

GENESIS

A THEOLOGICAL COMMENTARY

THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB

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INTRODUCTION

I have long wanted to do a commentary on the book of Genesis mainly because it contains three of the most fundamental ideas taught in the Bible: Creation, Sin, and the Covenant with Abraham.

There are several ways to approach a commentary. Instead of the usual approach (which in our day is called a “scientific” method), I wanted to explore the precise way that the message of Genesis is carefully woven into our Christian faith, starting from the very beginning of the story and following its expansion in the theology of the New Testament writers. I’ve always known that Genesis is a book for Christians, since both Jesus and the Apostles constantly use its foundational concepts in their teachings. Note, for example, how Jesus calls God “the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” (Matthew 22:32) Therefore it must be approached in a certain way in order to get the right message from it – the message that Jesus wants us to learn from it.

What is a commentary?

A “commentary” is one person’s views on the meaning of a portion of the Scripture. It differs from a dictionary of the Bible, or an atlas, or a history, or other kinds of works, primarily because it is so individualistic, so dependent on the writer’s opinion (however educated!) and his personal interpretation of the Scripture.

As you can imagine, the value of a commentary depends a great deal on the character as well as the training of the author. Not everyone can write an atlas, or a dictionary; for those works you need a great deal of data, all of which can be easily verified by others in the field. But *anybody* can give their opinions on the meaning of the Bible – in fact lots of people do that every day, they just don’t write down their opinions. Probably most people’s opinions aren’t worth the preserving. A commentator *has* written his thoughts down; but keep in mind that he is just as open to criticism as others who voice their opinions, for the same reasons. He could be introducing his own cultural values into the Biblical context, or avoiding key issues in the text and focusing on secondary points, or any number of hermeneutical errors. And, more often than you might have realized, the commentator’s moral character could very easily transform the Bible from God’s Word to man’s false religion. The question, therefore, is this: how does a commentator prove that his opinions are, in fact, correct and accurately reflect what the text is saying? How can we tell whether to take the commentator’s statements seriously?

That brings us to the central problem of interpreting the Bible: there is so much going on in this book, such an endless stream of seemingly unrelated ideas, that the Bible could appear to support pretty much *any* opinion, however wild and fanciful and contrary to Church tradition. In order to allay the fears of the reader, I must confess at this point that I believe the Bible to be the Word of God and nothing less, with whatever legitimate ramifications that concept entails. And a short summary of my theological beliefs can be

found in the Apostles' Creed. I firmly accept what the historical Church has believed about the Bible's truth, and I firmly reject heresies and cults and their anti-Christ opinions.

Even within the context of a conservative theological persuasion there is still room for learning and growing in one's understanding of Scripture. So before one presumes to make a commentary on a book of the Bible, one has to have a number of years of experience handling the Word and grasping the central message of the book. It should only be done by someone whose "delight is in the Law of the LORD, and on his Law he meditates day and night." (Psalm 1:2) It should not be done by a novice, or even by someone in the intermediary stages of his spiritual growth. A commentator, in order to bring out the message of a book like Genesis, has to see the big picture into which Genesis fits, and how it supports and helps explain the rest of the Bible.

Simply put, a commentary brings out the meaning of a Biblical text. But accomplishing such an apparently simple task is fraught with responsibility. The first hurdle to cross is the text itself, since (in the case of Genesis) it was originally written in Hebrew, which requires careful translation methods to render it accurately. Next, one has to consider what this event meant to the people within the story: God brought the message to them first. The commentator next must determine what kinds of connections this historic event had with not only Israel's ensuing history but also into the Church age. Here is a particularly thorny problem to solve, because there are many ways to *read into* the event all kinds of doctrines and lessons that may not have been part of the original story at all. Many commentaries fail at this point because of their eagerness to "tie together" the whole Bible from beginning to end, using favorite doctrines or cultural values that might actually be foreign to the original event.

To do a good commentary, therefore, means that one has to have certain tools on the table that will insure success. Determining what those tools should be makes the difference between success and failure. Another way of saying this is that one has to have the right *hermeneutic* in order to see the true meaning of the Bible. If our hermeneutic assumes that *we* are the center of history and that even the Bible must conform to our own particular historical context, then we will naturally fail to see the timeless nature of God's world and will therefore "fall short of the glory of God."

That's one tool. Another is what the Apostles give us. If we don't understand the crucial role that the Apostles played in understanding the *entire* Bible, then Genesis in particular will become a historically useless book for us moderns.

Where we come out at the end depends completely on whether we use all the correct tools to interpret the book. Just as in building a house the builder needs the correct tools for the job, so in interpreting Genesis we have to use the correct hermeneutical principles if we want to see Genesis in context of the entire Bible. The responsible commentator knows, for example, that Genesis is setting the stage for the true *Heir of Abraham* (see Galatians 3:16) who will be the *Designated Heir* for the rest of the Family of God – that is, those who are of the faith of their forefather Abraham, whether Jew or Gentile. He can see the spiritual and theological significance of each step of every story in Genesis working towards this grand spiritual goal. And when the author is done with his

commentary, it will be obvious to the reader that his work does indeed create the theological foundation for the work of the Christ – the Heir of the Covenant.

You will find, the more commentaries you study, that this spiritually responsible approach is not always taken. This is a difficult task and requires an honest soul.¹

What it's not

As I mentioned, there are different viable ways to write a commentary. This is a theological commentary, which means it won't fit the stereotype of most other modern commentaries.

For example, many authors write their commentaries for the academic community. Academics have certain standards that they use to measure the worth of a commentary: for example, they require that the author show a certain amount of awareness of, and response to, existing works in the field. This assures them that the author is going to address (what the academic community feels) are the relevant issues of a Biblical book (which to them, unfortunately, center on non-Biblical elements).

I will leave the appeasing of the academic community to others more attuned to that area. My purpose here is to put into the hands of teachers of the Bible the spiritual food that they need for Christ's sheep. "Feed my sheep." (John 21:17) And for that we already have the standards for laying out a commentary: what Christ gave his disciples. Unfortunately the academic community, and the authors who have written for them, don't usually dwell on giving spiritual food to the sheep; they are more concerned with peripheral issues. Important though they may be for a pastor's background training, they are still secondary in importance. If they were of primary importance, the Lord and his Apostles would have discussed them (which they didn't!). Therefore the works of modern academics have not been of much use to me for this particular endeavor.

The same thing can be said about spending time and effort on analyzing the effects of the Ancient Near East – the area of Mesopotamia in Abraham's time, the culture and languages, the history and geography and archaeological findings. At times the Biblical story mentions such things when there is need. When it does, we can draw on the insights of others who have investigated those areas more thoroughly. But for the most part, the Bible's stories center on what all human beings already know and deal with every day of their lives. The Patriarchs were not unique in that respect. They wore clothing and ate food and traveled and communicated and dealt with life's problems as we all do. The fact that they did it with different materials doesn't put them in a separate universe from us. The story of Genesis is universal (or in terms of theology, *normative*) and is therefore a story that we can all identify with. So again, this commentary is not going to focus on peripheral issues but on the central idea, the theology, that God wants all of his children to learn.

¹ Even the opinions of spiritually honest people can be widely divergent. See the Appendix for examples of various (otherwise very dependable!) commentators' views on the story of Abraham and Abimelech – Genesis 20.

Another common way to do a commentary is called *exegesis*. Exegesis is the process of working through a passage, generally verse by verse, bringing out the meanings of the words in their original language, breaking apart the sentences grammatically and literarily and reconstructing them to assess their true meaning, bringing in relevant historical and geographical data, and coming to a conclusion on what that verse means in its totality. Then we move to the next verse. In effect this is an analytical approach and very much deductive: the meaning comes only from the ingredients of the text itself, no more and no less than what a particular text actually *says*. Nowadays it's called a "scientific analysis" of the text, using accepted academic tools.

In one way this Genesis commentary is exegetical, but not in the scientific sense. We will be going through the stories, not verse-by-verse necessarily, but from concept to concept. Our purpose is to dig out the significant *ideas* in each story. And we will leave the "critical analysis" (a common description of today's scientific approach to the Bible) to others. I feel that since the Bible's own hermeneutic is not "scientific" but theological (note how Jesus and the Apostles handled OT stories), we have the authoritative precedent to follow its lead and use the same methodology. Besides, a scientific analysis by definition can only be done by scholars, since only they have been thoroughly trained in linguistics and history and archaeology. But the Bible wasn't originally written by scholars, nor did God intend the book for only scholars.² The hermeneutic that Jesus and the Apostles taught us can be, and *ought* to be, mastered by anybody who is a child of God without the need to resort to academic tools. Scholars are not a source of revelation for the rest of us; we are not required to sit at their feet to learn the Word of God. All we need is the Bible and God's Spirit opening it up to us.³

Genesis is a theology

A "theology" is a specialized form of literature. There are different kinds of literature – fiction, history, poetry, etc. – and each kind is designed to convey its message in a way that will illuminate something unique about it, and elicit a particular response from the reader. For a theology, what we are after is *knowledge about God* (theology: *theos* – God; *logos* – knowledge, science).

For that matter, the purpose of the entire Bible is to teach us something about God; that is its primary goal. For some strange reason (is it our modern consumer attitude toward life in general?) our generation has lost this perspective of the Bible, to the point that we have turned almost everything in the book around to center on ourselves. The words "God" and "Lord" and even "Jesus" have been almost emptied of their Biblical meanings, so that they have no more import than Wal-Mart or Amazon. God is a mysterious source of the things that *we* want – the focus is on the consumer and whether

² The examples in Scripture of scholars using a scientific approach to Scripture resulted in confusion concerning the text, not clarification – see the judgment that Jesus made concerning the scribes and Pharisees.

³ With one caveat, of course: that certain scholars are concerned enough to translate the Bible into our mother tongue. Even then, we should find the means, if possible, to check on the accuracy of their work.

God is taking care of our immediate needs. But that's not the Bible's purpose. God gave it to us as a revelation of himself; it brings us into his presence so that we can see him clearly. That *vision of God* is the dynamic content of our religion, not the things that we get from him.

Genesis in particular has been abused by modern consumers. God (a mysterious spiritual being) repeatedly brings some person in history out on center stage, and we read about what happens in their lives as they listen to, and follow, this God. We imagine ourselves in their places, and even pass judgment on their actions based on what we would have done in their situation. It is difficult to separate man's part of the story from what we are learning about God. But until we do, not only will we draw the wrong conclusions (our condemnations of, for instance, Abraham's actions are entirely wrong) but our vision of God will be no better than that of a false religion. Unfortunately we are so used to looking for ourselves when we read the Bible that we miss the picture of God almost completely.

To get the right lesson from Genesis, we have to put man aside for the time being and look at *what God did* – his works, his ways, his actions that reveal his names and character. For example, there is *nothing* in the first chapter of Genesis about what man does except what God told him to do – to reproduce and rule. Everything in that chapter reveals God in some way, fundamental concepts that explain why he does what he does throughout the rest of Scripture. You will find, if you take this theological approach to every chapter, that the text shows us all sorts of things about God and very little about man (usually his sins!).

Probably the easiest way to make sure we read the book as a theology is to keep asking questions of the text: what does this passage say about God's character and works? What is God doing here? What unique situation is he creating in the world of men? Why did it require the hand of God to happen? Let's take one of the stories as an example. On the left in the following chart are the things that God did in Genesis 22, and on the right are the things that Abraham and Isaac did.

WHAT GOD DID	WHAT ABRAHAM, ISAAC DID
God tested Abraham (22:1)	Abraham answered God
God said to Abraham (22:1)	Abraham took son, servants, supplies
God said (22:2)	Abraham instructed his servants
The mountain I will tell you about (22:2)	Abraham took supplies to Mt. Moriah
The place God told him about (22:3)	Isaac asked about sacrifice
God himself will provide (22:8)	Abraham testified to God's providing
The place God told him about (22:9)	Abraham bound his son on altar
The angel of the LORD called out (22:11)	

The LORD stopped the sacrifice (22:12)	
The LORD provided a ram (22:13)	Abraham sacrificed ram
The LORD will provide on this mountain (22:14)	
The LORD called a second time (22:15)	
The LORD swore by himself (22:16)	
The LORD will bless Abraham (22:17)	
The LORD will bless his descendants (22:17)	Abraham and Isaac returned home

As we put together a list, or data, about God in this passage, the theological categories start taking shape. You will notice that God is driving this entire situation. He set up the sacrifice of Isaac, he instructed Abraham about what to do, he decided when to stop Abraham from killing his son, he provided the ram, he explained the whole theological situation to Abraham, and he promised to bless Abraham (he had definite things in mind) for his obedience. All that Abraham did was follow through with what he was told. The whole thing was a learning process about God, for Abraham as it should also be for us. With this story we now have another essential building block of our theology that will explain the sacrificial system that Israel later used in its entire history, and that the Christian Church now depends on.

Each story in Genesis contributes a new piece of the developing picture about what God is doing with Abraham and his Family. What is taking shaping here is the theology of the Covenant with Abraham. So we have to keep a list of the things we're learning, integrate them together, and understand their relationship with each other; and then at the end we have the full development of the Covenant concept that will help us understand what God did with Israel in the rest of the Old Testament, and the things Christ did in his ministry within the Church. The rest of the Bible depends on this Covenant theology from Genesis.

And yet Genesis doesn't *look* like a theology. It has, in fact, history and poetry and revelation and doctrine – it's a collection of different types of literature. But we have to keep in mind that our idea of a "theology" is a rather modern concept. After centuries of experimentation, scholars have decided that a theology has to have a certain form to qualify for the genre – which, of course, Genesis doesn't have because it was written thousands of years ago. But the book has the *function* of a theology, if not the look that we are more familiar with. The purpose of Scripture was always to reveal God, to teach us data about him, by using many literary forms. There are *theological* lessons in the stories, worked into the flow of history, woven into the character development. The author meant for the readers to focus on that theology, and he made it easier to understand and remember by integrating the revelation of God with the history and characters. What we must not do, however, is miss the theology in the text and turn Genesis into simply a series of literary forms, as if the *telling* of those stories (like a

modern drama, based on myth or legend, it doesn't matter) was the point. Or even worse – that Genesis is a collection of moralistic lessons. The ultimate author, after all, is God himself, and he used these events and literary forms to reveal the truth about himself.

What God gives Abraham, he gives to us all

For some inexplicable reason most students think that Genesis (and most of the Old Testament, for that matter) is for the Jews, not for Christians. Their reasoning is based on the fact that it was written 3500 years ago and describes a totally foreign culture, and it's not immediately apparent to us what use it might be for our spiritual life. Jesus occasionally referred to the Genesis history, but he seemed to have a completely different agenda for the Church.

That is a totally wrong approach. People who think this are deliberately ignoring (or they simply can't see) clear theological statements in the teachings of both Jesus and his Apostles. We will be looking at these teachings in the Commentary. For now, let's look at one concept that puts the entire Bible – including the Gospel of Christ – into the proper perspective.

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, *to the Jew first and also to the Greek*. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.” (Romans 1:16-17)

The Gospel of Christ is nothing less than the *fulfillment* of the entire Old Testament religion. In fact the Jews would not have accepted anything less than that from their Messiah; they would have rejected (rightly so!) any religion that was something other than the one they already believed in. In other words, the Jews in Jesus' day (those with true faith, at any rate) wanted to hear about the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant.

And that's precisely what Jesus gave them. He offered them the *spiritual* fulfillment of the Covenant Promises. Of course that's what confused the Pharisees so badly – they were expecting a permanent form of the physical system they were so used to. But the work of Christ *was* the Abrahamic Covenant come to fruition as God had always intended, for those who could see it. And that's the key to interpreting the lessons from Genesis: they find their spiritual fulfillment in the special work that Jesus did in his ministry, which God taught to even the Patriarchs from the very beginning. Now those ancient lessons are being offered to us as well.

But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a Heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city. (Hebrews 11:16)

The Patriarchs saw by faith the spiritual world of God – the same Kingdom to which the great Heir is going to take all the children of God, in fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant. This is the real inheritance of the Son that will be distributed to all the adopted sons of God. Suddenly Genesis takes on a new aspect in Christ's ministry: it's not just a series of stories about strangers in a far-away place back in ancient times. Abraham is *our* spiritual father; we, if we have Abraham's faith, are his spiritual children; and the

Treasure that was given to Abraham will be ours if we can prove our genealogy back to him. And the Treasure, which is meant for all of God's children, is described in detail for us in Genesis. When the time comes, Jesus will come to us and take us to meet Father Abraham (Matthew 8:11) to receive our inheritance. Genesis, therefore, is the Will and Testament of Abraham to his entire Family.

Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. (Galatians 3:7-9)

The relationship is the key

And that brings us to a very critical concept: Genesis is all about *relationship*. There are relationships on various levels across the book, and they are all patterned after the eternal relationship within the Family of the Trinity. The kind of relationship, the persons involved, the experiences between them, the benefits, the responsibilities of each – they are like concentric circles moving from the highest spiritual level to the lowest level on earth, fully revealing God's grand scheme of the Family from Heaven to earth.

- The fundamental relationship in Genesis is between God and Abraham. God called Abraham his "friend" (Isaiah 41:8, see also 2 Chronicles 20:7 and James 2:23) – which means that the two of them worked together on the project of the Covenant. God and Abraham bared their hearts to each other. They shared their lives with each other, they shared the same House, the same hope, the Treasures of Heaven. In this fundamental relationship we learn about the essence of God's heart and mind and life as he relates to his own Son. This is not a master/servant relationship, but a Father/son relationship.
- Another level of relationship in Genesis is between Abraham and other people. Relatives found out that, simply by being part of Abraham's family – even extended family – they received extraordinary blessings from Abraham's God. And those who were not related to Abraham were treated as outsiders, denied the Family inheritance, and often were on the opposing side in the war between God's people and the rest of the world. So it's extremely important to be related to Abraham if one wants anything from God. Later in the history of Israel, it was critical to prove one's descent from Abraham if he/she wanted to be involved in the blessings of the Promised Land. Those who couldn't prove it were cast out; only true legal heirs, for example, could inherit land and take advantage of the work of the Temple. Therefore, we know that we're getting the right point of Genesis when we look at ourselves and ask whether *we* are Abraham's heirs. God gives nothing to anybody unless they can prove their relationship to their spiritual father in the faith.

- The concept of God relating to someone as his Son is sharpened to a fine point later on in the story of Israel: God refers to the entire Nation as “my Firstborn son.” (Exodus 4:22) He is ready to pull the descendants of Abraham out of Egypt, form them into a Nation, and take them to the Promised Land, where he will finalize the Covenant made with their forefather Abraham. In other words, he had in mind all along to treat Abraham and his Family as his Son, with all the rights and privileges involved in that special relationship. The unfolding of that relationship of Father/Son and its facets is described across all the Genesis stories.
- But relationship is found on a deeper level in Genesis: there were not only physical heirs but also spiritual heirs. God promised Abraham an eternal treasure that some of the family were not given rights to – Ishmael, for example, and Esau, even though they were firstborn sons. In other words, just because someone is physically descended from Abraham doesn’t mean they will receive the eternal Covenant Promises; the Family itself followed two different tracks in this world (as Paul explains in Galatians 4).
- Now let’s back up one step further and see a greater relationship in the story. When God related to Abraham as Heir of the Covenant, and insisted that only Abraham’s descendants had the right to the Inheritance of the Covenant Promises – putting the entire relationship in terms of Family, and Father/son – what we’re really seeing here is the eternal relationship between the Father in Heaven and his Eternal Son as it cast an image (or “shadow,” as Hebrews 8:5 puts it) upon earth. *This Trinity relationship* describes how God wants to relate to Abraham and his Family. This is what Paul meant when he said that Abraham’s real “Seed” is Christ, the Designated Heir of the entire Family of God. In the end, the Father loves the eternal Son who will take all of Abraham’s spiritual descendants back to Heaven with him to live in his Father’s House.

The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his Seed. Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “and to your Seed,” meaning one person, who is Christ. (Galatians 3:16, NIV)⁴

In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. (John 14:2-3)

These relationships that are described in Genesis teach us what to expect from God – both those inside the Family and those who are outside. Here is the real value of the Bible: it reveals the true God to all of mankind and the “rules,” so to speak, of any relationship we may have with him. So in order to read Genesis as a theology, we have to keep two questions in mind: *first*, what has God promised to Abraham and his Family? *Second*, who precisely are the members of Abraham’s Family? The answers to these questions are given to us in Genesis, and exemplified throughout the rest of the Bible.

⁴ The Greek word here is σπέρμα, which is literally “seed.” The NIV translated it correctly.

How does one use this commentary?

I have chosen not to insert the text of the Biblical chapters into the commentary as most other commentaries will, because of two reasons: first, copyright issues; second, to avoid expanding the size of the commentary at least a fourth again larger than it is. I felt that you would want to read the Scripture yourself, using whatever version you wish, before you turn to my thoughts on the chapters you are studying.

And that is the second thing to keep in mind when you're using this commentary. These are my thoughts based on great deal of personal study.⁵ But they are, after all, *my* thoughts. In order to get the most out of any passage in Scripture, you first should ask the LORD to teach *you* what it means before you turn to someone else's work. The Bible is open to all of the children of God; this is part of the Inheritance that we've received by becoming Christians. God speaks to each of us now; we all live by faith and therefore hear the voice of the LORD. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." (John 10:27) It's one of the signs that we've been truly born again into eternal life and a living hope.

And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 31:33-34)

The reason you might want to read what I have to say is that God doesn't teach all of his truth to all of his children in the same way. Many Christians don't have the time or opportunity to give the Scriptures much deep thought; others do. I can save you about forty years of hard work. And part of the paradigm of being a son or daughter of God is that we are willing to *learn* from the Father, a process that requires humility, hard work, willingness, discipline, time and effort. By design of the King, the older shall teach the younger, and the more experienced are responsible to lead the less experienced, in Christ's Church. Hence the emphasis in Scripture on teaching, particularly the Father teaching his children.

You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. (Deuteronomy 11:18-19)

You will find that I didn't include much of the material that is usually included in most other commentaries. I felt you could look up that material if you wish – in fact, it would be a good idea to have other books on hand. Through other sources you can learn

⁵ Having said that, I still feel that I have not done justice to the book. The project has taken far longer than I first imagined; there are massive themes here and an unanticipated complexity within the stories and across the rest of the Bible. But hopefully I have turned the investigation around and headed it in the right direction, and others will come after me to fill in the picture with fullness.

about the geography, the archaeology, the culture, the languages, the history of the Ancient Near East, the nations involved, and anything you may want to learn about the pagan religions that prevailed during those times. All that is interesting as background material, but it really has little to nothing to do with my goal here.

You should (ideally) just start at the beginning and simply follow the story of the Covenant from beginning to end, since the separate elements of the Covenant came together across the span of the lives of the Patriarchs. If you start in the middle, you will miss a lot of what has already transpired, and you may not appreciate what a particular story is giving you from its special place in the history of the Patriarchs. That's not to say that you couldn't eventually piece it all together in the end, but it may take you more time figuring out the point of the Covenant system if you study the stories in a non-sequential manner.

And if you get lost in the details, be sure to make use of the summary sections where I tie together the things that we've covered so far in each Patriarch's history.

Just remember that Genesis is about the Abrahamic Covenant. For this reason, take special advantage of the passages that I refer to from the rest of the Bible – they all look back to Genesis for their spiritual foundation. Look for the connections between Genesis and, for example, the fulfillments of the Covenant in Israel's history as it unfolds in the rest of the Old Testament. Those things will be obvious. And even though it may not look so obvious how the New Testament also looks to Genesis, take the Apostles' word for it that it's true. Think deeply about what Jesus did in the Gospels; it's for a good reason that the Gospel of Matthew starts out with the words, "This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the *son of Abraham*." (Matthew 1:1) And that Jesus says of Zacchaeus, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a *son of Abraham*." (Luke 19:9) In all of his works on earth, Jesus revealed himself to be the Designated Heir who distributed the Covenant blessings to the rest of the Family of Abraham – which is the central theme of Genesis.

And of course that foundation also extends to the letters of the Apostles who claimed that Gentiles were also "grafted into the tree of *Abraham*" and given the inheritance rights of sons of God. This puts all the "promises in Christ Jesus" in a new light.

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.
(2 Corinthians 1:20)

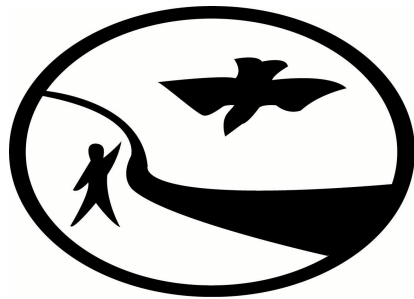
Both Jew and Gentile who become believers through Christ Jesus are joined together into one Body and are destined to be lifted up into the Father's presence as his Son to know Abraham's God. Genesis is the declaration of Abraham's legacy prepared for us all.

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