

The Story of the Bible

The Abrahamic Covenant

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January 6, 2018

Preliminary Comments:

- Because they address different subject matter, none of the covenants supersede or nullify a previous covenant. Otherwise the earlier promises would be broken.
- Put simply, to replace Israel is to break promises to Israel.
- No Israelite was ever saved from his sin by obedience to any covenant requirements.
- Each covenant has not only the literal meaning but there runs in most cases a parallel spiritual meaning. For example, Abraham has physical descendants but also heirs according to faith.

Contractual Comments:

- Covenants vs. Contracts
 - Contracts include covenants but is a broader term. Covenants are contained within contracts.
 - Formalities were required until recently.
- Parties vs. Beneficiaries
- Terms vs. Terminations
 - Contracts expire when the term runs out.
 - Covenants can end with or survive both terms and terminations.
- Unilateral vs. Bilateral:
 - Bargaining, negotiating or even written agreements are not always necessary, as long as there is consideration.
 - Unilateral promises are enforceable when there is reliance.
- Conditional vs. Unconditional
 - Compare "Unconditional Surrender" and Out clauses
 - Preconditions vs. Conditions Subsequent
 - Is obedience by the offspring a condition subsequent?

God's Promises to Abraham:

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

Three Promises to Abram - Genesis 12:1-3

- **12** The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.
 - ² “I will make you into a great nation, and *I will bless you*; **12** The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.
 - I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ^[a]
³ *I will bless those who bless you,* and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”
- GEN 12
 - Parties: God and Abram
 - Beneficiaries:
 - Abram’s descendants
 - Those who bless Abram
 - All people of earth
 - God’s Promises:
 - Land
 - Nation
 - Name
 - Blessings
 - Conditions: Abram move to Canaan
 - Term/Termination: N/A

Land and Offspring Promises - Genesis 13:14-18

- ¹⁴ The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, “Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. ¹⁵ All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring^[a] forever.
 - ¹⁶ I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. ¹⁷ Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for **I am giving it to you.**”
 - ¹⁸ So Abram went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he pitched his tents. *There he built an altar to the LORD.*
- GEN 13
 - Parties: God and Abram
 - Beneficiaries:
 - Abram’s descendants
 - Those who bless Abram
 - All people of earth
 - God’s Promises:
 - Land **all land seen is conveyed**
 - Nation **Offspring like dust of earth**
 - Name
 - Blessings
 - Conditions: Abram move to Canaan
 - Term/Termination: **forever**

Offspring Promise - Genesis 15:1-6

- **15** After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision:
- “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield your very great reward.”
- ² But Abram said, “Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” ³ And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.”
- ⁴ Then the word of the LORD came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.” ⁵ He took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”
- ⁶ *Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.*
- **GEN 15**
- Parties: God and Abram
- Beneficiaries:
 - Abram’s descendants
 - Those who bless Abram
 - All people of earth
- God’s Promises:
 - Land **all land seen is conveyed**
 - Nation **Offspring like dust of earth & stars**
 - Name
 - Blessings
- Conditions: Abram move to Canaan
- Term/Termination: **forever**

Land Promise: Genesis 15:7-21

- ⁷ He also said to him, *“I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it.”*⁸ But Abram said, “Sovereign LORD, *how can I know that I will gain possession of it?*”
 - ⁹ So the LORD said to him, “Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon.”¹⁰ Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half.¹¹ Then birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away.
 - ¹² ...¹⁷ When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. ¹⁸ **On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, “To your descendants I give this land,** from the Wadi^[e] of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates— ¹⁹ the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, ²⁰ Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, ²¹ Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites.”
- GEN 15
 - Parties: God and Abram
 - Beneficiaries:
 - Abram’s descendants
 - Those who bless Abram
 - All people of earth
 - God’s Promises:
 - Land **all land seen is conveyed title and possession to descendants and scope clarified**
 - Nation **Offspring like dust of earth & stars**
 - Name
 - Blessings
 - Conditions: Abram move to Canaan
 - Term/Termination: **forever**

Abraham's Offspring: Genesis 17:1-9

- **17** When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, “I am God Almighty; **walk before me faithfully and be blameless.** **2** **Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers.”**³ Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, **4** “As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. **5** No longer will you be called Abram^l your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. **6** **I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you.** **7** I will establish my covenant as an **everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.** **8** The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.”⁹ Then God said to Abraham, “As for you, ***you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come.***

Sign Of Circumcision Genesis 17:10-18

- ¹⁰ This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹ You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. ¹² For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner—those who are not your offspring. ¹³ Whether born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. **My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant.** ¹⁴ Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”
- ¹⁵ God also said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. ¹⁶ I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.”
- ¹⁷ Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, “Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?” ¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, “If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!”

Other Blessings Promised - Genesis 17:19-27

- ¹⁹ Then God said, “Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. **I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.**
- ²⁰ And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation. ²¹ But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year. ²² When he had finished speaking with Abraham, God went up from him.
- ²³ On that very day Abraham took his son Ishmael and all those born in his household or bought with his money, every male in his household, and circumcised them, as God told him. ²⁴ Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised, ²⁵ and his son Ishmael was thirteen; ²⁶ Abraham and his son Ishmael were both circumcised on that very day. ²⁷ And every male in Abraham’s household, including those born in his household or bought from a foreigner, was circumcised with him.

Terms and Conditions:

GENESIS 12 13 AND 15

- Parties: God and Abram
 - Beneficiaries:
 - Abram's descendants
 - Those who bless Abram
 - All people of earth
 - God's Promises:
 - Land **all land seen is conveyed title and possession to descendants and scope clarified**
 - Nation **Offspring like dust of earth & stars**
 - Name
 - Blessings
 - Conditions: Abram move to Canaan
 - Term/Termination: **forever everlasting covenant**
 - **Everlasting possession**
 - Man's Obligation: **circumcision**
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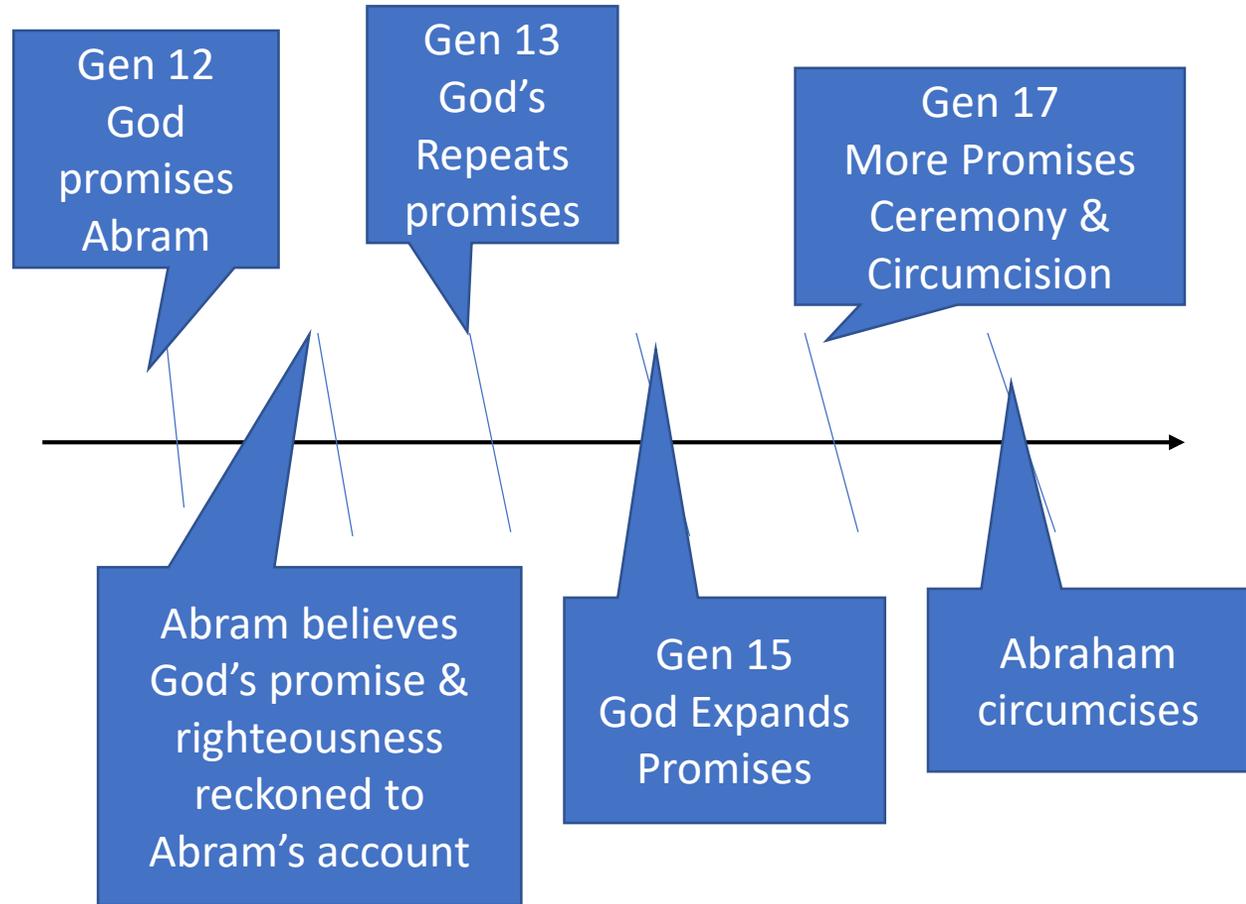
GENESIS 17

- V.1-2 “walk before me faithfully and be blameless² Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers”
- V.4 You will be the father of many nations
- V. 7-8 everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you;
- V. 10-11 “This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹ You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you.”

God's Promises to Abraham: The Genesis Chronology

Faith Precedes Circumcision

- Genesis 12:1-3
- Genesis 13:14-18
- Genesis 15:1-21
- Genesis 17:1-27



God's Promises to Abraham: New Testament Clarifications

Land Promise and Circumcision Acts 7:2-8

- ² And he said, “Hear me, brethren and fathers! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in ¹Haran, ³ and said to him, ‘LEAVE YOUR COUNTRY AND YOUR RELATIVES, AND COME INTO THE LAND THAT I WILL SHOW YOU.’ ⁴ Then he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. From there, after his father died, God had him move to this country in which you are now living.
- ⁵ But He gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot of ground, and yet, even when he had no child, He promised that HE WOULD GIVE IT TO HIM AS A POSSESSION, AND TO HIS DESCENDANTS AFTER HIM.
- ⁶ But God spoke to this effect, that his DESCENDANTS WOULD BE ALIENS IN A FOREIGN LAND, AND THAT THEY WOULD BE ENSLAVED AND MISTREATED FOR FOUR HUNDRED YEARS. ⁷ ‘AND WHATEVER NATION TO WHICH THEY WILL BE IN BONDAGE I MYSELF WILL JUDGE,’ said God, ‘AND AFTER THAT THEY WILL COME OUT AND SERVE ME IN THIS PLACE.’
- ⁸ And He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so *Abraham* became the father of Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac *became the father of* Jacob, and Jacob *of* the twelve patriarchs.

Faith vs. Circumcision - Romans 4:9-12

- ⁹ Is **this blessing** then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, “FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.”¹⁰ How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? **Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised;**¹¹ **and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them,** ¹² and the ***father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith*** of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.

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Abraham as Father of us All Romans 4:13-18

- ¹³ For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. ...¹⁴ For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; ¹⁵ for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation.
- ¹⁶ For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,¹⁷ (as it is written, "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU") in the presence of Him whom he believed, *even* God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. ¹⁸ In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR^[t] DESCENDANTS BE."

Abraham's Descendants not of flesh only

Romans 9:6-8

- ⁶ But *it is* not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel;
- ⁷ nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED."
- ⁸ That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

Promises to Abraham Came Before the Law

Galatians 3:16-18

- ¹⁶ **The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “and to your seed,” meaning one person, who is Christ.** ¹⁷ What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on the promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.

Christians are now Abraham's offspring

Galatians 3:26-29

- ²⁶ So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ **If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.**

Those with Faith are Abraham's offspring

Galatians 3:7-9

- ⁷ Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham.
- ⁸ Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you."
- ⁹ So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith

Blessings Upon Gentiles - Galatians 3:14

- ¹⁴ He redeemed us in order that **the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus**, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

The Spiritual Inheritance - Hebrews 11:8-10

- ⁸ By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed [\[i\]](#) by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign *land*, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; ¹⁰ for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Abraham's Offspring

