

The Abrahamic Covenant

Because we become the spiritual seed of Abraham through the new birth, we participate in the promises of the covenant. The church does NOT replace Israel and is NOT the complete fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. E.g., Peter, in Acts 3:25 only applies the universal aspects of the covenant, leaving the national aspect for future fulfillment. This partial fulfillment in the church shows God's intended literal national fulfillment.

ASPECTS OF THE COVENANT

Individual Promises (Personal)

- "I will make you a great nation" (Ge.12:2)
- "and I will bless you" (Ge.12:2)
- "and make your name great" (Ge.12:2)
- "and so you shall be a blessing" (Ge.12:2)

National Promises (Seed)

- The nation will be great (Ge.12:2)
- The nation will be innumerable (Ge.13:16; 15:5)
- The nation is promised land (De.30:5)
- "I will bless those who bless you" (Ge.12:3)
- "the one who curses you I will curse" (Ge.12:3)

Universal Promises (Gentiles)

- "all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Ge.12:3)

Individual promises do not transfer to national promises; National promises may not transfer to Gentiles except those promises that specifically must be related.

PROMISES NOT FULFILLED

"And He gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot of ground; *yet*, even when he had no child, He promised that HE WOULD GIVE IT TO HIM AS A POSSESSION, AND TO HIS OFFSPRING AFTER HIM" (Ac.7:5).

"All these died in faith, without receiving the promises" (He.11:13-40).

"But *it is* not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel; ⁷neither are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED."⁸That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants. ⁹For this is a word of promise "AT THIS TIME I WILL COME, AND SARAH SHALL HAVE A SON." (Ro.9:6-9).

FULFILLMENT REQUIRES

- That the land promised be occupied.
- That it be "everlasting."

CONDITION

There was only one condition of the Abrahamic covenant, namely, leaving his homeland and going to the land that God will show him. Abraham met this condition, and God committed Himself to its fulfillment without the need for continued obedience. Also disobedience does not forfeit the covenant itself, only the blessings of it.

God commits Himself by a solemn ritual where He alone passed by the parts of the sacrifice (Ge.15:7-12) indicating no requirements on Abraham's part.

If one admits to either a partial or complete fulfillment of this covenant, he contends for a **literal** intention of the covenant.

This covenant was **reconfirmed** by an oath (Ge.22:15-18; 26:2-5; 27:26-29; 28:4, 11-15). This covenant was confirmed by the birth of Isaac and Jacob who had the promises repeated to them in spite of their acts of disobedience (Ge.17:19; 26:2-5; 27:26-29; 28:4, 11-15; 12:10-12; 16:1-16. Surely, if something is conditional, the conditions and consequences of not meeting those conditions, would be spelled out.

God's commitment with Abraham included a **specific land inheritance** (Ge.12:7; 13:15, 17; 15:7-8, 18; 17:8; 24:7; 26:3; 28:13-14; 35:12; 48:4; 50:24). Genesis 17:1-3 shows that the land is to be an everlasting possession. Genesis 15:18 gives the boundaries as from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates.

This covenant is declared **eternal** (Ge.17:7, 3, 13, 19; 1Ch.16:17; Ps.105:10) and thus **unconditional**. The New Testament also declares this covenant to be immutable and unchangeable (He.6:13-18; cf. Ge.15:8-21).

Meaning of Covenant

Covenant (Hebrew *berith*, comes from *barath*) means "to cut" or "to cut a covenant." In Genesis 15:6-21 God performs a solemn ritual. He put Abraham asleep, and passes between the pieces alone, showing the unilateral nature of the covenant. God is making this covenant with Abraham without requiring a commitment from Abraham. God was committing Himself to this covenant, making it unconditional. It is purely by God's grace and integrity with no performance required on Abraham's part. This practice was still observed later in Israel's history (Je.34:18).