

FAITHFUL ONE

THE PROMISE AND THE PAIN

Part 2: Cutting a Covenant

APPETIZER: I'll Have What Noah's Having

Genesis 9:12-13

"I have altered the deal. Pray I don't alter it further."
~ Darth Vader

DINE IN: Getting a Covenant Upgrade

Genesis 17

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM...

- Chapter 12** – a great nation, all people blessed
- Chapter 15** – descendants as many as the stars in the sky
 - faith is credited as righteousness
 - at Abraham's request, a covenant is "cut"
 - land is promised
- Chapter 17** – descendants will be many kings, many nations
 - lineage through Sarah
 - names changed: Abram → Abraham, Sarai → Sarah
 - circumcision as a sign
 - called to be faithful, blameless, obedient

EL SHADDAI...

- Akkadian, *Shadu* = Mountains / Breasts
- Hebrew, *Shad* = Breast

ABRAM = "Exalted Father"



ABRAHAM = "Father of Many Nations"

Revelation 21:22-24
Jude 1:22
James 1:5-8
Colossians 2:9-14

BAPTISM TODAY...

- Theory 1: It doesn't matter.
- Theory 2: Baptism, like circumcision, should be done to infants.
- Theory 3: Baptism, like circumcision, is a sign of the kind of covenant we are living in – the New Covenant – which is by grace not race, by faith not family of origin.

OLD COVENANT CIRCUMCISION

Male centred
An expression of birth
A sign of parental obedience
A sign of maintaining covenant
A sign of what we must do
A sign of intimacy/inclusion
A possible sign of warning

NEW COVENANT BAPTISM

Gender inclusive
An expression of rebirth
A sign of personal obedience
A sign of starting fresh
A sign of what Christ has done
A sign of intimacy/inclusion
A definite sign of celebration

TAKE OUT: What's Your Baptism Story?

Colossians 2:9-14

Romans 6:1-11



NEXT WEEK: Faithful One, Part 3 (Read Genesis 18 to prepare!)

Home Church Questions

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

1. Talk about what you remember being most interesting, encouraging, or perplexing in Sunday's message.

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

2. Read **Genesis 17**. Remember to use these questions more like a menu to choose from than a list to be fully completed.
 - a. What aspect of this story stands out to you the most?
 - b. God reveals himself to Abraham as *El Shaddai*, pointing to a God of strength and tenderness, might and nourishment, the Father God with a Mother's heart. How would you describe God to someone who said, "My experience with men had been damaging – why would I want to worship a God who is male?" Do you think it's alright for someone to think of God as "Mother"? What about praying to God as Mother, and talking about God as "she" and "her"? Why? Why not?
 - c. Abraham fell facedown before God. How do you use posture to communicate and connect with God?
 - d. God told Samuel that Israel wanting a human king was rejection of himself as their rightful king (1 Samuel 8). Yet, God promised Abraham that kings would come from him and Sarah as though that was a good thing. What's up with that?
 - e. Even though God chose (elected) Isaac to fulfil his messianic mission, he still loved and blessed Ishmael. How might this chapter influence how we as Christians approach the issue of contemporary Jewish-Arab conflict? Is it right for Christians to be pro-Israel by default?
 - f. Talking to Jewish people, Jesus said, "**Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad**" (John 8:56). In what way do you think Abraham foresaw the coming of Jesus?
3. Read **Colossians 2:9-14**.
 - a. What verse, idea, or concept stands out to you the most?
 - b. Brainstorm (without using the sermon notes): How is baptism similar and different to circumcision as a sign of God's covenant with his people?
 - c. Divide into three groups and debate these three positions:
 - i. God doesn't care about us doing things like baptism and communion – it's our hearts that count.
 - ii. Baptism is the New Testament replacement of circumcision and therefore should be gifted to babies of Christian parents, just like circumcision in the Old Covenant.
 - iii. Baptism is an important sign of personal, not parental, faith and every believer should participate as an act of obedient faith.

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

4. Use your Huddle questions and take time to pray for each other.