

Stephens, GregGod, The Covenant and the Contradiction

10. God's Covenant With Abraham

This chapter traces God's covenant with Abram (Abraham) from Genesis 12-24 and argues it is the foundational pattern for the New Covenant in Christ. It shows how God called Abram out by faith, cut a blood covenant, changed his and Sarai's names, sealed it with circumcision, and tested it with Isaac—each step pointing forward to Jesus. A 'Go Deeper' section explains the Hebrew word *hesed* (God's covenant lovingkindness).

Key takeaways

- God called Abram to leave everything by faith. The promise was all BLESSING with one condition: go. 'Hebrew' means 'one who crossed over'—Abram crossed to God's side.
- The covenant was cut in Genesis 15: animals divided, God alone (as smoking furnace and burning lamp) passed between the pieces. Abram did not walk it, because this covenant was really between God the Father and God the Son—so there was no curse attached, only blessing.
- Sarai's plan (Hagar and Ishmael) was not God's solution. The heir would come through Sarah by miracle.

- God revealed Himself as El Shaddai ('the God who is more than enough') and changed the names—adding 'H' from His own name YHWH, tied to His creative, life-giving breath. Within months Isaac ('he laughs') was conceived.
- Circumcision sealed the covenant with human blood mingled with animal blood—foreshadowing Jesus' sacrifice.
- The testing of Isaac (Genesis 22) proved Abraham's faith and gave God legal ground to offer His own Son. Abraham believed God would raise Isaac from the dead.
- Abraham pictures God the Father; Isaac pictures the Son. The two sons (Ishmael/flesh, Isaac/spirit) mirror the two Adams. The Father seeking a bride for Isaac pictures the Holy Spirit preparing the Church for Christ.
- Jacob ('supplanter') was renamed Israel ('a prince with God'); the nation of Israel was born from that name change.
- hesed is God's unconditional covenant lovingkindness—first seen in the rescue of Lot from Sodom, granted because of Abraham's covenant friendship and intercession.

Passages worth keeping

“In thee shall all families of the earth be BLESSED.”

The covenant promise that reaches all nations and points to Christ.

“My father... where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb.”

Abraham's faith on Moriah foreshadows God providing His own Son.

How it connects

The chapter's whole aim is to read Abraham forward: the blood covenant, the offered son, and the promised Seed all set the 'mold' for the New Covenant in Jesus, whose death fulfilled what Abraham's faith prefigured.

Scripture referenced

- **Genesis 12:1-3** -- The Abraham covenant promise of blessing to all families of earth
- **Genesis 15:1-6, 17-18** -- The covenant cut; Abram believed and it was counted as righteousness
- **Genesis 17** -- El Shaddai, name changes, and circumcision as the covenant seal
- **Genesis 22:1-13** -- The testing of Isaac and the ram provided as substitute
- **Hebrews 11:17-19** -- Abraham offered Isaac believing God could raise the dead
- **Galatians 3:29** -- Those in Christ are Abraham's heirs of the promise