
a *Grace Notes* course

The Acts of the Apostles

an expositional study
by Warren Doud

Lesson 117: **Acts 7:1-15**

Acts 7:1-15

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Instructions

Begin each study session with prayer. It is the Holy Spirit who makes spiritual things discernable to Christians, so it is essential to be in fellowship with the Lord during Bible study.

1. Study the lesson by reading the passage in ACTS, studying the notes, and studying the other passages of the Bible which are cited. It is a good idea to read the whole book of Acts regularly, perhaps at least once a month. This will give you a good overall view of the events in ACTS.
 2. Study the topics in the same way, paying close attention to all of the Bible verses which are mentioned.
 3. Review all of the notes in the ACTS study and the topics
 4. Go to the Quiz page and follow the instructions to complete all the questions on the quiz. The quiz is “open book”. You may refer to all the notes and to the Bible when you take the test. But you should not get help from another person.
 5. When you have completed the Quiz, be sure to SAVE the file.
 6. Return the completed Quiz to Grace Notes, either by e-mail or regular mail. There are instructions below in the Quiz section.
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Acts 7:1-15

Acts 7:1 Then said the high priest, Are these things so?

There is very little appearance of justice here, only that the high Priest (Caiaphas) offers Stephen a chance to declare whether the accusations made against him are true. Notice, however, that neither the high priest nor other members of the Sanhedrin, have asked the false witnesses whether any of the things they said “are so!?”

In the history of the development of Jewish ruling leadership after the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, there were changes in leadership from time to time from the Sadducees to the Pharisees, and vice versa. At the beginning of the Church Age, the high priest, the president (Nasi) and vice-president of the Sanhedrin, along with all or most of the other members, were Sadducees.

One of the great differences between the Sadducees and Pharisees was how each handled criminal cases. The Pharisees were very scrupulous in giving every benefit to an accused. In fact, they were so extremely careful in this respect that, often, guilty parties went free, to the detriment of society.

Under the Pharisees, the testimony of at least two witnesses was required, and the evidence was required to be clear and decisive – circumstantial evidence was not admitted, as least in capital cases.

Also, witnesses were to be scrupulously cross-examined; with every fact favorable to the accused was to be brought forward, while everything that was against the accused was to be carefully sifted. In fact, there were cases in which the judges too often acted more as lawyers for the accused, than as impartial judges.

In one case, an eye-witness to a murder testified, “I saw a man pursuing another into a ruined building. I ran after him, and beheld the sword yet in his hand. It was reeking with blood, and the murdered man lay wallowing on the ground. I exclaimed, ‘Thou wicked man, who has committed this murder – I or thee? Alas, thy life is not in my power, for two witnesses are required

for conviction before a sentence of death can be pronounced.’ But he who know man’s thoughts will recompense the murderer of his neighbor.” The story [legend?] has it that, although the accused was released, divine vengeance overtook him, in that a viper bit him so that he died.

“Are these things so?”

The High Priest is asking Stephen to plead. Guilty or Not Guilty.

So, “Have you predicted the destruction of the Temple?” “Have you said that Jesus will change our customs and abolish our ceremonies and temple service?” “Have you actually spoken these blasphemous things against Moses and against God?”

Stephen could not give a “Yes” or “No” answer to questions like these. There was an element of truth in each of them, but a large amount of error all mixed together in the false accusations.

Enough is given to us here to give us a good idea of how Stephen met the First Charge, of speaking against the holy Temple, by

Instead of offering a defense, however, Stephen entered into a detailed description of the history of the nation. He shows how graciously God had dealt with them, and how ungraciously, by contrast, their fathers had responded to God. He shows that God is not confined to Jerusalem, or to the Temple, and he proves that God had many dealings with their fathers before Moses came, and that Moses foretold the coming of the Messiah.

Far from blaspheming the Temple, or undermining Moses, Stephen is establishing the Temple as the place where Jesus Christ is explained and taught. He is also establishing Moses as the prophet who took the lead in proclaiming Christ, as did all the prophets who succeeded him.

Stephen has not blasphemed the Temple. In fact, he understands what the Sanhedrin do not understand, that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of everything that the Temple stands for.

Stephen does not attempt to recount the entire history of Israel, but he does emphasize some important principles which will bear fruit among some who sit in the court, Saul of Tarsus for one.

To make the issue clear, Stephen provides an outline of certain events and principles from Jewish history.

He does not speak against the Temple, but *for* the Temple; because the Temple reveals the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Outline of Chapter 7

- 7:1-8, the call of Abram, when he lived in Ur and in Haran.
- 7:9-17, the history of Jacob and Joseph.
- 7:18,19, the persecution of the Jews in Egypt.
- 7:20-37, the history of Moses and the exodus from Egypt.
- 7:38-43, the rebellion and idolatry of the Jews in the wilderness.
- 7:44-46, the erection of the tabernacle in the wilderness, which continued until the time of David.
- 7:47-50, The temple built by Solomon.
- 7:51-53, Stephen's charge against the Jews of rebellion against God
- 7:54-60, the reaction of the Jews and Stephen's murder.

Acts 7:2

Acts 7:2 And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,

“Men, brethren” - A common Greek combination of *andre~* and *adel foi* (men + brethren), used as a single reference to an audience of common men.

In fact, *andre~* often appears in combination with other titles, such as ***andre~ aqhnaioi*** , translated into English, “Athenians,” not “men-Athenians” or ***andre~ + persai*** = “Persians.”

So we have in Luke 2:15, ***anqrwpoi poimene~*** for “shepherds.”

So, the NAS uses just “brethren.” Stephen recognizes the Sanhedrin as racial brethren; all

present are Jews. And there were probably quite a few other men present.

“Fathers” - A term of more honor for the priests, elders, and scribes; as such the Sanhedrin are members of the ruling body and the administrators of the Jewish community.

“hearken” = ἀκούω = imperative; “Listen; Give attention”

“THE GOD OF GLORY”

1 Cor. 2:7, 8, “But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the ages unto our glory. Which none of the princes of this age knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.

Jesus Christ is the “God of Glory. He is the revealed member of the Godhead. And it is the ministry of the Holy Spirit, during the church age, to glorify Jesus Christ.

John 16:13,14, “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.

One of the ways the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ is to edify Christians.

READ Eph. 3:13-21.

“appeared” – before there was a Temple, or even a Tabernacle, God, the Lord Jesus Christ, appeared; and it wasn't even in Palestine, but in Mesopotamia (Ur).

“to our father Abraham” – here was a man who was open to the Lord's approach. We say he was positive toward the Lord at the point of God consciousness.

It's important to understand at this point, that at the time of the Lord's appearance to Abraham, *there were no Jews upon the earth.* God's approach to Abraham had nothing to do with the Jews, because there weren't any.

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The human race was divided into three categories of races: Hamites, Japhethites, and Semites, the descendants of the sons of Noah. These were subdivided into many nations and ethnic groups. This had occurred at the time of the Tower of Babel incident.

But there were no Jews!

Stephen is reminding the Sanhedrin that the Jews are a new race of people, based on the faith of Abraham.

Gen. 15:16, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.”

But when God appeared to Abraham, he was a Gentile. He was not a Jew – at least not at first.

“when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran.”

The Chaldeans were a Semitic people – descended from Shem. They were a strong, tough-minded people, and they had a long and boisterous history. They were the Babylonians, Evil-Merodach, Nabo-Polassar, Nebuchadnezzar, etc., who were used by God to bring Israel and Judah under the 5th Cycle of discipline in the century from 710 BC to 586 BC.

Topic: Chaldea

Abraham was a Chaldean, but when he accepted Christ, God changed his race. He became a Jew. The Jewish race was founded on the principle of regeneration. And it is Stephen’s goal to make this clear to the men gathered in the council chamber.

Mesopotamia means “between the rivers.”

Acts 7:3

Acts 7:3 And said unto him, Get you out of your country, and from your kindred, and come into the land which I shall show you.

“GET YOU OUT”

READ Genesis 11:27 to 12:9

The call to Abraham, to come out of his homeland in Chaldea, was issued to him and his whole family, while they were still in Ur. There seems to have been only one call, although some commentators suggest there may have been two calls. This passage in Acts says that God spoke to

Abraham “when he was in Mesopotamia.” Gen. 12:1 says that “the Lord had said to Abram, get out of your country.” I think of this as an explanation for Terah’s family leaving Ur. Another reason to think this is that God said, “Get you out of your country...” Now, Abraham’s country was not Haran, but Chaldea, so this explanation holds.

“your country” – Ur of the Chaldees

Ur of the Chaldees and Haran are topics associated with verse 4.

Topic: UR

Topic: Chaldea

“THE LAND WHICH I WILL SHOW YOU”

Abraham obeyed the first command, “Get out of thy country.”

He disobeyed the second command, “Depart from your kindred.” Abraham had trouble with his family until they were out of the way. His father died, and later on, Lot moved to Sodom.

He disobeyed the third command, “Come into the land I shall show you.” The “land” that the Lord meant was Palestine, not Haran!

Acts 7:4

Acts 7:4 Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from there, when his father was dead, he moved into this land, wherein you now dwell.

Haran means “the dried up place.”

Topic: HARAN

“when his father was dead” – it took the death of his father to get Abraham, finally, to get moving again towards Canaan.

“he moved into this land”

Now Stephen is making the whole thing personal to his own generation of Jews. He is emphasizing that they have an amazing spiritual heritage.

“wherein you now dwell.”

God’s intention was that the Jews dwell in Canaan permanently, as part of their spiritual heritage. They didn’t profit from all the blessings that God

had for them, because they would not accept Christ. In fact, as Stephen will point out at the end of his speech, the Jewish leadership had been persecuting and murdering any of the prophets that foretold of Christ!

Stephen's voice here is another one that is warning of the coming chastisement to fall on the nation of Israel, the 5th cycle of discipline, which, as we know, was just over three decades away. In 70 AD, the Jews would once again be taken out of their land, this time to stay out until the Lord Jesus Christ returns to rule.

Acts 7:5

Acts 7:5 And he gave him no inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child.

“no inheritance in it” – inheritance = **kl hronomia** .

“not so much as to set his foot on” = **oude bhma podo**~ - “not even the stepping of a foot”.

The NASB “not even a foot of ground” is incorrect, though the English idiom used does convey the meaning.

From the original meaning of **bhma**, “pace or step,” comes the sense of a *step* considered as a raised place, or seat, a *platform reached by steps*, hence a *judgment-seat*. In fact, this is the only place in the New Testament where the earlier meaning of *step* is used; in all other places *judgment-seat* is the meaning of **bhma**.

Both Abraham and Jacob has small parcels of land in Canaan, burying places. The fact that Abraham was obliged to purchase burial space (Gen. 23:3-18), it is obvious that God had not given him an inheritance there.

Example from Ruth:

Ruth 4:7,8

Now this was the manner in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, to confirm all things: a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to

his neighbor; and this was a testimony in Israel.

Therefore, the kinsman said unto Boaz, But it for thyself. So he drew off his shoe.

The author of Ruth uses the word "formerly" to describe this custom, indicating that by the time of writing the ceremony of drawing off the shoe was no longer practiced.

From Keil and Delitzsch, "The custom itself, which existed among the Indians and the ancient Germans, arose from the fact that fixed property was taken possession of by treading upon the soil, and hence taking off the shoe and handing it to another was a symbol of the transfer of a possession or right of ownership.

Deut. 11:23, 24, “Then will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves. Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be.”

In this case, there was only a symbolic transfer of the rights to purchase a property, not a transfer of the land itself. The act of handing over the shoe to Boaz was undoubtedly designed to indicate visually to the elders that a formal agreement had been reached.

In Deuteronomy 25 the custom appears in a different light. If a man refused to perform his duty to his deceased brother's wife, the elders of the city were to remove his shoe and disgrace him publicly.

Deut. 25:7-10, “And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuses to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother. Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and if he stand to it, and say, I like not to take her; Then shall his brother's wife come

unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house. And his name shall be called in Israel, 'The house of him that hath his shoe loosed.'"

"yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession" - katascesin "a permanent possession." Refers to that which is held permanently, once it is grasped.

TOPIC: ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

But, even when Abraham had arrived in Canaan, he didn't stay there. Almost immediately there was a famine in the land; and Abraham, not having faith that God would sustain him, went on down into Egypt, and suffered through all the problems that that brought about.

Abraham used many human-viewpoint techniques to try to bring about by his own efforts what God had promised.

1. Made Eliezer his heir.
2. Made Lot his heir.
3. Had a son, Ishmael, by Hagar, to try to make him his heir.

In fact, it was more than 25 years before Abraham would begin to exercise real faith in God and begin to enjoy the blessings and rest that comes from casting one's burdens on the Lord.

Acts 7:6

Acts 7:6 And God spoke on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and treat them evil four hundred years.

"should sojourn" - estai paroikon, "shall be a sojourner". This is a word which describes someone living near one's home, but who is a stranger, or foreigner. It was used of someone who was a temporary resident without full rights of citizenship.

Acts 7:29, "Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Midian, where he begat two sons." Also, Acts 13:17.

The word "sojourner," or "stranger," is also used of Christians residing in this world while waiting for the next.

Eph. 2:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;"

1 Peter 1:17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judges according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:"

"in a strange land" – "in a land that belongs to someone else; an alien land"

"that they should bring them into bondage, and treat them evil four hundred years."

The quotation in this verse is from:

Gen. 15:13,14, "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years. And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance."

Moses said, in Exodus 12:40, that the time spent by Israel in the land of Egypt was 430 years.

Paul has the same number in Gal. 3:17, but he takes the 430 years to cover the period from the "covenant" to the giving of the "Law."

Gal. 3:17, "And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

This includes the period of time in Canaan from the declaration of the captivity until the birth of Isaac (30 years), plus the 60 years Isaac lived until the birth of Jacob, plus the 130 years that Jacob lived before moving to Egypt. Therefore, 430 – 220 = 210 years, the actual time the Jews were in Egypt.

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Stephen, however, is not trying to establish an exact chronology; he uses a round number, 400, which was common in the Bible, as well as in other ancient literature. Notable exceptions would be works written on chronological matters.

Acts 7:7

Acts 7:7 And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place.

“will I judge” – **krinw egw** – “will I punish”, which is how this word is often taken.

When a criminal is brought before a judge, the judge does three things: (1) he tries, or judges, the case; (2) he pronounces a judgment, or sentence; and (3) he applies the sentence. At different times, **krinw** signifies each of these things, with the meaning of the word to be determined by the context.

krima is used for “punish” in:

Rom. 13:1,2, “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves condemnation.”

The Egyptians were punished by the ten plagues, described in Exo. 7:19 to 12:30.

“and serve me in this place” – this phrase is not found in the quotation in Genesis 15. What comes closest is in God’s word to Moses, in Exodus 3:12, “Ye shall serve God upon this mountain.” This was Mount Horeb, where Moses was at the time.

Acts 7:8

Acts 7:8 And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs.

“And he gave him...” – the covenant was entirely a Grace gift from God to Abraham and his seed.

“**the covenant of circumcision**” – that is “the covenant of which the sign is circumcision.”

Topic: Circumcision

Isaac was the son of Abraham. He was born again and the inheritance and the promise passed through him.

Jacob was born again, so the promise passed through him, even though his twin Esau was the elder. Jacob was a Jew, Esau was not a Jew.

“**the twelve patriarchs**” – the heads of the 12 tribes of Israel, from Reuben to Benjamin.

The Lord treated all 12 sons of Jacob equally under Grace, even though, with the exception of Joseph and Benjamin, the 10 sons of Jacob were filled with envy and treated Joseph shamefully.

READ Rom. 9:1-13

Stephen is making the point here to the Sanhedrin that (1) the Jews are the children of the promise; (2) as such they are responsible to take God’s word to all of the other nations, and (3) they have failed miserably in carrying out God’s plan.

Acts 7:9

Acts 7:9 And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him,

The “patriarchs” are the 10 older brothers of Joseph (excluding Benjamin).

“**moved with envy**”

Joseph’s brothers were envious of Joseph’s favorite place with their father, and of his position over them, even though he was younger. Also, they despised him because of the dreams he related of his future elevation over them.

Of the seven worst sins – those which God abominates – three are sins of mental attitude, sins caused by certain types of thinking. Envy, or jealousy, is a product of arrogance, or pride.

Topic: Jealousy (see also Sin, Mental Attitude)

“**But God was with him,**” – the plan of God cannot be derailed by persecuting a believer, or even by murdering a believer.

Notice here how the principle of Rom 8:28 was carried out in the ancient world. The persecution

of Joseph not only did not hinder God's plan, it *furthered* that plan, by protecting Joseph and sending him into the best place he could be for God to use him!

Acts 7:10

Acts 7:10 And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.

“And delivered him out of all his afflictions”

God's plan is greater than our problems, greater than our sufferings. Joseph had many trials and frustrations. Most of his suffering was undeserved. Exception: when he trusted the cup-bearer, rather than God, to get him out of prison, it seems he sinned in relying on man and not God.

But God, in grace, delivered him from *all* his afflictions.

Topic: Suffering

”and he gave him favor” – **carī** - - “grace”.

Joseph did not qualify for any blessing from God or special favor. What God did was entirely apart from any merit on Joseph's part.

Joseph had no experience or background that would recommend him to Pharaoh. He had only the character and wisdom developed from a life of trusting God, but this was the best preparation for the challenges of being prime minister of Egypt.

“and wisdom” – the application of Bible truth to experience.

“governor”= “prime minister”. You are not promoted until God the Father promotes you.

Josh. 3:7, “And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.

Acts 7:11

Acts 7:11 Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance.

“now there came a dearth”

Gen. 41:54, “And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.”

The famine was in all the lands of the surrounding area, but Stephen's narrative is just concerned directly with Canaan and Egypt.

“no sustenance” – **cortasmata** – originally meaning food for animals (because the root word is “grass”), but later meaning food for men and animals. From the Greek to Latin *hortus* (garden) to English horticulture.

Matt. 5:6, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.”

“They shall be filled” is **cortasqhsontai**, a very strong and graphic word, originally applied to the feeding and fattening of animals in a stall. In Revelation 19:11, it is used of the filling of the birds with the flesh of God's enemies. Also of the multitudes fed with the loaves and fishes (Matt. 14:20; Mark 8:8; Luke 9:17). It is very appropriate to Matt. 5:6 as expressing the complete satisfaction of spiritual hunger and thirst.

However, here in Acts, the reference is to physical food alone.

Acts 7:12

Acts 7:12 But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first.

“corn” – **sitia** – in general, means “grain,” such as wheat, barley; was not used for “maize” or “corn,” as we understand it.. Hence, NASB is less misleading to today's reader.

Gen. 42:1,2, “Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another? And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt; get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die.”

“**he sent our fathers first**” – that is, Jacob stayed in Canaan and send the 11 brothers of Joseph to Egypt to buy grain.

Now, it is already clear that there was famine in Egypt, too, just as much as in Canaan and the other countries in the region. So Jacob was aware that grain had been laid up in Egypt, and either he knew that it was available for sale, or he was desperate enough to hope that it would be. Of course, he did not know that, by the grace of God, Joseph was responsible for this state of affairs.

Acts 7:13

Acts 7:13 And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred were made known unto Pharaoh.

“**and at the second time**” – Genesis 43, 44, and 45.

“**Joseph’s kindred were made known unto Pharaoh.**”

The Egyptians already knew that Joseph was a Hebrew; Potiphar’s wife called him “that Hebrew servant.” when she was accusing him to her husband, and the chief butler called him “a Hebrew” when he told Pharaoh about him. (Gen. 39:17; 41:12) Here, Pharaoh was informed that the visiting Hebrews were Joseph’s relatives.

Acts 7:14

Acts 7:14 Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls.

Now Gen. 46:27 states that “all the souls of the house of Jacob, who came into Egypt, were threescore and ten (70), so there is a discrepancy between that and Stephen’s statement. The question is, is it possible for these accounts to be reconciled? Well, possibly, and with difficulty, if at all.

The answer is that Stephen was undoubtedly following the Septuagint version of the Old Testament. In that version, Gen. 46:27 reads “But the sons of Joseph who were with him in Egypt were nine souls; all the souls of the house of Jacob which came with Jacob into Egypt were seventy-

five souls.” This number is made up of the 66 mentioned in Gen. 46:26, plus the nine in verse 27.

The difference between the original Hebrew and the Septuagint Greek translation is that the Septuagint mentions descendants of Joseph who are not recorded by Moses. The names of the sons of Ephraim and Manasseh were Ashriel, Machir, Selophehad, Peresh (sons of Manasseh); and Shuthelah (son of Ephraim). Although we don’t know why, the Septuagint translators inserted these, and the facts agree with the historical record.

One of the great examples of the grace of God and the plan of God is the fact that this small family of 75 people would number more than 2 million adults by the time of the Exodus, though for most of that time they lived in conditions of slavery.

Acts 7:15

Acts 7:15 So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers,

After a period of time, Jacob and all of his sons, died. This refers to Jacob, Joseph, and the 11 brothers of Joseph. The intention here is to show that, by a certain time, that whole generation had passed away. (Gen. 49:33; 50:26; Exo. 1:6)

The Glory of God

The following is a selection of comments on the word "glory", (doksos), as used in the Bible.

Glory is used to describe the Essence of God: ROM. 3:23; EPH. 1:17; DEUT. 5:24; PS. 21:5; MT. 16:27; LK. 2:9.

The Lord Jesus Christ is said to possess glory: MK. 10:37.

Glory is used to describe the edification structure in the believer's soul: EPH. 3:21; COL. 1:27; 1 PET. 1:8; 2 THESS. 2:14. As a believer receives doctrine, he reflects the Glory of God.

A wife is said to be the glory of her husband: 1 COR. 11:7, 15.

The Grace of God is described as his glory: EPH. 1:6.

The provision of God's grace is also called wealth, "the riches of His glory": EPH. 1:18; 3:16; PHIL. 4:19.

There is a glory in the future which is beyond human knowledge, namely, the glory of eternity: 1 TIM. 3:16; HEB. 2:10; 1 PET. 5:10; 2 PET. 1:3.

Human glamour is described as glory, though often in the negative sense: 1 PET. 1:24; PHIL. 3:19; MT. 6:29.

Glory is used to describe the wonders of the universe: 1 COR. 15:40,41.

Glory is used to describe the resurrection body of the believer: 1 COR. 15:43; 2 THESS. 2:14.

The word glory is associated with the presentation of the Church to the Lord Jesus Christ: HEB. 2:10; MT. 19:28; 24:30; 25:31.

The Shekinah Glory

from the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia

The word "shekinah" is not found in the Bible, but is used in rabbinic literature to signify God's presence. In reaction to Hellenism and paganism, Judaism attempted on the one hand to preserve the biblical notion of God's presence while on the other hand emphasizing the vast gulf between the deity and mankind.

The promise that God would dwell with mankind goes back to Noah's blessing in Gen. 9:27: "God enlarge Japheth, may he [God] dwell in the tents of Shem" (cf. RSV "and let him [Japheth] dwell ..."). The Aramaic renders this verse: "He will cause his Shekinah to dwell in the dwelling-place of Shem."

Many passages in the Pentateuch affirm that the Lord came to dwell among His people Israel. First He revealed His glory-cloud (Exo. 13:21f), which represented His presence and protection in the wilderness. The cloud came to rest at Mt. Sinai and formed a canopy for Moses as he communed with Yahweh and received the commandments (Exo. 24:15-18).

The purpose of the revelation about the construction of the TABERNACLE and the commencement of the priestly service (Exo. 25-31) was to ensure that Israel might be blessed by

the divine presence in its midst: "And let them make a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. According to all that I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and all of its furniture, so you shall make it" (Exo. 25:8f).

The divine presence was a guarantee of the covenant: "And I will dwell among the people of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them forth out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them; I am the Lord their God" (Exo. 29:45f; cf. Lev. 26:11f). Only the concept of Shekinah can explain the details of Israel's cultic, moral, and civil laws. By these means God taught Israel how to live as a holy and clean people in His presence (cf. Nu. 5:3).

When the "tabernacle" of the Lord was completed, it was crowned with the descent of the glory-cloud. The Pentateuch stresses that all Israel saw the cloud covering the tabernacle as evidence of the presence of the Lord's glory (Ex. 40:34-38; Lev. 9:23f). Israel believed that the divine presence was particularly associated with the Most Holy Place, where Yahweh dwelt between the cherubim above the ark (1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 6:2; Psalm 80:1). The Shekinah signified God's presence and protection; thus when the ark was carried forward an early war hymn exclaimed, "Arise, O Lord and let thy enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee"; and when it rested the response was, "Return, O Lord, to the ten thousand thousands of Israel" (Num. 10:35f). Later in Israel's history the location of the ark signified the place of the divine Shekinah — first at Shiloh (1 Sam. 4:4) and later in Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6:12-19). Yahweh revealed His glorious presence again through a cloud at the dedication of the Solomonic TEMPLE (1 Kings 8:10f). Upon this occasion Solomon declared, "The Lord has set the sun in the heavens, but has said that he would dwell in thick darkness. I have built thee an exalted house, a place for thee to dwell in for ever" (1 Kings 8:12f).

Closely related to the motif of the PRESENCE OF GOD are other motifs: "the angel of the Lord" (cf. Ex. 14:19; 23:20-23; 33:1-3; Isa. 63:9; see ANGEL II.C), the "glory" of the Lord (Ex. 40:34-

38; Ezk. 1:28; 10:18f; 11:22f), the “word” (Isa. 55:10f), “wisdom” (Prov. 8), and “Spirit” of the Lord (Ezk. 2:2; 11:24). These reveal God’s presence and the means of His judgment and deliverance.

When Judaism came into contact with Hellenism (3rd cent B.C.), it developed a theological vocabulary. Instead of referring directly to God by His names and titles, it spoke of Him in circumlocutions. The concept of Shekinah proved useful as an in-between way of speaking about God as Spirit, wisdom, the word, etc.

In the Mishnah, Midrashim, and Talmud, the Shekinah motif shows a theological rather than an apologetic development. The Shekinah, like the rays of the sun, is at many places at the same time (T.B. Sanhedrin 39a) and more present at some places than others. This explains Yahweh’s special presence at the burning bush, Mt. Sinai, the tabernacle, and the temple. The analogy also clarifies Israel’s special status, since the Shekinah was more real to the Israelites than to the Gentiles (T.B. Berakoth 7a; Shabbath 22b; Midr Nu. Rabbah vii.8) even after they had gone into exile (T.B. Megillah 29a). Moreover, the radiance of the Shekinah is more authentic wherever anyone practices the law of God (T.B. Menahoth 43b), or good works (T.B. Baba Bathra 10a) or is in need of the divine presence (T.B. Shabbath 12b; Sotah 17a). The Shekinah resists the proud, rebellious, sinful, and lazy (T.B. Berakoth 43b; Hagigah 16a; Shabbath 30b; Sotah 42a), but rests in large measure on the saintly, wise, leaders, affluent(!), and outstanding Jews (T.B. Shabbath 92a; Sotah 48b; Sukkah 28). Even the proselytes could find a special place (T.B. Shabbath 31a). Related designations of the Shekinah are “the Word”, “the Spirit,” “the Glory,” “the Light,” and “the wings of the Shekinah.” From the Tannaitic and Amoraic literature it is apparent that these designations of the Shekinah refer to none other than the Lord. As Urbach has observed, “a survey of all the passages referring to the Shekina leaves no doubt that the Shekina is no ‘hypostasis’ and has no separate existence alongside the Deity” (p. 63).

This is different in Christianity, however, where the NT presents the Christ as the Word, Glory, and

Light of God, and also speaks of the Spirit of God. The Shekinah motif helps to explain the oneness and separateness within the Godhead. The NT authors employed this language to explain the mystery of the incarnation (see PERSON OF CHRIST) and the indwelling of the HOLY SPIRIT (II). At Jesus’ birth the shepherds saw the “glory” of the Lord (Lk. 2:9). John observed Jesus’ glory and identified Him with the (“word”) of God: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father” (Jn. 1:14). At Jesus’ baptism the Holy Spirit descended and “remained on him” (v 32). The Messiah’s glory was especially transparent on the mount of transfiguration (Lk. 9:29; cf. 2 Pet. 1:16–18). In the context of giving sight to a blind beggar, Jesus Himself declared, “I am the light of the world” (Jn. 9:5). Shortly before His death Jesus prayed the high priestly prayer, in which He stated that the Son shares in the glory of the Father and prayed that believers may also share in this glory (17:22).

In his epistles Paul used the concept of “dwelling” (Shekinah) to set forth the mystery of the incarnation (the dwelling of God in human flesh; cf. Col. 1:19; 2:9). The “glory” of the Shekinah rests on all those who are in Christ (e.g., Rom. 9:23; Eph. 1:18; 3:16; Col. 1:11, 27). Jesus is “the Lord of glory” (1 Cor. 2:8). The “glory” of the incarnate Christ has been greatly magnified in His Resurrection (Rom. 6:4). Through the Spirit, all who are in Christ already share in the benefits of the risen Christ in anticipation of His glorious appearing (cf. Rom. 8:15–18; 2 Cor. 1:20–22; Eph. 1:13f). Paul stated the Christian hope thus: “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:17f).

The association of Jesus with the Shekinah is also apparent elsewhere in the NT. Paul saw the glory of the resurrected Jesus and was blinded by His brightness (Acts 9:3–9; 22:6–11; 26:12–18). He. 1:3 speaks of God’s supreme revelation in Jesus, who “reflects the glory of God and bears the very

stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by the word of his power.” Jas. 2:1 addresses the Christian community as those who “hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.”

The presence of the Holy Spirit is also a representation of the Shekinah. The Spirit descended and remained on Jesus (Jn. 1:33). At Pentecost the Spirit came down and rested on the 120 disciples: “And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each of them” (Acts 2:3, emphasis supplied).

The NT is clearly set against the Jewish background. The NT authors attributed to the Spirit and to the Son the glory associated with the Shekinah. Jesus is the $\text{me}^{\text{mra}} \text{ } ^{\text{r}}$ (“Word”), filled with the Spirit of God and full of glory, and He reflects the glory of God. The Holy Spirit bestows the glory of God on all who are filled with the Spirit, and thus they are gloriously renewed in the image of God (see Kline).

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W. A. VANGEMEREN

The Abrahamic Covenant

by Randall Radic, PhD

Genesis 12:1ff. read, "The Lord had said to Abram, Leave your country, your people and your fathers household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." This is the beginning of the covenant with Abram.

One portion of Shem's descendants eventually moved into Ur of the Chaldees (Iraq of present day). And here, even today, still exist the remains of a temple that was dedicated to the moon god, Nanna (su-en, in Sumerian), and his wife, Nin-gal (the great lady). And Ur of the Chaldees of the ancient world was a sacred city, a city consecrated to the worship of Nanna and Nin-gal. And all the

citizens of Ur were sacred servants of the moon god.

Within this city, Terah, a descendant of Shem, lived and worked, according to tradition, as an idol-maker. Terah had three sons: Nahor, Abram, and Haran. Haran had a son called Lot before he died. Thus, Terah and his family were moon worshippers. In some manner, "the God of glory" revealed Himself to Abram in Ur of the Chaldees. At this point, God commanded Abram to leave Ur. For having discovered the Living God, Elohim, Abram had to separate himself from the moon worshippers. And Abram responded to his God.

However, Abram was commanded to leave his family and his father behind, for Terah had not believed in the revealed God. But Terah and Lot went with Abram. Terah accompanied Abram perhaps because of family ties, but more probably because of impulse. And Lot accompanied Abram because part of the promise from God included a child. But Abram was 75 and Sarai 65 at this time. Now why didn't God select a young couple in the prime of their sexuality? To demonstrate Who and What He was and is. "God specifically chose Abram and Sarai because they could not have children. And this demonstrates that helplessness is the way to faith." [134] Thus, Abram carried Lot along to assist God in keeping His promise, i.e., Abram thought he had discovered a reasonable method to facilitate the fulfillment of the promise. For both Abram and Sarai were unable to propagate due to the sexual decline of age.

And as Abram traveled up the Fertile Crescent, Terah became lonely for his god, Nanna. For this reason, they went to the city Haran rather than Canaan. Eventually, Terah died in Haran. Then Abram went to Canaan. And Canaan was a land of idolatry and religious sexual perversions, including bestiality, and homosexuality. While in Canaan, both Lot and Abram were successful in business and both became wealthy. However, they argued and went separate ways.

Abram at this juncture was discouraged; for he saw no hope of the promise of a child being fulfilled. Then he has an idea: he decided to adopt one of his servants, Eliezer. At this point,

God again entered. God said, in Genesis 15:4, "This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir." And here the blood covenant between God and Abram is "cut." Genesis 15:18 reads, "On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates -- the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites." Thus, Abram became the covenant representative of all the descendants that would come from him.

The other representative was God. Genesis 15:1 reads, "Do not be afraid Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." God here, then, gave Himself as the sign of the covenant. For remember, each party of the covenant would give an emblem of their strength. But God has no physical sword or physical shield to give -- for God is God and does not carry or require implements. Yet He gives Himself to Abram as a shield. This is awesome, striking, and grand in its implications. This is beyond words. This is nonpareil! And remember, each representative would then walk through the blood of the animals. Here, though, God places Abram in a supernatural sleep; for Abram sees what transpires.

And God, as a great furnace of fire, moved through the pieces. Fantastic! This is God walking through the halved carcasses of the slain animals and their blood. God commands Abram to rest in Himself. For God takes the place of both representatives in the covenant. God Himself took the place of Abram! God took an oath by Himself "that in blessing I will bless you." God, then, is the sole representative. Thus, God entered into covenant with Himself in Abram's behalf, and Abram became the inheritor of the covenant. God took the initiative, and Abram understood in faith. That is all that Abram could do -- for he is resting. Abram did absolutely nothing but believe! The ramifications are extravagant, to say the least.

A question dramatically imposes itself in one's mind: Why would God do such a thing? Why? Hebrews 6:17 provides the answer: "Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his

purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged." In other words, God performed this remarkable act to demonstrate Who He is, and how He operates: He is unconditional Love, and He functions on the basis of Grace. There is no linear logic, no worded thought that can express what this implies to mankind -- it can only be acknowledged and felt.

The emotions of any believer should demand an explosive burst of fanfare at this moment; one should stand, arms outspread, and bellow in response to God's Love and Graciousness. This is irresistible, if one comprehends it! For here is the definitive verdict! This is our inheritance from God. And as believers in the Church Age we have an even more intimate relationship with God; for we are in Christ, and He in us! For we are the Bride of Christ. We are wedded into the very family of God. [135]

Although Abram, at this juncture, had come to that point of rest in God and response to God's word, Abram still has much to learn about faith and the essence of a promise from YAHWEH. For when a famine descended upon Canaan, Abram hurriedly left and traveled to Egypt. He failed to trust God to provide for him in Canaan (Abram failed, but he is not a failure, for his faith is growing and God is growing Abram up.)

And as they entered Egypt, Abram notified Sarai that since she was so beautiful the King of Egypt would desire her for his own; thus, Abram advised Sarai that she was to pretend that they were brother and sister because Abram refused to risk death just because his wife was so desirable. In effect, then, Abram morally abandoned his wife. Abram has misunderstood the meaning of faith, and the meaning of the promise concerning the son he is to beget. Abram defines the word promise as God instructing him, Abram, in how to achieve the promise. Abram interpreted this as "you, Abram, must find a way to have a son." Abram did not understand that God made the promise, therefore

God must fulfill the promise. And how is up to God and Gods omnipotence.

And Sarai, too, has misunderstood the promise and its method of fulfillment. For she decides to help God. She presents Abram with a servant girl, and the servant girl, Hagar, is to bear Abrams child. At the birth of the child, the child was placed in Sarai's lap (a type of adoption), and then Sarai presented the child to the Abram. This child, then, was to be the fulfillment of the promise from God. This was Ishmael. And Ishmael was told that he was the covenant child, until he was 13 years old.

At this juncture, Abram is 99 and Sarai is 89, and Abram has forgotten about the fulfillment of the promise, for he has the son, Ishmael. Then God entered and re-iterated the promise, but this time God stated that Sarai would bear the child. At this point, Abram started to laugh -- a laugh that began deep in his belly and worked its way up to a full-blown bellowing guffaw. Have a son? Me and Sarai? Ha, ha, ha, ha! I'm 99 and she is 89, there is no possibility. Abram thought God was crazy. And God, as it were, laughed with Abram; for He declared that Sarai that would have a child. And they were to call the child Isaac (the sound of laughter). God laughed at human helplessness and reasonable human attempts to resolve impossible obstacles. For with God, "nothing is impossible."

At this juncture, then, Abram had arrived at the position of total helplessness. For God had allowed Abram and Sarai to try every possible method of fulfilling the promise. And then, then, when every possible avenue had been explored, and they were way too old to even think of ever having a child of their own, then God said, "Now you are ready. Now you have no one and nothing to trust in but Me." Gods power, then, must now fulfill the promise.

Circumcision and Name Change

Now God changes Abrams name. For remember, that in the ancient covenant ritual each nation would alter its name to include the others name. Abram meant "exalted father." Abraham meant "the father of a multitude." And this name change was a statement of faith. For to change your name to "the father of a multitude" at age 99 is either

sheer insanity, or sheer faith in the power of God to effect the name change.

And it is interesting to note that the median sound of Yahweh is "aha," and that Abraham is formed by adding the "aha" infix, as is Sarah, being changed from Sarai by changing the suffix. And more, YAHWEH Himself became known as "the God of Abraham." The covenant continues. [136]

Moreover, from the physical/sexual death of Abraham and Sarah came life; in other words, Abraham and Sarah had to be sexually and physically resurrected to have a child. Again, a picture of the Cross to come. YAHWEH swallowed up death through resurrected or, in this case rejuvenated, life. Just as Christ swallowed up the spiritual and physical death of mankind on the Cross and by means of resurrection.

The sign or seal of the covenant was circumcision, which is the cutting away of the foreskin of the male phallus. And at the juncture that this cutting took place, Abraham was 99 years of age. This cutting or circumcision represented not only the sexual/physical rejuvenation of Abraham, but also commemorated the establishment of a new race, the Jews. For before the cutting, Abraham was an Akkadian, through Shem. And remember, that Abraham was the representative of all that were in him; thus every Jewish male thereafter was to be circumcised -- the living scar or seal of the covenant. Thus, every time a Jewish male urinates, he is to be reminded of the covenant with God, the Grace of God, the Promises of God, and Gods power to fulfill those promises. For to Abraham, Gods promise had more power and more meaning than his own sexual impotence. In other words, Gods promise became more corporal to Abraham than the reality of his physical existence.

And it is interesting to note that circumcision was customary among many ancient peoples: for the Egyptians it was a hygienic precaution; for the Africans it represented a tribal initiation; to others it was used as a substitute for human sacrifice, an offering to the gods. [137]

The prophet Jeremiah, in Jer. 6:10, reminded the Jews of the covenant God that they had forgotten about: "To whom shall I communicate Gods

word? To whom shall I give a warning that they will listen? Behold, their ears are uncircumcised. They will not listen. Behold, the word of the Lord has become a reproach to them. They have no delight in it."

Furthermore, in Jer. 9:25, God Himself attempted to remind the Jews of the covenant: "Behold, the days are coming, decrees the Lord, that I will punish all who are circumcised and yet uncircumcised." And in Deut. 10:16, "Moses said, Therefore circumcise your heart and resist no more." And according to Ex. 12:48, no Jew could participate in the Passover Feast without having been circumcised.

"The Hebrews deemed themselves invincible, the Chosen People, by virtue of the Yahwic mark of a covenant cut in the sacred flesh of their infancy." [138 Indeed, the location where Joshua circumcised the Jewish males in Canaan was thereafter "known as GILGIL, the Circle, in allusion to the denuded corona and circular scar of circumcision: And Yahweh said to Joshua, This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." [139]

Moreover, the phrase, "bridegroom of blood," is the traditional name for every newly circumcised Jewish infant. And this phrase, CHATHAN DAMIM, has its provenance in the words spoken by Moses' wife, Zipporah, in Exodus 4:25, when she called him "a bloody bridegroom," and then abandoned him.

The Covenant Meal

Genesis 18 narrates the Covenant meal. Three men arrived to Abraham's tent, one of which was the Lord Himself. As the meal took place, Sarah was secreted, listening from behind the curtain to what was taking place. And remember, Sarah is about 90 now. And as the Lord declared, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son. Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. Abraham and Sarah were already old and well advanced in years and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure? Then the Lord said to Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh and

say, Will I really have a child, now that I am old?" (Genesis 18:10-13)

And Hebrews 11:11 states, "By faith Abraham, even though he was past the age -- and Sarah herself was barren -- was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise." So both Abraham and Sarah came to believe in God's promise, and God's power. And for this to occur, i.e., the physical rejuvenation necessary for pregnancy, Sarah would have had to become young once again. And, indeed, she did. For in Genesis 20, Abraham again ventured into Egypt, Gerar to be specific, and again Abraham stated that Sarah was his sister. And because she was so beautiful, King Abimelech took her. In other words, a woman of about 95 years of age has been so restored to youth, that she is the most beautiful woman in Egypt.

Isaac, then, was born. Isaac was the first son of Abraham, and Jesus Christ was the last. And YAHWEH, God, has laughed at mankind's helplessness.

Provisions of the Abrahamic Covenant

The Abrahamic Covenant constantly refers to "the land" and Abraham's "descendants." And the term for "descendants" may also be translated "seed." Who, then, are the descendants of Abraham? All of the Semitic peoples would certainly be included in this term, including the Arabs. However, the covenant refers to a specific group; for God is selective.

Isaac had two sons: Esau and Jacob. However, Jacob is the bearer of the promise. Jacob emerges into twelve tribes, but only one of those tribes is the specific bearer of the covenant promise: Judah. The promise would come through Judah, and His name shall be Shiloh, which means the "worthy one."

So within Israel there comes to be "a remnant." There is, of course, the collective Israel, those who descended from Abraham; but there are also those who are "like Abraham." This group consists of those who have "faith" in God and the promise. The remnant are those who are the true Israel, those who have faith. They have a faith, a heart

that comes from God; and true Israel also has the blood of Abraham in their veins.

Matthew 3:9 reads, "And do not think you can say to yourselves, We have Abraham as our father. I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham." Here, then, John the Baptist told the collective Israel that they were not true Israel. In other words, John the Baptist said prove that you are the children of Abraham -- do the works of Abraham, i.e., have faith. John 8:33ff. reads, "They answered him, We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free? Jesus replied, I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin... If you were Abraham's children, said Jesus, then you would do the things Abraham did... You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your fathers desire." Our Lord, then, is stating that these Jews are Israelites, they are the descendants of Abraham, but they are not really true Israel, even though the blood of Abraham flows in their veins. So a very fine distinction is being drawn.

And in Luke 19:9, our Lord made the following statement: "Jesus said to him, Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham." Thus, Christ said that Zacchaeus heart was like Abraham's: a lifestyle of love and of salvation, and faith.

And Paul, in Romans 2:28, said, "A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a mans praise is not from men, but from God." Paul said, then, that a real Jew is one by faith like Abraham.

Gal. 3:6ff. states, "Consider Abraham: He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness. Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham." A son of Abraham, then, has nothing to do with the blood in ones veins, but everything to do with what is in the heart.

Then, in Gal. 3:26,29 Paul is speaking to Jews and Gentiles: "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized

into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Who, then, is a descendant of Abraham? Anyone who believes in Christ. Thus, anyone who believes in Christ is an heir of the promise that God made to Abraham. Paul is insisting, then, that the covenant is for both Jew and Gentile.

Who is the seed? Gal. 3:16,17 provide the answer: "The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say and to seeds, meaning many people, but and to your seed, meaning one person, who is Christ." Christ is the seed. And all those in Him become the descendants of Abraham. So what does that make you, the reader? If you are in Christ, a believer, then you are related directly back to Abraham, and you are true Israel or Abraham's offspring. Not by blood, but by faith. Thus, in effect, you are on every page of the Bible. Again, not by blood, but by faith.

So all those in Christ are blessed. And the word blessing means "empowered, and successful" in body, mind, spirit and thought. Thus, when the Church Age believer is filled with the Spirit, this believer is blessed or empowered with success in every way. For "through you (Abraham) all nations of the world will be blessed." (Gen. 12:3)

For Gal. 3:13 states plainly, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree. He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit." So your receiving of the Holy Spirit was the promise that God promised to Abraham in Genesis 12. Then, when you believe in Christ, you are an heir of the promise. Thus, you also may be "like Abraham" and walk with God, and express and receive agape love. So if you are in Christ, then you are in the real family of God, a descendant of Abraham. Again, not by blood, but by faith.

What of the "land?" When Adam fell, he ceded rulership of the earth to Satan. However, when the end comes, man will again be lord of the earth. Thus, the "land" becomes salient of what is to

come. The "land" is a shadow of something to come. The receiving of the land was part of a covenant; Deut. 5:32,33, state that if the covenant was obeyed they would live long in the land. Deut. 6:3, states that if they obey God, they will live in the land. Deut. 8:19,20, state that if they fall into idolatry, they will lose the land. Deut. 11:13-15, state that if they obey, then good weather will be theirs, if not, they will perish from the land. Thus, the land was conditioned by obedience. The land was a reflection of their hearts. They could not sin against God and stay in the land. For the land is conditional; for the land is that place where faith in God exists and persists. Thus, when the Jews became apostate, they began to lose the land; for, again, it is a "land" of faith.

And Romans 4:13 states that Abraham was to inherit the whole world. And according to Hebrews 11:10, Abraham was looking beyond the "land" to the "city that God would build." God, then, gave Abraham the "land" in a geographical sense, but Abraham saw beyond the shadow "land," the geographical land, to "the new heaven and the new earth." And remember, the "land" was given to Abraham as an "everlasting possession." This, then, would be a land in Gods scope, and of Gods making. Thus, Abraham finally understood Gods promise. He saw the "everlasting" aspect of the promise; and he looked forward to the real land that was promised, not just the physical/geographical land of Canaan. So Abraham saw beyond the shadow land, the one made of dust and dirt, to the land that was promised. For the covenant spoke of a covenant land, a heavenly land.

The geographical/physical/shadow land of the covenant was given to Israel, according to Joshua

21:44,45; I Chronicles 18:3-8; and II Chronicles 8:7,8. Yet the real land of the promise, the heavenly land, the "everlasting" land, was that which Abraham saw in the future. And for this reason, he lived in a tent, because he "believed in the promise of God," and he believed "that what God had promised, He is able to do." Thus, those scholars that maintain that the land portion of the covenant has yet to be fulfilled are correct, as long as they comprehend that the portion that remains to be fulfilled is the "everlasting" portion. And Abraham saw this, and believed it.

The "everlasting" city or land that Abraham awaited is the New Jerusalem of Revelation 21. This Holy City is described as a "city in the clouds," [140] one that hangs above the earth. And this Holy City is that one "made by God," and it is specifically for the Jews, those that comprise the true Israel (Jews by blood and by faith). For it is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant. And this is why Abraham resided in a tent while living here on earth; for Abraham knew that his permanent residence, the "everlasting" aspect of his covenant with God, was still to come.

Abraham's inheritance of "the whole world," found in Galatians 4:13, refers to the inheritance of Abraham's seed, i.e., those who though not Jewish by blood, are Abraham's seed by faith. These, then, will inherit the "new earth" of Rev. 21:1, which reads, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away; and there was no longer any sea."

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Section I, Lesson 117	a Grace Notes study

Lesson 17 Quiz

The following questions relate to your study of this lesson.

To answer a question, type your response in the space provided after the word "Answer:". A question may be True/False, multiple choice, fill in the blank, or short answer type.

The last question requires you to write one or two paragraphs in "essay" form. Use the space provided; it will expand to accommodate your response.

You have choices about sending the quiz back to Grace Notes.

- If you received an email file containing the quiz, you can use the REPLY feature of your e-mail application to open the quiz. Enter your answers in the reply message. Then SEND the message to Grace Notes.
- You can enter your answers on these pages, then send the whole file back to Grace Notes as a file attachment. As an alternative,
- After you answer the questions here, copy and paste the whole list of questions into a new MS Word document; then, send the new file to Grace Notes as an attachment. The new file will, of course, be much smaller than this main file.
- Finally, you can print the Quiz pages on your printer and send your response back to Grace Notes in the regular mail. If you do this, send the mail to:

Grace Notes

% Warren Doud

1705 Aggie Lane

Austin, Texas 78757 USA

Whichever transmission method you use, when Grace Notes receives your completed Quiz, the next lesson will be sent to you, by the same means you received this one. EXCEPT: when you have sent in the FINAL QUIZ, we will send your certificate to you, by regular mail.

This Quiz may have Multiple Choice, True/False, Fill-in-the-Blank, and Short Answer questions. Type your responses after the word "Answer:" following each question. The last question is an essay question and requires you to write a few sentences. Type your response following the questions.

Quiz

1. At the time of Stephen's inquisition, most of the members of the Sanhedrin were Pharisees.

[True/False]

Answer:

2. It was the _____ who were usually very scrupulous in giving benefit of the doubt to an accused person.

Answer:

3. Everything that the Temple stands for is fulfilled by _____.

Answer:

4. In what scripture passage do we read Paul's prayer that Christians will understand the "breadth, length, depth, and height" of divine wisdom.

Answer:

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5. Where did Abraham live before he and his family moved to Haran?

Answer:

6. When Abraham moved into the promised land, he immediately inherited the whole area, as God had promised. [True/False]

Answer:

7. What was the manner of confirming an agreement or land transaction in Palestine in the days of the judges?

Answer:

8. Lot was Abraham's legitimate heir. [True/False]

Answer:

9. In what scripture passage is a wife said to be the "glory of her husband"?

Answer:

10. The sign, or seal, of the covenant between God and Abraham, was _____.

Answer:

End of Quiz
