

Sample - from Book #1 for web

Chapter 3

Abraham, father of many nations, Meets Jesus

What is our clue to unraveling the mysteries surrounding the birth of the Christ-centered faith? God has given us many hints, but probably the most impressive was the discovery of a stone slab that unlocked the secrets of pre-historic civilizations.

What do the New Testament

and the Rosetta Stone

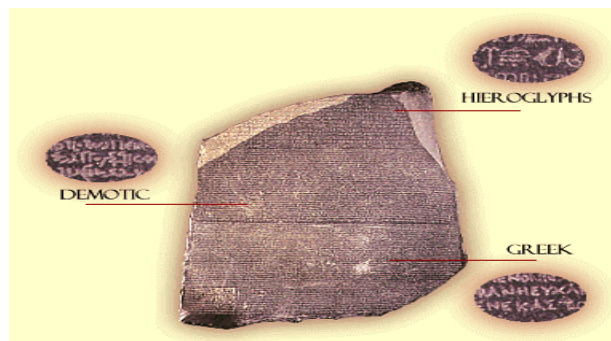
have in common?

Just as The Rosetta Stone is our key to ancient history, so the New Testament is our key to unlocking the mysteries of the Old Testament. What is the **“Rosetta stone”**?

Much of the history of past ages had been the subject of speculation until 1799 when Thomas Young and Jean Champollion unearthed a curious slab of rock while digging in the ruins of ancient Egypt. That slab contained three inscriptions, in hieroglyphics and Demotic and Greek.

Champollion got a hunch that the three transcripts all told the same story. That hunch proved to be true. Using the Greek transcript as the key, he was able to decipher and unlock the other records of preceding Egyptian civilizations. The Greek message on that “Rosetta Stone” became the key to unlocking the mysteries locked in the earlier transcripts.

The Greek New Testament, given to us by Jesus and the apostles, is our “Rosetta



Stone” to unlocking the secrets concealed in the Old Testament.

Old Testament mystery, “which for ages past was kept hidden in God” is now explained through the eyes of Jesus and the apostles. Ephesians 3:9. Colossians 1:25,26.

Where you arrive depends upon where you begin.

God’s template is found in the book of Genesis – the book of beginnings. Begin at any other point and you contribute to the further splintering of the Christian church.

Our central text to the mystery of the New Covenant is found in Genesis chapter 15, verse *When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking fire pot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces.*

Your King James version of the Bible refers to the appearance as, *a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.*

You notice that **two symbols**, representing the Godhead, appeared on the scene. The **"smoking furnace"** represented God the Father, while the **"burning lamp"** symbolized Jesus, man's divine intercessor. Those symbols passed between the pieces of the offering that Abraham had brought, thus confirming a covenant. The **lamp**, or light, that lights every man that comes into the world (John 1:9), now stood as Abraham's representative on this most solemn occasion, when an everlasting plan, or agreement, was about to be finalized regarding the eternal future of the human race.

Let us consider a question. If Christ, the Son of God, was destined to take the place of sinful man, and die the death of the cross, was it not only reasonable that He should also be party to an agreement which would require His life?

And a second question: How can we know that the "burning lamp" represented Jesus Christ? **Is there Scriptural evidence to indicate that such was the case?**

In Hebrews 9, verses 15 and 16, the covenant under discussion is identified as the **New Covenant** or the **Eternal Covenant** that Christ **“confirmed”** by the shedding of His blood. Then the writer of Hebrews goes on to identify Christ not only as the One who validated that covenant, but also as its author!

*For this reason **Christ is the mediator of a new covenant**, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance - now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins they committed under the first covenant. **In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living.** (Emphasis supplied).*

The pre-Moses part of the Old Testament was not only pre-Sinai, but also pre Old Covenant

Let us keep in mind that the word "covenant" is synonymous with the word "testament", or "agreement" or contract. Also, let's not forget that the pre-Moses part of the Old Testament was also pre-Old Covenant. The covenant of faith given to Abraham had its roots in Genesis 3:15 and spans human history from the Garden of Eden to the earth restored.

Also, let us not forget that the **Mosaic (Old Covenant)** was parenthetical and inserted into the same time frame as the covenant God made with Abraham, but it only covered the time span from the giving of the law at Sinai, to the cross of Christ. Galatians 3:19. You will see this illustrated on the chart I have placed at the end of this lesson.

But, someone may ask; I thought that the Abrahamic or New Covenant did not take effect until after Christ died on the cross! Let us examine that view carefully.

Hebrews 9:15,16 tells us that the New (or Abrahamic) Covenant did not take full effect **until the One who made it died.**

Who was it that died for the sins of mankind? Don't Christians agree that it was Jesus Christ, who is also called the "LIGHT OF THE WORLD"? If only His death could validate that agreement, then it had to be He who authored it!

Let me repeat; because it was Christ's death that validated the New Covenant, it had to be He who co-authored that covenant with God the Father! Isn't that what we just read?

Think for a minute, **When** did Jesus Christ present His Will, or agreement, or Covenant to mankind? There was only one such encounter recorded in Scripture. It was when the **Burning Lamp** appeared with the **Smoking Furnace** while Abraham was asleep under the power of God's presence. Review Genesis chapter 15.

Christ, the co-author of the Eternal Covenant, later confirmed and validated it by His death . This is proof that the "burning lamp" which appeared with the "Smoking Furnace", represented our Savior as man's intercessor. Christ, the promised Redeemer, had to be there as the author of that covenant, or His death could not have validated it. John 8:12.

The other symbol of a "smoking furnace," or a "smoking fire pot" represented God the Father who spoke for the Godhead. As we shall see later, God is often referred to as a burning or purifying fire. Centuries later, God spoke to Moses out of a burning bush. In Exodus 19, when God appeared to give Moses the 10 commandments on Mount Sinai, we read that the mountain was covered with smoke as it burned like a **smoking furnace**. At that event, the burning lamp, or light, was not present! By contrast, the Father and the

Son together brought the Abrahamic contract into existence. Then, many years later the Son confirmed that Everlasting Covenant by His death on the cross.

With Abraham asleep, and with *both* God the Father, and God the Son present, the setting was complete for drawing up the terms of a flawless covenant on behalf of all mankind. Abraham, the symbol of humanity, was under divine anesthetic and for all practical purposes, was out of the ceremonies.

Jesus Christ, (the burning lamp), was present as “*the Light of the world*”. John 8:12. He stood not only as the author of His own will and testament, but as man’s advocate. God the Father, standing for the Godhead, was present in the symbol of the furnace.

In keeping with the custom of the day (it is amazing to see how far God will go to accommodate our customs) we read that,

a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp passed between those pieces.

This means that God the Father, and **Jesus Christ who took man's place**, together hallowed and accepted Abraham's sacrifice by their presence. But the key to this whole story is that the covenant was finalized and "signed" by Divinity on both sides. God the Father "signed on" for the Godhead, while Christ "signed" for humanity. When Abraham woke up, the ceremonies were completed, and the covenant (contract) that Abraham had hoped to participate in, was an accomplished fact! All he had to do was to accept its provisions by faith. That is the reason it was called a better covenant. Hebrews 8:6.

Christ’s blood alone would **“confirm”**
this covenant at Calvary, exactly
according to God’s prophetic timetable!

The promise of salvation had been offered by God the father, and accepted by, and through God the Son. Abraham, representing mankind, was only required to believe that Christ alone could pay the price for our salvation! His blood alone would redeem us! We need only believe. By believing God, as Abraham did, we also receive **the shield of faith**. The righteousness of Christ is then credited to us, and we become heirs of salvation, and joint-heirs with Christ. Romans 8:15,16. Life giving “believing” is not works, it is a gift of God.

In order to become betrothed to Jesus, the Bridegroom (the one who made the covenant of salvation with the Father), we are simply asked to enter into this covenant by accepting its reality, and saying, “Yes, Lord, I receive your proposal!” This is what it means to believe. Jesus Christ offers to the believer, the wedding garment that is woven in the loom of heaven. It is the spotless robe of His righteousness. He does not say to His betrothed, “with all my earthly goods do I thee endow.” His gift to His betrothed is His “exceeding great reward” which means that he is making her not only the heir of salvation, but a joint heir with Himself, of heaven itself! What an exceeding great

reward!

The Everlasting Covenant was a covenant made by God the Father representing the Godhead, and Jesus Christ representing mankind. This is in stark contrast to the Mosaic Covenant where later, Moses a mere man, represented Israel.

To enter into the full benefits of the Everlasting Covenant, Abraham was not required to perform in any way. He did not promise to do anything except to believe that God could and would do what He said. What was Abraham's part in the covenant? He brought the blood sacrifice, indicating his trust in the coming Savior, and then,

Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness. Genesis 15:6.

This was a graphic picture of the NEW COVENANT OF FAITH, that is based 100% on the **gift** of faith in the God who promised to be Abraham's shield. Thus, the ABRAHAMIC COVENANT was structured totally on faith in what God will do for mankind. Abraham's part was simply to come and lay himself out before the Lord unconditionally, and allow God to work a divine miracle in his heart. Abraham was at rest, while God did the work. When Jesus was asked,

What must we do to do the work God requires?

He answered, *The work of God is this: to believe in the One He has sent.* John 6:28,29.

Now, by way of review, WHY WERE THOSE PROMISES "BETTER"?

But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.

*For if there had been nothing wrong with that **first covenant**, no place would have been sought for **another**.* Hebrews 8:6,7.

Definition: The terms "Old" and "New" do not refer to the order in which those covenants were presented by God. Rather, they refer to the order in which they were finalized, or "confirmed", one by the blood of animals, the other by the blood of Christ when He died on the cross.

Why was it said that the Abrahamic Covenant was founded on better promises?

Is it not because all the promises included in this covenant were made by God the Father and God the Son? ***It did not contain any promises made by man.*** Because both parties to this covenant were part of the Godhead, it was flawless, and because it was flawless it can span the whole history of the human race from Eden to the New Earth. The fatal flaw in Israel's commitment was their presumption that they did not need a divine mediator. They thought they could make and accomplish the agreement themselves, thus demonstrating their own righteousness. Israel's ego proved to be their "Achille's heel". Their fatal flaw came later when they modified their stance, still insisting they could keep the law, but this time "**with God's help**". They never did get out of God's way and trust solely in the righteousness of Christ as Abraham did.

The heart of the New and Everlasting Covenant:

I will be your Shield means: I will be your Savior
 I will be your Deliverer.
 I will be your faith.
 I will be your righteousness.

I will be your Exceeding great Reward, means:.

I will make you my joint heir.
 I will make you heir of heaven itself.
 I will seat you with Me in my throne!

Because both parties to the Everlasting Covenant were part of the Godhead, *IT WAS FLAWLESS*, and because it was flawless, it spans the whole of human history from Eden lost, to Eden restored.

Herald: “Now that you have had the opportunity to review the agreement, or covenant, that Abraham received from God, I trust that you will be better able to evaluate the impact his life had on his posterity. Briefly, gentlemen, what were your reactions to the material presented?”

Reporter Hunt: “I was surprised to realize that Jesus Christ was present when God gave His covenant to Abraham. Any reference I ever heard to the subject always gave me the impression that only God the Father was present. I have never heard Christ brought into the picture, nor have I heard anyone comment on what the lamp in Genesis 15:17 might represented either.”

Professor Clarity: “How easy it is to read Genesis 15, without seeing the main picture! Now that the “smoking furnace” and the “burning lamp” have been placed in clear focus through comparison with other Scriptures, there is no question regarding what they represented. John 1:1-4 identifies Jesus as the **Word** and the **Light**. King David, in Psalm 119:105, and other Old and New Testament writers knew that Jesus was the Light of the world. What a thrilling revelation! I must admit that I have not previously connected Hebrews 9:15-17 with the giving of the covenant in Genesis 15.”

Rabbi Benjamin: “The concept that Christ appeared to Abraham would throw a real ‘monkey wrench’ into some of the doctrines that we, as Jews, have held for generations.”

Reporter Hunt: “I see that our understanding of this covenant is the factor that brings Christendom to the Great Divide, those who believe that the provisions of the Abrahamic

Covenant are complete, and those who believe in that covenant plus something else.”

Reporter Holmes: “Double talk has always turned me off! Don’t Christians preach that Abraham believed the Lord, and that on the basis of faith alone, God declared him righteous? Then the same people turn around and tell you that unless you do this, or that, in addition to trusting God, He will throw you into hell. And to make it worse, each organization has its own list of what you must add to faith, to make it stick! Why don’t you guys get your act together? Maybe then you might have some impact on the skeptical world out there.

Or perhaps you people confuse the real faith, which I understand, is a gift of God, with the weak wishy-washy believism that people try to generate in their own heads. Isn’t there a difference between humanly generated faith and the divine gift of faith that can do the impossible? I’ve been checking my Bible this week and it seems to me, a mere reporter, that you guys get hung up on the surface of your religion as though there is nothing under that wrapping. How do you explain Luke 22:32, Ephesians 2:8 and 6:16?”

Rabbi Benjamin: “Excuse me, my friends, but I’m really trying to figure this out myself. As a Messianic Jew I do not yet understand the balances in this whole ‘faith or works’ controversy. The mentality of my people, who remain committed to trying to satisfy the demands of the 10-commandment law, is that if the law were removed, anarchy would result. We think that this ‘easy believing’ must be balanced with the observance of rules and certain symbolic rituals to impress the direction of the new walk on our minds. Yet I admit that no human has ever satisfied the law. But surely I cannot be made righteous solely by the promises of another, can I? Do you mean that God will accept me as fit for His heavenly kingdom simply because I identify fully with Christ who represents me before God? Frankly, this boggles my mind! Won’t I also be rewarded on the basis of my own good works?”

Herald: “Let us be patient, and take one step at a time. May I remind you that we are here to search for truth as it is in God’s Word. Our goal is unity and harmony based on the Word of God. You have become fragmented because you have used the Bible to defend pre-conceived ideas, rather than to discover truth. It is important not only to know what you personally believe, but **why** you believe it. Each person will have to answer to God on his own behalf, so tend your own garden well. I promise you that as we explore the Word of God, the answers you seek will become self-evident. I will look forward to next week when we shall review the life of one of your favorite heroes.”