

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

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Jerusalem

“No other city is the object of such divine passion, and because of that (divine passion), no other city is the object of such contention!”

How do we understand the nation of Israel?

God created the nation of Israel (Isa. 43:1) and He chose them to receive the law, to witness to the surrounding Gentile/heathen nations re: the one true God; to serve as an instrument of blessing for the WORLD! God chose the nation of Israel to accomplish His purposes. Not all Jewish people will come to faith in Jesus.

How do we understand the Jewish people?

Physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Summation re: “Covenant and Controversy”: the covenant has always led to controversy, conflict, and contention. Which covenant? The Abrahamic Covenant.

A covenant (Hebrew *bereth, b’rit*) is a legal agreement between two or more parties. The word "covenant(s)" occurs 284 times in the Old Testament (as found in the New American Standard Bible). "Covenant(s)" occurs 37 times in the New Testament, which gives a total of 321 occurrences.

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia:

A covenant is an agreement of a solemn and binding force between two or more parties. Covenants can be made between individuals, nations, or other powerful groups (Josh. 9:6, 15; I Sam. 11:1). The early Semitic idea of a covenant was that which prevailed among the Arabs (W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, 2nd edition). This was primarily blood-brotherhood, in which two men became brothers by drinking each other’s blood. Clans were included along with their gods.

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."

We have covenant. But, why controversy? Controversy - disagreement, dispute, argument, debate, dissension, contention,

God initiated the covenant with Abram:

Gen. 12 – It was spoken. God promised Abram land, seed, a blessing.

Land – boundaries are noted in Gen. 15:18.

Seed (can be collective/singular) – multiple descendants; the Messiah

Blessing – salvation – all the families of the earth.

Gen. 15 – it was cut, it was ratified, the parties came together.

God alone passed between the slaughtered animals while Abraham was put into a deep sleep.

The Abrahamic Covenant is:

- A unilateral covenant – a one-sided covenant: on God's side. God alone has vowed to fulfill the covenant. Heb. 6:13 - *For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself,*
- An unconditional covenant – the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant is no way dependent upon Israel's obedience. God has obligated Himself to fulfill the covenant.

WHOSE LAND? A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

GOD PROMISED THE LAND OF ISRAEL TO ABRAHAM, ISAAC, JACOB, AND THEIR DESCENDANTS

The foundation of all is the Abrahamic Covenant which is God's unconditional covenant with Abram (Exalted Father)...a unilateral/one-sided covenant...the fulfillment of which is totally dependent upon God's faithfulness. THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT, BY THE WAY, IS THE CONSTITUTION OF OUR SALVATION!

GOD DEFINED THE BOUNDARIES OF THE LAND OF ISRAEL (Gen. 15:18)

This promise of the land is foundational to the expectation of the literal future Messianic Kingdom when the land grant will be fulfilled in its entirety.

GOD GAVE THE LAND OF ISRAEL TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE AS AN ETERNAL INHERITANCE

min olam v'ad olam

Jer. 7:7 – forever and ever

Jer. 25:5 – forever and ever

Biblical Hebrew usage simply has no stronger way to indicate eternity. The phrase “forever and ever” is used 13X in Scripture and most often refers to the nature of God. This time the prophet uses this unique double mention of the Hebrew term *olam* in reference to the land to demonstrate that God's promise of the land of Israel to the Jewish people would endure for all time.

GOD MADE TOTAL ENJOYMENT AND GUARANTEED HABITATION OF THE LAND OF ISRAEL CONTINGENT ON ISRAEL'S FAITHFULNESS

God's promise of the land as an eternal inheritance to Israel did not preclude the possibility that Israel might be temporarily removed from the Promised Land. God warned that disobedience could and would lead to their exile and dispersion (Lev. 26:27-28, 33; Deut. 28:58-64).

GOD'S PROMISES TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE ARE IRREVOCABLE REGARDLESS OF THEIR UNBELIEF

Rom. 11:29 - *For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.*

(Context: Israel's rejection is not final; there will be redemption, there will be restoration because God's plan cannot be thwarted!)

NOTE: from Scripture we know that only restored Israel, Israel who, as a nation, has placed their trust/faith in Jesus as their Messiah, will enjoy the entire boundaries of the land. Only believers, Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus, will enter the Millennial Kingdom.