



## Exploring God's Love Through the Bible: The Abrahamic Covenant

June 26, 2016

### Text: Genesis 12:1-4

#### Exhortation Concerning God's Love

*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. (1 John 4:7-11)*

As we continue looking at the love of God through Scripture, may we marvel at such love! May we become awestruck at the patience, kindness and forbearance of God, as He continues to demonstrate mercy upon His children.

Let us think about what we deserve (death and hell) and be overwhelmed by what we've been given in Christ (life and heaven)! Oh let us love God meaningfully...in ways HE has commanded:

*For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. (1 John 5:3)*

Hallelujah! :)

#### Examining Today's Context: The Abrahamic Covenant

1. After the flood, God commanded Noah and his family to begin repopulating the earth:
  - *Then God said to Noah, "Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—that they may swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth." (Gen 8:15-17)*
2. Genesis chapters nine and ten chronicle Noah's descendants and the many nations that came from Noah.
3. Chapter eleven gives us the narrative of the Tower of Babel, where instead of obeying God and scattering over the earth, many men, likely under the leadership of Nimrod (Gen 10:8-10), decided to stop and build a city dedicated to their own name and accomplishments (Gen 11:4). God took care of that pride right quick. :) (Gen 11:5-9)
4. Scripture then gives us the lineage to Abram (Gen 11:10-32), through whom we see God declare His plan to bless "all the families of the earth."
5. And this is EXTREMELY significant! God, in mercy and love, called Abram out of Haran (modern Turkey) after his father Terah left Ur of the Chaldeans (modern Iraq). (Gen 11:31)
6. And God established a covenant (a **spiritual** agreement) with Abram. God declared that He would:
  - Give Abram (later, Abraham, Gen 17:5) a great land
  - Make Abram a great Nation

- Make His name great
  - Bless those who blessed him
  - And bless all the families of the earth through him!
7. We see God repeat this covenant when Abram was 90 years old:

*When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly." Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, "Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. 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." (Gen 17:1-8)*

8. God being so loving and merciful, also repeated these same promises to Isaac and Jacob (renamed Israel) in Gen 26:3-4 and Gen 28:13-14.

### **Looking at God's Love in the Text**

1. Now, much has been made of the earthy portion of the covenant, God's people inheriting **Land**. Indeed, so much so that this discussion is way beyond the time constraints of a single sermon.
2. However, I'd like to point to a principle of interpretation we've taught before concerning prophetic passages and promises:

There are three "times" or seasons normally one can observe:

- The **fore**-future, which describes events that are relatively imminent.
- The **far**-future, which describes events that are a "long" way off.
- The **final**-future, which describes events that are final consummation in nature, i.e. the return of Christ and final judgment.

3. And because I'd like to focus on God's incredible love in promising to "bless all families of the earth," I'd like to submit the following Scriptures with respect to the *Land*, to show the goodness of God:

#### **A Promise Kept:**

*Thus the LORD gave to Israel all the land that he swore to give to their fathers. And they took possession of it, and they settled there. And the LORD gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn to their fathers. Not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the LORD had given all their enemies into their hands. Not one word of all the good promises that the LORD had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass. (Joshua 21:43-45)*

#### **A Kingdom with Large Borders**

*Judah and Israel were as many as the sand by the sea. They ate and drank and were happy. Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt. They brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life. (1 Kings 4:20-21)*

### A Fulfillment Remembered after Captivity

- *You are the LORD, the God who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and gave him the name Abraham. You found his heart faithful before you, and made with him the covenant to give to his offspring the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Jebusite, and the Girgashite. And you have kept your promise, for you are righteous.*
  - *So the descendants went in and possessed the land, and you subdued before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and gave them into their hand, with their kings and the peoples of the land, that they might do with them as they would. And they captured fortified cities and a rich land, and took possession of houses full of all good things, cisterns already hewn, vineyards, olive orchards and fruit trees in abundance. So they ate and were filled and became fat and delighted themselves in your great goodness. "Nevertheless, they were disobedient and rebelled against you and cast your law behind their back and killed your prophets, who had warned them in order to turn them back to you, and they committed great blasphemies. (Nehemiah 9:7-78, 24-26)*
4. In other words, God **fulfilled** His promises in the FORE-future, giving Israel the Promised Land.
  5. Now shift with me friends...because this is the LOVE of God. **In the FAR-future, God fulfilled his promise to bless all the families of the earth through CHRIST!** And catch this: in the FINAL future, Paradise lost (Eden) will become Paradise restored (the New Jerusalem), all because of **Christ!** —(see the Apocalypse Code by Hanegraaff)
  6. I want you to go with me beyond *dirt* and see the *deliverer*, beyond *earth* to see *eternity*, and beyond *land* to see the **LORD**, who according to the inspired New Testament writers, was the ultimate point!

### Preaching Christ in the Text:

To the church in Galatia, Paul writes:

**Gal 3:16** *Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ.*

**Gal 3:29** *And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.*

- The ultimate point of the promises in the covenant with Abraham, was Christ! This is unmistakable!
- So then, if we belong to Jesus, we ARE the spiritual offspring of Abraham! If you are a Christian, you are, right now, walking in the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant!
- God is SO loving, He chose Abram thousands of years ago, not only to father Israel and inherit land promises, but to be the physical and spiritual line through which the Messiah would come and we'd be saved!
- *How great is the love of God!!*

To the church in Rome, he writes:

**Rom 9:6** *But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel,*

**Rom 9:7** *and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named."*

**Rom 9:8** *This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.*

- Again, look at the love of God!
- God's people are not chosen by race, class, etc., from a New Testament perspective. Our heritage is not fleshly; it is spiritual!
- Because of the atoning work of Christ, we ARE the people of God! We ARE the chosen ones. We are, as Peter wrote:

*...a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 Pet 2:9-10)*

Paul said again to the church in Rome:

*For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God. (Rom 2:28-29)*

Amen!

### **Exhortation to the Church**

Understand who you are because of **Christ**. Fix your gaze upon Jesus, through whom we have inherited the Kingdom of God. The temptation when considering the Abrahamic Covenant is to look earthward and to become focused on borders, sacrifices, and rebuilt temples. When we look at God's Covenant with Abram, we should ultimately see Jesus. I challenge you to look at the better and greater promises given in Christ, and live accordingly.

Remember that Jesus:

Is greater than Jonah, at whose preaching Nineveh repented (Matt 12:41)

- Is greater than Solomon, for whom the Queen of the South traveled from the ends of the earth (Matt 12:42)
- Is greater than the Temple, which is ultimately fulfilled in Him (Matt 12:6, John 2:19-21)

**Jesus is the focal point of history, the ultimate fulfillment of types and shadows, and our very lives (Col 3:4). God called Abram ultimately because He desired to send His beloved Son to save a people for Himself.**

That people is you! Let us live like it. Praise Him for such overwhelming love.

Amen.