

God's Covenants

Genesis 12:1-3; 15:17-18

1 ¶ 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. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3 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."

17 ¶ And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. 18 On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates—NKJV

Well, how did you do with your reading in the Bible this week. I hope you were able to keep up.

One of the things that struck me this time reading it was the names. Seems like there are hundreds of names of everyone that do not seem to matter at all. But I guess they must have mattered to God.

Another thing is that it is evident is that we are following a certain line of people from the very beginning. From Adam to Noah and Shem and then to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

And what about those ages, Adam, 930, and Methuselah 969, really, is that possible. Yes it is.

And how did Moses come by all this information. Well since they lived so long you could always go ask an old and I do mean old person. You see Noah could have told his children, my dad, Lamech told me that he often talked to Adam, since Adam did not die until he was way past two hundred years old. Abraham could have talked to Noah and Isaac & Jacob could have spoken to Shem.

But all that is incidental to what I want to talk about this morning. We find from Genesis that God is a covenant making God. Now that may seem strange since God is not obligated in any way to His creation. He is the creator, we are created and that should pretty much settle that.

There are some main covenants that stand out and then there are a number of others that usually do not draw that much attention. A covenant is essentially when God commits Himself to uphold His word and stand by what He has promised.

There are two man types of covenants, a conditional covenant and an unconditional covenant.

We understand conditional covenants, we make them all the time. I will sell you this house for so much a month and with these other conditions. It is understood that if you fail to uphold your end of the deal, you will loose your house.

An unconditional covenant is where one party agrees to do something for the other with no strings attached and not dependant upon what is done or not done.

The first unconditional covenant in the Bible is when God promises not to destroy the earth with water ever again. The sign of the covenant was the rainbow.

I. Some conditional covenants.

A. With Adam & Eve

1. They were commanded to reproduce and tend the garden. They had everything that one could desire with relative ease.
 - a. There were not weeds, or droughts or floods to destroy or hinder their work. There were not damaging insects.
 - b. How much corn could you grow in a perfect environment.
2. They had one negative command, do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
3. Only one rule to keep but yet they did not.
4. The result was God cursed a good portion of the creation that he had made in order to make man's life more difficult and He drove the pair from Eden.
5. Man became a rebel against God from that day forth.

B. There is a small but real covenant made with Cain, Adam's first born son.

1. In regards to offerings to the Lord, God did not have respect to Cain's offering of grain but He did accept Abel's offering from the flock.
2. The one was a bloodless sacrifice, which is not acceptable, for without the shedding of blood there is not remission of sins. Heb. 9:22
3. God confronts Cain with these words. " "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."
 - a. In the covenant, if Cain will offer an acceptable sacrifice, he will be accepted. If not, then he will not be accepted, and sin will result and will rule over him.
 - b. Cain decides to make his own choice rather than follow God's choice.
 - c. That is really the issue, isn't it, our way or God's way.
 - d. Cain is free to make his own choice but he is not free to choose the consequences.
 - e. He does not change, his choice is to kill the one whose sacrifice is accepted by God so he does.

II. God's unconditional covenants.

A. With Abram

1. Gen 12: 1 ¶ 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. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3 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." 4 ¶ 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. 5 Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan.
2. Ge 15:1 After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." 2 But Abram said, "Lord God, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!" 4 And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." 5 Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." 6 And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. 7 Then He said to him, "I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it." 8 And he said, "Lord God, how shall I know that I will inherit it?" 9 So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." 10 Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. 11 And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. 12 Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him. 13 Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. 14 And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. 15 Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. 16 But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." 17 And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. 18 On the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates-- 19 the

Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, 20 the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, 21 the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."

B. God renews this covenant with Isaac.

1. Gen 26:24 And the Lord appeared to him the same night and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for My servant Abraham's sake." NKJV

C. God renews this covenant with Jacob

1. Gen 28:13-15 And behold, the Lord stood above it and said: "I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. 14 Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. 15 Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you." NKJV

III. God's Everlasting Covenant.

- A. Heb 13:20-21 Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. NKJV