

Introduction:

- *"So the Lord made a covenant with Abram that day..."* (Genesis 15:18, NLT) It was a blood covenant that God made with Abraham that day.
- *"For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."* (Matthew 26:28, NKJV) It was a blood covenant that Jesus declared was the New Covenant He was making!
- My heart in this series of messages is to encourage us with understanding of covenant. I think many people are scared of covenants because they are afraid of breaking them. IE. HOAs
- We have looked at: What is covenant? And we have studied the covenants with Adam and Noah. Tonight we want to look at the Covenant with Abraham.
- As we look at these covenants, one man described them as skeletal structure that must be assembled accurately.

I. Truths to Recall

- A covenant is a **binding agreement** between two people or parties. God in making covenant with us, literally puts himself into a binding agreement with us.
- God determines the terms of the covenant. It is not a mutual agreement.
- The covenants that God makes with man **is for man's benefit!** They declare the goodness and kindness of God towards us.
- Covenants are all about relationship! God wants relationships with us. That is why He initiates covenant! They are meant to bring people together, by ending strife and conflict.
- Covenants are about the stronger person providing covering/protection etc. for the weaker.
- In the Adamic and Noahic covenants: God initiates the covenant, sets the terms, blood is shed to activate/ratify the covenant, and man is the recipient of the covenant if he so chooses.

II. The Abrahamic Covenant

- How can I know? Gen. 15:8 *"How can I be sure?"* COVENANT!
 - This is the question we all ask at some point in our lives and in our walk with God.
 - God gives Abraham all these kind words: (terms of the binding agreement of God to Abraham.)
 - I will protect you.
 - Your reward will be great.
 - You will have a son of your own who will be your heir.
 - Your descendants will be like the sand on the shore and stars in the sky.
 - Abraham believes...is made righteous by his faith.
 - How can I be sure of this?
 - The way that God makes sure that Abraham trusts Him is that He makes a covenant with Him.
 - Heffer, goat, ram, turtle dove, pigeon. These animals became covenant talk with Abraham.

- c) Abraham fell asleep...and watched it all in a night vision. The fire of God passed between the halves of sacrifice. *"So the Lord made a covenant with Abram that day ..."* (Genesis 15:18, NLT)
- 4. All Abram has to do is walk with God and obey. This covenant is unique in that when God appeared to him to make a covenant...Abraham knew what it meant. God was coming into a covenant of strong friendship with him! This is why Abraham is called a friend of God. (*"and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God."* (James 2:23, ESV); *"But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend;"* (Isaiah 41:8, ESV); *And did you not give this land forever to the descendants of your friend Abraham?* (2 Chron 20:7 NLT) Abraham is the only person called friend of God in the OT.
 - a) Abrahams faith and obedience draws God to him. *So Abraham went* Gen 12:4 and *by faith he obey* Heb 11:8
 - b) With this background God makes a covenant with Abraham (Gen 15:18) and promises him land and many descendants in return. All he has to do is walk and obey.
 - c) This covenant was to bring the Israelite nation into being as a covenant people.
- B. Thirteen Years Later Covenant Expounded and Confirmed
 - 1. God repeats the covenant: 17:4-6. Note: God is taking the initiative. God is revealing Himself. And the covenant is to Abrahams benefit.
 - a) Many descendants,
 - b) Father or many nations
 - c) Extremely fruitful
 - d) Kings in your lineage
 - e) Everlasting covenant that I will confirm from generation to generation. 17:7
 - f) Terms: obey and circumcision (shedding of blood) a sign of the covenant from generation to generation.
 - 2. *"For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs,"* (Romans 15:8, ESV)
 - a) Christs coming to earth as a man confirms the covenants!
 - b) The size of the need determined the depth of the covenant! It would take the Son of God confirming this covenant with those who believe.
 - 3. The parts:
 - a) The covenant is between God and Abraham, and the generations to come.
 - (1) It is an unconditional covenant as illustrated by the events of Gen 15 where God passed between the sacrifices. Abraham was asleep and did not participate.
 - (2) Abraham believed and it was credited to him as righteousness. This foreshadows what was to come in Christ.
 - b) The promise of a son, descendants, land and spiritual blessing.
 - c) The ratification of the promise was God's own heavy dreadful presence upon Abraham while he slept and the fire of God passed between the sacrifices, and circumcision.

- d) The obligation was circumcision. *"You must cut off the flesh of your foreskin as a sign of the covenant between me and you."* (Genesis 17:11, NLT)
 - e) The mark of God upon Abraham and his descendants. Again, the shedding of blood. This circumcision is brought to completion with the circumcision of the heart.
 - f) The fulfillment foreshadows the coming of Christ and men receiving the word of God (righteousness by faith) in the son of God.
 - g) The Hebrew word 'Heemeen' Gen 15:6 *"Abraham believed God"* means to trust God in the way of unqualified commitment of yourself to God. He was a true "friend of God".
 - (1) Gen 22:16 God swore by His own name! In other words, "If this fails, you own me."
 - (2) At this point everything God has is Abrahams and everything Abraham has is Gods (including his son, Isaac.)
 - (a) they exchange mantles (symbolic of authority).
 - (b) Abram gets a new name, Abraham.
 - (3) He is a covenant keeping God!
4. We don't become heirs of Abraham's promises by working for God but by being confident that God works for us.

III. Application

- A. You who hope in Jesus Christ and follow him in obedience of faith are descendants of Abraham and heirs of his covenant promises.
- B. That these promises to you are more spectacular than anything you will ever know.
- C. That these promises are sure, rooted in God's unchanging truthfulness, confirmed by Christ's coming, and saturated with God's love!