

Lesson 29

7.4 God Proves Abraham

⇒ **Genesis 21:1~8**; The birth of Isaac

- God's promise to Abraham was fulfilled; Isaac, the son of promise, was born. Isaac's birth was supernatural, it was the work of the Spirit, it was planned by God.

⇒ **Hebrews 11:11**; Through faith, Sarah gave birth.

⇒ **Hebrews 11:17**; It was supernatural, Isaac is called the '*only begotten son*', the only one born that way, a barren mother and at an advanced age.

- After the birth of Isaac, God was going to test Abraham to see if he really was in covenant with God. God was going to test Abraham, and he was perfectly entitled to ask whatever he wanted of Abraham because of the covenant, everything that belonged to one belonged to the other.

⇒ **Genesis 22:1~19**

➤ **V.2**: ...*Whom you love...*; Abraham loved Isaac deeply, God bore witness.

➤ **V.5**: ... *We will come back to you ...*; Abraham believed that he would return with Isaac alive; even if he sacrificed him, Abraham believed that God would resurrect him.

- God asked Abraham for his son, and he didn't even blink, he got up at dawn and took his son, that's covenant. All that was Abraham's was God's and all that was God's was Abraham's.
- We saw that Abram's name was changed to Abraham, with God's name coming into Abram's midst (Sarah's too). But God also took Abraham's name, because the whole Bible, when it speaks of God, speaks of the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, especially when it refers to the covenant with Abraham.

⇒ **Genesis 28:13**; God presenting himself to Jacob.

⇒ **Exodus 3:6**; God presenting himself to Moses.

⇒ **I Kings 18:36**; Elijah praying to God.

⇒ **Matthew 22:32**; Jesus speaking to the Sadducees.

⇒ **Hebrews 11:16**; And God is not ashamed to be called that, showing that it is his name after the covenant with Abraham.

- Abraham did not withhold his son from God and God would not withhold his; but we know that it was different, God did not spare Jesus.

⇒ **Luke 3:22**; At the baptism of Jesus Christ.

➤ You are my beloved Son; in you I am pleased. Isaac was Abraham's son, God said: '*take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love*'; do you see the parallel?

⇒ **Hebrews 11:17**; Isaac called the only begotten.

➤ Isaac is called the only begotten, the only one born that way; born of a father whose body was already dead (100 years) and a barren mother, who had even ceased her days of fertility (90 years) to bear children. Only begotten, a miracle wrought by God! The son of promise called beloved, called only begotten.

⇒ **John 3:16;** *'Jesus the only begotten Son.'*

⇒ **John 1:14;** *'The only begotten of the Father.'*

- Jesus the promised Messiah, the only begotten of God, born of a virgin, a miracle of God. The beloved Son, called the only begotten of God.

- When Abraham went to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, he thought: *'It's logical that God will give my son back, because it's from him that the offspring come'*.

⇒ **Hebrews 11:17~19**

⇒ **Genesis 22:5** *'We will come back to you ...'*

- The fact that Abraham *'took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son'*, ⇒ **Genesis 22:6**, shows the figure of Jesus with the cross on his back. Abraham was going to immolate, to kill, his son Isaac. But when he picked up the cleaver, God interrupted, Abraham took Isaac away and put an animal, a lamb, tied up there. Note that it wasn't loose, it was supernatural; ⇒ **Genesis 22:13**.

⇒ **Genesis 22:8;** *'My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.'*

- Isaac was substituted, but God did not substitute His Son, **The Lamb of God** who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus was the substitute, even for Isaac. God *'used the cleaver'* on His Son so that He would be the substitute, because of the covenant.
- God could now act, there was a covenant, and we are also in that covenant. *'This cup is the new covenant in my blood'*. Jesus is the covenant, the new covenant, in him the 'eternal covenant' made before the foundation of the world is fulfilled.

⇒ **Matthew 26:27~28;** *'The blood of the covenant for the remission of sins.'*

⇒ **Mark 14:24;** *'The blood of the covenant shed for many.'*

⇒ **Luke 22:20;** *'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.'*

⇒ **I Corinthians 11:25;** *'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.'*

- We talk about circumcision and that its true meaning is internal, in the heart; it reflects faith. How many Israelites did and do circumcision only as an external sign! And like God's people today, they also take the external symbols of the new covenant, baptism, the Lord's Supper, and do them only as external symbols! They don't even think about what they're doing. The Lord's Supper is in memory of what we have seen, of Jesus having shed his blood for us, it's very serious.
- God then passes on the promise and the covenant to Abraham's descendants; note the words descendants, lands and blessings.

⇒ **Genesis 26:1~5;** God to Isaac.

⇒ **Genesis 28:1~4;** Isaac to Jacob (Israel).

⇒ **Genesis 28:12~15;** God to Jacob.

- The story of the people of Israel is the story of God's faithfulness because of this covenant. Want to see an example?

⇒ **Exodus 32:1~14**

Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving all God's instruction and the tablets of the 10 commandments, and the people were down there corrupting themselves:

- **V.7:** God spoke to Moses; *'...Go, get down! For your people...'*
- **V.10:** *'Moses, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them, and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation...'*
- **V.11:** Moses pleaded with God: *'Lord, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people?'*
- **V.13:** look what Moses replies to God; *'Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants...'*. Moses said, *'Remember, Lord, the covenant?'*, and God replied, *'I remember, Moses, and I'm not going to do anything else'*.
- In this passage, God *'poked'* Moses to intercede for the people, because without intercession nothing happens on earth; (remember ⇒ **Psalm 115:16**). God was saying to Moses: *'If you don't intercede, I'm going to have to destroy these people, because they have strayed from my path'*. And Moses touched the right spot, the covenant. We need to intercede for people, so that God can act with mercy and not justice against sinful man.

7.5 One purpose for Israel vs. one purpose for the Church

- Why has Israel not yet fully received the descendants, the land and the blessings? Because they rejected the Messiah. Israel's Messiah was rejected at His first coming to planet earth. Jesus is the one who is going to give all the promised land into Israel's hands; when he returns, all the land of Canaan will belong to Israel.
- Most of the land of Canaan was possessed by Israel only at the time of David and Solomon, today Israel is just a narrow strip. When will it all be Israel's? When the Messiah returns and sets up His Kingdom on earth. The land that Israel has already conquered today will never leave their hands.

⇒ Galatians 3:1~9

- All descendants are concentrated in Jesus, including us who are saved in Jesus, who have inherited Abraham's blessing. Jesus is the blessing, which is why Israel is not yet possessing the fullness of this blessing, of this covenant.
- In his plan, God made six covenants: one with the whole of humanity and five with Abraham and his descendants:
 - 1st. Rainbow Covenant**, with the entire human race; the earth will no longer be destroyed by the waters of the flood.
 - 2nd. Abrahamic Covenant**, with Abraham, the one we studied; God promises land, descendants and blessing to Abraham, it is an unconditional covenant.
 - 3rd. Mosaic Covenant**, with Moses; we'll study this later, it's a conditional covenant.
 - 4th. Palestinian Covenant**, linked to the Mosaic covenant; we'll study it too, it's a conditional covenant.
 - 5th. Davidic Covenant**, with David; God promises an eternal Kingdom to Israel, it's an unconditional covenant.
 - 6th. New Covenant in Jesus Christ**; where we are, and which will be passed on to Israel when it receives its Messiah. The new covenant, in the blood of Jesus, where all the families of the earth will be blessed.

- It depends on understanding these covenants to understand the Bible, putting everything in its proper place. There were five covenants with Abraham and his descendants, and some have not yet been fully fulfilled, such as the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants.
- God cannot lie; Jesus is the covenant manifested on earth. For Israel, Jesus is the focus of the Abrahamic covenant, descendants, land and blessing, and the Davidic covenant, he is the descendant of David who will sit on the throne forever, Hallelujah!
- At his first coming, Jesus fulfilled part of the Abrahamic covenant, which one? In you all the families of the earth will be blessed. In Jesus all the families of the earth have redemption, anyone who believes in Jesus' sacrifice is immediately reconciled with God. Is there any greater blessing than that? From this blessing, all the others follow.
- It is only when I am reconciled with God, the Creator of heaven and earth, that I become His child, that I am His heir and He can then bless me with all the blessings that a father has for a child, before that I am only God's creature. So, the basic, ultimate blessing is this. How am I going to reconcile and re-establish that relationship with God that was lost at the beginning of history? Only through Jesus. That's why God said to Abraham, *'in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed'*. Because Abraham made the covenant, he left God free to act; and because Abraham gave his son, God was going to give His. Of course, God moved everything, proposed everything, but Abraham opened his life **and believed**.
- At the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ, all the covenants will be fulfilled, and Israel will be perpetuated on earth and the kingdom promised to David will be established by Jesus. If we doubt or change this understanding, we will say that God is a liar and then I can doubt all the promises God has made to me. If God is not faithful with Israel, he will not be faithful with the Church.
- There is a theology that says: because Israel rejected its Messiah, God rejected Israel and passed on all of Israel's blessings to the Church; the Church would be the new Israel of God. This is not biblical. Israel is Israel and the Church is the Church. God's plan without Israel is not God's plan and God's plan without the Church is not God's plan.
- God needs Israel and He needs the Church, because He decided so, He planned so. It's not that Israel is more important or the Church, the two complement each other and complete God's plan; if one of them is missing, the whole plan is compromised.
 ⇒ **Romans 11:29**; *'For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.'*
- What does vocation mean? Vocation means calling. Literally the Bible says that God called Israel; ⇒ **Isaiah 43:1~7**
 God created Israel, called Israel for a certain purpose, and this is irrevocable. How can God call and then reject, if He has an eternal covenant? *'Forever Abraham, I will give you this land and this offspring'*.
- The Church isn't waiting to go to the land of Israel, it's waiting for the rapture, to be with Jesus forever. It's true that Jesus is coming to reign in the millennium with the Church, but Israel is waiting for the fulfillment of these covenants. *Of course, the Jew who has accepted Jesus Christ as the Messiah is already part of the new covenant, that's the end for everyone. But not everyone will accept it, and God will implement His Kingdom for 1000 years here on earth and Israel will be God's channel; Israel's purpose and calling is for that.*

- Israel, as a nation, is saying no to the Messiah, it is saying no to God. When Jesus came, his first action was to offer the Kingdom to Israel:
 - ⇒ **Matthew 3:1~2**; John the Baptist preaching, offering the kingdom of God.
 - ⇒ **Matthew 4:17**; Jesus' initial preaching, offering the kingdom of God.

When Jesus was offering himself as King, the Jews spoke up:

⇒ **John 19:15**; 'We have no king but Caesar! '.

They were turning their backs on the offer of the kingdom, so the theologians say: ' Oh! you see, because they rejected the Messiah, God has passed everything on to the Church '. If that happens, we're lost, because if God doesn't keep his covenants with Israel, he won't keep his promises with the Church. **This theology is not biblical**; Israel will be God's channel of blessing on earth. There is a purpose of God for Israel and a different purpose of God for the Church, and the two complement each other.

7.6 End of the Abrahamic covenant

- In chronological order we have today we are living in the period called the Church, the period of grace. Then will come seven years of tribulation and then will come the Millennium, the millennial Kingdom of Jesus Christ on earth, the Kingdom promised to David.
 - ⇒ **Zechariah 8:18~23**
 - **V.20**: ' Peoples shall yet come ' ; future.
 - **V.22**; ' to seek in Jerusalem '.
 - **V.23**; in that day; ' Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.', channel of blessing.
- God's promises and program for Israel are very different in many ways from God's program for the Church, but Israel will have its promises and covenants fulfilled and so will the Church.
 - For Israel:
 - ⇒ **Isaiah 14:1~2**; ' And settle them in their own land'.
 - ⇒ **Isaiah 60:9~16**; There will be a restoration of Israel.
 - ⇒ **Ezekiel 36:8~11 and 33~38**; ditto.

The texts speak for themselves; is the Church expecting this? No, but Israel is.

 - For the Church:
 - ⇒ **Philippians 3:20~21**; ' For our citizenship is in heaven '.
 - ⇒ **Colossians 3:1~4**; ' Set your mind on things above. '
- God formed Israel for an eternal purpose and Israel may be disciplined as a nation, as it is being, but it will never be rejected. The purposes of God's call for Israel are eternal and will be fulfilled.
- Israel is a rebellious child in discipline. God is dealing with Israel as one deals with a child. When your child needs discipline, do you kill them and bury them? No, you discipline it out of love for it; that's what's happening to Israel.
- God continues His plan and will fulfill all the covenants. In the millennium, the Abrahamic covenant that we studied will be completely fulfilled. This understanding of Israel and the Church is key to biblical understanding.
- We will then see how God will continue to form the nation of Israel and how Abraham's descendants will follow.