

## **Final Paper**

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TH620: Biblical Theology

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Program: Masters of Divinity

Alliance Theological Seminary

23 Mar 2023

## Genesis 12:1-3 (Abrahamic Covenant)

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Genesis 12:1-3 is a significant passage that marks the beginning of God's covenant with Abram (known as the Abrahamic covenant) as the patriarch of the Jewish nation. Through this passage, Abram is called by God to move from his current country, people, culture to the place where God will one day establish the nation of Israel. God's covenant with Abraham is presented in the form of a fourfold promise that, according to \_ from *According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible*, "will remain at the heart of biblical theology."<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, The passage stands as a significant juncture in the book of Genesis as it stands as a turning point for humanity's relationship with God. According to \_\_ from *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, Genesis 1-11 paints a picture of humanity that lives cursed by evil and sin.<sup>2</sup> Although numerous blessings were given to Adam and Eve at the Garden of Eden, by chapter 3:14-19, these blessings were virtually reversed due to the Fall. Humanity continues on the path of sin and lives under disastrous consequences of living under God's "curse or disfavour."<sup>3</sup> Therefore, Genesis 12:1-3 offers hope to the readers as it reveals God's plan to reestablish relationship with humanity through Abram and, ultimately, with all of humankind.

As already mentioned, the Abrahamic covenant pronounced in Genesis 12:1-3 plays a central role in the entirety of the Bible. It begins God's plan to establish His people and the Kingdom of Israel, additionally, it points to the coming of the messiah who will one day rescue humanity from sin. Thus, the passage serves as a thesis statement, setting the stage for God's plan of redemption. This theme develops throughout the Scripture as it is repeated many times in

<sup>1</sup> Alexander, T.D. and Brian S. Rosner, eds., *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove: IVP; 2000), 14% by Calibre

<sup>2</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, *According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible* (Downers Grove: IVP; 2002), 45% by Calibre

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

the lifespan of Abraham, referenced numerous times throughout the OT, and fulfilled just as God promised. The descendants of Abraham become the people of Israel, the Israelite Kingdom is established in the land of Canaan (1 Samuel), and Jesus is presented in the gospels as the seed of Jesus who came to bless the world. Through it all, God is presented to be faithful. Abraham fails to trust God multiple times in his life. However, God not only fulfills his arrangement but continues to remind Abraham that He will remain faithful. Abraham's descendants continue to repeat the patriarch's action, questioning God and even disobeying his commands. God continues to fulfill His promise instead of duly punishing them for their disobedience. Finally, through the genealogy of Abraham, Jesus comes to save and rescue all of humanity from sin. God fulfills His bargain even if the Israelites do not.

Finally, God's grace is revealed through Genesis 12:1-3. Besides the mention of Abraham's genealogy to Noah, nothing about Abraham is mentioned before the passage. Clearly, Abram is incredibly blessed because of God's covenant, but it is not known why he is chosen. It is soon revealed in the very same chapter that it was not about Abram's character or good deeds that makes him suitable for such blessings; it is the grace of God. Abram fails his first test in Egypt to trust God's promise and chooses to find his own way. This theme is repeated over and over throughout his life. However, in His grace, God protects Abraham and provides a way for him to reap the promised blessings. Clearly, Abram was not chosen because he is a good man, but because of God's grace and love to reconcile His relationship with humanity through the descendants of Abraham (Romans 4:3-5).

The themes found in the Abrahamic covenant stand as a significant message to the church and the followers of Christ as it reminds us of the faithfulness of God. Just like Abraham and his descendants, Christians will continue to struggle through difficulties and temptations. More

often than not failing to adhere to God's will completely. However, Genesis 12:1-3 reminds us that God is gracious and loving. It was not Abraham's goodness, nor ours, but because of God's goodness that He first reached out to Abram, a sinful man, to engage humanity and begin His redemptive work. In fact, if our salvation was up to Abraham or up to us, we are surely doomed. Instead, God continues to work with us despite our sinfulness and invites us to walk with Him through our lives as did Abraham. The Abrahamic covenant reminds us that God loves us, He is faithful, and it is through His goodness that we are forgiven and invited back into a relationship with Him.

### **Exodus 19:1-6 (Mosaic Covenant)**

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Exodus 19:1-6 is a significant passage in the Old Testament as it details the establishment of the covenant between God and the Israelites at Mount Sinai. Through this covenant, which is commonly referred to as the Mosaic Covenant, the basis of the relationship between God and His people are formed and it outlines the terms and conditions of their relationship. In this passage, the Israelites have left the captivity of Egypt and came upon the Desert of Sinai. Here, Moses goes up to God who directly speaks to him of the covenant. The establishment of the Mosaic Covenant is a significant passage because through it, "the whole theology of redemption and the new life is summed up..."<sup>4</sup> God has judged and punished the enemies of the Israelites (His people) and redeemed and reconciled them back to himself. Now, if the Israelites exhibit that the redemptive act of God is not manifested only outwardly but through the change of heart and action, they shall be set apart to be God's treasured possession. Finally, as the people of God, the Israelites have the unique opportunity to represent Him to the rest of the nations, taking on the

<sup>4</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, *According to Plan* (Downers Grove: IVP; 2002), 45% by Calibre

priestly role for the world. Clearly, this priestly function is a continuing theme of the Abrahamic Covenant where God promised that the whole world would be blessed through his seed.<sup>5</sup>

The importance of the Mosaic Covenant is emphasized throughout the Old Testament as it is referred to repeatedly as the basis of Israel's relationship with God. It is renewed in Deuteronomy 29:1-15 as Moses reminds the Israelites of his faithfulness even through their lack of obedience. Moreover, when the Israelites continue to disobey throughout the OT, God sends his prophets to call the Israelites to repentance, reminding them of the covenant they had made with God and the consequences of their disobedience. Its theme of establishing a unique relationship with the Israelites continues even in the New Testament. In the NT, the Mosaic covenant is represented as foreshadowing of the coming of the messiah, Jesus. The Son of God comes to completely fulfill the law, which the Israelites could not do, and establish a new covenant. This time, between God and all of humanity. Jesus' perfect fulfillment and renewal of the covenant is further emphasized in the Epistles. Apostle Paul frequently contrasts the Mosaic covenant with the new covenant established by Christ. He emphasizes that the law could not bring salvation but rather serves as a tutor to lead people to Christ (Galatians 3:24). Finally, the author of Hebrews emphasizes that the Mosaic covenant was temporary but the new covenant through Christ is perfect and eternal (Hebrews 8:6-13).

Exodus 19:1-6 highlights a few things about God. First, it shows that God is a deliverer. He rescues the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and continues their journey towards the promised land. God punishes His enemies and provides for His people. Second, readers can observe that God is holy. He requires His people to be holy and set apart as well. As His people, the Israelites must reflect his character. Third, God is sovereign. God, in his sovereignty, chose the Israelites as His own people and through whom he will bless the world. He is the one who made the

<sup>5</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, *According to Plan* (Downers Grove: IVP; 2002), 45% by Calibre

decision to establish a covenant with the Israelites and continues to follow through with his arrangement. Lastly, God is gracious and merciful. Despite the Israelites continued disobedience and rebellion, He continues to extend His grace and mercy towards them. As He did through the establishment of the Mosaic covenant, He continues to bring His people back to Himself. These theological themes are significant for the church ministry today. It reminds us that a sovereign God is on our side. Although we are imperfect, a perfect God fights for us, delivers us, and brings Him back to His care. Although we will continue to struggle to be faithful in our relationship with God throughout the entirety of our life, God will remain faithful. In all circumstances, we can return to God, who, in His love, will forgive us and restore us.

### **Jeremiah 31:31-34 (new covenant)**

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Jeremiah 31:31-34 is a crucial passage in the Old Testament that announces a new covenant that God will make with His people. In the passage, God proclaims to the prophet Jeremiah that He will establish a new covenant with both the house of Israel and Judah. He specifically states that it will be distinct from the Mosaic covenant that was made after He brought the Israelites out of Egypt, which the Israelites broke. Instead of written on stone tablets, the new covenant will be written on the hearts of the people. Through this, God will be the God of His people and the people will belong to Him. It signifies a personal relationship with God where His people will not only follow His will externally, but also internally. Finally, verse 34 signifies that under this new covenant that He will establish, everyone will know God. He mentions that all people, from the least to the greatest, will be forgiven of their sins and invited into a relationship with God. This announcement of the new covenant develops throughout the

Old and the New Testament as it is mentioned in Ezekiel 36:26-27, Matthew 26:28, and Hebrews 8:6-13.

As God declares that ‘the days are coming,’ the establishment of a new covenant in this passage points to the coming of the messiah. Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, a new time or era of God’s salvation history will begin. It also shows that, in this new covenant that is established through Christ, all sins will be forgiven and remembered no more. This points to the plan for Jesus to be the perfect sacrifice: he will completely fulfill the Mosaic Laws and die for the sins of all mankind. As the perfect sacrifice, no longer will the people of God be in need of making amends for sin through sacrificing animals. Furthermore, through Jesus, all people will be invited to know God personally. Christ, who reveals God’s plan for salvation and the coming of the Kingdom of God, everyone will have the opportunity to learn and partake in God’s plan. Finally, as the coming of the new covenant is being pronounced in the context of the restoration of Israel, it can be noted as indicating that God will one day restore all nations back to His Kingdom.

Overall, Jeremiah 31:31-34 is a significant passage for the Christian ministry today. Although the passage indicates an impending establishment of a new covenant, we see that God is ultimately fulfilling his promise made to Abraham and Moses. God is faithful and all that He does revolves around fulfilling the covenant made with His people. As the promises made by God were filled with a plan to love, bless, and rescue His people, Christians can be rest assured that this good God is still working out His plan of salvation through our lives. Furthermore, we can be comforted knowing that God desires to have a personal relationship with us. There was a time where God had to remain in distance as we were sinful and unable to restore ourselves.

Now, in the new covenant established through Jesus, we are able to stand in restored relationship with God in intimacy.

### **Matthew 4:23-24 (ministry of Jesus)**

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Matthew 4:23-24 is a significant passage found in the Gospels as it centers on Jesus and his ministry to indicate him as the promised messiah. After Jesus is baptized and successfully completes his test in the wilderness, he moves from Nazareth to Capernaum, located on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee. He then called his first disciples, Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John and began his ministry in earnest. In this passage, Jesus is seen to travel throughout Galilee, teaching in the synagogues and preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God. He performs many miraculous healings and news of his ministry spread throughout the region, attracting large crowds and followers. Through the passage, several aspects of Jesus are revealed.

The passage highlights Jesus' authority and power as the Son of God. As he is able to heal the sick and the diseased, it is clearly evident that Jesus is not just a prophet or a teacher. He is the promised messiah who would come and save the people of God. This messiah proclaims the Kingdom of God and announces that it is being established through him. Through him, God's mission to establish a genuine relationship with His people will be fulfilled. The arrival of God's kingdom is directly demonstrated through the miraculous healing Jesus performs. These aspects about Jesus found in Matthew 4:23-24 directly fulfill Old Testament prophecies regarding the messiah.

Isaiah 35:5-6 speaks of the messiah who will come and heal the blind, deaf, and the mute. This passage points to the miraculous healing ministry of the messiah and directly connects to

Jesus' ministry. Additionally, the proclamation of the Kingdom of God is referenced in Daniel 7:13-14 where Daniel sees a vision of the coming messiah who will be given all the authority, glory, and power. This messiah will be given dominion over all the nations. Furthermore, Jesus' ministry in healing the sick points to Psalm 103:13 which testifies that the Father's compassion will be exhibited through the messiah. Finally, the spreading of the good news of the Kingdom of God was prophesied through Isaiah 52:7. The arrival of Jesus is truly a joyful moment for humanity as God's ultimate plan for salvation through Christ has come.

Matthew 4:23-24 is a crucial message to the church's ministry today because it clearly indicates Jesus as the messiah. A quick survey of the Bible through Biblical Theology reveals that all signs that pointed to the coming of the messiah are fulfilled in Jesus. Furthermore, through the passage, Jesus displays how we must replicate his ministry. It is indicated in the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:18-20 that Jesus taught his disciples to replicate what he did through his ministry. As we are called to the same mission, we can learn from this passage that we are to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God, demonstrate its power through healing and deliverance, and make disciples of all nations just as Jesus indiscriminately did for those around him.

## **Bibliography**

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