

Is Abraham's Covenant A Promise For Us?

Yes!

It is said that the Bible is a circle.

(Cf Ecclesiastes 1:9).

Times past apply promises to us today, that God made thousands of years ago.

One such promise is told through one of our earliest patriarchs, Abraham, telling a story that still reads into our lives today.

God did something very special through Abraham, that benefits more than just Abraham!

Fast forward to today... we're called "seeds" of Abraham (Gal. 3:29).

God divides, elects, and separates people and nations to be set apart for God's purposes. He often chooses them from before time began. (Deuteronomy 7:6, Ephesians 1:4-5, Romans 8:29-30).

From the very elect of these people, God established covenants. Special relationships designed to fulfill God's purposes and promises. Abraham was one of these people.

He became the first patriarch known as the "father of the faithful", because in him faith came to life.

While God knew "Abram" would be called to faith, He first had to call him out of a life of "Chaldean" pagan culture; and while his family joined him on the road trip from Ur to Canaan, God's covenant would ultimately be mantled upon Abraham only.

GENESIS 11:27-32

"Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan, but when they came to Haran, they settled there" (Gen. 11:31).

Abraham's walk with God would carry with it a big promotion for his willingness to go where God was wanting to take him (and his wife Sarah). The details of Abraham's new life are outlined by God Himself in Genesis 17.

“I am God Almighty; walk before me faithfully and be blameless. Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers.” At this, Abram fell face down, and God said to him, ***“As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations.”*** (Genesis 17:3-5)

Abraham's new name would now be characteristic of his “calling” that he is about to fulfill, through faith and obedience to God's plans. Abraham literally translates to “Father of Nations”.

God chose Abraham to ultimately begin this process of first being “called” to belong to God. A great act of faith. In order for Abraham to “father many nations”, he would have to start with one. That would be Israel. They became the nation through which the “Good News” (the gospel) was brought to the world for the salvation of all.

In Isaiah 42:6-7, God revealed His character in this declaration to Israel: "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness."

This was fulfilled through Abraham as the first of a series of covenants God would make with key people in the establishment of a 'flagship' nation (Israel) called by God to be an example to the world.

In doing this, God would be able to show the ways He is God to a people called to be like Him, which would "reach to the ends of the earth".

Abraham's life, set the stage (approx. 2000 years ahead of schedule) for Jesus to ultimately redeem the whole world through one final covenant the "New Covenant" which is made through faith. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

God says in Isaiah 49:6, "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant (foreshadowed as Jesus) to restore the tribes of Jacob, and bring back those of Israel I have kept; I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."

The Psalm writers prayed that:

“... all the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD” (22:27).

“... your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations” (67:2).

“... all nations be blessed” (72:17).

God therefore, chooses Abraham for this prophetic mission of creating what would be Israel, or “God’s chosen people”, His flagship nation.

God’s promise to Abraham models His heart towards humanity. God chose Israel to be a light to the nations, the hands who recorded God’s Word, the prophetic fulfillment and the line from which our Messiah would come, and Israel would be a visible demonstration of an invisible God, revealing His power, His ways, and His righteous judgment.

The mission of God has
always been for the world
to know Him as God.

What did God promise Abraham?

“I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing.” (Genesis 12:2). This is a patriarchal blessing that applies to us in Christ. This means God foreknew that two covenants would become the ultimate fulfillment of this promise.

The Abrahamic Covenant and the “New Covenant” in Christ which is for the whole world.

These three promises focus on blessing for the entire world through Abraham and his family (his seed).

So, these blessings promised to Abraham continue with us even today! It infers we both receive and become a blessing! It is ultimately wrapped up in the promise of posterity, protection, privilege and favor. God will command the blessings, even through troublesome times.

Being the heir of a patriarch whose name “is great” implies that the mantle of greatness is passed onto that heir. We are heirs of Abraham’s seed to which this blessing continues. We ultimately have free-will, yet the favor of God is there for us to walk in the greatness of such a calling as an heir to the blessings of Abraham.

How do you know you are officially a seed of Abraham? You have a covenant with Christ.

Galatians 3:26-29: "For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise" (ESV)

The greatness promised to Abraham is fulfilled in us when we are just as believing in God and have faith in His promises. This is the whole thrust of the gospel of Christ. We are saved and redeemed through Jesus’ death, and so we are raised with Him in life. Raised and distinguished by the greatness of God’s benefits to our mortal lives now, and raised in the future hope of our promised resurrection into glory!

The Lord promised Abraham that through his descendants “shall all the families of the earth be blessed, including with salvation, and life with God forever!” We’re grafted into the promise of this covenant through our salvation in Christ!

When the Gentiles accept Christ, they are immediately grafted into Israel. Paul uses the analogy of a cultivated olive tree (representing Jesus or the Jewish messiah) into which wild olive trees were grafted (this represents “Gentiles”: non-Israelite Children of God “in Christ”) Romans 11:24. This means we are rightful heirs of all that the Father has. It also means we are heirs of Abraham.

The first promise of a “great nation” in Genesis 12:2 contrasts with the final promise in 12:3 “in you all families of the earth will be blessed.”

A future promise emerges by God in this passage (Genesis 12:3): that a kingdom ruled by God will come into existence and will be far more significant than any other man-made kingdom of this world.

...This refers to the Millennial Kingdom. A final nation of glorified people through the finished work of the cross by those who “carried” theirs.

Psalms 45, 68, 89, and Joel 3:17-21, and Psalms 72:1-8, 79:13, 113:4-9, and 145.

So, How are Abraham’s blessings transferred to us?

1. We are either called or chosen. God does this to “sanctify” us for His good purpose(s). Sanctification comes when we agree to enter into a covenant with God or a special relationship, like Abraham did. Ours for today is the “New Covenant” in Christ and it includes Abraham’s blessings. We enter into it freely by our faith and our willingness to walk in the image of Christ and in his ways. The Holy Spirit then gives us the power (“grace”) to live for God and to walk in the ways of God’s holiness which means “set apart”. Sanctification means to be cleansed or purified in a specific way, and set apart to be used by God for something pretty special. Once something is “consecrated” (the work of the Holy Spirit in us), it is holy, or fit for use by God. *Under the Old Covenant, you sanctified yourself, under the New Covenant, Jesus is your sanctification. Under the OC, you cleansed your outer man. Under the NC, Jesus cleanses your inner man.*
2. The Promise of Justification. In another passage (Genesis 15:6), God also promised Abraham the gift of justification. He declared Abraham righteous before him because of Abraham’s faith. God had promised to act on Abraham’s behalf. The appropriate response to this was faith. Abraham had to learn to trust God for these promises. But in the end, he trusted God to keep his word even in the face of all appearances. His first act of faith was to leave his homeland to go to an unknown land God said He would show him. Most significantly, he trusted God for an heir through whom the promised nation would come, even though he and his wife were beyond child-bearing years. In response to that faith, God declared Abraham justified. That is, He promised to forgive Abraham’s sin: past, present, and future.

3. We receive the mantle of “greatness” aligned with the path and the fulfillment of destiny we’ve individually been called to. Just like God asked “Abram” who He renamed Abraham. God took Abraham from a place of darkness to a new position in the Kingdom of God with a new name to match his “crown” of favor.

Our destiny is intertwined with the inheritance we receive from God, who has chosen us and works everything according to His plan for our lives.

“I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve.” Jeremiah 17:10

4. We qualify in the predestination of “sonship” (sons/daughters of God) Romans 8:14, 19, 29-30, Romans 9:26. In the Old Testament, “firstfruits” were the first fruit of the harvest which belonged to God. He then guaranteed the rest of the harvest would come in. Firstborn sons of God are the “firstfruits of the spirit” (Romans 8:23). The presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer is God’s guarantee of the fullness of the “harvest” of redemption (harvest of souls in the promise of a resurrection of believers patterned after Christ’s). Firstfruits are God’s first born redeemed by Christ’s blood. We are holy to the LORD, the firstfruits of His harvest (Jeremiah 2:3), or God’s “elect”.
5. The LORD will command the blessing of all you put your hand to (Cf. Deuteronomy 28:8, Psalm 1). Whatever you do, in the goodness of God, will prosper.
6. We Are “Spiritually” Included. This becomes clear in the New Testament. Many Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah. As the apostle Paul wrestled with this troubling fact, he wrote, “Being descendants of Abraham doesn’t make them truly Abraham’s children” and “Abraham’s physical descendants are not necessarily children of God” (Romans 9:7-8). In Galatians 3, he took this one step further: **“The real children of Abraham are those who put their faith in God”** just as Abraham trusted God (Galatians 3:7). This includes people who are not Jewish (verse 14): “Through Christ Jesus, God has blessed the Gentiles with the same blessing he promised to Abraham.” In conclusion, Paul says (verse 29), “And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God’s promise to Abraham belongs to you.”

The promises God made to Abraham fall into three categories. First, God promised a great posterity (“a great nation”) and a land for them to live in (“the land that I will show you”). This refers to the people of Israel, through whom came the prophets, the Scriptures, and the Messiah himself. Second, God promised to extend his blessings beyond Abraham and beyond his descendants until “all the families on earth will be blessed through you”). This promise eventually culminated in the death and resurrection of Abraham’s greatest descendant, Jesus Christ – the Savior of the world.

Ultimately, the covenant that began with Abraham was fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Just like Abraham, we also have to face testing and trials by God to be refined like silver and tested like Gold (Zechariah 13:9). Why?

In order to hold the blessings and the authority that come with the “wait” weight of promise from God upon our lives when we walk in right relationship with Him. A promise is revealed to those who do:

...”But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.”

Sincerely,
Inner Session

