

Covenant Theology: from a Reformed Baptist Perspective

Lesson 5: The Abrahamic Covenant

One covenant or two?

In answer to the question of one or two covenants, we answer that there is only one covenant here spoken of. The accounts of Genesis 15 & 17 are detailing the _____ covenant-the Abrahamic Covenant.

“The main difference between the two chapters (Genesis 15 & 17) is that one gives more of the divine side (ratifying the covenant), the other the human side (the keeping of the covenant, or obedience to the divine commands).”-Pink

Elements of this covenant

1. It was made with _____-Genesis 15:18
2. It promised a _____-Genesis 15:7
3. It had a _____-wide focus-Genesis 17:4-5
4. _____ required-Genesis 17:9-10

“Abraham’s offspring, circumcised according to God’s command, had a legal covenantal right to Canaan. But their inheritance could be annulled by breaking the law of circumcision.”-Renihan

Abraham and his descendants would remain in the land based upon their _____. The Abrahamic Covenant while containing an unconditional promise was a covenant constructed upon the basis of works. This was a covenant of works but not like the covenant God made with Adam. The covenant God made with Adam was that by his works he might attain eternal life. The covenant God makes with Abraham is that by circumcision you and your descendants will remain in the land. Ever since the Fall salvation had always been by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone (which was revealed in Scripture alone-Genesis 3:15). So, the Abrahamic Covenant is a covenant of works but not in terms of salvation but in terms of earthly blessings.

Abrahamic Covenant and the church

How we understand the place of the Abrahamic Covenant and the Covenant of Grace will determine how we see either connection or disconnection between the Abrahamic Covenant and the church. Who is part of the covenant of grace?

Paedobaptists see the Covenant of Grace as _____ with Abraham. Therefore, the Old Covenant and the New Covenant are not two different covenants in terms of substance but rather are simply one covenant under two different administrations.

Reformed Credobaptists (reformed Baptists) see the Covenant of Grace as synonymous with the New Covenant. Therefore, the Covenant of Grace was not actually “covenanted” until the death and resurrection of Christ. Before Christ the Covenant of Grace was repeatedly and progressively _____ but it did not actually arrive in time until the inauguration of the New Covenant.

Since Paedobaptists understand the Abrahamic Covenant as the Covenant of Grace they see both believing parents and their _____ as part of this covenant. They see a connection between circumcision and baptism as a way of bringing not only believing adults but also their children into the Covenant of Grace.

“The Covenant of Grace that God concluded with Abraham included his physical posterity; the Covenant of Grace was, therefore, a Covenant of mixed nature in which one entered at birth.”-Denault

Since, Credobaptists understand the Abrahamic Covenant as being _____ from the Covenant of Grace they do not see a direct parallel between circumcision and baptism but rather see a type, anti-type fulfillment. Circumcision was given to the natural children of Abraham shortly after their physical birth which was a shadow of how baptism is given to God’s spiritual children shortly after their spiritual birth. They distinguish between the physical elements of the covenant and the spiritual that it was foreshadowing.

The New Covenant (the Covenant of Grace) was the historical fulfillment of the Eternal Covenant. Therefore, membership in this Covenant of Grace is the _____ as membership in the Eternal Covenant (the elect).

“The text of Galatians 3:17-18 does not affirm that God gave His grace to Abraham through the covenant, but through the promise; this promise was the revelation of the Covenant of Grace. The Abrahamic Covenant did include the physical posterity of Abraham, but it was not in the Covenant of Grace even if it was in a covenant that revealed the grace of God by way of promise.”-Denault

Abrahamic covenant and the Eternal Covenant

The Abrahamic Covenant pointed toward God’s plan to have an _____ people

The Eternal Covenant was never about simply saving one _____ group of people but from the very inception of Israel as a nation the focus was always put on something greater. The Old and New Testaments frequently show how the Jews failed to remember this and thought that salvation was to be reserved for themselves (one easy example is that of the book of Jonah).

“From the beginning, this promise of universal blessing from one nation involved a transnational mindset...As a result, the nation of Israel should never have prided itself in its national identity in any way that would eclipse or subvert the transnational teleology of its existence. The nation is established by covenant in order to bring about a blessing for all nations. As we will see later, the purpose of the people is to bring forth the messiah. The Old Covenant is to give birth to the New Covenant. The kingdom of Israel is to give birth to the kingdom of Christ.” Renihan

The Abrahamic Covenant declared that from this specific line the _____ would come

Abraham was going to be a blessing to all peoples because through his descendants the promised one would come. The Apostle Paul declares that this was a specific promise of _____ (Galatians 3:16).

“The purpose of the Abrahamic Covenant is to bring the New Covenant into existence by bringing its founder, head, and mediator into existence.”-Renihan

“The first great purpose of the Abrahamic Covenant was to make known the stock from which the Messiah was to spring. This was the most prominent aspect of truth revealed in it: the appearing of the promised Seed in Abraham’s own line.”-Pink

Type gives way to antitype

“The outward and the temporal must be consistently viewed throughout as the shell and shadow of the spiritual and eternal...Now each of the promises to Abraham receives a double fulfillment: a ‘letter’ and a ‘spirit’ or, as we prefer to designate them, a carnal and a spiritual...the temporal things promised therein being but images of those ‘better things’ which God promised to bestow upon Abraham’s believing children.”-Pink

“There was to be a temporary accomplishment of those promises to his natural offspring here on earth, and there was to be an eternal realization of them to his spiritual children in heaven. Unless this twofoldness of the contents of the covenant be steadily borne in mind, it is impossible to obtain a right and clear view of them.”-Pink

Abraham a _____ of a great many people

The earthly fulfillment of this is seen in the growth of the nation of Israel. However, the New Testament points us away from the natural descendants of Abraham to the _____ descendants of Abraham. Abraham is the father of all those of faith (John 8:39-47, Romans 2:28-29, Galatians 3:7, Philippians 3:3).

A Promised _____

The earthly land of Canaan was a type that gives way to the anti-type the **new earth**

“The Land becomes typological of the whole earth in the Covenant of Grace that commences in Christ’s death.”-Van Dorn