

The Assurance of Faith

Abraham Part 6

February 25, 2018

Overview of the nine covenants that God made with man:

- 1. The Edenic covenant** (Gen 1-2)
Made with Adam and Eve before sin entered the world, revealing God's purpose for man.
- 2. The Adamic covenant** (Gen 3)
God's judgment on sin and the promise of the coming of the Messiah to redeem fallen man.
- 3. The Noahic covenant** (Gen 6 - 9)
God's promise not to destroy the earth by floods, the promise of the rainbow.
- 4. The Abrahamic covenant** (Gen 12 - 22)
The promises to Abraham and his seed, both natural and spiritual Israel; the blessing of faith.
- 5. The Mosaic covenant** (Ex 19 - 40)
The promise of blessing when we keep all of God's laws.
- 6. The Palestinian covenant** (Dt. 27 - 33)
The promise of the land of Canaan to the nation of Israel.
- 7. The Davidic covenant** (2Sa 7; Ps 89; 132)
The promise made to David and to his seed; pointing prophetically to Jesus and His kingdom.
- 8. The New covenant** (Jer 31:31-34, Heb 8, Mt 26)
The covenant God made available through the cross of Jesus Christ, bringing salvation to the people of the world.
- 9. The Everlasting covenant**
It is an all comprehensive covenant, including the covenants of creation and redemption and God's eternal purpose for man. All other covenants are a fragrance of the whole and are a progressive unfolding of this everlasting covenant.

God speaks to Abraham seven times to give him assurance

Heb 6:13-19 For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14 saying, "I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU." 15 And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise. 16 For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute. 17 In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, 18 so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. 19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil,

Scripture	God's promise	God's Command	Response
12:1-3	Make Abraham a great nation, to bless him and all who bless him.	Leave your country. Be a blessing	Abraham leaves Ur and goes to Canaan
12:7	Give the land of Canaan to his descendants.		Abraham builds an altar.
13:14-18	Multiply Abraham's descendants and give Canaan to them forever.		Abraham builds an altar.
15:1-21	formal covenant by passing through sacrificial animals. He promises to multiply Abraham's descendants and give them the land.	Do not be afraid.	Abraham believes God.

17:1-27	God promises to establish an everlasting covenant with Abraham's descendants promises to give the land as everlasting possession.	Walk before Me, be blameless. Keep the covenant, circumcise every male.	Abraham circumcises all males in his household
18:1-18	God promises to give Sarah a son		Sarah laughs
22:1-19	God promises to make Abraham's descendants numbers and to bless all nations through them.	Sacrifice your son, Isaac.	Abraham obeys

26:23-25	God promises Isaac to increase his descendants	Do not be afraid, for I am with you	Isaac build altar and calls on God.
35:9-15	God promises Jacob to multiply his descendants and give them the land.		Jacob sets up a stone pillar and pours oil on it

God confirms the covenant (Gen 17:1-27).

Abraham's and Sarah's names are changed (Gen 17:5, 15).

Abram, meaning "exalted father," now became Abraham, "father of many."

Sarai means Contentious; Quarrelsome. My princesses;
Sarah means Princess; like a chieftain; noblewoman;
roots = [1] a princess; a noble lady; [2] to lead; to fight.

This new name, though involving only a slight change in meaning "princess," was fitting for one whose seed would produce kings (Gen 17:6, 16).

Sarah is the only woman renamed by God in the Bible.

The Lord appeared to Abram:

Appeared translates a verb that is used of God's act of revealing or showing himself to someone.

It is not stated whether this was in a dream, a vision, or by a messenger, but the verb suggests that God became visible to Abraham.

The Lord speaks to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3; 13:14-18; 22:1-19)

The Lord appears (and speaks) to Abraham (Gen 12:7, 17:1-27; 18:1-18)

The Lord came to Abraham in a vision (Gen 15:1-21)

Theophany, God's appearance to Abraham is a "theophany," a visible manifestation of the invisible God.

Though God told Moses that "no one may see me and live" (Exod. 33:20), he has occasionally allowed believers to catch a glimpse of him in various forms (Gen 18:2; Ex 24:9-18; 33:18-23; Judg 13:17-23; Ezk 1:26-28).

Sometimes these theophanies are referred to as the "angel of the LORD" (Gen 16:1-16). God's ultimate self-revelation would be in the person of Jesus Christ (Jn 1:14).

I am Almighty God - El Shaddai

This word is like a word for mountain, to which God's strength and endurance can be compared. He is -

- the all-powerful or the all-powerful One;
- totally self-sufficient or the all-sufficient One;
- transcendent;
- absolute ruler or sovereign ruler;

El Shaddai is used only seven times in the Scriptures

(Gen 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3; Ex 6:3; Ez 10:5).

The Almighty = **Shaddai is used 41 times**

(Gen 49:25; Nu 24:4, 16; Ru 1:20, 21; Job 5:17; 6:4, 14; 8:3, 5; 11:7; 13:3; 15:25; 21:15, 20; 22:3, 17, 23, 25, 26; 23:16; 24:1; 27:2, 10, 11, 13; 29:5; 31:2, 35; 32:8; 33:4, 10, 12; 35:13; 37:23; 40:2; Ps 68:14; 91:1; Isa 13:6; Ezk 1:24; 10:5; Joel 1:15)

God's command to Abraham:

Walk before Me

Walk = refers to a manner of life, or a way of living. The sense is "live as I want you to live," He was to conduct his life as an open display of faithfulness to the Lord.

Be blameless - means to have integrity.

Circumcision - Abraham and all the males of his household must be circumcised.

Abraham's response:

Abraham fell on his face (17:3)

This is intentional, by this act he is showing reverence respect and worship of God.

Abraham fell on his face and laughs (17:17)

Abraham's laugh is unexpected and shocking—but completely understandable! For 24 years Abraham had heard - and believed - the same promise: One day he would become the father of a son who would found the nation of promise. He had tried to force the birth of a legitimate heir (Gen 15 - 16), but God had assured him that the true heir would not be an adopted slave (15:4) nor the child of a surrogate mother (16:11-12).

But now, after nearly a quarter of a century and at the age of 99 (17:1), Abraham had reached his limit. Even if Sarah were to conceive now, she would be 90 when the baby was born, and he would be 100! At this point it appears the whole thing might be a joke. And so, at last he laughed.

And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before You!" (Gen 17:18).

Abraham's plea shows his love for his son Ishmael and his desire that in some tangible way the covenant promise of God would finally come to pass.

Abraham and his household are circumcised (17:23-27).

Again, we see Abraham completely obey the command of the Lord (Gen 12:4; 22:3). On the very day he received the command from God, he did just as the Lord commanded. All the males in his household from little boys to aged men were treated alike.

Concerning circumcision:

Abraham was the first man to be circumcised.

This is a demonstration of his faith, circumcision renders one temporarily helpless.

Circumcision is the sign and seal, but not the source, of God's promise.

Faith in God's word is the source (Gen 15:6; Rom 4:1-12).

Circumcision of the flesh without cleansing the heart of sin is worthless (Dt 10:16).

Circumcision is not required under the New Covenant of grace (Ac 15:1-2, 28-29; Rom 4:1-12; Gal 5:2-6).

Paul, however, compares circumcision to baptism (Col. 2:11-12).

The Seal of the Covenant

Gen 17:11 "And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you." (Gen 17:11-14)

Rom 4:11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them,

A seal is an ongoing tangible witness to the truthfulness of the covenant. It serves as a constant reminder of the authenticity of the covenantal promises and terms. Each of the Covenants had its own seal which was referred to as either:

1. The Seal of the Covenant (Gen 17:11)
2. The Sign of the Covenant (Rom 4:11)
3. The Token of the Covenant (Rom 4:11)

The Fulfillment of the Rite of Circumcision

Though the Abrahamic Covenant focused on the external aspect of circumcision, the New Covenant focuses on its internal application. Even the Old Testament prophets reflected the New Testament reality

Dt 30:6 "Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live. (Dt 10:16; Jer 4:4, 14; Ezk 44:7)

Fulfilled in Christ - at Calvary (Ac 2:22-36).

Fulfilled in Water Baptism (Mt 28:19-20; Ac 2:36-41; Col 2:11-13).

Into the water -- identification with His death.

Out of the water -- identification with His resurrection.

Fulfilled in Circumcision of the Heart (Col 2:11-13; Rom 2:24-29; 6:14).

Cutting off of the fleshly life.

Experiencing newness of life.

Abraham believed God both when he was uncircumcised and circumcised. Thus, he is the father of all who believe, whether the Circumcision or the Uncircumcision. This confirms the truth of the matter that God's desire is for the new creature that is circumcised in heart

Gal 6:15-16 For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. 16 And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. (Eph 2:11-13; Rom 4:9-12)

Everlasting Covenants

Certain of the Divine covenants were expressly spoken of as "everlasting covenants" (Gen 9:16; 17:13; Num 25:12-13; 2Sam 23:5; Ezk 16:60; Heb 13:20). These covenants were made to be never ending, eternal, perpetual, and age-abiding. They were to continue to be in effect forever.

However, in the promises, sacrifices and seals of these everlasting covenants there were elements that could not last forever because of their temporal nature. For example:

The Abrahamic Covenant is spoken of an everlasting covenant and the seal of it (circumcision) is also spoken of as being everlasting (Gen 17:13).

However, the New Testament declares that the external expression of the seal, the circumcision of the flesh, was fulfilled and abolished at the cross. Therefore, only the internal and spiritual reality of the seal, which is circumcision of the heart, can be everlasting.

Likewise, the animal sacrifices of the everlasting covenants could never be eternal.

Only through the once-for-all sacrifice of the Son of God could the principle of covenantal sacrifice be everlasting though the external form was fulfilled and abolished (Gen 15; Heb 10). Though having temporal elements everlasting covenants are legally binding and remain in effect for eternity.

References used in this study:

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