

Women & More

Faithful Covenant God

Lesson 8: **October 22, 2015**—*God Is*

“Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father!
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not:
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.”

—Thomas O. Chisholm

Psalm 90:1-2 (Moses writes) “*Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. 2Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*” J. I. Packer in his book, *Knowing God*, gives the richest answer to the question: What is a Christian? He says that a Christian is “**one who has God as his Father.**”

Packer goes on to say about God being the Christian’s Father: “But cannot this be said of every man, Christian or not? Emphatically no! The idea that all men are children of God is not found in the Bible anywhere. The Old Testament shows God as the Father, not of all men, but of His own people, the seed of Abraham.” Galatians 3:26-29 describes how that is true of Christians: “***You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,*** 27*for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.* 28*There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.* 29***If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise***”—according to the covenant!

“The New Testament has a world vision, but it too shows God as the Father, not of all men, but of those who, **knowing** themselves to be sinners, put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as their divine sin-bearer and Master and so become Abraham’s spiritual seed,” said Packer. So the gift of being children of God becomes ours not through being born, but through being born again!

•John 1:12-13 “***Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God***—13*children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.*”

•Galatians 4:4-7 “***But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son born of a woman, born under law,*** 5*to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.* 6*Because you are sons,* God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, ‘*Abba, Father,*’ 7*So you are no longer a slave, but a son (daughter); and since you are a son (daughter), God has made you also an heir.*”

•1 John 3:1 “***How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!*** And that is what we are. ***The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.***”

“A little knowledge of God is worth more than a great deal of knowledge about him,” said Packer. “In knowing God—the more complex is the object, the more complex is the knowing of it.” God cuts covenant, and we are to keep covenant!—Psalm 103:17-18 *“But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD’S love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children’s children—18 with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts.”* In the Old Testament, God gave his people a covenant name by which to speak to him: Yahweh—meaning Jehovah, the LORD. Yahweh sounded like two breaths, and represented the reverent awe for God as His name could not be said aloud.

As we examine the hand of God delivering, preserving and faithfully cutting and keeping covenant with us, as he did with the saints of old, may it encourage us to know that he will continue it in every believer until he comes for us. So we trust God—the faithful covenant-making and -keeping God! But it is **not** a matter of trusting Him to do our bidding; what we desire, and what we ask of Him. Trusting is asking Him for forgiveness, wisdom, or healing, or restoration of a marriage or a friendship, provision of a job—asking Him, yes—but trusting that He will do the righteous thing!

Jesus Christ, the very beloved Son of God, trusted the Father when he prayed—sweating drops of blood in the Garden of Gethsemane—to be delivered from the horrible death in front of him. But Jesus added to his prayer, *“Not my will, but Your will be done”*—trusting that God knew what was best. God will do what is ultimately part of his wonderful and glorious plan from the beginning of time. He did it in Jesus’ life and death, and he will do it in ours. Because our Faithful Covenant God is purposeful, powerful, and planning!

► Scripture is Strategic! God’s Word is going somewhere from Genesis 1:1’s *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,”* to Revelation 22:21’s *“The grace of the Lord Jesus **be with God’s people.** Amen.”* God is absolutely, completely faithful in every way, every shape and every form. He is the Covenant—formal binding agreement—planning, producing, processing, and proclaiming Divine: God’s great plan through all of His covenants—keeping in mind that they are linked—was to bring about salvation. Acts 13:26 *“Brothers, children of Abraham, and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent.”*

And our faithfulness does not affect the faithfulness of God! The fully faithful, pact-making and -keeping God is ours to claim if we have trusted by faith his Son’s atoning gift of redemption for us. Someone has said: “Where God’s finger points, there God’s hand will make the way.”

C. I. Scofield outlines **eight great covenants** of Scripture “which condition human life and progressively unfold the divine redemption.” Peeled open in the first dozen chapters of Genesis are four of them: **Edenic** (Genesis 2:16), **Adamic** (Genesis 3:15), **Noahic** (Genesis 9:16) and **Abrahamic** (Genesis 12:2). The Mosaic, Palestinian and Davidic Covenants, related chiefly as adding detail or development, culminate with the New Covenant. God had already cut covenant with us, today, way back in Genesis. Examples:

◆The sign of the covenant God made with **Noah** is described in Genesis 9:12-17—a **covenant for all generations to come**. *“And God said, ‘This is the sign of the covenant I am making **between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come**: 13I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, ¹⁵I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. ¹⁶Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.’*

¹⁷“So God said to Noah, **‘This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth.’**”

◆And in Genesis 17:4-8 *“As for me (God speaking), this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations ⁵No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a **father of many nations**....”* When Abraham was ready to slay his son Isaac at God’s command, and the LORD provided a ram in the thicket, Abraham renamed the mountain Moriah: *“So Abraham called that place **The LORD Will Provide**. And to this day it is said, ‘On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.’”* God’s provision can still be found! And in Genesis 22:15-18, because Abraham did not withhold his son, his only son, God’s Covenant with Abraham was reiterated and expanded to include:

1. I will make you a great nation;
2. I will bless you;
3. I will make your name great;
4. I will bless those who bless you, and
5. I will curse him who curses you!

Earlier in Genesis 17:18-21 when God chose Isaac—renamed his son Jacob, **Israel**—over Ishmael, this began the 4,000 year hating spree: The descendents of Ishmael and Esau (including the sons of Keturah) practice religiously hating the descendents of Isaac and Jacob. Hal Lindsey, author of *The Everlasting HATRED, The Roots of JIHAD* writes: “Arabs feel ‘enmity’ toward Israel. The conflict has risen and subsided at various times since the destruction and dispersion of Israel in 70 A.D.

“It is as a consequence of the rebirth of the State of Israel that the Bible prophets predict the whole world will become involved.” Of the world’s more than 1.3 billion followers of Islam—10% are fundamentalists, whose goal is to replace the Judeo-Christian world order with an Islamic world order. Anti-Semitism, therefore, has been spread worldwide, and Lindsey reports that there is a malevolent spiritual force behind hatred of the Jew. ‘Jew’ is derived from **Judea** (their original geographical location).

God gave a Land-deed to Abraham and his descendents! And Scripture spells out 1) to whom, 2) borders, 3) conditions of ownership and 4) duration of its ownership. And God reconfirmed the title-deed to Abraham. *“In the fourth generation your descendents will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.”* The boundaries of Israel had extended from the River of Egypt to the great river, Euphrates, but they lost ground when they returned.

The strategic center of the world would shift back to the region where history began. And the United States has stood for Israel since its rebirth in 1948, but our attitude is changing, to our peril. All attacks on Israel will ultimately bring retribution from God. **When Gentiles attack Israel, they are attacking God’s chosen instruments of their own redemption.** Zechariah—1,600 years after God’s Covenant with Abraham, said: *“For he who touches you, touches the apple of his eye.”* Interestingly, in 1798 Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, while on his Palestinian Campaign, asked one of his generals, “Can you give me a proof that the Bible is the Word of God?” He answered, ‘Your Majesty—the Jew.’”

The Israelites were to:

1. receive, write and preserve the Word of God;
2. be the physical race through which Messiah would come;
3. spread the message of the true God and his salvation to the world, and
4. be an example, because the way God dealt with Israel as a nation teaches principles of how he deals with the individual who believes in him.

◆In 1 Kings 8:56, Solomon prayed for the people of God just before the dedication of the temple in Israel: *“Praise be to the LORD, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. **Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses.** 57May the LORD our God be with us as he was with our fathers; may he never leave us nor forsake us. 58May he turn our hearts to him, to walk in all his ways and to keep the commands, decrees and regulations he gave our fathers. 59And may these words of mine, which I have prayed before the LORD, be near to the LORD our God day and night, that he may uphold the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel according to each day’s need, 60so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God and that there is no other. 61But your hearts must be fully committed to the LORD our God, to live by his decrees and obey his commands, as at this time.”*

Sadly, three chapters later Scripture records that Solomon's foreign wives "led him astray," they "turned his heart after other gods," so in his old age Solomon's "heart turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice," 1 Kings 11:9.

In Jeremiah 33:19-22 "The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: ²⁰This is what the LORD says: **If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night no longer come at their appointed time, ²¹then my covenant with David my servant—and my covenant with the Levites who are priests ministering before me—can be broken, and David will no longer have a descendant to reign on his throne. (It isn't going to happen!—mine.) ²²I will make the descendants of David my servant and the Levites who minister before me as countless as the stars of the sky and as measureless as the sand on the seashore.**'"

The Hebrew word, **Barath**, means to **cut covenant**. God walked between the **animal (sacrifice) pieces: They had His Word and His oath**. O that the people of God had done everything that the LORD had said! During the Israelites 400 years in the land of Egypt:

1. They would grow in number, and
2. because the sin of the present inhabitants had not yet reached the full measure of iniquity worthy of destruction, they had **400 years to repent!** And the distance from *Yahweh* in the Old Testament will give way to the nearness of Jesus in the New!

Henry Holley in the Holley Bible Handbook explains: "...the Old Testament is the account of a nation. The New Testament is the account of a Man. The Nation was founded and nurtured of God to bring the Man into the world." One of the most soul-searching and solemn questions ever asked by God is in Hebrews 2:3 "**...how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?** *This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him.*"

In Revelation 11:19 God's temple in heaven is opened and the Ark of the Covenant of testimony is revealed and present there. This shouts God's faithfulness in remembering forever His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—Israel—and with His Church. Hebrews 10:16 "*This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the LORD. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.*" Psalm 144:15 "**Blessed are the people of whom this is true: blessed are the people whose God is the LORD.**"

Charles Spurgeon "There is no more blessed way of living than a life of dependence upon a covenant-keeping God."