

Our Covenant God – Part Three

The Abrahamic Covenant – background information

The first time that the word covenant is found in the Bible is in God's conversations with Noah. However, the verb that was used with Noah's covenant is not "cut". God never "cut" covenant with Noah. For this reason, we are going to put Noah's covenant on the shelf until a bit later on in this study.

The first person in the Bible that we find God "cutting" covenant with is Abraham. Abraham was a physical descendant of Noah's son, Shem. He was a pagan: a worshipper of the moon. But one day God spoke to Abraham and told him to leave his country and go to a land that He would show him. His name was initially Abram and God changed it to Abraham. For the purposes of this study we will call him Abraham except for the Scripture quotations where he is called Abram.

Altogether, Abraham had seven encounters with God. Today we will look at the first three encounters that Abraham had with the Lord because they are the build-up to the fourth encounter, which is when God cut covenant with Abraham.

Abraham's first encounter with the Lord

Genesis 12:1-3 (NKJV) 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. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. 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."

Abraham obeyed God and left his country and went to the land of Canaan.

Abraham's second encounter with the Lord

Genesis 12:7-8 (NKJV) 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. And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent *with* Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD.

Interestingly enough, Bethel means "House of God" and Ai means "a ruin". And this is what God is wanting: to live with mankind... any place where God does not live is a ruin!

Abraham's third encounter with the Lord

Genesis 13:14-17 (NKJV) And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, *then* your descendants also could be numbered. Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you."

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Separated Unto God!

Just as a sideline here.... Why is it that God told Abram to remove himself from his family? Well, I believe that one of the reasons is because of the fact that Abram came from a land called Ur, meaning light / moon / fire city. This was a place where Sin, the moon god, was worshipped, according to Easton's Bible Dictionary. And certainly, the Bible tells us that Abraham's father and forefathers were idolators. Therefore, God needed to completely introduce Himself to Abram, because Abram did not know Him beforehand. All Abram knew was about the moon god, which was pagan worship.

Joshua 24:2-3a "Joshua said to all the people, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Long ago your forefathers, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the River and worshiped other gods. But I took your father Abraham from the land beyond the River and led him throughout Canaan and gave him many descendants.'"

There are times that we have to separate ourselves from those we love because of the lifestyles that they lead. A Christian is set apart by God, separated from the world ... while we are in the world, yet we do not live according to the world's standards. We are in the world, but not of the world!

Also, Jesus even had to withdraw from the people in order to spend time alone with his Father. It is imperative that you and I withdraw each day and spend time with God.

Mark 1:35 "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed."

Jesus also separated Himself from His earthly family when they tried to stop Him from ministering. This is how the Amplified Bible puts it:

Mark 3:21-22; 31-35 And when those who belonged to Him (His kinsmen) heard it, they went out to take Him by force, for they kept saying, He is out of His mind (beside Himself, deranged)! And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, He is possessed by Beelzebub, and, By [the help of] the prince of demons He is casting out demons.

Then His mother and His brothers came and, standing outside, they sent word to Him, calling [for] Him. And a crowd was sitting around Him, and they said to Him, Your mother and Your brothers and Your sisters are outside asking for You. And He replied, Who are My mother and My brothers? And looking around on those who sat in a circle about Him, He said, See! Here are My mother and My brothers; For whoever does the things God wills is My brother and sister and mother!

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Question 1: In Abraham's first encounter with the Lord God, what did the Lord ask Abraham to do?

Question 2: What did God promise to do?

Abraham's third encounter with God occurred after Lot, his nephew, was no longer with him. Do you remember that in Genesis 12:1, God had told Abram to leave his father's house and to get away from his family? Although Abram had left his father's country, only NOW had he actually left his family!

Question 3: In these three conversations, did Abraham ever answer God? Why might this be significant?

Question 4: Put yourself in Abraham's shoes. What do you think Abraham was feeling each time that God spoke to him?
