

The Plan of Salvation is a Covenant.

By Nick Bibile

The plan of salvation is presented in a form of a covenant in the Bible. It means a mutual contract between two or more parties. It is often used of compacts between individuals, kings and rulers. There is a covenant that God the Father made with the Son; this is called the covenant of redemption. There is also a covenant that God made with his people, which is called the covenant of grace. Both are revealed in the scripture but they differ as to the parties, promises and conditions.

The Hebrew idiom for establishing a covenant is to cut a covenant. This is because the covenant is made by sacrifice.

Remember God told Abraham, 'to thy seed will I give this land,' and 'in thy seed shall all nations be blessed. But Abraham is getting old, his wife is getting old, both of them have come to the old age where they cannot have any children. So from human perspective Abraham is worried who is going to be the heir of his house, as God has not given him a child.

Ge 15:2 And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?

3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

Eliezer was a faithful steward of Abraham and he is a foreigner. Abraham is telling God; because I am childless maybe this foreigner Eliezer of Damascus will be the heir. But God answers Abraham;

Ge 15:4 And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

God confirmed Abraham by saying no, it is not going to be Eliezer of Damascus but one coming from your own body is going to be your

heir. Then God wanted to show Abraham what looks impossible is to the human eye is possible with God.

Ge 15:5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

Stars of the night are like the sand of the seashore, you cannot count them.

Genesis 13:16

I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted.

Abraham believed in the Lord and God imputed righteousness to Abraham, he became righteous in the sight of God. (Verse 6) Then God told Abraham;

Ge 15:7 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.

Then Abraham asks God;

Ge 15:8 And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?

This is a question not of unbelieving the word of God, saying I do not believe what you are saying, but telling God I believe and asking further confirmation of his faith in the promise. I believe God but remove my flesh, which is the hindrance so I can see. Abraham need knowledge, out of faith comes knowledge.

Now God shows this proof to Abraham by making a covenant. As I said previously, the Hebrew idiom for establishing a covenant is to cut a covenant. This is because the covenant is made by sacrifice.

Ge 15:9 And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.

When Abram brought these, God told him to cut them in two in the middle except the birds.

Ge 15:10 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.

Once you cut them there is one half on the left and the other on the right in the middle there is a passage. The one who made the covenant will pass through the passage, confirming his covenant, and if he breaks that covenant he will be cut right in the middle of his body like these animals. This is how they made a covenant in those days between rulers. It shows the seriousness of the covenant. There was a sacrifice in the covenant. If the person who makes the covenant breaks that covenant there will be punishment. The covenant breaker will be cut like the animals.

Jer 34:17 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbor: behold, I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the LORD, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine; and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.

18 And I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof,

19 The princes of Judah, and the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, and the priests, and all the people of the land, which passed between the parts of the calf;

20 I will even give them into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life: and their dead bodies shall be for meat unto the fowls of the heaven, and to the beasts of the earth.

Ge 15:11 And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

The sun was going down and Abram fell into a deep sleep and there was terrible darkness.

Ge 15:12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him.

Now God spoke to Abram by giving this prophecy.

Ge 15:13 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;

14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

15 And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.

16 But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

Israelites were in Egypt for 400 years but God redeemed them and judged the Egyptians.

Ge 15:17 And 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.

18 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.

God passed between the cut pieces of animals not as a pillar of fire but as a burning lamp. The passing of these between the pieces was the confirming of the covenant God now made with him. Who made the covenant here with Abram? God. God is telling Abram, believe me Abram, trust in me, out of your seed will come the heir and your descendents will be like the stars of the sky sands of the sea, numerous, and it not going to be Eliezer of Damascus but a son coming from your own loins will be the heir, you and your descendents will inherit this land. God confirmed with by a covenant as God himself passed between the cut animals as a smoking oven and a burning torch. God is really telling Abram, if I break this covenant I will be punished like this animals cut into pieces!

Last week we saw how God made a covenant with Adam and the penalty of breaking that covenant was death. We saw Adam represented the entire humanity, when Adam broke that covenant we

broke along with Adam and we are all born sinners. We deserve the punishment in breaking the covenant. Then we saw the second Adam the last Adam who represented his people came to seek and to save those who were lost, he took the punishment that was due to us, he was cut, crucified for our sins. Wow! The amazing grace of God!

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