

“Abraham’s Family” (1-19-20)

Introduction: Through the Bible this year we will consider: “Little Picture” and “Big Picture”

Our reading this week: Genesis 25-45 (Abraham’s Death, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph and his brothers)

Today: God’s covenant with Abram (Primary Passage - Gen. 15) ***Sermon covers ground from Gen. 12-45**

1) God’s Blessings & Covenants in Genesis

a) **Blessing** - Good favor bestowed on another

God’s Blessings

Mankind at Creation - (Genesis 1:27-28)

God **blessed** them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” . . .

Noah (God renews the covenant made at creation) - (Genesis 9:1)

God **blessed** Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.”

Abram - God declares his intention to bless Abraham and his family, and all families through him!

Genesis 12:1-3 (ESV)

(1) Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. (2) And I will make of you a great nation, and I will **ble**ss you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. (3) I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

God renews His covenant to Abraham’s descendants: Isaac (Genesis 26:3-5), **Jacob** (Genesis 28:12-15)

b) **Covenant** - Pledge, Agreement, Alliance, or Treaty

God’s Covenants

Noah - God promises to never again destroy the earth with a flood (Genesis 9:9-17)

Genesis 9:15-16 (ESV)

(15) I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. (16) When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth."

Note: The sign or symbol of God's pledge was the appearance of the rainbow

Abraham - Genesis 15 (This Morning's Main Passage) . . .

2) God's Covenant with Abraham

Abram's Biblical Timeline from 1st promise to Isaac's birth . . . 25 years!

75 years old - God calls Abram to go to a land he will show him (Gen. 12)

86 - Abram, Sarah, and Hagar take matters into their own hands for an heir (Gen. 16)

99 - God renews His promise, changes names, Isaac coming next year, circumcision instituted (Gen. 17)

100 - Isaac is born (Gen. 21)

God's Covenant with Abraham (Genesis chapter 15 - sometime between 75-86)

a) The Conversation - God's commitment to Abram to fulfill his promise

Genesis 15:1-3 (ESV)

(1) After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." (2) But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" (3) And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir."

Note: Abram is saying - Lord this sounds great, but how & when is this gonna happen?

Genesis 15:4-5 (ESV)

(4) And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." (5) And (God) brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

Note: God re-affirms, no you will have a son, and more than that - your heirs will become a great nation!

Genesis 15:6 (ESV)

And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

Note: This is a key biblical theme throughout the OT and re-affirmed in the NT - **The just shall live by faith!**

Even Abram's "faith" seems questionable at times:

Hagar & Ishmael

Abraham & Abimelech (gives up Sarah right after God promises she'll have a child next year)

This is also the concept that changed Martin Luther's perspective & sparked the Reformation

Bottom Line: The promises of God are not dependent upon the will of man, but upon the faithfulness of God!

b) The Covenant - God walks the path

God doesn't just talk the talk, He walks the walk.

Genesis 15:7-11 (ESV)

(7) And he said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess." (8) But he said, "O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" (9) He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." (10) And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. (11) And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

Note: This is the ancient and biblical model of a covenant. Walking through the blood is the pledge - if I break this covenant then let this be my fate too!

Genesis 15:12 (ESV)

As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him.

Note: Yeah, no kidding he's freaked out, there is only 1 possible member of this covenant that will mess it up!

Then, vs. 13-16 (God foretells the birth of a nation, slavery in Egypt, and the retaking of the promised land)

Then, God walks the covenant path Himself . . .

Genesis 15:17-18 (ESV)

(17) When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. (18) On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates

Note: God promises to keep this covenant himself - the blessing to Abraham, the nation to come out of him, and through his offspring, the blessing of all nations. He promises to keep this covenant, even if it means the shedding of his blood.

And it did . . .

3) Jesus fulfills God's Covenant to Abraham

Galatians 3 - Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of God's covenant to Abraham . . .

Galatians 3:1-2, 6-8 (ESV)

(1) O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. (2) Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? . . . (6) just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"? (7) Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. (8) And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed."

Note: Christ was crucified to fulfill his blood oath that all nations would be blessed.

There is a theme over & over through the Scripture of blessing & cursing:

Our general behavior leads to **curses** (that's the effect of sin)

God's heart & action towards us is **blessing** (that's where His Grace shows up and works to redeem)

Galatians 3:27-29 (ESV)

(27) For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. (28) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (29) And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

Note: God's promise to Abraham, is His promise to us. And it is fulfilled and upheld in Jesus Christ.

Conclusion:

- Are you trusting Him and him alone for your salvation? (I ask this of everyone I water baptize)
- There is **no other source** of blessing and salvation!
- God walks the path, and He keeps His commitment, even unto death!