

## 2012 Eastern Canada Thanksgiving Conference

### Subject: Finding the Divine Revelation in the Old Testament History, Characters, and Prophecies

#### Section Two: The History of God with the Called Race— from Abraham to the End of the Old Testament Period

#### I. God called Abraham from the fallen Adamic race and worked on him to make him the head of a new race:

1. God's calling of Abraham:  
First time (Gen. 11:31; Acts 7:2-4a): God appeared to him as the God of glory. Abraham went out from Ur of the Chaldeans and left his kindred. However, he did not enter the land of Canaan but settled in Haran.  
Second time (Gen. 12:1, 4): After his father Terah died, he was called to go from his land, his relatives, and his father's house, to the land that Jehovah would show him.
2. God promised Abraham to make him a great nation and to make his name great; to bless him and to make him a blessing to others; in him all the families of the earth will be blessed (Gal. 3:8). God appeared to him the third time and promised to give the land of Canaan to his seed—Gen. 12:2-3, 7.
3. God promised Abraham to give to him and his seed all the land that he could see northward and southward and eastward and westward from where he was, and to make his seed as the dust of the earth—Gen. 13:14-17.
4. God told Abraham in a vision that He was his shield and his exceedingly great reward; that he who would come out of his own body would be his heir; that his seed would be as numerous as the stars in the heavens. Abraham believed God, and He accounted it to him as righteousness. Abraham's seed would be sojourners in Egypt and would serve the Egyptians. They would afflict them four hundred years, and in the fourth generation they would return to the land of Canaan. On that day, God made a covenant with him to give to his seed the land from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates—Gen. 15.
5. When Abraham was ninety-nine years old, God appeared to him the seventh time to establish the covenant of circumcision with him; to make him the father of a multitude of nations; to change his name from Abram to Abraham, and his wife's name from Sarai to Sarah. Abraham would obtain a son, Isaac, from Sarah—Gen. 17.
6. By the oaks of Mamre, God appeared to Abraham the eighth time, coming to visit His friend Abraham in the form of man on a human level (2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23). Abraham received God and provided Him with food, drink, and rest. God told him that according to the time of life (one year later) Sarah would have a son. Abraham walked with God, and God was conversing with Abraham as a man conversing with his friend, revealing His intention to judge Sodom where Lot and his family were dwelling. Through Abraham's petition, God saved Lot's family out of the destruction—Gen. 18-19.
7. God gave Abraham his son, Isaac, whom Sarah bore to him. When He spoke to Abraham for the ninth time, He kept His principle of grace and acknowledged that Abraham's son Isaac whom Sarah bore to him was his only son, and cast out Ishmael, the son that Hagar bore to him.
8. When God spoke to him for the tenth time, He tested him by asking him to offer up his son Isaac as a burnt offering, and Abraham passed God's test. The eleventh time God spoke to him was when He stopped him from killing his son Isaac. He prepared a ram (typifying Christ, John 1:29) for Abraham, which he took and offered as a burnt offering in place of Isaac—Gen. 22:1-18.

9. God spoke to Abraham for the twelfth time, promising to multiply his seed like the stars of the heavens and like the sand on the seashore, and that in his seed (Christ—Gal. 3:16; Matt. 1:1b) all the nations of the earth shall be blessed—Gen. 22:16-19.

## **II. The continuation of God's work on Isaac:**

1. Making him the only heir of Abraham, inheriting the promise that God gave to Abraham and the covenant that God made with Abraham—Gen. 17:19; 21:10-12; 26:3-4.
2. Making him a type of Christ as God's Son:
  - a. The only begotten Son of the Father (John 1:14b; 3:16a), receiving everything that the Father possesses from the Father—Gen. 25:5; John 3:35; 13:3.
  - b. Offered up to God for God's satisfaction and raised from the dead—Gen. 22:2-13.
  - c. Acquiring a Gentile church through the Holy Spirit to be His spouse—Gen. 24.
3. Because of his father Abraham, God placed him under His abundant blessings—Gen. 25:11a; 26:12-25:
  - a. God appeared to him and promised him that He would be with him and would bless him; that He would give to him and his seed all these lands and would establish the oath which He had sworn to Abraham his father; that He would multiply his seed as the stars of heaven—26:2-4.
  - b. In particular, he inherited God's promise to Abraham that in his seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed.
  - c. He became rich and continued to grow richer until he became very rich, possessing flocks and herds and many servants and being much more powerful and prosperous than others. God also made room for him so that he could prosper and be fruitful in the land—Gen. 26:12-25.

## **III. God loved Jacob, chose him, and worked on him:**

1. Making him heir to Abraham and Isaac, inheriting God's promise to them and the covenant that God made with them—Gen. 28:13-14:
  - a. During Jacob's escape to his uncle Laban, he took a stone for a pillow and slept in the wilderness. In his dream, he saw a ladder set up on the earth, and God stood above the ladder and said to him, "I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. . . In you and in your seed will all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 28:10-14) In giving him this promise of all the families of the earth being blessed, God confirmed and extended in Jacob the promise that He gave to Abraham and Isaac.
  - b. The promise that God gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is related to Christ. Christ is the seed in whom God promised to bless all the families of the earth. As such, He will become the blessing of all the families of the earth.
2. Transforming him by the dealings in his circumstances:
  - a. Although Jacob was defeated in his mother's womb by his brother and was born second, he kept struggling to seize the birthright. After he seized the birthright and his father's blessing from Esau through deception, Esau hated him and plotted to kill him, so he was forced to leave his parents and flee to his uncle Laban.
  - b. He was cheated by Laban when he was there. He served Laban for fourteen years for his two daughters, and six years for his cattle. Laban changed his wages ten times. He was consumed in the day by the drought, and in the night by the frost. He could not sleep (Gen. 31:40-41).
  - c. His two wives, Leah and Rachel, engaged in competition, envy, and wrestling in the matter of child-bearing (Gen. 29:31-30:24), causing him grief.
  - d. On account of the complaints from Laban's sons and the sign of Laban's countenance, Jacob fled from his uncle Laban according to God's direction (Gen. 31:1-21). Under the hidden care

- and protection of the Angel of God—Christ (31:10-13), he confronted the situation with Laban pursuing him and catching up with him (31:22-55).
- e. He confronted the predicament of his brother Esau coming to deal with him (32:1-23; 33:1-17).
  - f. After he returned to Shechem in the land of Canaan, his only daughter Dinah was defiled by Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the land. His sons plotted and took revenge, and his two sons Simeon and Levi slew Hamor and Shechem and every male in the city. His sons also plundered the city, bringing trouble upon Jacob and causing him distress and unrest (Gen. 34).
  - g. His beloved wife Rachel died of hard labour while giving birth to his last son Benjamin (Gen. 35:16-20).
  - h. His concubine was defiled by his own firstborn son Reuben (Gen. 35:22).
  - i. He was deceived by his sons into believing that his most beloved son Joseph was devoured by a wild beast (Gen. 37).
  - j. He was grieved by the prospect of losing his son Simeon and his youngest son Benjamin (Gen. 42:18-43:15; 44:9-34).
  - k. All these hardships in his circumstances were used by God to deal with Jacob in every aspect in order to transform him.
3. Through God's direct dealings, he eventually reached maturity, becoming God's overcomer and God's prince, full of the elements of God and being able to express God:
    - a. At Peniel, God wrestled with Jacob in the form of man until the break of dawn. God did this in order to expose his natural life. God touched the socket of his hip, and he was crippled (Gen. 32:22-32). This indicates that he was wrestling with God his whole life.
    - b. In the matter of Joseph being sold, he was brought by God to the point of utter helplessness. Once crippled, he began to realize God's dealing with him and arrive at the maturity in life, becoming Israel. The "el" in the name "Israel" refers to God. This name that God gave him shows that he has been dealt with by God and has been brought to maturity.
  4. He was able to bless others for God. When Jacob was mature in life, God went down to Egypt with him (Gen. 46:4a). After that, the Bible does not record anything else he did except blessing people. He first blessed Pharaoh, then the two sons of Joseph, and finally he blessed every one of his sons just before he died:
    - a. Jacob did not bless blindly like Isaac did because he knew God's heart.
    - b. Joseph brought his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh to Jacob to ask for his blessings. He brought the firstborn son Manasseh toward Jacob's right hand, and the second son Ephraim toward his left hand, expecting Jacob to lay his right hand on Manasseh and his left hand on Ephraim.
    - c. Jacob stretched out his hands in a crossed fashion to bless them. Joseph was displeased and tried to remove his right hand from Ephraim's head onto Manasseh's head, but Jacob refused and said, "I know, my son, I know." (Gen. 48:8-20)
    - d. Although Jacob's physical eyesight was poor, his spirit was sober. He knew that God's desire was to set Ephraim above Manasseh. Hence, he did not go along with Joseph's manipulation but blessed them according to God's desire.
    - e. The blessings he bestowed on his sons before his death all turned out to be God's prophecies regarding them. From then on, what is recorded in the Bible from Exodus to Revelation is just the fulfillment of these prophecies of blessings.

5. Signifying the stage of maturity of God's work on the called ones:
  - a. In his old age, when Jacob heard that Joseph had become ruler in Egypt, his reaction was "his heart grew numb... his spirit was revived" (Gen. 45:26-27). This indicates that his soul life was deadened, but his spirit and his soul had been divided.
  - b. He went to Egypt not to ask for anything but to bless others.
  - c. The later part of Jacob's life represents the stage of maturity of the complete experience of a called one, unlike Abraham or Isaac who can only represent the early stages and living of the complete experience of a called one.
  - d. Joseph represents the reigning aspect of the mature Israel and signifies the reigning for God of one who is mature in the spiritual life:
    - i. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob together represent the three stages of experience and living of one who is mature in the spiritual life. These three stages of experience and living ultimately produce the mature Israel, the one who can reign for God, as represented by Joseph.
    - ii. Genesis 37:2 says, "These are the generations of Jacob." Yet, it goes on to tell us Joseph's life. This proves that the history of Joseph is part of Jacob's history. Hence, the last fourteen chapters of Genesis merge the records of Joseph's life with the records of Jacob's life, treating them as the biography of one person.
    - iii. Joseph's reigning was actually Jacob's reigning through him. Joseph ruled over the land of Egypt (45:8b-9a) and supplied the whole land with food (41:55-57; 42:5-6). This signifies that all those who are mature in the spiritual life should reign for God and rule over the whole earth and should be the life-suppliers to satisfy all people.
    - iv. At the consummation of the age of grace, Christ will return to take the whole earth and establish the millennial kingdom. At that time, all those who were perfected throughout the ages and grew to maturity in life will be co-kings with Christ (Rev. 20:6) and will rule over the nations on the earth in the millennial kingdom.

**IV. The history, types, and prophecies of the entire Old Testament age are governed by God's promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob regarding all nations being blessed in their seed—Christ:**

1. God became the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exo. 3:13-15), indicating that God is the complete Triune God in the three stages of the life of a corporate man:
  - a. In Jacob, we see God the Father loving and choosing man—Mal. 1:2; Rom. 9:10-13.
  - b. In Abraham, we see God the Father calling man, justifying man, and working on man so that man can live by faith and live in fellowship with Him—Gen. 12:1; 15:6; 17; 18; 19:29; 21:1-13; 22:1-18.
  - c. In Isaac, we see God the Son blessing man and causing man to inherit all His riches and to live a life of enjoying His riches, full of rest and enjoyment—Gen. 25:5; 26:3-4, 12-33.
  - d. In Jacob and Joseph, we see God the Spirit working in all things for the good of those who love Him. He also transforms man and causes man to mature in His divine life so that man can bless all people and rule over the whole earth, satisfying all people with God the Son as the life supply—Gen. 27:41; 28:1-35:10; 37; 39-49; Rom. 8:28-29.
2. The centre of all the promises is the unique seed of Abraham—Christ, through whom God's promise of all the nations being blessed by Abraham may be fulfilled—Gal. 3:14.
3. Therefore, all of God's work in the Old Testament points to this Christ: He is the body of all the Old Testament eating, drinking, feasts, new moons, and the Sabbath (Col. 2:16-17); He is the reality of the types (Rom. 5:14); He is the centre of the prophecies (Rom. 1:2; Luke 1:68-75;

24:25-27, 44); He is also the goal and the reason for God's protection and care of the Israelites who are the descendants of Abraham. The whole history of Israel points to the coming of Christ—Luke 2:25, 26, 36-38:

- a. God brought them out of Egypt in order to lead them into the good land of Canaan which is a type of Christ.
- b. God gave them the law as the sheep fold to guard them until Christ came.
- c. God wanted them to build the tabernacle so that they could enter into Christ to enjoy God's presence and that they could serve God and have a holy living.
- d. God gained David to establish the kingdom: David was a man after God's heart. God made a covenant with him that his seed—Christ—would sit on his throne forever. "When your days are fulfilled and you sleep with your fathers, I will raise up your seed after you, which will come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. It is he who will build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." (2 Sam. 7:12-13).
- e. In their utmost failure, God delivered them into the hands of the Gentiles, and they were carried away as captives and lost their nation. Still, God called a group of people to return to their homeland to rebuild the holy city and the temple in order to preserve God's testimony on the earth and to enable Christ to come to the earth.
- f. The matters concerning Christ have already been recorded in the Scriptures (Heb. 10:7) and must be fulfilled (Luke 24:25-27, 44). Among the Old Testament prophets who prophesied concerning Christ, there are two who are the most comprehensive:
  - i. David: David was a king and a prophet as well (Acts 2:30). The Spirit of Jehovah spoke through him, and His word was on his tongue (2 Sam. 23:2). In his psalms, he prophesied that from the beginning, Christ was God (Psa. 110:1; Matt. 22:43-44) who became a man (Psa. 8:4-5; Heb. 2:6-9). He came into the world that He might do the will of God (referring specifically to the replacement of all the sacrifices) (Psa. 40:6-8; Heb. 10:5-9). He trusted in God (Psa. 18:2; Heb. 2:13). He loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore, God anointed Him with the oil of exultant joy above His partners (Psa. 45:7; Heb. 1:9). He was hurt by one of His disciples (Psa. 41:9; John 13:18). On the cross, He was rejected by God for our sins, His hands and feet were pierced, and He suffered the pain of death (Psa. 22:1, 14-17; Matt. 27:46); yet not one of His bones was broken (Psa. 34:20; John 19:36). The soldiers divided His garments among themselves, and for His clothing they cast lots (Psa. 22:18; John 19:23-24). While He was dying on the cross, He thirsted (Psa. 69:21; John 19:28). God would not leave His soul in Hades, nor would He permit His flesh to see corruption; rather, God raised Him up, made Him ascend before God, and seated Him at God's right hand (Psa. 16:8-11; 110:1; Acts 2:25-35). In resurrection, He (with His human nature) was born of God (to become God's Firstborn) (Psa. 2:7; Acts 13:32-35). After resurrection, He declares the Father's name to His brothers (disciples); in the midst of the church He sings praise to the Father (Psa. 22:22; Heb. 2:12). Having ascended to the height, He led captive those taken captive and gave gifts to men (Psa. 68:18; Eph. 4:8). In ascension, He was made a Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedec (Psa. 110:4; Heb. 5:5-6, 10). Now He is sitting in the heavens, waiting for God to make His enemies His footstool (Psa. 110:1; Heb. 10:12-13; 1 Cor. 15:25). At His coming back, all the angels of God shall worship Him (Psa. 97:7; Heb. 1:6). His throne is forever, and the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of His kingdom (Psa. 45:6; Heb. 1:8). In the beginning He was the Lord who created the heavens and the earth; the heavens and the earth shall perish and be changed, but He shall remain forever and not be changed, and His years shall not fail (Psa. 102:25-27; Heb. 1:10-12).
  - ii. Isaiah: The book of Isaiah speaks concerning salvation in such great detail that some have even called it the Gospel of Isaiah. In it are found prophecies concerning Christ:

- (1) His birth—God becoming a man (7:14; 9:6);
  - (2) His genealogy—a descendant of Jesse (11:1);
  - (3) His name—Emmanuel, Wonderful Counselor, (a child being called) the Mighty God, (a son being called) the Eternal Father, the Prince of Peace, Jehovah’s Servant (7:14; 9:6; 42:19);
  - (4) His living—as a root out of dry ground, having no attracting form nor majesty, His visage being marred more than that of any man, and His form more than that of the sons of men, being despised and forsaken of men, being a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (52:14; 53:2-3);
  - (5) His being anointed—being filled with the Spirit of God (61:1; 11:2);
  - (6) His work—preaching good tidings and proclaiming God’s jubilee (61:1-3);
  - (7) His dealings with man—not crying out nor lifting up His voice, not breaking a bruised reed, and not quenching the smoking flax (42:1-4);
  - (8) His death—having borne our sicknesses and carried our sorrows, being wounded for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities (53:4-10a);
  - (9) His burial—being assigned a grave with a rich man (53:9b);
  - (10) His resurrection—swallowing up death, extending His days, justifying many (25:8a; 53:10b-11);
  - (11) His coming back—rending the heavens and coming down, judging the people (64:1; 63:1-6);
  - (12) His reign—in the millennium (Rev. 20:4, 6) reigning in righteousness, all peoples enjoying grace, and all creation living in harmony (9:7; 11:3-16; 32:1; 33:17-24);
  - (13) His kingdom—being exalted above all the nations and all peoples streaming to it (2:2-4; 35:1-10; Micah 4:1-3), bringing in the new heaven and new earth (65:17; 66:22). Isaiah also prophesied that Christ, who became a man, was a sure foundation stone and a precious cornerstone laid by God for His building and trusted in by His believers (28:16), and that He would be like a refuge from the wind and a covering from the tempest; like streams of water in a dry place, like the shadow of a massive rock in a wasted land (32:2).
- g. God’s salvation has not come to the one race of Israel only; through Christ salvation has come to the nations also. God’s salvation has come back to the fallen Adamic race, and the Gentiles will look to Him. Out of all tribes, peoples, places, and nations, multitudes will come from the East and from the West unto God through the redeeming blood of Christ to be a kingdom and priests to reign on the earth.
- h. As God says in Hosea, “I will call those who were not My people *My people*, and her who was not beloved *beloved*, and it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, You are not My people, there shall they be called *sons of the living God*.”—Rom. 9:25-26.
- i. This is God’s wonderful arrangement. Due to man’s progressive falls, He abandoned the Adamic race and called Abraham to be the head of a new race, producing the Israelites. Through Christ as Abraham’s seed, the blessing promised by God returned to the Gentiles. When the fullness of the Gentiles comes in, all Israel will be saved. This is like the praise that Paul expressed to God: Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and untraceable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counselor? Or who has first given to Him, and it will be repaid to him? Because out from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen!