

The Covenant

by Bill Randles

The sermon explores the significance of Abram's encounter with God in Genesis 15, and how it represents the promise of the seed and the land, which is a spiritual identity that includes all who believe in Jesus Christ.

Duration: 44:11

Scripture: Genesis 12:1, Genesis 15:1-2, Genesis 15:4-6, Genesis 15:8-10, Genesis 15:17, Isaiah 55:6, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Covenant"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the horror of great darkness and the significance of death in bringing about righteousness and everlasting life. He connects this concept to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the giving of the law to Moses. The preacher also mentions the quartet consisting of the U.S., the European Union, Russia, and the U.N., and their goal to solve the conflict between Israel and the Muslims. He concludes by referencing the story of Abram and the vultures, emphasizing the importance of death in the possession of the land and the fulfillment of God's promises.

Transcript

You know, we need to really do something about our parking lot. Sorry about that. Amen, amen, amen.

Praise the Lord. Yeah, seriously, there's people blocked in. So if the people know that you're blocking someone in would be sensitive to that.

We'd really appreciate it. This spring, I mean, we have to recover our parking lot and then line it. And may God give us the means also to expand it.

I suppose it's a good problem. Praise the Lord. First, we've got to get this mountain of snow, this glacier off it.

All right. Praise the Lord. Good old Iowa.

I'm going to read the whole chapter of 15 and then talk about it here. After these things, the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord God, what will you give me, seeing I am childless? And the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus.

And Abraham said, Behold, to me you have given no seed. And lo, one born in my house is my heir. And behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be your heir, but he that shall come forth out of your own bowels shall be your heir.

And he brought him forth abroad and said, Lord. And he said, Look now toward heaven and tell the stars if you be able to number them. And he said unto them, So shall thy seed be.

And he believed in the Lord and he counted it to him for righteousness. That little verse right there, about two-thirds of the New Testament is based on that right there. It's huge.

Abram believed in the Lord and he counted it to him for righteousness. And he said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees to give thee this land to inherit it. And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? And he said unto him, Take me a heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle dove, and a young pigeon.

And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another, but the birds divided he not. And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away. These are vultures.

And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram. And lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him. And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years.

And also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge, and afterwards shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace, thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come here again, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

It came to pass that when the sun went down and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp that passed between these pieces. In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates. The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephians, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Gergesites, and the Jebusites.

He said, I give them all to you and your seed. Well, first of all, let me just reiterate something I think I said last week. What is the meaning of Abram and what's the significance of Abram anyway? Abram's a big deal.

Abram's a big deal in the world today. Even in the secular world, Abram's a huge deal. You've got the Jews, you've got the Moslems, you've got the Christian world, all laying claim to Abram.

He's huge. Huge figure. And I asked the Lord one time, what's the meaning? What is the bigness of Abram? What's it all about? And the Lord pointed out to me, showed me that you've got to understand Abram in the context of Genesis where God put him.

See, the last thing before Abram is the Tower of Babel. It was the last time all the nations of the world spoke the same language. All the nations of the world were one.

All the nations of the world embarked on this worldwide project, this globalism, you see, that was actually a total and outright apostasy and rejection of the true and living God. At that time they knew who God was

and they rejected Him as a whole world. So, then it tells the story of Abram.

But nobody. They say, let us make a name for ourselves and God says, I'll make your name great. It's God's answer to the Tower of Babel is the meaning of Abram.

That's why the first 11 chapters of the Bible cover 3,000 years of the book of Genesis and the rest of Genesis covers about 300 years. Focus, and there's a lot of chapters in Genesis. From then on, God is not going to deal with the nations directly, okay? Only indirectly through a brand new nation that He makes from scratch.

Out of Abram. See, when God wants to make a brand new nation, He doesn't take a 20-year-old couple of virile kids that are full of fertility and say, now there's someone I can work with. When God wants to make a new nation, He takes a barren, dried up old grandpa, who's not a grandpa because he has no children, and a woman long past childbearing age.

He says, now there's someone I can work with. He's going to make a brand new nation. From now on out, the Lord will not deal directly with the nations of the world as He did up until the Tower of Babel.

He will deal indirectly through the new nation that He's going to make through Abram. It's not just Israel. It's deeper.

Abram believed God and it was encountered unto him for righteousness. The new nation is physical. Yes, there is Israel.

The new nation even involves the Arabs, the sons of Ishmael. They are the seed of Abram, too. But the new nation has a spiritual identity.

All who believe in the seed that God promised in Genesis 3, all who believe the promise of Jesus Christ, that is the new nation that God will deal with the whole world through. Now, notice the world hasn't changed much. I think like three-fourths of the time the U.N. spends its time literally making resolutions against Israel.

They don't like the new nation that God made. And they want to do their own thing. Well, we go to Genesis 15.

Now let me walk you through this very important chapter of the Bible. First thing I want to say is that it's after these things, okay? And so we talked last week about Abram and his encounter with two figures, the king of Sodom and a figure named Melchizedek. And I told you last week, I really believe Melchizedek is Jesus.

Because Jesus didn't start in Bethlehem. Jesus is forever. Jesus is God.

And Abram's coming back from rescuing Lot and defeating the king of Babylon and his confederacy. And on the way back alongside of the road are two figures, king of Sodom and Melchizedek. The first thing the king of Sodom says to him is, Hey, give me the souls that you rescued and I'll give you the spoils.

But Melchizedek doesn't say give me anything. As a matter of fact, Melchizedek offers something that we just had this morning. He gives him bread and wine.

What is it? It's the devil and Jesus. And Abram has to choose. The devil says, I'll make you rich.

Don't worry about the souls. I'll give you the spoil, the plunder. And Jesus gives him bread and wine.

Now, to certain types of people it's a no-brainer. Definitely go with the king of Sodom. But the seed of Abraham, the sons of Abraham, they could see the unseen.

Sodom's not going to be around for very long. Sodom's doomed. This world is doomed.

You know that? This world is under God's judgment. This world is not going to become a better place. God's attitude toward it is uncompromising.

This is the world under wrath. The king of Sodom won't be around very long. Neither will anyone that follows him.

But Melchizedek gives him bread and wine. And you know the story. Abram says, I don't even want so much as a shoestring from you to the king of Sodom.

I don't want anything from you. I don't want you to say that you're the one that made me rich. I believe in God.

And Melchizedek blessed Abram. It was after this encounter with Jesus, this choosing of Jesus over the world, that this very pivotal chapter happens in Genesis. After these things, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram, I'm thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.

And Abram said, Lord God, what will you give me, seeing I go childless and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? The first thing I want to say about this is that in this chapter, so many times as Genesis does, the first mention of such things. This is the first time in the whole Bible where anyone has a vision. This is the first time where we're told a dialogue between a man and God.

This is the first time in the whole Bible where it says, The word of the Lord came to Abram. Now the word of the Lord is Jesus. It's the first time out of 365 times God says, Fear not.

By the way, why do you think God would say 365 times in the Bible, Fear not? Every day, that's right. Each day has enough evil of its own. Amen? It's new language for a new covenant.

This is the first time the word imputed is used. God put to Abram's account that he was righteous. The first time that was ever said.

But Abram's got a concern in verse 2. And he's, you know, God can handle our concerns. You're supposed to talk to God with your concerns. And the concern is that I don't have a child.

I'm still childless. Yes, you made these promises, but I still don't have a child. And it's not just a selfish concern.

It's not just that he didn't want to go through life without a child. He actually believed the promise where the seed of the woman that would crush the serpent's head. He believed in what God said.

Through you, every family on the face of the earth is going to be blessed. He believed that. And so we say, Lord, when's this going to happen? Because he said that he is going to have to leave his inheritance to the chief steward of his house, Eliezer of Damascus.

It says he was born in my house, verse 3. Abram said, Behold, to me you've given no seed, and lo, one born in my house is my heir. I'm going to have to leave everything to my chief steward. When it says born in your house, it doesn't mean that he was physically born in his house.

That means that Abram's steward and Abram's servants, like in the last chapter, when they put an army up against the kings of Babylon, it says 318 servants born in his house. That means these were servants that he had adopted as sons. One born in my house will be my heir.

And behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This will not be your heir, but he that will come forth out of your own bowels shall be your heir. It's going to come out of you, Abram, your seed. And he brought him forth abroad and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars if you be able to number them.

And he said unto them, So shall your seed be. Now every time Abram advances with God, the promise expands. See, earlier he had said, Look at the sand.

Can you count sand? Your seed will be as the sand. Now he says, Look at the stars. Can you count stars? Your seed will be like the stars.

It's higher. It's part of the seed of Abram that's like the sand. A lot of the Arab nations, Muslim nations, the seed of Abram.

You can't count them. There's a lot of them. The Jewish people, even the ones that don't believe in Jesus, the seed of Abram.

But the spiritual seed of Abram are like stars. Daniel said, Those that lead many to righteousness will shine like the stars forever. And it's in verse 6, it's so pivotal.

Abram believed in the Lord. And he counted it to him for righteousness. Abram let the word of God calm his soul.

And because of that, God put that on his account as though he had never sinned. That's what this verse means. Salvation is not going to be by works.

It's not going to be by human goodness. The salvation is going to be by anyone that puts their faith and trust in the promise of Jesus Christ. God will treat them as though they've never sinned.

This is a huge, huge thing. That verse is quoted three times in the New Testament. It's a basis for the book of Romans.

It's a basis for the book of Galatians. It's a basis for the book of Hebrews. Abram believed God, and it was put to his account that he was righteous.

This is huge. In other words, God would treat him, and God would be able to treat him as though he'd never sinned. Well, then the next section, though, he has another concern, and that is the land.

It's about the seed and about the land. There's some connection between the two. Even to the end of time.

I told you Genesis is like Revelation. As it was in the beginning, so shall it be at the end. At the end, there's a huge concern worldwide about the land.

We're reading of Israel being shelled from Gaza, and Gaza being invaded by Israel. Prophets say that a fire will break out on the walls of Gaza. Something terrible will happen there, and then into Damascus, and the surrounding region, and sooner or later, it will engulf the whole world.

These rumblings you see, this is the ominous foretaste of what's coming to the whole world. It's not going to go away. It's not going to be solved.

Bush and Rice won't be able to solve it. Putin won't be able to solve it. The European Union won't be able to solve it.

This is a deep and ancient controversy that goes all the way to the end. What about the land? The Lord says in verse 7, He said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of the Ur of the Chaldees to give thee this land to inherit it. Almost sounds like the preamble to the Ten Commandments.

I am the Lord thy God that brought thee out of the land of Egypt. Remember that Moses wrote this book. And the first people to hear this book were the children of Israel that experienced that very thing.

And they see through this account that what happened to Abram individually happens to them as a whole nation. I am the Lord thy God that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees. But remember, Abram wasn't a slave in Ur of the Chaldees.

Ur of the Chaldees was like the ultimate worldly place, the city of man, the most advanced civilization of the day. So what does he mean when he says, I am the Lord thy God that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees? I am the one that showed you that the city of man is inadequate. I am the one that made you hunger for a city built not with human hands.

I am the one that made you long for heaven. I am the one that broke your attraction and affection for this city of man. I am the one that stirred up these holy longings in you and made you into a pilgrim.

And he said, Lord God, how shall I know that I'll inherit the land? And this is where it gets really interesting. He said unto him, take me a heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle dove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these and divided them in the midst and laid each piece one against another, but the birds divided he not.

It's a very bloody story. Take these animals, which represent the whole of the sacrificial system. All of the animals are sacrificed here, five of them.

A heifer or an ox, three years old. A goat, three years old. And a ram, three years old.

And a turtle dove and a pigeon. And he says, hack them down the center. Cut them in half.

Can you imagine how much effort it would take with the tools they had in those days? Take a heifer and cut it right down the spine in half. Can you imagine the blood and the gore and the mess? And you take one side and put it down on one side, and then you take another side of the ox and put it down on the other, and then you do the same with the goat. You take a goat and you hew it and hack it and saw it, and split it right down the middle and put it on two sides, and then you do the same with the ram.

You hew it and hack it and saw it and put it on the other side, but with the two birds, you don't hew and hack and saw. You just put one on each side. Bloody business, right? He asked me, how do I know that I'm going to inherit the land? How do I know that I'm going to have a son? How do I know how serious this

is? And God tells him to do this sacrificial rite.

Bloody, messy, stinky, smelly, death everywhere. In fact, so much death that the vultures came in. The fowls came on the carcasses, and Abram drove them away.

And it actually gets downright dark and scary. The sun was going down. A deep sleep fell on Abram.

And lo, a horror of great darkness. What's the meaning of it? All he wants is assurance from the Lord. What's this all about? Well, every sacrifice and offering in the Bible is a type of Jesus Christ.

The ox, that's Jesus. Is Jesus not like an ox? Did not the strong one bear the burden for we, the weak ones? Anybody here? The goat? What do we think of when we think of a goat? I think of blame. We get the word scapegoat from the offering system of the Bible, from the book of Leviticus.

The goat gets the blame. He will take the blame. Amen? Did we not celebrate that in the Lord's Supper this morning? Heal them down the middle.

Put one on each side. The ram? It's a sheep. The lamb? Three years old.

They got an age. Three years old. Make sure it's a three-year-old.

Did not Jesus serve for three years before he laid down his life? And then the birds? Don't split the birds, and there's no age on the birds. Why? There's this sense in which Jesus Christ is like these land-based animals. He's man.

But there's another sense in which you couldn't split him. He's God. Hearken unto the Word of God.

Jesus is God and man at one and the same time. There's a sense in which he's like an ox. He's like a lamb.

He's like a goat. And you split him down. He had an age at the prime of his life, at 33 years, under Pontius Pilate.

He was crucified. Amen? And he's cut in the middle. But there's another sense in which he's... You know, the birds fly.

They're not land-based. He's heavenly. He's the Lord from heaven.

Jesus is God. It doesn't say the name of the birds or the age of the birds because there is no age in that sense. Is Jesus 33 years old? Are you kidding? His going forth has been from of old.

He's eternal. Amen? And he makes a bloody pathway of death. And then the story says a long day of waiting.

He waits for something. He doesn't even quite know what. But he waits all day long.

But he's not just waiting because he has to shoo off the vultures that would eat away at this bloody pathway and devour it. It's already scary. Every time I see the vultures or the black birds or everything like that.

Ominous. And he's waiting for a long time. And in a way, it's almost like that's Israel's future history because Abram's a prophet.

And they set out the sacrificial system and they wait and they wait and they wait. But the vultures, the nations, the demons, they come against this. You know, they come against this bloody pathway.

They come against this offering. They come against this holy message. They come against these split animals.

They come against the body and blood and the whole meaning of it. And so they have this ministry in Israel for many years of shooing away vultures, keeping the Word and keeping the worship intact while they wait. What are they waiting for? Remember Abram's questions.

Will I ever have the seed? Will the seed come? It's not just a matter of will I have children to enjoy. It's a bigger picture. Abram believed in the promise that some seed would come to crush the serpent's head and bless every family in the face of the earth.

He's going, I'm getting older. You said it would come to me. Will he ever come? Israel said, will he ever come? Down through the centuries.

They got the hostile world and they lay the sacrifice out. In a sense, they're almost like a sacrifice. And they lay everything out there and all they could do was wait for God.

And the vultures come, not without opposition. They wait. And when the sun was going down, it began to get dark.

And when it began to get dark, a deep sleep came upon Abram. And lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him. Well, this word for deep sleep is the same word that Genesis used when it says that God put Adam into a deep sleep that he might bring forth his bride out of his side.

It's a deep sleep. The sun goes down and Abram gets sleepy and is rendered unable to fend off the vultures any further. You know what, that's going to happen at the end of the world.

The sun's going down. You know, from the beginning of Israel, their armies were victorious and championed every time. Unbelievable odds would come against them in 48, in 56, in 67, the Six-Day War.

Staggering and unbelievable that through politicians and through the U.N. and the U.S. and many other things, they have bought into this new idea of appeasement. And they're getting weakened. In 73, they were almost wiped out.

It wasn't the same in 67 when they just came in and just flummoxed the Arab world. In 73, they were almost wiped out. In Gaza and southern Lebanon and their withdrawals, the Arabs take great courage.

A lot of our problems today with Muslims is because the Muslims feel like they're on the edge. They're winning. They can't shoot these vultures away as much anymore.

The vultures are actually circling. You know, in world politics, there's something called the Quartet. How many have ever heard of the Quartet? What is the Quartet? The Quartet consists of four entities, the U.S., the European Union, Russia, and the U.N. In fact, that doesn't even leave anyone out.

The U.N. is everybody. Why would you even have them? But they're all entities together. And the whole goal and stated reason for the Quartet is to solve this problem of Israel and the offense that they are to the Muslims, our oil masters.

What am I saying? Vultures are gathering. They're really circling. Someone said to Jesus about the end of the world, you know.

What do we look for? He says, where you see the vultures gathering, that's the corpse. Well, Abram prophesied this a long time ago. It says the horror of great darkness fell upon him.

Another thing this reminds me of is Jesus' Gethsemane experience, horror, terror. Why? It's connected with the seed and the possession of the land. It's impossible without death.

You see what I'm saying? You've got the bloody scene, the stinky, smelly, bloody scene there, the bloody pathway. The horror of great darkness, the vultures. What's it going to take for the seed to come? What's it going to take for righteousness to prevail? What's it going to take to reverse the curse and bring everlasting life to the world? Death.

We just celebrated this morning. The meal that we celebrated, we celebrated the death of Jesus Christ, the one who offered himself as a sacrifice. The wages of sin is death, but he gave himself for our wages.

And so, thus, that part of the horror, the terror of darkness, reminds me also of the giving of the law. A black cloud comes over the mountain. Moses says to the people three days earlier, Sanctify yourself, clean yourself up, wash your clothes, get yourself ready.

The Lord's coming down. And the people go, Yay, the Lord's coming down. Awesome.

We're going to have a revival. But when the Lord began to come down, a black cloud covered the mountain. Fear gripped the people.

Moses himself said, I exceedingly fear and shake. His knees are knocking together. And the voice of the Lord is coming closer and closer and closer and closer.

And the people run down the road. The rabbis say they ran eight miles down the road to get away from the awesome and terrible presence of the Lord. The solemnity and majesty of God.

Terror of darkness. Isn't God great? Isn't God wonderful? Isn't God happy? God is great. God is awesome.

God is wonderful. But there's a horrible solemnity about it all. He's the Holy God.

When the Holy God comes down into the scene of blood, the scene of death, the scene of the sacrifice, horror takes hold of Abram, just like horror took hold of Moses, just like horror took hold of Isaiah. Not to mention the horror that is involved in redeeming the world and starting it all over again and giving us a new creation and undoing the power and damage of sin. It's horrifying.

Even Jesus was horrified in the Garden of Gethsemane, sweating blood. And then another thing I see in this darkness and horror is the creation motif. The earth was without form and void and darkness covered the face of the earth.

Well, in Abraham, God's going to do a new creation. A brand new nation's going to be born and through that nation, someone's going to come that's going to bless every family on the face of the earth. And through His coming, you can actually be a part of the new creation to come.

Doesn't the Bible say, If any man be in Christ, lo, a new creation. You partake of the new creation. You know what my problem is? And your problem too, if you're born again.

I'm a child of the new creation, but I still live at the end of the old creation. I'm a man whose time hasn't come yet. I'm in the doorway of the tomb like Lazarus.

I'm still in the depth, but I'm right at the doorway getting ready to go into the life. A new creation is going to break out. A day of righteousness is going to come.

The Lord will come to judge the world in righteousness and then those that are righteous will shine like the stars. The righteousness will burst out on the day of the new creation. But we partake of it now.

We have the powers of the age to come. The Lord gives them a prophecy of dread and woe. Maybe this had to do with the horror too.

Verse 13, He said to Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and they shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years. Abram, here's what's going to happen to your seed. They're going to be afflicted.

They're going to be enslaved. They're going to suffer. And He even gives them a time, four hundred years.

Also that nation whom they will serve will I judge, and afterward they will come out with great substance. Well, there's the assurance of ultimate triumph. Sometimes my wife and I look at each other and say, Hey, you know what, we win.

We do win. We will win. It's affliction first though.

It's affliction even to the seed of Abram. It's affliction first. He says to Abram, Remember the question, How do I know there's going to be a seed? And how do I know whether I'm going to possess the earth, the land? And God has this elaborate ritual that He does.

That's the sign, the covenant sign. And then He says, He gives them a prophecy. By the way, the first heirs of Genesis, they just come out of that four hundred years.

And they just saw verse fourteen fulfilled. That nation whom they will serve will I judge, and afterward they will come out with great substance. They just read a few chapters earlier how Abram got stuck in Egypt.

How Abram got in bondage, and how Abram came out with great substance. He says, You'll go to your fathers in peace. You'll be buried in the good old age.

But in the fourth generation they shall come here again. Now here's an interesting phrase. For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

Amorites are the Canaanites that lived in the land. Let me tell you, the archeologists are always digging in Israel. And they find these relics from the Amorites.

And they're a sex saturated and obsessed society. They find the bones of babies. You can tell just by the bones that they have venereal diseases.

What's God saying there? The cup isn't quite full yet. Let me give you a doctrine on that. Every nation and every person has a cup of iniquity.

And it fills up slowly, but surely. And God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. And so He waits, and He deals, and He sends people like Abram into these bad places.

And He shows the witness, and He shows them people like Joseph. I mean, He deals with people. They don't turn.

That cup just keeps getting fuller and fuller and fuller and fuller. I think of this when I think of our nation, and I tremble. Because when it gets to the point where there's what's called reprobation, where there is no turning back, only resistance to good, you know, gets to the point where good is actually seen as evil, and evil is good.

When you can't distinguish anymore between right and wrong, the cup is full. The cup is full. What happened to the Canaanites is going to be what happens to the whole world.

The cup will be full. It says, Fill up the cup of your sins, Jesus said to His generation. What happened to His generation is what happened to the Amorites, is what happened to the Romans, what happened to the Egyptians, and what will happen to the whole world.

The cup gets full. But He says, I can't let you possess the land now. I can't let your seed possess the land now.

The cup of the Amorites isn't full yet. See, God even loves them and is giving them a chance to repent. What does the book of Proverbs say? He that stiffens his neck after much reproof will suddenly be broken and without any remedy.

Blow off the church. Blow off your parents. Don't listen to the Bible.

And don't listen to a preacher. And don't let no church tell you what to do. Keep blowing it off.

Soon you'll be broken and there'll be no remedy for you. There'll be no going back. No.

My message to you is seek the Lord while He can be found and call upon Him while He's near. Flee from the wrath to come, for it comes. Days of wrath are coming.

Days of judgment. So, then comes the manifestation of God, a surprising, amazing manifestation of God. Verse 17.

It came to pass that when the sun went down and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. The manifestation of God as a torch. And believe it or not, the word furnace is oven.

Torch in an oven. Ever thought about that? God came as a torch in an oven. And passed right through the pieces.

We talk about the passing through the pieces first. See, in the ancient world you had covenants. And our relationship with God is covenantal.

Okay. And this is the core of the covenant right here. And what is a covenant? Okay.

You make an agreement with someone stronger than you, greater than you. And basically the agreement always involved the shedding of blood. And they knew.

This is strange to us and for them, but they knew what they were doing. This happened all the time between kings and their vassals and everything like that. You take these animals and you cut them down the middle and you put them side by side and you make a bloody pathway and you walk up the middle with the one you're making covenant with.

What you're saying is a lot of things. Number one, you're saying, now we're one. It's almost like a marriage.

Marriage is a covenant. Now we're one. My assets are yours.

Your assets are mine. The blood is sealed. But there's also sanctions.

You're also saying, should I break this covenant? May God do to me what we did to these animals. Split down the middle. The other one says, should I break this covenant? May God do to me what we did to these animals.

So the man and the one he makes covenant with walk down the aisle. But notice who doesn't walk down the aisle in this one. Abraham.

Abraham doesn't walk down the aisle. God put him in a deep sleep. Who walked down the aisle then? God and Jesus.

The covenant with God is not between God and man because of course I'm going to break this covenant. I'm a faithless man. John says, I write these things to you that you sin not.

I'm even glad that's not all he said. If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father. Anybody here? Who is he? Jesus Christ, the righteous one.

What did he do? He's the propitiation for our sin. He was split in two. He was broken.

He was oppressed. He was afflicted. And he opened not his mouth.

He could have said, I'm innocent. But no. He opened not his mouth because he bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.

Is there any transgressors here today? But God as a lamp and God as an oven. You've got to picture this oven because it's not the way you think. It's not like a Sears or a Kenmore or something.

It's a little rounded clay bowl. And you don't put the, or it could be a pot with a chimney like those Mexican things you see on the porches. And you don't put anything in the oven that you're going to, you put what you're going to bake, use this for bread.

You put a bread patty on the oven and put coals in the oven. And then you move it toward the fire and it bakes the bread. So, God manifests as a torch in an oven.

A clay oven. Well, when did God become clay? In Jesus. God became a man.

What did he do? He's the bread of life. He went through the fire for us. Anybody here? He suffered the affliction.

And the torch, the true light of God. God himself would walk down the bloody path. God would make the covenant with himself.

The covenant meal we just had, the body and the blood, that's the covenant between God and Christ for us. That's the covenant that we only have a part in. We have a share.

We have a seat at the table. We didn't walk down the bloody path. We couldn't walk down the bloody path.

We couldn't survive. God himself walked down the bloody path for us. You see what I'm saying? God manifests as an oven, part of the Christian life.

Purging. You've got to go through the fire. God will take us through the fire of purging.

God will put us in the oven. God said that Egypt was like an oven that he put Israel in. They came out.

And the lamp? The lamp is for light. You could put it this way. You can't really see the true light unless you had an encounter with the oven.

You can't really see the true light unless you've had an encounter with the oven. Israel had a two-fold calling, and they still do. Affliction and witness to God.

The oven and the light. And then I'll close by bringing out one more point. Verse 18.

In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram. Literally cut a covenant with Abram, saying, Under thy seed have I given this land. Notice, the Lord cut the covenant with Abram, but who did he actually give it to? Not Abram.

The seed of Abram. And Paul makes a big point in Galatians of saying that word seed is in the singular. Okay.

Abram's going to have as many children as the sand of the sea and the stars of the sky. Abram's going to have a lot of seed, a lot of nations, but the covenant is between God and the seed. Singular.

The seed of Abram is Christ. The seed of Abram is Christ. Under thy seed have I given this land from the river of Egypt under the great river, the river Euphrates.

The last point I want to make is that every time God gives it, it expands. In Genesis 12, He says, Listen, come with me. I'll show you a land.

He takes him to Hebron. He takes him to Shechem. He takes him to Bethel.

The next time God says to Abram, Get up on this mountain. As far as you can see, it's yours. I've given it to you.

Now, He even puts boundaries on it. From the river in Egypt all the way to the Euphrates River. Let me tell you something.

Israel has never possessed the whole of the land that God gave them. The closest they ever came was under David. From Israel all the way to the Euphrates, it just keeps on expanding.

God said to Jesus, Ask of me, I'll give you the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Paul said, Abraham was made the heir of the world. Jesus said, The meat shall inherit the whole earth.

Father, breathe your breath of life on us and on our faith. And let us follow Father Abram. Even through the clouds, even through the gloom, even through the darkness, even through the fear, even through the bloody path of the cross, O Lord.

Even with the assurance of ultimate victory and triumph, O Lord God. Even if we have to shoo away some vultures while we wait for You out in the hot, dry, smelly scene, O Lord God. It's all part of following You.

It's all part of believing in You. It's all part of waiting for You. And we do wait for You, O Lord God.

Give us Your Word that we might speak it to those who are without. For I know the time of judgment draws near. O let people be saved.

Let them be born again, Lord. Let them be washed in the blood of the Lamb, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

God bless you.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/17/SID17246.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/bill-randles/the-covenant/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net