

The Covenant Series – Week 2  
The Abrahamic Covenant - The Framework for Redemption  
Senior Pastor, Dr. Janet Cook  
March 13, 2022

The Hebrew word *beriyth* is translated in English as: "will", "covenant" and "testament," It means binding agreement and comes from the root word meaning "to cut". It is mentioned approximately 300 times in Scripture.

Testament = Covenant – a testament is a covenant, and a covenant is a testament.

In Biblical times a covenant vow was binding and unbreakable.

Three facts about a Covenant Relationship

1. It is entered into by a sacrifice
2. It requires laying down your life for another
3. It requires total commitment

Traditions of that time for “Cutting” Covenant

1. Preparation--Since a covenant was meant to be a permanent relationship it was entered into only after much prayer, counsel and deep thought.
2. A Witness was sought as a trusted mediator of both sides. A covenant was meant to be a public declaration of intent.
3. Garments and weapons were exchanged.
4. The belt or girdle would be exchanged signifying, "My strength is your strength."
5. An animal would be split in two and the parties would stand in the midst of the split animal, thus representing as the animal gave up its life, so too, will I give up my life to maintain this covenant.
6. Names would be exchanged and the parties would henceforth refer to themselves as \_\_\_\_\_ the friend of \_\_\_\_\_.
7. A list of ALL assets and liabilities was then exchanged - as a united, covenanted pair they would each share the other’s belongings and burdens.
8. A formal exchange of the covenant’s blessings and curses was then made in public.

Charles L Monk

The promise for a redeemer “born of a woman” is given in

Genesis 3:15. And I will put enmity Between you and the woman,  
And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head,  
And you shall bruise His heel.”

God’s plan to redeem humanity unfolds in the covenant he makes with Abram.

Genesis 12:1-3 Now the LORD had said to Abram:

“Get out of your country, From your family and from your father’s house,  
To a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation;  
I will bless you and make your name great; And you shall be a blessing.  
I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you;  
**And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”**

God would still have a world in which his eternal kingdom would demonstrate his glory.

Colossians 1:19–20 “For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”

Christ’s connection to Abraham

Matthew 1:1 “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”

### **Abraham’s Faith in God is Incredible**

FAITH Trusting commitment of one person to another, particularly of a person to God. Faith is the central concept of Christianity. One may be called a Christian only if one has faith. *Holman Bible Dictionary*

Abraham said “I Will”. At the River we say “Yes Lord”!!

Genesis 12:1-4 Now the LORD had said to Abram: “Get out of your country, From your family And from your father’s house, To a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.”

### **God ratifies the covenant in a unique way.**

Genesis 15:5-17

5 He took him outside and said, “Look up at the heavens and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” 6 Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness. 7 He also said to him, “I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it.” 8 But Abram said, “O Sovereign Lord, how can I know that I will gain possession of it?”

9 So the Lord said to him, "Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon." 10 Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half. 11 Then birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away.

12 As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him. 13 Then the Lord said to him, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. 14 But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions.

15 You, however, will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age. 16 In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure." 17 When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces.

God walking through the sacrifices alone, symbolized that God alone was responsible to fulfill this covenant. See Gen 15:17-19.

Hebrews 6:13-14 "For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you."

- In other words this was a unilateral covenant. So its promises are absolutely sure.

## **WHY COVENANTS ARE VALUED**

Exodus 32:13-14 "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.' " So the LORD relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people."

2 Kings 13:23 But the LORD was gracious to them, had compassion on them, and regarded them, because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not yet destroy them or cast them from His presence.

- Clearly, covenants have a strengthening effect on later decision-making, even by God.

## **ELEMENTS OF COVENANTS**

### **A. TERMS AND OATH OF COVENANT**

1. Moses summarized God's promise to Abraham (Exodus 32:13).
2. The conditions was that they were to obey the Lord and He was to be their God.
3. Hebrews says that God swore an oath to Abraham that day (Heb. 6:13-16).

### **B. CUTTING OF ANIMALS IN TWO**

- The cutting of animals in two was one of the oldest rites of the covenant, emphasized by its very name "to cut."

### **C. SYMBOL OF THE COVENANT**

- The Covenant with Noah – a rainbow
- The Covenant with Israel – keeping the Sabbath
- The Covenant with Abraham, God gave the Israelites the symbol of circumcision (Genesis 17:11). This was the symbol that the Israelites were in covenant with God.

Genesis 17:9-14 This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant. He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.”

### **D. CHANGING OF NAMES**

Genesis 17:15-17 “And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her. Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?”

- Abram would now be called Abraham, "Father of Many." Sarai would now be called Sarah, "Princess, Queen."

### **SMOKING FIREPOT & BLAZING TORCH**

Fire represents the consuming, cleansing zeal of God as well as His unapproachable holiness, which are interrelated. In the darkness Abram saw nothing else in the vision except these fiery elements that passed between the pieces of the slaughtered animals.

### **THE BLAZING TORCH**

1. God’s presence is always seen as a bright Light surrounded by cloud (Ex. 3:2; 14:24; 19:18, etc.). The shekinah.
2. The “blazing torch” is undoubtedly Jesus Christ, preincarnate, covenanting to be the Sacrifice to atone for, and fulfill, all the promises God was entering into.
3. As David was called the “Lamp of Israel” (2 Sam. 21:17), so Jesus is the greater Lamp of God. He’s the “Light” that shined in the darkness (Gen. 1:3), the “radiance (out-ricing) of God’s glory” (Heb. 1:3), the Morning Star (Rev. 2:28), the “Star out of Jacob” (Num. 24:17), the “Sun of Righteousness” (Mal. 4:2), the “Light of the World” (Jn. 8:12), and the Lamp of New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:23). “The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.”

### **The New Covenant**

1. We are in a covenant with God, the New Covenant. Jesus is the mediator (Heb. 8:6; 12:24). When we take the Lord's supper, Jesus told us to say, "This cup is the new covenant in [Jesus'] blood" (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25).
2. The terms are Jer. 7:23, "Obey Me, and I will be your God and You will be My people."
3. The "Token" of the covenant is the "earnest of the Spirit" Eph. 1:14; 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5.
4. Our Covenant Meal is the Lord's Supper.
5. The sacrificial animal -- Christ was that sacrifice.
6. Sprinkling of blood -- Christ's, Heb. 12:24.
7. Changing of names -- Rev. 2:17. "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it."'
8. Exchanging of clothes -- He took our sin and we take His righteousness, Rom. 13:14; Eph. 4:22-24
9. The blood covenant makes us part of God's family, were of one bloodline, so that we can also cry, "Abba Father!"

Hebrews 11:8-12

James 2:20-24 "But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.'