

Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.

Series: *Covenant: God's Way of Relationship*



Teaching Sermon Notes: "Abraham: The Covenant of Promise, Part Four"

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Live Teleconference August 2, 2020

A pattern emerges between Abraham's obedience and the promises of God which follow.

Genesis 12.

Obedience – get out-go to the land I will show you

Promise – I will make you..., I will bless you..., I will make your name great

Obedience- you shall be a blessing

Promise – I will bless those who bless you. I will curse the one who curses you. In you all the families of the earth will be blessed.

Genesis 14.

Declared blessed. God revealed Himself as God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth. God declared him blessed and revealed that victory comes from God. God delivered his enemies into his hand.

Genesis 15.

God removes fear. I am your shield, your exceeding great reward, the Lord God. A discussion ensues. Look toward heaven at the stars. I brought you out to give you this land to inherit it. God cuts the covenant, reveals the future, and defines the territory.

Genesis 16. Abraham doubts, helps God out, has an apparent failure.

Genesis 17. God reveals Himself as El Shaddai.

Obedience – walk before Me and be blameless

Promise – I will make My covenant, multiply you

Obedience – you shall keep My covenant (circumcision as the seal)

Promise – Sarah, a mother of nations

Genesis 18.

Obedience 18.19- command children. "For I have known him in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him."

Promise-Abraham asks and realizes, "Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?"

Genesis 22.

Obedience-give the first in the covenant line of the children of promise (22.14)

Promise – (22.17) stars and sand and possess the gates of your enemies. All nations blessed because you have obeyed My voice.

Genesis 23.

Abraham paid for the field and would not take it as a gift so as not to be indebted to the Hittites.

Genesis 24.

The Lord had blessed Abraham in all things.

Genesis 25.

Abraham dies at 175 years old. He gave all that he had to Isaac, the child of promise. After the death of Abraham, God blessed his son Isaac.

Why is this covenant termed the Covenant of Promise? In Genesis 15, only God passed through the pieces. God took responsibility for the keeping of the covenant, ultimately through Christ. By the solemn ceremony, Genesis 15, God promised redemption. The one distinctive aspect of the narrative has to do with the fact that Abraham does not pass between the divided pieces representing the covenantal curse of self-malediction. God did not require this of Abraham.

"By this action, God promises. The Lord assumes to Himself the full responsibility for seeing that every promise of the covenant shall be realized. It is not that Abraham has no obligations in the covenant relation. Already he has been required to leave his father land. Then he is required to administer the seal of the covenant to all his male descendants (Gen. 17). But as the covenant is instituted formally in Genesis 15, the Lord dramatizes the gracious character of the covenantal relation by having Himself alone to pass between the pieces. This covenant shall be fulfilled because God assumes to Himself full responsibility in seeing to its realization." O. Palmer Robertson

Abraham pleads how he can know and be sure. God assures him. God promises. God solemnly commits Himself as Almighty God that though death may be necessary, the promises of the covenant shall be fulfilled. Abraham was not perfect, but Abraham is accounted righteous, forgiven.

God fulfilled His promise in Jesus Christ. In Christ God is with us. Jesus offers His own body and His own blood as what is called "victim" of the covenantal curses. Jesus' flesh is torn that God's word to Abraham might be fulfilled.

Hopefully, by examining the covenants and tracing the grace, it will become clear that it is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to God's mercy, He saved us...Titus 3:4-7.

So, God cut the covenant (Genesis 15) because Abram faltered in his faith. He was drifting and doubting and asking how all this could happen. God cut the covenant with him to give him assurance. It is a fine point, but it doesn't seem to be because Abraham obeyed, but because he was faltering and trying to come up with his own solutions as to how what God promised could come about. He leaves Ur of the Chaldees and his former gods and finally leaves Haran, but he had no heir, etc. and so how? God demonstrates great grace here in this covenant with Abram. God accounted him righteous. God cuts the covenant with a self-maledictory oath to guarantee the outcome. Throughout the history of Israel, God moves mightily as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Just as we do not go, "Yeah, Adam," neither do we go, "Yeah, Father Abraham." John 8. But we are to see the awesome grace of God who sent Jesus, the Seed.

We must also see the progressive nature of the covenant God made with Abram. Abram believes in the Lord (Genesis 15:6), and God accounted/reckoned it to him for righteousness. But he is also called to believe the Lord and to believe what the Lord believes as set forth in His promises. Romans 4. With God with him, empowering and preserving, and with a change in name, etc.

Abraham comes to that place of Romans 4:16ff. Now of Abraham it says that Abraham believed God.

To me this is justification, a one-time act of being declared righteous, a righteousness laid to our account/being judged righteous, followed by progressive sanctification. The more we think about it, the more amazing it gets. God takes an ordinary person, a worshiper of no-gods, and look at the outworking of the grace of God!

For more insight into the Covenant of Promise God made with Abraham, look at this:

<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-covenant-of-abraham>

Now I want to talk about the blessing. Abraham was blessed to be a blessing. God promised him a great name, a great posterity, and a land to dwell in. God will be God to him and to his descendants. Abraham is freed from condemnation. God will bless him in this age and in the age to come. God will bless the world with the blessings of Abraham. All the families of the earth will be blessed. (Gen. 18:18; 22:18) God works so that Abraham will in fact fulfill the conditions of the promises by means of the obedience of faith.

There are seven blessings of Abraham: (1) I will make you a great nation (2) I will bless you (3) I will make your name great (4) You will be a **blessing** (5) I will bless those who bless you (6) I will curse those who curse you (7) In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. For more, see Genesis 17, Romans 4.

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He says not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. Galatian 3:16

Every believer can learn from the life of Abraham by discovering important truths connected to the blessing of God.

1. Surrender the first and the best, not leftovers. Genesis 17, 22.
2. Recognize God owns everything. He is Possessor of heaven and earth – Genesis 14
3. Practice the obedience of faith and do what God says. God told Abraham, “you shall be a blessing.” Watch the attitude of Abraham. It was not “I don’t have to,” an attitude of lawlessness, but “I will.” Genesis 22.13-18. He did not hesitate.
4. Learn the patience of waiting. It was 25 years before Isaac. Abraham waited for the exact fulfillment of the promise, but God also waited.
5. Be convinced of both the goodness and the power of God. God is faithful and He also will do it.
6. Give tithes and offerings. Abram gave Lot the choice of land. Abram gave of the spoils of war to Melchizedek. Abraham offered Isaac, the first in the line of the children of promise. Throughout his life, Abraham gave gladly, graciously, generously, and as God guided him.
7. Die to the flesh. Isaac came after God changed Abram’s name to Abraham. (Genesis 17.1, 5) Die to fear, doubt, and unbelief. Abram left his homeland but when famine came, he drifted from a firm faith and went down to Egypt. He questioned God (Genesis 15.2), but in an attitude of inquiry to have doubt removed. He had to die to unbelief. He sought to help the promise along through Hagar and Ishmael, but after 25 years, a new name, and a new surrendered life, the promise was realized.

8. Look out for the inheritance of the covenant. Abraham did just that. He gave gifts to the sons of his concubines, but to Isaac, the child of the covenant, he gave all that he had as an inheritance.

**The blessing of the LORD makes *one* rich;
And He adds no sorrow with it. Proverbs 10:22**

Abraham knew God as Shield and Great Reward, El Shaddai, God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth, Lord God, Jehovah Jireh, Covenant Lord, Judge of all the earth, and as El Olam, the Everlasting God. He received great revelation into the nature of God, God's heart and soul.

Abraham was able to receive, for God said in His promises to Abraham that He would give to him. Satan tries to bankrupt us emotionally so we grasp in greed to fill up our coffers instead of receiving, as grace upon grace. Satan tempts us to grasp the tangible and less valuable and so robs us of greater glory. Abraham took the persons over property in Genesis 14. He let Lot choose. He was a giver, not a taker. He saw himself as full, not hungry for more. And God poured out upon him grace upon grace, favor upon favor, and fullness. The spiritual law is, give and it shall be given unto you... We must be both, gracious givers and grateful receivers.

But remember that it is the LORD your God who gives you the power to gain wealth, in order to confirm His covenant that He swore to your fathers, as it is this day. Deuteronomy 8:18

So let us have regard for the Covenant Lord, the Covenant of the Lord, the people of the Covenant Lord, the purposes of the Covenant Lord, and the promises of the Covenant Lord. Amen.

May you be touched by the grace of the Living God and know Him who is eternal life.

Mary Craig

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**“He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.”
Revelation 21:7**

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