

# Dispensationalism — Kingdom (Abraham)

## THE KINGDOM AND THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT (GENESIS 12–50)

“In Genesis 12, the kingdom mandate given to Adam and then Noah is now given to Abraham and his descendants. The Abrahamic Covenant will be built upon the revelation made previously with Adam and Noah, yet with more specificity. From Genesis 3:15 there was expectation of a “seed” who would reverse the curse. The “seed” line went through Noah and Shem. Then God’s plan for deliverance narrowed as Abraham became the vehicle for God’s kingdom purposes. But as God’s kingdom program narrows it is not for making the kingdom relevant only to Israel. Through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob blessings will flow to the world. National election, therefore, will be a means for international blessings. Abraham and his physical descendants are not an end in themselves but they are means to universal blessings.”

— Michael J. Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever: A Biblical Theology of the Kingdom of God*, EPub, (Lampion Press, LLC, 2017), 81.

### 1. THE GIVING OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT (GENESIS 12:1–3)

Genesis 12:1–3 NASB

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; [2] 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; [3] And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

“The Abrahamic Covenant undergirds the totality of the biblical revelation. Specifically elucidated in Genesis, its promises govern the pattern of all that follows in Exodus to Revelation.”

— Keith Essex, *The Abrahamic Covenant*, in *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 10 (1999): 212.

Three parties will benefit from this covenant:

1. Abraham

2. The great nation to come from Abraham (Israel)

3. The families/nations of the earth (Gentile groups)

“The Heb. syntax indicates this, and the clause is most probably to be taken as a result clause indicating what will be the consummation of the promises that the preceding verses have announced. That is to say, the personal promises given to Abram have final world blessing as their aim.”

— William J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of OT Covenants* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984), 65.

“Beyond doubt, then, there was a universal purpose in God’s election of Abraham, and therefore also a universal dimension to the very existence of Israel. Israel as a people was called into existence because of God’s mission to bless the nations and restore his creation.”

— Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity), 251.

“Grasping this truth of universal blessings through Israel helps with avoiding two errors. The first is thinking the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant are only for Israel. The second error is assuming later Gentile participation in the covenant means Gentiles will be incorporated into Israel. Both Israel and Gentiles will be related to the Abrahamic Covenant yet each will retain their ethnic identities (see Isa 19:24–25; Eph 3:6).”

— Michael J. Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever: A Biblical Theology of the Kingdom of God*, EPub, (Lampion Press, LLC, 2017), 84.

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### 2. THE KING-PRIEST (GENESIS 14:17–24)

“A brief encounter with kingdom implications takes place in Genesis 14 when Abraham encountered Melchizedek who is identified as “king of Salem” and “priest of God most high.” Melchizedek was a king-priest. The writer of Hebrews will make a typological connection between Melchizedek and the superior King-Priest, Jesus (Heb 7). Psalm 110, a messianic

psalm that finds fulfillment with Jesus, predicts both the reign of God's King (Ps 110:2) and His priestly function (Ps 110:4). When Jesus comes He will successfully unite the offices of King and Priest. Thus, Melchizedek corresponds to Jesus, the ultimate King-Priest."

— Michael J. Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever: A Biblical Theology of the Kingdom of God*, EPub, (Lampion Press, LLC, 2017), 87.

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### **3. THE KINGDOM AND THE TRIBE OF JUDAH (GENESIS 17:6 AND 49:8-10)**

Genesis 17:6 NASB

I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you.

Genesis 35:11 NASB

God also said to him, "I am God Almighty; Be fruitful and multiply; A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, And kings shall come forth from you.

Genesis 49:8-12 NASB

"Judah, your brothers shall praise you; Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; Your father's sons shall bow down to you. [9] "Judah is a lion's whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, And as a lion, who dares rouse him up? [10] "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. [11] "He ties his foal to the vine, And his donkey's colt to the choice vine; He washes his garments in wine, And his robes in the blood of grapes. [12] "His eyes are dull from wine, And his teeth white from milk.