

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth One Verse at a Time*

Zachariah's Song of Salvation: The Abrahamic Covenant

Scripture: Luke 1:67-80

Code: 42-18

We return in our study of God's Word to the first chapter of Luke. We are studying the last section of Luke chapter 1, the song of salvation which was given by Zacharias, the father of John the prophet, the forerunner to the Messiah. The text begins in verse 67 and runs down to the end of the chapter.

Before we look at this text, again I want to remind you that up to now we have pretty much played the role of the story teller and I have reiterated the narrative of this record that is the beginning of Luke's gospel. Luke tells the story of Jesus. He starts where the story really starts, he starts when God invades human history by sending an angel Gabriel to announce to an old priest by the name of Zacharias that he would go home and he and his wife would have a son. They were barren, they were very old. They were beyond childbearing years, as we remember. This would be a miracle. And indeed the angel's word came true. This older woman, perhaps in her seventies, named Elizabeth conceived with her husband, became pregnant and brought forth a son. The son was to be named John. He was the forerunner of the Messiah.

At the same time this wonderful story was going on between God, the angel Gabriel and Zacharias and Elizabeth leading to the birth of John, Gabriel was also visiting another person, a young girl about thirteen named Mary. And there was a second conception miracle, this time without a man. She would be given a child while a virgin. This child would not just be any prophet, but the Messiah, the Son of God, the Savior of the world.

With these great narratives, Luke begins the saga of salvation which he tells, the story of the coming of the Messiah, the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. We have gone through the annunciation to Zacharias, the annunciation to Mary. We have gone through the identification of John, the identification of Jesus. We have gone through the praise of Mary upon this wonderful reality. We have now come in this part of the chapter to the birth of John the Baptist and starting in verse 57 down to verse 66 is the record that the child John was born. And, of course, this is a great event because everybody in the family knows that this child is the forerunner of the Messiah. Mary, who is to be the mother of Jesus the Son of God and the Messiah, is already pregnant and she has been three months in the house of Zacharias and Elizabeth so they know that the Messiah is already being formed in her womb. Here is the birth of the forerunner and the birth of the Messiah in just a few months later. Redemptive history is reaching its great high point, its great apex.

Now you need to understand just a little bit about redemptive history by way of a sort of an overview. We've been doing a series on creation, a series on origins and the question comes up...why did God create? Why did God create the universe? Why did God make the earth, the theater of the universe? And why did he put mankind on a stage? What is this all about?

Well, the answer is, to put it simply, God created the universe as we know it, the physical universe as we know it, created the earth, put man on it in order that He might redeem a bride for His Son. In order that He might bring to glory a redeemed humanity. It was an expression of His love to give to the Son a bride, a bride who, in effect would radiate the Son's glory, would serve and praise Him and worship Him and adore Him forever and ever and ever...which is exactly what all redeemed people will do. God will bring us to glory for the praise of His Son forever.

Now in order for God also in gathering a bride for His Son, to put Himself on display, God allowed sin to enter into the picture. When creation occurred, the garden was a perfect environment, it was without sin, without corruption, without decay and without death, but into the perfection of that creation came sin. Sin came in the form of a fallen angel by the name of Satan. Lucifer's sin came, of course, in the case of Adam and Eve who believed the lies of Satan, disobeyed God and plunged the entire human race into depravity and sinfulness. And thus God began to reach out and save sinners. God created the universe to put His creative powers on display. He created the universe to demonstrate a perfection of life and a joy that the creature could have with the creator. He created the universe also to allow for fall and sin so that in response He could demonstrate the attributes that can only be demonstrated in an environment of sin...mercy, grace, compassion, forgiveness. We would never know that about God if it were not for the fact that there is sin in the world. And so, God allowed sin to come into the world and then began to put His grace and compassion and mercy and forgiveness on display and sought to redeem sinful man and to reshape sinners into a bride for His Son.

Now obviously the apex of this whole redemptive plan is when His Son comes into the world to die in the place of sinners. He comes into the world, first of all, to live a perfect life for 33 years so that a perfect life of righteousness which He lives could be put to your account and mine. And then He died on the cross in our place. So He lived a perfect life which is given to us. He died on the cross bearing our sins. On the cross God treated Him as if He had lived our life and by grace He treats us as if we'd lived His.

So the apex of redemptive history is the coming of Messiah. He comes and provides a sacrifice by which righteousness can be granted to sinners at any point in redemptive history...Old Testament and New Testament, from the beginning of God's redemptive to the end. The Savior came to live a perfect life, came to die, came to rise again to provide the sacrifice for sin and it would pay the penalty for the sins of all who would ever believe throughout the whole drama of redemption.

Now the Jews have been waiting for the Messiah to come. They've been waiting for Him to come and establish the Kingdom and give them their land. They have been waiting for Him to come and show the mercy of God, bring forgiveness of sins and all of that. Zacharias was one of those Jews who along with others, as chapter 2 verse 38 says, were looking for redemption to come, were waiting for redemption. When was Messiah going to come? When would God provide the final sacrifice? When would God save His people Israel? When would the Savior arrive?

Here was this common, ordinary garden-variety priest who gets a visit from an angel out of the presence of God named Gabriel to tell him that not only is the Messiah coming but before the Messiah is coming a prophet to announce the arrival of the Messiah like a press agent, like a herald. And not only that but, Zachariah, he was going to come in your life time and not only in your life time but he's going to be your son. The angel Gabriel brings a message from God that you and your wife Elizabeth who have been barren, now in your old age God's going to allow you to conceive miraculously and your son is going to be the forerunner of the Messiah. And Zacharias knew that. I mean, it was spelled out in absolutely crystal-clear terms back in chapter 1 that he would come, he would be great in the sight of the Lord, he would be filled with the Holy Spirit, he would turn back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. He would go as a forerunner before the Messiah in the spirit and power of Elijah and he would make a people ready for the Lord.

So, they knew exactly who this child was. And they knew that Mary was pregnant with the Messiah because she just spent three months with them. Zacharias gets it. He understands this is the high point, the apex of redemptive history.

Now Zacharias at first didn't believe it so God miraculously made him deaf and mute. And so for nine months he hasn't been able to hear or say anything. But upon the birth and circumcision of the son John, it says in verse 64, "At once his mouth was open and his tongue loosed and he began to speak in praise of God." He had pent up for nine months with this desire to praise God for this incredible, incredible birth and finally when his mouth was opened he praises God. Now there may have been other things he said, but one thing for sure he said is recorded in verse 67 and following. This is what came out of the mouth of Zachariah. And, folks, this is where we have to stop, we have to halt the narrative process and we find ourselves needing to just sort of build booths and stay here a while because this is really important material. And Zacharias understood that and Luke didn't drop this passage in here whimsically, he didn't drop it in here because he thought it would make a nice balance for the narrative and slow things down a little bit. He didn't drop it in here because he wanted to throw a hymn in the midst of the whole thing. He put it here because it is absolutely critical material to link what's happening to the Old Testament. Of course the accusation through the centuries of Judaism has been that Christianity is a heresy, Christianity is not true religion, Christianity is a form of false religion. The fact of the matter is, Zacharias knew it, the Bible proves it...Christianity is the fulfillment of all Judaistic hope and promise. The New Testament is the

complete story begun in the Old Testament. And this benedictus, this blessing, this song of praise or song of salvation by Zacharias ties to the Old Testament. It makes the link for us. And it is a...it is a very profound and far-reaching section of Scripture.

I know we could read it and we could say that's nice, that's nice praise, and make a few allusions to it. It's impossible to do that. We have to stop and make the connection that is absolutely necessary. This is a critical, critical moment in the history of God's salvation. This is a critical coupling of the Old with the New.

Now we've been looking at the...initially looking at this benedictus by Zacharias, what he said that day. And I mentioned to you that it basically revolves around three covenants. In the Old Testament God made some covenants, He made some promises that He pledged to keep. There was the Noahic Covenant, He made a promise to Noah never to drown the world again. There was the priestly covenant, He made the promise to Israel that there would always be a perpetual priesthood given to them. He made the Mosaic Covenant which was a prescription of law given to Moses. But there are three covenants that had as components as salvation. You couldn't get saved in the Noahic Covenant, the priestly covenant or the Mosaic Covenant, those provided no means of salvation, no path to salvation and no promise of salvation. The law...the Noahic Covenant promised only that you won't drown, it didn't say anything about the fact that you might burn to death. The priestly covenant simply said there would be an available priesthood, it didn't say anything about who would be able to take advantage of it legitimately. And the Mosaic Covenant didn't provide salvation, it only provided condemnation because nobody could keep the law therefore everybody was cursed.

But there were three Old Testament covenants which God made that had inherent in them saving purposes...the Davidic Covenant, the covenant God made with David, the Abrahamic Covenant, the covenant He made with Abraham and what we call the New Covenant, the covenant which God made with Israel which is recorded in Jeremiah and Ezekiel and we'll look at that New Covenant in the next session. But for Zacharias, he realized what was going on. All the promises of the Davidic Covenant, all the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant and all of the anticipated promises of the New Covenant which had to do with changing the heart and the internal part and forgiving sin which was the entree to the fulfillment of Abrahamic and Davidic promise, he knew it was all hinged on Messiah. It was all dependent on the Messiah. It was the Messiah who could come and bring the Kingdom. It was the Messiah who then would come and free the people from bondage and give them their land and their protection and the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant. It was the Messiah who would be the focal point of the New Covenant forgiveness that God would provide.

So, these three covenants are the sort of the stanzas in his song of salvation. The theme is salvation, we know from verse 68, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel." Zacharias filled with the Holy Spirit stands up and says... Why? "Because He's visited us and accomplished redemption for His people." They associated the coming of John the Baptist with the coming of Messiah, rightly so, and with the

coming of Messiah would come redemption. And then he says the Messiah is none other, verse 69, than a horn of salvation for us. A horn being a reference to animals, the horn was used for power and even to kill. It was the formidable strength of the animal by which the animal was able to push and to destroy. The Messiah will come with a push that will destroy the enemies of Israel and will free them. And that's essentially what was in the Davidic Covenant because it says in verse 69, "This Messiah will come in the house of David, His servant, as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old," and what will He bring? "Salvation, deliverance from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us."

Now what did we say last time when we studied the Davidic Covenant? We said that the Davidic Covenant was a promise to David by God that a Son would come out of David's loins ultimately who would rule in Israel and would rule over the whole earth and would rule forever. It wasn't fulfilled by Solomon. And, of course, after that the kingdom fragmented and split and today, of course, and for centuries and millennia there has been no real king in Israel. But there will be a king. God promised a greater son of David, somebody out of the Davidic line of David's blood would come to reign on the throne of Israel. And from that throne would bring peace and prosperity to Israel, would rule with a rod of iron and His rule would extend over the whole earth. This promise, by the way, was made in 2 Samuel chapter 7, repeated in 1 Chronicles chapter 17, repeated in Psalm 89 at the beginning of the chapter and the end of the chapter. It is alluded to over 40 times in the Old Testament. It is referred to in the statements of Isaiah 9:6 and 7, "Unto us a child is born, a Son is given and the government shall be upon His shoulders." This is a ruler that is coming, a king.

Back in chapter 1 of Luke verse 31, when Gabriel was talking to Mary, told her she was going to be the mother of Messiah, verse 32 after saying you're going to bear a son name Him Jesus, He'll be the Son of the Most High, verse 32, "The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David." So the Messiah was to be the fulfillment of Davidic Covenant promise. He will, verse 33, reign over the house of Jacob forever and His kingdom will have no end. So He's going to come, He's going to reign, there's going to be an eternal kingdom, a universal and eternal kingdom. And we saw that last time, that when the Messiah was to come He was to be the King, He was to set up His Kingdom on earth and it was to be an earthly Kingdom in Jerusalem where He would reign from Jerusalem over the whole world and with a rod of iron. At the end of that Kingdom would come the new heaven and the new earth, the eternal state, but He would rule in that as well forever and that's why it can be said that His Kingdom though it changes from being temporal to being eternal is nonetheless a forever Kingdom.

And what the Jews thought about when they thought about the Davidic kingdom was freedom from oppression, freedom from our enemies, that's noted in verse 71, free from persecution, hostility and hatred and deadly animosity which, of course, Israel has endured through all of its history, all of its history and endures even to this day today. Israel, God's special people, obviously had been the special attack of Satan, the subject of Revelation chapter 12 describes that. Satan has done

everything he possibly could to accomplish genocide against the Jewish people, to try to wipe them out, to try to destroy the messianic line, destroy of the people of promise. But he's been unable to do it because God has protected them to bring to fulfillment Davidic promise.

So, the Davidic kingdom looked primarily at the rescue of Israel from all the rulers around them and over them so that they would have ruled on nation and that the Messiah would not only rule Israel but from Israel rule the world. He would take over and rule everything. He would be King of kings and Lord of lords to borrow the language of the book of Revelation. Psalm 110 we noted talks about it. Zachariah 14:9 talks about it. And, of course, it's unfolded in Revelation 19, Revelation 20. I also showed you last time some of the characteristics of the earthly millennial kingdom. There are hundreds of verses in Isaiah that outline the details and the nature of that earthly kingdom.

So Zachariah's participation was Messiah's almost here, that means the Son of David has arrived, that means the Davidic kingdom is coming soon. Maybe even Zachariah could hang on long enough, though he was an old man, to live to see its inauguration. He didn't have any idea that they would reject the King, they would crucify the King and the kingdom would be postponed and still has not yet come. It will, but it hasn't yet. But Zacharias assumed when the Messiah comes the kingdom comes and so he's exhilarated because he sees the one who is coming from the house of David, delivering them from their enemies and the hand of all who hate them. Now the Davidic Covenant was universal, that He would be the universal King over the whole earth, reigning in the nation, in the land of Israel on the throne of David.

Zacharias had a second hope. He knew this too was connected to Messiah and this is Abrahamic Covenant hope. The Abrahamic Covenant is one of those rockbed elements to biblical interpretation. And I want you to hang with me because this is really foundational. If you understand this, you can get the big picture. I know there are lots of people who come to church and all they want is a little fix on some thing in their life. I'm not going to be able to address that today. Some days we do that. But what I'm going to address today is the rockbed foundation by which you can understand the whole of redemptive history and it's all bound up in the Abrahamic Covenant.

While essentially the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant is universal, He will literally rule the world some day and it will be a world of believers and unbelievers during the Millennial Kingdom, the Abrahamic Covenant is national. The Davidic is universal, the Abrahamic is national. Let's look at the Abrahamic Covenant in verses 72 to 75.

The intent of the Davidic Covenant was to deliver everybody in Israel from their enemies and set up the rule of Messiah. The intent of the Abrahamic Covenant was to show mercy, verse 72, toward our fathers, to show mercy toward our fathers. The fathers to the Jews were Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. And to remember where that first was launched, God's holy covenant, the oath which He swore to Abraham, our father, to grant us that we being delivered from the hand of our enemies by

the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant, we've now been delivered from the hand of our enemies but now in the Abrahamic promise we can go ahead and serve God without fear. Always we've served God with fear, always the Jew lives in fear, always the Jew lives in mortal fear of maintaining his own existence against all of the aggressive hostilities that surround his life. But once Davidic promise is fulfilled and the Messiah reigns, fear is gone and we will serve Him, verse 75 says, in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.

So you can see that the Davidic Covenant and the Abrahamic Covenant were connected. The Davidic Covenant brought the rule of Messiah in Israel. And the rule of Messiah brought the blessing that the Abrahamic Covenant promised.

Now let's go back to the Abrahamic Covenant for just a moment. It says in verse 72 there, "To remember God's holy covenant, the oath which He swore to Abraham our father." Now it was about mercy, it was a covenant to show mercy. The idea is that God was compassionate, God was merciful toward undeserving people and He made a covenant. Now this mercy was, first of all, to Abraham and then repeated to Isaac and Jacob and Joseph and then extended to the nation of Israel and then extended through Israel to the world. So when it says in verse 72 to show mercy toward our fathers, that's just where the stream of mercy starts. That's the headwaters of the stream of mercy, certainly not the extent of it because it broadens through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, the people of Israel and the mercy of God towards sinners spreads to the world and that's why we're here today because we have received that mercy once given to Abraham. And it all began with a covenant, a promise made to the father of the Jews, the father of the nation Israel...a man by the name of Abram who later had his name changed to Abraham once he received the covenant of God.

Now at the time of Abram there was no such thing as a Jew. There was no such nation as Israel. That all started with one man chosen by God. To understand the essence of the Abrahamic Covenant let's go back to Genesis chapter 12. I find this to be just a fascinating, fascinating account.

Now just to give you a little bit of a chronology in the book of Genesis, Genesis starts out with the creation account, God's creation in six days of the entire universe. It's followed up, of course, with the discussion of the life of man on the earth. Chapter 3, man falls into sin. It progresses from there to a destruction in the universal flood where God drowns the whole earth and saves eight people. And the story of man progresses from the eight people rescued out of the Flood. That's up through chapter 11. All you have basically is the creation, the Fall, the Flood, the scattering of the nations.

The first sort of individual history starts in Genesis 12. And here's where redemptive history really starts. It starts with a man named Abram. The rest of Genesis goes Abram, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and they take up the next chapters till the fiftieth chapter which ends the book. But let's begin with Abram because that's where the covenant was made.

"Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go forth from your country.'" Now Abram lived in a place called Ur of the Chaldeans as noted in verse 31. It was a typical pagan place and Abram lived there and God just plucked him up, just picked him out of the crowd for reasons, of course, good reasons, reasons that God knows. He picked Abram. He said, "Go forth from your country, from your relatives, from your father's house to the land that I'll show you." We can assume that Abram had some kind of connection to the true God. We don't know all about how that can be defined but we do know that Abram knew of the true God. And so God came to Abram and says...I want you out of here, I want you to go to a place where I'm going to send you. And then in verse 2 He tells him why. "I'll make you a great nation." This is...this is absolutely a unilateral promise. He's not asking Abram to agree to anything. He said, "I'm going to make you a great nation and bless you and make your name great and so you shall be a blessing and I'll bless those who bless you and the one who curses you I will curse and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Now this is very, very important. Get out of your country, away from your relatives, away from your family. Go to this place I'm going to take you, which was, of course, the land of Palestine, as we know it. And here's what I'm going to do, I'm going to make a great nation. Out of your loins is going to come a great, great nation.

Now that was a problem because he and Sarah didn't have any kids. Hard to have a nation if you don't have one. Back in chapter 11 verse 30, "Sarai was barren, she had no child."

So this is a pretty monumental promise and it's going to involve a conception miracle. "I'm going to make you a great nation," and indeed that came to pass, obviously, the Jewish people are and have been a great nation. "I will bless you," God says I'm going to bless you, I'm going to bless that nation and, "I'm going to make your name great." The Jewish people, believe me, they have earned a great name. You could say they have earned a great name in medicine, you could say they've earned a great name in the arts, you could say they've earned a great name in education, you could say they earned a great name in literature, you could say they earned a great name in finance, you could say just about any category you want to say and pretty much Jews have earned a great name. They are a quite unusual strain of homosapiens. Whatever the genetics are that God made sure were in Abram have made a great contribution to this quite noble people among the peoples of the world. And their name was great. And their land has been the focal point of human history. And even is today. "And you will be a blessing and not only a blessing but in you...the end of verse 3...all the families of the earth will be blessed."

This is quite a thing. You're going to have...you're going to come...out of your loins is going to come an entire nation. This nation is going to be a great nation. This nation is going to be a blessed nation. This nation is going to have a great reputation. This nation is going to be a blessing to others. In fact, through this nation all the families of the earth are going to be blessed.

This is the promise of the whole saving purpose of God...the whole thing is going to come through Israel. The law came through them. They were the writers of the Old Testament. The prophets were Jews. Everything...the covenants came to them, promises came to them, the adoption came to them. They were the elect, they were the chosen people. And through them came the Messiah, He was born in the line of David. Everything came through them. That's why Jesus said in John's gospel, "Salvation is of the Jews." He didn't mean it's only for the Jews, He meant it's through them...they have been God's divine conduit. This was the promise of God. A great nation, blessing, a great reputation, and through them the whole world would be blessed.

But if you study the history of Israel, it didn't kind of work out that way. Not all the time. There were times of blessing, obviously there is inherent greatness. There were times when they were a blessing to others...but the idea that all the families in the earth have been blessed through them has been in some measure without their cooperation. Well all the families of the earth have been blessed through them because it is through them that we have the Old Testament and through the Jews that we have the New Testament. It is through them that we have the gospel. It is through them that we have the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. So it is true. But they have not been able to join in on those blessings.

God has even protected them, "The ones who bless you I'll bless, the ones who curse you I'll curse." God says I'm going to protect you. That's partly because God made a promise to do it and partly because He's going to perpetuate the people of Israel. There's yet an unfolding plan for Israel and God protects them. It's remarkable to me. It doesn't matter what Adolph Hitler tried to do. It doesn't matter what Joseph Stalin tried to do in committing genocide and exterminating the whole entire world of Jews. It's not going to happen. It's astonishing and an amazing thing from the human side, but not from the divine side. God has preserved these people. He's preserved them so carefully that in the end time in the book of Revelation, in the Tribulation time, the seven-year destruction before the return of Christ, God will select 12,000 Jews out of each of the twelve tribes, each tribe will yield 12,000 Jews who will become the 144,000 great preachers during that time of judgment. Now they don't know what tribe they're of, but God knows...because the lines have been kept so pure through all these centuries.

They haven't really enjoyed the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise. It...certainly if you were talking to Zacharias that day and you say...Hey, Zach, how you guys doing on the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise? Would you say that your nation is a great nation? That God is blessing you and making your name great? And you're a blessing and all the families of the earth are blessed through you?

He's say no. They were hoping. Right now we're cursed, right now we're under judgment, right now we're occupied by the insufferable Romans. Right now life is hard. Right now it's difficult. But the

dawning of a new day is come because the forerunner to the Messiah has been born and the Abrahamic Covenant fulfilled, it must be on the horizon.

Now turn to chapter 15. The Abrahamic Covenant is reiterated in Genesis eight times...eight times...chapter 12, 13, 15, 17, 22, 26, 28 and 35. But we're not going to look at all of those, so relax. But Genesis...Genesis 15 verse 18, "On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham." Now I want to stop you for a minute. He announced the terms of the covenant in chapter 12, he actually made the covenant, as we will see next week, here in chapter 15. The terms of the covenant came, the covenant was confirmed in chapter 15. And he says in verse 18, "On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham," that's why we know this is an actual covenant.

Here's the covenant. Now this goes beyond what was stated in the first terms of the covenant in chapter 12. He says, "Your descendants...to your descendants I'll give this land." "Not only a great nation, not only a great reputation, not only blessed and a blessing of others, not only through them will the families of the earth be blessed, this will be an immensely influential nation." By the way, folks, the Jewish people are THE most influential people who have ever lived on this earth. They are THE most influential people who have ever lived on this earth. They are the writers of the Bible. They are the prophets and the Apostles of redemptive history. And that's what He meant by that great nation, with that great power to bless.

But He adds here another component and this one's very, very pragmatic. "I'm giving you a land," and let me tell you what the land is? "It's from the river of Egypt, as far as the great river, the river Euphrates." The river of Egypt would not be the Nile, probably, but be...there's a river on the north border of Egypt going from there north the land would go. And it goes as far east as the river Euphrates, the Mesopotamian valley, the Tigris/Euphrates valley, clear through Arab country, far into that territory. "The land of the Kenite, the Kenezite, the Kadmonite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, Rephaim, Amorite, the Canaanite, the Girgashite and the Jebusite." And by the way, how many of those folks have you met? I never met a "nite" of any kind except an Israelite. They aren't around anymore because God had no covenant to preserve them. God says in the end it's all going to be your land, you're going to get all that land stretching all the way from the border of Egypt north and sweeping through that fertile crescent, probably the most valuable piece of real estate on the face of the earth, given its capability for growing things, its capability for producing oil and other natural resources. God says that's your land, I'm going to give you that land.

Well in the time of Zechariah they're sitting in Jerusalem and they're not really experiencing much of the benefit because frankly the Romans are ruling the whole land. And before the Romans they had a little moment's breath, but before that it was the Greeks. And before that it was the Medo-Persians, and before that it was the Babylonians. And Zacharias had never seen anything that looked remotely like the fulfillment of this. Neither has any Jew today. In fact, you can't imagine all the Arab countries, Iraq, Iran and all the rest of them, marching over to Jerusalem and saying...We just read

Genesis 15 and we'd like to turn your land over to you. That's not going to happen.

But that's the covenant and the covenant...the Jews saw that covenant as tied to the land. And here's Zacharias in the midst of the Roman occupation, oppressed by these hateful Romans and their idols...they don't have the freedom and the blessing that they attached to the Abrahamic Covenant. Now he hears the Messiah is coming, the Messiah's forerunner has been born and he understands what's happening. Now this might be the time when Messiah comes, sets up the Davidic throne, takes over the rule of the land and then He will institute the conditions of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Now go to 17 for a moment, chapter 17, because I want you to get the richness of this covenant because it's...it's so important. Abram was 99 years old and the Lord came to Abram and said to him, "I'm God Almighty, walk before Me and be blameless. I'll establish My covenant between Me and you." Now it's an unconditional covenant, God's made it unilaterally and irrevocably, but its fulfillment is dependent upon obedience. So He says I'm going to establish the covenant that I gave you, verse 2, "I'm going to multiply you exceedingly. Abram fell on his face, God talked with him saying, As for Me, behold My covenant's with you, you shall be the father of a multitude of nations, not only are you going to be the father of a nation, Israel, but you're going to be the father of multitude of nations."

Do you realize that that's the problem in the Middle East today? Everybody traces their lineage back to Abraham. Abraham didn't think Sarah could become pregnant because she was 90 years old and had been sterile, or infertile all her life. And so he got a hold of the handmaid, Hagar, and produced a child called Ishmael and Ishmael fathered Arabs.

Later on, Isaac had sons, Jacob and Esau. Esau sold his birthright. God cursed Esau. Esau then went and fathered the nations of the Middle East. So Arab nations came out of Ishmael. Arab nations came out of Esau. But whether you're out of Ishmael or Esau, you can trace your lineage back to Abraham. So while Israel feels that the rights of the land is theirs cause they're the sons of Abraham, so does the whole Arab world because they can trace their lineage back to Abraham and that's why you have this horrific conflict. It's clear in the Scripture that God chose Isaac to be the line and not Ishmael. And God had chose Jacob to be the line and not Esau, right? But they're unwilling to accept that. And so they all go back to Abraham.

God says, "I'm going to let you father a multitude of nations, these Arab nations. And I'll make you exceedingly fruitful, and I'll make nations of you and kings shall come forth from you." And they have even today, still out of that line from Esau and Ishmael. "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you...listen carefully...throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant." Now that's very important because now, all of a sudden, we've gone beyond the land, we've gone beyond temporal blessing, we've gone beyond peace in the land, not having a conqueror there or an occupying nation. We've gone into something that is eternal here and these are the saving terms of this covenant. In fact, it's an everlasting covenant to be God to you.

You see, in the end what I want is your hearts, in the end I'm going to be your God. Not only to you but to your descendants after you. And I'll give to you and your descendants after you the land of your sojourners, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession...and then this...I will be their God.

You're talking about something that's eternal. If God is your God, that's an eternal relationship. So God comes to Abraham in chapter 12 and says...You know, here are the sort of general outline, you're going to have a great nation, a great reputation, a great blessing, through you all the nations of the earth are going to be blessed, I'm going to add to that another component, I'm going to give you the land and I'm defining exactly what the land is and basically it embraces Eden. It's sort of like paradise regained. And in the Millennial Kingdom when the Lord restores the earth to an Eden-like condition after Christ returns and sets up His thousand-year millennial rule, that's when the fullness of the Abrahamic Covenant will be fulfilled and the Jews will have their land and their blessing and they will be a blessing to the whole world...the prophets tell us every Jew will have ten Gentiles hanging on his coat asking him to take him to see the Messiah.

So there will be...and they'll even be a great blessing to the whole world during the time of the Tribulation because when the 144,000 Jews are saved, they become the greatest force for evangelism the world has ever known and in a few years so many people are saved, according to that chapter, chapter 7, they can't even be counted.

Then they're called to do what they were called to do in the first place, be witnesses to the true and living God and proclaim the message of salvation. They'll do it with a force and a power, the likes of which has never been seen previously. They'll do that during the time of the Tribulation. Then in the Kingdom, they'll continue to do that with people who are born during the millennial era and who are brought to the knowledge of the Messiah.

Now go to chapter 22 for a moment. Now God said to Abram, now called Abraham...All of this is going to happen, but you have to believe Me, you have to trust Me. God in His wonderful sovereign power worked in the heart of Abraham's faith. God came to test Abraham as to his faith, to make the point that God's promises come true where people believe in Him.

They had a child. It was such an incredible miracle that Sarah couldn't stop laughing so she named him laughter, Isaac. And the child grew and, of course, was the apple of his father's eye and all of that. God came to Abraham in chapter 22 of Genesis, says, "Okay, I want you to take Isaac and kill him. I want you to go up to Mount Moriah," you can go to Mount Moriah today, go to the Mosque the great Mosque on the temple mount. Has a little opening you can look down and see what the Arabs will tell you is the original Moriah where Abraham was going to offer Isaac.

So God says to Abraham, "Take Isaac up there and take some sticks and build an altar and you're going to make a sacrifice of Isaac." Now, you know, Abraham could be scratching his head and saying...Why...I mean, we had a conception miracle, we went through all of this stuff, I've got a son, supposed to have a great nation, now I'm going to go up there and kill my son? Jews don't...we don't believe in murder, it's forbidden. Certainly we don't believe in killing our children. How can this be?

Well, according to Hebrews he was willing to do it. He believed God knew what He was saying and never questioned God's Word. And Hebrews tells us in chapter 12 that he believed that God could raise the dead. I don't think he was going up the hill chewing his nails and wringing his hands and stroking his beard. I don't think he was going up the hill fretting and fuming and fussing. I think he was going up the hill waiting to see a resurrection miracle because he understood the inviolability of God's promise and he understood that if God was going to ask him to take a life, God was going to have to give it back. But the God who can bring life out of the womb of a dead woman, Sarah, dead as far as childbirth, could certainly bring life out of a dead body. And so, according to Hebrews 12 he believed that God could raise the dead. And I think he went up there expecting to see a great miracle. That's how strong his faith was. And when he lift the knife to plunge it into the chest of his beloved son, he was anticipating a great resurrection miracle to occur.

At that very moment, according to Genesis 22, he raised his eyes...well go back to verse 12 for a minute. God says, "Stop, don't stretch your hand against the lad and don't do anything to him. I know you fear God since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me. I know you believe Me. I know you honor Me, you worship Me, you trust Me, you revere Me, you reverence Me. So stop."

"Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son." Substitute. "And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will...what?...provide." The Lord will provide a sacrifice. That's a great statement, isn't it? The Lord will provide, the Lord will provide. "And it's still called that to this day," says Moses as he writes. "In the mount of the Lord it will be provided." The Lord will provide.

So he thought he was going to see a resurrection but rather he saw a substitution. And the Lord wanted to show him that if you'll go all the way with Me to the end, I'll provide what's necessary...I'll provide a substitute.

"Then the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven," in verse 15, "and said, 'By Myself I have sworn,' declares the Lord, "because you've done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son because of your great faith, indeed I will greatly bless you, I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of heaven and the sand which is on the seashore." In other words, that's metaphoric for a huge, massive number of people. "And your seed shall possess the gate of

your enemies. Your seed in the end will conquer and in your seed...here it is again, verse 18...all the nations of the earth shall be blessed because you have obeyed My voice."

So, Genesis 22, one of the most dramatic moments in all of redemptive history, one of the dramatic...all time dramatic moments of the Bible, confirm...that dramatic moment confirmed the Abrahamic Covenant. And it was confirmed by the faith of Abraham. Abraham was going to believe God. God had graciously produced that faith in his heart and he was willing to believe. God says...that's all I need to see, that's all I need to see, I don't ask for the life, I'll provide a sacrifice. That was a preview of the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who would die in the place of sinners.

So, Genesis then lays out this covenant. Now let me just kind of sum it up for you. The covenant God made with Abraham and repeated to Isaac and repeated to Jacob and it's referred to eight times in Genesis, was unilateral, that is it was God who made it, didn't ask somebody else to commiserate with Him. It was irrevocable, it will come to pass. And that's why there are still Israelites and aren't Perizzites and Hivites and Jebusites and Amorites and Girgashites. And eternal, its components are eternal and he repeats that several times and that involves the forgiveness of sin. You can't have an eternal relationship with God, you can't have eternal blessing from God unless you have forgiveness and salvation.

So it is a unilateral, irrevocable, eternal saving pledge, promising...here's the components...a great nation, a nation that would be blessed, a nation that would possess a great land in which they would experience blessing and protection. A nation then that would become the source of blessing to every nation in the world. And a nation that would receive divine mercy through redemption provided by a substitute redeemer. That was in the covenant...that was in the covenant.

And the covenant was unconditional in the sense of ultimate fulfillment that there will be salvation. The nation Israel will be saved. There will be a kingdom of blessing. They will occupy their land and be protected and blessed in that land and they will become that millennial blessing to the world where the whole world will be hanging on the coats of the Jews saying...take me to the Messiah, teach me the knowledge of God. They will become that. It is unconditional.

But, it is conditioned on the fact that it requires faith. Before God can bring it to pass, He has to grant to Israel the faith to believe. They have to respond to the truth with faith. When Jesus came, they didn't.

Now Zacharias expected the Messiah, Davidic Kingdom...Messiah, Abrahamic fulfillment. It didn't happen because they wouldn't come to Him. They wouldn't acknowledge Him as king. They wouldn't believe. They wouldn't accept Him. And so the promises of Abraham were postponed. As to the nation Israel, the promises of David were postponed. Both will come together in the Millennial

Kingdom.

Now I want to add just a closing thought to this in just the next few minutes. The Davidic Covenant has to do, first of all, with Israel and secondarily, we all get involved cause all believers of all ages will be in the Kingdom. The Abrahamic Covenant was promised particularly to Israel but we all get in on it because part of the Abrahamic Covenant was that through the Jews, through Abraham's nation, all the families of the earth would be blessed. So there are elements of the Abrahamic Covenant that passed to all of us. In fact, the Abrahamic fulfillment is in the Millennial Kingdom and we'll all be there. So I'll enjoy all the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant, along with converted Jews who have come to know their Messiah.

And in the truest sense, Christian people today are sons of Abraham. Now I want to show you this. I want you to turn to Galatians chapter 3 and I'm going to do this as quickly as I can. It's very necessary. Galatians chapter 3 and it kind of pulls everything together for you. Now we go in to Galatians 3 down to verse 6, and the Apostle Paul says this, "Abraham believed God." Boy, we know he did. He went up on the mountain, lifted up the knife ready to kill his son because he believed God. God told him to do it and he was ready to do it. "He believed God," that was an evidence of his true faith in God. "And it was reckoned to him as righteousness." When God saw his faith He gave him righteousness.

Now the question comes, whose righteousness did He give him? Well he didn't have his own righteousness because he was sinful like all the rest of us. He gave him His own righteousness. God literally gave Abraham His righteousness. What do you mean? He gave him the righteousness of Christ. He put the perfect life of Christ to Abraham's account, even though Christ hadn't yet come and lived and died and raised from the dead. It was still in God's economy where there is no time, an event already done and already accomplished and therefore the righteousness of Christ was granted to Abraham and God treated Abraham as if he had lived the perfect life of Christ. And he treated him that way because he believed.

Then verse 7, "Therefore be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham." Now if you believe, if you believe in the gospel, if you believe God as He's revealed in the scriptures, and you've embraced Christ, you are a son of Abraham, a son of Abraham in the category of faith. You're in the line of faith. You have the same kind of faith that Abraham had. You're not a Jew, you're not in the line of Abraham ethnically, racially. You're not in the line of Abraham socially. But you are in the line of Abraham spiritually because you, like Abraham, believe God and receive righteousness reckoned to you. That's how verse 8 says, "All the nations are blessed in Abraham." Verse 9, "So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer."

So all believers, Jew or Gentile, are going to receive the same Abrahamic blessing. What is it? Righteousness imputed to you because you have believed. Abraham is not my father racially. He's

not my father ethnically. But he is my father faithfully in the fact that I followed his faith...I followed his faith. I believed and righteousness was credited to my account, as it was to him.

Now turn to Romans chapter 4 and we'll do two passages in Romans to sum it up. Romans 4 you can read for yourself, it's a lengthy passage, I don't want to go through all 25 verses here. But the first part of the chapter talks about Abraham in terms very much like Galatians 3. It tells us, verse 12, that Abraham who received circumcision in verse 11, and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of faith of our father, Abraham. So Abraham is the father not only of circumcised people, that is racial, ethnic Jews. But he's also the father of those who have his faith, even if they're uncircumcised, namely Gentiles. So all of us receive the benefits and the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant in the Millennial Kingdom. We've already received some of the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant because the gospel has come to us, Scripture has come to us through Israel. We've already been blessed by the nation Israel because we have an Old Testament, we have a New Testament and the truth of the gospel has come, the Messiah has come. But the fullness of Abrahamic Covenant promise comes to pass in the Millennial Kingdom and we'll be there as well because we are righteous by faith, not by works, not by keeping the law, not by circumcision...the same way Abraham was.

So Abraham becomes then the father of all who believe in the spiritual sense. Now a lot of people say at this point...Okay, then that means the church is the new Israel, we're the new children of Abraham and the Jews rejected Christ, they crucified the Messiah and they want nothing to do with Him still and that's the end of them. And we have taken their place.

That is a traditional covenant amillennial etc. viewpoint, that Israel is now set aside as an entity as a nation. In fact, at a conference in Europe, one of the well-known Bible teachers whose name you would know was asked in a panel discussion, "What is the significance biblically of the existence of the people of Israel today?" And the answer was, "It has no biblical significance whatsoever."

That's wrong. God wouldn't perpetuate and protect His people clear down to this age unless He had something in mind for them. And that's exactly what He promised to do and they have not been set aside. And to show you that, turn to Romans 11. We enter in to Abrahamic blessing by faith, but that doesn't cancel the Abrahamic Covenant. It is irrevocable and it is eternal. Romans 11 and again this is a pretty lengthy chapter, but let me just give you some highlights.

You know, chapter 10 ends, Israel's been disobedient. Verse 21, God says about Israel. "You know, all day long I stretch out My hands to a disobedient and obstinate people." They don't want to...they don't want Christ, they refuse Christ, they reject Christ. They want nothing to do with Christ. I mean, you've got a Jewish synagogue a half a block down the street and we're the enemy to them. They don't want to accept Christ, they're not interested in Jesus Christ. They're offended by Him. They're just permanently appear to be disobedient and obstinate.

So is that the end? Chapter 11 verse 1, "I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He?" And then me genita(?) in the Greek, the strongest negative there is, "May it never be, no, no, no way, impossible, can't happen." No He hasn't set them aside because He made a promise to Abraham which was irrevocable and inviolable and eternal. And it had to do with a nation, not just anybody and everybody.

Verse 2, "God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew." He has not. Don't you remember the story of Elijah? Elijah goes to God...I...only I am left, nobody left, just me, just me. And what was God's response, verse 4? What was the divine response? "I've kept for Myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal." You're wrong, I've got 7,000 people in Israel who are a remnant of those who believe. That's God's gracious choice.

Now verse 11 says, "I say then, they didn't stumble as to fall, did they? May it never be." Sure they stumbled. Sure they've fallen into sin. Sure they've experienced the cursings that were promised to them if they did. Sure they've experienced the punishment of God. They did stumble but they didn't completely fall out of God's plan. May it never be. "Rather by their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make them jealous."

Now all of a sudden we all own the God of the Old Testament and they're jealous of Gentiles. We have a relationship with the God of Israel that they don't have. Verse 12 says, "If their transgression has become riches for the world," in other words, they rejected Christ so He turned to the Gentile world to become His witnessing people. "If their sin became riches for us, if their failure became riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be?" That's what I told you earlier. If their failure has produced such riches and such conversion, and the development of the church across the face of the earth, imagine what's going to happen when they finally believe.

Sure, they were...they were the true branches of the Abrahamic blessing. And verse 17 says they were broken off and Gentiles, the church, a wild olive were grafted in. And you became partaker of the rich root. What's the rich root? Abrahamic blessing, Abrahamic blessing, salvation, forgiveness, mercy. "But don't be arrogant," verse 18, "don't be arrogant. Branches...verse 19...were broken off, you were grafted in." Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief and you stand by your faith. "But don't be conceited for if God didn't spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you." Church, you better be careful how you view yourself.

And then in verse 24, well verse 23 at the end he says, "God's able to graft them in again," and He will. If you were cut off, "For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree and grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, the Abrahamic Covenant, how much more shall these who are the natural branches be grafted in to their own olive tree?"

Listen, God is going to put them right back in. God's going to save Israel. God is going to save Israel. Verse 25, "I don't want you to be uninformed, brethren, of this mystery, I don't want you to miss this, hardening has happened to Israel only till the fullness of the Gentiles has come in...only till the Lord has gathered His Gentile church...just until that time, then...verse 26...thus all Israel will be saved." Verse 27, "This is My covenant with them when I take away their sins." And verse 29 says, "This has to happen because the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable."

So the Abrahamic Covenant, Zacharias anticipated it was going to happen immediately. It didn't because they rejected the Messiah. It will happen. It will happen. It will happen and Israel will be saved and Israel will be blessed and the whole world through them will be blessed and that's going to occur when they're saved at the time of the Tribulation and then they're going to enjoy the benefits of the Abrahamic fulfillment and Davidic fulfillment through the whole of the Millennial Kingdom. And we'll all be there enjoying our part in the Davidic promise, the rule of Christ over the universe and our part in the Abrahamic promise, the unlimited blessing of God and goodness of God poured out on His people during that period of time.

Now next time, which will be two weeks from today, we're going to go to the New Covenant, a little more I want to say about the Abrahamic, but we'll go to the New which is the key to the fulfillment of both the Abrahamic and the Davidic because it is how God deals with the heart and can't receive either of those first two kingdoms until the heart has been changed. We'll see that next time.

Father, we are grateful for the Word which brings light. We thank You for the unfolding of redemptive history which sweeps over us with such great power and clarity when we get the big picture from Genesis 12 where the saga of redemption begins, clear to Revelation chapter 20 where the Abrahamic Covenant, Davidic Covenant and New Covenant are fulfilled in an earthly glorious Kingdom of Messiah and all the stops in between. We understand the flow of redemptive history. And then, of course, that followed by the eternal Kingdom where all Davidic and Abrahamic and New Covenant promise is fulfilled in the glories of the new heaven and the new earth forever. Thank You, our Father, for graciously letting us be a part of all of this. We bless You, we praise You, we thank You in the name of Christ. Amen.

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