

Hebrews 11: Can I Trust God? Can God Trust Me?

Part 4: Believing is More Than You Can See (11:8-16)

ABRAHAM

All these people were still **living by faith** when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, **admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.**

People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. **Instead, they were longing for a better country**—a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

Hebrews 11:8-16 (excerpts)

- What was Abraham's faith rooted in?
- And can you and I experience the same kind of rootedness?

The word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision:

"Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield,
your very great reward."

...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."

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.

...When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and **passed between the pieces. On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram** and said, "To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates."

Genesis 15:1, 9, 10, 17, 18

COVENANT

Covenants were a big deal in biblical times.

Four instances of God initiating a covenant with man:

1. Noah
2. Abraham
3. Israelites
4. David

The prophets talked about a day coming when God would initiate a new covenant with us. They eagerly anticipated and looked forward to that day coming.

And Jesus comes into the scene and claims He is the fulfilment of all God's promises so that we can become part of the new covenant with God. His death and resurrection sealed the new covenant for us.

Christ is the mediator of a **new covenant**, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that He has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

Hebrews 9:15

Abraham's faith was rooted in his trust in God and His word and His covenant. Even when it didn't always make sense to Abraham.

God didn't say to Abraham and He doesn't say to us, Come to me and I will remove all your doubts and fears and troubles.

He says, Have faith in me even when it doesn't make sense,

Trust me even though you are afraid,

Obey me even though you are frightened,

And you will find that I can be trusted,

You will find I will keep my part of the deal no matter what.

DELETED SCENES

For further study (or small group discussion) about covenants in the Bible, you can take a look at the following passages of Scripture that didn't make it into the message today because of time. Enjoy!

- Passages that talk about prophets anticipating the new covenant – Isaiah 42:1-7, 54:10, 55:3; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:22-32
- Passages that talk about the four covenants that we talked about today - Covenant with Noah - Gen. 9:9-17; Covenant with Abraham Gen. 15:8-18; 17:1-14; Covenant with the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai Exod. 24:4-8; Covenant with David - II Sam 7:12-17; 23:5; Ps. 89:3,28
- On the ritual of oath-making, check out Jeremiah 34:18-19
- Read Exodus 19:1-6. Contrast that with 1 Peter 2:9-10.
- Take a look at 2 Samuel 7:10-17 again. Read it with Psalm 72 and imagine the hope of the people as fulfilled in the anticipation of a future King and His Kingdom.
- Read Luke 22:7-20. How did Jesus portray His role and His imminent death as part of the covenant story in the Bible?
- Read Hebrews chapters 8 to 10 and trace how the writer of Hebrews skillfully weaves the thread of Jesus' life, death and resurrection through the narrative arc of the all the old covenant promises.