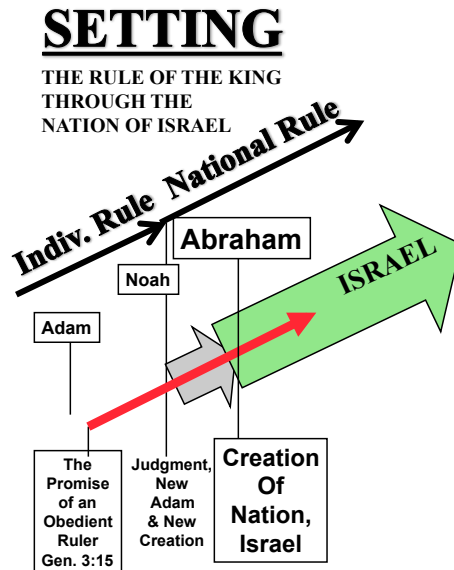


## CHAPTER 10

### Abraham: Creation of the Nation Israel to Represent God (12—26)

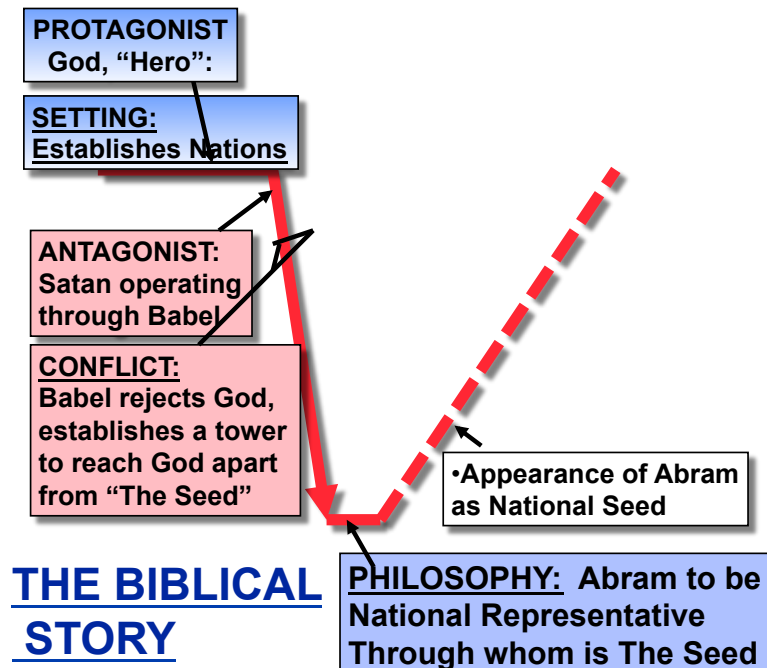
#### The National Philosophy: Abram as the National Ruler over the Gentiles



The genealogy (*toledot*) of Shem comes finally to Terah. Terah's family and travels are detailed, but it is not long before Terah dies and the important son, with respect to God, emerges as God speaks (revelation) to Abram. The purpose is obvious. God, as He has in the past, is designating Abram as the national bearer of The Seed. Thus it is through Abram as a nation (15:2) that God will deliver the world, as this Seed will reside in Him as the ultimate Ruler of this Nation. This Seed will substitute Himself for the nation and the world and establish a national kingdom for Israel and rule the Gentile nations.

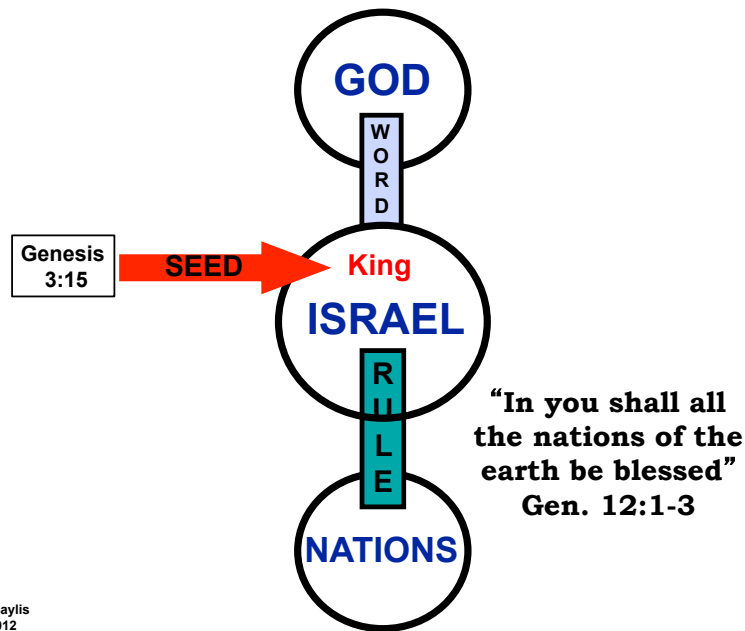
This is reflected (from Psalm 2 which comes to its fulfillment in the eternal earthly kingdom) in Revelation 21:23-26. Jesus will rule in Jerusalem, the capital city of Israel which rules over the Gentile nations.

<sup>23</sup> And the city (Jerusalem) has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp *is* the Lamb. <sup>24</sup> The Gentiles will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. <sup>25</sup> In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; <sup>26</sup> and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it;  
(Revelation 21:23-26)



**Abram to be the National Representative (Image): Genesis 12:1-3**

God now, similar to Genesis 1:26 where man was declared by God to be the individual ruler over the animals, establishes Abram as the national ruler over these Gentile nations through whom will come The Seed of Genesis 3:15 to deliver the world and the nation.



This promise of God to Abram has several details.

- **The Land:** Abram was to receive a domain (similar to the garden, contrasted with Babel and the land of Babylon) from which he would rule over the nations.

"Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you . . ." (Genesis 12:1)

Abram was to leave the physical things on which he might have gained support<sup>1</sup> (like the physical efforts of Babel) or enablement, as this was to come from God alone through His promise. The land was a different land than he was occupying, and the land to which he was going was occupied by others.

This is the "by faith" (revelation, not human sight) that Abram had. This is reflected contextually in Hebrews 11:8-9. The point is that Abram never owned any

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<sup>1</sup> There is a view that Abram erred when Abram took Lot with him, that he had violated the "go forth from your relatives" instruction. That is not the point here. The point is that Abram was to be a contrast with Babel who found all their strength in physical reliance. Lot brought no support to Abram. It was the other way around. Lot gained from his relationship to Abram, which was the way it was supposed to be. If one was Abram's nephew and realized that Abram had the promise, then the thing to do was to go with him. Lot's life went markedly right when he was with Abram and markedly wrong when he separated from Abram. In addition, Abram took his wife and many others. Of note, however, is that he also took Hagar, an Egyptian maid, and ended up utilizing her to try to bring the promised son.

part of the land (a “stranger” or “alien”) while he was alive (other than his burial plots which he purchased) and thus died not receiving the promise of this land. He would have to wait for the literal kingdom on earth and his bodily resurrection.

<sup>8</sup> By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. <sup>9</sup> By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign *land*, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; (Hebrews 11:8-9).

Jesus states the same thing when questioned by the Sadducees (who denied the bodily resurrection) as He affirms that Abraham must be resurrected to receive the promise of the land. Thus Abraham’s faith was not in physical sight but the promise of God to have His Seed, Christ, resurrect him to enjoy the land that was promised him.

<sup>31</sup> "But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God: <sup>32</sup> 'I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living." (Matthew 22:31-32)

- **A Great Nation:** Out of all the nations (contrasted with Babel who wanted to be the great nation of God), Abram would be the unique nation to represent God to the Gentiles.

He would be uniquely equipped (blessed) for that position as God’s sole national representative.

<sup>2</sup> And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; (Genesis 12:2)

- **A Great Name:** Abram would receive a great name from God, contrasted with Babel who sought a name for themselves (11:4).

A Name stands for one’s character attributes. While a “name” is utilized by those who follow the serpent for earthly fame, this is not what God meant. God meant that Abraham’s name would forever be associated with the bringing forth of the Seed of the Woman who would bring forth a great nation. Of course, Abraham pursued a famous name and a physical nation until he realized earthly fame was not his pursuit. The “Name” that anyone should want is their identification with the character of God and His Son, Jesus.

- **Mediator (Blessor, Ruler) to the Gentile Nations:** Abram would be the sole representative for God through whom He would bless the nations by the Seed of the Woman.

It is not infrequent to let this promise stand on its own, without the mention of how these Gentile nations would be blessed. Would it be through some physical benefit; money, power, or fame? The issue is, as it has been since the fall; blessing is always a relationship with God, not physical benefits (as with “human reasoning”). And that relationship is always through the provision of the Seed of the Woman. Without Him, there was no deliverance and Israel would remain no different than the other nations. This is what Israel (and Abram) must do to be this blessing. They must first embrace the Seed of the Woman as their only hope. And then they could bless the nations through that provision and the message of that deliverance<sup>2</sup>.

This is the difficulty with the Nation, Israel, today. While they have been chosen as the national representative of God, they can only find that fulfillment when they embrace the Seed, Jesus. Until they do they will not find themselves blessed, nor will they bless others.

This is what Paul is declaring in Romans 9:6 when he states that “for they are not all Israel who are Israel.” True Israel must be those who are physical seed, *as well as* embracing the revelation of God in their Messiah. Thus a true Jew had to embrace the promise of “The Seed,” that is, Christ. Paul refers to Genesis 22 following the sacrifice of Isaac, when God promises that in Abraham’s Seed (singular<sup>3</sup> reference to Christ) will be the blessing.

<sup>16</sup> Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as *referring* to many, but *rather* to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ. (Galatians 3:16)

Now there is something that is very important here for an understanding of the rest of the Biblical story. First note that the rest of the Old Testament concerns the nation of Israel and, only rarely, Gentiles. There is not one book in the Old Testament that can

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<sup>2</sup> This is Matthew 28:19. The nation has rejected its Messiah, so 11 Jewish apostles are to take the message of the Messiah to the Gentiles in the apostolic doctrine, the eyewitness account of the forgiveness of sins in Messiah’s death and resurrection as the fullness of the Old Testament.

<sup>3</sup> That the “Seed” in Genesis 22:17 is indicating a singular person as opposed to a collective is due to the pronoun following being in the third person singular, “gate of His enemies.” Note also the previous referent for “seed” is Isaac, the “son.” Isaac, of course, was not the ultimate son, but Jesus the ultimate Seed of Abraham who would be sacrificed as the fullness of Isaac. Thus the very immediate “seed” referenced is Isaac who pictured the ultimate Messiah and sacrifice, and the third person singular confirms the “Seed” there as singular as Paul affirms.

be identified as being written to anyone other than Israel. There is also not one story in the O.T. that is not centered in Israel. Even when one considers the prophets they are all about Israel. Some Gentile nations are mentioned but are only mentioned because of their treatment of, or relationship to, Israel.

The point of this is that the first thing that must happen for the Abrahamic Covenant to be fulfilled is that Israel must embrace the message of Messiah itself before it can then bless the nations. But Israel is evil, has an evil character, and thus rejects the God of Israel and His Messiah.

When one comes to the Gospels, the same thing happens as Messiah arrives. All the Gospels are about Israel. There are few Gentiles that even appear in any of the stories. The reason is that it is about the Messiah's arrival in Israel in full revelation so that Israel will respond and receive Him, and then take the message to the Gentiles.

Thus in Matthew 10:5, Jesus arrives in Israel and sends the 12 out into Judea to pronounce that the Seed of the Woman has arrived to deliver them so that they will receive the message and then take it to the Gentiles as they were supposed to do in the Abrahamic Covenant. Note that they are to only go to Israel and not to the Gentiles since Israel was supposed to take this message.

<sup>5</sup> These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: "Do not go in *the* way of *the* Gentiles, and do not enter *any* city of the Samaritans; <sup>6</sup> but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Matthew 10:5-6)

But Israel rejects this Messiah (Matthew 12), and so Jesus takes the Jewish apostles who do receive Him to take the message of the Messiah's death for sins and resurrection to life. They are then told to go to the Gentiles to fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant's purpose of blessing the Gentiles with the message of the Christ. One day in the future, the nation itself will repent and deliver the message to the Gentiles (Revelation 12:11). Thus the perfect Israelite, Jesus, takes the message of Himself to the Gentiles through 12 Jewish apostles in Matthew 28:19.

<sup>19</sup> "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations (lit.: "Gentiles"), baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, (Matthew 28:19)

### **Details of the Abrahamic Promise (Philosophy): Genesis 12-15**

Following God's speech to establish His desire that Abram be the mediator to the nations on His behalf, the narrator includes several stories to illustrate the fullness of how

that promise will look<sup>4</sup>. That is the nature of narrative literature. The events play out and explain the philosophy of the Hero.

**Abraham, is to be Regarded as God’s Unique National Representative of the Seed to other nations (Genesis 12:8—13:4)**

**Bethel:** This short episode in Genesis 12, which continues to 13:6, has Abram obeying God and moving his tent to Bethel<sup>5</sup>. Here he sacrifices to YHWH signifying his alignment with the promise. “Calling upon the Name of YHWH” was used earlier when God provided Seth to continue the hope of The Seed. Here it is the same thing. Abram is aware of the promise of the Seed and calls upon the Name of YHWH.

**Conflict: The famine in the land.** As is always the case, one’s character (Name) and their belief are not seen until a conflict enters the story. In this case the conflict is famine. Abram, determined to get what God has promised him (physical thinking, fame), realizes that if he dies due to famine he will not get the promise (based on human reasoning, the deceit of Satan, fame). So he goes to a Gentile ruler (whom he is supposed to bless, not the other way around), Pharaoh, hoping Pharaoh can deliver him from starvation so he can be great.

**Conflict: A beautiful wife and a Gentile ruler:** On the way to solve one problem through human wisdom, Abram is confronted with another conflict. His wife is beautiful and he is sure that the Pharaoh (Gentile Ruler) will kill him to get her (fears a Gentile, not God). He thus proposes a solution to let the Pharaoh have his wife<sup>6</sup> and thus escape death and still receive the promise. Of course, Abraham was negating the promise of Genesis 2:24, that Sarai was “one flesh” with Abraham regarding the inheritance of God, “The Seed.” Thus, she was as he was, with regard to the inheritance and God protected her, something Abraham did not think God could do for him.

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<sup>4</sup> Recall that following the revelation of the philosophy of the Hero, the events following must be seen in light of the philosophy. Thus the events will flesh out the philosophy and vice-versa. This enables the author to validate his meaning to the reader.

<sup>5</sup> Beth-el means “house of God,” and is referred to by Jacob as the “gate of heaven.” It is where Jacob saw the ladder in Genesis 28 and the place to which he was to return. Interestingly, it contrasts with Babel’s meaning “gate of god.”

<sup>6</sup> Abram’s repeated “on account of you” and “because of you” as related to Sarai and her part in his deliverance are a twist of the “helper” promise in Genesis 2. In other words he saw Sarai as helping him implement the promise (but of physical fame) through the sacrifice of her body, clearly human reasoning. Lot will do the same thing later, offering his own daughters to the violent men of Sodom, so as to preserve the angels (and, of course, himself).

**God's Intervention according to the promise:** God would provide, and protect, His Promise of the Seed. Abram was the Seed carrier and Sarai was "one flesh" with him. Thus God would provide deliverance for both while His promise to make Abram the possessor would still come true.

Now one thing must clearly be noticed here. The Seed of the Woman is everything. Anyone who honors, or possesses, the Seed will be blessed. Anyone who does not bless the Seed will be cursed. Thus, when God says He will bless Abram, it is because God has given him the Seed. So when Pharaoh proposes to touch Abram's wife, he is cursed, since she has the right to bear The Seed ("one flesh"). Thus Pharaoh was about to potentially dishonor the Seed by having a physical relationship with the covenant "Seed-bearing" mother, even though Abram had potentially given her away thinking he would have the Seed through someone else.

Thus note the issue here. Abram gave his wife to another man. Think of the unbelievable carnality of such an act. Anyone doing something like that today should be excommunicated from the church body. Yet Abram comes out, not only unscathed, but returns to Bethel with more than he had. Pharaoh, on the other hand, barely escaped disaster. The issue here is blessing Abram (12:1-3) because He possesses the "Seed."

**Return to Bethel (13:4).** The point here is that Abram made an historical (and literary) circle. He had spent all this time to escape the famine, escape being killed, and he ended up back where he was in the beginning (as the text makes clear since it restates it twice.) He simply had wasted his time and had gotten nowhere. Bethel was the place where he identified with God by offering a sacrifice. Again he calls on the Name of the Lord to designate His alliance with the Promise.

<sup>3</sup> He went on his journeys from the Negev as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, <sup>4</sup> to the place of the altar which he had made there formerly; and there Abram called on the name of the LORD. (Genesis 13:3-4).

### **Abram to be Given the Land of Canaan by God (13:5-18)**

This episode begins subtly enough as the text recalls that both Abram and Lot are being physically blessed with animals that are so abundant that the land cannot keep them all. However, the servants of Lot and the servants of Abram are quarreling<sup>7</sup> and the

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<sup>7</sup> Obviously they are quarrelling because of a physical perception that they were protecting their own property and potential to be prosperous. But they were blessed because of



decision is made to separate for the sake of both parties.

Yet it should be noted that Lot is being blessed because of his relationship with Abram (recall everything is related to the revelation, not physical efforts). Lot errantly decides that he is the provider of his own success (human reasoning instead of revelation) and is thus willing to separate from Abram and go on his own. To emphasize this, when Lot chooses the land he evaluates with his own fleshly perception (“lifted up his eyes and saw”). Lot’s downhill slide, which ultimately culminates with incest, begins when he separates from Abram.

“Lot **lifted up his eyes and saw** all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere-- *this was* before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah<sup>8</sup>-- like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar.” (Genesis 13:10).

Abram rightly did not choose so that God would be the determiner of his blessing. God steps on the scene and tells Abram what his eyes could not see<sup>9</sup>. This land would be the place from which the Seed and the Nation would rule the world.

#### **A National Mediator, Melchizedek to Reach God (Genesis 14)**

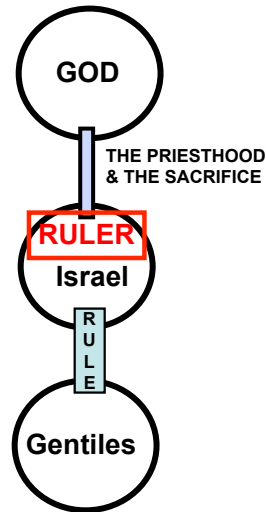
God would mediate His blessing through the nation, Israel. God’s Seed would be the King of Israel. But the bridge between God and Abram would be provided through the sacrifice of the Seed from Genesis 3:15 as illustrated by God in the coats of skin from the animal.

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their association with Abram, possessor of The Seed, not from their own doing. They were not realizing the blessing of God and were not humble but divisive.

<sup>8</sup> One does not want to miss the insert here by the author. He wants the reader to know that Lot’s visible perception is going to come to ruin because of his lack of spiritual discernment. That same visible perception was what ruined the prosperous city of Sodom and Gomorrah.

<sup>9</sup> Note that God tells Abram to look, but then reveals what he could not see, that he would own the land upon which he was looking.

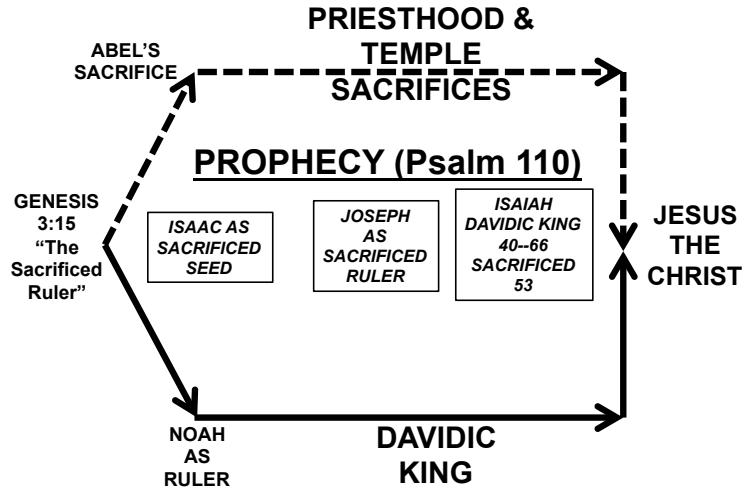


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Note that from Genesis 3:15 comes two things.

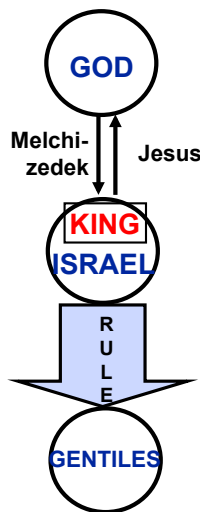
- The Sacrifice: The Seed would provide a substitution for the cursed first creation. The sacrifice will find its place in the priesthood and the tabernacle.
- The Ruler: the Seed would be the Ruler over Israel and the world. If one wants to find the Ruler then they must follow the line of the Seed.

They will come back together when the Seed appears and is sacrificed (first coming of Jesus) and then rules (second coming). Psalm 110 prophesies this re-merging of the two. Psalm 110:1 talks about the Ruler, having completed the sacrifice as Melchizedek the priest (Psalm 110:4; first coming), sitting waiting to dominate in the Second Coming,



Cain had rejected that avenue to God as did Babel when it built its national tower. Now in Genesis 14, God would reveal more about that sacrificial bridge to God. He reveals that there will be a human High Priest who must bridge that gap between God and the Nation, Israel. A true high priest must, of necessity, be both Divine and human so that He can bridge this gap as a full representative of both heaven and earth (God and man).

For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; (Hebrews 5:1)



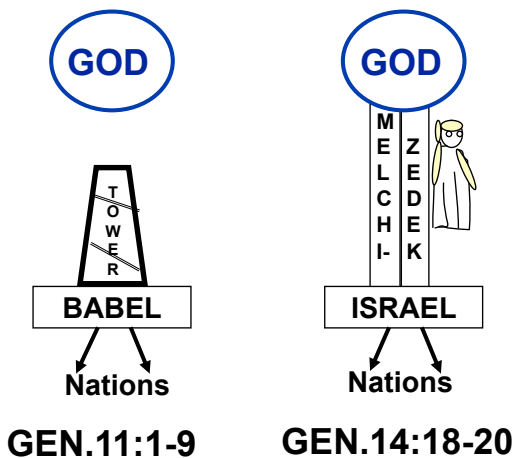
This story in Genesis 14 reinforces the structure of the covenant with this man,

Abram, who will dominate the Gentiles. He dominates four Gentile kings with only 318 men, obviously a supernaturally accomplished feat. At the end of the story, the King of Sodom offers to bless Abram, which Abram rejects. Abram is stating that he will be blessed only by God and not by a Gentile. If that were the totality of the story, then it would seem to be enough. The lesson of Gentile submission was first learned through the story of Pharaoh in Genesis 12 and is reinforced here with the king of Sodom. But now there is an additional revelation as Melchizedek enters the scene.

Melchizedek appears and leaves the story, never again to personally appear in the history of the Old or New Testament. He will be referenced only twice in the rest of Scripture, once in Psalm 110:4 and the other in Hebrews 5—7. The unique significance of this character's appearance in the story is that Abram, the man with the promise of God to whom all kings and nations must submit, bows to this man. Abram submits to him by giving him a tithes (showing submission) and thus recognizes that, with respect to God, Melchizedek is greater than Abram.

<sup>18</sup> And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. <sup>19</sup> He blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;" <sup>20</sup> And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." He gave him a tenth of all. (Gen. 14:18-20)

Melchizedek will bridge the gap between Abram and God, and thus indicates a Priest to come who will bridge the gap between Israel and God. As such, it is God's provided means, contrasted with the Tower of Babel that was man's means of connecting the nation, Babylon, to God.



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New Testament

Melchizedek is detailed in the New Testament as this representative of God and man in Hebrews 5—7.

For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,<sup>2</sup> to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all *the spoils*, was first of all, by the translation *of his name*, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace.<sup>3</sup> Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually.<sup>4</sup> Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils.<sup>5</sup> And those indeed of the sons of Levi who receive the priest's office have commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham.<sup>6</sup> But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed the one who had the promises.<sup>7</sup> But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater.<sup>8</sup> In this case mortal men receive tithes, but in that case one *receives them*, of whom it is witnessed that he lives on.  
(Hebrews 7:1-8)

Thus Melchizedek steps forward and pictures this required High Priest to Israel, yet to come. In Psalm 110, David observes YHWH (God the Father) appointing David's Ruler, *Adonai*, the King of Israel, the Second Person of the Trinity, the Son (110:1; Jesus), as this Melchizedekian High Priest (110:4). Thus the ultimate<sup>10</sup> Davidic King, Jesus, is also the High Priest. He will be the sacrifice and the administrator of that sacrifice in order to bring men to God and enable God's blessing to man, through the Nation Israel, and uniquely through The Seed.

The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."<sup>2</sup> The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, *saying*, "Rule in the midst of Your enemies."<sup>3</sup> Your people will volunteer freely in the day of Your power; In holy array, from the womb of the dawn, Your youth are to You *as* the dew.<sup>4</sup> The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."

(Psalm 110:1-4)

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<sup>10</sup> It is sometimes proposed that all Davidic kings assumed this role. However, this is not the case, as this Psalm points only to the Second Person of the Trinity, the Son, who is Jesus. Hebrews confirms this unique appointment of Jesus alone and not the Davidic kings, none of whom acted as priests.

### **Abram's Faith: The Seed of the Woman (Genesis 15:1-6)**

This section is marked out, as is the next, with a statement by God followed by Abram requesting some guarantee of that statement. The first is the request for a guarantee of

- the (individual) Seed
- and the second is the request for a guarantee of
- the land.

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great."

<sup>2</sup> Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir (*note: singular "heir"*) of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" <sup>3</sup> And Abram said, "Since You have given no offspring (*lit.: "seed," note that it is singular by the following statement*) to me, one (*note: singular*) born in my house is my heir (*note: singular "heir"*)."

<sup>4</sup> Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir." <sup>5</sup> And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants (*lit.: seed, contextually singular*) be."

<sup>6</sup> Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

(Genesis 15:1-6)

Note here that the discussion is over the singular heir and thus the singular Seed. Thus what Abram believed in was the ultimate victory of his Seed, the "Seed of the Woman." It is not a question as to the content of Abraham's faith (i.e., belief in The Seed), only the question of how he would accomplish this fulfillment, through the flesh or through the promise (e.g., "I will," "I" being God.) In other words, Abram wanted a nation that was like the stars of the heavens in number, but he was focused on the result, that is, a great famous nation named after him, not the God who provided it. It was for his fame, not God's. So Abram would follow this belief with a human reasoning attempt to provide the seed through his own efforts.

### **God's Promise of the Inheritance: The Land**

The second emphasis in this chapter is Abram's inquiry about knowing for sure he will inherit the land. God then responds with the covenant process by which God guarantees it (the land) based on His walking alone through the parts of the animal. God alone will guarantee the keeping of the covenant, specifically the land promise through the provision of The Seed.

This is a very important section for pre-millennialists, who believe that there is a unique future for Israel, and it is in a physical fulfillment in the Land of Canaan. Note here that this all-important cutting of the covenant is primarily to guarantee Abram the land promise, about which he inquired. It is frequently used to only guarantee the Abrahamic promise in some spiritual manner, but the immediate focus is the land, while the whole issue is addressed. The land promise assumes the multiplication of the singular, "The Seed," to live in it. The land is the inheritance.

- **God Covenants:** God guarantees the land promise by taking the covenant conditions by Himself.
- **A Delay of 400 years with Rule Reversed:** God describes that there will be a delay in the possession of the land by 400 years where the descendants of Abram (recall that only a few verses earlier he questioned that there would be anyone) would be oppressed (rule over Gentiles reversed) and then they would come out in victory over that nation to move to the land that God had promised.
- **Physical Boundaries Promised:** God gives a description of the boundaries of the land to impact Abram that this is a clear physical inheritance (i.e., not heaven but earth).

### **Abraham's Response: Abram to Receive Promise through Faith though Deceived**

Now that God has promised Abram the ultimate Kingdom in the land in His Seed, Abram begins his long journey of life to obtain the promised Seed. He will attempt to receive it through human means, for his own fame (human reasoning) but ultimately will have to trust in God when he realizes that God alone must deliver him. James points this out in stating that Abraham's journey to rely in God began at salvation, but continued until Abraham recognized that he would have to rely in God for the promise, and that the benefit was not the future reward of physical benefits, but God's character itself. He would realize this when he sacrificed his only physical hold on that promise, his son, Isaac.

<sup>21</sup> Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? <sup>22</sup> You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith

was perfected; <sup>23</sup> and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God. (James 2:21-23)

### **Acting in Human Reasoning: The Choice of Hagar to Provide the Seed (16)**

In a scene reminiscent of the fall in the garden, Sarai (like Eve) gives her handmaid (like the fruit) to Abraham (like Adam) to obtain the Seed. This attempt at obtaining seed was not provided by God, but by man's reasoning, not of promise but of works (cf. Gal. 4:22-31).

#### **New Testament**

In the Book of Galatians, Paul relates exactly this as he states that rejecting Israel (1<sup>st</sup> Century) had rejected God because they relied in works (e.g., circumcision, the Law) and had not received the promise (of "the Seed") by faith as their forefather Abraham had, instead thinking they would inherit because they were physical descendants. Thus to be redeemed (as Abraham) according to the promise that Abraham received they had to express the faith of Abraham (Genesis 15:6) to receive the same promise. They needed to embrace the promise as Abraham did in obtaining Isaac and not through the works of the flesh as with obtaining Ishmael.<sup>11</sup> Since Abram believed in "The Seed," so the Nation, Israel, would need to believe in "The Seed," that is, Christ.

<sup>22</sup> For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman. <sup>23</sup> But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise. <sup>24</sup> This is allegorically speaking, for these *women* are two covenants: one *proceeding* from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. <sup>25</sup> Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. <sup>26</sup> But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. <sup>27</sup> For it is written, "REJOICE, BARREN WOMAN WHO DOES NOT BEAR; BREAK FORTH AND SHOUT, YOU WHO ARE NOT IN LABOR; FOR MORE NUMEROUS ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE DESOLATE THAN OF THE ONE WHO HAS A HUSBAND." <sup>28</sup> And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. <sup>29</sup> But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him *who was born* according to the Spirit, so it is now also. <sup>30</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Note that Paul says "allegorically" speaking. He does not mean "allegorical" as is the contemporary use of allegorical. He means that Abraham represents (as in a living symbol) the nation and thus is symbolically anticipating a nation who also must trust in the individual Seed of Christ in order to be delivered.



But what does the Scripture say? "CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON, FOR THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE AN HEIR WITH THE SON OF THE FREE WOMAN."<sup>31</sup> So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman.

(Galatians 4:22-31)

### **The Reconfirmation and Sign of the Covenant Given (17)**

God reconfirms his covenant with Abram (100 years old) and introduces the sign of circumcision as the sign of the covenant and renames Abraham (the father of many nations) (17).

### **The Judgment of the Nations through Abraham by God: Sodom and Gomorrah. (Lot as a contrast to Abraham's sanctification; 18--19)**

Genesis 3:15 had defined the future of mankind, as some would follow the serpent and reject the revelation of God of a Deliverer. This had been seen on a human scale in Genesis 6 with the wicked world and their judgment, versus the escape through Noah, the one who found grace. Now a nation will be judged (represented in cities of Sodom and Gomorrah) in a parallel to Genesis 6. This judgment will be mediated through Abraham (Israel) who attempts to speak on behalf of the righteous in the city. God, however, based on His promise to Abraham (12:1-3), delivers Lot (the righteous escape) out of the wrath (the wicked are judged).

Lot, who was righteous through his relationship with Abram ("I will bless those that bless you"), demonstrates his faith as he recognizes the revelation of judgment in the angels and departs the city as instructed by them (revelation). The men of the city did not recognize them as revealers, seeing them through physical eyes (human wisdom) as simply men. They then treat these holy revealers as common and go against God's creative order (homosexuality, cf. Romans 1), thus blaspheming (not only treating holy angels as common, but attempting to commit lewd abominations on them). However, Lot also demonstrates his service to the flesh ("human wisdom") as he debates with the angels against their instruction (obviously having been influenced by Sodom's reasoning). Ultimately, Lot's failure to live a life of sanctification (not responding to the revelation but to human reasoning) results in the human reasoning of his daughters as they attempt to provide seed through an incestuous relationship with their father.

Lot, however, was blessed by God due to his relationship with Abraham and was saved from the destruction of Sodom. He is clearly a believer as is noted by his treatment of the angels (revelation). His sons-in-law clearly are not believers as they do not receive the revelation of judgment of which Lot speaks (it was like a jest to them). Yet God was faithful to deliver Lot.

<sup>6</sup> and *if* He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing *them* to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly *lives* thereafter; <sup>7</sup> and *if* He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men <sup>8</sup> (for by what he saw and heard *that* righteous man, while living among them, felt *his* righteous soul tormented<sup>12</sup> day after day by *their* lawless deeds), <sup>9</sup> *then* the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,

(2 Peter 2:6-9)

### **Repeated Failure of Abraham, but Proper Response of Gentile to Seed (20).**

Abram repeats his self- efforts to preserve the promise demonstrating a continued lack of learning that God would provide and protect him and insure the promise.

In a repetition of Genesis 12 and Abraham's giving away his wife to Pharaoh, Abraham now repeats it with Abimilech. This time, however, the Gentile Abimilech seeks God's blessing from Abraham instead of cursing him as Pharaoh did. Note here that Abimilech was restored only through Abraham (Israel) as mediator, even though it is Abraham who lied (and got Abimilech into trouble in the first place). Abimilech, in contrast to Pharaoh, recognizes God's blessing through Abraham, and submits himself to it in order to be blessed.

### **Fulfillment by God: fulfillment of the promise, Isaac born, Ishmael sent away (21)**

God now insures His part in providing the Seed. Isaac is born. Ishmael mocks Isaac (21:8-10), a clear rebellion against the promise of the Seed residing in Isaac. Now the son of promise cannot coexist with the son of works, who blasphemes, and Ishmael is sent away (demonstrating no inheritance through the works of the flesh). The inheritance of the father, Abraham (the Seed, the land) belongs to Isaac who was provided supernaturally by God. Ishmael, on the other hand, came by the works of Abraham and Sarah's human wisdom, and thus could not demonstrate God's glory, but only man's human wisdom. Thus Ishmael is sent away, but still given a blessing due to his relationship with Abraham. Abraham is reaffirming his trust in God's promise by sending Ishmael away so there is no conflict with who is the inheritor.

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<sup>12</sup> It would appear from the translation "tormented" that Lot was very much opposed to their lawless deeds. However, the word should be translated "tossed about," meaning Lot was a double minded man. He was a believer yet was tempted by their human reasoning. His debating with the angels demonstrates this as well as his daughters' human reasoning in the cave.

**Fulfillment of faith by Abraham: The final separation of Abraham to God by faith: the offering of his only son and God's oath (22).**

Now comes the climax of the Abraham section, demonstrating Abraham's full sanctification, his walk by faith (always in the promise). God tells him to execute the seed, his hope for fame, Isaac. Since the seed was always Abraham's pursuit, this was necessary in order to show that Abraham would give up on what his natural reasoning dictated and trust God. Thus, Abraham proceeded up the mountain, negating his hope for physical fame, realizing that God's promise (His character) was all that he wanted.

Abraham clearly understood that God would return Isaac to him based on the promise since he states to the servants, "I and the lad . . . will return."

Of course, God stopped Abraham, and substituted a ram (like God provided an animal for Adam and Eve). Yet based on Abraham's obedience, God gave an oath to Abraham to supply blessing through his Seed (Isaac – Christ) to the nation, Israel, and then to all nations.<sup>13</sup>

This is the climax of Abraham's sanctification. It began in Gen. 12, continued through the confession of his faith in 15:6 and now comes to the point where God wants him, the representative of God, to be a man who relies in God's word alone. Abraham has now acted for God, acting out His promises in giving his only son, Isaac. This anticipates God, and the Nation Israel, who must give up their Son for their sake and the sake of the world. Yet, the ultimate sacrifice is not yet to be, and Isaac is not the one, so a ram is provided. The anticipation continues. The scene is reminiscent of God's sacrifice of the animal in Genesis 3.

Note that Abraham's faith is not based only in Genesis 12:1-3 (national promise), but in Genesis 3:15. For it is in the promise of the sacrificial Deliverer that Abraham is able to imitate God, who will give His Son. Abraham had to lose his life (in Isaac) in order to save it (by God). In addition, the Nation Israel, like Abraham, would not come to their completion until they had, by faith, recognized that their favorite Son must be sacrificed for them.

This demonstrates the fact that Abraham understood, not only Genesis 3:15 ("the strike on the Seed of the Woman"), but Genesis 3:16 where the woman would desire to bear her "Man," but would have sorrow in doing it (see the notes on 3:16) because He would be executed by the serpent. Now Abraham realizes, as the national woman, Israel

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<sup>13</sup> Note that this is the passage to which Paul is referring in Galatians 3:16 where he speaks of a singular "seed" as opposed to the plural "seeds". God is referring to providing His promise through the sacrifice of Isaac (picturing Abraham's ultimate child Christ), the singular Seed.

(see Rev. 12:1-3), that he must suffer sorrow in bringing forth his own Deliverer.

### New Testament Commentary

James 2 references Abraham as an example of “faith without works is dead.”<sup>14</sup> The point is that Abraham understood that God was a God who was sacrificially merciful from His very character, not dependent on a personal return of benefits from others. So while Abraham had only acted to gain benefits previously, he now acted to sacrifice Isaac without any visible benefit, but solely to represent the mercy of God.

James recognizes this contextual message in James 2:19-23 where he states that Abraham’s original faith in the Seed (Genesis 15:6) had to come to completion where he recognized that God was a sacrificial God and that Abraham would have to imitate God’s character in giving what God had given him.

<sup>21</sup> Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? <sup>22</sup> You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; <sup>23</sup> and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God. (James 2:21-23).

In addition, Jesus states clearly that Abraham looked to the provision of “The Seed” that was in his body to deliver the nation and himself.

<sup>56</sup> "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad." (John 8:56)

### **Delay of fulfillment: Faith indicated as Sarah dies and is buried in the only piece of land Abraham owns (23)**

In this chapter, the author wants the reader to understand that Abraham did not receive the land promises of Genesis 13 or 15 prior to his death. Notice the emphasis on the deeding of the land to Abraham for Sarah’s grave. This is the only piece of land that Abraham ever owned in Canaan, and he had to purchase it. Thus, since God’s promises

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<sup>14</sup> Note that Abraham received a promise from God as a result of his efforts to sacrifice Isaac. There was no physical benefit in Abraham’s life for his act of faith as he only came back with what he had gone with; Isaac his son. In other words, God would provide the benefit to Abraham in the future and it was not physical but the privilege of representing a God of sacrificial mercy.

always come true (as demonstrated in the birth of Isaac), Abraham understands that he will be resurrected in order to get the land that was promised to him and his seed (13:15).

**New Testament:**

<sup>31</sup> "But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God: <sup>32</sup> 'I AM'<sup>15</sup> THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB "? He is not the God of the dead but of the living." (Matthew 22:31-32)

Here Jesus refers to Exodus 3 and the burning bush to demonstrate the bodily resurrection from the dead. God had appeared to Moses to have him deliver Israel from Egypt. God's point to Moses was that God had given Abraham a promise (Genesis 15:13-21) that described the very enslavement that they would undergo and the subsequent deliverance to the land that was promised to Abraham. God was appointing Moses to lead that promised deliverance. However, there was more. Abraham did not realize the fulfillment of the promise of the land since he owned only a small plot of land and had to purchase that. Thus Abraham had to be resurrected to enjoy the land as part of the promise. Thus God is repeating that promise to Abraham (repeated to Isaac and Jacob) and Moses must implement the deliverance from Egypt. Thus, Jesus' point is that the Sadducees had missed their theology that rejected bodily resurrection since Abraham had to have his body resurrected to fulfill the promise.

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<sup>15</sup> Some errantly propose a solution to this statement by Jesus that states that He uses the present tense, "I AM" indicating that Abraham was alive at that moment (i.e., in heaven). This fails as a logical argument on several levels. First of all it was not a proof since they would have to take Jesus' word that Abraham was alive and they did not think of Jesus as a valid source of revelation. Secondly, the argument is over the bodily resurrection, not that Abraham was in existence in heaven. Since his body had not been resurrected yet, there was no physical evidence yet of bodily resurrection. Third, and most importantly, Jesus is not quoting the present tense of the Hebrew verb since there is no verb in the statement in Exodus. The verb only appears in the Greek, not in the original quotation (although it might be assumed). In the Hebrew of Exodus 3:6 there is no verb, thus the present tense is only implied from the context. It reads, "I ( אֲנִי ), the God of Abraham . . ." Note that the "I AM" statements that occur later in Exodus 3:14 are " אֲנִי אֲנִי ". So exegesis on a non-existent present tense would not be a proof.

### **The Promise of Seed Continued in Isaac (Gen. 24—26)**

#### **God repeats the Abrahamic promise to Isaac and chooses the “one flesh,” Rebekah, who will bring the Seed. (24).**

Literarily, the choice of God is emphasized in Rebekah’s election. The story is repeated twice so the reader understands. From a human perspective, it was not at all a sure thing that they would find each other and that, even if found, Rebekah would follow them. God is guiding and choosing, for all things turn out as God has directed. Isaac had followed Gen. 2:24 and left his father and mother to find his wife. He will bring her back as “one flesh” to participate in the inheritance (Seed).

#### **The Seed continued in Isaac and not Ishmael (25).**

Abraham dies (25:1-11) and so comes to an end the earthly hope of Abraham to receive the promise in this lifetime. So, other than the resurrection of Abraham, one must look for its fulfillment in Isaac.

It is clear as the line of Ishmael unfolds (25:12-18) that God is honoring His promise to Isaac, and that Ishmael’s line will not amount to anything significant by comparison.

As Rebekah is chosen for Isaac a blessing of note is given.

<sup>60</sup> They blessed Rebekah and said to her, "May you, our sister, Become thousands of ten thousands, And may your **seed** possess The gate of those who hate **Him**." (Genesis 24:60)

Note that the “Seed” is again matched by a singular pronoun, “Him.” Now this blessing occurs prior to Rebekah having any children and so it becomes clear that the Seed of Isaac is indicated here as being the Christ, the Seed of the Woman.

#### **God’s choice of Jacob over Esau (25:19-26).**

The first section is a record of the birth of Jacob and Esau. As Esau attempts to come out of the birth canal, Jacob grabs him by the heel. God then announces to Rebekah that Esau will serve Jacob, meaning that the Seed will come from Jacob, not the firstborn Esau. The point of this story is to point out that it is **God’s choice** of Jacob that makes Jacob the seed. Yet it is also announced that Jacob is the ‘supplanter’, a schemer who will attempt to fulfill what God has already stated; Jacob is the one through whom will come the national and individual Seed. Yet Jacob pursues the physical benefits through human wisdom and it will not be until he comes to recognize that it is God whom

he should desire, not the things God gives. And it will be God who gives, not Jacob who connives to receive.

### New Testament

Paul comments on this story when showing the Romans that it must be based on the promise that one is related to God. This is the promise of Christ. Thus it is not one's physical relationship to Abraham that gives one a relationship with God, but the hope in Christ through the promise.

For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel;<sup>7</sup> nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED."<sup>8</sup> That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants. (Romans 9:6-8)

Yet, now that God has revealed His will to Rebekah (that Jacob would be the one), will they all regard God's promise, or will they attempt to manipulate it in order to gain physical benefits? Obviously, they will all try to get the promise through "human wisdom."

Esau will not value the promise of the Seed and will sell it to Jacob for a pot of "red stuff." Rebekah will plot with Jacob to deceive the father into giving Jacob the blessing of the eldest son, even though they know God had already chosen Jacob. Isaac, though he is aware of the pronouncement of Jacob as the one, seeks to give Esau the blessing, simply because he loves the meat that Esau cooks for him, a clear reference to human physical reasoning.

### **Jacob's scheme to bring about what God had promised, yet Esau demonstrates his disregard of the Covenant (25:27-34).**

The story of Jacob taking Esau's birthright indicates the fulfillment of what God had stated regarding Jacob at his birth. But instead of acting by faith, he would purchase the promise from Esau for a pot of stew. Note clearly two things; (1) Jacob values the promise of The Seed, and (2) Esau "despises" the promise. The word "despises" indicates blasphemy, that Esau had taken what was extremely holy and treated it as common, or worthless, that is, worth only a pot of stew.



**God faithful to promise in Isaac. Isaac duplicates sins of Abraham, his father, yet  
God is faithful, reconfirming Abrahamic Covenant in Isaac (26).**

This short section regards the passing of the promise from Abraham to Isaac, and soon to Jacob. Isaac, as the image is wont to do, duplicates the sins of his father, e.g., passing his wife off to preserve himself, yet God is faithful as he reiterates the promise to Isaac. God is faithful. The hope continues in Jacob and his sons.