

Genesis, pt2: Covenant, part 2 – Cut of Sacrifice

Genesis 15:7-21

MPS God sent Jesus as our sacrifice that we might receive salvation, life in relationship with Him.

OBJ Every person should believe in Jesus because of Three Revelations of God's Covenant to receive His promise.

We began looking at God's Covenant in Genesis 15 by considering His promise. God calls Abram to remember His covenant, to 'weary himself in the wonder of God's promise'. Abram seeks the Lord for greater understanding, even proposing how he thinks God's promise will be fulfilled because he has no son. God corrects him by telling him that he will have a son. Then, verse six says, *And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.* **Abram did nothing but believe, and God gave him everything.**

Two things we see in verses one through six that are so powerful. God invites Abram to strengthen his faith by a greater filling of His promise. And, that God will accomplish all His will in the life of every person who believes and trusts in Him. Paul tells us in Romans 4 that what occurred with Abram was not just about Abram, but that it was written for us as well. **God calls people to believe in Jesus by faith as the promise of His Word.**

TRANS Today we continue from the promise of covenant to the cut of sacrifice. The grace of God is free to all who believe not because it is worthless, but because it was won. Today God reveals His plan to secure His promise as ultimate victory. IF you want to know the "blueprints", the plan, that God is following in His work in you, look to the pattern that secures His promise in His Word. That is the plan He is working from. This passage is the framework for all understanding of salvation, what Jesus accomplished on the cross. Let's read the text and enter into the mystery of all mysteries, the sacrifice that secures the soul of man.

READ Genesis 15:7-11

*7And he said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess." 8But he said, "O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" 9He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." 10And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. 11And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. **Gen 15:7-11***

God reminds Abram of WHO He is, of what He has done, and His promise. Abram asks, "**How am I to know I shall possess it?**" He wants to know how he can be certain he possesses God's promise. Abram is seeking assurance from God.

APPL **Have you ever desired or asked God for assurance of your salvation?** I hope so. This question is fundamental to the Christian faith, one from which we never move beyond. No parent gets angry when a child says, "Dad / Mom, do you love me?" Yet, many Christians get anxious when questions or doubts arise, or feel guilty for needing God's continued assurance.

The essence of faith means Christians establish their life in relationship with God by His assurance. Certainty and confidence in salvation comes from God's Holy Spirit, not within by self-assurance. God wills that we live in complete and continual dependence upon Him, not for Him in our own strength. This is exactly the question God wants His children asking, "**How do we know we possess God's gift of salvation?**" **We know we possess God's promise only when we live in the full assurance from Holy Spirit that we are possessed by God. Principle of Christian life: Assurance from God in salvation is essential DNA for the Christian faith.**

God commands Abram to bring a three-year-old heifer, female goat, and ram, as well as a turtledove and young pigeon. **Why three-year-old animals?** Because they are at the height of their value. Abrams brings the sacrifice to God, kills the animals, cuts them in halves, lays pieces open on ground, and guards them for the purpose of sacrifice.



APPL Please understand another important principle. Abram obeyed in offering the sacrifice not as a means to believe but because he already believed. (.6) Sacrifice to the Lord is an expression of our faith, not a means to it. When we try to produce faith through obedience, that is legalism. When we try to bypass the necessity for obedience in sacrifice, that is licentiousness. **Obedience is the product of our faith, not the producer of it; the expression of our faith, not the impetus for us to trust; the manifestation of faith, not the manipulation that causes it.**

God calls us to believe in the glory of His promise by looking to the character and nature of His Being to trust that He can fulfill it. **Trust IN God empowers obedience TO Him.** Adherence to that bypasses trust in is a painful deception, but not an uncommon one. God's promise enflames the affections of our whole being to adore the knowledge of His command in our heart as the source of power and strength to obey it. This is why David states, "*for I find my delight in your commandments, which I love. I will lift up my hands toward your commandments, which I love, and I will meditate on your statutes.*" **Psa119:47-48** God wills that we have certainty and confidence in our possession of His promise, so He works for our assurance by His power in us to obey His commands. **Phi12:13** **Principle of Christian Life: The Christian's motivation and strength to obey the Lord is sourced from relationship with God, knowing that He is the One who will do it!**

TRANS And now, let's walk into the great mystery as God acts in our behalf.

READ Gen 15:12-21

12As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. 13Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. 14But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. 15As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. 16And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

17When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. 18On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, 19the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, 20the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, 21the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites." **Genesis 15:12-21**

Abram falls into a deep sleep. He had done all he could do, bringing himself and his need before God. Here we enter a bone-chilling description of the events; a "*dreadful and great darkness fell upon him.*" This was not a storm cloud brewing or regular darkness. This was the envelopment of darkness, the absence of light that rattles the nerves and shakes the soul. There was no depth of fear or anxiety left untouched in Abram by this darkness, and to a magnitude never experienced or known. Like the onset of an adrenaline-induced shock, a tunnel vision set in on Abram beyond his control and comprehension that commanded the attention of his whole being. God held Abram's undivided attention to bring clarity and certainty in revealing His covenant. **God takes Abram to a deep place far beyond mere consciousness into the spirit realm.**

God reveals the details of how His promise will come about. He tells Abram that his offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs. Their sojourning will become an affliction in captivity for four hundred years. But God will not forget them. He will bless them greatly through all of this and deliver them. The land God promised to Abraham will be given to his offspring.

THEN, a "*smoking fire pot and flaming torch passed between these pieces.*" The smoking fire pot and flaming torch represent God, the smoke His Spirit and the torch the light of His truth. This is not like most covenants made where both parties pass through. God passes through the sacrifice alone. Hebrews 6:13-14 tells us, "*For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, 14saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you."* And on that day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham. **Abraham, still arrested in fear, watches as God Himself solidifies the covenant by which His promise will be fulfilled.**

Covenant : Gospel



The covenant of salvation is from GOD alone. He is the One who has offered up the sacrifice and passed through for the covenant of salvation. The mystery of God's covenant is revealed in Jesus Christ, the sacrifice offered up once for all for all who believe.

God sent Jesus as our sacrifice that we might receive salvation, life in relationship with Him.

Listen to Paul's doxology as he celebrates the revelation of God's mystery of His Will in Christ Jesus.

Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶ but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— ²⁷ to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

Rom 16:25-27

And not only is our salvation in Jesus the mystery of God now revealed, but so is our life with God in Jesus Christ.

Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory. 1 Timothy 3:16

There are many things about God that we do not know nor fully comprehend. But these things are in accord with our finiteness in this world, NOT in accord with God's sovereign will for us. In Christ Jesus, ALL things will be revealed to us in the fullness of His time.

YES, God's Will is SURELY a mystery; but the WHY, not the WHAT. The mystery of WHAT God has done is fully revealed in Jesus Christ. He came and died to rescue us from sin by the ransom of his blood, to redeem our lives, reconcile us in relationship with the Father and re-define our lives in this world! The mystery of godliness is revealed in the person, teaching, life and work (death, burial resurrection and ascension) of Jesus Christ. The only real mystery that remains is "WHY would God do all He has done in Jesus Christ for lost, dead, reprobate, rebellious sinners like me?" This too is no mystery in reality, but one of glory and wonder; because He loves us!

OBJ Three Revelations tell why you should believe in Jesus and receive God's Covenant promise in Him.

1: Jesus is the perfect sacrifice made for covenant to be received.

A sacrifice has been made once for all to atone for sin. God the Father sent Jesus as a propitiation for our sin. Rom3:24-25 Jesus became our sacrifice, willingly laid down His life to satisfy God's wrath against sin and atone our sin debt. God was satisfied with Jesus' sacrifice, and passed through on our behalf. Jesus is the only One in whom the promise of our salvation is secured. 1John4:10 We receive God's covenant promise when we enter into Jesus' sacrifice for us by faith.

Therefore, believe in Jesus and place your faith in Him as God's sacrifice for your sin. All God's promises are "Yes, and amen" in Jesus. 2Cor1:20

Believe does not mean simply to affirm intellectually, but with the whole of your being. Our culture has too often reduced believe to produce, often by manipulation, a mere agreement of intellectual, act of volition, or bending by emotional stirring. NO! It is not any one of these but all three.

The gospel proclaims God's truth in Jesus Christ to us in a way and at a depth of being unlike any other. Like that great darkness that fell on Abraham, Holy Spirit conviction captures all of us to attend the intellect by conviction, command the will with certainty, and captivate the affections with clarity. And by the full measure of all fear of our whole being fully centered on God, the gospel shows us our sin and speaks God's love in Jesus Christ to us. When Holy Spirit brings a person under conviction, it commands their whole being. When the gospel speaks God's love and truth through Jesus Christ it sets that whole person free. **When you believe in Jesus, you know God's forgiveness and cleansing and the joy and peace of Holy Spirit in you.**

"so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles,



so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.” **Gal 3:14**

Believe in Jesus today with your whole being, for He is the sacrifice offered up for fulfillment of all God's promises.

2: The whole promise rests solely on God because only He passed through to enter into Covenant.

The great demand for your life will never be met with your life. But it can be satisfied for your life because Jesus has already paid sin's price for you. Because only God passed through the covenant, only He can fulfill the promise. This is what He has done in Jesus. Paul tells the Ephesian Church: “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”^{Eph2:8-9} **Salvation is God's free gift to all who believe, from first to last, beginning to end.**

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.^{Rom6:23} Salvation in Jesus is a combined effort between you and God. You bring all the sin and death. He provides all the forgiveness and life. **Stop trying to earn or achieve what you will never obtain, and trust to receive what Jesus died to give you, new life in Him!**

3: Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of God's covenant promise.

Jesus is not only our sacrifice but He is our reward! In Him we have life with God, not just because of Him. As the fulfillment of God's Promise, Messiah or Christ, the Christian life is one of walking in relationship with Jesus, living by faith in obedience to His commands. Just as God gave Abraham greater detail for how His covenant would be fulfilled, so we too receive commandments for new life in Jesus Christ.

Jesus died to give us pay our debt and was raised to give us new life. Christians are called to live in the new life He gives; a life of obedience to Jesus by faith is what it means to live in His love.

and he died for all,

*that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. **2 Cor 5:15***

God saves you to offer your whole life for His glory as a living sacrifice! God's will for you, His whole purpose for your life is this; intimacy in relationship with Him as a living sacrifice. **The “cut”, sacrifice, of covenant is the key for intimacy with God.**

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God,

*to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. **Rom 12:1***

God sent Jesus as our sacrifice that we might receive salvation, life in relationship with Him.

God desires / wills for you to walk with Him in all of life, in peace and problems, in pleasures and in pain, so He can reveal the full measure of Himself to you, all the majesty of His glory beheld by you and the measure of His good to you. IF you are not living for the One that died for you, then you are not living to know the One who has called you. **Believe in Jesus today and receive the great reward of God's covenant promise to you, new life in Jesus Christ!**

