

2.2a Discussion

What is the uniqueness of the “you and your offspring” promise to Abraham? How does that uniqueness (if granted) affect our assessment of the claim “our children have the same promises that God gave to the children of Abraham” (Belgic Confession)?

Uniqueness

The uniqueness of the “you and your offspring” promise to Abraham is a historical-redemptive uniqueness; Abraham and his descendents have a special or distinct place in the history of redemption for all their generations to the end of history. That cannot be said of any other person or family from Abraham forward. Abraham’s family, his children, and his children’s children, have a unique place in the outworking of God’s covenant purposes by which He is restoring His fallen image bearers to form the redeemed new humanity and bringing them to eternal Sabbath rest. Uniquely, through Abraham’s descendents, God gave fallen sinners the seed of Eve, and through his children’s children, even in their judgment, the gospel now belongs to all families of the earth. In Romans 11, we have the classic NT text that indicates the uniqueness of Abraham’s offspring to the very end of time and the full accomplishment of God’s redemptive purposes.

Assessment

The children of NT saints do not have the same promises that God gave to the children of Abraham, namely, that they would multiply as the sand of the sea. They do not have the promise that the saving seed of Eve would come from them according to the flesh, that God would be their God in all their generations to the end of history (some believing families extend no further than one or two generations), and that through them all other families of the earth will be blessed.

In other words, the promise to Abraham and to his children, and to his children’s children has a special function in the history of redemption. That is unique to Abraham and his family. Thus, the “you and your offspring” promise is not a universal promise to believing parents. Abraham is not the father of just believing *parents* in his example of faith and faithfulness; he is the father of all who believe.