THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB

MESSAGE ONE

Knowing and Experiencing the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob to Become the Israel of God

Scripture Reading: Gen. 28:13; 33:20; Exo. 3:6, 14-15; Acts 3:13; Gal. 6:16; 1 Thes. 1:1

I. Our God is the God of three particular persons—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; this implies that He is the Triune God—Exo. 3:15; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14:

A. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the foundations of the nation of Israel; without them there would not be the nation of Israel—Exo. 3:15-16:

1. God's people became His people through the experiences of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; their experiences culminated in Israel, the people of God.
2. We all need to have the elements of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; without these elements we cannot be the people of God, the Israel of God.

B. In the book of Genesis the records of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob overlap; Genesis does not portray them as three separate individuals but as constituents of one corporate person:

1. The experience of Abraham signifies the experience of God the Father, the unique source, in His calling man, justifying man, and equipping man to live by faith and to live in fellowship with Him—12:1; 15:6; chs. 17—18; 19:29; 21:1-13; 22:1-18.
2. The experience of Isaac signifies the experience of God the Son in His redeeming man and His blessing man with the inheritance of all His riches, with a life of the enjoyment of His abundance, and with a life in peace—vv. 1-14; 25:5; 26:3-4, 12-33.
3. The experience of Jacob (with Joseph) signifies the experience of God the Father in His loving man and choosing man (Mal. 1:2; Rom. 9:10-13) and of God the Spirit in His causing all things to work together for the good of those who love Him, in His transforming man, and in His making man mature in the divine life so that man may be able to bless all the people, rule over all the earth, and satisfy all the people with God the Son as the life supply—Gen. 27:41; 28:1—35:12; chs. 37; 39—49; Rom. 8:28-29.

II. We need to know and experience the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob:

A. Abraham believed in God as the unique source, as the One who "calls the things not being as being"—4:17:

1. God's goal must be achieved according to God's time and through God's power—Gen. 17:17, 19, 21.
2. God did a special work on Abraham in order to show him what it means for God to be the Father—Eph. 4:6:
   a. To know God as the Father is to know that He is the source, the unique Initiator, and that everything originates from Him—Matt. 15:13.
   b. We all need to know that God is the Father and that everything proceeds from Him—Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 3:14-16.

B. In Isaac, the best figure of the Son, we see that everything comes from the Father—Gen. 24:36; 25:5:

1. According to the picture in Genesis 22, Isaac typifies Christ in a detailed way.
2. The principle of Isaac is the principle of receiving—25:5; 1 Cor. 4:7:
   a. The significance of God the Son is that everything is received and that nothing is initiated by Him—John 16:15; 17:10; 5:19, 30.
   b. In Isaac we see that everything comes from the Father and that our place is to receive—Gen. 26:12-13; Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 4:7:
      (1) Isaac's relationship with Abraham was one of receiving; to know the God of Isaac is to know God as the Supplier—Gen. 24:36.
      (2) God is the Father, and everything proceeds from Him; we are sons, and everything we have is from Him—1 Cor. 8:6; 11:12b.

C. Jacob speaks to us of the Holy Spirit; his experiences represent the work of the Holy Spirit, and his history is a type of the discipline of the Holy Spirit:
   1. Jacob's life is a life that represents God's dealings, and the God of Jacob is the God of dealings—Gen. 31:38-41:
      a. The title *the God of Jacob* implies how the Holy Spirit disciplined Jacob, dealt with his natural life, constituted Christ into him, and bore the fruit of the Spirit in him—Gal. 5:22-23; Heb. 12:11.
      b. If we would know the God of Jacob, we need to allow the Spirit to perform His work in us, dealing with our natural life and constituting Christ into us.
   2. Jacob's history is a picture of the discipline of the Holy Spirit—Gen. 47:9; 48:15-16a; Heb. 12:9-11:
      a. The discipline of the Holy Spirit refers to what the Holy Spirit is doing in our outward environment—to His arranging of all people, things, and happenings—through which we are being disciplined—Rom. 8:28.
      b. Through the discipline of the Holy Spirit, God completely tears down the element of the old creation in us so that the element of the new creation may be built up in us.
   3. God deals with our natural life through the discipline of the Holy Spirit so that Christ may be wrought into us, constituted into us, and formed in us for the corporate expression of the Triune God—Gal. 4:19; Eph. 3:16-21.

D. The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob is Jehovah, Elohim—the self-existing and ever-existing Triune God, the eternal great I Am—Exo. 3:6, 14; Rev. 1:4.

E. The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob is the God of resurrection—Exo. 3:6, 15; Matt. 22:23-33; Acts 3:13.

F. The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob is the God of the tabernacle; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob each lived in a tent; while they were living in tents, they were eagerly waiting for the eternal tabernacle of God, the city of New Jerusalem—Exo. 40:34-35; Gen. 12:8; 13:18; 26:17, 25; 33:18; 35:21; Heb. 11:9-10; Rev. 21:2-3.

G. The God of Abraham is the God of justification (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:2-3), the God of Isaac is the God of grace (2 Cor. 13:14), and the God of Jacob is the God of transformation through divine discipline (3:18; Heb. 12:5-11); eventually, the God of Jacob became the God of Israel (Gen. 33:20; Exo. 5:1), the God of the transformed Jacob.

III. The issue of experiencing the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob is the Israel of God, the church in the Triune God—Gen. 35:10; 33:20; Gal. 6:16; 1 Thes. 1:1; Matt. 28:19:

A. The Israel of God is the real Israel (Rom. 9:6b; 2:28-29; Phil. 3:3), including all the Gentile and Jewish believers in Christ, who are the true sons of Abraham, who are the household of the faith, and who are those in the new creation—Gal. 3:7, 29; 6:10, 15-16:
   1. The real Israel, the spiritual Israel, is the church—v. 16; Matt. 16:18.
   2. In God's New Testament economy we have been made both the sons of God and the Israel of God; our destiny is to be sons of God expressing God and also kings reigning in the kingdom of God—Gal. 3:26; 6:10, 16; Rev. 5:10; 21:7; 22:5b; 12:5a.
   3. As the Israel of God, we represent God, exercise His authority, and carry out His administration on earth for the fulfillment of His purpose—Gen. 1:26, 28; Luke 10:19; Rev. 12:5, 7-11.

B. The Israel of God is the church in the Triune God—1 Thes. 1:1; Matt. 28:19:
   1. When Paul speaks of the church in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, he actually means that the church is in the Triune God—1 Thes. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:4-6:
      a. The expressions *God the Father* and *the Lord Jesus Christ* both imply the Spirit; therefore, in 1 Thessalonians 1:1 the Spirit is implied and understood, and we may speak of the church being in the Triune God.
      b. According to the Bible, there is no such thing as the church being merely in God; rather, the church is in the processed Triune God—Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14.
      c. For the church to be in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ means that the church is in the processed Triune God—the One who has become the life-giving Spirit with the Father and the Son—Matt. 28:19; Eph. 4:4-6; John 14:20.
   2. If we see the vision of the church in the Triune God, this vision will control our thinking, our activities, and our entire life—Prov. 29:18a; Acts 26:19.