

A MULTITUDE THAT NO ONE COULD NUMBER:  
GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM AND ITS FULFILLMENT IN CHRIST

0ST601 COVENANT THEOLOGY

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## Introduction

Abraham received incredible promises from the LORD, but when those seemed to not be fulfilled as Abraham remained childless, he doubted.<sup>1</sup> The LORD came to him and confirmed his promise. “He brought him outside and said, ‘Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.’ Then he said to him, ‘So shall your offspring be.’ And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness” (Gen. 15:5-6).<sup>2</sup> When will Abraham experience this wonderful promise? When will he look upon this great multitude of his children? In Revelation 7:9-10, John looks upon the throne of God and around the throne he sees this glorious picture:

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

What will be the conversation between the Lord and Abraham when this glorious eschatological hope is achieved? Christopher Wright imagines it this way: “And God in the midst of the resounding praises, will turn to Abraham and say, ‘There you are. I kept my promise. Mission accomplished.’”<sup>3</sup> Nothing less than this image captures the scope of God’s covenant with Abraham and its position in the unfolding revelation of God’s covenant of grace.

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<sup>1</sup> In order to be consistent, throughout this paper I will use the name that God gives to Abram in Genesis 17, Abraham, with the exception of direct quotes from Scripture that occur before the name change.

<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise noted all Biblical Citations come from: *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Christopher J.H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 251.

This glorious gathering of the nations is promised within the Abrahamic covenant itself and is then worked out across redemptive history. The specific promise that “in you [Abraham] all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen. 12:3) finds its fulfillment in the redemption of people from all nations in Jesus Christ and the gathering of all the redeemed into one people of God. In other words, it means the inclusion of Gentiles into all the blessings of Abraham. Paul asserts this in Galatians 3:8-9 when he declares “the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed.’ So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.” The focus of this paper is to show that the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham is the inclusion of the nations into God’s covenant people and their enjoyment of all the blessings of the covenant.

#### The Universal Context of the Covenant Promise to Abraham: Genesis 1-11

The promise given to Abraham in Genesis 12 cannot be rightly understood or appreciated without the universal context of Genesis 1-11.<sup>4</sup> God has created the whole of the cosmos and man in his image and entered into covenant fellowship with him. But Adam and Eve rebel against God, breaking his covenant, and plunge the human race into sin. But, God is gracious and enters into a covenant of grace with them, promising to crush the tempter with the “seed” of the woman and regain the intimate fellowship of Eden. However, man continues in sin and even after God’s judgement of the world and election of Noah as a kind of new Adam, the rebellion continues. The depravity of man seems to hit a new height,

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<sup>4</sup> Walter Kaiser Jr. says “Genesis 1-11 is decidedly universal in scope and outlook.” Walter C. Kaiser, *Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, ©2000), 15.

literally, in Genesis 11 as fallen man joins together and says “let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth” (v. 4). God is not impressed and “comes down” to see this tiny tower and then confuses the language of the peoples, creating diverse cultures, and scatters the people. Michael Williams articulates the results of this well: “How can he [God] be known by a human population that is now divided, diverse, dispersed by his own action (Gen. 11:8)? The call of Abraham is God’s missional answer to this problem.”<sup>5</sup> The Abrahamic covenant then fits within this universal scope answering universal problems, meaning its fulfillment must be universal in scope as well. James Hamilton goes back further than an answer to the problem of Babel. “The content of the blessings in Genesis 12:1-3 matches the content of the curses in Genesis 3:14-19.”<sup>6</sup> Hamilton places the curses into three categories and sees direct answers to these in the blessings promised to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3.<sup>7</sup> For particular interest in this paper, Hamilton sees the answer to the “seed conflict” of Genesis 3:15 in the blessing to Abraham that “all the families of the earth will be blessed in you.” The victory of the seed of the woman is often called the *protoevangelion* or first gospel, which adds strength to Hamilton’s assertion given what Paul says about God “preaching the gospel to Abraham” (Gal. 3:8). With this universal context, why does God choose one particular man and through him one particular nation? To answer this, we must now turn to the direct promise given to Abraham from God in Genesis 12:1-3.

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<sup>5</sup> Michael D. Williams, *Far as the Curse Is Found: the Covenant Story of Redemption* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2005), 103.

<sup>6</sup> James M. Hamilton Jr., *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: a Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 80.

<sup>7</sup> See the helpful chart that outlines the specific curses of seed conflict, gender conflict and land conflict and their answers in the promises to Abraham in *Ibid*, 82.

In you all nations will be blessed: Genesis 12:1-3

Now that the context in which the promise to Abraham comes, we must turn our attention to the text of Genesis 12:1-3:

Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Two important things must be pointed out related to the direct question of this paper. First, the glorious promises given to Abraham in this passage are given for a purpose. This can be seen in v. 2, “And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, *so that* you will be a blessing.” The purpose of God choosing and blessing Abraham is so that he will be a blessing. Whatever conclusions may be drawn about what it means for Abraham to be a great nation and have a great name, they must include the intended result of being a blessing.

This leads to the second point, which concerns what it mean for Abraham to be a blessing. Certainly it means that those who come in contact with Abraham will be blessed as God promises in the first part of v. 3, but the greater force comes in the second half of that verse, “in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” Combining this with the purpose of God’s promise being that Abraham would be a blessing, the result is that God’s purpose in calling and blessing Abraham is nothing less than the blessing of all nations.

But what exactly is this blessing that they are to experience? Given the structure of the passage, the form of the verb,<sup>8</sup> and how the blessing plays out in Abraham's life, Christopher Wright sums up the blessing to the nations as nothing less than enjoying the very same blessings as Abraham himself.

This is not just randomly sprinkled blessing. It is a deliberate act that will activate God's promise of blessing for them. The nations will indeed be blessed as Abraham was, but only because they will have turned to the only source of blessing, Abraham's God, and identified themselves with the story of Abraham's people. They will know the God of Abraham.<sup>9</sup>

Here the thesis of this paper comes into full view. The fulfillment of the promise that all nations will be blessed in Abraham comes as they are included in all the blessings of Abraham. This is in fact the very reason that God covenants himself with Abraham.

Some would see a distinction between the fulfillment of this promise of the Abrahamic covenant, all nations being blessed, and the fulfillment of the rest of the promises to Abraham. Dispensationalist interpretation would contend that there still exists promises held out to ethnic Israel for land and nation based upon the eternal covenant with Abraham. John Walvoord states this when he says, "The church does not have right or title to promises given expressly to Israel. It may be conceded that some of the promises given to Abraham are intended to extend to the church."<sup>10</sup> He goes on to talk about the fulfillment of these promises in Galatians and concludes "the portion of the covenant specifically given to Israel is not

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<sup>8</sup> There is considerable debate as to whether it should be translated "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" or "by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves." Wright makes the case that the difference is minimal since either would involve seeking a blessing through Abraham and its source, Abraham's God. See Wright, 216-219 for the full discussion.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 219.

<sup>10</sup> John F. Walvoord, "The fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 102, no. 405 (January 1, 1945): 27-36. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed January 12, 2015), 32-33.

transferred to the church. Only the portion of the covenant dealing with universal blessing such as extended beyond Israel is applicable to the church.”<sup>11</sup> Similarly Keith Essex argues that “the church today experiences in Christ some spiritual benefits that Israel and the nations will experience (with physical results) in the future when Jesus implements fully the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant. The NT, like the Old, views the complete fulfillment of the Lord’s promises to Abraham as a future event (Matt 8:11; Acts 3:19-26; Rom 11:25).”<sup>12</sup> I would agree that there is a not yet aspect to the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant, but that it does not find its fulfillment in ethnic Israel but in what has already been argued, the eschatological gathering of the redeemed from every tribe, tongue, people and nation.

There seems to be a similar but more moderate position as well that views the covenant of Abraham as two separate covenants, one with Israel and one with the nations. T. Desmond Alexander explains this position:

At the heart of these promises/ covenants are two important expectations. First, God’s relationship with Abraham will result in the creation of a unique nation that will inherit the region of Canaan. Secondly, blessing will be mediated by one of Abraham’s descendants to the members of other nations.<sup>13</sup>

Alexander footnotes Paul Williamson who makes a similar claim, though he sees one serving the other. “God’s plans for Israel were always subservient to his universal purpose, his plans

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 33.

<sup>12</sup> Keith H. Essex, "The Abrahamic Covenant." *Master's Seminary Journal* 10, (1999): 191-212. *Old Testament Abstracts*, EBSCOhost(accessed December 22, 2014). 212.

<sup>13</sup> T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: an Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids MI: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2009), 189-190.

for all the families of the earth.”<sup>14</sup> I would agree that the call of Abraham and the creation of the nation of Israel serves God’s universal plan to bring all nations to himself in Jesus.

However, I would disagree that the only way to understand God *particularly* calling Abraham is that he has a twofold agenda. I think that Wright’s conclusion again best understands the flow of this passage in particular and its outworking in the nation of Israel.

God’s calling and election of Abraham was not merely so that he should be saved and become the spiritual father of those who will finally be among the redeemed in the new creation (the elect, in another sense). It was rather, and more explicitly, that he and his people should be the instrument through whom God would gather that multinational multitude that no man or woman can number. Election is of course, in the light of the whole Bible, election unto salvation. But it is first of all election into mission.<sup>15</sup>

The point of God’s electing of Abraham and promising the blessing on all nations is not to introduce a twofold plan. Rather it is to show the instrument (Abraham and his offspring, namely Christ) for the ultimate plan of gathering all the nations that have just been created and scattered (Gen. 11), in the worship of Himself. To separate the promises to Abraham as personal, national, and then universal<sup>16</sup> may be helpful in categorizing the promises, but it is unhelpful if they are seen as having different fulfillments. “Blessing for the nations is the bottom line, textually and theologically, of God’s promise to Abraham.”<sup>17</sup> Abraham is promised by God a multitude of offspring and a blessing on all the families of the earth. The fulfillment of these two promises coincide with the ingathering of all the nations under the promised seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ, to enjoy all the blessings of the covenant. Nothing

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<sup>14</sup> Paul R. Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God's Unfolding Purpose* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 84. His entire section on the covenants with Abraham is helpful in understanding the position that he arrives at and can be found on p. 77-93.

<sup>15</sup> Wright, 264.

<sup>16</sup> See Essex, 208 and especially note 68.

<sup>17</sup> Wright, 194.



less than this will fit the covenant framework of the Scriptures, as the Abrahamic covenant fits within God's one covenant of grace to redeem fallen humanity.

Reiterating the Promise: God's commitment to the nations extending beyond Abraham

In seeking to confirm this interpretation of Genesis 12:1-3, we will now look briefly at the language of blessing all families being repeated throughout Genesis and then take a look at the Psalms and the Prophets. Wright identifies at least five references in Genesis to the promise that all nations will be blessed through Abraham with minor variations in language (Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4-5; 28:14) and the potential for a sixth (Gen. 35:11) in the promise that a "community of nations" will come from Jacob.<sup>18</sup> The specific exegesis of each of these passages is beyond the scope of this paper, but I will highlight themes that emerge from these passages. In each of these passages the connection is maintained between God blessing Abraham and making him a nation, and the blessing of all the nations. This is confirmed in Genesis 17 when God renames Abram, calling him Abraham "the father of a multitude of nations" (Gen. 17:5; c.f. Rom. 4:17) and reiterated in each of these passages that uses the specific language of Gen. 12:3.

Another theme that emerges from these passages is the connection between Abraham's obedience and the blessing to the nations. In Gen. 22 Abraham is about to sacrifice Isaac, the son of the promise, but God intervenes and provides a substitute. Abraham is then confirmed again in the covenant and the promise is linked with his obedience. This is not an indication that the promise is merited by Abraham's obedience, but

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 194.

further indication that God will use Abraham and his seed as the instrument by which the sure promise of God will be accomplished.<sup>19</sup> This is an important feature because it again indicates that the reason for God blessing Abraham is so that he would be a blessing to the nations. He is the instrument that God will use to bless the nations. This means that the promise for him to be a great nation is not an end in itself, but a means by which God will bring about the greater blessing of a multinational multitude enjoying the blessing of Abraham, namely relationship with God.

Finally, the theme emerges that the blessing of the nations is not peripheral in God's covenant workings with Abraham and his descendants. If the twofold promise (one to ethnic Israel and one to the nations) interpretation of the Abrahamic covenant is correct, why does God continue to reiterate the promise of blessings to the nations as the covenant is passed from Abraham to Isaac (Gen. 26:1-4) and Jacob (Gen. 28:14)? It can only be because it is central to the covenant promises to Abraham. Not only that, but the multiplication of descendants promised in both of these passages is explicitly connected with blessings extended to the nations. This helps to properly understand the universal scope of the promises to Abraham and that his descendants would overflow the land and in fact be extended to incorporate all the nations.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> This is why the labels of unconditional and conditional covenants are not entirely helpful. All biblical covenants have "conditions" or stipulations, however the faithfulness of God to accomplish those conditions makes the promises sure or "unconditional." This is seen most clearly in Genesis 15 when God "cuts the covenant" with Abraham and passes through the slain animals alone as a smoking fire pot, and a flaming torch (Gen. 15:17). By this God commits himself by an oath of death to accomplish both his end and Abraham's end of the covenant. This is fulfilled in the death of Christ bearing the curse and accomplishing the positive requirements of the covenant.

<sup>20</sup> G.K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: the Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 754, n7.

### Let all the Peoples Praise You: The Abrahamic Covenant Promise in the Psalms

Further confirmation of the thesis of this paper can be gained as we look at the rest of the Scriptures, and the Old Testament in particular to see how the Abrahamic promise of the blessing to all nations surfaces again and again. It is not just that this theme surfaces, but that the people of Israel are rejoicing in its promised fulfillment and see it as vital to experiencing the true blessing of God. The first place we will look is to two of the Psalms.<sup>21</sup> This is helpful in showing that the intent of God to bless all the nations permeated into Israel's worship of God, meaning it does not occupy some peripheral focus.

Psalm 22:27-28 highlights the theme of the nations being gathered under the worship of God. "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, and *all the families of the nations* shall worship before you. For kingship belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations." Here specific mention is made of *all the families of the earth* and the result is that they will worship before the LORD, the God of Israel, and the King of the nations. Significant as well is that the ends of the earth will "remember and turn to the LORD." From the rest of the Psalm it seems that they will remember the salvation and deliverance that the LORD accomplishes for his people, Israel. The connection again being made that through the LORD's blessing on Israel the nations receive blessing. Wright points out as well the christological implications of the entirety of this Psalm in that Jesus quotes from the beginning of it on the cross.

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<sup>21</sup> There are more Psalms that incorporate this theme of the Abrahamic blessing. Wright highlights Psalm 22:27-28; Psalm 47:9; Psalm 67:1-2; Psalm 72:17; Psalm 86:9; and Psalm 145:8-12 that echo the language of the promise to Abraham. See Wright, 230-235. John Piper helpfully categorizes a series of texts from both Isaiah and the Psalms under the headings of exhortation, promise, prayers, and plans. John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad! the Supremacy of God in Missions*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 192-197.

But Jesus found in the first half of the psalm the words and metaphors that so vividly described his own actual sufferings, and found in the second half the assurance that his death would not be in vain. For as the rest of the New Testament makes clear, it would be through his death and resurrection that God would open the way for the universal worship of all the nations to become a reality. For this reason, a christological reading of the psalm connects it both backward to the Abrahamic promise it embodies and forward to the missional universality it anticipates.<sup>22</sup>

Psalm 67:1-3 echoes to a greater extent the structure and language of the promise to Abraham. “May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known on the earth, your saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!” It appears that the Psalmist has in mind both the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 12:1-3) and the Aaronic blessing (Numbers 6:22-27).<sup>23</sup> One of the greatest pronouncements of blessing upon the nation of Israel is said here to be with the purpose of the salvation of the nations! The connection to the Abrahamic covenant is unmistakable. Blessing was promised to Abraham, *so that* blessing would extend to the nations. This is remarkable in showing how the Psalmist and by extension Israel understood their covenant relationship with God. “Blessing came to Israel as a means of reaching the nations. This is the hope of the Old Testament: The blessings of salvation are for the nations.”<sup>24</sup> The Psalms therefore confirm the thesis of this paper that God’s promise to bless all nations through Abraham is fulfilled by all the nations being included into the covenant people of God and enjoying the blessings given to Abraham and his descendants.

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<sup>22</sup> Wright, 231.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 232.

<sup>24</sup> Piper, 197.

### The Future of God's People: The Prophets

The eschatological hope for God's people is one of the main themes of the prophets. So, if the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant is found ultimately in its blessings extending to all the nations, than it should be seen in the prophets expectation. While it is true that the passages that specifically use the language of new covenant focus on the restoration of Israel and Judah, the theme of the nations is certainly not absent from the prophets. I will focus on one passage in Isaiah in order to illustrate this theme.<sup>25</sup>

Isaiah 19: 24-25 has one of the most audacious claims of the reception of the Abrahamic blessings by the nations in all of Scripture. It refers to the new covenant fulfillment in Christ by using the "later days" language that is common of the prophets. The days in which the LORD will again restore Israel. "In that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom the LORD of hosts has blessed, saying, 'Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance.'" This comes at the conclusion of Isaiah's prophecies for the restoration and salvation of Egypt. And it climaxes with Egypt and Assyria, two enemy nations of Israel, being blessed by God and included in his people. Wright captures the unavoidable conclusion of this prophecy by saying, "the archenemies of Israel will be absorbed into the identity, titles and privileges of Israel and share in the Abrahamic blessing of the living God, YHWH."<sup>26</sup> This is the breathtaking reality of what the LORD is committed to accomplishing in bringing about salvation for the nations and praise for his great name among the nations.

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<sup>25</sup> See Wright p. 235-243; 350-352 and 484-500 for a fuller investigation of the theme of the Abrahamic blessings and the inclusion of the nations into the people of God in the prophets.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 493.

## The Inclusion of The Gentiles: Abrahamic Fulfillment in the NT

In the introduction I have shown Paul's understanding of the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant blessings among all nations from Galatians chapter 3. Therefore this section will focus on Peter's speech in Solomon's portico found in Acts 3 and in the all-encompassing vision of a new people found in Ephesians 2:11-22.

In Acts chapter 3:11-26 Peter gives a defense for the healing of a lame beggar. He focuses his attention on proving that Jesus is the suffering Servant of the LORD from the prophets. He calls on the men of Israel to "repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out" (v. 19). He concludes in v. 25-26 by saying:

You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness.

Essex, who was quoted earlier as seeing the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant set in the future, uses this passage as a justification for a future fulfillment for ethnic Israel.<sup>27</sup> However the context would point to the servant being sent to Israel already in Jesus and the preaching of the gospel, hence the need to repent now and receive the messianic blessings. David Peterson says it this way:

Peter declares that, through the apostolic preaching, God has sent his exalted servant first to Israel, 'to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways'. The use of the word 'first' (prōton) implies the sort of sequence portrayed in Isaiah 49:5-6, where the Servant of the Lord is used to 'restore the tribes of Jacob' so that they can be 'a light for the Gentiles' and bring God's salvation 'to the ends of the earth' (cf. Acts 1:6; 13:46-48; 26:16-18). In other words, that significant 'Servant Song', which reveals the way in

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<sup>27</sup> Essex, 212.

which God will ultimately fulfill his promise to Abraham, appears to lie behind the final challenge of Peter's sermon.<sup>28</sup>

This is significant to understanding what Peter is proclaiming. Repentance and forgiveness of sins is available and "it is a blessing of the New Covenant for the Jews first, but also for the Gentiles."<sup>29</sup> This means that all the Abrahamic blessings are for the Jews who will repent and come to Jesus. And for the Gentiles, all the families of the earth, who will repent and come to Jesus. For "there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

In Ephesians 2:11-22, Paul unpacks a compelling vision of what the people of God looks like now in the new covenant. And the picture that he presents is nothing less than what this paper has argued for and presented. The picture started in Gen. 12:1-3 of all nations being blessed through Abraham and being brought into the blessings of God's covenant people. Again I must look to Wright's spot on analysis of this passage:

Paul's picture is decidedly not Jews *plus* Gentiles, remaining forever distinct with separate means of covenant membership and access to God, but rather that through the cross God has destroyed the barrier between the two and created a new entity, so that or together and both alike have access to God through the same Spirit.<sup>30</sup>

The language of being "fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (v.19) confirms this understanding. The question remains, is this some new thing unknown to Israel beforehand? However, Paul answers that as well in saying this is all "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the

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<sup>28</sup> David G Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary. (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 185.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Wright, 528.

cornerstone” (v. 20). This is the foundation that this paper has sought to show, that God’s promise to Abraham to bless all the nations through him can only find its fulfillment as all the nations are brought into the people of God to enjoy the blessings of Abraham, namely relationship with the LORD and his covenant people.

### Conclusion

Standing in the midst of the New Heavens and the New Earth that Jesus will establish upon his return, is the tree of life. And “the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (Rev. 22:2). In that glorious day, all the nations will be healed in Jesus, nothing will be under the curse, and the glorious diversity created in the judgement of Babel, will be finally redeemed in the unity of the worship of all the nations of the LORD God. This is the final fulfillment of the wonderful promise made to Abraham, that through him and his descendants “all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen. 12:3). While the church awaits this glorious day, it is her calling to be the instrument of God by which he would create that final reality. So, with the assurance that God will be faithful for the sake of his covenant promises let her pursue that task with all of his power by the Spirit.



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