

Abraham Entered into a Covenant with God

The History of Abraham's Life story begins in Gen 12:1-3

Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Gen 12:1-3

Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you.

As with all Covenants/Promises, there are two sides to the agreement. In this case, God offered to enter into a covenant/contract. Once that covenant was ratified, it was binding to both parties.

*Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man's covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. 16 Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ. 17 And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, **cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect.** 18 For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Gal 3:15-18*

Like all of God's covenants, He offered the greater and more lasting promises and blessings, based on a quality of obedience and submission that can only be characterized by grace and not by works.

What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." 4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. 5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, Rom. 4:1-6

Thus Abraham's side of the covenant(contract) is a single simple truth. By faith he must leave his country, his family and father's house. He must leave all the friends, acquaintances and family he had and begin anew in a foreign land. This is what God asked of him. God had sized Abraham up, just as he had sized up Noah and Enoch before him. God chose Abraham to bring the promise to Eve one step closer to fulfillment.

And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel." Gen 3:14

There was only one thing required of Abraham to become that man. He needed Abraham to leave his country and kindred. He wanted to make him a great nation and bring the Christ through him. But Abraham had to do this one step. Once he took that step, he fulfilled his part of the covenant. This was all God expected and demanded of him. Abraham did exactly as he was told:

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Heb 11:8-10

The Spirit spoke through Nehemiah and summed up the following observations about Abraham:

You alone are the LORD; you have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and everything on it, the seas and all that is in them, and You preserve them all. The host of heaven worships You. 7 "You are the LORD God, who chose Abram, and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans, and gave him the name Abraham; 8 You found his heart faithful before You, and made a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, and the Girgashites-- to give it to his descendants. You have performed Your words, for You are righteous. Neh 9:6-8

Blessings Promised to Abraham if he Obeyed.

I will make you a great nation

I will bless you

Make your name great

You shall be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you

I will curse him who curses you

in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed

He became first the nation of Israel and later the father of all the godly. Blessed as an individual: Long Life; wealth; Health; God's Promises. Abraham became famous man among his own nation and still is today. Abraham was a great blessing to the Jewish nation, and he still brings great blessings today.

Those who blessed him and appreciated the kind of man he was and what he stood for would be blessed by God(including all Christians!).

Those who hated Abraham and what he stood for would be cursed by God.

Greatest promise to Abraham. Thru his descendants the promised Savior would come. Gal 3:6-16

On the map on the next page, the scope of Abraham's journey is revealed. Stephen told us it was a two stage journey. First, he moved with his father Terah to Haran. Then, after Terah's death, he moved his family to Canaan.

And he said, "Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, 3 and said to him, 'Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.' 4 Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell. Acts 7:2-5

After he arrived in Shechem, all that God had required of him to receive the covenant was completed. At that moment, God again appeared to Abraham and gave him assurance that the covenant was now complete and active.

So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. 5 Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan. 6 Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land. 7 Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. Gen 12:4-8

Abram's Sin Gen. 12:10-20

One of the important principles we find throughout the Scriptures is the need to be discerning. Many times, God simply records the events as they transpired without any comment on the goodness or evil of the decision. So "Noah was drunk in his tent" is simply recorded (Gen 9:21). It is not until later that we learn drunkenness is a sin.

So also with Abram. He does something similar to Ananias with Saphira (Acts 5). They both agree to deceive the Egyptians.

And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "Indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance. 12 Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. 13 Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you." Gen 12:11-13

But Abram makes Sarai the main character in the deception. Though they are married and they are also half brother and sister, Abram only wants the brother/sister relationship brought out. Such a "half-truth" was a lie. This would relieve Abram of any risk to his life, but left Sarai exposed to great danger. Like all others who enter into covenant with God, Abram was still weak and still prone to sin. Grave consequences could have resulted, God intervened in behalf of Abram and spared Sarai from the possibility of being "married" and entering into an adulterous relationship.

Abraham even profits from this deception.

So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman, that she was very beautiful. 15 The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken to Pharaoh's house. 16 He treated Abram well for her sake. He had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels. Gen 12:14-16

One has to wonder if this plagued Abram's conscience to profit from a lie. We learn a great deal about the grace of God in this section. Abram is a man of faith and trust who in a moment of temptation falls under its power. In all other ways he is the morally superior to Pharaoh, but not in this one instance. God in grace and mercy protects Abram from the consequences of this sin. He keeps Pharaoh from defiling Abram's wife. Yet Pharaoh rebuked Abram for his sin. His silence told well that the rebuke hit home and could not be contradicted.

But the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. 18 And Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? 19 Why did you say, 'She is my sister'? I might have taken her as my wife. Now therefore, here is your wife; take her and go your way." 20 So Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they sent him away, with his wife and all that he had. Gen 12:17-20

As noted above, since all have sinned and fallen short (Rom 3:23), it is evident that all of God's servants, even His greatest ones have sinned. As Paul noted, Abraham was righteous by faith, not by works. Far from causing scorn or seeking to justify his conduct, we should realize that God is letting us see that they are just like us. Never forget just as "Elijah was a man of like passions with us," (Jas. 5:17), so also was Abraham, Moses, David, and Daniel. Just like us they sinned and just like us they were forgiven.