

# **What is Covenant Theology?**

February, 13 2022

**Harvest Fellowship PCA**

**Part IV Covenant with Abraham**

# **An Overview**

**Covenantal Framework & Noah**

**Covenant Map (notional with arrows)**

**Overview - Context**

**Covenant with Abraham**

**Convenient of Promise**

**What is it?**

**What type of Covenant is being established?**

**Who are the People of God?**

**What does it mean to me?**

**References**

# FRAMEWORK – Covenant of Redemption

## Covenant of Works

Between God and man, requiring  
perfect, personal obedience,

OFFERING LIFE

AND

THREATENING DEATH

## Covenant of Grace

Between God and the ELECT, requiring FAITH,  
Offering FORGIVENESS

AND

ETERNAL LIFE

Secured by God's promise

( or oath) (e.g. John 3:16)

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**Todays topic:  
Of Abraham –  
The Covenant of Promise\***

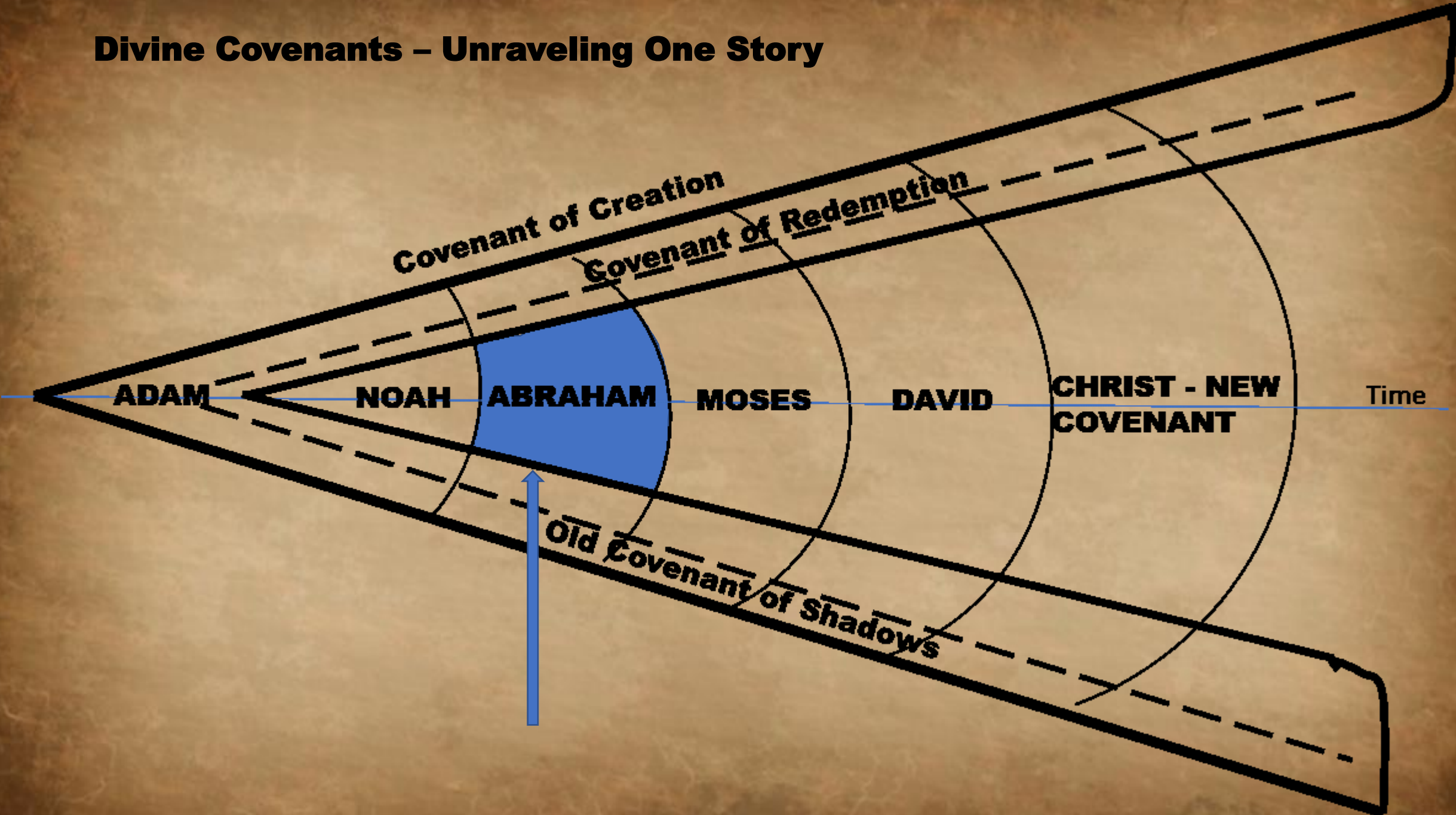
**(Robertson, O Palmer “\*working terminologies”**

**and ideas)**

Reference: Elements attributed to Rev Richard Phillips ; Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC



**Divine Covenants – Unraveling One Story**



Reference: O Palmer Robertson: "Christ of the Covenants pg 62-63

# **An Overview**

**Four Key Passages on the Covenant with Noah**

- 1) Genesis 12 – His calling from the Chaldean city of Ur ; God promises land for him and his seed**
- 2) Genesis 15 – God cuts a covenant – He promises a son and from him his offspring will inherit land from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates River**
- 3) Genesis 17 – Abraham and the Covenant of Circumcision; God promises he will be a father of many nations and many kings**
- 4) Genesis 22 – Abraham's obedience and the substitutionary sacrifice for Isaac**

# Genesis 12 - God calls Abram and makes a Promise

God calls Abram out of the land of Ur ( vs1) from his people and begins a relationship. It has the **markings of a covenant.**

God provides a list of promises.

It is unconditional , it is irrevocable, and it is a ROYAL GRANT

Verses 2 – 3

- I will make you a great nation
- I will bless you
- I will make your name great, so you will be a blessing
- I will bless those who bless you
- I will curse those who dishonor you
- In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed

Source: <https://www.goodsalt.com/details/stdas0141.html>

Source: <https://newlifenarrabri.wordpress.com/2016/02/16/reflection-on-genesis-151-18/>



# **Genesis 12 - God calls Abram and makes a Promise**

The declaration of God's promise and Abram's response:

## **Verse 7**

**<sup>7</sup> Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said,**

**“To your offspring I will give this land.”**

**So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.**

# Genesis 12

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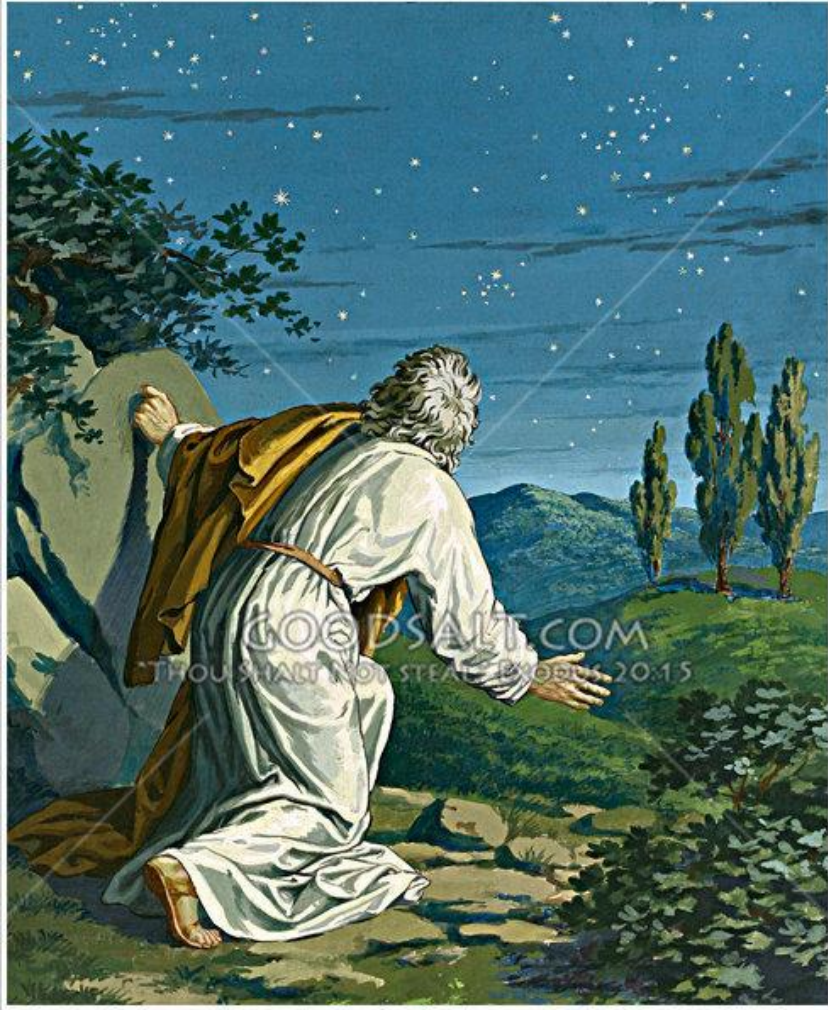


# **Genesis 15 – God “cuts” a covenant with Abram**

## **God establishes a covenant with Abram**

- Abram remembers God’s promise of an heir but he has no heir and Sarai is childless. Abram expresses his anxiety about the reality to God directly (vs 1 – 2). He pleads the expediency of using a servant son “Eliezer of Damascus)
- God has not forgotten and assures him that his son will come from his loins
- GOD takes Abram outside and tells him to look at the night-sky

# Genesis 15 – God “cuts” a covenant with Abram



## God establishes a covenant with Abram

- <sup>5</sup> And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”
- <sup>6</sup> And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness. (Genesis 15:5 – 6)

Source: <https://www.goodsalt.com/details/stdas0141.html>

Source: <https://newlifenarrabri.wordpress.com/2016/02/16/reflection-on-genesis-151-18/>



# Genesis 15: 13 - 15 The Assurance of His Promise- The Firepot and the Torch – A Self Maldectory Oath

<sup>13</sup> Then 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. <sup>14</sup> But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. <sup>15</sup> As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age.

<sup>17</sup> **When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces.** <sup>18</sup> On 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,

Source:

<https://www.quora.com/Does-Genesis-15-18-suggest-that-East-Africa-is-part-of-the-land-promised-by-God-to-Abram-s-seed>





# **Genesis 15 – God “cuts” a covenant with Abram**

**Remember:**

**<sup>17</sup> For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.” (Romans 1: 17)**

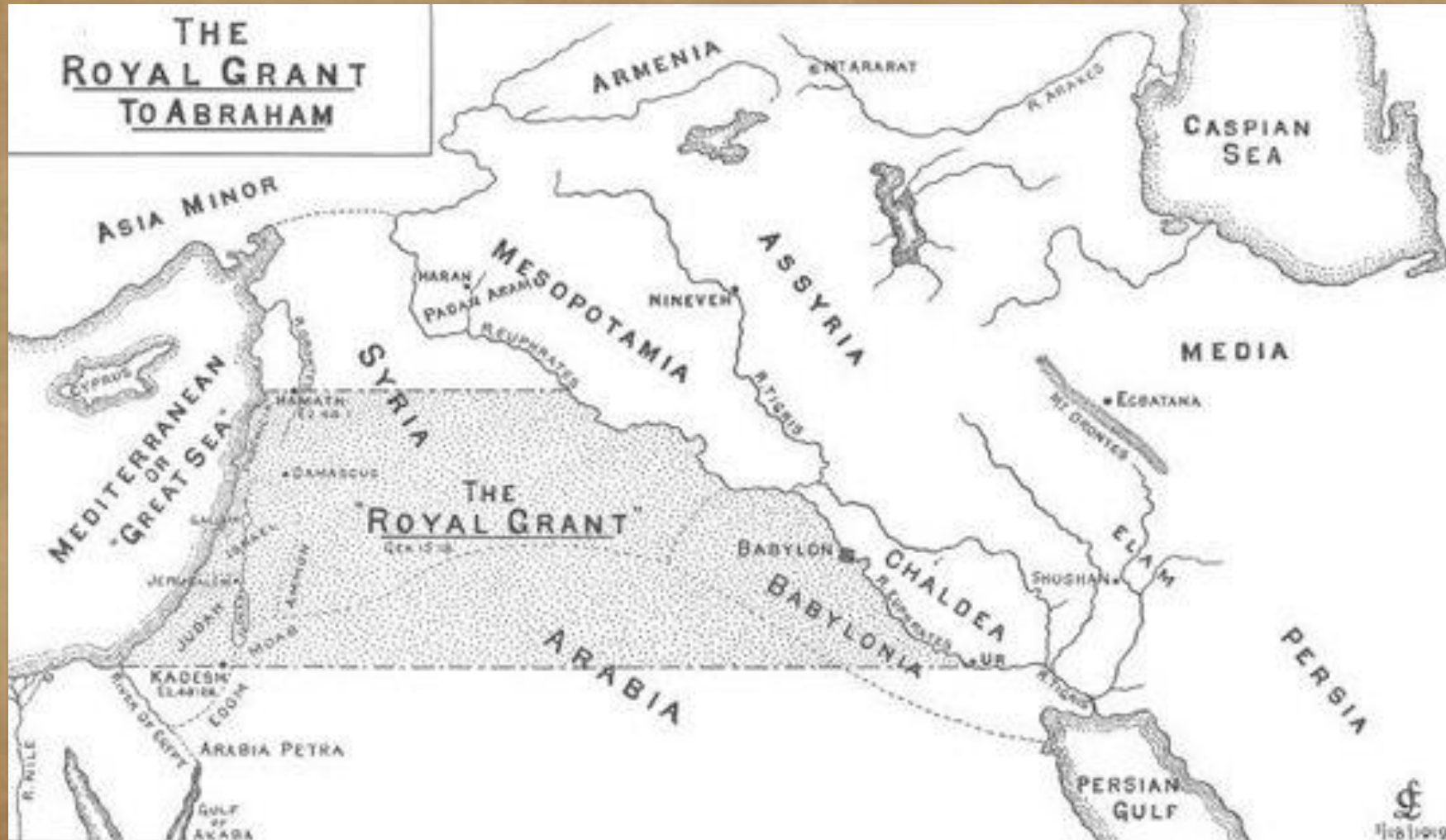
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**The Land: How big is I suppose to be?**

**The land of Canaan promised by God could be as big as :**

**<sup>18</sup> On 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,**

# Genesis 15 – God cuts a Covenant



Source:

<https://www.quora.com/Does-Genesis-15-18-suggest-that-East-Africa-is-part-of-the-land-promised-by-God-to-Abram-s-seed>

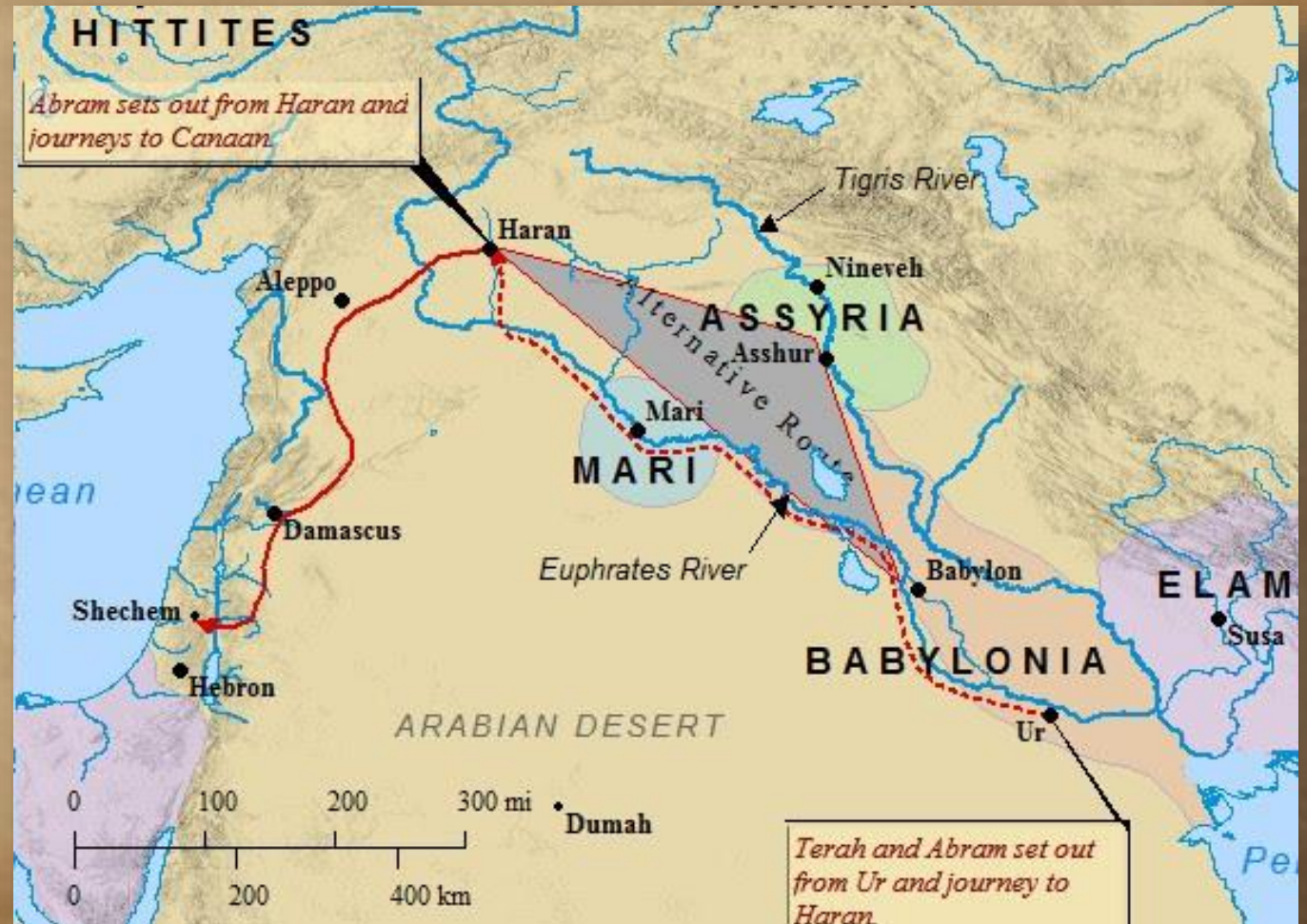


# Genesis 15 : Actual size of Land due to Abram's journey

<sup>14</sup> The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, <sup>15</sup> for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. <sup>16</sup> I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted. <sup>17</sup> Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you."

Source:

<https://www.quora.com/Does-Genesis-15-18-suggest-that-East-Africa-is-part-of-the-land-promised-by-God-to-Abram-s-seed>





## **Genesis 15 : Conclusion of this Covenant**

- God's Covenant with Abraham is a **Covenant of PROMISE**
- Abraham does not pass between the divided pieces of animals.
- The curse or malediction does not fall on him.
- The LORD did not require Abraham to walk between the dismembered animals.
- God HIMSELF walked between animal pieces thus, symbolically taking the curse, that just as the animal flesh was torn, then this would happen to him if the covenant was broken.

## **Genesis 15 : Conclusion of this Covenant**

**-God's Covenant with Abraham is a **Covenant of PROMISE****

- In Jesus Christ God fulfills his promise .**
- He offers his own body and his own blood as victim of the covenantal curse.**
- His flesh is torn that God's word to the patriarch might be fulfilled.**
- Now HE offers HIMSELF to you and me:**  
**“ Take, eat; this is my body. This is my blood of the covenant shed for many. Drink , all of you, of it.**

# **Genesis 17 – Abraham and the Covenant of Circumcision**

**God goal in establishing a covenant with Abram to establish a new people**

**Part 1: It is unconditional, it is irrevocable, and it is a  
COVENANT of GRACE applied to Abraham**

- He reveals HIS NAME: “I am the God Almighty “ ( 17:1)
- God recites the details of this COVENANT with Abraham:
  - “Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. (vs 4)
  - He is no longer named Abram but ABRAHAM (vs 5)
  - His wife’s name is now SARAH ( from Sarai) ( vs 15)
  - I will make him exceedingly fruitful ( vs 6a)
  - “I will make you into many nations and kings shall come after you.” ( vs 6b)



# **Genesis 17 – Abraham and the Covenant of Circumcision**

**Part 2: This Covenant has conditions to be part of the household of God. It has benefits and a curse.**

**God ratifies this Covenant with a physical sign to Abraham for him and his offspring to remember.**

**That is the sign of circumcision.**

**It ties Abraham to God as a new people**

**It ties Abraham's seed as part of that new people**

**It covers his household**

**It begins with infants eight days old**

**It allows the Gentiles to come and join the new household of God.**

**Uncircumcised males in the flesh are cut off from his people. "They have broken my covenant."**

# Genesis 17 – Abraham and the Covenant of Circumcision

The passage is:

<sup>9</sup> And God said to Abraham, “As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations.

<sup>10</sup> **This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised.**

<sup>11</sup> You shall be circumcised in the **flesh of your foreskins**, and **it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you.**

<sup>12</sup> **He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised.** Every male **throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring,**

<sup>13</sup> both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant.

<sup>14</sup> Any **uncircumcised male who is not circumcised** in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”



# **Genesis 17 – Covenant of Circumcision and Baptism - under the new COVENANT- in Christ**

The Key Passage to tie the two is **Colossians 2: 11 – 14**

<sup>11</sup> In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,

<sup>12</sup> having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.

<sup>13</sup> And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses,

<sup>14</sup> by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.



# Genesis 17 – Covenant of Circumcision and Baptism - under the new COVENANT- in Christ

The Key Passage is **Colossians 1:19 - 22**

- <sup>19</sup> For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,
- <sup>20</sup> and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, **making peace by the blood of his cross.**
- <sup>21</sup> And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds,
- <sup>22</sup> **he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him**

**Recall: The Divine COVENANT – bond in blood –  
sovereignly administered.**

# **Genesis 17 – Covenant of Circumcision and Baptism**

## **- under the new COVENANT- in Christ**

### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ME?**

#### **Key Things to Know**

- When you were buried with him in baptism, you were circumcised ( vs 11 – 12)**
- Baptism under the new covenant accomplished all that was represented in circumcision under the old.**
- By being baptized the Christian believer has experienced the equivalent of the cleansing rite of circumcision.**
- Circumcision may fairly be said to be the Old Testament Counterpart of Christian baptism.**



# **Genesis 22 The Obedience of Abraham**

## **What can I learn from this?**

**The story of Abraham and his obedience to sacrifice his son Isaac does not seem to have a direct relation to covenants, but ABRAHAM'S Faith is recognized to be ENOUGH to "reckon his righteousness".**

**THE QUESTION that needs to be settled is whether CIRCUMCISION requisites righteousness; in the case of Abraham?**

**A: IT DOES NOT.**

**Note - This question was debated by the early church and the Apostle Paul addresses this growing heresy by merging the old with the new covenant.**

**Refrain:**

**Genesis 15:6**

**And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.**

# **Abraham justified by Faith alone => Romans 4: 9, 10 – 11, 12)**

- <sup>9</sup> Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness.
- <sup>10</sup> How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? **It was not after, but before he was circumcised.**
- <sup>11</sup> **He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well,**
- <sup>12</sup> and to make him the **father of the circumcised** who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father **Abraham had before he was circumcised.**



# **Abraham justified by Faith alone => Romans 4:13,14,15)**

- **<sup>13</sup> For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith.**
- **<sup>14</sup> For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void.**
- **<sup>15</sup> For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.**

# **Redemption through the blood of Christ, that supersedes the old covenant => Hebrews 9: 15 - 20**

- <sup>15</sup> Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.
- <sup>16</sup> For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established.
- <sup>17</sup> For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive.
- <sup>18</sup> Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood.
- <sup>19</sup> For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,
- <sup>20</sup> saying, “This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you.”
- <sup>21</sup> And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship.
- <sup>22</sup> Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and **without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.**



# We are a people of God

Galatians 6:15 For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

2 Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

Romans 9: 6- 9

<sup>6</sup> But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, <sup>7</sup> and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” <sup>8</sup> **This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.** <sup>9</sup> For this is what the promise said: “About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.”

# We are a people of God

Galatians 3: 26 – 29

<sup>26</sup> for in **Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.**

<sup>27</sup> For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

<sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

<sup>29</sup> **And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.**



# The witness of Abraham's faith (Hebrews 11: 8 – 12)

- **8 By faith** Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.
- **9 By faith** he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. **10 For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.**
- **11 By faith** Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised.
- **12 Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.**

## **Our inheritance:**

### **We Are Abrahams's Offspring (Galatians 3: 26 – 29)**

.....” <sup>26</sup> for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.

<sup>27</sup> For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

<sup>28</sup> There is **neither Jew nor Greek**, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female,

**for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

<sup>29</sup> **And if you are Christ's, then**

**you are Abraham's offspring,**

**heirs according to promise.”**



# **Covenant with Noah (Post Diluvian (after the Flood))**

- **Biblical Reference (Genesis 12, 15, & 17)**

**“Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them... So shall your offspring be”(Gen. 15:5).**

- **Participating Parties:** God and Abraham and his spiritual offspring
- **Covenant Relationship Type:** Royal Grant
- **Covenant Conditions and Obligations:** Faith
- **Sanctions and Curses:** God's self-malediction (Genesis 15: 12-18)
- **Promise and Blessing:** Promised Land and Offspring
- **Sign/ Token: Circumcision**
- **WHAT does it mean to ME?** We are the offspring and receive the promises
- **by becoming Abraham's offspring through faith in Christ. (see**
- **Gal. 3:9, 14**

**WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN TO YOU?**

# References

(used in this lesson)

- O. Palmer Robertson, The Christ of the Covenants
- Michael S. Horton, God of Promise: Introducing Covenant Theology
- Understanding Covenant Theology; by Rev. Richard D Phillips, Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC
- John Murray “The Covenants of Grace” (1953)
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# Questions