Adamic defilements of sin, pride, unbelief, and ungodliness.

Rom 11:26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

Rom 11:27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

The process of cleansing Israel is shown after their regathering

Eze 36:24 For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.

Eze 36:25 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. (Cleansing of the Red Heifer.)

Eze 36:26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.

Eze 36:27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

John the Baptist was the Last of the Ancient Worthies and will completely verify who Jesus was...

Joh 1:36 ...looking upon Jesus he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

The process of taking out the stony heart includes their acknowledgment who Jesus truly was. The Ancient Worthies provide this evidence.

As Jesus had told them...

Luk 13:28 There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets [the Ancient Worthies], in the [earthly phase] kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

This prejudice of their stony hearts was spoken of by Paul:

2Co 3:13 And **not** as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:

Paul is saying that this prejudice was/is due to their own pride and stubbornness.

2Co 3:14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ.

2Co 3:15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.

2Co 3:16 Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

Jesus had spoken of their prejudice and unbelief regarding himself...

Joh 5:39 Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

Joh 5:46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.

Jesus also said to them...

Luk 13:35 ...Ye shall not see me [understand who I am in God's plan], until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

This understanding will be brought to Israel by the Earthly Phase of the Kingdom – the Ancient Worthies

Then they will say in that day...

Isa 25:9 Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

They will see the Ancient Worthies as the earthly representatives of the Heavenly Kingdom (Zion).

They will see these Ancient Worthies as the intended “Veil” on Moses face when he came down the second time with the Law in Exo 34.

Exo 34:29 ... when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony ...he knew not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him.

Moses “put a veil on his face” so that he could communicate with the people. (Exo 34:33)

D630

“And the veil which Moses afterward wore before the people, but laid off when with the Lord in the Mount would seem to typify the earthly phase of his Kingdom, the “princes in all the earth” through whom the Christ will speak to the people and be represented, the glory being hidden.”

Gradually their stony hearts will be removed. They will be given a new spirit – “ruach” – influence of the holy spirit –

Zec 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications [prayer]: and they shall look upon me whom

they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

Then they will be "given" a heart of flesh...

Eze 36:26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.

Their hearts – their desires will no longer be to do their own wills, but to do God's will and to bless others.

Eze 36:27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

This work of the Ancient Worthies as intermediaries between natural Israel and the Christ head and body is also shown in Jacob's ladder.

Gen 28:12 And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

D629

the communication between the two phases or parts of the Kingdom will be easy and direct; and thereby the supervision and instruction of mankind will be complete-- the "princes" being the channels of divine communication.

This seems to be the intimation of our Lord's words to Nathanael:

Joh 1:51 "Hereafter ye shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God [the messengers of God, the "princes" of the new dispensation] ascending to and descending from the Son of Man."

This will provide the proper influence which will motivate natural Israel to be fully cleansed and to want the full blessing that God intends for them.

Later, Jacob, after serving Laban for decades, was retuning to the promised land. Jacob had already seen the fulfillment of God's earlier promise of protection...

Gen 28:15 And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

So, as the children of Israel were scattered throughout the world, they were actually kept by God so that they could return to their land and see the blessings that God had for them.

Just as Jacob was about to the enter the land...

Jacob wrestled with a man [really an angel of God] until the breaking of the day. The man said...

Gen 32:26 ... Let me go, for the day breaketh. And Jacob said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.

Israel will then earnestly desire the kingdom blessings...

R3970

Representing the Jewish people when the Lord shall shortly "pour out upon them the spirit of prayer and supplication."

And the man [angel] said...

Gen 32:28 And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob [supplanter], but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

This seems to show that after desiring and working for the blessings of the Kingdom, Jacob [natural Israel] will truly become the Princely Natural Israel that God intends for them.

They were initially developed under the Law Covenant, the Hagar covenant of bondage to the Law, that they could not do, with a mediator who was himself condemned.

But now, under the Keturah Covenant - the New Law Covenant – with a divine mediator of the Christ head and body, and with the Ancient Worthies, the...

“Just men made perfect”, the “princes in all the earth,” ...natural Israel will also become the Blessed Seed – the sand upon the sea shore class in the Abrahamic promise of Gen 22:17.

The New Covenant will be made with Israel...

Jer 31:31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

Jer 31:33 I will put my Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

This will be seen by all mankind.

Mic 4:2 And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the Law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

The blessings will flow through Israel to everyone who ever lived...

Isa 42:6 I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;
Isa 42:7 To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

R2504 – All mankind will become the seed of Abraham

“Indeed, all mankind then coming into harmony with the Kingdom will be counted as Israelites--children of the true Israel of God--Christ. All such will be counted as "children of Abraham," who as a type of God is the "father of the faithful" with one Seed (the heavenly, Christ and the Church) as the stars of heaven, and another (faithful fleshly Israelites from all peoples, kindreds and tongues) as the sand by the sea-shore.--`Gen_22:17`."

All who will, will be fully reconciled with God...

Rev 21:3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

And finally...

Num 14:21 But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.

So, the statement of the angels to the shepherds is true!

Luk 2:10 ...Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people!