

THE ALLEGORY OF ABRAHAM'S SEED

GENESIS 21

The “allegory” of Genesis 21 confirms, without any doubt, that our understanding of the Gospel of the Kingdom is correct. This extraordinary chapter systematically reveals the details of the Abrahamic covenant, and his seed, which we properly understand to be the foundation and true teaching of the “things concerning the Kingdom of God.”

Galatians 4:21-31 “Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that *Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.*”

Paul...shows that in these incidents there is a typical foreshadowing of Yahweh's dealings with the spiritual and natural seeds of Abraham. Considered as allegory, the history foreshadows the future of the Ecclesia of God in relation to the nation of Israel, to the setting up of the Kingdom of God on earth—*Expositor, pg. 247*

Gen. 12:1-3 “Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: (1) *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: (2) *And I will bless them that bless thee*, and curse him that curseth thee: (3) *and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*”

1. I will make of thee a great nation: This refers to the ultimate and future establishment of the natural seed of Abraham—the Jews—as a great nation in the earth.
2. I will bless them that bless thee: This refers to a favored or blessed status among the Gentile peoples and nations that deal kindly with Abraham and his seed.
3. In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed: This refers to the development of the Abrahamic seed in a spiritual sense; including people of faith from all races, genders, and social backgrounds who embrace the promises made to Abraham.

This fragment of Abraham's history has a signification beyond what appears on the face of it. The apostle informs that the incidents are allegorical. That is, *the two women* and their characteristics, represent *two covenants*; and *the two sons* of Abraham by them *two seeds*, or classes of persons—*Elpis Israel, pg. 251*

The apostle says that Jerusalem is the subject of these covenants; but in different periods of her history. During her existence as the metropolis of the Hebrew commonwealth under its Sinaitic constitution, she was represented by Hagar the bondwoman; because

the covenant from Sinai “gendered to bondage”...But this state of things was only provisional. God did not intend the Hebrew commonwealth to exist perpetually under the Sinaitic constitution. Israel was not always to be in bondage to the Law of Moses. A great revolution was predetermined of God, which should result in the abolition of the Arabian covenant (Sinai), and the dispersion of Israel among the nations. This is allegorically styled “*casting out the bondwoman with her son.*”—*Elpis Israel*, pg. 252 (the term “bondage” represents the Law of Moses. See: Dictionary)

But, while Hagar represents Jerusalem under the law; and Sarah Jerusalem under the new constitution of the Hebrew commonwealth; Ishmael represents Israel, glorying in their fleshly descent from Abraham, boasting in the law; and Isaac, those of Israel and the Gentiles, who regard the flesh as profiting nothing, and who are the sons of Abraham by believing the promises made to him and his seed. Hence, Ishmael and Isaac represent two seeds or classes of mankind, who shall not be heirs together of the promise...The kingdom to be established is a righteous dominion, and requires righteous men for its administration...It is impossible, therefore, that the Ishmaelite-seed can be heirs of the promise—*Elpis Israel*, pg. 253

THE ALLEGORY

HAGAR—represents the Law given at Mt. Sinai
ISHMAEL—represents the fleshly or natural seed of Abraham
SARAH—represents the Abrahamic covenant given before the Law
ISAAC—represents the seed of Abraham according to promise
BEERSHEBA—represents the water of the Word, the Gospel

To allegorize is to represent truth by comparison. For certain features of the kingdom of God to be illustrated parabolically is to speak, or act, allegorically; and is a mode of instruction more calculated to keep up the attention, and to impress the mind permanently, than a set discourse, or formal disquisition.—*Elpis Israel*, pg. 274

An allegory, then, is a description of one thing under the image of another. It is, by infallible design, intended to be a veiled presentation, for the very purpose of revealing the Truth to those who believe the gospel. The allegorical meaning, however, remains an aspect of confusion among those who have turned the Truth of God into a lie. Thus, unless expressly stated, Christendom can only read the historical account without the ability to perceive the doctrine allegorically implied.

Rom 9:6-9 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, *In Isaac shall thy seed be called.* That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.

One of the keys to understanding the Bible is noticing when specific accounts are quoted by other writers in a determined context. In other words, simple cross-referencing will often open our eyes to various allegories, types and parables. For example, the above quotation by Paul (Rom. 9:6-9) is taken directly from Genesis 21: the allegory concerning Ishmael and Isaac. Thus, the application of the verse quoted by Paul provides us with the exact context of the historic allegory in the Genesis record. Therefore, assumptions and theories are entirely unnecessary regarding the

proper interpretation of Genesis chapter 21. According to Paul's quotation, Isaac represents believers of the Gospel (whether Jew or Gentile), while Ishmael represents the unbelieving natural Jews.

Now it is written, "*In Isaac shall thy seed be called*"—that is, Christ shall descend from him, and all *who believe the promises*, and put on Christ, shall be considered as "*in Isaac*": and being thus "the children of the promise," shall be "counted for *the seed*," who shall inherit the land and the world forever. "*Thy seed*" then, is a phrase that must be understood in a two-fold sense—first, as referring to Christ; and secondly, to all who are constitutionally *in him*—*Elpis Israel*, pg. 254 (Gal. 3)

Gen 21:1 And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken.

Gen 21:2 For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.

Three times the opening verses state specifically that the seed born to Sarah was conceived and brought forth "as he said," even "as God had spoken." In this, we understand that seed of Abraham, according to the promise, is begotten by God's "spoken" Word—Heb. 1:1-3—and not by natural descent.

1 Pet 1:22-23 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: *Being born again*, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the word of God*, which liveth and abideth for ever.

James 1:18 Of his own will *begat he us with the word of truth*, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

Gen 21:3 And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac.

Gen 21:4 And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him.

"Circumcision" is a powerful principle, which identifies the true seed of Abraham—

Rom 2:28-29 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

No uncircumcised person was permitted to be a member of Abraham's family...for *none but circumcised persons can inherit the promises*. This may startle; but it is strictly true. It will, however, be remember that true circumcision is of the heart. Circumcision of the flesh is but an outward sign of Abraham's circumcision of heart; and everyone who would inherit with faithful Abraham must be circumcised of heart likewise...*in putting on Christ*, he is "circumcised with the circumcision made without hands by the circumcision of Christ" (Col. 2:11-12)—*Elpis Israel*, pg. 250 (Rom. 2:28-29)

Though the seed of Abraham had to be circumcised, the principle behind the physical action was the desired result (see: Dictionary). This became a great contention among the natural Jews during the preaching of the apostles (Acts 15:1-7, 24; Gal. 5:1-3; 6:12-13).

Rom 4:11-13 “And (Abraham) received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: *that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised*; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. *For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.*”

Gen 21:5 And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.
Gen 21:6 And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me.

Gen 21:7 And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born him a son in his old age.

In the terms of the allegory, it was late in the history of the nation of Israel when the promised see, the Messiah, was born. It was a “set time” which God had appointed (Gen. 21:2 cp. Gal. 4:4)—*Expositor, pg. 248*

Gen 21:8 And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned.

Allegorically, the *weaning* of Isaac from the milk implies a move from the Law of Moses to the “word of righteousness,” that is, justification by faith in Christ Jesus (2Cor. 5:19). The advancement from milk implies spiritual growth beyond the Law: (Heb. 5:11-14)

Heb 5:11-14 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

“The first principles”—These are the first principles as related to the Mosaic Law. The Greek word *stoicheion*...The term is only used 7 times in the New Testament, in which it is applied to the principles of the Mosaic system. It is rendered “elements” four times (2Pet. 3:10-12; Gal. 4:3-9), “rudiments” twice (Col. 2:8-20), and “first principles” once, here—*Hebrews, J. Martin, pg. 40*

“Oracles of God”—These were those lively oracles which had been committed to Israel’s trust (Rom. 3:2; Acts 7:38)—*Hebrews, J. Martin, pg. 40*

The Genesis record not only states that Isaac was weaned, but also that “Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned”

It is in conformity with the allegory that Christ did likewise for his ecclesia (Luke 22:1, 15) to commemorate a great change in diet. Law gave place to grace and faith—*Expositor, pg. 249*

Scripturally, the “feast” of Isaac represents the memorial emblems associated with the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ (Mat. 26:17; 1Cor. 5:8; 2Pet. 2:13; Jude 1:12). Christ’s meal of “meat” with the disciples, among other things, emphasized the advancement of spiritual diet. This was a great stumbling block for the natural Jews, who sought righteousness by the Law (1Cor. 1:23; Rom. 10:4-5). Thus, they became mockers of Jewish and Gentile believers who lived by faith.

Gen 21:9 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking.

Remembering the context of the allegory, the natural seed of Abraham, like Ishmael, was born out of “Egypt” (Exo. 4:22-23—“Israel is my son, even my firstborn...let my son go that he may serve me”). Note how the apostle relates Ishmael’s mocking of Isaac in these allegorical terms:

Gal 4:28-31 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

As Ishmael mocked at Isaac, so Israel under the law persecuted the Ecclesia—*Expositor*, pg. 249 (Acts 13:45-48; Phi. 3:4-6; 1The. 2:14-16)

Indeed, the Abrahamic seed “born after the flesh”—the Jews—greatly oppressed the brethren in Christ, “the children of promise.” The apostle Paul himself was guilty of such persecution. In this confession, he notes his natural Jewish descent: “Though I might also have confidence *in the flesh*. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might *trust in the flesh*, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; *Concerning zeal, persecuting the ecclesia*; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless”—Phi. 3:4-6 (see: Acts 13:45-48; 1The. 2:14-16).

Gen 21:10 Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.

The language “cast out” is most remarkable, especially relating the current state of the natural descendents of Abraham—

“When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, *I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel*. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west (ie. Gentiles), and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be CAST OUT into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth”—**Mat. 8:10-11**.

“There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves THRUST OUT. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last”—**Luke 13:28-30**

Christ warned that the Kingdom of God would be taken from the natural Jews, and given to a people revealing the fruits thereof (Mat. 21:43), which Peter identifies as the Ecclesia (1Pet. 2:9). The old covenant was brought to an end by the sacrifice of Christ, and the

people who clung to it were expelled from the land. Abraham was shown this in type—*Expositor, pg. 249*

Of course, the “children of the Kingdom” were the Jews; for the Kingdom of God existed in the past in the nation of Israel (1Chr. 28:5; 29:23; 2Ch. 13:8; Exo. 19:5-6). Thus, the words of the Master, elsewhere: “Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, *The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation (ie. people) bringing forth the fruits thereof*”—**Mat. 21:42-43**

Thus, the “casting out” of Ishmael—the Jews under the Law—occurred in A.D. 70, following the overthrow and destruction of Jerusalem by Roman authorities. This sent the Gospel, that is, the Hope of Israel, into the land of the Gentiles. But it is not a permanent state for the natural Jews.

Rom 11:11-15 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. For if the CASTING AWAY OF THEM be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?

The dispersion of the Jews was necessary for the purpose of the Gospel to continue to spread among the Gentiles. Thus, evil was not permitted to triumph and the casting out of the mocking Jews led to the salvation of the Gentiles (Romans 11). See example: Acts 8:1-4.

It is also worthy to notice that Hagar was Sarah’s “handmaid” (Gen. 16:1; 25:12). The Law is styled by the apostle as “schoolmaster,” or handmaid of sorts, to the Gospel of faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:24). Like Ishmael, the nation of Israel reached national birth under the Law, but was to develop faith in Christ when brought to maturity, which they will do in the future age.

“For the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac” (Gen. 21:10)—These words are cited by Paul in Gal. 4:30 as applying to the greater inheritance that Israel of the spirit receives as distinct from that which shall be obtained by Israel after the flesh. There was a typical fulfillment of this in the lifetime of Abraham when, just prior to his death, he “gave gifts” to the sons of the concubines he had, and “sent them away from Isaac.” To whom he had given all his possessions (Gen. 25:5-6). The *son of the bondwoman* describes Israel under the curse of the law as Jews after the flesh are to this present day (Gal. 5:3).—*Expositor, pg. 249*

Gen 21:11 And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son.

Concerning the trodden down Jerusalem and casting out of the natural Abrahamic seed, the Lord warned the Jews in his very first parable—“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be *cast out*, and to be *trodden under foot* of men”—**Mat. 5:13**.

But, this state of being “cast out” and trodden down will not always be the status of the Jewish people. Luke 21:24 “And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, *until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*”

Gen 21:12 And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

It is upon this point, as noted in our initial comments, where Christendom fails; for many see Israel forever cast out from the presence of God. The next two verse of the chapter (Gen. 21:12-13) allegorically apply the proper aspects of the Abrahamic covenant to both the believers (Isaac) and the natural Jews (Ishmael).

Neither Abraham nor ourselves should be consumed with “grief” over the present state of the allegoric Ishmael (Israel after the flesh); for the time is soon coming when they will be converted, washed, and exalted above all nations.

We have already detailed the fact that the latter part of this verse (“in Isaac shall thy seed be called”) refers to Christ and all those *in him*, who believe the promises. These are the seed to which this portion of the Abrahamic covenant refers—“in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” This is POINT 3 in our introductory outline. Therefore, we will not repeat the principle here. We refer the reader again to comments in verses 1-2 of this chapter, and remind ourselves that Gentiles are graft into the Hope of Israel (please see: Eph. 2:10-22; Rom. 11).

Gen 21:13 And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.

“The children of the flesh are not the children of God, neither are they all Israel, who are of Israel” (Rom. 9:8). This is true; but it does not therefore follow that there is nothing more to be done with “the children of the flesh” than to burn them up. *To carry out the allegory, God has yet to make of the Ishmael-seed a great nation;* for though Ishmael was an outcast and a wanderer in the wilderness, God promised that he should be great, and dwell in the presence. The children of Abraham according to the flesh are “the children of the kingdom” (Mat. 8:12; 13:38) as well as the children of the promise; only these two classes stand in a different relation to the government and glory of the commonwealth, and to the dominion of the nations in the age to come. The Ishmael-children were cast out of the government by the Romans; but the children in Isaac will “shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father,” when the kingdom is restored again to Israel—*Elpis Israel*, pg. 254.

“I say then, Hath God CAST AWAY his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God HATH NOT CAST AWAY HIS PEOPLE which he foreknew...For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; *that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved:* as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. *As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes*”—**Rom. 11:1-2, 25-28.**

“In the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory” (Mat. 19:28), the children in Isaac will reign as “sons,” while the children of the flesh will be the king’s subjects, or “servants”...(Eze. 46:16-17) If natural Israel are not restored to Canaan, the spiritual Israel, that is to say, the prince and his sons, would inherit a kingdom without subjects to serve them.—*Elpis Israel*, pg. 254-255

In POINT 1 of our introduction, we stress that the Abrahamic covenant includes the promise: “*And I will make of thee a great nation.*” This aspect of the promise is applied in this chapter to the Ishmael seed: “*And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed*” (Gen. 21:13). In fact, the phrase “I will make him a great nation” is directly quoted later in this chapter (Gen. 21:18).

To this doctrinal point, the Bible is specific. The natural seed of Abraham—the Jewish people—will become “a great nation.” A proper understanding of this Scriptural principle provides us with a vital key to the true terms of the Gospel and general comprehension of Bible prophecy.

As a fundamental rule, we understand that Israel was cast out for disobedience, and scattered among the nations for correction (Lev. 26:44; Deu. 4:27; 28:64; 29:28; Zec. 7:11-14; Luke 19:43-44). However, this state is not permanent, as states the prophet (Jer. 30:10-11); they are not cast out forever—

Lev 26:44 “And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I WILL NOT CAST THEM AWAY, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and *to break my covenant with them*: for I am the LORD their God.”

2 Ki 13:22-23 “But Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. And the LORD was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, *because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them*, neither CAST HE THEM FROM HIS PRESENCE as yet.”

Jer 33:25-26 “Thus saith the LORD; If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; THEN WILL I CAST AWAY THE SEED OF JACOB, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them.”

Gen 21:14 **And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba.**

“Bread, and a bottle of water”—These are the two necessities of life. Symbolically they represent the Lord Jesus Christ as the bread of life (John 6:32-35) and the water of life (John 4:13-14). These were incorporated in the principles of the old covenant and are both found in the ritual of the tabernacle worship: the water in the laver, and the bread of the showbread table—*Expositor*, pg. 251

The above point shows that, like the bread and bottle of water in the historic allegory, the shadowy things of the Law were only temporary and intended to lead the Jews unto Christ (Gal. 3:23-25). The fact that the bread and water were put on Hagar’s “shoulder” further stresses the point of this typical meaning; for the Law was *yoke* and *burden* to those under it (Psa. 81:6; Isa. 9:4; 10:27 cp. Mat. 11:28-30).

Peter, in rebuking the Jews who desired believing Gentiles to become circumcised and follow the Mosaic Law, stated: “Now therefore why tempt ye God, *to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples*, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they”—**Acts 15:10-11.**

Manifesting sin, perfect obedience to the Law was impossible (Gal. 5:3-6; 2:16-21; 3:11-14; 6:13; Jam. 2:10; Phi. 3:9; Col. 2:11-14; Rom. 9:31), Christ came to redeem us from the burden or curse of the Law (Gal. 3:10-13; 4:4-5; 3:22-24; Col. 2:12-14). Allegorically, Hagar *the Egyptian*—that is, the symbol of the old covenant—carried upon her shoulder the burden of the Law as she and her son were cast out.

This was the second time that Hagar had been banished from Abraham's encampment (cp. Gen. 16:7): answering to the two scatterings of Israel; first, at the hands of the Babylonians; then by the power of Rome (Isa. 39:3-7; Luke 21:20-24)—*Expositor*, pg. 251

Furthermore, with the temporary bottle of water upon her shoulder—representing the Law—Hagar wandered “in the wilderness of Beersheba” (Gen. 21:14). The word *Beersheba* means “well of the oath.” Thus, the water was before Hagar, but her eyes were figuratively “blinded” so that she could not see the source of life-giving water. Allegorically, the natural seed of Abraham—Israel—wandered among the nations after being cast out in blindness to the true Gospel of salvation through Christ (Rom. 11:25).

Gen 21:15 And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs.

The allegory of Genesis 21 teaches that the Abrahamic covenant was established before the Mosaic covenant (Gal. 3:17-18), that is before Hagar and her son, Ishmael came upon the scene. It also teaches that the Law was only temporary in status, typified in the words “*the water was spent in the bottle.*”

Allegorically, the Mosaic covenant had fulfilled its usefulness (Rom. 10:4), and, with the perfect sacrifice of Christ, its involved ritual was no longer effective (cp. Col. 2:20)...Allegorically, Israel after the flesh can derive no help from the old covenant, and must perish unless their eyes are opened to the living water of the Gospel of Christ. In absence of this, the Law is only a “ministration of death.” Not until Israel is brought to the extremity to which Ishmael was reduced, will their eyes be opened to the Truth (Eze. 37:11; Jer. 30:5-7). Until then, “blindness in part” will remain with them (Rom. Chapter 11). Nevertheless, it will be in “the wilderness of the peoples” that Yahweh will meet with His people (Eze. 20:35), to revive their fainting spirit...Hagar pushed the fainting Ishmael under a shrub and left him to die. The old covenant cannot rescue its children from death (Rom. 7:9-10)—*Expositor*, pg. 251-252

Gen 21:16 And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bowshot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice, and wept.

Hagar the Egyptian was incapable of saving the child, as the Law was powerless to save. It is notable, however, that she “sat down over against him a good way off, *as it were a bowshot.*” This unique phrase, indicating the distance an arrow would travel from a drawn bow, is represented elsewhere as *deliverance* (2Kin. 13:15-17). Furthermore, the Lord Jesus Christ is prophetically styled the “polished shaft” hidden in Yahweh’s “quiver” sent forth as the salvation of mankind.

Isa 49:1-8 “Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. And he hath

made my mouth like a sharp sword; *in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me*; And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel (*ie. Christ*), in whom I will be glorified...And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength. *And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.*”

This strange expression is rather appropriate to the allegory. Literally it signifies: *about a shot of a bow*. There is forgiveness in Christ; there is none in the Law in the absence of Christ. A Jew, under the Law and in the absence of grace, is always within “a shot of a bow”—*Expositor, pg. 252 (Isa. 49:1-8)*

True it is that “he be not far from every one of us” (Acts 17:27). This lesson, Hagar soon learns; she simply needed her eyes opened to see the way of life.

Gen 21:17 **And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is.**

The time is coming when Israel, in great extremity (Jer. 30:5-9), and at the point of political death (Eze. 37:11), will cry unto Yahweh and He shall hear (Deu. 4:30, RV; Jer. 29:13-14; Mat. 23:39).—*Expositor, pg. 253*

The time is coming when Israel, in great extremity (Jer. 30:5-9), and at the point of political death (Eze. 37:11), will cry unto Yahweh and He shall hear (Deu. 4:30, RV; Jer. 29:13-14; Mat. 23:39).—*Expositor, pg. 253*

The oversight of the “angel of God” in this verse is most interesting. The angels are greatly involved in the manipulation of political affairs of the nations (Dan. 4:13, 23; Heb. 2:5; Rev. 16:1-4; 15:1; Isa. 37:36); which includes the natural seed of Abraham—the Jewish people. As with the allegory before us, God will not permit their destruction, but instead will gather them again by angelic oversight and place them back in the Land of Promise.

Mat 24:30-32 **And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:**

Gen 21:18 **Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation.**

“I will make him a great nation” is a direct quote from the Abrahamic covenant regarding the natural seed of the patriarchs (Gen. 21:13 cp. Gen. 12:2). This promise is repeated in Gen 17:20—“And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and *I will make him a great nation.*”

As the descendents of Ishmael were divided into twelve (Gen. 25:12-16), the sons of Jacob were divided into twelve tribes. This answers to the allegory, and will find its fulfillment in the Kingdom Age when the twelve tribes of Israel will be regathered and united as at the first (1Kin. 4:7; Mat. 19:28-30; Eze. 37:15-24).

Literally interpreted, this promise reveals that the Arab nations will become great in the Kingdom of God (see: Isa. 60:6-7). In the terms of the allegory however, the promise relates to Israel according to the flesh. Israel is to become great in the Kingdom of God (Mic. 4:8; Eze. 37:21-22; Eze. 48)—*Expositor*, pg. 253.

Like the listless lad, Ishmael, it will be at the point of death that the Jews will receive salvation from God. Scriptures reveal that when the Gogian host invades the Land in the latter days, Christ and the saints will save them from ultimate slaughter (Zec. 13-14; Eze. 38-39; Joel 3; Dan. 11-12; Jer. 30:3-11). At that time, Israel, like Ishmael shall be “lifted up” to assume the chief place and exalted position among the nations (Mic. 4:8; Zec. 8:23; Zep. 3:20).

Gen 21:19 And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink.

In harmony with the allegory, Israel’s *spiritual blindness* to the true significance of the Abrahamic covenant will be remedied when Yahweh opens their eyes to their need for the Messiah. (see: Rom. 11:25-27; 2Cor. 3:13-16; John 12:37-40). As the *well of water* allegorically represents salvation in Christ, it will be when the Lord returns to the earth that the eyes of the natural seed of Abraham shall see him as their savior and redeemer. Note the detail of prophetic language:

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: 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*. (Rev. 1:7 see: Eze. 14:22-23; Zec. 14:1-3; Mat. 24:32-35; Jer. 30:3-11).

As the opening of the eyes represents spiritual enlightenment, the return of the Lord and the salvation of the natural Abraham seed shall be a great revelation to all of mankind; Jew and Gentile alike.

Isa 52:8-10 “Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, *he hath redeemed Jerusalem*. The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and *all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God*.”

The *well of water* seen by Hagar when God opened her eyes represents the pouring forth of water to cleanse the iniquity of the Jews. “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness”—**Zec 13:1**.

It is also notable that Hagar draws from the *well of water*—Christ—and *fills the bottle of water*—the temporary status of the Law—to give the lad drink. In the future Age, Israel will be compelled to see that Christ was IN THE LAW all along, in various shadows and types, if they had just looked to see Him. They shall see that the Law was indeed, a schoolmaster unto Christ (Gal. 3:25), and that there was a “form of knowledge and of the truth in the law” (Rom. 2:20).

“Search the scriptures,” said Jesus to the Jews, “for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and *they are they which testify of me*...For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: *for he wrote of me*. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?”—**John 5:39-47**.

When the Lord was resurrected from the dead and conversed with two disciples on the way to Emmaus, we read: “And *beginning at Moses and all the prophets*, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself...And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And *their eyes were opened*, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight”—**Luke 24:27-34**.

And later, with the eleven disciples: “And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, *which were written in the law of Moses*, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. *Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures*, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem”—**Luke 24:44-47**.

Col 2:16-17 “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: *Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ*.”

Heb 10:1 “For *the law having a shadow of good things to come*, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.”

Rom 3:20-21 “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, *being witnessed by the law and the prophets*.”

All aspects of the Law pointed forward to Christ, and the natural Jews will have their understanding and eyes opened to this reality at his return from heaven (Heb. 8:1-9).

Gen 21:20 **And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.**

As “God was with the lad,” so Yahweh will be with *Israel after the flesh* (1Cor. 10:18) in the Kingdom Age (Jer. 31:3-34; Eze. 39:25-29; Joel 3:16; Zec. 8:13-15). And they too, shall grow and strengthen.

As the allegory continues, it is significant that Hagar’s son “became an archer.” In the future age, Israel is described as such a weapon of warfare, which will submit the Gentile nations.

Zec 9:13 “When I have *bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim*, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man.”

Jer 51:19-21 “The portion of Jacob is not like them; for he is the former of all things: and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: the LORD of hosts is his name. *Thou art my battle ax and weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms*;

And *with thee* will I break in pieces the horse and his rider; and *with thee* will I break in pieces the chariot and his rider.”

Micah 4:8-13 “And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, *even the first dominion*; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem... Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of the LORD, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor. *Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people:* and I will consecrate their gain unto the LORD, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth.”

Gen 21:21 **And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.**

Figuratively, Egypt represents the world. There will be close union established between Israel and the Gentiles in the Age to come. As the former has been a curse, it will find Divine salvation and will become a blessing (Zec. 8:13)—*Expositor, pg. 254*

The prophets Isaiah (60-66) and Ezekiel (36-39) testify of the conversion of the Gentiles, as they witness the spiritual cleansing of the Jews.

Gen 21:22 **And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phichol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest:**

The allegory continues, but now involves the Gentiles...It fittingly follows the story of the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael, which Paul interprets as the rejection of an Israel seeking justification through works of the Law only...Abimelech seeks to enter into covenant-relationship with Abraham. He realizes that Abraham is a prophet (Gen. 20:7), for he received benefits from God because of him (Gen. 20:17), and accordingly had invited him to dwell with him in peace (Gen. 20:15)...Abraham shows that this is conditional upon him accepting the covenant, as had his Amorite friends previously (Gen. 14:14). This is typical of the future, when nations shall be incorporated into the Kingdom of God through the Abrahamic covenant (Rev. 11:15)—*Expositor, pg. 254*

The above verse states: “And it came to pass *at that time* that Abimelech and Phichol...” What time? The time of Hagar and Ishmael’s banishment from the household of Abraham, and the subsequent opening of their eyes to the well at Beersheba. This is in harmony with the Scriptures that testify to the fact that the Gentile nations, generally, will respond to the Gospel upon the restoration of the Jews.

In the allegory (Abimelech and Pichol) are representative of Gentiles who were drawn to the Truth at the casting away of Israel...The time will come when Gentile rulers will acknowledge the Truth. It will be apparent from the blessings that Yahweh will pour upon Israel—*Expositor, pg. 255*

Rom 11:7-15 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompense unto them: Let their eyes be darkened that they may not see, and bow down their back alway. I

say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?

READ: Eze. 37:21-28; Eze. 39:21-28; Jer. 33:7-9

Abimelech saw that God blessed Abraham, and rightly desired to share the privilege; the Gentiles shall do similarly in the Age to come, as they observe the blessings poured out upon Israel—*Expositor*, pg. 255

Significantly, Phichol is described as “the chief captain of (Abimelech’s) host” (Gen. 21:22). Other military leaders among the Gentiles converted to the Truth, and were graft into the “*hope of Israel*” include: “Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria” (2 Kin. 5:1); the Roman “centurion” (Mat. 8:8-13); and “Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band” (Acts 10:1). This represents the ultimate submission of Gentile rulers before the Jews.

Isa 2:1-4 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Abimelech’s words to Abraham are most significant, as his belief is based upon the evidence that: “GOD IS WITH THEE” (Gen. 21:22). This is quoted by the prophet Zechariah in respect to the conversion of Gentiles in the future Age, when they witness God’s blessing upon the Jews.

Zec 8:13, 20-23 “And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; *so will I save you*, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, but let your hands be strong... Thus saith the LORD of hosts; It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD. *Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: FOR WE HAVE HEARD THAT GOD IS WITH YOU.*”

Gen 21:23 Now therefore swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son: but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned.

This statement from Abimelech—“but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned”—represents a portion of the

Abrahamic covenant: “I will bless them that bless thee.” This refers to a favored or blessed status among the Gentile peoples and nations that deal kindly with Abraham and his seed.

A kindness done to Israel for Abraham’s sake will have its reward...(Abimelech’s) experience typified the eventual entrance of Gentiles into the family of faith, and demonstrated the truth of the divine covenant “In thee shall all nations be blessed” (Gen. 12:3; Gal. 3:8)—*Expositor*, pg. 255

Abimelech, representing the *sheep nations*, was kind to Abraham and to the land where he sojourned. The converse of this has been witnessed among the *goat nations*, who have abused and persecuted the Jews in their dispersion (ie. Babylon: Isa. 14:4-6; 47:1-6; Jer. 50:17-19).

Gen 21:24 And Abraham said, I will swear.

Gen 21:25 And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away.

In the allegory, a well is representative of the Gospel, the water of life—*Expositor*, pg. 255

During Gentile times, the spiritual seed of Abraham has suffered opposition from the powers that be. In the future Age, nations will be held accountable for their actions in that regard, and will be forced to acknowledge their error before being received by Christ (cp. Dan. 7:10-12)...As Abraham required that his right to the “well of water” be acknowledged before entering into covenant with Abimelech (v. 30); so in the future, nations will have to acknowledge the Abrahamic nature of the Hope before being incorporated into the Kingdom. The allegory, therefore, anticipated the opposition that the preaching of the Gospel would receive from Gentiles, who, afterwards, would be compelled to accept the Abrahamic covenant—*Expositor*, pg. 255-256

The prophets speak clearly on the matter of the future enlightenment of the Gentiles—

Isa 60:1-5 Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.

Gen 21:26 And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing: neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it, but to day.

Gentiles have been largely ignorant of the enormity of their conduct in opposing the preaching of the Gospel—*Expositor*, pg. 256

Gen 21:27 And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech; and both of them made a covenant.

Gen 21:28 And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves.

These comprised a covenant present, as was normal (cp. 1Kin. 15:19). Notice, however, that on this occasion, the giving of gifts was one-sided. Abraham gave gifts to Abimelech, but Abimelech did not give them to Abraham! In like manner, the benefits of the Gospel are one-sided (cp. Eph. 3:2-8; 4:7-8)—*Expositor*, pg. 256

Bro. Mansfield makes an excellent observation; for Gentiles are graft into the Hope of Israel; become Jews; and the seed of Abraham (Eph. 4; Rom. 2:28; Gal. 3), and not the other way around. Thus, the Jewish hope is extended to the Gentiles—a one-way benefit.

Gen 21:29 And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves?

Gen 21:30 And he said, For these seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well.

How significant that the word “seven” in Hebrew is the same word used as “oath.” The Hebrew *sheba* shows that a covenant was made between the two men, on the basis of the Abrahamic well; or the Gospel!

Gen 21:31 Wherefore he called that place Beersheba; because there they swore both of them.

Accordingly, Beersheba means “the Well of the Oath.” It is at this place—the allegorical water of the Word—where the basis of God’s covenant is established.

Gen 21:32 Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba: then Abimelech rose up, and Phichol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines.

Gen 21:33 And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God.

Gen 21:34 And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land many days.

He planted it as a memorial, as a symbol of his belief. It pointed forward to one who would “bear our sins in his own body on the tree” (1Pet. 2:24), that we “being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness”...The tree was “in Beersheba,” and thus in association with the *Well of the Oath*—*Expositor*, pg. 257