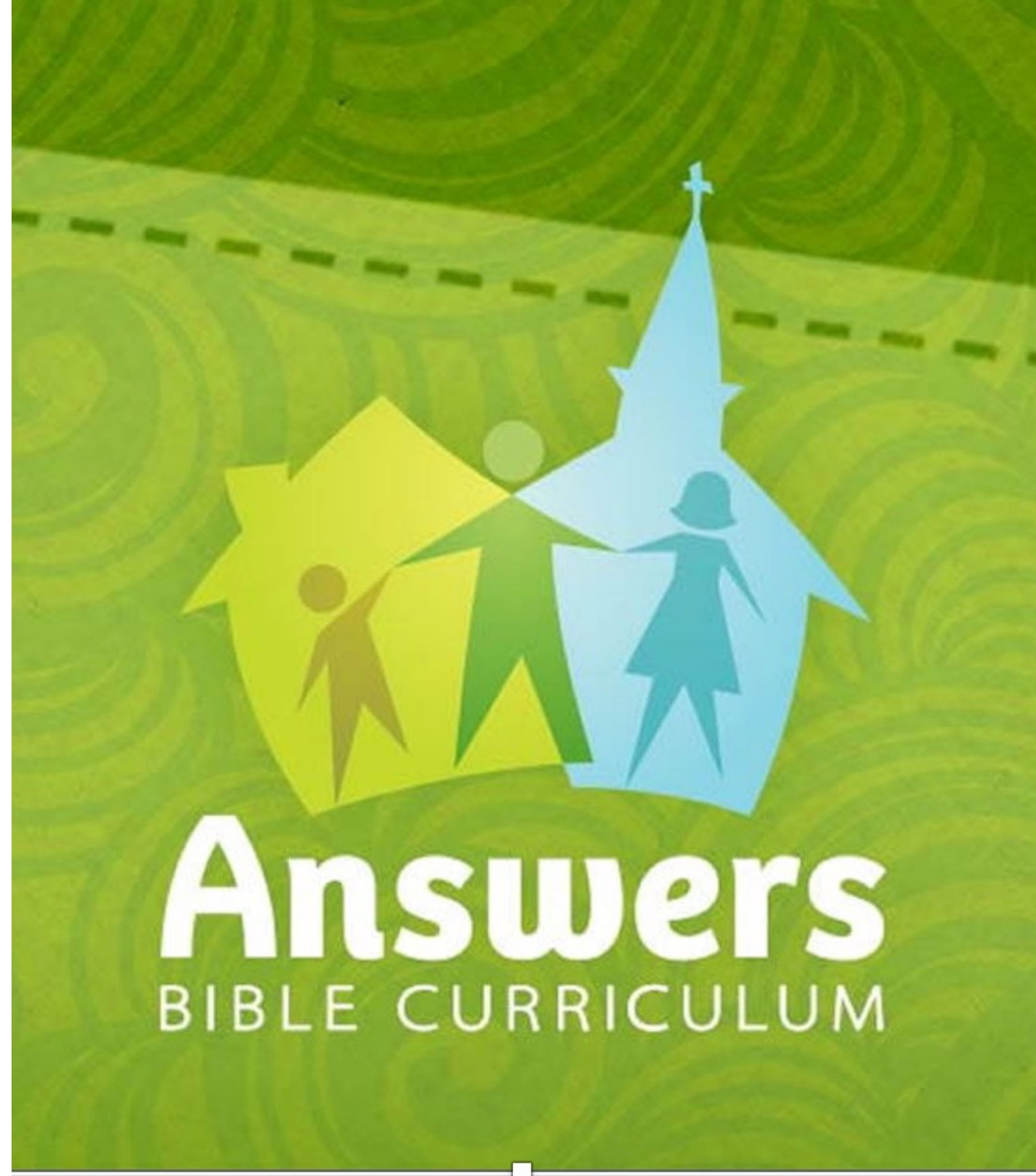
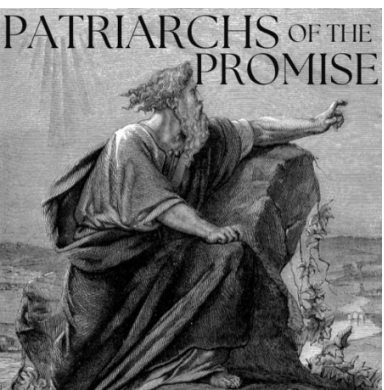


Lesson 4: God's Covenant with Abram

February 2, 2025



“And Yahweh said to Abram, “Go forth from your land,
And from your kin
And from your father’s house,
To the land which I will show you;
And I will make you a great nation,
And I will bless you,
And make your name great;
And so you shall be a blessing;”
(Genesis 12:1-2, LSB)

“After these things the word of Yahweh came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great.””
(Genesis 15:1, LSB)

Lesson Outline

- Patriarchy and God's Design
- Scriptural and Historical Background
- Observation
- Interpretation / Correlation
- Application

Patriarchy and God's Design

““And He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so Abraham was the father of Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac was the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve **patriarchs**. “And the **patriarchs**, becoming jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt. Yet God was with him,”

(Acts 7:8-9, LSB)

- This series covers the foundational lives of these men.
- These men are ‘flawed but faithful’, providing to us both positive and negative example

Patriarchy and God's Design

- Patriarchy Dictionary definition 1: *a form of social organization in which the father is the supreme authority in the family, clan, or tribe and descent is reckoned in the male line, with the children belonging to the father's clan or tribe*
- Definition 2: *a social system in which power is held by men, through cultural norms and customs that favor men and withhold opportunity from women.*

Neither is a biblical definition: only God is the supreme authority, creating men and women in His image (Genesis 1:27), equal in value and equally accountable to Him.

Patriarchy and God's Design

““If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!”

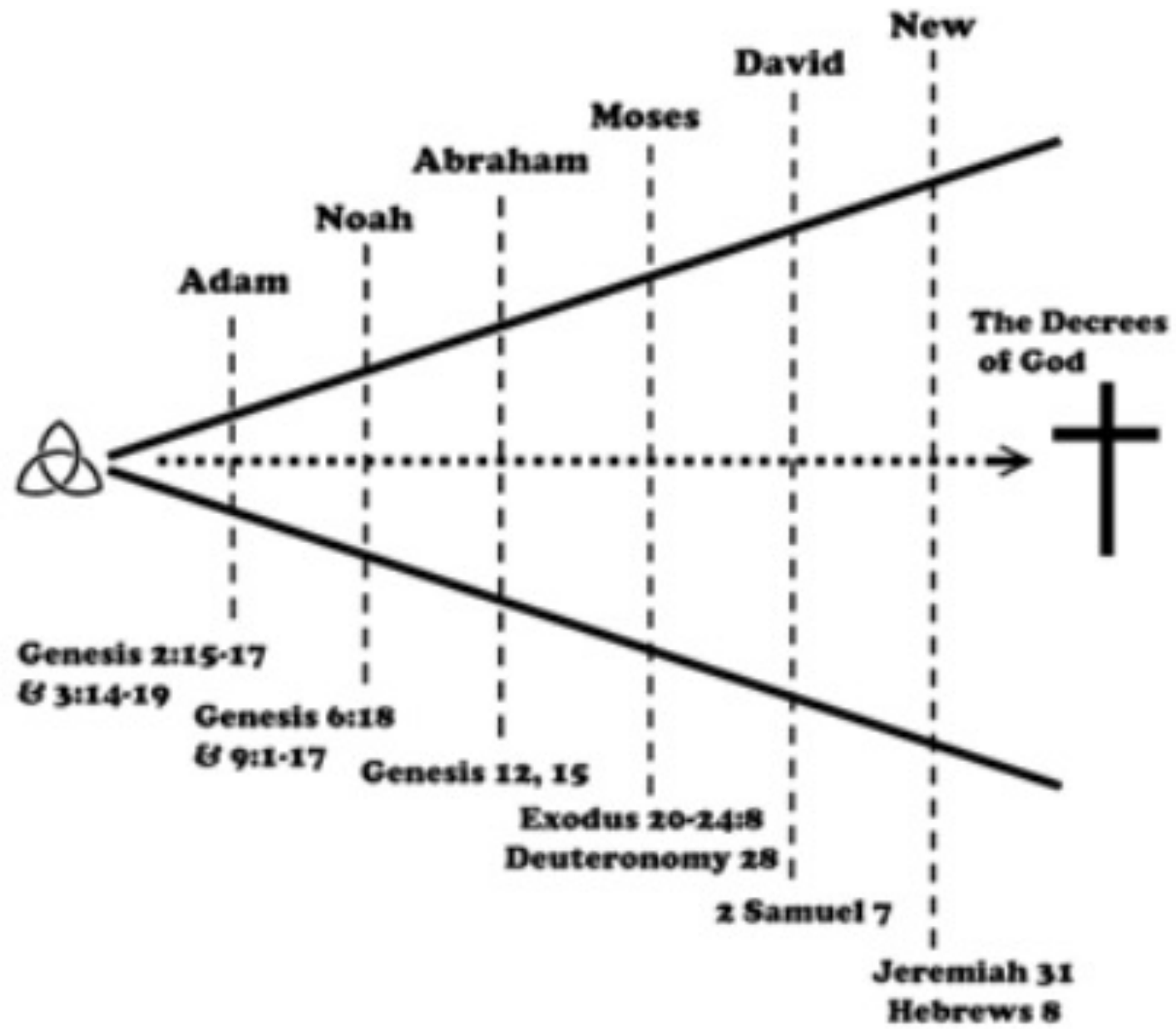
(Matthew 7:11, LSB)

The biblical word or concept simply refers to the founder or head of the household, a divine order which is to reflect the perfect Fatherhood of God.

Covenants

COVENANT (בְּרִית, berith; διαθήκη, diathēkē). A sacred kinship bond between two parties, ratified by swearing an oath. Covenant making was a widespread custom throughout the ancient Near East and Graeco-Roman culture, serving as a means to forge sociopolitical bonds between individuals or groups. God's covenants are prominent in every period of salvation history. Divine covenants reveal the saving plan of God for establishing communion with Israel and the nations, ultimately fulfilled by the death and resurrection of Christ. (Lexham Bible Dictionary)

Overview of Covenants



Observation: Genesis 15

God Promises Abram a Son and Many Descendants

- How did Abram hear from God?
In a vision
- How did God identify Himself?
As a Shield and a Rewarder (see also Hebrews 11:6)
- What was Abraham's response to God's appearance?
Abram reminded God that he did not yet have an heir.
- Who did the Lord tell Abram his heir would be?
His very own son, not his legal heir Eliezer.

Observation: Genesis 15

- How many offspring would Abram have?
As many as the stars, v.5
- Where did Abram's righteousness come from according to v.6?
God credited him with righteousness because he believed God.
- What figures, symbols, or practices do we need to understand or interpret from this passage?
Understanding the dividing of the animals and what the fire pot and torch represent will be important in understanding the passage.

At the time of Abram, a covenant was much more dramatic than a simple handshake. It was a sacred sign. It seems strange that God would request a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon after Abram questioned him about the land he was to inherit (Genesis 15:7–9). But this was the requirement of some ancient covenants. A promise between two individuals sometimes involved cutting animals in half and placing them on either side of a pathway. The pledging parties would walk between the freshly killed animals as a sign of the curse they were willing to accept if they reneged on their agreement—may they, too, be cut limb from limb just as these animals had been (see Jeremiah 34:18–20).

(AIG Study Guide)

Observation: Genesis 15

- What attributes of God are on display here?

Independence: he doesn't need people, but uses them to fulfill His purposes

Sovereign Will: God chose unremarkable Abram

- What was required of Abram in this contract?

Nothing. It was unilateral, fulfilled by God when Abram was asleep.

Observation: Genesis 15

- What event is foreshadowed in vv. 12-16?

The bondage of the Israelites in Egypt for 400 years before they took possession of the land of Canaan. See Exodus 12:40, Acts 7:6-7.

Note the forbearance of God before the conquest of Canaan, v.16.

Observation: Genesis 16

Abram's Impatience

- How Long had Abram been in Canaan?
10 years (v.3)
- How old were Abram and Sarai at this point?
85, 75. Abram left Haran at 75 (12:4) and Sarai was 10 years younger (17:17)
- What was Sarai's proposition for providing Abram a child?
v.2, 'go into my servant woman', a common practice of the day, not God's design for marriage.

Observation: Genesis 16

- How did Abram respond?
He 'listened to the voice of his wife', agreeing.
- Did Sarai's plan succeed?
A child was conceived, but Sarai did not truly obtain a child (v.2).
- What happened to the relationship between the two women after conception?
'...her (Sarai) mistress became contemptible in her sight.'
(v.4) and vice-versa (v.5)

Observation: Genesis 16

- Whom did Sarai blame for the situation?

‘May the violence done to me be upon you..’ (v.5). Even though it was her idea, she blamed Abram as the head of the household.

- How did Abram respond?

Abram deferred to the wishes of his wife: ‘do to her what is good in your sight’ (v.6)

Observation: Genesis 16

- What names / attributes of God do we learn in this passage?

El Roi: 'You are the God who sees' (v.13)

Beer Lahai Roi: 'Well of the Living One Who sees me' (v.14)

God sees and has compassion on the afflicted.

- What did the Son communicate to Hagar?

She should return and submit to Sarai (v.9)

He would multiply her descendants (vv.10-11)

Observation: Genesis 16

- How would you contrast God's behavior and man's in this narrative?

God: Promise-making

Man: Unbelief, blame shifting

Interpretation / Correlation

- What action had Abram previously taken that demonstrated his lack of trust in God's promise of an heir? (Genesis 12:10–13)

He lied to Pharaoh about Sarai being his wife, fearing he would be killed. Genesis 22, Hebrews 11:19 show us that Abram's faith would grow in this area.

- What part of God's created order did Abram violate in trying to bring an heir into the world through Hagar?

Marriage between 1 man and 1 woman (2:23-24), choosing to follow culturally accepted practices.

Interpretation / Correlation

- Abram allowed Sarai to do whatever she wanted after Hagar conceived. What consequence might have happened had God not intervened and told Hagar to return?

The son he believed was the promised heir may have been lost in Egypt without God's intervention.

- How would you explain how Abram went wrong in not waiting for God's timing?

Abram and Sarai sought to bring about God's plan in their own timing and by their own methods rather than waiting on God's timing and trusting him to bring about these promises.

Application

- What happens when you take matters into your own hands?
- What truth from the Scriptures we looked at today has helped you see God's grace in the account of Abram?
- How does knowing that God is unchanging and absolutely faithful give you peace and assurance of your salvation (if you have trusted in Christ's work)?

Application

- What does it mean to “wait on God” and his timing? Why is this so challenging at a practical level?
- In what areas of your life do you find it hard to wait on God’s timing?
- How do we maintain hope in the midst of circumstances where God seems to have forgotten us?