

Covenants of God I What is a Covenant?

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This is the first in a series that we are going to do beginning with the covenants, and we will end with what we need to do in keeping what is called the New Covenant. I think we will get another view of whether it's new or a continuous one, or whether the old one was really old or the first one, because of what was done with Abraham.

We're going to be into the series on Covenants and what we should do or not do in what is called the New Covenant. And the reason that this has come up is because there are so many people who have put their faith in a man so much so that they have lost faith in God. That seems to be what we would look at as a contradictory statement, that people put so much faith in a man that they lost faith in God.

That may tell you that there has been some misplaced faith because of their feelings and different people coming along saying, 'You don't need to do this and you don't need to do that, and you don't need to do the other thing, and under the New Covenant we can pretty well decided what we want to do. And there are going to be people in the Kingdom of God who don't keep the Holy Days. Now I'm all confused and don't know whether I ought to keep the Holy Days.'

Some people say that 'maybe even some Protestants will make it into the Kingdom of God, so therefore, why should we go through all of this hard stuff that we need to do in the Church of God and keep the Holy Days and all this weird stuff. Why shouldn't we be allowed to eat the unclean foods, after all there are going to be people in the Kingdom of God who ate unclean foods.'

You hear all of these things. So, it really gets down to an attitude that is forming after the ones who have been corrupted—Laodiceans—and say, 'Lord, what is *the least* that I may do to be in Your kingdom?'

That can be very dangerous! Now, they are not stating it that way, but they're saying, 'This man said this, and that man said that.' We have sacred namers over here and we 14-15ers on the Passover. We have four different versions of Pentecost and lo and behold, what on earth are we going to do.

What I want to do is just clear the deck and let's start out with *What is a Covenant?* That's where we have to begin:

- What is a covenant?

- What is a covenant with God?

The word in the Hebrew is 'berith,' and it means *covenant*. A covenant is a *contract*. But a covenant with God is one that He is the *contract writer*. That's the thing that's very important. God is the One Who is the *contract writer*.

It's not like when you sit down with management in a union and, between the two of you, you bang out a contract you both agree to and you ratify it. It's not the same with God; as a matter of fact, it's totally different.

The word that is used in the Greek means that *it is a will that has been ratified*. I want to key in on the word *will*. That's very important, because any covenant with God states *God's will*. Before any covenant is made there is another condition that must take place first—we'll see what that is. Also, with any covenant we're going to find this:

- there are promises—on both sides
- there's a testimony
- there is a witness—always is that
- there is an oath
- there is acceptance
- there are obligations

In every covenant God binds Himself. Those who accept the covenant also bind themselves. We will see in every covenant there is:

- *a token or evidence*

In the Old Covenant there is *circumcision and the Passover* as a token of that covenant. In the New Covenant there is repentance, baptism, spiritual circumcision and the token of the covenant is the *bread and wine*.

- the right of blessing through covenant

Certain blessings can be passed on because you are in that covenant with God. You actually have the right of passing on a blessing—we'll see some instances of that.

- correction that comes because of sin

God can modify or alter His covenant and still carry out His covenant even though there is sin.

- a renewal and form through repentance

In covenanting there are also what you would call:

- major covenants

These are broad, general covenants that affect many.

- minor or narrow covenants

that can be personal or cover a family, or a *sub-major*—which is not quite a minor—*covenant* we will see when we come to David. That was a ‘sub-major’ covenant given to David.

Will of God

Matthew 6—let’s begin there, because we need to talk about the *will of God*. When God makes a covenant He gives His will *first*. Always the will of God is expressed *first*.

We have in the prayer and I want to focus in on this one thing, because this is going to help us understand that there are certain things that cannot be done from a human point of view. I’ve said this many times before, but now it comes into a little clearer focus: In any covenant with God—I’ll make this as a categorical statement—***the recipient of that covenant does not tell God what to do!*** This becomes very important when we come to the New Covenant as to what we should keep and not keep—bear that in mind.

Matthew 6:10: “...Your will be done...” That’s New Covenant terminology. It is *God’s will* that is going to be done.

We also know that in John 1 where it says, ‘as many as receive Him have the right to eternal life.’ We need to explore this a little more, but I want to preface this study with this statement: John 1:12: “But as many as received Him, to them He gave authority to become *the* children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name.” The common understanding of this with Protestants is: you invite Christ into your life. That is a complete misunderstanding of the Scriptures.

To receive Christ means that *you accept the will of the covenant of God*. You do not invite Christ into your life. You may pray that He will involve Himself in your life, but what about the man who was in the bunker when the shelling started and said, ‘Oh, God, please don’t’ and that bunker was blown to smithereens and the guy died? That’s an inexplicable thing for atheists to try and come up with an answer to that, if there is a God.

The answer is, He shouldn’t have been there fighting in the first place, and the other answer is that he wasn’t in covenant with God necessarily. Out of mercy, God could have heard the prayer. But God did not answer that prayer. The point is this:

- God is the One Who does the inviting.
- God is the One Who does the terms of the covenant.
- God is the One Who expresses *His will*.

That’s what you are receiving. You are not telling

God out of the goodness of your heart that you’re going to open it up and ‘please come in.’ A vast difference! The long and short that we’re going to see is that ***the created does not tell the Creator what to do!***

We will see of several instances. We know that where Abraham did bargain with God. He bargained, but he didn’t change the will of God. God said He’s willing to alter certain things because of certain conditions, but ***you’re not going to change the will of God!*** You may change His mind that He may not do something at a certain time, but ***you are not changing the will of God!*** That’s important to remember.

I want to focus in on one thing back in Genesis, the second chapter. Suffice it to say, God’s will was done in the creation. Is there any question on that? ***No! No question! Gods will was done!*** We’re going to see here though, before a covenant is made, there is something that must always be done as a trial before a covenant is executed. That’s why we don’t have all the ingredients for a covenant with Adam and Eve. We have the pre-conditions before the establishment of a covenant. That is always requisite: ***IF you will obey My voice!*** That’s the condition; that’s the pre-condition for the covenant. That’s the pre-condition that happened with Adam and Eve. Did they obey His voice? ***No!*** So, no covenant was established. Keep that in mind.

That’s why when a person in the New Covenant when they repent of their sins and they want to turn to God, they have to be willing to obey the words of God. God says, ‘Repent and be baptized.’

So, we see that God gave certain commands to Adam and Eve about the tree to eat and not eat. I just want to focus in on the marriage covenant.

Marriage Covenant:

Genesis 2:23: “And Adam said, ‘This *is* now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. *She* shall be called Woman because *she* was taken out of Man.’ For this reason shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife—and they shall become one flesh” (vs 23-24).

The point I want to make is what we would consider a minor covenant—which is not minor to God—in relationship to God’s plan, one marriage over here might appear minor. The covenant that is made in marriage is not between the man and woman—there are agreements that are done—it’s between ***the man and God and the woman and God***. They have an obligation *to God!* That’s the thing to remember.

When, originally, there would have been

infidelity between a husband and wife, it would be tantamount to infidelity between God the Father and Christ. That's why a marriage needs to be put on a much higher plane than people have understood. It is not just something that two people do so that they can have a physical relationship, but it is what God says should be, and ***the covenant is between God and the man, and God and the woman so that the three of them together are in this covenant!***

There are obligations, rules and regulations. Every covenant has obligations, rules, regulations, laws, commandments, statutes and judgments—bar none!

Genesis 5:23—a lot of people think that Enoch didn't die, but I say he did: "And all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years." It's all of his days—right? That's all of his days, he had to have died. That's the same statement that is used with all of them, all the days of Jared—who was Enoch's father—were 962 and he died (v 18). The only difference was that instead of Enoch dying in the regular manner, God took him as He took Moses when he died, that's all.

Who were the two that stood beside Christ at the Mt. of Transfiguration? *Elijah and Moses!* But right here this tells us that Enoch probably died.

Grace and Covenant:

We find something else that's very important with a covenant. Every covenant has to have this. I'm not going to go through all the story of this:

Genesis 6:8: "But Noah **found grace** in the eyes of the LORD." Every covenant that is a major covenant of God there is *grace*. Any time you are brought into a relationship with God, it is *grace*. People haven't understood that before. There's a little difference when we come to the covenant with Israel. But in order to be in contact with God you must have *grace*.

Verse 18: "But I will establish My covenant..." So, we have *grace and covenant*.

Genesis 9—here is where God established the covenant with Noah and with Noah's sons. We also had the test before the covenant—didn't we?

We had the test with Adam and Eve, the test came with Satan—they failed the test and didn't obey the voice of God. They obeyed the voice of Satan, but no covenant.

Then we come to Noah. Noah found grace and God said, 'I will establish My covenant with you, but I want you to build an ark. I want you to get the animals that I send and put in the ark. Did Noah

do that? *Noah did what God said! He obeyed the voice of God!* I want to keep that in the forefront of our minds that *the main thing of a covenant is obeying the voice of God!*

So, they did that; they got to the other side of the Flood—that's what it's called, *the other side of the Flood*—we are living in the other side of the Flood. To us, we're on this side of the Flood because it happened back then, but in Bible terminology *the other side of the Flood*; in Joshua 24 where Joshua is talking about 'our fathers on the other side of the Flood.' That means this side of the Flood in Noah's day.

They came through the Flood, and He included in that Noah as one of the fathers on *the other side of the Flood*.

Genesis 8:20: "And Noah built an altar..." I want us to understand something very important here: the difference in the patriarchal covenant—which this is—Noah was the beginning of *the patriarchal covenant*.

The patriarchs could build an altar and offer wherever they were. Please understand that. Under the covenant with Israel they could not build an altar wherever they wanted, and they could not offer wherever they wanted, because God changed the covenant from the patriarchal to the Mosaic covenant, and the priesthood was then going to be through the Levites.

We find that Noah built an altar, and we know that he offered all the clean. We know that God said it was a sweet savor. God said He would never again destroy the earth.

The Blessings:

Always with a covenant, we find a blessing. So, you have the trial period of obeying the voice of God. Once you have done that, then comes the blessing. We'll see that is the pattern all the way through.

Genesis 9:1: "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and He said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth.'" The government rule changed, instead of God administering the government, now He gave the government administration to mankind. He gave the sentence of capital punishment for those who took a human life. Noah and his descendants were to administer it.

Verse 8: "And God spoke to Noah, and to his sons with him, saying..." Here they're all gathered together face-to-face with God. That must have been something! Standing by this altar making the offerings, and I'm sure they sat down and ate together, because there's always a meal when there's

a covenant.

God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, v 9: “Behold I, even I establish My **covenant** with you, and with your seed after you.” Again, the earth could have been a different place had they obeyed the covenant.

Verse 10: “And with every living creature that *is* with you—of the birds, of the livestock, and of every animal of the earth with you—from all that go out from the ark, to every animal of the earth. And I will establish My covenant with you. Neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood. Neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.’ And God said, ‘This *is* the **sign [token] of the covenant ...**’ (vs 10-12).

There is always the token [sign] of the covenant; it may vary from time-to-time. The token may be different from time-to-time. The token of the New Covenant is the Passover.

This one here is the covenant with the earth, Noah and with all the things that God has created. “...which I make between Me and you and every living creature with you, for everlasting generations” (v 12). Still here. We can still see that.

Verse 13: “I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be *the* sign [token] of *the* **covenant** between Me and the earth. And it shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud. And I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the rainbow shall be in the cloud. And I will look upon it that I may remember **the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth**” (vs 13-16). {note Rev. 5:13-14—where all creatures sing praises to God}

Verse 17: “And God said to Noah, ‘**This is the token of the covenant** which I have established between Me and all flesh that *is* upon the earth.’”

A few numbers as we go along:

Covenant is used there seven times—seven is completion, so it’s a complete covenant that God made.

Because of sin, there were curses because of the obligation of the covenant was broken. Obviously then, with the covenant there had to be a set of laws, otherwise there would be no sin, there would be no curse. We all understand that.

Genesis 11:27: “Now these are the generations of Terah... [from which we get the word

Tehran today—a combination of Terah and Haran] ...Terah begat Abram, Nahor and Haran. And Haran begat Lot. And Haran died in the presence of his father...” (vs 27-28). When this statement is used after this point, always in relationship of sin. He died in the presence of his father because of some sin.

“...Terah in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldeans. And Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abram’s wife was Sarai. And the name of Nahor’s wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah. But Sarai was barren. She had no child. And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot, the son of Haran, his grandson...” (vs 28-31). Notice that he left Nahor, when they left, Nahor remained. Nahor had Laban, so when we have Jacob sending Eliezer—the servant of Abraham—sending back for a wife for Jacob, we have Nahor’s line.

“...and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram’s wife. And he went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan. And they came to Haran and lived there” (v 31). If you have a map, Haran is at the northern end of the Euphrates River. They didn’t get into the land of Canaan unless that part was the northeastern extension of the Canaanites territory. They never got into it.

Verse 32: “And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years. And Terah died in Haran.”

1. First covenant with Abraham

Genesis 12:1: “And the LORD said to Abram, ‘Get out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father’s house into a land that I will show you.’” I will assume that even though it states in v 32 that Terah died in Haran, I will assume that Abraham left before his father died. It says, “Get out of...your father’s house...”

We know the story that is here. Here is the test of obedience. What do we have? **Test of obedience!** Before the covenant was made, we’re also going to see something else. There is also always some kind of sacrifice that is with the covenant.

In the case between Abraham and Abimelech for the buying of the burial site, there was a meal and the shaking of a hand. There was no letting of blood, but with the meal there was probably the letting of blood for the killing of the animal, though it was not a sacrifice. I want you to see these things as we go along.

Here is the test: God says, ‘You leave and I will bless you, make you a blessing for the whole world, a blessing for all nations. Those that bless

you I will bless. Those that curse you I will curse’—in spite of your mistakes. It doesn’t say that here but it’s evident later on. Abimelech even caught Abraham in a half-lie. God did not condemn Abraham for that, but He told Abimelech, ‘You better get your household in order or I’m going to curse you.’ That’s something to keep in mind once God sets His will.

Abraham is 75-years-old, took his wife and went into the land. Gen. 15 is where the covenant was made with Abraham. We have testing that went along with Abraham up to this point. God did not establish the covenant, yet. He was only operating on promise, no covenant, yet.

Genesis 15:1: “After these things the Word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, ‘Fear not, Abram, I *am* your shield and your exceedingly great reward.’” God then told him that he would have a son of his own, out of his own bowels (v 4).

Verse 5: “And He brought him outside and said, ‘Look now toward the heavens and number the stars—if you are able to count them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your seed be.’ And he believed in the LORD. And He accounted it to him for righteousness” (vs 5-6).

Now, I want to make a very important point here, which the Apostle Paul makes a little later. This belief was counted as righteousness. I want you to note the first covenant—because there’s more than one covenant—with Abraham was *based upon faith* while he was uncircumcised.

Paul makes a great deal out of it (Rom. 4), because, in fact, when we come to the New Testament you’re actually coming full circle back to the original covenant that God made with Abraham. What we call the Old Covenant was a variation of the covenant given to Abraham until Christ would come. That’s why we’re told in Galatians that if you be Christ’s then are you Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise *by faith*.

Verse 18: “In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram...” There is the first mention of a covenant, and this was a covenant based upon belief and obedience:

- he *obeyed* the voice of God
- he *believed* what God had to say

There is the difference between Adam and Abraham:

- Adam did not believe
- **Abraham believed**
- Adam did not obey
- **Abraham obeyed**

Now let’s go back to v 6: “And he believed

in the LORD. And He accounted it to him for righteousness.” That righteousness is *right standing before God!* Actually in the presence of God, which is exactly where Abraham was: *in the presence of God!* I want you to remember that because that is a seed for what we call the New Covenant.

Verse 7: “And He said to him, ‘I *am* the LORD that brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give you this land to inherit it.’” When we get to Israel we have a little substitution of the words—don’t we? *Where God says, ‘I am the LORD that brought you out of the land of Egypt’—correct? Yes!*

Verse 8: “And he said, ‘Lord GOD, by what shall I know that I shall inherit it?’ And He said to him, ‘Take Me a heifer of three-years-old, and a she-goat of three-years-old, and a ram of three-years-old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.’ And he took all these to himself, and divided them in the middle, and laid each piece opposite the other; but he did not divide the birds” (vs 8-10).

He put a bird on one side and a bird on the other side. These animals were cut down the middle. Notice that they were not eaten. They were cut down the middle and separated. Different from any sacrifice that we have in the book of Exodus or listed in any place else in the Bible. This is a special covenant sacrifice, which has this basic meaning that when you walk down through this covenant, you are saying in symbolism: if you break this covenant you will be as these parted halved animals, you will be destroyed. Also, God with the smoking furnace and burning lamp passed between those pieces. That was quite a covenant that was made here with Abraham.

Verse 17: “And it came to pass—when the sun went down and it was dark.... [Can you imagine what this would have been like—pitched black? They didn’t have streetlights, the flickering lights from the city. It was dark, black.] ...—behold, a smoking furnace and a burning lamp passed between those pieces.”

In other words, between those pieces where the animals were God gave his affirmation and sealing of this covenant by putting His presence there to be seen at night like this light. This is like a light, a burning lamp in a world of darkness. There are many parallels and analogies that you can draw out of this. That’s when He made the covenant.

2. Second covenant with Abraham

Now we have another covenant, the second covenant with Abraham. This is the covenant that comes down to Israel. We know that this is 24 years later, actually 25 with inclusive counting. He was a little more than 75, so we would have to say 25 years from the first covenant.

(go to the next track)

Genesis 17:1: “And when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, ‘I *am* the Almighty God!.... [the first reference to El Shaddai] ...Walk before Me and be perfect....”

- covenant numbers 13 times, *the number of rebellion*
- #7, *number of God*—plus #6, *number of man*

Verse 2: “And I will make ^[1]**My covenant** between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.” Did He not already make a covenant with Abraham? *Yes, He made a covenant with Abraham!* So, there are two categories of covenant with Abraham.

1. referred to by the Apostle Paul (Gal. 3)—‘to seed *not of many* but as of One,’ referring to Christ
2. here he’s talking about ‘*seed as of many*’—nations, peoples

—that’s the other part of the covenant that He gave. This then was a physical covenant with physical promises of inheritance in this age—that is before the coming Kingdom of God. The token of the covenant was physical. The token of the covenant in Gen. 15 was spiritual; it was *belief and faith*.

Verse 3: “And Abram fell on his face. And God talked with him, saying, ‘As for Me, behold, ^[2]**My covenant is with you**... [He gave them no choice; there’s no negotiation on the part of Abram] ...and you shall be a father of many nations. Neither shall your name any more be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham...” (vs 3-5). Remember the ‘h’ from Yahweh is inserted into the name of Abram so we have *Abraham*, because it was going to be God’s doing in his life. So therefore, part of God’s name Yahweh is in the name Abraham.

“...for I have made you a father of many nations. And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish ^[3]**My covenant** between Me and you and your seed after you in their generations for an ^[4]**everlasting covenant**, to be God to you and to your seed after you” (vs 5-7).

The covenant of race, in spite of spiritual correction because of disobedience is still in effect today. It’s an *everlasting covenant*.

Verse 8: “And I will give the land to you in which you are a sojourner, and to your seed after you, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession. And I will be their God.’ And God said to Abraham, ‘And you shall keep ^[5]**My covenant**, you and your seed after you in their generations. This is ^[6]**My covenant**, which you shall keep,

between Me and you and your seed after you. Every male child among you shall be circumcised” (vs 8-10) Here we have the *covenant of circumcision*, from whence then the covenant comes down to Israel. But remember, the first covenant was not in circumcision. The obedience and the faith was while Abraham was not circumcised.

Verse 11: “And you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin. And it shall be a sign... [here is the token of the covenant] ...of the ^[7]**covenant** between Me and you....” (vs 11-12). In this case there was no sacrifice given, but there was blood letting—right? *Yes!* Notice all the way through:

- covenant
- promises
- blessings
- obedience
- token
- blood-letting

A little different form in each one, but all the elements are there.

“...And a son of eight days shall be circumcised among you, every male child in your generations; he that is born in the house, or bought with silver of any foreigner who *is* not of your seed. He that is born in your house, and he that is bought with your silver, must be circumcised. And ^[8]**My covenant** shall be in your flesh for an ^[9]**everlasting covenant**. And the uncircumcised male child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people—*for* he has broken ^[10]**My covenant**.” (vs 12-14).

Exodus 12—we will see that the requirement is exactly the same concerning the token of the covenant with Israel was not only circumcision but it had to do with the Passover. The token of circumcision and keeping of the Passover is a confirmation or reaffirmation of it.

Exodus 12:43: “And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ‘This *is* the ordinance of the Passover. No stranger shall eat of it. But every man’s servant... [the wording is almost identical] ...that is bought for silver, when you have circumcised him, then he shall eat of it” (vs 43-44). A bought servant was to be in a greater relationship with the household of God than the hired servant. He was to be part of that family, though in a serving capacity.

Verse 45: “A foreigner and a hired servant shall not eat of it. It shall be eaten in one house. You shall not carry any of the flesh out of the house. Neither shall you break a bone of it. All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. And when a stranger shall dwell with you, and desires to keep the

Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it. And he shall be as one that is born in the land.... [will share in the blessings given] ...And no uncircumcised person shall eat of it. There shall be one law to the one born at home and to the stranger that dwells among you.' Thus did all the children of Israel. Even as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did" (vs 45-50). Isn't it interesting how close that the wording is?

Genesis 17:15: "And God said to Abraham, 'As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but her name *shall be* Sarah.'" Again the 'h' from Yahweh was added to her name. Part of God's name was added to Sari's name. The structure that God has in the Bible concerning men and women is only for order and peace, authority and direction; has nothing to do with qualification as a person having a relationship with God or not. That's why God gave part of His name to Sari, too.

Verse 16: "'And I will bless her, and give you a son also of her. Yes, I will bless her, and she shall be *a mother* of nations—kings of people shall be from her.' And Abraham fell upon his face and laughed, and said in his heart, 'Shall *a child* be born to him that is a hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear?' And Abraham said to God, 'Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!'" (vs 16-18).

Even though Abraham was willing to do something different, God said, 'No, My covenant, My will, is going to be done! In due season and due time Sarah will conceive and that's the child of promise—Isaac.

Verse 19: "And God said, 'Sarah your wife shall bear you a son indeed. And you shall call his name Isaac. And I will establish ^[11]**My covenant** with him for an ^[12]**everlasting covenant**, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. But I will establish ^[13]**My covenant** with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time in the next year. And He left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham. And Abraham took his son Ishmael, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his silver..." (vs 19-23).

Can you imagine what this was? Can you imagine here were all these people going along, whatever their daily thing was, and now you have a sudden solemn meeting and Abraham calls it and says, 'Get out the knives, guys.' So, they had a big circumcision party that day. Abraham at 99-years-

old was circumcised. He probably told them, if you want to stay here you have to do it.

"...—every male among the men of Abraham's house—and circumcised the flesh of their foreskins in the same day, even as God said to him" (v 23). He probably told them, 'I am, too.'

Genesis 22—now we the part of the covenant which is *the oath*. I won't belabor the point, we'll just stop here and briefly touch it, just cover a couple of verses that we have to understand that before the oath comes in an irrevocable way, God has got to know something absolutely for sure.

We know that Abraham obeyed. We know that God provided the sacrifice, and so forth. Genesis 22:12: "And He said, 'Do not lay your hand upon the lad, nor do anything to him, for **now I know that you fear God...**'" That's what God needs to know!

The whole key, brethren of everything we are doing in our lives is *do we love God and obey God with all our heart, mind, soul and being?* That's it! That's between you and God! That's why one of the most damnable things that can happen—and I'll use the word not advisably, but it is a damnable thing, because you bring curses upon yourself in two ways:

1. To take the religion of God and twist it in such a way that you make it to where you are running it as a man and sever that relationship between the individual and God.
2. Then you take it and you claim the name of God—as the Pharisees and Scribes did—and they weren't following or obeying God.

This is the key right here, God has to know this! After all this time, the 25 years before Isaac was born, the 12 years after—we'll say he was 12-years-old at this point, no older than 20.

"...for **now I know that you fear God...**" When that happens then God does something that's very important. I'm sure that God does that in each one of our lives to a certain degree.

"...seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.' And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked. And, behold, behind *him* a ram was entangled in a thicket by its horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son" (vs 12-13).

Verse 15: "And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, 'By Myself have I sworn,' says the LORD, 'because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son; that in blessing I

will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the seashore. And your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, **because you have obeyed My voice**" (vs 15-18).

That's why when we come to the New Testament it starts out with John—"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God, the Word was with God" because those are the words of God. Key thing: ***You have obeyed My voice!***

We know that Sarah died. Rebecca was fetched. She came and became the wife of Isaac. I want to cover a few things with Isaac before we finish this section, because lots of times we forget Isaac. Let's not forget Isaac, because Paul said in that we 'as Isaac, are the children of promise' (Gal. 4). We think Jacob was great and we think Abraham was great, that's correct. But I want to tell you that *Isaac was great*. Of the seed of the promise that God gave, don't you think He would bless Isaac many times? We just overlook it. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We concentrate on Abraham and Jacob, and we forget Isaac.

Genesis 25:11: "And after the death of Abraham, it came to pass that God blessed his son Isaac. And Isaac lived by [Beer Lahai Roi] The Well of the Living One, My Beholder." It's very interesting concerning Isaac. We know that they had two sons—twins—Jacob and Esau. In many cases, not all, the one first given the opportunity is rejected. Adam, Cain, Esau, then we have Judah, Pharez and Zerah. First covenant, second covenant, many parallels where the first is rejected.

Genesis 26:1: "And there was a famine in the land (besides the *former* famine that had been in the days of Abraham). And Isaac went to Abimelech, king of the Philistines, to Gerar. And the LORD appeared to him and said, 'Do not go down into Egypt. Live in the land, which I shall tell you of. Stay in this land, and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your seed, I will give all these lands; and I will establish the oath, which I swore to Abraham your father'" (vs 1-3).

From here on it always refers to Abraham, then Abraham and Isaac, then Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. As a matter of fact, by the time we come to the book of Deuteronomy the reference to the covenant with Abraham, no less than 26 times is the basis for the covenant that they are talking about in the book of Deuteronomy.

Verse 4: "And I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and will give to your seed all these lands. And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." That's quite a statement!

That's really something! The rest of the world has been trying to figure out how they can get the blessings of God *by climbing up another way*, and they never get them because God has not determined it any other way than this.

Verse 5: "Because... [for the cause of the fact that] ...Abraham **obeyed My voice**... [I want to focus in on that because that's the key to any covenant.] ...and **kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.**" Which commandments, statutes and laws? Does it tell us? *No!* God does things very interestingly—doesn't He? He does things and tells us what they are at another place. Let's just stop and think for a minute:

- How big was the entourage of Abraham?
- *It was so big that he was able to harness up an army of over 300 to go after King Tidal who came down and took away Lot!* It was a big one.
- Did he have children born in his entourage?
- *It was like a moving plantation! Yes!*
- Were there marriages? *Yes!*
- Do you suppose there may have been a little petty thievery now and then?
- Do you suppose there may have been a little dispute over to whose camel or jackass belonged to who?
- Do you suppose there may have been a little difficulty, that there was a fight one night?
- Do you suppose that they had slaves that they had purchased? *Yes! Sure they did!*

What commandments, what statutes did he follow? Let's go to Exo. 21. *IF* God is the same yesterday, today and forever, do you not think that in similar circumstances he would have the exact same law? *Yes!* I submit this to you:

Exodus 21:1: "And these *are* the judgments which you shall set before them." And it says later, *these are the statutes*. Here are the judgments based upon the laws of God. It talks about:

- a Hebrew servant
- smiting a man
- smiting a mother and father
- eye for eye/tooth for tooth

Did Abraham have to make certain judgments? Was he not the patriarch over his whole moving entourage, his moving plantation? *Yes!* I submit to you that everything we have here, going all the way through, has to do with the laws, statutes, commandments that Abraham kept that God gave him. Why would they be any different? *They would*

have to be the same!

It does not tell us concerning the Holy Days, but you can go to Lev. 23 and it says that ‘these are the statutes of the Holy Days.’

- Do you suppose that the Holy Days were kept in reference to when God called Abraham?
- In reference to when the circumcision took place?
- In reference to the time that God blessed him?

I would say that there were certain days that they kept—which were special—in addition to the Sabbath. We know that the Sabbath was binding from creation. We know that Abraham kept the Sabbath.

You have to, from this one paragraph, ask the question where it says, v 5: “Because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws”—which ones? *Obviously, the ones that were given to Israel were no different than the ones God gave to Abraham!* Pure and simple!

Just like when we come to sacrifices, we will see the same parallel. The sacrifices before Israel are literally the same sacrifices that were after Israel. Did not Job have to offer sacrifices because of sin? Job was one of the patriarchs under the patriarchal system.

Verse 6: “And Isaac lived in Gerar. And when the men of the place asked about his wife, he said... [falls into the same sin] ...‘She is my sister’...” (vs 6-7). Why would he say that? *Because Abraham probably related the account to him again and whenever you have an account related you always justify your actions by the past behavior of someone you know!* Isn’t that correct? *My daddy did it!*

I remember one time that I told the kids about what I did when I was about six-years-old. A couple of us kids went over and all these rotten apples were in the orchard and we thought, because we hated our landlord, because he was a gripy, miserable old man, we figured he wasn’t home—we didn’t know he was home. We got all these rotten apples and started throwing them up on the side of the house. We were laughing and having a hilarious time—rotten apples sliding down off his wall. There were bushels of rotten apples out there.

So, in our great hilarity we were throwing them and all of a sudden up drove a police car. BAM! Scared the living tar out of us! I bet our knees fell up above our eyeballs! The police and the guy had a conference and they looked at us and we were

crying. The policeman said, ‘If you clean it up I won’t press charges.’ *Yes, sir! Yes, sir!* So, we cleaned it up.

Lo and behold I was telling my boys about that. One day we came home from church and that was the day we happened to have a babysitter there. We got home and the neighbor came up and knocked on the door. ‘We have something to say to you about your sons.’ *What is it?* ‘They were throwing tomatoes at our house.’

So, we went through the same thing. Got it all done and guess what my sons told me? *Well, dad, didn’t you throw apples on the side of that person’s house. And we only hit this one with one or two tomatoes!* Same thing here!

“...‘She’s my sister’ for he feared to say, ‘*She is my wife,*’ lest the men of the place should kill *him* for Rebekah because she was beautiful to look upon. And when he had been there a long time, it came to pass that Abimelech, king of the Philistines, was looking out a window and saw Isaac caressing Rebekah his wife. And Abimelech called Isaac and said, ‘Behold, she surely *is* your wife. Why did you say, “*She is my sister?*”’ And Isaac said to him, ‘Because I said, “Lest I die on account of her.”’ And Abimelech said, ‘What *is* this you have done to us? One of the people might have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us!’” (vs 7-10). Even there in Canaan, even the Canaanites understood God’s laws—didn’t they?

Verse 11: “And Abimelech charged all his people, saying, ‘He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.’ Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year a hundredfold....” (vs 11-12). Doesn’t that remind you of a Scripture in the New Testament? *Matt. 13, you plant the seed and some will bring forth 30, 60 and 100-fold!* What a parallel.

“...And the LORD blessed him. And the man became great—and continued gaining until he became very great” (vs 12-13). It’s talking about Isaac. He was like a king in the land.

Verse 14: “And he had possessions of flocks and herds and many servants. And the Philistines envied him. (Now the Philistines had stopped up all the wells which his father’s servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father and filled them with dirt.)” (vs 14-15). When Abraham died, when it says, ‘our covenant with him is over, close up all of these well.’ Sounds like a typical Mid-Eastern thing. They get this headlock! Stubborn! Just unmovable! They did it and closed up all the wells.

Verse 16: “And Abimelech said to Isaac, ‘Go away from us, for you are mightier than we are.’

So, Isaac departed from there and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar and lived there. And Isaac dug again the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father..." (vs 16-18). Isn't it interesting, *water*. What's that a type of? *The Holy Spirit!*

{note Psa. 1: *blessed is the man who stand not in the council of the ungodly, nor walks in the way of sinners, but meditate on the Law of God day and night and delights therein. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water'—a type of the Holy Spirit.*}

Water in the desert where things grow. They could have 3-5 crops there, no problem of all.

"...for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham. And he called them by the names which his father had called them. And Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found there a well of flowing water. But the herdsmen of Gerar strove with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, 'The water is ours.' And he called the name of the well [Esek] Contention because they strove with him. And they dug another well, and *they* strove over that one too. And he called its name [Sitnah] Opposition. Then he moved from there and dug another well..." (vs 19-22).

Wherever he went he dug a well; God was with him. I tell you wandering around in a semi-arid place and to get a well is really a fantastic thing. So, wherever he went there was water, there was a blessing of God.

"...but they did not strive over it. So he called its name, [Rehoboth—*enough room*] Broad Places. And he said, 'For now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.' And he went from there to Beersheba. And the LORD appeared to him the same night, and said, 'I *am* the God of Abraham your father. Do not fear, for I *am* with you, and will bless you and multiply your seed for My servant Abraham's sake.'" (vs 22-24). Notice that it goes back to the promise of Abraham.

Verse 25: "And he built an altar there and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there. And Isaac's servants dug a well there." Isaac was really a whole lot more than we figured.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 6:10
- 2) John 1:12
- 3) Genesis 2:23-24
- 4) Genesis 5:23

- 5) Genesis 6:8, 18
- 6) Genesis 8:29
- 7) Genesis 9:1, 8-17
- 8) Genesis 11:27-32
- 9) Genesis 12:1
- 10) Genesis 15:1, 5-6, 18, 6-10, 17
- 11) Genesis 17:1-14
- 12) Exodus 12:43-50
- 13) Genesis 17:15-23
- 14) Genesis 22:12-13, 15-18
- 15) Genesis 25:11
- 16) Genesis 26:1-5
- 17) Exodus 21:1
- 18) Genesis 26:6-25

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Genesis 5:18
- Joshua 24
- Revelation 5:13-14
- Genesis 15:4
- Romans 4
- Galatians 3; 4
- Leviticus 23
- Matthew 13
- Psalm 1

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