

Skandalon, You, Abraham, & Family

The Promises to Abraham, The Escape from Egyptian Group-Slavery Into the PROMISED Land, and TODAY

- » What Is Given?
- » What Is Required?
- » And How It Is Tested?

Grace, Total Trust, and Gift Skandalon

Salvation isn't at stake, if there is trust in the blood of Jesus Christ, the Gospel (GOOD News) of Jesus.

What IS at stake? The good news of the Kingdom, "this is how all men will know you're my disciples," "On earth as it is in heaven," oneness, and the visible, daily Life of the many members connected to each other in Jesus. The bride who has made herself ready for the return of Jesus. That all men will know, and be without excuse. Virgins with oil, "wedding clothes." That's the topic.

A City set on a hill, made of “Gold, Silver, and Precious Stones.” Not “invisible” faith or an “invisible” community/ekklesia/ church, hidden under a bushel basket, but shining like stars in the universe, for all to see?

Or “wood, hay, and stubble” that gets burnt up, allowing only “escape through the flames”?

God can bring peace and emotional and spiritual and physical prosperity, sandals never wearing out for 40 years, and “see how they love one another!” (John 13-15) That is His plan and purpose—when He finally finds those who will be faithful with their skandalons, so He does not need to rip the kingdom from their hands and give it to another, their betters. (Matthew 21-23)

What is Satan’s counter-attack to God’s plan of having a people, visible in daily life as glowing with God’s power and love, rather than “attending”?

Since Satan already knows that the blood of Jesus, and our total complete unwavering and often verbalized Faith/Trust in that blood is All in All, for exchanging Jesus blood and righteousness, for our sin and death, is already “finished“ (the Good News of Jesus Christ), his only remaining strategy is to keep “kicking the can down the road,” the goodness of the kingdom, on earth as it is in heaven, the bride made Ready, “this is HOW all men will know” this is from heaven not from earth: the miracle of the impossible, unshakable loyalty, and self-sacrifice, and love they have for one another.



But that is a gift, that love, that Oneness. It is not a right. It is not a commitment. It certainly is not a system or a way or a method, or the result of knowledge.

The kingdom of God, the love for one another, is a gift from God himself.

Satan wants to sow chaos, suspicion, doubt, fear, selfishness, pride, independence, manipulation, rules and ritual, hatred, lust, disrespect, lack of gratitude, lack of sensitivity, materialism, ambition, and the rest. You know who he is and what he does.

Can you love one another truly, to be seen by all men in their life, a culture and kingdom and circle of unshakable love, if God lowers the walls and allows Satan to sow all of that junk just listed?

Of course not. That is a gift from God alone. “You can’t get there from here,” “it can’t be done.” Peace and love and kindness and loyalty of life and lifestyle is a gift from God. Though it is based on truth and loyalty to God, it is still a gift “lest any man boast.”

What is Satan’s strategy to kick the can down the road of God’s Purposes being fulfilled, the Sons of God being shown for their full intent and potential of “Greater works than these shall you do,” “Tasting the powers of the coming age,” “Rivers of alive water gushing from the inner man of everyone who has True life and trust in God”?

How can Satan keep us from being “joined and knit together by every supporting ligament,” and the body of Christ seeing and living God’s intention mentioned in three out of four “Gospels” by Jesus himself in different ways, for “100 mothers, brothers, sisters, lands, possessions, and Heaven-Life in this life, and post-molecular realm Life?”

How can Satan trick us with our emotions and desires and selfishness, fears and distractions and unchallenged relationships or habits, to negate God's Intention (Ephesians 1-6) in this generation? How can Satan play with God people, like a cat with a ball of yarn, and bring further delay, further judgments of "women and children ruling over" (Isaiah 3, Isaiah 5), family chaos, sandals wearing out, health collapsing, widows, orphans, the loss of the pillar of fire and cloud to Guide, mayhem and loneliness replacing loyalty

And what is the response of God's people to NOT willingly or even unknowingly give Satan dominion, and let him have his way?

A Visual Historical Aid

Written "for our Learning" — a visual historical aid to help us understand God, and what covenant is, here are two of these Examples we all know well, and are meant for our current decisions and application.

- » What Was Given? Grace
- » What Was Required? Visible, Tangible Faith
- » And How It Was Tested? Skandalon

2 million Israelites wandered in the wilderness for 40 years waiting for the PROMISED Land. It was coming. It was a promise. But faithfulness, obedience, and trust are essential to "enter in." Read the book of Hebrews again sometime, with this in mind, and heart.

The Jews' wandering in the desert for forty years was a time of testing, supernatural provision, and as the Preparation for entering the PROMISED Land. (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)

The journey began after the Israelites' miraculous exodus from Egypt, where they had been enslaved for over four centuries.

God, through Moses, led them out with a mighty hand, parting the Red Sea and destroying Pharaoh's pursuing army (Exodus 14). The initial plan was to lead the Israelites directly to Canaan, the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. However, due to their lack of faith and disobedience, the journey was extended to forty years.

The pivotal moment leading to the extended wandering occurred when the Israelites reached Kadesh-Barnea. Moses sent twelve spies to scout the land of Canaan. Upon their return, ten of the spies gave a discouraging report, causing the people to rebel against God's command to take possession of the land (Numbers 13-14).

God wants "total trust in God," and whining is not trust! Whining is a choice. Fearing is a choice. Doubting is a choice. Change that if you are doing it.

In response to their unbelief and rebellion, God declared that the current generation would not enter the Promised Land, except for Caleb and Joshua, who had remained faithful. It was an attitude and a choice on their part, that others did not make. God is God. They actually believed that. Because some didn't, the Israelites would wander in the wilderness for forty years, corresponding to the forty days the spies spent exploring Canaan (Numbers 14:34).

A reminder and a warning: when you whine, you wreck it for everyone around you. Remember that even Joshua and Caleb still spent 40 years in the wilderness because of the whining and unbelief of the others. Do YOUR part to have total trust.

During these forty years, the Israelites experienced both divine judgment and provision. God provided manna from heaven (Exodus 16:4-5), quail (Numbers 11:31-32), and water from a rock (Exodus 17:6; Numbers 20:11). Despite their frequent complaints and rebellions, God remained faithful to His

covenant, guiding them with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Exodus 13:21-22).

The wilderness period was also a time of receiving the Instruction at Mount Sinai regarding worship and community life (Exodus 19-40) and personal “thought life” and holiness. They would receive a “type and shadow,” the Tabernacle to travel with them, to experience God’s presence, protection, and provision among them.

God’s chosen adopted family faced numerous challenges and rebellions during their desert journey. The rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who wanted power for themselves ambitiously, resulted in severe judgment by God (Numbers 16). The people also faced external threats, such as the attack by the Amalekites (Exodus 17:8-16) and the seduction by Moabite women, which led to idolatry and a plague (Numbers 25).

The forty years in the desert served as a period of discipline and preparation. God used this time to teach the Israelites reliance on Him and to purify the nation from the influences of Egypt. The older generation, characterized by unbelief, gradually passed away, making way for a new generation that would enter Canaan under Joshua’s leadership.

Moses, who faithfully led the people, was also prepared for the transition of leadership. Before his death, he delivered a series of admonitions to God’s people, recorded in Deuteronomy, reiterating the ways of the only true God and urging the Israelites to remain faithful to God. Moses’ final act was to view the Promised Land from Mount Nebo, as he was not permitted to enter due to his own disobedience at Meribah (Deuteronomy 34:1-5).

The forty years in the desert are a testament to God’s faithfulness, justice, and mercy. This period is mentioned throughout Scripture as a reminder of the consequences of

unbelief and the importance of trusting in God's promises. The lessons learned in the wilderness still resonate with today's Washed People, emerging from the collapsing Red Sea that drowned the Egyptian pursuers, always reminding us of OUR need for faith, obedience, and total reliance on God for our "daily bread," our provision in all areas, love, peace, relationships, jobs, neighborhoods, Family.

Blessings, Curses, and Conditions for Israel in the Wilderness

In Deuteronomy 28, Leviticus 26 and the broader covenant established in Exodus 19-24, we see this was a national covenant — a formal treaty between God and the entire people of Israel, structured much like the ancient Near Eastern treaties of the era, where a great king laid out terms for a nation.

The blessings were comprehensive and concrete, touching every area of life.

Agricultural food abundance: crops, livestock, and harvests overflowing.

Climate blessing: rain in its season, the land producing at full capacity.

Military dominance: enemies who rose against Israel would be routed, fleeing in seven directions. Economic grace, unmerited: Israel would lend to nations and never borrow, sitting at the top rather than the bottom.

National reputation: the peoples of the earth would see that Israel was called by God's name and stand in awe.

Urban and rural flourishing: blessed in the city, blessed in the field, blessed coming in and going out.

At the Center of it all: God's presence dwelling among them, walking with them, being their God in a tangible, experiential sense.

The curses were the mirror image. The Text spends far more space on them than the blessings, which is definitely how it has worked out on entropic planet earth ever since: when people have neglected, felt entitled, been apathetic, acted like they knew more than God, or were rebellious.

Disasters: crop failure, drought, plague, confusion, and panic.

Disease: diseases of Egypt returning.

Military catastrophe: armies that could not be stopped, sieges so severe that people would cannibalize their own children.

Exile: scattered among the nations, finding no rest, serving foreign gods of wood and stone.

Isolation and hardness: the sky above becoming bronze, the ground beneath becoming iron.

Affliction: Madness, blindness, and bewilderment of heart.

And the haunting summary of Deuteronomy 28:65-67:
a restless, trembling existence among the nations, with no assurance of survival from morning to night.

The single hinge on which everything turned was covenant loyalty — wholehearted obedience to God’s voice.

Not perfect sinlessness, because the “sacrificial system,” animals and grain as a visual aid, and then Jesus himself, the First Born, existed or would come into the world — precisely to address failure.

The “condition” was orientation — whether God’s People’s heart, worship, and corporate life remained directed toward God or turned toward the gods of surrounding nations. “Come out from among them and be separate says the Lord. And then I will be your God and you will be my people.”

Blending in is not an option, though isolation from the world is also not an option. Light of the world, salt of the Earth, shining like stars in the universe: that is His Plan. This is HOW the world will know, this is the miracle they cannot duplicate: how you sacrificially and wholeheartedly love God and one another without condition. In the world but not of it.

The specific fault lines were ONE GOD, ONE MASTER “no man can serve two—you will love the one and automatically in God’s eyes hate the other). Worship, Romans 12:1-4, with no idols and no importing the practices of the worldly; justice and treatment of the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the stranger; and “Sabbath” deep breath and rest in Messiah—costly choices as the rhythmic acknowledgment that the land and the people belonged to God.

Deuteronomy 30 adds the crucial thought: the conditions are not impossibly remote or mystical. “The word is very near you — in your mouth and in your heart.” This was a relationship Designed for life, not an impossible standard designed for failure.

What is often missed is that the 40 years in the wilderness was itself a testing environment — intentionally structured. An Intentionally Devised Skandalon trap to reveal our hearts, even lucidity, to ourselves. To see what we will do next. Behold HIM? Or clench our fist, or numb our hearts and mind?

Deuteronomy 8:2-3 makes this explicit: God led Israel through the wilderness to humble them and test them, to know what was in their heart, whether they would keep his commandments or not. The hunger, the thirst, the disorientation — these were not accidents or punishments in themselves. They were diagnostic pressure, revealing what the people actually trusted when comfort was stripped away. The manna was the central object lesson: daily, just enough, impossible to hoard, requiring fresh dependence every single morning. It was a planned curriculum in trust.

The generation that died in the wilderness failed not primarily on moral grounds but on the ground of UNBELIEF. That makes perfect sense with a covenant of grace, and then a refining and revealing of what FAITH, our part in the covenant, REALLY is. IT IS A CHOICE TO TRUST GOD. NOT UNREACHABLE. IT IS WITHIN YOU AND AROUND YOU AND CALLING YOUR NAME. IF WE WILL BEND OUR KNEE.

They did not trust that God could deliver what he had promised. Wrong Tree in the Garden.

Numbers 14 identifies this as the defining failure. Hebrews 3-4 later interprets the entire wilderness narrative through this lens, warning its readers that the same hardness of heart remained possible for them. The wilderness was a 40-year exam on one question: Will you trust me? Minus Joshua and Caleb and whoever listened and believed as they did, an entire generation answered “no, we only trust ourselves.”

The Father of Our Faith

And another example for our learning? Father Abraham? “Those with the faith of Abraham are sons of Abraham,” and therefore true Israel, therefore possessing the land and “saving faith”?

The promises God made to Abraham fall into several categories (Genesis 12, 15, 17, 22). He was PROMISED land — a specific space for his descendants to possess permanently.

He was PROMISED descendants, FAMILY so numerous they would be uncountable, like stars and sand. A great nation bearing his name. Blessing and greatness. And the broadest promise of all: “All the families of the earth shall be blessed through you” (Gen 12:3) — a scale and scope that made Abraham’s story about far more than one man or one people. Underlying all of it was a covenant of presence: “I will be your God, and you will be my people.”

The promises operated on two levels. In Genesis 15, God cuts the covenant in an unusual way — Abraham is put into a deep sleep, and God alone passes between the animal pieces, a ritual where both parties would normally walk through together, binding themselves under oath. GOD WALKS IT ALONE. God walks it alone.

The covenant's fulfillment rests on God's faithfulness, not Abraham's performance. Wow. Grace. Yet, BY FAITH, TRUST. "Do you wholeheartedly trust and believe I can keep My promises?!"

Genesis 17 introduces circumcision as the covenant sign — a required mark of participation. The signature on the contract. Not an earning of the covenant, but a willing participation forever.

Genesis 18:19 reveals God's reasoning: "I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord." Obedience wasn't the basis of the promise, but it was the expected pathway through which the promise would flow.

Grace initiates. Obedience channels.

The test, the Skandalon, in Genesis 22 was constructed with devastating precision. AS ARE OURS! (Romans 8:28-29) Don't doubt it! Our unconditional trust of God and God's character is our signature on the contract every day of our lives. We can't earn deliverance, salvation, or Spirit-life. But we can lay down molecular life where we want to be gods, and we don't want this man Jesus to be king over us. If we want to have unlimited control of our decisions and relationships and pursuit of pleasure and happiness and comfort, or our fears or our guilt or shame, way are wanting to be gods, instead of trusting Him, as Abba, as immutable and perfect and all-knowing, and our loving all-powerful TRUST-WORTHY God. If we want to suck on our

Binky, with our favorite Blankey for our protection instead of him, that would be a test of our allegiance and trust and faith that needs to be exposed and solved for His Name's sake.

Don't fight the Skandalon! Embrace the sovereignly designed "trap" (Romans 7-8, Romans 8:29-29) as an opportunity to go to the next level with Him! It's a Gift, not a curse! Just ask Job or David or Moses or Elijah, or Simon Peter, or James (either of them), or Jesus.

Back to Abraham. God had already closed off every alternative — Ishmael had been sent away, Abraham and Sarah were biologically past the possibility of more children. Isaac was not just a son. He was the singular vessel through whom every one of God's promises had to pass!

Skandalon. For "father of or faith Abraham." AND: For all of those with the faith of Abraham, therefore saved and Spirit-DNA-gifted. No "Isaac" meant no descendants, no nation, no land, no universal blessing. The entire covenant collapsed without Isaac, right?

And God had given Isaac himself — the miracle child, born against nature — which meant God was asking Abraham to surrender the very gift through which God's own promises would be fulfilled.

The command left no interpretive escape: "Take your son, your only son, whom you love — Isaac" (Gen 22:2), each word pressing on the wound.

The test demanded that Abraham trust God's promise even against God's command — or rather, trust that somehow both could be true simultaneously. Hebrews 11:19 reveals his internal logic: he reasoned that God could raise the dead. He didn't resolve the contradiction. He held it in faith.

The test was never ultimately about Isaac. It was about whether Abraham's trust in God's character ran deeper than his grip on

God's gifts — whether he could remain loyal to the Giver even when asked to surrender the gift. And withholding putting that gift on the altar unconditionally no matter what came next was “the faith of Abraham.” Tested by Skandalon, the trap with no escape “BUT GOD,” as it MUST be.

That death and resurrection, seeded here, echoes through the entire arc of Scripture, described in the Book of Romans, written even to “superstar” longtime blood-bought Christians (Romans 16), so that they could together learn how they themselves could “soon trample Satan under their feet.”

A Request

I know this is weird but please do this. Read this again:

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And what is the response of God's people to NOT willingly or even unknowingly give Satan dominion, and let him have his way?

Skandalon, Isaac on the altar! We can trust Him no matter what comes our way! There is no other way to crush Satan under our feet!

Let's Go!

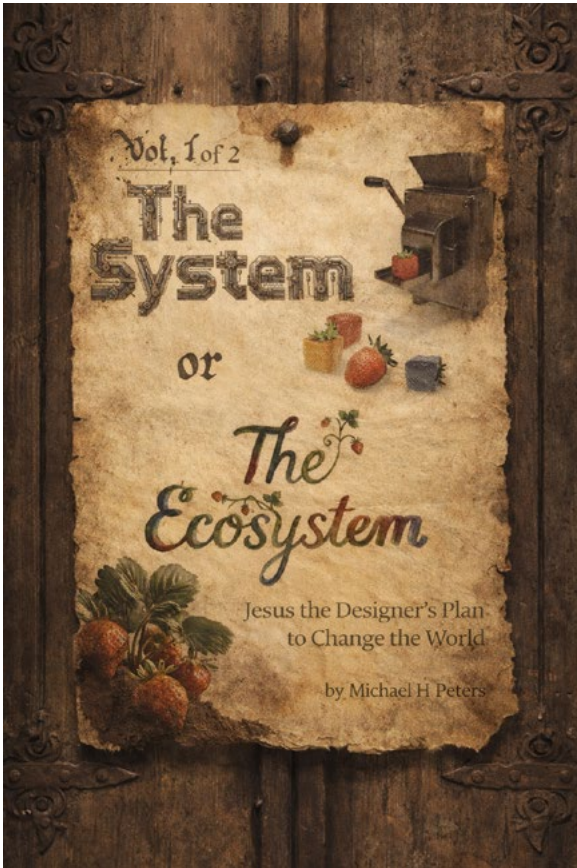
110 times in the Old Testament and 40 more in the New Testament: THE most "frequent" command in the Bible, "Fear not! Be of good courage! Let's go!"

It is not a command to try harder. It is God's command to us saying, "Totally TRUST Me, and LET GO! You don't have to prop yourself up. You don't have to protect yourself. You don't have to pursue pleasure and safety and reputation. Romans 8:28-29: the Skandalon will glorify God in ways you can't yet understand. But the God who is not bound by time sees the end from beginning all at once! Let go! And then..."

LET'S GOOOO!



"The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." Romans 16:20



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