

FAITHFUL ONE

ABRAHAM'S COVENANT OF FRAGILE FAITH

Part 4: Oven & Flame

APPETIZER: The Verse That Changes Everything

Genesis 15:6

Romans 4:3, 9, 22; Galatians 3:6; James 2:23

DINE IN: Questioning Faith & Blood Covenants

Genesis 15

“offspring” = Heb, *zera* (Gk, *sperma*) = seed

Galatians 3:16

The “seed” of Abraham...

Single (Abraham) → Plural (Israel) → Single (Jesus) → Plural (The Church)

“believe” = Heb, *aman*
= I trust that it's true

Genesis 26:5

“Righteousness” = Heb, *tsedaqah* (or *tsedaq*, masculine)
= to be straight and true;
= to be living ethically;
= to be in right relationship

Jeremiah 34:18; Mark 13:30-32

1. Before there was sin, there was no need for “covenant”, but only loving relationship.
2. *Covenant* is God's way of responding to our need for assurance (see **Genesis 9**, the covenant of the rainbow).
3. **Blood** covenant is God's way of responding to our need for assurance in a way that also accommodates our religious language of sacrifice (**Genesis 15**). Blood sacrifice is our idea. Rainbows are God's.
4. Jesus brings an end to our religious ritual of killing things for God by shedding his own blood, once and for all, giving us total, complete, and final assurance that God has broken through all religious norms to declare we are forgiven and accepted and loved unconditionally (**Luke 22:20**).

TAKE OUT: Amen?

Whatever you are afraid of – Do you trust Jesus?

2 Timothy 2:11-13

NEXT WEEK... We start our fall FROSH series!

Home Church Questions

HANGOUT [Warming Up to the Topic – in one Large Group]

1. Review this week's sermon – especially the four points in the body of the message. Talk about what most encouraged or perplexed you, what new things you learned or old things that were confirmed. (Take your time with this. There is lots to talk about!)

HEAR [Listening to God through Scripture – in Discussion Groups]

2. Read **Genesis 15**.
 - a. What verse or idea that stands out to you the most? Why?
 - b. The "Word" of God appeared in a "vision" to Abraham. Talk about the significance of this.
 - c. Have you ever been in a circumstance when, like Abraham, you needed to be reminded that God himself is your very great reward?
 - d. Review **verse 6** (and **26:5**). How would you define biblical "faith"?
 - e. Review **verse 15**. Abraham's destiny was simply a peaceful, uneventful death. But his soul was encouraged by learning about the bigger narrative his life would be a part of. What is the larger story that you are a part of? How are you contributing to *that* and how is this encouraging to you?
 - f. What is the significance of **verse 16** for helping us understand Israel's future fight for the promised land under Joshua's leadership and the killing of the Canaanites?

HUDDLE [Making It Personal and Praying Together – in Huddles]

3. Use your Huddle Questions and pray for each other.

Quotes

Welcome to the conclusion (for this year!) of our series about the faith of Abraham and the faithfulness of God.

In Genesis 15 we read about a story that has become foundational for how Christians view New Covenant faith....

**After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision:
"Do not be afraid, Abram.
I am your shield,
your very great reward."**

Then he took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

He also said to him, "I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it."

But Abram said, "Sovereign Lord, how can I know that I will gain possession of it?"

So the Lord said to him, "Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon."

Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half. 11 Then birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away.

As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him. Then the Lord said to him, "Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there.

But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure."

When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land.