

I. ABRAHAM: A MAN OF FAITH, FRIEND OF GOD (GEN. 12-17)

Up to this point, God had dealt with mankind in a general way, but now, God chooses one man, and one nation, to carry out His redemptive purposes on the earth so that all the nations would be blessed.

- A. God tells Abraham to leave the land of Ur and to go to a land he had never seen before and to live in a tent for the rest of his life. Abraham goes on what would end up being a 1,500 mile journey without knowing where he was going (Heb 11:8-10).

Heb 11:8-10 By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. ⁹ By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

- B. This seemed to be a common theme in Abraham's life. God says go, and he goes without knowing where he is going.

1. Abraham believed the Lord's promise (Gen. 14:4-6)

2. God credited to him as righteousness because of Abraham's faith. And so, Abraham becomes the father of all who believe Rom. 4:11.

Gal. 3:6-9 Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." ⁷ Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. ⁸ The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." ⁹ So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

3. God changes Abram's name, which means "exalted father" to Abraham in Gen. 17:5 to emphasize that he would be "a father of many nations." God also calls Abraham His friend (Jam. 2:23)

II. THE COVENANTS OF GOD

- A. The God of the Bible is a covenant making God. He relates to people on the basis of covenants. One way to think of a covenant is as a promise that God makes and backs up with His character. "I swear by myself."
- B. In Hebrew terminology, a covenant is "cut," not "made." (Gen. 15:7-21). God swears by Himself (Heb. 6:13). It's a unilateral covenant, the promises are absolutely sure.
- C. There are several covenants in the Bible. These include: Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and the New Covenant.
- D. The nation of Israel mediates (makes available) the covenants to the world (Rom. 9:1-5).

III. THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT (GEN. 12-17)

The Abrahamic Covenant establishes the nation of Israel and the land of Canaan as the vehicle of redemption of all mankind. God advances His plan to restore to humanity all that was lost in the fall. God declares His desire for the children of Abraham and the nations of the earth. Basically, the Abrahamic covenant is God's plan to save the world.

- A. It calls into existence the nation (people) of Israel (Gen. 12:1-2). The sign of the covenant was circumcision (Gen. 17:10).
- B. It initiates a program of world redemption (Gen. 12:3).
 - 1. The Gospel begins with God's Covenant with Abraham. God declares that he wants to save the world. 2000BC. 4000 years ago (Gal. 3:8).
 - 2. A New Covenant was established by what Jesus did. Jesus died on the cross so that the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant would be given to us.

Gal 3:13-14 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." ¹⁴ He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

- C. It gives the land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants forever (Gen. 12:7; 17:8).

Gen. 17:8 The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.
- D. It is an everlasting covenant (Gen. 17:7)
- E. It includes the promise of blessing to all who support God's plan and warns of a curse to those who would oppose it (Gen. 17:3).
- F. God is still upholding His promises to Abraham. For almost 2000 years, there was no nation of Israel. 1948, the nation of Israel was re-established, to show that God is faithful to His promises. God's plan in the End-times involves the nation of Israel, so we must stand in support of Israel (Rom. 9-11).

Rom. 11:11-15 Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. ¹² But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring! ¹³ I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry ¹⁴ in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. ¹⁵ For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

Rom 11:25 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.