

The Father of the Faithful - Part 1

©2022 Mike Whyte

Copyright Notice: this document may be used freely for personal study, preaching, and teaching. No part of it may be used under any circumstances for commercial purposes or to attain personal gain or advantage.

The Covenant of Promise: In Genesis 12:1-3,7 God made a two-part promise to Abram:

- A Great Nation: “I will make of you a great nation” ... “To your offspring I will give this land”
- Universal Blessing: “in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed”.

These two promises are the basis of the working out of the whole Plan of God (Lk1:50,54-55, Gl3:7-9).

Faith is a gift from God granted upon conversion - Abraham was granted this gift (1Tm1:13-14, 3:3, Hb12:1-2, Gl5:22-23).

The Faith of Abraham: Abraham was promised a legitimate heir through his wife Sarah (Gn15:2-4, 17:1,15-19). Abraham could see no physical way for God to fulfill his promises, but **he did NOT let his limitations prevent him from serving God** – “he believed the LORD”, “the LORD [cut] a covenant with Abram”, and **he became the “father of the faithful”** (Gn15:5-9,18, Gl3:6-9)

Requirements of the Covenant: Abraham demonstrated his **faith** and that he would **obey God** (Gn12:1,4). As with Noah, God required Abraham to “**walk before me, and be blameless**” (Gn6:9, 17:1-2,7). God continued, “I have chosen him, that he may **command his children and his household** after him to **keep the way of the LORD** by **doing righteousness and [mish*pat]**” (Gn18:16-19).

Abraham’s children are all converted persons – **what exactly are we to learn from Abraham?**

Abraham Learned to Live by Faith: Abraham had a serious character flaw: **Abraham “had faith” but he did NOT live by it** – this is demonstrated in the text of Genesis by the word **hesed**: At first, Abraham knew the “word”, **hesed**, **but he did NOT know its meaning**. Twice **Abraham resorted to subterfuge rather than trust God**: “Abraham said of Sarah his wife, ‘She is my sister.’ ... **This is the [hesed] you must do me ...**” (Gn12:11-13, 20:1-2, 10-13) God gave Abraham **four object lessons in hesed**:

- Lot had received undeserved salvation (Gn19:9),
- His wife, Sarah, was willing to give up her dignity and her position because Abraham requested **hesed** from her,
- Hagar and Ishmael were miraculously saved (Gn21:9-10, 16-17),
- Abimelech extended **hesed** to Abraham in spite of his subterfuge (Gn21:22-14).

In addition, Abraham was required to cut a covenant of his own with Abimelech (Gn21:27). Finally, Abraham was required to **demonstrate his unreserved hesed toward God by the sacrifice of Isaac** (Gn22:16-18, Hb11:17-19).

Covenant Love: The words **hesed** and **b^erith** are frequently associated – the **hesed of God is expressed in the Covenants of Grace which he has given to humanity** (Dt7:9,12). “The faithful God who keeps **b^erith** and **hesed**,” is a hendiadys demonstrating the full range of YHWH’s commitment to “those who love him”. The **b^erith** is an **inviolable agreement** based on **hesed**, an unfailing intrinsic attribute of the character of God. The “**b^erith** and the **hesed**” allude to **the Plan of God**, specifically to the covenant with the Patriarchs, The Covenant of Promise.

“In you shall all the nations be blessed”: The **Universal Blessing of all nations comes through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ** (Rm4:13,16-17, Gl3:16). The First Advent made forgiveness of sins possible which allowed the creation of the New Testament Church – **the Second Advent will extend the blessing to all people over the whole earth** (At3:18-25, Is25:6-7,9).

Faith and hesed: Abraham was given the gift of faith by God, but **he had to learn to demonstrate his faith by his life** (Rm4:9, Jm2:21-24). As with Abraham, **God requires each of us to understand hesed and demonstrate it** by unfailing commitment to the covenant of baptism – **faithfulness**. God’s covenants are a perfect and complete expression of **God’s love for human beings**. God’s love is most clearly expressed by the **grace he holds out to each and every human being**. (Jh3:16)

This material is based on the paper: “Covenants of Grace” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

The presentation is available at: www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/presentations