



### **Week 13: Understanding the Old Testament: God's Covenant with Abraham**

**MV:** *"The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. 2 "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."" (Gen 12:1-3)*

A pattern has already developed by Genesis 12.

- \* People sin
- \* People face consequences
- \* God redeems (fall—animal sacrificed to give Adam/Eve clothes Gen 3:21; flood-ark, renewed earth Gen 6:28 & 9:9), Babel-Gen 12)

The Plan is set in motion, quietly.

*"For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all." (Rom 11:32)*

*But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law," (Gal 4:4 NIV)*

Human history was working toward the point of God righting what went wrong in the fall.

As soon as sin entered the picture, God began to reveal His plan to reverse sins effects

- God made a promise to Adam and Eve (Gen 3:15)
- God made a promise to Noah (Gen 9:9)
- God made a promise to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3; Gen 15, Gen 21)

LAND was an important part of God's promise; that's why Israel is always the focal point

- Abraham left his own land
- Abraham went to a land God called him to

God confirmed the covenant by walking between two halves of a dead animal

*"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 for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there. 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 ancestors 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.** 18 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--" (Gen 15:9-18)*

**ASK: What is the purpose of walking between the halves of a dead animal?**

If I break my word, may I be like this dead animal is the significance of walking between cut up pieces. In the dream, God himself does this!  
EVERY aspect of God's creation has been tainted or distorted by sin

**God made an agreement with a mere man!**

**Unilateral covenant=I keep my end of the covenant regardless!**

This was God's decision and He has kept up his part of the covenant throughout our rebellion!!!

God's plan started with a promise.

**ASK: What was that promise?**

God would make a great nation out of 2 people (Abraham and Sarah) and with that nation he would reform creation and transform the nations

**The people of Israel: I will be your God and you will be my people**

God was offering the greatest blessing he would give to anyone...HIMSELF!!!

He is offering us relationship.

Israel would embody God's intention—they would live in close relationship with God and reflect Him to the world around them. They were being commissioned to live as his representatives on earth.

Paul said that when Gen 12:3 came about that it was the gospel preached.

While Israel was called to his, she never really rose to the task. The nations were not fully blessed through Abraham until Jesus Christ.

*"Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad."*  
(John 8:56)

With Jesus, we see all the nations blessed as they are called to join the people of God (Israel)

*"I will make you into a great nation, and **I will bless you**; I will make your name great, and **you will be a blessing**." (Gen 12:2)*

**ASK: What is significant about vs. 2?**

When we are blessed, we are to in turn be a blessing.

**When we receive God's blessings, we should immediately look around to see whom we can bless.**

- Gen 12—Abraham gets the promise
- Gen 15—Abraham questions the promise (it's okay to ask God) vs. 3
  - He gets his answer—vs 4
  - He remains silent—vs 5
  - BUT HE BELIEVES!!!—vs 6

*"6 Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness." (Gen 15:6 NIV)*

He was declared to be in right relationships to God because of his faith.

*"Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." 19 Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead--since he was about a hundred years old--and that Sarah's womb was also dead. 20 Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, 21 being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. 22 This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." 23 The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, 24 but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness--for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. 25 He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification." (Rom 4:18-25)*

Paul says Genesis 15:6 was written for our sakes so that we would believe in Jesus who died to pay for our sins and God who raised Him from the dead.