



A Never Changing Promise

Genesis 17

Pastor John Sloan

Introduction: Throughout time and history, God has spoken. And He still speaks. It is by the power of His word that God upholds the universe (Hebrews 1:3), and it's by God's commands that rain pelts the earth and the wind changes direction (Psalm 147:15-18). In other words, the Lord's hidden, unheard word is revealed and discerned in His doings in providence. *But when God engages humanity*, He does so in a unique and visible way: He makes and keeps covenants, never-changing promises to His people.

01.

02.

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THE UNBURDENED HEART

[FORGIVENESS]

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & DISCOVERY

1. How would you define a covenant?
2. Circumcision is the sign or mark of the Abrahamic covenant. What is the point of this gruesome act? What significance does it have for us?
3. How does this passage ultimately point us to Jesus Christ?
4. What are areas in your life that you are tempted to doubt God's promises? How does God's character assure us that He can be trusted?
5. How does this exchange between Abraham and God reiterate the importance of obedience?

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1. Covenant: A formal and binding agreement, declaring benefits to be given by one party to another, with or without conditions attached.
2. "This is the greatest of all divine benefits." - *Gordon Wenham*
3. **01. If God is your God, you belong to Him, and He will work for you and in you with power, mercy and faithfulness."**
4. "Let no man's heart fail because of him. ... Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God" (1 Sam. 17).
5. "It was the extension of this rite to infants that characterized as different the role of circumcision in Israel. If infants are to be circumcised, the essence of circumcision must be what God is saying to them, for they can say nothing to him." - *Joyce Baldwin*
6. "How then was [righteousness] counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised" (Rom. 4:10).
7. "And I will put my Spirit within you, **and cause you** to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules" (Ez. 36:27).
8. "Whoever does not **obey** the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him" (Jn. 3:36).
9. "And being made perfect, [Christ] became the source of eternal salvation to all who **obey** him" (Heb. 5:9).
10. **02. If we have been acted upon by God's Spirit—if we have been made alive spiritually—there will be evidence: a pattern of obedience in our lives.**
11. "Obedience is the necessary outcome of truly trusting in God's promises, and so obedience is made a condition of inheriting God's promises which are granted by grace and through faith. The Covenant of Abraham and the New Covenant under which we live today are one covenant of grace, because in both gracious promises are made to sinners who receive them through faith—a faith which banks so completely on the wisdom and power and love of God that it inevitably obeys his commands."
12. "Not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring. ... It is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring" (Rom. 9:6-8).
13. **03. The promises made by God to Abraham belong to all who are, by faith, in Christ Jesus.**

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