

The Covenant God Made With Abraham

Quote:

“And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.”

Genesis 22:16-18

Make a Bible Insert of the Promise to Abraham - Stick it in your Bible adjacent to Genesis 12-13

The Promise To Abraham

1. The Importance of the Promise

- The promises made to Abraham form the foundation hope of the nation of Israel, the apostles and the Lord Jesus Christ himself ([Acts 26:6-8](#)).
- It comprises the Gospel ([Gal.3:7-9](#) - “In thee shall all nations be blessed”). Paul is showing that the blessing of Abraham can be extended to all those who hear and believe the Gospel message, become part of Abraham’s seed through baptism into Christ, and live faithful lives like Abraham.
- The promises made to Abraham therefore are pivotal to our faith. They ought to govern our lives as they form the very basis of our hope in Christ.
- A clear understanding and belief of the promises made to Abraham will teach us the path to eternal life, for without them, we are “without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world” ([Eph.2:12](#))

2. The Promises Have Not Yet Been Fulfilled

- When Israel took possession of the land of Canaan under Joshua, these promises were only partially fulfilled ([Deut.9:5; 10:22](#)). Israel did not possess the land forever as the Abrahamic Covenant requires ([Gen 13:14-15](#)), but were dispossessed from it through disobedience.
- The Jews occupied the land under the law of Moses, in which it remained God’s. They did not possess the title deeds, and had no right to sell the land ([Lev 25:23; Rom 4:13](#)).
- The terms of the covenant could never be fulfilled through the Law of Moses. The scriptures show that the covenants were ratified through Christ ([Rom.15:8](#)) and will only be fulfilled at his coming ([Acts 3:20-21, 24-26](#)).

3. The Details of the Promise

The promises made to Abraham gradually revealed more detail. They were given over many years, during which Abraham learnt more and more about Yahweh’s great promises.

Place/ Circumstances	The Promise
UR AND HARAN - The Initial Call (Genesis 12:1-3 ; Acts 7:2-4).	A CONDITIONAL promise, whereby Abraham could be BLESSED by becoming a great nation, his name great, and his blessing extended to others.

Significance:

“And I will make of thee a great nation” – NATIONAL PROMISE - Not completely fulfilled, for through disobedience Israel was scattered amongst the nations. This promise will be completely fulfilled at the return of Christ when Israel will be united under their king in the land promised to Abraham ([Ezek 37:21-22](#)) and will be favoured among the nations, no longer despised but now a blessed people ([Zech 8:13, 23](#)).

“and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing” – A PERSONAL blessing to Abraham, which was partially fulfilled in his lifetime ([Isa 51:2](#)), but which will be ultimately fulfilled in the kingdom. See [Luke 13:28-29](#).

“And I will bless them that bless thee” - FAMILY PROMISE - Those who bless Abraham - walk in his footsteps. These embrace the promises, and become part of the family of Abraham, and are thus blessed. This also applies in measure to those who treat Abraham and his people well. They are in measure blessed.

“and curse him that curseth thee” – Lit - “the despisers of thee I will curse”. This class of people have treated lightly the things pertaining to the promises. Natural eg. - Germany tried to crush the Jews (WWII), but was itself crushed.

“and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” – INTERNATIONAL PROMISE - Paul explains that this blessing summarises the Gospel message ([Gal 3:8-9](#)) in which both Jews and Gentiles are blessed by faith, which requires us to believe and act on that belief in baptism ([Gal 3:14-16, 26-29](#)). The blessing of Abraham is the forgiveness of sins or justification (a declaring righteous or just - only possible by having our sins forgiven - [Rom 4:1-8](#); [Eph 4:32](#)) and turning men away from their sins, and leading them to righteousness ([Acts 3:25-26](#); [Rom 8:3-4](#); [2 Cor 5:19-21](#)).

The ultimate and full sense in which this promise will be fulfilled must await the coming of Jesus and the establishment of his government of peace, when those that be “of faith” will be granted eternal life in the Kingdom of God ([Gal 3:29](#)) and all the inhabitants of the earth shall be brought to an understanding of this glorious covenant, and when, in the fulness of time, the Son relinquishes the kingdom to the Father, that God may be “all in all” ([Psa 72:17](#); [Jer 4:2](#); [1 Cor 15:23-28](#)).

Place/ Circumstances	The Promise
SHECHEM - After Crossing the Euphrates and entering into Canaan (Genesis 12:7)	For the first time, Abram is promised that his SEED would inherit the LAND of Canaan.

Who is this seed?

Christ – ONE individual - the Lord Jesus Christ ([Gal 3:16](#); [Mat.1:1](#)). This is also seen when we consider that the same promises made to Isaac ([Gen 26:3-5](#)) and Jacob ([Gen.28:13-14](#)). The fulfilment of these promises was not to be found in Isaac and Jacob, but in a future singular seed – the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Saints – Those baptised into Christ also become part of Abraham’s seed ([Gal.3:26-29](#)). Therefore, being a natural descendent of Abraham (a Jew) does not automatically entitle one to be an inheritor of the promises ([Mat.3:9](#); [John 8:33-40](#); [Rom 9:6-8](#)).

True children of Abraham are those who display the same faith ([Gal.3:7](#)) and works ([John 8:39-42](#); [Gen 18:19](#)) as he did. Therefore, faith and obedience are the family characteristics of the true seed of Abraham.

BETHEL - After Separating from Lot (Genesis 13:14-17)	After being unselfish to Lot, ABRAM is personally promised the entire land. He is also told for the first time that the land would be given to an INNUMERABLE seed FOREVER.
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Significance:

Resurrection: For the first time, Abram is told that he would personally receive this land, as an inheritance forever.

Therefore Abraham must be raised from the dead and be given eternal life. Abraham did not receive any of the promises ([Heb 11:13, 39](#); [Acts 7:5](#)) in his lifetime. This is emphasised when Abraham had to buy a burying place for Sarah and himself ([Gen.23:17-20](#)).

Abraham will be resurrected and he will be in the kingdom to receive eternal life ([Luke 13:28](#); [20:37-38](#)).

God’s Gift: Abraham is also told for the first time that the land was to be GIVEN to him.

It was not earned by “works of law”, but given to him by God’s grace ([Eph.2:6-8](#)). The promises were God’s gift to Abraham, provided to him on account of his faith and obedience to God.

Place/ Circumstances	The Promise
HEBRON - After demonstrating his faith in God, which was counted to him for righteousness (Genesis 15:18-21)	God's promise was made by a sacrificial COVENANT. God also DEFINED THE BOUNDARIES of the land that Abram's seed would receive.

Significance:

For the first time Yahweh proclaimed the promises to him as a covenant. These events pointed to the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ through which the covenant would be confirmed (Rom 15:8; Isa 42:6; 49:8; Matt 26:28).

The literal Hebrew is "to cut a covenant". Two parties enter into a covenant by cutting sacrifices in half, then passing between the pieces together. Each party is bound by the terms of the covenant for life. The fate of the covenant victim would also be the fate of the party that would break the covenant (cp Gen 15:10-11; Jer 34:18-20).

Yahweh therefore assures Abraham of His promises by making a covenant (Psa.105:8-11).

The fate of those who break their covenant with Yahweh (Psa.50:5) through the Lord Jesus Christ, is to be "cut asunder" or "cut off" (Mat.24:51, Luke 12:46; Rom 11:22).

LAND OF MORIAH – After demonstrating unswerving obedience, in being prepared to sacrifice Isaac (Gen 22:16-18)	God's promise was sworn by an OATH. His seed would be victorious by POSSESSING THE GATES OF HIS ENEMIES, and IN HIS SEED all nations shall be blessed.
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Significance:

Yahweh swore by himself because he could swear by no greater (Heb 6:13-18) - He swore an oath by His very existence. It is therefore an absolute certainty (Gen 24:7; 26:3; 50:24; Exod 13:5,11; Mic 7:20; Luke 1:72-73).