

## **Abraham: The Covenant that Christ Fulfilled, Genesis 12:1-9; 15:1-6**

**Main idea: Jesus fulfilled the Abrahamic Covenant by becoming the ultimate seed of Abraham and by saving all who believe in Him.**

One of the typologies of Christ we see in Abraham is that from the seed of Abraham is Christ and just like Christ, Abraham is one man that God uses to bless the world. Three things I want us to examine this morning concerning this Abrahamic Covenant: 1) The Promises of the Covenant, 2) The Requirement of the Covenant, and 3) Those Who Will Receive the Covenant. Before we examine the covenant, let's examine Abraham. First known as Abram, later God changed to Abraham, which in Hebrew means, exalted father. God calls one man, Abram, a worshipper of false gods according to (Joshua 24:2-3) from the land of Ur, modern day Iraq, 150 miles from Baghdad. This area during that time, was known to worship, the moon god. This was possibly what Joshua was referring to before God called Abraham to follow only Him. God tells him, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse, and in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:1-3). Through completely sovereign grace, God calls this undeserving idol worshipper to move 700 miles and says to him, with life-transforming authority, "I am going to bless you, and through you bring blessing to the whole world." And with that begins the history of the people of Israel. One of the truths I want us to see from Abraham's life, God can call anyone regardless of their past or present. He has the pleasure and power to transform those He calls through Christ! Romans 15:4 stands true for this series: *"For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."* The Abrahamic Covenant reveals the hope of Christ!

### **I. The Promises of the Covenant (Genesis 12:2-3) What promises did God make to Abraham?**

**1. God grants Abraham descendants and land.** This is why Abram's name was changed to Abraham in Genesis 17:5; it will be numerous, and will have a land all its own. Genesis 12:2, "I will make of you a great nation . . . and make your name great." Genesis 15:5, "Look toward heaven and number the stars if you are able to number them . . . So shall your descendants be" (Gen. 13:16; 18:18). Genesis 13:14, "Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land which you see I will give to you and to your descendants forever." Genesis 15:18, "On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I give this land from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates'" (Gen. 12:7; 15:7; 17:8). This is the first set of promises: numerous offspring and a land to dwell in.

**2. God grants Abraham righteousness.** This doesn't mean that Abraham doesn't sin, in fact you know the rest of the story, he becomes disobedient, not trusting God, taking matters into his own hands with Hagar. In Genesis 15:6 it says, "Abram believed the Lord, and he reckoned it to him as righteousness." God justifies Abram because of his faith, and justification is an act of God full of

promise. Ever since God had chosen this ungodly man and promised to make him a great nation (Genesis 12:1–3), he had remained childless. The promise seemed hopeless (Genesis 15:2). But God, who delights in doing the humanly impossible, says to him in Genesis 15:4, 5: "Your own son shall be your heir . . . Look toward heaven and number the stars if you are able to number them . . . So shall your descendants be." Abraham looks away from himself and trusts God to keep his word. That act of faith honors the glory of God's causing justification: he declares Abraham to stand righteous before him. Not that Abraham will never sin again. He will. But he has now been forgiven for all his sins, past and future, in the sense that God will not bring him into condemnation for them. Listen to Romans 4:1–3: *"What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness."*

**3. God grants eternal blessings.** God promises these blessings to the descendants of Abraham through Christ. (Genesis 17:7) "I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you . . . to be God to you and to your descendants after you." If God is your God, he works for you with all his power, and so Abraham's justification by faith is a promise that God is for him, and for all in Christ!

## II. The Requirement of the Covenant (Genesis 15:6)

So the question is, if there is a requirement to receive these promises, wouldn't that seem like we are working to earn God's favor? The short answer is no. The only thing we bring to the table towards salvation is our sin that causes an overwhelming need for the Savior. The requirement is faith! Faith gives birth to obedience. Ezekiel 36:27 ***"And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules."*** Good Works does not produce salvation. Good works are the offspring of salvation. Obedience only comes as a result of faith in Christ. Two New Testament passages convey this obedience as a result of faith. If you are struggling with obedience to God, start with your faith in Christ! John 3:36 "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him." Hebrews 5:9 "And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him." We will examine Abraham's obedience in a few weeks with his son Isaac. Hebrews 11:17–19 "By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, 18 of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." 19 He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead." We do not see the requirement of obedience initially in the Genesis 12 or 15 passages, but allow me to direct you to Genesis 22:16–18 in which its clear: ***"and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, 18 and win your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."***

## III. Those Who Will Receive the Covenant (Genesis 12:3)

The short answer is, all who place faith in Jesus Christ. Paul labored and longed for his kinsmen, the Jewish people, to come to Christ (c.f. Rom. 9:1; 10:1). When they had hardened hearts he preached to the Gentiles. Galatians 3:8 ***“And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.”*** Not every physical descendant of Abraham is a spiritual descendant of Abraham through Christ. Listen to ***Romans 9:6–8 “But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, 7 and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” 8 This means that it is not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.”*** Who will receive the covenant? Those who place faith in Christ. Rm.10:9-10