

# Some Little-Known Prophecies of Christmas: Part 2—Genesis 12:7

By PAUL J. SCHARF

Last time, we saw how the very first promise of the Messiah proclaimed Him to be the “Seed” of the woman (Gen. 3:15). But before we can go any further into understanding the characteristics of this coming Savior, we certainly must realize that He was also to be the “Seed” of “Abraham” (Gal. 3:16).

During this time of Advent, we are looking at some of the lesser-known prophecies of Christmas, and we will continue going in chronological order—realizing that we could never exhaust this subject in one Christmas season.

One often neglected Christmas truth is that the promise of the Messiah is actually contained within the Abrahamic Covenant.

When God made His unconditional covenant with Abram in Gen. 12:1-3, He gave us a paradigm that would govern all of His work in history for the remainder of time—and through the remainder of Scripture.

God promised Abram “a land” (v. 1), “a great nation” (v. 2) (which would descend from Sarai and him, although they had no children at all, even at an advanced age; see v. 4) and universal “blessing” (vv. 2-3).

This covenant is so important that it is repeated, reiterated and reemphasized all throughout the life of Abram—who became Abraham (Gen. 17:5)—the book of Genesis, the Pentateuch, the entire Hebrew Bible and, finally, the New Testament. It is so all-encompassing that the other unconditional covenants that God made with His chosen nation in the centuries that followed are really expansions—inspired commentaries, if you will—on the main provisions of the Abrahamic Covenant (see Deut. 29:1-30:10 for the Land Covenant; 2 Sam. 7:1-17 for the Davidic Covenant; and Jer. 31:31-34 for the New Covenant).

From the very first time that the Abrahamic Covenant is referenced, however, just a few verses later, in Gen. 12:7, the inspired author Moses speaks of Abram’s “descendants” in the singular—although that is not reflected in this English translation. However, the Apostle Paul makes a major point of this fine distinction in Gal. 3:16 when he writes:

Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “And to your Seed,” who is Christ.

The Hebrew text contains similar wording in the following verses: Gen. 13:15; 15:18; 22:18; 24:7; 26:4; 28:14; 48:4; Ex. 33:1; and Deut. 34:4.

Ultimately, then, it was “the Seed .. to whom the promise was made” (Gal. 3:19). Christ, the Messiah of Israel, is at the very center of the Abrahamic Covenant!

This, of course, does not negate the continuing importance of the whole people, nation and land of Israel. Christ does not *replace* national Israel in any sense, but He is ultimately the One who makes the literal fulfillment of all these covenant promises possible for the entirety of Abram’s “offspring” (Gen. 12:7, ESV). Otherwise, promises such as the one found in Gen. 48:4 would make no sense at all.

The direct implication, then, in God’s covenant with Abram is that the “nation” (Gen. 12:2) would serve as the caretakers over the land until such time as that perfect “Seed” (Gal. 3:16) would arrive to rule over it. Once He “should come” (Gal. 3:19) in His final return, the people of Israel will forever thrive under His righteous reign.

Indeed, this One who was promised would be their king. When we open His New Testament, we learn that, looking back, He is “the Son of David, the Son of Abraham” (Matt. 1:1).

But where do we find more early hints about His future kingship? There are yet more intermediate steps, and accompanying prophecies, between those associated with the names of Abraham and David.

And we will develop them in the final two installments for this Advent season.

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