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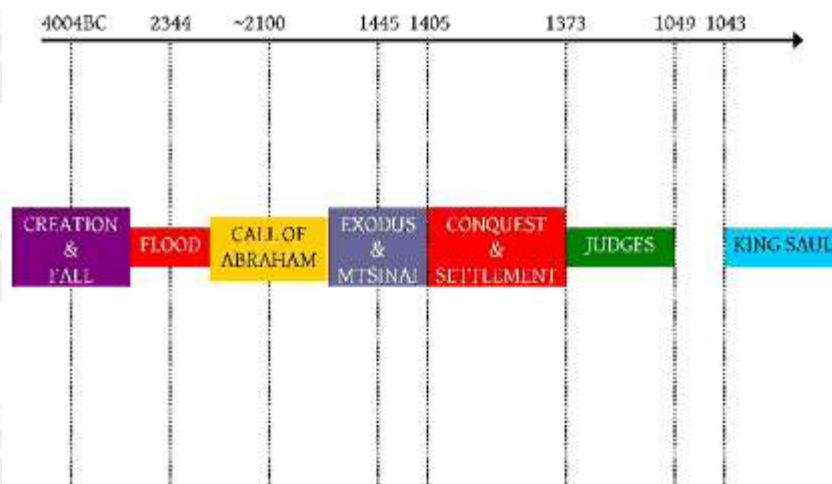
C0743 – November 28, 2007 – The Abrahamic Covenant

We're working with the historical framework for understanding the significance of The Book of the Twelve. In early Christendom these were labeled The Minor Prophets but that's sort of a literary blunder because it tends to deprecate their status. They didn't mean to make them inferior but language orients our thinking. We really need to pay closer attention to how we learn things because labels, titles, words automatically begin to work in your mind and produce false views of reality. Labels are often propaganda devices to push a point of view and too often we don't question the labels. For example, it's popular to refer to our government as a democracy but actually it's a republic. Remember the phrase in our Pledge of Allegiance, "And to the *republic* for which it stands". The American flag stands for the fact that we are a republic not a democracy and thinking of America as a democracy has some rather unpleasant connotations. So, to avoid the connotation of Minor Prophets we call these The Book of the Twelve so that we think of them as Scripture on the same level as a Matthew or a Romans. All of Scripture is equally God breathed, parts of it are not more inspired than others, but it's all equally the exhalation of God so that all of it is profitable from Genesis to Revelation. What we tend to do is think that we are NT Christians so we just need to focus on the NT but that's a fallacy because the NT authors were Jews who presupposed an understanding of the OT. What's the context of the NT? The OT. And what happens when we interpret out of context? We tend to misinterpret. One of the fundamentals of Bible study is interpreting in the context. Context, context, context. So when we study the NT we study it in light of the OT. The OT sets the context so, you don't start with Jesus, there's a logical progression to get to Jesus and the Holy Spirit knew that, why is it taking Christians so long to get that? The OT sets us up to identify Jesus when He comes into history. But if you bypass that then you get the wrong Jesus. And if you get the wrong Jesus then have you really understood the

gospel? Can we clearly communicate the gospel out of the gospel's context? What happens when we give the gospel out of context? We allow our listeners to provide the context. We see examples of this in the NT. Remember Paul at Athens in Acts 17. Here's the clearest Bible teacher in the world of that time and he must have given a very clear gospel presentation to the Athenians. But what happened when he presented Jesus and the resurrection? They interpreted them as two new gods. What happened in Acts 14 at Lystra? They started worshipping Paul and Barnabas. Boy, that was a successful evangelistic encounter. See, it's naïve to think that you can just present the gospel in a vacuum. And for some reason it's taking Missions organizations and Christians in general a long time to catch on to this, to really take a look at these kinds of passages. The gospel didn't come in a vacuum so why do we present it in a vacuum? What did Jesus do in Luke 24:25-27 after His resurrection, He appeared to two guys on the road to Emmaus, a seven mile journey and as they walk along they're discussing the recent historical events, Jesus being condemned and put on the cross and the reports of His resurrection and what did Jesus say? "And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶"Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" ²⁷Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures." Note how Jesus explained things. Where did He start? Where do you start to explain Jesus? You start at the beginning with Moses, that's Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, the Torah, the first major division in the Hebrew canon and then where did He go, to "all the prophets". Think that includes The Twelve prophets we're trying to get to? Of course, there's Messianic prophecy in them. But the point is that there's a logical progression to get to Jesus and Jesus knew that. He knew you don't start with the virgin birth or the cross or something. You get to that, that's where He was going but that's not where you start. That's why I hesitate to just blurt out the gospel message to people because when I do that I allow my audience to fill in the context and I don't want that at all because he interprets me in a pagan frame of reference. So that the best you get is that this Jesus was some kind of a religious martyr an example that we should strive for, but that's the liberal gospel not the biblical gospel, and if you convert someone to the liberal Jesus, the liberal gospel so what. that has nothing to do with the Bible, so some people think so easy, just give them the gospel, that's the right thing to do but what about Paul? Paul had to learn the hard way that that's not the way it works. Paul had to stare the horror of

what unbelief does to the gospel in the face and go back to the drawing board, look at Scripture again, adjust my method. And the method he went to is the same method Jesus used here in Luke 24, and notice the response Jesus got in verse 32. Their hearts were burning while He explained the Scriptures to them. See, it's a powerful way of understanding the Scriptures, we don't need a new ways to study the Scripture, the Holy Spirit's already done it in the chronology of history so we go back to the OT and then work our way to Jesus.

So, we're looking at a part of the OT that spans about four centuries. It's well into the OT so we wanted to go back, get a handle on world history in Gen 1-11 and Israel's history in Gen 12ff. Those are the two basic phases of the OT, you have world history in Gen 1-11 and Israel's history in Gen 12-Acts 1. That's the first and most basic thing you can learn about OT history. World History in Gen 1-11 and Israel's History in Gen 12-Acts 1.



Everything is set up in Gen 1-11. It is foundational for everything else that follows and I like to go into these two phases and single out certain key events so you see the flow of history. The flow, God's plan is set up at Creation, that defines who our God is, how He does things defines who He is, isn't that true that as you look at what a person does, how they do something you learn something about the person? So, we learn who God is at the creation event. We also learn who we are, what the cosmos is, where history is going, what God's plan is all about. If you get that wrong you'll never know where you are in history, you won't know where you came from, where you're going, you can't know anything truly. Then we have the Fall and again, if you don't get this you have serious problems. If you don't realize the magnitude of man's Fall and the historical repercussions of this then you can never make

sense out of the world, what's going on, why things are the way they are, what's wrong with man, what's wrong with nature, something's seriously wrong and that sets up why Jesus Christ came to die on the cross. Vital stuff, but if you don't understand the sin damage then you can't understand the sin solution which is Jesus Christ. That's what we're saying and that's why you can't get to the cross before you diagnose the problem correctly. This is why you get all these works systems of salvation out there. Because people diagnose the problem as really not that bad, so they think we can fix this, the cross of Christ is too radical a solution. But the Bible says, "Oh yes, it's bad, it's so bad that the only solution is the cross work of Jesus Christ and anything else won't fix your problem." A radical problem requires a radical solution. But the solution is also offensive to man because it says "Man's not good" and we don't like to hear that, that rubs us the wrong way so we come up with all kinds of works systems to solve our problem. Then we have the Flood and that deals with the judgment/salvation motif in Scripture. By that point you already have a pretty clear picture of God's holiness and man's sin, how God judges, why God judges. It's not a trite thing, sin is offensive and until we realize the horrible offense that we are to God we'll never understand things like the global flood and why God takes such drastic measures. Why is nature judged along with man. What did nature do? And then we come to the Noahic Covenant and here God comes into a covenant with man and nature. People don't think about this but God came into a covenant with nature. He made promises to nature that still hold today. And this covenant is still in force today. We don't hear much about it, it kind of gets overshadowed by the Abrahamic Covenant but think of it, God has come into a covenant with every person, believers and unbelievers, and every beast that has ever walked this earth from the time of Noah, God has made promises to them and He keeps those promises. So, that's world history in a nutshell. Everything is set up there. God dealt with every people group then. We hear complaints today about how bigoted Christianity is, "Why do you Christians always say Jesus is the only way? Why can't you be a little more open to other religions? Why do you say only Christianity leads to God?" And you can't back down here, because the answer to that dilemma is in Genesis, "God's already tried the 'I'm going to work with everyone approach and it didn't work" thus Israel and the Bible launches into a detailed outworking of God's plan for Israel, it's exclusive, He went to work in one people group and this was necessary because the "I'm going to work with everyone approach" didn't pan out, people just kept distorting the truth, twisting it so that key

truths were eventually replaced with lies and so really we should be thankful that God started working with Israel, depositing the truth in this one nation and bringing into the world, through her, the Messiah. If you don't have Him you have nothing. So, God graciously elected the nation of Israel to be a conduit of revelation and the Messiah. If you don't have the word of God and you don't have Christ you don't have anything. So God started a new nation by calling out a man named Abraham. Abraham responded by faith to God's call (cf Gen 15:6). This call was designed by God to establish a counter-culture, a culture that would stand in contrast to the pagan culture surrounding Israel and ensure that the Messiah and the gospel would remain pure so men could be saved. This brings us to our first focal point tonight, the Abrahamic Covenant. There are two things that really set the nation of Israel apart from the rest of the nations and those are her exclusive covenants with YHWH. Tonight I want to deal with the Abrahamic.

BIBLICAL COVENANTS

Now, when you deal with covenants in Scripture you don't want to think of some ooey goey mystical thing. A covenant is a contract. When we buy a house or a car we enter into a contract. That's what we're talking about when we say "covenant"; that two parties come together in a verbal agreement. Contracts were common in the ancient world between families (Gen 21:22-24), between nations (Hos 12:1), and between a monarch and his subjects (2 Sam 5:3). Although virtually every ancient people used contracts what is remarkable is an observation made by the late Dr William F. Albright. Dr Albright was arguably the greatest biblical archaeologist of the 20th century, a graduate of Johns Hopkins University, the W.W. Spence Professor of Semitic Languages there until 1958 and the Director of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem. So, he is not some off the cuff archaeologist, he knows very much what he's talking about, he's interacted directly with the archaeological evidence in Israel and he says this, "Only the Hebrews, so far as we know, made covenants with their gods or God."ⁱ An astonishing observation. Of all the ancient archaeological evidence, whether it be inscriptions or oral tradition, only the Hebrews made covenants with their gods or God. Why is it that no other people thought to come into a contract with their God or gods? Because they were pagans who were offended by the Creator-creature distinction and replaced it with the Continuity of Being. Once you've wiped out the Creator-creature distinction

who are you going to come into a covenant with? There's nobody there. Remember I told you that when you study ancient documents, whether it's the ancient *Enuma elish* of Babylon or Egyptian papyri, they have no concept of a Personal Sovereign Creator, there's just this smear of the Continuity of Being. Yes, they have gods and goddesses but do you really want to come into a contract with a group of gods and goddesses who are both good and evil, who are constantly warring with one another? Besides, are any of these gods or goddesses sovereign so that they can control where history is going? No, instead you see them fighting one another, jockeying for position to see who, tomorrow will be the top dog. Nobody knows what tomorrow holds. In the final analysis history is open, anything can happen. That's what we call Chance. The idea that history is determined by dice. So, if that's the way I think about reality as a pagan who am I going to come into a contract with? Consequently, pagans did not think of coming into a covenant with their gods or goddesses. However, in Israel the Holy Spirit preserved the original truths of the Creator-creature distinction contrary to sinful human nature and this opened up the possibility of a divine-human contract. Further, this God is defined by the creation narrative as being Personal. Ultimately there is a Person behind the universe, not an "it" or a "force" but a Person who talks and loves. So, back of everything is not some kind of mystery or black nothingness but a Person. And this Person is also Sovereign, He controls history, so that He can make promises and fulfill them. These are the preconditions for God coming into a contract with human beings and this is why Dr. Albright said only the Hebrews made covenants with their God. They were the only people who had a God that could make and keep covenants! In fact, that gets us to the point of a contract. Why do we make contracts? To demonstrate character. In the contract we're saying "I will do this" and time will tell whether we do what we said or not. So they measure our behavior. If we violate the contract it shows we're unfaithful and we get a bad credit rating but if we keep the contract we're faithful, we get a good credit rating and it makes it easier to borrow money. Well, God entered covenants with the Hebrews to demonstrate His character, that He is faithful. What is the one thing God asks of us everyday as Christians? How does God ask us to walk? By faith? Faith in what? Faith in His character. It's not a blind faith, it's not faith in a vacuum, it's faith in His character, that He is reliable, that we can count on Him. So, God set up a historical record so that when we start asking "God, can you really do this? Can you really help me in my jam here?" we can go back to the historical record and check His

behavior. And time and again we see that God always does what He says He will do and that is one of the key things we learn about God in the Book of the Twelve, that God is faithful to His promises. I'm going to try not to refer to them as the Minor Prophets so if I say "The Twelve" or "The Twelve Prophets", just know that I'm referring to those twelve books at the end of your OT that we've known as the Minor Prophets. That's not necessarily where they fall chronologically but that's where they are placed in our English Bible. And the first key to understanding them is the Abrahamic Covenant. So, let's take a look at the covenant and then we'll look at portions from the Twelve Prophets to see how this works.

THE FIRST KEY TO THE TWELVE: ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

In Gen 17 we have one of the accounts of the Abrahamic Covenant. There are many passages on this, there are many promises God makes, we want to just focus on three of those promises.

1. Land - Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and His descendants were promised a specific real estate as an eternal possession.
2. Seed - Abraham was promised that his "seed" would multiply greatly and that one from his "seed" would rule the whole earth.
3. Worldwide Blessing - through his descendants and particularly this seed "blessing" would come upon the whole world.

So, these are the basic promises, we'll only see two of these here. God had already entered a covenant with Abraham in Gen 15:18 so here He's confirming that. Abraham and Sarai have already foiled things up pretty good by trying to have a seed through the maid, but this is an unconditional covenant and that's what you want to see here. Watch the "I will..." language. That language is characteristic of an unconditional covenant so that no matter what Israel does, no matter how much sin or idolatry they commit God will do these things. You want to watch this very carefully because when we come down to the Christian life there's a parallel. God promises certain things to the believer and no matter what the believer does, no matter how much sin, no matter if he denounces Christ, no matter if he commits suicide God is faithful to His promises. So watch and underline the "I will's" because God has, by His own will, come into a relationship with this people that is everlasting, nothing can change it, and as we're going to see,

that's true for us too. But when we get to certain paragraphs in the Twelve Prophets they can only be understood in light of these covenant promises.

Gen 17:2-8 "I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly." ³Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, ⁴"As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you will be the father of a multitude of nations. ⁵"No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations. ⁶"I have made you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you. ⁷"I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. ⁸"I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

Seven times God says "I will". That powerful language is indicative of an eternal relationship between God and the nation of Israel. No amount of idolatry or sin can ever lead God to break this relationship. Note the land promise in verse 8, "for an everlasting possession." Keep that in mind, we'll come back to that. So, this covenant is permanent and that's why we find restoration and blessing passages in The Twelve. But before we look at some of those turn over to Gen 12. I want to note one more aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant, a vital aspect that governs the flow of world history. All these promises govern world history, the Abrahamic Covenant basically demarcated what world history would look like and where it's going. You'll see in this passage a lot of that "I will" language and notice verse 3, "And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse." Remember that because, when we see nations getting judged by God in The Twelve a lot of that goes back to this promise. Those who mistreat Israel will be judged by God and that's basically what Obadiah is about, the end of Edom because she cursed Israel. And Edom is Esau, the descendants of Esau, Jacob's twin-brother, so the Edomites are Muslim people, generally speaking, Arab Muslims and Obadiah is virtually a prophecy of the end of Islam. Yes, there are other Muslims from Ishmael and converts from other lineages but the bulk of Islam is wiped out in Obadiah in the end-times and the reason is because she cursed Israel, it goes back to Gen 12:3. This promise penetrates

all of history and that's why I say you can't understand history, I don't care who you are, if you don't study it in terms of the Abrahamic Covenant. So, with the three promises in mind, particularly the land promise and this promise of cursing upon those who curse Israel turn to Obadiah 10. He's talking about Edom, the descendant of Esau as you can see from v 1, 6, 8, 9 and you come to v 10 "Because of violence to your brother Jacob, You will be covered *with* shame, And you will be cut off forever." What's the reason Edom will be totally destroyed? Because of violence to Jacob, she cursed Israel. It's a working out of Gen 12:3, the Abrahamic Covenant. There's the end of Islam right there. Skip down to Obadiah 15-21, "For the day of the LORD" Anyone remember what the day of the Lord is? The Tribulation, so this is eschatological, this is prophecy that still hasn't been fulfilled and it's an explanation of what we just read in the prior verses about the destruction of Islam. So he says, "For the day of the Lord draws near on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head." There's the principle of Gen 12:3 again, verse 16 "Because just as you drank on My holy mountain, All the nations will drink continually. They will drink and swallow And become as if they had never existed. ¹⁷"But on Mount Zion there will be those who escape," that's where the Temple is and some of the city of Jerusalem, "And it will be holy. And the house of Jacob will possess their possessions. ¹⁸"Then the house of Jacob will be a fire And the house of Joseph a flame; But the house of Esau *will be* as stubble. And they will set them on fire and consume them, So that there will be no survivor of the house of Esau," For the LORD has spoken. See, that's the destruction of Islam's final stand against Israel. "¹⁹Then *those of* the Negev will possess the mountain of Esau," so here we get into the land promise, Israel will possess the land, it will extend over east of the Jordan in the mountain of Esau, "And *those of* the Shephelah the Philistine *plain*," more land promises being fulfilled and you can see on the map here several of these territories, "Also, possess the territory of Ephraim and the territory of Samaria, And Benjamin *will possess* Gilead. ²⁰And the exiles of this host of the sons of Israel, Who are *among* the Canaanites as far as Zarephath, And the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad Will possess the cities of the Negev. ²¹The deliverers will ascend Mount Zion To judge the mountain of Esau, And the kingdom will be the LORD'S.

The point is that, I hope you can see that it's these promises back in the Abrahamic Covenant which explain what is going on in the Twelve. Turn

over to Joel 3:18-21 for more of this, it's not just Obadiah. "And in that day The mountains will drip with sweet wine, And the hills will flow with milk, And all the brooks of Judah will flow with water; And a spring will go out from the house of the LORD To water the valley of Shittim. ¹⁹Egypt will become a waste, And Edom will become a desolate wilderness, Because of the violence done to the sons of Judah, In whose land they have shed innocent blood." See, that's polluting God's land, that shedding of innocent blood, it's an attack on His people and thus an attack on Him, that's why Gen 12:3 is so important. If you attack Israel, the apple of God's eye, you attack God Himself. "²⁰But Judah will be inhabited forever And Jerusalem for all generations. ²¹And I will avenge their blood which I have not avenged, For the LORD dwells in Zion." This is more of the outworking of Gen 12:3 and the land promises being fulfilled. Turn over to Amos 9:11-15. If you're going to Israel with us next summer you'll learn that this name is pronounced Ah-mose because this is our Hebrew tour guides name. Now, in this context your seeing a great calamity before Israel has peace in the land and that's a common theme in The Twelve, some great calamity then peace and that calamity is the Tribulation then it's followed by the Kingdom so be aware of that as you read through these, there's a lot of that, not all of Israel's calamity but some of it is related to this end-times scenario and that's what we have here, the previous verses deal with the calamity during the Tribulation then verse 11 starts in on the restoration of Israel and her day of peace in the Kingdom. "In that day I will raise up the fallen booth of David, And wall up its breaches; I will also raise up its ruins And rebuild it as in the days of old; ¹²That they may possess the remnant of Edom" This is the believing remnant of Esau, they're not Muslims. "And all the nations who are called by My name," See, they are called by His name, they're believers. Verse 13, "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "When the plowman will overtake the reaper And the treader of grapes him who sows seed; When the mountains will drip sweet wine And all the hills will be dissolved." This is all kingdom and look at the productivity of the land, it's going to be awesome as God lifts part of the sin damage to nature so the land produces an abundance like we've never seen ¹⁴"Also I will restore the captivity of My people Israel, And they will rebuild the ruined cities and live *in them*; They will also plant vineyards and drink their wine, And make gardens and eat their fruit. ¹⁵"I will also plant them on their land, And they will not again be rooted out from their land Which I have given them," Says the LORD your God." That is a very important promise that harks back to the Abrahamic

Covenant because notice that when this is fulfilled Israel will never “again be rooted out from their land.” Some evangelicals want to say Israel has no rights to the land. Recently they’ve been uniting and writing letters to our President to let him know that Evangelicals aren’t united on the Israel issue. And they’re right about that, their anti-Israel and we’re pro-Israel, it’s been that way for a long time. And here’s a portion of our President’s mail from the other side, “Both Israelis and Palestinians, have legitimate rights stretching back for millennia to the lands of Israel/Palestine.” Not only is that a lie. The Palestinians aren’t even a people, “Palestine” is a linguistic variation of the ancient “Philistine”, one of Israel’s OT enemies, but those people in Gaza and the West Bank are not descendants of the Philistines, they are Arabs and they have no legitimate rights to the land whatsoever. They never lived there. Who says who has rights to that land? God says Israel has the rights. What did God say to Abraham in Gen 17:8 which was repeated to Isaac and Jacob not Ishmael and Esau, “I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession.” No land rights for Arabs. Sorry, you’ll have to live somewhere else because that real estate that’s got everyone hot and bothered is the everlasting possession of Israel and this verse in Amos says they will “not again be rooted out from the land?” At some point in the future Israel will have every square inch of that land. So, are we going to support a two-state solution in the land? Now, you can reject these verses, you can throw them out, you can allegorize them away, have them fulfilled in the church or something but if you do that what happens to the character of God? Did God say or did not God say the land is Israel’s as an everlasting possession? That He would plant them in the land and they would not again be rooted up? What’s at stake isn’t just some foreign policy, while that is very important, I’m not deprecating that but what’s really at stake is the character of God. Is God faithful to His word or not? If I can’t trust God to keep His promises to Israel can I trust Him to keep His promises to me? If He doesn’t keep His promise of eternal land to Israel can I trust His promise of eternal security to me? See, the whole Bible goes together, it all hangs together. So, if God doesn’t do this, if Israel is not restored to her land permanently then He’s a liar and the God of the Bible is just a big fake, I can’t have eternal security with a God of caprice.

Well, we could go on and on looking at other passages in The Twelve to illustrate the point (Hos 14; Micah 4:1-5; 5:1-5; Zeph 3:8-20; Zech 1:12-17; 2:6-

13; 8:1-8, 11-15; 9:10; 10:1-12; 12:1-14; 14:8-11; Mal 3:1-7) but I just want you to see here that the Abrahamic Covenant is a key. So, as you read The Twelve keep in mind this covenant because God said, “I will” and when God says “I will” do something that’s a guarantee, nothing can stop Him so that’s why you find these promises.

Now, let’s diagram what we’re saying. We want to develop a diagram here over the next few weeks and by doing this we’re setting up for other things as well. Let’s just diagram the Abrahamic Covenant.



To illustrate this we have a circle and it’s an enclosed circle, once you’re in that circle you can’t get out. Now, here’s what this covenant is saying, God put the nation of Israel inside that circle and made promises to them that other nations can’t claim. Remember what Dr Albright says, only the Hebrews made covenants with their God. Really it’s the other way around, God made a covenant with them. And in this covenant God basically says “I will give you this land, I will give you a seed, I will make you a worldwide blessing” so the whole thing hangs on the character of God, it has nothing to do with human behavior; for God or against God, love God or hate God, worship God or worship idols, none of that matters here. See, that’s the point that has to come home here. God is obligating Himself to Israel. Do you realize the magnitude of this? That God would come down, stoop down to man and obligate Himself to a nation of men. But that’s the nature of our God. He loves Israel and He wants us, the rest of mankind to see Him in action, He wants to give us His track record. That’s why He comes into a contract with Israel, that’s one reason at least. He does this so man can look back at His track record and say, “Look at the faithfulness of God.” Isn’t that amazing as I watch Him turn the cogwheels of history. God didn’t have to do that but graciously He does. He says, “Alright watch Me, here’s what I said I would do and here I did it. This is My behavior” and you can sit there and read these OT stories like they’re just stories or you can read this like God’s character is on the line. That’s what He wants, He wants us to see Him and what you see is a flawless record. He always does what He says He’s going to do. ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS. God is faithful. That’s what this is saying.

So, you have this circle and it's a solid circle because there's no way out, the nation of Israel whether they believe in Jesus or not is God's covenanted people. He has a special relationship with that people and nothing can change that and that's why we find these promises in The Twelve, they're going back to the character of God; that He never changes. To show you this I've got to show you one more passage, Mal 3. Here's the last book written in the OT, written about 432BC and the context is the Second Coming of Christ, they didn't see all that at the time but we know as we look back this is looking at the Second Coming and the judgments that are going to be coming against Israel during the Tribulation to stimulate them to believe that Jesus is the Messiah and look at verse 6, in the midst of these judgments what does the Lord say, "For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed." See, God doesn't change, His character is forever perfectly stable and He made covenant promises to Israel so His character is the only reason Israel exists. This is one of the arguments for the existence of God, the fact of Israel's existence. No people has ever lost their land, been totally dispersed and maintained their national identity, no people in the history of the world and Israel has done it twice. Israel is a permanent fixture in world history. You can try to destroy Israel with nuclear weapons, you can try anything you want but you cannot destroy them. Israel exists and will always exist because God never changes. And this is just an evidence of the fact that God always holds up His end of the bargain.

Okay, next time I want to get into a second key, the Mosaic Covenant. You can't understand everything in The Twelve just in terms of the Abrahamic Covenant because the Abrahamic promises Israel a permanent relationship with God, all this blessing she will receive but you find a lot of passages in The Twelve where Israel is being cursed by God. So, if you don't understand the Mosaic then you won't understand why God judges Israel so harshly and this brings in the doctrine of divine discipline or chastening. Then we have to somehow see how these two Covenants relate and how they come together in the Tribulation and the Kingdom. That's where this gets difficult, in seeing how an unconditional and a conditional covenant both relate to Israel but I don't want that to overwhelm you, I just want to work with this piece by piece and then we'll put the pieces together. And keep in mind the doctrines I keep mentioning because we're going to come back and develop those, there are doctrinal consequences to these historical events and if you don't get anything out of this class, remember that if these events didn't happen then

the doctrines of God, that He's faithful to His promises, the doctrine of discipline and the doctrine of prayer mean nothing. We'll be getting to those doctrines sooner or later.

¹ W.F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1968), 108.

[Back To The Top](#)

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