

## THE STORY: UNDERSTANDING THE BIG PICTURE OF THE BIBLE

Week 6 – That the World May Know! Why God Chose Israel. . . Why the Abrahamic Covenant is the GLUE of the Bible

AFTER 2,000 years of dealing with MANKIND – no Jews or Gentiles, just “MANKIND” - God called ABRAM. Abram was a GENTILE. His father, Terah, was a pagan – a worshipper of other gods (Joshua 24:2). BUT GOD chose Abram. GOD created the nation of Israel through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Isaiah 43:1 – “*But now, thus says the LORD, Who created you, O Jacob, and He Who formed you, O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine. Mine?* God has a covenant with Israel.

Did God forget about the nations (Gen. 10)? About mankind? NO! God chose Israel as His redemptive tool – His evangelistic tool – to bring the truth of the one true God to the nations. The nations would witness the covenant God has with the children of Israel and they would know of the majesty, power, and faithfulness of God.

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And so, when Solomon dedicated the Temple in Jerusalem to the Lord, we read in. . . I Kings 8:41-43 - “*Moreover, concerning a foreigner, who is not of Your people Israel, but has come from a far country for Your name’s sake* <sup>42</sup> (*for they will hear of Your great name and Your strong hand and Your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this temple,* <sup>43</sup> *hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as do Your people Israel, and that they may know that this temple which I have built is called by Your name.*

The Temple was actually called a house of prayer for all nations (Isa. 56:3-7; Matt. 11:17). Jesus cleansed the Temple, displaying righteous anger, when He came to the Temple and found the outer courts – the only place where the Gentile nations could come and pray – more like a den of thieves. Jewish pilgrims from many nations came to Jerusalem three times a year to observe Passover, Shavuot/Pentecost, and Tabernacles. Merchants sold animals for sacrifice. Pilgrims carried coins from their home towns. The High Priest ordered that only certain shekels would be accepted. The money changers exchanged “unacceptable” coins for these shekels and, as such, extracted a large profit. God chose Israel to serve as a witness people to the nations. In these outer courts of the Temple, many of the Jewish people were making a mockery of the purpose for which God had chosen them. Jesus, therefore, displayed righteous anger.

God’s plan of salvation is for both Jew and Gentile: Gen. 12:3; Isa. 49:6; John 1:29; Rom. 15:7-13. Psalm 117 is the middle of the Bible! Psalm 117 speaks to all peoples praising the Lord!

*Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples! <sup>2</sup> For His merciful kindness is great toward us, and the truth of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD!*

God chose Abram. . .

Genesis 12:1-9 - Now the LORD had said to Abram: “Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup>I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. <sup>3</sup>I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” <sup>4</sup>So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him. . . . <sup>7</sup>Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your descendants I will give this land.” And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. <sup>8</sup>And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. <sup>9</sup>So Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South.

NOTE: The land between Bethel and Ai is now part of the West Bank!

God promised to make of Abram a great nation (Gen. 12:2). God promised to bless Abram (Gen. 12:2), to make his name great (Gen. 12:2) and to make him a blessing. God’s plan for Israel impacts the world.

What we need to KNOW about the Abrahamic Covenant is that it is an eternal, unilateral, unconditional covenant.

ETERNAL – forever (Gen. 17:7; Jer. 7:7; 25:5).

UNILATERAL – one-sided. On God’s side. God obligated Himself in the working out of the covenant with Abraham (Gen. 15:9-20; Heb. 6:13 - *For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself*)

UNCONDITIONAL – the outcome/fulfillment of the covenant promises rest on one party – on God! Eze. 36:22-23 - <sup>22</sup>“Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name’s sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went.’ <sup>23</sup>And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD,’ says the Lord GOD, ‘when I am hallowed in you before their eyes.

#### The outworking of the Abrahamic Covenant:

Land – the Land Covenant. Fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom.

Seed – the Davidic Covenant. Fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom.

Blessing – the New Covenant. Fulfilled (completely) in the Millennial Kingdom.

Do you see the reason for the Millennial Kingdom?

More details:

God promised Abraham and his descendants:

Land – (Gen. 15; Gen. 17; Jer. 7:7; Jer. 25:5. . . .)

We see the outworking of the land promise in the Land Covenant (Deut. 28 – Deut. 30). The promise of the land will be fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom (Eze. 48 – the division of the land in the Kingdom)



Seed – a great nation – collective seed (multiple descendants): (Gen. 15:5; Gen. 22:17; Gen. 26:4. . . .). And THE Seed – the Messiah, Who would come through the line of David (II Sam. 7; Matt. 1:1. . . .)

We see the outworking of THE Seed promise (the Messiah) in the Davidic Covenant (II Sam. 7). The promise of THE Seed will be fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom when Jesus will rule and reign from King David's throne in Jerusalem (Psa. 2; Luke 1:32-33; Rev. 20:4).

Blessing – salvation for both Jew and Gentile through the Messiah. Gal. 3:14 – that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Isa. 49:6 - *Indeed He says, “It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.”*

We see the outworking of the blessing in the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31ff).

### Chosen People

Israel has been chosen as a nation through which God will accomplish His purposes. This does NOT guarantee the salvation of every Jewish person. Being chosen to accomplish God's purposes (which are yet unfolding in our world) guarantees Israel's continued existence. We do know that at the end of the Tribulation, one third of the Jewish population left will come to know Jesus. Read Zechariah 12:10ff.

After the crucifixion of Jesus, Paul used the present tense in speaking of the Jewish people as the chosen people (Rom. 9:4).

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Israel was the only nation chosen to serve as God's instrument of blessing for the world. As such, God has Israel on a short leash! They have been given more light and, as such, are more responsible. Check out Deut. 28 (curses for disobeying; blessings for obeying); Romans 2:8-9! The world witnesses how God deals with Israel. In the midst of God chastising Israel or protecting her, the world witnesses and responds. Many times the responses on the part of the world are harsh toward Israel.

Believers in Jesus (Jew and Gentile) are chosen by God for salvation (Acts 13:48; Eph. 1:4; II Thess. 2:13).

Conflict – spiritual warfare. Israel's continued existence, guaranteed by God to accomplish His purposes (the Tribulation, the Millennial Kingdom, and the Eternal State – yet to occur) would then understandably cause conflict in the world. The enemy is at the core of this conflict. BUT GOD is in complete control!

The Abrahamic Covenant is the GLUE of the Scriptures: the Abrahamic Covenant forms the FRAMEWORK for understanding God's plan of salvation and His end time program. God's promises to Abraham through the Abrahamic Covenant are timeless.

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### Abrahamic Covenant:

Glue between Israel and the nations

Glue for understanding the prophecies of the Bible

Glue for understanding the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Bible

Glue for understanding the big picture of the Bible!

Throughout the Bible we read of the promise of the land, the seed, and the blessing.  
When we read passages that seem to tell us that God is finished with Israel:

Read the CONTEXT of the passage.

Know the CONTEXT of the Bible. Take note of these passages we're looking at today. BP those passages; include them on your chart!

Know Who God is. He is FAITHFUL to His promises. He is a God of RESTORATION.

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How serious is God in promising to Abram land, seed, and the blessing of salvation? How significant? The Abrahamic Covenant is timeless – because it is solely dependent upon God. The Abrahamic Covenant was still in effect even after the patriarchs of Israel had sinned several times.

- Gen. 12:10-20 – Abram goes down to Egypt after God promises him the land.
  - Tells Sarai to lie to Pharaoh and claim that she was Abram's sister.
  - Pharaoh is punished.
  - God's promises were to come through Isaac (Gen. 17:19; Rom. 9:7). Isaac was to be born to Abram and Sarai.
  - Here was an attempt on the part of Satan to pollute the line of the Messiah!
  - God's purposes can NEVER be thwarted.
- Gen. 20:1-18 – “deja vu” with Abimelech who took Sarah. After Abraham and Abimelech hashed things out, we read in Gen. 20:17-18 - *So Abraham prayed to God; and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants. Then they bore children; <sup>18</sup>for the LORD had closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.*
  - Again, God was protecting the polluting of the line of the Messiah.

God later confirmed the covenant w/ Abraham's 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; 6:2-8)

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 David exhorted the Jews, ‘*Be ye mindful always of his covenant; the word which he commanded to a thousand generations, even of the covenant which he made with Abraham, and of his oath unto Isaac, and hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant, saying, unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance’*

Psa. 105:8-11 - *He remembers His covenant forever, the word which He commanded, for a thousand generations, the covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac, and confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant, 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? Why would he exhort Jews to remember the covenant always? He says it is an everlasting covenant – and includes the promise of the land.

Moses promised that even though Israel would become idolatrous and evil and would be scattered and suffer because of its sin, in the latter days it would have opportunity to return to God and be obedient because God would not fail Israel, nor destroy it, nor forget the Abrahamic Covenant which He swore to their fathers (Deut. 4:25-31) (Lev. 26:42, 44-45) (Dt. 30:6; Jer. 31:31-34; Eze. 36:24-27; Eze. 37:11-14; Zech. 12:10).

It is the same people – literal Israel (the descendants of Abraham) who would depart from God and be scattered from the land – who would also have the opportunity to return to Him and be obedient in the latter days. This implies that the literal nation of Israel will still exist in the latter days – in spite of its idolatry, evil, and traumatic history. God is a God of RESTORATION!

Even after Israel had sinned throughout the “OT” history – the Holy Spirit through Zacharias, John the Immerser’s father, indicated that the Abrahamic Covenant was still in effect, ‘*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed His people and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant, David; That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us. To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant. The oath which He swore to our father, Abraham, that He would grant unto us that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear.’* (Luke 1:67-75)

The ABRAHAMIC COVENANT assures:

- Israel’s permanent existence as a nation (Jer. 31:35-37)
- Salvation offered to all the families of the earth (Gen. 12:3).
- The Millennial Kingdom (Rom. 11:15).

If the Abrahamic Covenant is unilateral and unconditional – based on God alone - God guarantees the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant. . . then every promise of that covenant must be fulfilled – or else God is unfaithful – a liar!

The Abrahamic Covenant – the CONSTITUTION OF OUR SALVATION. The Abrahamic Covenant is an unconditional agreement. God swore by HIMSELF (Heb. 6:13). Our salvation is unconditional – it's dependent solely upon God. It's not based on any merit of our own.

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 including Gen. 12:3, Rom. 11:15, Rom. 15:8-12, etc.
- . . . there's no assurance of a Millennial Kingdom (no Seed/Messiah reigning from the throne of David in Jerusalem for 1,000 years)
- . . . salvation for both Jews and Gentiles would depend on Israel's obedience!!!

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Obedience to the Mosaic Covenant (a conditional covenant – dependent upon Israel's obedience/disobedience) brought favor upon the Jewish people. Transgression of God's commandments and statutes resulted in God's removal of protection and blessing. BUT GOD has NOT finished with Israel. Israel might feel that God has forsaken them. God has dealt with them in their sin and has disciplined/chastened them. The nations have watched Who this God is Who has a relationship with Israel.

What about the victories we see Israel enjoying ('48; '56; '67; '73; war with Hamas)? God has guaranteed the survival of Israel.

God will come against those who come against Israel and He will come against those who attempt to divide His land.

Lev. 25:23 – the land is Mine.

Joel 3:1-2 - *For behold, in those days and at that time, when I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup>I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; they have also divided up My land.*

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.* (Deut. 32:10).

Zech. 12:3 - *And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it*

Matt. 25:31-46 – the judgment of the nations who come against Israel during the Tribulation.

*Storm Clouds on the Horizon*, edited by Charlie Dyer (p. 10) – “If you believe in unconditional promises – then Israel becomes the strategic player in the future history of

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this world. Especially when that belief encompasses the promise that Christ's return is to the Mt. of Olives outside of Jerusalem and that He will establish His reign on the throne of David, fulfilling the Davidic Covenant."

**QUESTIONS:**

What was new to you?

Why did God choose Israel? Based on what? To do what?

How is the Abrahamic Covenant the GLUE of the Bible?

If you don't believe that the Abrahamic Covenant is the glue of the Bible, what do you understand to be the glue that ties the Bible together?

Regarding what do you need further clarification?

**HOMEWORK:**

Read these notes again.

If you have a different viewpoint, write it out and support it with Scripture.

Read the handout for week 7 when you receive it.

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