

“COVENANT AND CONTROVERSY; THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT/THE GLUE OF THE BIBLE

May 23, 2017

The Abrahamic Covenant that God made with Israel has produced much conflict, controversy, and contention in the world! Why?

The Abrahamic Covenant is all about God’s SOVEREIGNTY. God created Israel (Isa. 43:1) – the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – and has given them promises while not choosing Ishmael’s line or Esau’s line to convey to be the channel for the promise. BUT GOD offers salvation to the world through the Abrahamic Covenant.

The world is inflamed by the very nature of GRACE – getting what we DO NOT DESERVE! Our pride tells us that we’re not sinners! Why do I need God’s forgiveness?

Conflict over Jerusalem. God’s name is in Jerusalem (II Chron. 6:6). Jesus will return to Jerusalem (Zech. 14:4). Jesus will establish His physical earthly kingdom in Jerusalem, seated on King David’s throne (Luke 1:32-33) and will rule for 1,000 years (Rev. 20).

AND, there is controversy because God HAS CHOSEN to set His Son on His Holy hill – Jesus will rule and reign from the throne of David in Jerusalem for 1,000 years. Ps. 2 tells us that the nations rage. There is contention because of JESUS!

God is committed to Jerusalem whether we are or not!

Isa. 14:1 - *For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will still choose Israel, and settle them in their own land. The strangers (GENTILES) will be joined with them, and they will cling to the house of Jacob.*

How many covenants did God make with Israel? Five: Abrahamic, Land, Mosaic, Davidic, New Covenant.

How many are unconditional? Four: Abrahamic, Land, Davidic, New Covenant.

What is the Abrahamic Covenant?

A covenant, firstly, is a binding agreement between parties who obligate themselves to each other. The REPUTATION of the covenant parties was at stake!

- Why are covenants said to be cut – in their being implemented?
 - The Hebrew word for covenant, b’rit, comes from a root which means "to cut" (Strong’s Concordance). Cutting was the custom of making solemn covenants wherein the parties of the covenant passed between divided parts of “victims.” Animals were typically divided into two parts with the contracting parties passing between them. The parties of the covenant were, in essence, saying, "May I be torn apart like these animals if I fail to uphold my part of this covenant." Who walked between the divided/cut animals? God (represented by a burning torch and a smoking oven [our God is a consuming fire – Heb. 12:29 - ²⁹ *For our God is a consuming fire.*])

THEREFORE, since God ALONE walked between the cut animals, the Abrahamic Covenant is...

- Unilateral – one-sided. Whose? GOD’s! God vowed HIMSELF to FULFILL the covenant.
- Unconditional – no conditions attached to Israel. Israel is not held accountable in the FULFILLMENT of this covenant.
- Promises:
 - Land – boundaries of which are found in Gen. 15:18
 - Seed – descendants (Gen. 15) and THE Seed – the Messiah (Gal. 3:15-18)
 - Blessing – salvation (Gal. 3:14)
- God OBLIGATED HIMSELF to fulfill the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant.

NOTE: concerning all three promises, land, seed, blessing, there has been some fulfillment. And, concerning the land, seed, and the blessing, there are promises yet to be fulfilled (the land boundaries have not yet been realized; the Messiah is not yet seated on King David’s throne ruling and reigning as the conquering King; and there are those yet to be saved). We need to GRASP that the fulfilled promises have been fulfilled LITERALLY! This leads us to understand that the yet-to-be fulfilled aspects of all three promises will be fulfilled LITERALLY!

The outworking of the Abrahamic Covenant

The promise of land ([Genesis 12:1](#)). God called Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees to a land that He would give him ([Genesis 12:1](#)). The boundaries of the land are given in [Genesis 15:18–21](#)

- The land aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant is expanded in [Deuteronomy 30:1–10](#), (READ) which is the Land Covenant.

The promise of a seed, in terms of physical descendants ([Genesis 12:2](#)). God promised Abraham that He would make a great nation out of him. Abraham, who was 75 years old and childless ([Genesis 12:4](#)), was promised many descendants. This promise is amplified in [Genesis 17:6](#) where God promised that nations and kings would descend from the aged patriarch.

- The promise of “the” Seed is expanded in the [Davidic Covenant](#) of II Sam. 7:12-16. “The Seed” is promised in JESUS with Messiah’s kingdom rule in the Millennial Kingdom.

The promise of blessing/salvation ([Genesis 12:3](#)). Through Abraham’s line God promised to bless Abraham and the families of the earth through the Messiah.

- This promise is amplified in the New Covenant ([Jeremiah 31:31–34](#); [Eze. 36:24-27](#)). The New Covenant speaks to Israel’s redemption/salvation [Jeremiah 31:34](#) anticipates the forgiveness of sin.

The “I will” promises from God speak to the unconditional aspect of the covenant. AND, it is noteworthy that God reaffirmed these promises amid the sins of the patriarchs, which fact further emphasizes the unconditional nature of the Abrahamic Covenant.

The Abrahamic Covenant is the GLUE of the Bible. What does that mean? How does that look in our study of the Bible?

We are studying the book of Revelation in our Enrichment class on Sunday. We can understand the book of Revelation because of the Abrahamic Covenant. (The promises God made to Israel and to the world through the Abrahamic Covenant will be fulfilled during the Millennial Kingdom on earth)

We can understand the HUGE topic of the Kingdom of God because of the Abrahamic Covenant. (The Abrahamic Covenant will be fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom on earth)

We can understand CHRISTMAS because of the Abrahamic Covenant. Luke 1:30-33 - the angel, Gabriel (Lk. 1:26) said to Mary, *Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.*³¹ *And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS.*³² *He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.*³³ *And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."*
STRAIGHT FROM THE DAVIDIC COVENANT WHICH IS AN EXPANSION OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.

Luke 1:54-55 – Mary’s response to Gabriel re: the promise of Jesus: *He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy,*⁵⁵ *as He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and to his seed forever.*

Luke 1:68-79 – what a segue from the OT into the INCARNATION – God coming in the flesh – IMMANUEL!

Luke 2:8-12 - *Now there were in the same country* (we find Mary and Joseph traveling to the City of David to be registered for the census in Lk. 2:4) *shepherds living out in the fields,* (the lowest of the low; GRACE) *keeping watch over their flock by night* (many sheep were kept for temple sacrifice).⁹ *And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord* (“Shekinah” glory of God – Whose presence is seen throughout the OT) *shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.*¹⁰ *Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy* (Isa. 52:7 - How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him Who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns.’ Isa. 41:27 - And I will give to Jerusalem one who brings good tidings) which will be to all people (Gen. 12:3 – for all people).

¹¹ *For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord* (the Savior – the One Who redeems – will be from the lineage of David – He is the Messiah, Adonai [Psa. 2]).¹² *And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.”* (The Messiah will come humbly – He would be BORN [Isa. 9:6 – Unto us a Child is born....; Isa. 7:14 – a virgin shall conceive and give birth to IMMANUEL!]) (Swaddling cloths – shepherds would know about this. WHY? Those sheep that would be sacrificed in the temple [could be 8 days old – Lev. 22:27] were wrapped in swaddling cloths when the Ewes delivered – otherwise – bruised.)

This is how you might share the INCARNATION (the Christmas account) with your Jewish friends.

We can understand why Jesus cleansed the Temple during His earthly ministry (cleansing it twice [John 2 – at the beginning of His public ministry] and following His triumphal entry into Jerusalem prior to His crucifixion) through the Abrahamic Covenant. HOW? What was the Temple called? “A house of prayer for ALL people” (Isa. 56:7; John 2:13-17; Matt. 21:13). With all the exploiting of the people in the outer court of the Gentiles – charging exorbitant rates of exchange for coinage in regard to the Temple tax that was paid at that time – and encouraging the people to buy the Temple lambs for sacrifice at elevated prices – was this a witness to the Gentiles? Were the Jews to be witnessing to the Gentiles? (Gen. 12:3)

We can understand Jewish people making aliyah – going back to Israel – because of the Abrahamic Covenant (Deut. 30:1-3....)

We can understand Jesus’ Second Coming because of the Abrahamic Covenant (to sit on the throne of David in Jerusalem and rule over the earth)

How do you understand these verses/passages?

I Sam. 17:45-46 - *Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. ⁴⁶ This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel*

This is also found in Josh. 4:24; I Kings 8:43, 60; II Kings 19:19; Psa. 67; Psa. 126:2, Eze. 36:20-23, Mal. 1:11, 14....

WHY?

What is God’s desire? Hab. 2:14 – that the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God (Gen. 12:3)!

God chose Israel to be His witness to the nations – to fulfill “all the families of the earth would be blessed” through the Promised One/the Messiah coming through Israel.

Deut. 32:10 - *He found him in a desert land and in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye.*

Zech. 2:8 - *For thus says the LORD of hosts: “He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye.*

Israel is guaranteed protection by God. And so, 1948 – against all odds – the Israel won the war of Independence. At the outset, five Arab nations invaded: Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan. 1956 – Sinai Campaign... 1967 – Six-Day War (took back

Jerusalem)... 1973 –Yom Kippur war. WHY is there God’s protection for Israel? God has chosen Israel to accomplish HIS purposes. SO – Israel is guaranteed to survive!

John 4:24b - *salvation is of the Jews* – said to the Samaritan woman at the well. How is salvation of the Jews? Gen. 12:3 – all the families of the earth will be blessed through the Jewish Messiah.

Rom. 11:15 - *For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?*

Rom. 11:11-15 - *I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall?* (Gk – pipto – to come under condemnation; to perish or to be lost; to fall into ruin; to come to an end; to disappear, to cease) *Certainly not! But through their fall* (Gk - pa rap to ma – through their lapse or deviation), *to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.*

¹² *Now if their fall* (Gk – pa rap to ma) *is riches* (abundance) *for the world, and their failure* (Gk - hat ta ma a defeat, a loss) *riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness* (Gk – pleroma – completeness; a fulfilling)!

¹³ *For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry,* ¹⁴ *if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them.* ¹⁵ *For if their being cast away* (Gk – apobole – a loss, a rejection) *is the reconciling* (Gk ka tal la ga – restoration to favor) *of the world, what will their acceptance* (Gk – pro slempsis – coming into the kingdom of God) *be but life from the dead?*

Within Scripture there’s continuity and we can understand it in light of the Abrahamic Covenant. Continuity: we see an unfolding of God’s plan of redemption that revolves around God’s PROMISES through the Abrahamic Covenant.

The fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant is solely dependent upon God. When a person is born again, our salvation is secure as it is based on JESUS FINISHED work on the cross! And our salvation is laid out for us in the Abrahamic Covenant. Yet, there are those who understand that our salvation is secure in Jesus while not grasping God’s choosing of Israel as unconditional.

If the Abrahamic Covenant is conditional (dependent upon the obedience of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the children of Israel for the fulfillment of those promises) – then not every promise of that covenant has to be fulfilled

What does that look like?

God’s promise of the land to the descendants of Abraham that we find in Gen. 15:18 would not be delivered because of the disobedience of Israel. Yet – Eze. 48!

God’s promise of seed - multiple descendants would not be fulfilled. There are 13 to 15 million Jews in the world today – amidst millennia of persecution (since Gen. 3:15)!!

God's promise of THE Seed – the Messiah – would not have been fulfilled if the deliverance of the Messiah was based on Israel's obedience alone.

During the 430 years between the OT and the NT, because of disobedience on the part of Israel, God did not send a prophetic voice to the nation of Israel. At the end of the 430 years we find John the Baptizer telling the people *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!*"(Matt. 3:1-2). So, Israel was not yet restored – not totally obedient – and **JESUS THE MESSIAH, IMMANUEL...entered the world!**

If the Abrahamic Covenant is a conditional covenant, based on Israel's obedience, what about...

God's promise of the blessing through the Messiah – salvation – offered to all the families of the earth? Under a conditional covenant, salvation be dependent upon the obedience of Israel?!!! AND, we would all be TOAST!

The Abrahamic Covenant was still in effect even after the patriarchs of Israel had sinned several times.

- Gen. 12 – Abram goes down to Egypt after God promises him the land.
 - Tells Sarai to lie
 - Pharaoh is punished.
- Gen. 20 – Abimelech...déjà vu; Abimelech is punished
- God later confirmed the covenant w/ his son, Isaac (Gen. 26:1-4)
- In spite of Isaac's sin after that confirmation (Gen. 26:6-11), God later confirmed the covenant with his son, Jacob (Gen. 28:13-15; 35:9-12; 48:3-4).
- Even though Jacob and his sons were guilty of various sins (Gen. 37:18-36; 38:12-26), Joseph regarded the covenant to be in effect at the end of his life and was convinced that it would continue to be so into the future (Gen. 50:24-26).
- Several generations after Joseph, when the people of Israel were enslaved in Egypt, God made it clear to Moses that the Abrahamic Covenant was still in effect (Ex. 2:24 - *God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.*; 6:2-8 [read])

Even after the nation of Israel had sinned in numerous ways over the course of several centuries, David regarded the Abrahamic Covenant to be in effect with Israel in his day.

I Chron. 16:15-18 - *Remember His covenant forever, the word which He commanded, for a thousand generations,* ¹⁶ *The covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac,* ¹⁷ *And confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel for an everlasting covenant,* ¹⁸ *Saying, 'To you I will give the land of Canaan as the allotment of your inheritance'*

Psa. 105:8-11 – David exhorted the Jews, *He remembers His covenant forever, the word which He commanded, for a thousand generations,* ⁹ *The covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac,* ¹⁰ *And confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant,* ¹¹ *Saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan as the allotment of your inheritance,"* Why would David exhort Jews of his day to be mindful of the Abrahamic Covenant if it was no longer in effect?