

The Relationship Between Faith and Obedience (part four of a seven-part study)

What was the angel of the Lord referring to in issuing the promise recorded in Genesis 22:18? Was it simply an expansion of the physical descendant promise in v17? At first glance, in its immediate context, that would be the common-sense conclusion. After all, the singular word “seed” is used to refer to a plurality of descendants in v17. Why not a similar use in v18? Such a conclusion quickly evaporates upon reading the inspired interpretation of the apostle Paul, recorded for us in Galatians 3:16 –

“Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as referring to many, but rather to one, ‘And to your seed,’ that is, Christ.”

From this, we can conclude with certainty, that the promise of Genesis 22:18 is referring to a singular descendant of Abraham, who would prove to be a blessing to the entire world. That descendant is Jesus Christ! This in turn expands the nature and content of the unconditional promise which God established with Abraham. It is not only of genealogical consequence, but contains redemptive ramifications. Simply put, *God’s plan of salvation is fulfilled through the agency of the Abrahamic Covenant!* It is accomplished in the Divine person and redemptive work of Jesus Christ, and continues to be realized every time an individual places their faith in the Promised Seed of Genesis 22:18.

Furthermore, every convert to Christ becomes a participant in the Abrahamic Covenant on a spiritual level. Even though they may be a Gentile and not a physical descendant of father Abraham, through faith in Christ, they become his spiritual descendant, as Paul makes clear in Galatians 3:27-29 –

“For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise.”

Relationally, every Christian has an equal standing before God in Christ. We are all Abraham’s spiritual descendants by virtue of the faith we have placed in his Promised Seed. This is the contemporary significance of the covenant which God made with Abraham, who exemplifies for all of us what it means to trust and obey.