

(Genesis) 23 - the Abrahamic: the Fundamental Covenant

by S. Lewis Johnson

The Abrahamic covenant is the fundamental covenant in the Bible, illustrating justification by faith and its significance in biblical eschatology.

Duration: 48:48

Scripture: Genesis 12:1-3, Exodus 20:1-17, Matthew 6:33, Luke 1:46-55, Luke 1:72-73, Romans 9:6-8, Galatians 3:16

Topics: "Covenant"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by reading Genesis 12:1-3, which contains the fundamental promises given to Abraham. These promises are seen as extremely important because they form the basis for the rest of Scripture. The speaker then goes on to discuss the seven statements within these verses, highlighting the greatness of the nation of Israel and the need for divine redemption. The sermon emphasizes the importance of instructing children in their lost state and the need for spiritual redemption. The speaker also references the Benedictus in Luke, which speaks of God's mercy and the fulfillment of the covenant with Abraham.

Transcript

Turn with me to Genesis chapter 12, and will you listen as I read verses 1 through 3, and then I want to turn, since we have a short passage here, to a passage in the Gospel of Luke as a kind of counterpart of this passage in Genesis chapter 12. Now this is the passage in which Abraham is given the fundamental promises around which the remainder of Scripture is gathered, and so these three verses are extremely important. Will you listen now as I read Genesis 12 verse 1 through verse 3. Now the Lord said to Abram, go forth from your country and from your relatives and from your father's house to the land which I will show you, and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, and so you shall be a blessing.

This particular line may be rendered differently because the Hebrew verb is an imperative, and it could be rendered, it literally may be translated, and be thou a blessing. So it is a command directed toward Abram to be a blessing. And then verse 3 follows, and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse.

And it's also interesting here, and I'll say something about it later, the word translated curse is really two words in the Greek, in the Hebrew text. There are two Hebrew words, and one of them means to curse in the sense of to blaspheme, the other means to curse in the sense of to judge or condemn. And so it is the one who blasphemes you, I will curse in judgment, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

Now will you turn over to Luke chapter 1, and I want to read the Magnificat. Now this is the famous section in which Mary, having come to visit Elizabeth, by the Holy Spirit, is unable to express in a great song the joy that is hers, as a result of being the chosen one through whom the Messiah is to come physically. Verse 46, and Mary said, this is Luke chapter 1, and Mary said, my soul exalts the Lord.

That word incidentally translated exalt in the Latin version, the Latin Vulgate is the word Magnificat, and consequently that has become the name of this section, the Magnificat. My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior, for he has had regard for the humble state of his bond slave, for behold from this time on all generations will count me blessed. For the mighty one has done great things for me, and holy is his name, and his mercy is upon generation after generation towards those who fear him.

He has done mighty deeds with his arm, he has scattered those who are proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones, and has exalted those who were humble. He has filled the hungry with good things, and sent away the rich empty-handed.

He has given me, he has given help to Israel, his servant, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, now notice this final line, to Abraham and his seed forever. Now if you look over the page, on the next page is the famous Benedictus, which is the word that Zacharias spoke when filled by the Holy Spirit. He prophesied with reference to the things that had just happened concerning him and John the Baptist, and we read in verse 72, to show mercy toward our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant, the oath which he swore to Abraham our father, to grant us that we being delivered from the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear.

I read these passages in order to remind you of the fact that those promises that God gave to Abraham have a significance that pertains to us in this present age in which we live. May God bless this reading of his word. For this morning in the exposition of the word of God is the Abrahamic, the fundamental covenant.

The greatest human character in the Bible was the accolade given by Donald Gray Barnhouse to Abraham. And he also has suggested, and perhaps with some reason, that the giving of greater honor to Moses by Israel may have been, humanly speaking, the reason for Israel's spiritual downfall. For in giving greater honor to Moses, it was natural that there should be a greater emphasis upon the Ten Commandments, upon the law, upon the works of the law.

And consequently, it is possible, humanly speaking of course, that it was the stumbling block that led to Israel's failure to see that a man is justified not by the works of the law, but by faith on the basis of grace. If it is possible to think along these lines, it is just possible that if more attention had been given to Abraham, whose story the Apostle Paul expounds so beautifully, more stress may have been given to justification by faith on the principle of grace. The importance of Abraham lies in several areas.

And the first place is justification, as I have suggested, is the pattern of our justification. When the Apostle Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans, wishes to expound the means by which a man may become just before

God, and when he seeks to answer the obvious objection from his Jewish readers, well, what about the great men of the Old Testament? Were they justified in this way? The Apostle turns to the story of Abraham and points out that the doctrine that he proclaims is the precise doctrine that one discovers when he reads the book of Genesis. For there we read, concerning Abraham, for he believed in the Lord, and it was imputed to him for righteousness.

And so Abraham became just, not by achieving, but by believing. So he is the great illustration of how a man becomes just before God. His life also is the great example of a life by faith.

And what we see in Abraham, and that which we shall be stressing in the messages that follow, for we shall turn to Abraham's spiritual life constantly, we'll notice that the growth that Abraham experiences is a growth under the delayed promises of God. And we see him, through the delay of the fulfillment of the promises that were given to him, grow into the likeness of the person that God would have him to be. And in fact, I think what we see in Abraham is that he learns that, in the final analysis, God is all his spiritual good.

It is so easy for us to think that our spiritual good rests in material things, or even those that are closest to us, our children, our families, our friends, our business, our interests. And what Abraham learns, and what each of us is to learn, ultimately, is simply that the greatest good that we have, and our total good, ultimately, is God. Remember in the Authorized Version, it is stated in Genesis chapter 15, that God said to Abraham, I am your exceeding great reward.

And so when we have him, we have everything. And Abraham will learn that. Now he will learn it through the promises that are given to him, and the delay in the fulfillment of them.

That's preeminently seen, as we shall see, of course, in the promise concerning Isaac. But Abraham's life becomes the great example of the life of faith. And the New Testament writers, instead of appealing to New Testament characters for illustrations of the life of faith, appeal to Abraham for illustration of the life of faith.

And the third way in which Abraham is important for us, and one that we will be also stressing in the next ten or twelve chapters, is that his covenant is the key to biblical eschatology. It's probably safe to say that there is no covenant that is more fundamental than this covenant. And even the New Covenant, the climactic covenant, which our Lord Jesus accomplishes in his blood, is really the fulfillment of what is essentially promised in the Abrahamic covenant.

It is also through the Abrahamic covenant that Israel's claim to the land becomes significant. It's a kind of declaration of independence for them. And the result of this great promise, I want you to go forth to the land that I will show you, is that now Israel has an impeccable deed to the land that was promised to her by the Lord God.

One of the students of prophecy has said, in the controversy between pre-Millenarians and amillenarians, the interpretation of this covenant more or less settles the entire argument. So it's important for us, in many ways, to look carefully at the Abrahamic covenant. Now these are the promises in Genesis chapter 12.

Later on in Genesis 15, we shall see the confirmation and inauguration of that covenant. So it's big in the book of Genesis. It has been several hundred years since Noah's covenant.

Two things have happened that are significant. First, through Noah, God gave the promise and prophecy that the Redeemer should come through the stock of Shem. Remember that Japheth should dwell in the tents of Shem.

And we pointed out that that was God's way of saying that the Redeemer, promised in Genesis chapter 3 and verse 15, as the seed of the woman, shall be found in the Semitic division of mankind. Now that was important. And so that prophecy that Noah made was a narrowing down of the Messianic promises.

And then the second thing of significance that happened since the covenant that God made with Noah was the Tower of Babel. And there God repudiated the claims of natural men, judged those who sought to gather round themselves and make a name for themselves, and scattered them by confounding their languages. And as a result of that, confounding their language, I should say, into languages.

And as a result of that, scattering them over the face of the earth. So now God will lay his hand upon one man. And through this one man, Abram, he will work out his promises that are fundamentally Messianic promises of redemption.

Remember also that it is stated in the book of Joshua that Abraham's family dwelt on the other side of the river and they served other gods. So we are not to think of Abram as coming from a religious family in the sense that they were worshipers of the true God. They were not.

They served other gods. And then in the book of Isaiah, the prophet Isaiah speaking about Abraham said that he had taken them, the nation, the descendants of Abraham from the hole of the pit. So we have the biblical picture of a group of people who are in the right line, but they are serving other gods and are in the hole of the pit.

But the distinguishing grace of God reaches out and touches this man and his family and ultimately his seed and bestows upon them the unconditional promises of grace. We'll notice as we read through the book of Genesis from this point on that the promised seed and the promised land become the great themes that are before us. Let's look for a moment now at the provisions of the Abrahamic covenant.

The parties to this covenant are referred to in the first line. Now the Lord said to Abram. You'll notice that the term that is used for Lord is the term Yahweh or the term Jehovah.

It is the term that refers to him as the covenant keeping God. Now the Lord said to Abram, here are the parties to the covenant. On the one hand there is the Lord God, on the other hand there is the man Abram.

Now Stephen, when he speaks about this, fills in some details that are not found here. He says the God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he dwelt in Ur of the Chaldees. And so we are to think of the Lord, the God of glory, as the main party of this covenant.

And then we are to think of Abram, the descendant of Shem, as the other party. The promises are those things that follow. And I want to say this before we look at the promises for a moment.

The very fact that we have in these promises implicit a fulfillment of the messianic promise of Genesis 3, that the seed of the woman shall crush the serpent's head, means that as we look at these promises that we are to see two aspects of them. And also we are to see two things that pertain to the person involved in this covenant, that is to the recipients. We are to see, for example, as we refer to these promises and see that they ultimately refer to the Messiah, we are to notice these two aspects of his person.

First of all, he is a true human being. That is, he possesses a true human nature. The genealogies of the book of Genesis make that very plain and go into a great deal of detail to show that our Lord has a true connection with humanity.

He is a person who can be called a man, as he himself refers to himself in the book of John as a man who has told you the truth. But on the other hand, we must remember that the Messiah is a person who performs a divine work. The very fact that he is able to crush the head of the serpent means that he is more than a man, because all men are sinners and under divine judgment, and they must die for their sins.

So it is evident that no mere man can redeem men. The Lord Jesus is a true human apart from sin, but he is more than one who possesses human nature. He also is a divine person who possesses a divine nature.

So we should not be surprised to see in these promises the two aspects, the human and the divine. Now you can see clearly in verse 3 when we read, and in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed, that it is clear that it is not really strictly speaking within Abram himself to bless the entire world. So that involved in this in you is more than that which is human.

We must recognize that in that little statement there is a recognition of the fact that there is someone coming from Abram who will be more than a man. And the apostle Paul expounds this in great detail in the epistle to the Galatians, finally pointing out that it is specifically stated by the Old Testament writer that the promise was made to not seeds but the seed which is the Messiah or Christ. So we will see then the two aspects.

We'll see the human and we'll see the divine in the promises. Now bear that in mind because these promises will not make full sense to us if we fail to see that perspective. Now there are personal promises made to Abram.

For example it is stated that his name would be made great. First of all it is said that he should go forth from his country. Go out for yourself.

It's almost like the German *geht doch*, go indeed. And I want you to notice the extent of the demand that is made of Abram and how it covers three items, but these three items each form a narrower circle of relationships. First of all he says go forth from your country.

And then he narrows that and says from your relatives. And then narrowing that he says and from your father's house. So get out of your country, get away from your relatives, even get away from your immediate family and go to the land that I will show you.

I like to say this by way of application, that since Abram is an illustration of the life of faith, it's not surprising then that we should find in the New Testament that when we are called by the Holy Spirit in efficacious grace and brought to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus, that one of the first things that we experience is difficulty with our country. We no longer are of the world, though we are in the world. And it's not surprising that we have a little bit of difficulty with our relatives, that they do not understand what has happened.

And it's not surprising that mother and father and sister and brother may misunderstand us. Now of course we should not be discouraged and be defeated by that, realizing that it may be God's will that through us

they be one. But we should expect that there will be a kind of calling directed to each one of us when we are converted in which we are called away from the life of the earth to the life of fellowship with the Lord God.

That's one of the problems we have with life, is it not? The problems of adjusting to life in the society of which we are a part when we are not really a part of it. The problems of adjusting to life with our family and the problems of adjusting to life within our own immediate family. So Abram was given a particular call that all who have come to know Jesus Christ can understand at least in measure.

Now national promises were also given to him. He was called to a land, a specific land. And from this time on we will see that the land and Abram become the root and center of the future history of the world.

You can gather all of human history around the story of Abram and the story of the land of Palestine. And it's certainly striking that Israel is on the front pages of our newspapers today. Now there are also universal promises that are given, and we read in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

Now that's the universalism of the Bible. All the families of the earth shall be blessed. There shall be some out of every tribe, kindred, tongue, and nation, we're told in the last book of the Bible, that shall come to know Jesus Christ.

But this is a universalism that is not inclusive of everyone, for otherwise then we would believe that everybody should be saved. But the Bible does not say that everyone shall be saved. Universalism is not taught in the word of God.

The kind of universalism that is taught is that there shall be some out of every tribe, kindred, tongue, and nation that shall be converted. In other words, the Bible doesn't say that all shall be saved, but it says that there shall be a worldwide kind of salvation, and that is what we proclaim as we proclaim the distinguishing grace of God. Now I want to say just a little bit about the details of these promises in verses two and three, for there are seven items.

You almost think that every time you run across something that's seven that it must be inspired, because that's one of the words in the Bible that suggests perfection. Seven is the number of completion, it's the number of perfectness. We have seven days in the week, that covers the whole span of time.

Some of the books of the Bible are gathered around sevens, evidently, intentionally. So here we have seven statements, and first I will make you a great nation. Now we all would agree that Israel, though a small nation, is a great nation.

They've had a great past, and the Bible says that they will have a great future. But the true greatness of the nation Israel is not simply the uniqueness of their experience. How in spite of the things that have happened to other nations that have faded into the past, and which we read about only in the history books, that Israel is still here as a specific nation.

It's true, the Bible says that they would dwell alone. They would be separate from the nations. They're like the Gulf Stream in the ocean.

The Gulf Stream which acts so peculiarly. I was in Scotland over the past couple of weeks, traveling over the country again, and one of the unique things about Scotland is that it's, well of course, it's cold all the time. In Edinburgh, if you ask people about summer, they say, oh summer, that was last Wednesday.

And it was cold. I wore woolen clothes, a woolen sweater, a woolen sport coat, and then a raincoat lined over that. And I don't wear a cap or a hat, but when I got over there, and those things were falling from the sky, and the wind was blowing, I even went out and bought, tell it not in gaffe, publish it not in escalon, lest the uncircumcised philistines hear, a cap.

But I took it off when I got back. You won't see me in it. Well, one of the interesting things about Scotland is that it is warmed by the Gulf Stream, so that on top of the ground, the wind is blowing, we saw even flakes of snow, ice, sleet, rain, a little sunshine too.

But there is a place on the eastern side of Scotland where the Gulf Stream flows, and there, almost tropical gardens, right in the midst of all of that cold. And we saw it with beautiful rhododendron, and other types of flowers that you would not expect to grow there. After certain barriers were put up for the wind, it was warm enough to do it.

And so right in the midst of the ocean, there is the warmth of the Gulf Stream, and so Israel has been a nation just like that. They've been in the midst of humanity, but they are different, and they are still with us. Their true greatness, however, is a greatness that comes from the fact that they are the nation through whom redemption is to come.

So I will make of you a great nation. Israel was not chosen because of the religious genius of Abraham and others. You'll often find this in the books of the world.

They do not understand biblical things. That's why we have difficulty with them. But Israel was not chosen because of religious genius.

Israel has manifested a religious genius because they were chosen by God. That's why. Now, of course, they were chosen for different reasons.

They were not chosen to give the world religious genius. They were chosen to be the depositories of the divine revelation. They were chosen to be the mother of the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And they were chosen to carry the message of salvation to the nations, which they did not do so well, but which they will in the future accomplish as an agency of God. The second thing that is said about Abraham is, I will bless you. And again, you will notice as you follow the story of Abraham that true spiritual success crowns his endeavors.

Amid all of his failures, and he has many failures, he will also be blessed of God, remarkably blessed of God. Not only materially, he was that, but spiritually. Third, we read, and make your name great.

Why, even the Muslims speak of Abraham as El Khalil, the friend of God. He's great among the Muslims. He's great among the Jews.

He's great among the Christians. Truly, his name has been made great. Now, the Babylonians, or the human race at Babel, tried to make their name great.

And that is specifically stated there in chapter 11, where we read, if I think I can find it, in verse 4, they said, Come, let us build for ourselves a city and a tower, whose top will reach unto heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth. And they sought to make a name for themselves, but God said, No, the natural man will not make a name for himself, but I

will make Abram's name great, because Abram is the recipient of the promises of God in grace. So his name is made great.

He's called the friend of God. He's called the servant of God. He's spoken of as the person from whom God will not hide his counsels and his purposes.

His name shall be made great. And then we read, and be thou a blessing for the fourth of these lines. I suggest to you, though I'm not certain that this is really the meaning of this text, now it does say, and be thou a blessing, but I'm going to suggest to you, with a little bit of trepidation, that this expresses moral responsibility on Abram's part.

Now Abram, I'm going to make you a great nation. I'm going to bless you and be thou a blessing. That is, he calls upon Abram to respond to the blessing of God that is given to him.

Because, you see, when we talk about the distinguishing grace of God, when we talk about how God in effectual grace lays his hand upon a person and brings him to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus, so we say salvation is of the Lord, we do not, of course, mean that man is not, therefore, responsible. We talked about that two weeks ago. Man is responsible.

And so here, Abram, be thou a blessing. Now Abram does not do this in his own strength. He does it by virtue of the grace that flows through him as a result of what God has done for him and is doing with him constantly.

And fifth, I will bless those who bless you. Now what a difference in meaning there is between the two blesses here. When man blesses, well, his blessings are wishes.

We say blessings upon you. But we cannot do anything for those people. We can pray and perhaps God will bestow blessing.

But if I were to say to you, and you're engaging in some endeavor, blessings be upon you, that would be simply a wish. But when God blesses, that's an impartation of grace. So he says, I will impart grace to those who express their desire for your good.

In other words, I identify myself, Abram, with you. And so God identifies himself with Abram. And those who extend good wishes toward Abram will experience the blessing of God.

Many shall do it, evidently, because we read, I will bless those who bless you, is plural. And so we should expect that there will be many who will express, by the grace of God, their good wishes for Abram and the purposes of God through him. And sixthly, we read, and the one who curses you, I will curse.

Now again, two different Hebrew words are used here. I shouldn't use again, because they were the same, there was the same word in the preceding one. But here, two different Hebrew words are used.

And so this might be rendered, and the one who blasphemes you, speaks evilly of you, I will bring under judgment. Curse, in that sense. One of these words, arer, means judicial cursing, judgment.

The other word, kalel, means to speak evilly of, to speak lightly of, to make light of, and thus it has the idea of blasphemy as well. So you can see here that what he's saying is that when the world is contemptuous of you, Abram, in that contempt, they bring themselves under my judgment. Because you see, when a person speaks evilly against Abram and his seed, he's really attacking the promises of God and the

purpose of God.

This is really at the heart of true anti-Semitism. Now there's some anti-Semitism that is justified, just like there's a whole lot of anti-Gentilism that is justified. When a Gentile acts contrary to the principles of the Word of God, it's proper to be anti-Gentile.

And the same is true of Jewish people. But what is referred to by anti-Semitism as a term is really an antipathy ultimately to the purpose of God with reference to Israel. Ultimately, the source of anti-Semitic thinking in the spiritual sense, the unjustified sense, is dissatisfaction with the electing purpose of God.

That's what's really at the base of anti-Semitism. Why should God choose them? That kind of anti-Semitism is the kind of thing that is spoken of here. I will curse them that curse you.

And it's something for us to remember that God in his distinguishing grace does his will and we do not have the right to reply against God. We bow before his will even when we do not fully understand. Now I would suggest to you also that this we see constantly with reference to Christians in principle too.

Remember what Paul says in 1 Corinthians chapter 1 and verse 18? He says, The word of the cross is to those that are perishing foolishness. That is, the message concerning the Lord Jesus Christ is to the person who has not come to know the Lord Jesus foolishness, stupidity. He doesn't understand it because his own mind is unable to grasp it.

He's in blindness. The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, their foolishness to him. Neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned.

So the man outside of Christ cannot understand Christianity. He cannot understand Christ. He sees this as stupidity.

Why should people be interested in hearing the word of God? Why should they be interested in the forgiveness of sins? They have their own theories about that. But when the Holy Spirit has enlightened us and quickened us and we have become concerned we understand for we see our own need and we know that we need forgiveness of sins. We see that we have offended a holy God.

We see that we are under divine judgment. We see that we are perishing as Paul says and consequently we are most interested in a remedy which comes through the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The word of the cross is to them that are perishing foolishness.

That's why he doesn't understand his own condition. One of the saddest things is to see people who have been brought up in a Christian church fail to see that fundamental point. And so you parents, mothers and fathers, one of the greatest tasks that you have and one of the most important is to instruct your children in the need of divine redemption.

Point out to them their lost state. Point out to them their condition under judgment. Pray with them and over them that they may be become concerned by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit for their own spiritual condition.

And finally he says, All in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Now it's obvious that so great a blessing as this could only come from the promised Messiah. It would be impossible for a mere man to be the reason for the blessing of the whole of the human race.

And so it's clear that the divine aspect of the seed of Abraham shows through here. And so when we read in you, what is meant ultimately is in you Abraham and in your descendant the Messiah, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Abraham in a sense becomes the world's mediator because from him shall come the one mediator between God and men the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now I want to say just a word secondly. That was a long first point. My other points are brief.

But I want you to notice the unconditional character of the Abrahamic covenant. Did you notice the I wills? I will make you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great.

I will bless those who bless you and the one who curses you I will curse. You see there is a heaped up I will. It is God who takes the initiative.

And did you notice that there are no stated conditions at all so far as Abraham is concerned. All that is said is be thou a blessing. Nothing is said about blessing Abraham if he does this.

This is an unconditional covenant. First part of the week I was in Cambridge England and I saw the great St. Andrew church which was the church that William Perkins preached in. William Perkins is one of the overlooked English reformers.

And he was a man who was a strong preacher of the sovereign grace of God. He probably influenced America as much as any other theologian because it was through William Ames his disciple that the Marrow of Theology became the theological book for New England so that many of us sitting in this audience whether we realize it or not are indebted to this man who lived in the last part of the 16th century and the first part of the 17th. William Perkins was a great preacher and for 100 years his influence in London or in England was strongly felt.

I was reading a doctoral dissertation on his doctrine of the covenant and in it the author of the doctoral dissertation said for Perkins the covenant is never an agreement between equals it's a sovereign Lord offering himself to man and then providing the conditions in man which makes it possible for man to receive him. How true that is. For William Perkins just as for Abraham and just as for the biblical unconditional covenants what we have is not an agreement entered into a kind of contract in which God enters into an arrangement with man that he will do such and such if man does this.

But it is I will do this. Now certain responsibilities are laid upon man but he promises that he will perform those responsibilities for man and so it is a true gracious covenant. So when we are called when we call upon men to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and they shall be saved we are saying this in the conscious knowledge of the fact that it is God who gives saving faith for the man under the judgment of God who is blind cannot do anything to please God until there has been a transformation in his inmost being.

So this is an unconditional covenant over and over I will I will I will and Abraham is to be blessed. He and his seed the true condition of obedience is ultimately filled by the Lord Jesus Christ in the obedience of the cross. There was a Bible teacher by the name of Harold St. John who was very prominent in the last generation among a number of the Bible believing churches.

He was a Britisher but he came to the United States and he and some messages that he gave at the Keswick conference in Keswick England spoke about an incident that happened when he was in New Orleans. He said he talked with an old resident of New Orleans whose family had been there for generations and the man told him a story of his grandfather. There were very evidently virulent outbreaks

of fever often in New Orleans in the last century and in the midst of one of these this man's grandfather had gone walking outside the city and as he was walking by a little road on a little road he noticed a little boy that was lying over by the side of the road and as he looked at him he discovered that he was very very sick himself and he went up to the young child and he asked him what are you doing here and the child said I'm waiting for God.

He said waiting for God what do you mean? He said well father died on Monday night and my brother died on Tuesday night and last night my mother died and I'm the only one left but she said before she left that I was to wait for God then he would come and care for me and then he added and mother never told me a lie. Well the man ministered to him and according to Mr. St. John's account the young man was brought to the hospital and actually was physically saved. What was the ground of the little boy's confidence? Well it was a confidence based upon the word and the character of his mother.

Well that's the same kind of confidence we have in the Bible. Our confidence of our salvation rests upon what the Bible teaches and upon the character of the person who gives the promises and he says that we are lost that we need a savior Jesus Christ that he has provided a redemption that is available for sinners and that if we come and receive it as a free gift we have salvation and our salvation is based upon the word of our God concerning Christ and his character. He's faithful to his promises he does not tell lies.

Now I don't have time to speak about the promises of future fulfillment. I read the passage from Luke chapter 1 specifically for that reason. What I wanted you to see was this that it's clear from the Bible that we do have in the promises made to Abram that he would be given a land a promise that is still valid today and by the time of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ that promise is still a valid promise and in the coming of the Lord Jesus Mary and Zechariah see by the inspiration of the spirit as they spoke prophetically that it was in him that the Abrahamic covenant would find its culmination.

I wish it were possible and we will try to do this as we proceed through these important next chapters to point out the claims that Israel has with reference to the land. Suffice to say this there is no more impeccable deed to a piece of property in the whole of the earth than the deed that was given to Israel for the land of Palestine. I do not have a more impeccable deed to 9408 Dark Crest than Israel has for the land that was given to them in Abraham thousands of years ago.

Well the importance of the Abrahamic covenant for eschatology is clear. Its importance for salvation lies in the unconditioned grace manifested in it. If Abram is a true example of spiritual life for us it is very significant that we note how he came into that life, how he came into those promises and the principles on which he obtained them.

And I'm reminded of the text in Romans 11 verse 6, but if it is by grace it is no longer on the basis of works otherwise grace is no longer grace. And Abram was blessed in grace. The sole responsibility that lies upon Abram is expressed in the single though searching command, be thou a blessing.

Now Abram's faith was as Perkins would put it, obediential. That was his word. Now we don't use that term anymore but that was used in the 16th century.

It was obediential. That is it was a response that led to obedience. But it was not the obedience that saved.

It was the obedience that was the result of the working of God in the heart of Abram. And so the faith which was the proper response to the grace of God was a gift of God itself. The heaped up I wills express what God wishes to do for those who recognize that they're sinners.

If you're here this morning and you have never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, you're lost, you're under divine judgment, you are heading for a Christless eternity, you are perishing, to use Paul's words, which he uses more than once, you are perishing. You're on the way to destruction. You're on a DC-10 that is headed toward the earth.

That is your spiritual condition. And if the Holy Spirit awakens within you conviction of your sin and lost estate and perilous future, you may flee to our Lord Jesus Christ who welcomes sinners and receives forgiveness of sins. We invite you to come as an ambassador of the Lord Jesus.

Put your trust in him. Not down front in a meeting like this. Not signing your name to a slip of paper.

Not raising your hands in a meeting. Salvation is accomplished in the human heart when there is a recognition of lost condition before God and an acknowledgment before him of that lost condition and a leaning upon Christ in grace. Lord, I thank thee that Christ has died for my sins.

I thank thee for the word of the promise I do entrust myself by thy grace to him who loves sinners and gives forgiveness of sins. When that decision is truly made by the working of the Holy Spirit, there is new life imparted and obediential life follows. May God help you to come.

If you want to express your faith, the way to express your faith is not raising your hands in the meeting, not coming down front and praying through. The way to express your faith is to go to the elders of the church and say, I'd like to be baptized in testimony to the faith that God has put within my heart in Jesus Christ. May God help you to come.

Let's stand for the benediction. Father, we are so grateful to thee for the promises of the word of God. They come from a faithful God, one who does not lie.

And so, Lord, we thank thee for the truthfulness of them. And, Father, if there should be someone here who has not yet come to Christ, oh, work in their hearts, bring home to them very deeply the terror of their lost condition. May they flee for salvation.

May grace, mercy, and peace go with us for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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