



Week Four: The Covenants

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

The framework or foundation of biblical revelation. We could say everything in Scripture from Genesis 12 on is the unfolding and application of the Abrahamic Covenant.

The concept of a covenant – an agreement between two people that bound them together with common interests and responsibilities. Covenants usually promised blessings and cursings.

The Beginning of the Abrahamic Covenant – Genesis 12:1-3

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

Notice the personal, national, universal, and unconditional aspects of this covenant.

God's covenant with Abraham includes a three-fold promise of land, seed, and blessing (LSB).

God reaffirms His covenant to Abraham numerous times throughout the Bible:

- Genesis 15:17-18 – God's covenant is unconditional. God alone walks through sacrificed animals.
- Genesis 17:1-8 – God changes Abram's name to Abraham, a father of many nations.
- Genesis 26:3-4 – God reaffirms the Abrahamic covenant to Isaac.
- Genesis 28:13-14 – God reaffirms the Abrahamic Covenant to Jacob.
- Exodus 2:24 – God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- Deuteronomy 9:5 – God confirmed the oath which He swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- 1 Chronicles 16:14-18 – God confirmed His covenant with Abraham as an everlasting covenant.
- Micah 7:20 – God will show steadfast love based on the oath He swore to Abraham.
- Luke 1:72-73 – God will remember His holy covenant, the oath He swore to Abraham.
- Hebrews 6:13-20 – God's covenant with Abraham included blessing the nations and Israel.

Summary: The Abrahamic Covenant was an unconditional covenant with Israel, dependent on God alone for its fulfillment. It was also an everlasting covenant, based purely on the gracious promises of God. “There may be delays, postponements, and chastisements, but an eternal covenant cannot, if God cannot deny Himself, be abrogated.” Charles Ryrie, *The Basis of the Premillennial Faith*, p. 53.

The three “sub-covenants” of the Abrahamic Covenant are the Land, Davidic, and New Covenant. The Mosaic Covenant was temporary for Israel until Christ came and fulfilled law – Galatians 3:15-19.

THE PALESTINIAN (LAND) COVENANT

Part of God’s covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, includes the promise of a piece of real estate in the Middle East. This promise is also unconditional and eternal: Genesis 17:8 “And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.”

While the promise of this land was unconditional, Israel’s use of the land depended on her obedience to God – Deuteronomy 30:1-10.

The OT prophets repeatedly assured Israel that God would restore her to her land forever: Ezekiel 39:25-26 “Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel, and I will be jealous for my holy name. They shall forget their shame and all the treachery they have practiced against me, when they dwell securely in their land with none to make them afraid.” See Jeremiah 23:3-6

But now that Christ has come, interpreting the Old Testament in light of the New Testament, we know that all these land promises really refer to the blessings of being in Christ or speak of heaven. True or False? Explain.

THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

The Davidic Covenant, first mentioned in 2 Samuel 7, is the development of the “seed” promise in the Abrahamic Covenant.

It is thrilling to watch God unfold His plan down through the centuries through His chosen seed – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, David, and then, 1000 years later, Christ Himself is born as the seed of Abraham, to rule on the throne of His father David forever! Track these references:

2 Samuel 7:12-16 When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart

from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever."

Psalm 89:3-4 You have said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: 'I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.'" Selah.

Isaiah 9:7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Luke 1:30-33 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

There are three key aspects to the Davidic Covenant which Christ will fulfill: A house – the nation of Israel; a throne – rulership over Israel; and a kingdom – a realm over which Christ, the Son of David, will rule.

Dispensational Premillennialism sees the fulfillment of this Davidic Covenant as future, when Christ returns and rules on this present earth over the nation of Israel.

Most Amillennialism and Post-Millennialism see this covenant as already fulfilled, with Christ presently sitting on the David's throne from heaven and ruling over a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of believers, the church. But no where are we told Christ is now sitting on David's throne ruling over a spiritual "Israel." He is seated at God's right hand ruling His people and serving as our High Priest (Hebrews 4:16)

THE NEW COVENANT

In the Abrahamic Covenant God promised to bring blessing to the entire world through Abraham's seed. This is the New Covenant, promised first to Israel but today applied to the church. In the future God will fulfill the New Covenant with the remnant of Israel during the tribulation period. It is important to remember that believers in the Old Testament times were saved the same way we are saved today, by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. However, they were looking forward to God's provision of salvation in Christ, and we look back from our standpoint in history.

God promises the New Covenant to Israel in Jeremiah 31:31-34; 32:37-41; and Ezekiel 36:24-28. Contained in these promises are:

1. The Law written on hearts – regeneration.
2. Personal relationship with God.

3. Forgiveness of sins – justification.
4. Fear of God in the hearts.
5. Assurance God will not turn away.
6. Cleansing from evil – sanctification.
7. A new heart – regeneration.
8. The indwelling Spirit.
9. Desire to obey God from the heart.

According to Romans 11:25-27, when will God fulfill the New Covenant with Israel?

How does the Church participate in the New Covenant? See Matthew 26:27-28; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Hebrews 8:8-13.