

Theme: God's promises stand secure in spite of the doubts and failings of those to whom they are made. They are secure (and, therefore we are secure in them) because they rest on His faithfulness – not ours. But to experience them you must believe them - and believe in Him!

Background: Looking at characters from Jesus' Family tree. Today?

Abraham – Father of God's chosen people,  
Israel – Who needed *and received* God's assurance.

Introduction: If we are to understand Abraham and his importance in relation to Jesus - we must understand the ancient (and not so ancient) practice of covenant making. How does God confirm a promise?

## I. Father Abraham

### A. God chooses

NOTE: God is the one who is sovereign over His creation – every part of it, every aspect, every creature. (Psalm 115:3)

- God chose Abraham for blessing (Genesis 12:1-3 & 7)
- God chooses those to whom that blessing would extend (Ephesians 1:4)

### B. Abraham believes

1. He accepted God's Word as true (Genesis 15:6)
2. He packed up and moved! (Galatians 3:11)

## II. God's Promise

### A. To Abraham -

1. Great name (Genesis 12:2; 15:5; 17:4-6)
2. Through his own son (Genesis 15:4; 17:19)
3. A land to call "home" (Genesis 12:7; 15:7; 17:8)
4. To be your God (Genesis 15:1; 17:7-8; Exodus 6:7)

### B. Through Abraham -

1. To bless the nations (Genesis 12:2-3)
2. The nations have been blessed
  - By His Word and Self-Revelation

## III. Blessed Assurance - For Abraham and Us

### A. "But Lord..." (Doubt)

1. God assures him
  - a) "I am your shield and reward"
  - b) "Look up Abram! Count the stars!"
2. Abraham believes (v.6) and doubts!

Application: How do we see and address our own "doubts"?

### B. God's unbreakable covenant

1. Involves two parties - commitments, binding obligations
  - a. Between equals OR
  - b. Between greater and lesser

NOTE: Such "Covenants" are still an important part of our society and life today.

2. Self-maledictory oaths
  - a. God swears on Himself - He is faithful!
    - No "if-then" statement in this oath

- He alone bears the responsibility for fulfillment
- To take possession of us (Deuteronomy 7:6)
- b. He guarantees the requirement of perfect obedience
- c. Abraham's participation?
  - Cut up the animals - prepare the agreement
  - He observes – does not participate
- 3. Covenant fulfillment
  - a. Jesus fulfills the covenant "conditions" (Titus 2:14)
    - Securing the "promised eternal inheritance" (Hebrews 9:15)
  - b. The proof of God's commitment?
    - Look to the cross!
  - c. In Christ we possess "all the promises of God" (2 Corinthians 1:18)
- 4. Covenant sign and participation!
  - a. For Abraham - Genesis 17 - the sign of circumcision!
    - God Himself is the guarantor of the sign
  - b. For Abraham's spiritual offspring
    - Jesus Christ is the guarantor of the sign
    - Luke 22:19-20
  - c. The signs and *seals* of the Lord's Supper
    - Sign of His death to deliver us from sin and death (Passover)
    - Seal (His *mark*) of His own possession
    - Seal of promises which we "possess"

NOTE: To take the sign and seal of the covenant - is to be bound to its terms. It is to declare yourself as belonging to Christ. It is the mark of one who *believes* that God's promise is true in every part and cannot fail in any part.

Like Abraham before you, set your doubts and fears before God. Count the stars if you can and look to Jesus who passed through death to bring God's promises to you. Bride of Christ!