

6. Split Wide-Open

Paul said that the stories of the Old Testament were written for our sakes – “upon whom the completion of the age has come.”

Inside of Christ, these story-lines and metaphors can be applied at any level according to those hearing, and they will impart a knowledge of Christ perfectly at that level. The line from Genesis 15 that forms the basis of Paul’s gospel, “Abraham believed God, and He counted it to him for just innocence,” is as meaningful to the new believer in Jesus as it is to sons of God setting creation free.

The Covenant: Christ lives in your heart through faith.

True Salvation. We, however, are seeking to know God’s meaning at a specific and critical moment in the turning of the ages.

Our interest now is the same as in my series “A Highway for God,” and that is the experience of God coming through our hearts into the knowledge of all. We want to know God’s critical meaning for the proving and revelation of Jesus Christ inside our present world.

And thus we can safely say that what God is showing us now through these stories and metaphors is God’s true meanings and most important applications. God presented true Salvation right from the start.

Two Minds. What we learned from Abel’s witness has changed everything for us.

What we have is two minds, as Paul said in Romans 8. One mind places the Lord Jesus, the Tree of Life, the Sustainer of all, as its connection with everything, with self, with God, with others, and with things. And the other mind places self as its connection with everything, with self, with God, with others, and with things.

Abel placed the Lord Jesus for himself; Cain placed himself. Interaction between Abel and God passed through blood; interaction between Cain and God passed through sin.

Jesus Already. The mind of Christ is the mind that humbles itself, that is, that places self in the only place it can live, inside of Jesus. The mind of the flesh, on the other hand, always wants to control.

And so, “God is teaching me...” must be completed. *“God is teaching me – to be a better person so that I am more skilled in connecting myself to others – for control.”*

FAITH that Christ Jesus has already completed ALL, and that our lives mean something entirely turned around, is the mind of Christ. God IS revealing Christ through me as He wishes.

Confidence in Jesus. The covenant God made with Abraham, then, speaks directly to the desperate importance of this transfer from one mind to the other.

“NO sufficiency in ourselves” must be our definition. It’s not us “*coming to an end of ourselves*” for that is the mind that creates a “self” in the first place. It’s our CONFIDENCE, that Jesus ended all that needed to end and now gives Himself freely to us that we might BE ourselves as He wishes right now, that is the mind of Christ.

Placing the Lord Jesus Christ upon all my “mistakes” is changing my life.

Jesus as In-Between. In this lesson, I want to present briefly each element inside this layout of covenant with Abraham.

We know from the writer of Hebrews that the entrance of Melchizedek in Abraham’s story is the entrance, for us, of Christ as our High Priest, which means, as our connection with God first and ourselves and everything else second. You cannot know or connect with yourself except through Jesus; you have NO relationship with yourself except through Jesus. Put Him upon everything, with excitement!

The High Priest serves as the Bond of the Covenant, the Mediator between two. Jesus is All In-Betweens.

Bringing Forth Life. God said to Abraham (paraphrased), “I fill you within and without with all that I am; you possess Me as your own.” Abraham said to God, “That doesn’t cut it for me, God. I need an heir; I need my own boy.”

Some imagine that Abraham did not understand; yet it is they who do not understand. Union with God is NOT for whistling lullabies in fields of flowers. Union with God is for BRINGING FORTH LIFE, specifically that promised Seed that redeems all.

God and Abraham share the same need. Abraham’s son will be God’s Son, and God’s Son will be Abraham’s son.

God Through Us. Look at these two lines together. One who will come from your own body shall be your heir. – That the life of Jesus also might be made visible in your dying flesh (2 Cor. 4).

What, then, do you see in your dying flesh? The very life of Jesus Himself. It’s not “God,” per se, that we want, but God through us for the sake of others. We don’t just “enjoy God.” God is intent on bearing the agony of others through us for them.

Why are you in agony? Your agony IS God through you for others, the very Seed of Promise. When we believe that God is telling us the truth, we ARE that promised Seed, as Paul said in Galatians 3 & 4.

How Shall I Know? – **And he said, “Lord God, how shall I know that I will inherit this land?” So He said to him, “Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not**

cut the birds in two. And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

How shall I know?

This is the **central question of faith**, a question that must be the core of one's heart before the Answer will be embraced.

By This We Know. Here is the same question answered in the ruling verses of the Bible. – By this WE KNOW love, in that He set forth His soul, laid down His life, for us, for our sakes; AND WE ALSO are committed to setting forth our souls for the sake of our brothers and sisters.

Jesus died for us, to prove to us that He IS our only life.

Read Psalm 22 again. Any great author seeks to unfold the true person of a character by placing them in circumstances that cut them wide open (think Tolstoy's Natasha). Jesus' soul was cut wide open for us to see what He IS.

All Our Agony. And we SEE that Jesus connected us with God and God with us inside the agony of His very human soul. How shall I know? – By this we KNOW.

And thus we never call ourselves by anything other than the Lord Jesus Christ in the midst of all our agony and inside our dying flesh. This is the cutting open of the Covenant.

God doesn't want people who will "get it right." He wants those who will be split wide open inside His confidence, that He might pass through all their exposed parts as a smoking oven and as a burning torch, that is as Himself.

Passing Between. The cutting open, the vultures descending, the sleep that came upon Abraham, all prefigure Jesus upon the cross. And they speak of the same Jesus in our hearts as God's covenant with us.

And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. On the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram.

Let's paraphrase that covenant. – This land ruled by the mind of self for self will belong to the mind of Christ for others, same land, different possession.

Cut Wide Open. Writing my life story is the greatest cutting open I have known. And despite such great peace and resolution coming to each chapter of my life, after God has finished passing through all my split-open parts, each next chapter is as difficult to open as any before it.

And there is only one way by which I prevent the vultures of accusation from eating upon my bloody parts, and that is by placing the Lord Jesus Christ upon myself in every moment, and for the sake of each one of those with whom I interacted.

This is the mind of Christ.

Blessing or Cursing. God never leaves the issue – to bless or to curse. Those who bless some parts of their lives and curse other parts will, in the end, curse all.

In our present world, the mind of cursing-all seems to prevail.

The Anglo-Saxon word “bless” means “to place blood upon.” Through Abel, we know it means “to place Christ Jesus upon.” The Lord had said to Abram, “**And you shall BE a blessing.**” “Blessing” is that which turns each towards goodness.

Fixing Yourself. Abraham's next step was to try to fulfill God's promise himself. Ishmael is the story of Christianity; it was certainly the story of the move of God fellowship.

Paul claimed that Hagar was the old covenant given through angels to Moses and that Ishmael was the claim of the natural Judaic to the inheritance.

Ishmael is every attempt to "fix ourselves," for fixing ourselves is refusing God, that He is NOT sharing our agony, that God is NOT reconciling the world to Himself through our every stumbling step.

Woeful Inadequacy. Do you stumble? Then you are just like Jesus, the One who stumbled as He carried you. Yet Jesus never asked God to "fix" His woeful inadequacy, but instead believed God, that God was inside of His every stumbling step, reconciling the world to Himself.

The image of the "perfect" is the image of the serpent; the image of Jesus is one complete mess (Read Psalm 22).

We bring the Father into our agony as sharing it utterly with us. We bring the person whom we offended and who offended us into our agony as joined utterly with Father through Jesus. – This is how Jesus was "saved from death."

There I Will Meet with You. – You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark, you shall put the Covenant that I will give you. And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:21-22).

This is the Covenant, Father and us together above the WORD that is Jesus written upon our heart, Father and us sharing our very human MESS – for the sake of others.

"God, make me a better person" is cursing self and God, it is a Cain/Ishmael self, seeking open control. Abraham believed that God was telling him the truth.

Signing the Covenant. It was fourteen years after Abraham's first covenant experience with God before God spoke covenant again to him, still another year before Isaac would be born. This second covenant experience is in Genesis 17, in what is called "the sign of the covenant."

Paul draws from this chapter in Galatians 3 and Romans 4. And Paul is unmistakable in his assertion that whoever believes in Jesus, regardless of natural ancestry, is this very Seed promised to Abraham, and that all who refuse Jesus, regardless of natural ancestry, are NOT of Abraham.

Let's go through the parts of this signing of the covenant.

Inside My Presence. The NKJV says this: "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless." It is easy for the serpent to turn these words into his gospel.

Let's paraphrase them as God both says and means. – "I am El Shaddai, the All-Carrying, All-Sustaining One, for of Me and through Me and to Me are all things; go forward in every **step inside My presence, rooted and grounded in love, for you know no separation from Me.**"

Abraham responded in the best first way to respond – he fell on his face. (The best second response, then, is not to let go until God does what He says.)

God In and God Through. The next thing God did was to change Abram to Abraham. He then did the same for Sarah.

Do you see that "h." That "h," in the Hebrew, was the breath sound. It represented "yhwh" falsely translated "Yahweh" or "Jehovah," but better translated "Lord," since "Lord" remains neutral. (Names become images of God.) It means the breath of God; it means God Himself.

God placed Himself inside of Abram's name so that you could not say "Abraham" without speaking God. God placed Himself inside of Abraham and He placed Himself as coming forth from Sarah.

Our Signature. Then, AFTER Abraham believed God and AFTER God placed Himself into all that Abraham was and God Himself coming out from Sarah as the Promise, there came the signature of the Covenant.

God's signature is always the Lamb-Slain sent into ME. My signature is the circumcision of Christ.

“As for you, you shall keep My Covenant... you shall cut away the claim that you are your own source... **My covenant shall be in your flesh... – for your flesh is MINE”** (paraphrased with the gospel). I am your LIFE; do not ever call yourself by yourself again.

As We Are. To be the Seed of AbraHam is to call ourselves in every moment and circumstance, in every up and down, in every failure and success, by God with us, sharing our lives as we ARE for the sake of others.

Jesus is ALL first before anything not-Jesus could ever vanish away. It is only the evil one who says, “*should be*.”

The circumcision of Christ, the cutting away of imagining self as source, is falsely perceived as “the ending of self.” “I am crucified with Christ” means that my involvement with this so-called “self” ended long, long ago.

A Personal Covenant. The Covenant is to call self by Christ, regardless. This is our binding Blood Relationship with God. **“No sufficiency in myself”** means I never call me by me. With Abel and Enoch, I place Jesus upon everything I am.

The most important thing we gain from this story, then, is that Abraham was personal, and human, and foolish. Abraham and Sarah both “laughed against,” but Paul called both “filled with power in faith.” Christ proves Himself through our human weakness.

God's Covenant is personal to Him and to us. I believe that God is telling me the truth.

Reading Next Time. The next lesson will be Abraham and the coming of the promised seed, Isaac.

Read Genesis 18:1-15 and 21:1-7. Then read Galatians 3 & 4 again, as well as Romans 4, this time in the JSV. I will include those portions on the webpage of this lesson and the next, "Fulfilling the Promise."