

DOCTRINE OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

- I.** Definition and preliminary considerations: The Abrahamic Covenant is a compilation of all the promises of God to Abraham on the glory road from Ur of the Chaldeans (Gen.11:31) until the time of the sacrifice of Isaac in Gen.22.
- A.** The Hebrew word for covenant is: בְּרִית – beriyyth, used 295x; The Greek word is: διαθήκη – diatheke, used 31x.
 - B.** A covenant is a contract/agreement between two parties in which one or both parties promise(s) (takes an oath/swears or establishes by other means) to the other (Noahic Covenant is an example of a one sided Covenant).
 - C.** Covenants can be unconditional (a promise[s] not dependent upon any actions of a 2nd party e.g. the Noahic Covenant Gen.9:9-17) or conditional (the promise[s] are provisional to meeting the terms of the contract by both parties e.g., the Mosaic Covenant; Exo.19:5,6).
 - D.** A conditional covenant requires agreement between the parties. Cp. Exo.19:8
 - E.** Once the contract is agreed upon, execution depends on the integrity of the parties.
 - F.** When one party is God, absolute fidelity can be expected on His part.
 - G.** A covenant with God can be either temporal (e.g., Mosaic Covenant: national Israel awaiting the coming of Messiah in two parts [1st/2nd Advents] or eternal.
 - H.** The promises made to Abraham were accompanied by conditions and hence conditional viewing God as making an offer.
 - I.** The promises from God to Abraham, accompanied by conditions, required fulfillment of the conditions before the promises were valid in order to satisfy the righteousness (+R) and justice (+J) of God.
 - J.** Omniscience dictates that God knew whether Abraham would accept the offer; he also knew whether Abraham would meet the conditions.
 - K.** Strictly from the viewpoint of Omniscience, the covenant was unconditional i.e., it was offered not based on what Abraham did, but what God foreknew.
 - L.** Omniscience, however, does not set aside the satisfaction of God's +R/+J.
 - M.** The satisfaction of God's +R and +J comes about by obedience to the conditions. Gen.18:19
 - N.** Allowing for the satisfaction of +R/+J concerning obedience to the conditions, the package is conditional to Abraham.
 - O.** After the conditions are met, the Abrahamic Covenant is ratified and from that point on becomes unconditional on the part of Abraham. Cf. Neh.9:7,8 "*You are Yahweh Elohim, Who chose Abram and brought him out from Ur of the Chaldees, and gave him the name Abraham. And You did find his heart faithful before You, and did make a covenant with him...to give to his descendants.*"
 - P.** The Abrahamic Covenant is eternal (e.g., Gen.13:15) and therefore future participation in the Covenant by Abraham's descendants is also conditional (cf.Gen.17:9,10ff).
 - 1.** Entrance into the full terms of the Covenant is based on the salvation adjustment to the justice of God (SAJG).
 - 2.** The extent of blessing in covenant terms is based on the maturity adjustment to the justice of God (MAJG).

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- Q.** The terms of the covenant were revealed to Abraham in the book of Genesis over a period of 47 years (1876-1829 BC) with the passages being Gen.12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-21; 22:15-18.
- R.** With each segment of revelation, the promises of covenant become more expansive and conclusive.

II. The Abrahamic Covenant has three basic areas of promise with several sub-categories of blessing that are related.

A. Real estate.

- 1.** The original promise of real estate is found in Gen.12:1,2, "*To the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation.*"
 - a.** "Great nation" implies real estate.
 - b.** It also implies sexual prosperity.
- 2.** The real estate package was first defined in Gen.12:7 "*To your descendants I will give this land (Canaan cf.vs.5).*"
- 3.** It was later defined to be all the land that Abraham could see "*northward and southward and eastward and westward*". Gen.13:14
- 4.** In Gen.13:15, God promised to give Abraham this land as a part of paragraph SG3 (surpassing grace blessings in Ph₃) "*I will give it to you and your descendants forever.*" cp. Gen.15:7, "*to give you this land to inherit it.*"
- 5.** The ratification of the real estate package is specifically stated in Gen.15:18, "*On that day the Lord cut a covenant with Abraham.*"
- 6.** At that time, the real estate package was fully defined, Gen.15:18 "*To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates...vss.19-21.*"
- 7.** The sub-categories of blessing related to the real estate portion include:
 - a.** Great nation status, Gen.12:2.
 - b.** Protection (anti-Semitic clause), Gen.12:3 (illustrated by the judgment of Egypt); Gen.15:13-16.
- 8.** The conditions to be met by Abraham for the real estate package in order for it to be ratified included:
 - a.** Leave Haran and relatives and enter a new land. Gen.12:1
 - b.** Gen.13:14, "*look northward, southward, eastward, and westward*" (i.e., shows faith in acceptance of the promised gift cf.vs.15).
 - c.** Specifically, the preparation of five animals for the cutting of a covenant with God that God ratified. Gen.15:9; cp.15:18
 - d.** The ceremony of ratification is highly symbolic embedding the spiritual with literal conditions of the covenant tying the Messiah with the covenant giving Abraham right to the land (Gen.15:9-11).
 - e.** It included an addendum passing down the rights to the land to his progeny via overt validation (Gen.15:13-16).
 - f.** Gen.15:18-21 construe the legal abstract to the covenant.
 - g.** At this point, it was also told to Abraham when his descendants would inherit the land. Gen.15:13,14,16

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- B. Sexual prosperity.**
1. The original promise of sexual prosperity is coupled with the promise of land in Gen.12:2, "*And I will make you a great nation*" (a nation needs land and population).
 2. It was further defined in Gen.12:7, "*To your seed I will give this land.*"
 3. The eternality of his descendants was first implied in Gen.13:15, "*to your descendants forever.*"
 4. Abraham was also promised descendants as dust (Jews), Gen.13:16; Rom.9:4,5.
 5. In Gen.15:4, God specified further that his heir would be "*one who shall come forth from your own genitals.*"
 6. He was further promised that his descendants would be as the stars of the heaven (spiritual progeny). Gen.15:5
 7. The ratification of the sexual prosperity package is specified in Gen.17:4, "*My covenant is with you.*"
 8. At that time, he was again promised that his descendants would be many (both physical and spiritual), Gen.17:2 "*And multiplying, I will multiply you.*"
 9. It was at this point that Abraham had a name change to "father of a multitude."
 10. His sexual prosperity was further enlarged to include:
 - a. A multitude of nations. Gen.17:4
 - b. Kings. Gen.17:6
 - c. Eternality of his progeny. Gen.17:7
 11. At this point also, the sign of the Covenant was established. Gen.17:10,11 (circumcision - *see doctrine of*).
 - a. This demonstrated the importance of Ph₁ & 2 sanctification.
 - b. It was also designed to pass on the colors of Bible Doctrine to the next generation. Gen.18:19
 - c. The circumcision of all the males of Abraham's household portrays that the blessings of the Covenant are open to outsiders. Gen.17:12-14
 12. Also, Abraham's sexual prosperity was specifically designated as coming through Sarah. Gen.17:15,16,19
 13. Abraham was given, along with Sarah, the time of the arrival of Isaac. Gen.17:21; cp.18:14
 14. The conditions to be met by Abraham for the sexual prosperity portion in order for it to be ratified included:
 - a. Spiritual maturity at age 99. Gen.17:1
 - b. The name change of Abraham and Sarah, Gen.17:5,15.
 - c. Circumcision, Gen.17:11.
 15. A sub-category of blessing that comes from the sexual prosperity package includes God making His covenant with Isaac. Gen.17:19
- C. The line of Messiah.**
1. The original promise of the line of Messiah is given in Gen.12:3, "*And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed*"; cp. Gal.3:8.
 2. The ratification of the covenant of the line of Messiah came after Abraham's obedience in offering up his son Isaac as a burnt offering, Gen.22:16; cp. 22:18

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"because you have manufactured this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son... And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." Hence, the conditions were met.

3. The role of Messiah in terms of His substitutionary death and resurrection was explicitly defined to Abraham typologically when he offered up his son Isaac. Gen.22:1-10,13; cp.Heb.11:17-19.
4. At this point also, the first two parts of the Abrahamic Covenant were reiterated (sexual prosperity and real estate), Gen.22:17.
5. The reiteration of Gen.22:17 is all inclusive to include both racial and spiritual progeny.
6. From this point on the entire Abrahamic Covenant becomes unconditional; Abraham does receive any further revelation for the rest of his life.

III. Other areas of blessing to Abraham.

- A. A great reputation. Gen.12:2
 1. This was demonstrated in his defeat of the four kings in Gen.14.
 2. It is also seen in his association with Abimelech. Gen.21:22
 3. It is further preserved forever in the Scripture for all generations to observe.
- B. Protection (anti-Semitic clause), Gen.12:3; 15:1.
 1. It is demonstrated by his association with three people that provided some level of military protection: Mamre, Gen.14:13; Melchizedek, Gen.14:18-20; and Abimelech, Gen.21:22-32.
 2. It is demonstrated by his deliverance from potential harm: While in Egypt (Gen.12:10-20); While in Gerar (Gen.20).
- C. Great reward (SG₂ and 3). Gen.15:1
- D. Dying in peace in old age, Gen.15:15; cp. 25:8.
- E. The Lord blessed Abraham in every way (SG₂). Gen.24:1,35
- F. In the future (SG₃), it includes a city. Heb.11:10; Rev.21:2,10

IV. The key to Abraham's blessing is his obedience to the Word of God.

- A. Hence, the Covenant was established with Isaac. Gen.26:3-5
- B. The impact of Abraham's obedience was felt by the Jews throughout their history. Exo.2:24; Deu.30:7; 6:2-8; 2Kgs.13:23; 1Chr.16:16; Psa.105:8,9,42; Isa.41:8ff; Mic.7:20
- C. The final restoration of the Jews in unbelief during the course of the Church Age back to the land is based on the Abrahamic Covenant. Ezek.36:22 cp. Gal.3:17,18; Lev.26:42-44; Deu.4:25-31 cp. 5:2,3 "*with our fathers*"; Jer.33:26; Luk.1:67-73.
- D. His obedience will be the basis for the fulfillment of the Abraham Covenant to the Jews in the Millennium. Isa.51:1-3; 66:22 cp.Heb.11:10, "*for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.*"

V. The Royal Family shares in the Abrahamic Covenant as heirs via our association with the person of Jesus Christ (Abraham's seed) through positional truth. Gal.3:29; 4:28; Rom.9:8 cp.Isa.56:6

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- A. This is prophetically illustrated in the promise of Messiah to Abraham. Gen.12:3 cp.Gal.3:8,9
 - B. It is illustrated at the time of Abraham by the circumcision of all males of his household, though not Jews. Gen.17:27
 - C. It is also demonstrated by the faith of the centurion. Mat.8:5-13
 - D. It is portrayed by the significant role that the Church has in the New Jerusalem, the city that Abraham looked forward to seeing. Rev.21:2,9,10 cp.Heb.11:10 cp. 2Pet.3:13.
- VI.** Satan will attempt to counterfeit the Abrahamic Covenant to the Jews in the Tribulation. Dan.9:27.
- A. Like the Abrahamic Covenant, it will purport to guarantee nationalism and provide a Messiah.
 - B. But the covenant with death will not stand. Isa.28:14-19
 - C. The failure on the part of the Jews of making this covenant with the Antichrist will result in the "overwhelming flood". Isa.28:17,18 (invasion of Russia)
 - D. But the Lord will deliver Israel based on His faithfulness to the Abrahamic Covenant. Rev.10:1.
 - 1. Rev.10 has as its historical background the Soviet invasion into the Middle East.
 - 2. In vs.1, a strong angel is seen coming down out of heaven clothed with a cloud (coming storm).
 - 3. His face is like the sun (righteousness with the facts) and his feet like pillars of fire (justice administering judgment).
 - 4. But he also appears with a rainbow on his head.
 - 5. Gen.9:14 provides us with the understanding of the symbolism "*And it shall come about when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud.*"
 - 6. The cloud represents potential disaster or judgment on planet earth per the Noahic flood.
 - 7. The rainbow represents God's covenant between Him and the earth's inhabitants. Gen.9:12,13
 - 8. The significance of the rainbow (Noahic) is that God will never again totally destroy the earth with water. Gen.9:15-17 cp. 9:11.
 - 9. In Rev.10, the cloud represents what would appear to be a "universal flood", i.e. the Soviet invasion,
 - 10. While the rainbow (which represents literally the Noahic Covenant) represents a covenant, it is specifically the Abrahamic Covenant that will protect the Jews from total annihilation by the Russian invasion, just as the rainbow is the guarantee that the human race will not be destroyed by a universal flood, Isa.54:1-10 esp.vss.9,10.
 - 11. The correlation between the Noahic and Abrahamic Covenants is the unconditional status for deliverance as ratified in all 3 categories of blessings to Abraham (land, descendants and Messianic).

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- VII.** The complete ratification of the Abrahamic Covenant obtained for Abraham the notoriety of being justified by works (Jam.2:21-23), and establishes Abraham as the pattern for both Ph₁ & ₂ sanctification (cp.Rom.4:1ff; Gal.3:7,9).
- VIII.** The Abrahamic Covenant is superior to the Mosaic Covenant because:
- A.** The Abrahamic Covenant is unconditional in its fulfillment.
 - 1. Certain aspects of the Abrahamic Covenant are fulfilled regardless of the spiritual condition of the Jews.
 - 2. Their nationalism was protected by the Abrahamic Covenant (real estate).
 - 3. The existence of the Jew is protected by the Covenant (sexual prosperity).
 - 4. The Messiah was to be a Jew regardless of the spiritual condition of the Jewish people at the first advent.
 - B.** The Mosaic Covenant is temporary, the Abrahamic Covenant is permanent.
 - 1. The Abrahamic Covenant has an eternal life clause.
 - 2. The Mosaic Covenant has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives. Rom.7:1.
 - C.** The Mosaic Covenant was limited in its expression of justice by the Abraham Covenant. Lev.26:42
 - 1. Peoples and nations have been destroyed because of their evil (exs.: Sodom, Canaanites, etc.).
 - 2. The Jews, though they may have committed even worse evil, (Isa.1:9,10; 3:9; Lam.4:6), could not be treated like those nations in the expression of God's justice in judgment because of the Abrahamic Covenant.
 - D.** The main purpose of the Mosaic Covenant was to implement the nationalism clause and protection clause of the Abrahamic Covenant.
 - E.** The New Covenant to Israel is based on the Abrahamic Covenant, not the Mosaic Covenant. Jer.31:31-40, esp. vss.35-37; Jer.33:19-26.
- IX.** Conclusions.
- A.** Abraham secured blessing from God both for himself and his progeny forever via his MAJG.
 - B.** The three main ingredients of the Covenant (real estate, sexual prosperity, and the line of Messiah), govern the history of the Jews, both for cursing and for blessing, throughout their history, to include the Millennium and the eternal state.
 - C.** The personal history of the Jews in their degeneracy (721BC, 586BC, and 70AD), and the onslaught of anti-Semitic nations have not, and cannot, thwart the impact of this Covenant.
 - D.** Hence, the very existence of Israel today in unbelief is based on the promises found in the Abrahamic Covenant.
 - E.** Therefore, the Abrahamic Covenant is the most important document to the Jew, whether he knows it or not, and will forever stand as a monument to the grace of God toward one man who demonstrated maximum positive volition to His Word.