

The Covenants - Abrahamic

The God of the Bible is a Covenant making God. The key provisions and guarantees of Redemption are built on Covenants. (*Solemn, binding contracts*)

God's commitment to and relationship with Israel is also based principally on a Covenant, God's Covenant with Abraham.

1. *The details of the Abrahamic Covenant -*

Covenants have a moment – they happen! Like a marriage, it happens on a day, at a place and at a time. This Covenant has a series of moments (Genesis 12:1 – 3; 15:4 - 5 and Genesis 22:16 – 18) NOTE – the Covenant making process described In Genesis 15 records the sacrificing of animals.

The nature of this Covenant ... In Genesis 15 Abraham and God did not walk together between the pieces of the animals. God put Abraham in a deep sleep and only God -- in the form of a smoking oven and a flaming torch (Genesis 15:17) -- walked between the pieces of the animals.

The Abrahamic Covenant might be described as "*unconditional*", in fact in Genesis 22:16 God says "*By myself I have sworn ...*"

The Promises contained in this Covenant ... there are a number, but for simplicity here are the three central elements of the Abrahamic covenant: -

- A PEOPLE, a **great nation** was to come out of Abraham, namely, the nation of Israel (Genesis 12:2; 13:16; 15:5; 17:1-2, 7; 22:17b) Present in these promises is the reference to 'a seed' in which Paul saw as the promise of the Messiah coming through the Jewish people.
- A LAND, Abraham was promised **a land** -- specifically, the Land of Canaan (Genesis 12:1, 7; 13:14-15, 17; 15:17-21; 17:8). Later we know that the privilege of living in the land under God's blessing is conditioned upon their obedience (see, for example, Deuteronomy 28-29), however, their national obedience or lack of it, does not cancel the promise of God to Abraham; the land is promised to the Jewish people by Covenantal right.
- A BLESSING, He would be blessed and in Abraham **all the earth will ultimately be blessed**, a promise of Gentile blessing (12:3c; 22:18)

2. *The implications of the Abrahamic Covenant*

It is when we begin to consider the implications of this covenant that some of the issues facing us as the Church become apparent. '*God is not finished with Israel - He never was and He is not now*'.

This Covenant means that God has bound Himself to its fulfillment ... It can be stated no more emphatically than Jeremiah 31:35 – 37. So this matter is not about my

choice, it is about God's choice. Psalm 132:13 ... *'The Lord has chosen Zion'*. Psalm 135:4 ... *'For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.'* Romans 9:13 ... *"As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."* So this is not about my or your choosing - God has chosen. He has chosen this nation, and He has chosen Zion. That's why there is blessing in these things - this is something that God is committed to.

This Covenant and God's commitment to it ... have eschatological consequences.

There is underlying the whole theme of the *'end times'* the notion that History is not a random series of events, but rather something that ebbs and flows according to will and purpose of God. Put another way - God is not reacting to History, rather History is reacting to God. As someone said - *'History is His story!'*

God has chosen – to make Israel and Jerusalem the focal point of Redemptive History. As we look to the Second Coming of Jesus the focus of history will move inevitably toward the Middle East, toward Israel and toward Zion. God says in Zechariah 12:2 ... *'I will make Jerusalem a drugged cup'* and again in 14:2 ... *'I will gather the nations against Jerusalem'*. Armageddon is not a moment in History, it is an objective in history ... History flows toward it!

This Covenant also has Redemptive implications for Israel. God promised Abraham children like the stars in the heavens and the sand on the beach. Are these children just Gentile converts? Has the grafting become the tree? No – these children are the glorious Body of Christ; in which both Jew and Gentile have become part of the household of God.

We need to remember that it is the hardness of heart and the temporary blindness of the Jewish people that has brought salvation to the Gentiles. God is obliged in His Covenant promise to Abraham to give him children who are from his loins. What will the restoration and salvation of the Jewish people bring about – life from the dead.

Israel's redemption holds in it the very promise of the future. Zechariah talks of a day when they will 'look' upon Him and will 'weep' for a son (Zech 12:10), and that in that day God will open up a *'fountain of cleansing'* (Zech 13:1). I believe that Israel's redemption is part of God's promise to Abraham – I will give you children! Children from your seed!