

The Promises to Abraham

I. God made several promises to Abraham.

1. God promised to make a great nation of Abraham and to make his name great (**Gen 12:2**).
2. God promised that in Abraham would all the families of the earth be blessed (**Gen 12:3**).
3. God promised to give the land of Canaan to Abraham's seed (**Gen 12:7**).
4. God promised to give the land of Canaan to Abraham himself and to his seed forever (**Gen 13:14-15,17**).
5. God promised to make Abraham's seed as the dust of the earth that cannot be numbered (**Gen 13:16**).
6. God promised that Abraham's seed would be as numerous as the stars of heaven (**Gen 15:5**).
7. God made a covenant with Abraham promising to give the land to his seed (**Gen 15:18**).
8. God made a covenant between Himself and Abraham promising to multiply him exceedingly and make him a father of many nations (**Gen 17:1-6**).
9. God made a covenant of circumcision with Abraham and his seed the nation of Israel (**Gen 17:7-14**).
10. God promised to give Abraham a son through Sarah (**Gen 17:15-16**).
11. God promised to establish His covenant with Isaac and his seed after him (**Gen 17:19,21**).
12. God promised to return and cause Sarah to have a son (**Gen 18:10,14**).
13. God promised that all the nations of the earth would be blessed in Abraham (**Gen 18:18**).
14. God restated His promise to Abraham that He would multiply his seed as the stars of heaven and in his seed would all the nations of the earth be blessed (**Gen 22:16-18**).

II. The promises to Abraham were made to him and his seed (**Gal 3:16**).

1. The promises were not made to Abraham's natural descendants, the Jews, but rather to only one descendant, his seed, Jesus Christ (**Gal 3:16**).
2. "Abraham's seed" does sometimes refer to natural Israel (**Isa 41:8; Joh 8:37; Rom 9:7; Rom 11:1; 2Co 11:22**).
3. But the promises were not made to them, but to Christ (**Gal 3:16**).
4. There was a temporal and partial fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham and his seed in Abraham's son Isaac (**Gen 26:3**) and in his grandson Jacob (**Gen 28:4,13-14; Gen 35:12**).
5. There was an earthly aspect to the promises that pertained to Abraham's seed which were his natural descendants.
 - A. This is manifest by the language used in **Gen 17:7-14**.
 - B. Observe how Abraham's seed is referred to in the plural and is clearly referring to his physical descendants, remembering though that this is only a temporal and partial fulfillment of the promises.
 - i. **Gen 17:7** - And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.
 - ii. **Gen 17:8** - And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

- iii. **Gen 17:9** - And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.
 - iv. **Gen 17:10** - This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. (*ye* and *you* are plural pronouns)
 - v. **Gen 17:11** - And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. (*ye*, *you*, and *your* are plural pronouns)
 - vi. **Gen 17:12** - And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. (*you* and *your* are plural pronouns)
 - vii. **Gen 17:13** - He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. (*your* is a plural pronoun)
 - viii. **Gen 17:14** - And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.
- C. The earthly, partial fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham of having a numerous seed and of inheriting the land of Canaan was not the true essence of the promises.
- i. Firstly, we know this because the promise was made to Jesus Christ, not to earthly Israel (**Gal 3:16**).
 - ii. Secondly, we know this because the land was promised to Abraham himself and his seed (**Gen 13:14-15,17; Gen 17:8**).
 - a. Yet Abraham never possessed even one square inch of the land in his lifetime (**Act 7:5**).
 - b. Therefore, the true essence of the promise made to Abraham and his seed was not for the earthly land of Canaan, else God lied, which is impossible (**Heb 6:18**).
6. The true recipient of the promise made to Abraham and his seed was Jesus Christ, the seed of Abraham (**Gal 3:16 c/w Mat 1:1**).
- A. Jesus Christ, and all that are in Him through election (**Eph 1:4; 1Co 1:30**), are the true seed of Abraham to whom the promises were made (**Gal 3:29**).
 - B. Consider the promises made to Abraham and their fulfillment in Christ.
 - i. God promised to make a great nation of Abraham (**Gen 12:2**).
 - a. The church, who is the body of Jesus Christ, is a holy nation (**1Pe 2:5,9**).
 - b. The church is the kingdom of God that consumed all the kingdoms of the earth (**Dan 2:44**).
 - ii. God promised that in Abraham all the families and all the nations of the earth would be blessed (**Gen 12:3; Gen 18:18; Gen 22:18**).
 - a. Jesus Christ fulfilled this promise by justifying the heathen through His faith (**Gal 3:8 c/w Gal 2:16**).
 - b. Men out of every nation and family of the earth were blessed by Jesus Christ (**Act 3:26 c/w Rev 5:9**).

- iii. God promised to give the land of Canaan to Abraham's seed (**Gen 12:7; Gen 13:14-15; Gen 15:18**).
 - a. Jesus Christ is the heir to the kingdom of Israel (**Joh 1:49; Joh 12:13; Mar 12:6-7**).
 - b. The Lord Jesus is also the heir of the world (**Rom 4:13 c/w Heb 1:2**).
 - c. Those that are in Christ, the true seed of Abraham, are the heirs of this world (**1Co 3:21-23**) and the world to come (**Luk 20:35; Mar 10:30**).
 - d. God predestinated the elect in Christ to receive a heavenly inheritance which is the true promised land (**Eph 1:11**).
 - e. This is the inheritance in the new earth and heavens that Abraham was and is looking forward to (**Heb 11:8-10,13-16**).
- iv. God promised to make Abraham's seed as the dust of the earth and as the stars of heaven that cannot be numbered (**Gen 13:16; Gen 15:5**).
 - a. Abraham's natural descendants are innumerable (**Heb 11:12**).
 - b. The redeemed, who are Abraham's true seed, are a multitude which no man can number (**Rev 7:9**).
- v. God made a covenant of circumcision with Abraham and his seed the nation of Israel (**Gen 17:7-14**).
 - a. As part of the everlasting covenant that God made with Abraham, He promised him and his seed the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession (**Gen 17:7-8**).
 - b. The token of that covenant was circumcision (**Gen 17:10-11**).
 - c. The covenant of circumcision was said to be an everlasting covenant (**Gen 17:13**).
 - d. Circumcision ended with the coming of the New Testament (**Gal 5:6; Gal 6:15-16**) along with Israel's possession of the earthly land of Canaan (**Luk 21:24**).
 - e. The everlasting covenant of circumcision was fulfilled by the circumcision of Christ when He was cut off for our sins (**Col 2:11 c/w Psa 37:22 c/w Gal 3:13; Isa 53:8; Dan 9:26**), thereby destroying the body of our sins and spiritually circumcising us (**Col 2:11; Rom 6:6; Heb 9:26**).
- vi. The elect who are Christ's are Abraham's seed (**Gal 3:29**) and are the Israel of God (**Gal 6:16**) who have been spiritually circumcised (**Rom 2:28-29**) and are heirs of the everlasting heavenly promised land (**1Pe 1:4**).