



# Shelby Christian Church

CORE 52: GETTING RIGHT WITH GOD - COVENANT

GENESIS 12:1-9, 15:6, 21:1-21, 22:1-19; ROMANS 4:1-5, GALATIANS 3:6 \* 10/12/2025

## MAIN POINT

Covenant

## INTRODUCTION

**What is the most significant promise you have made? Were you able to keep that promise? Why or why not?**

**What determines whether we believe a promise made to us?**

**Have you ever given much thought to Abraham being the "father" of so many people and faith systems (Judaism, Christianity, Islam)?**

The source of a promise, the nature of the promise, or the time frame in which it was made affects our decision to trust the promise. Most of us would likely say we believe promises from God. Today, as we look at Abraham, we will consider how willing we are to take God at His Word and surrender to His plan.

## UNDERSTANDING

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 15:6

**What action did Abram take in this verse?**

**Why is Abram's belief significant in his relationship with God?**

**What does "credited as righteousness" mean in the context of the passage? How does this verse show that righteousness comes from faith, not works?**

Abram believed God's promise that he would have numerous descendants, even though he and his wife were old and childless. His faith in God was counted as righteousness, showing that right standing with God comes through trust and obedience, not through human effort or merit.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 21:1-21

**What does the birth of Isaac reveal about God's faithfulness to His promises?**

**Why do you think conflict arose between Sarah and Hagar after Isaac's birth?**

**How does God's instruction to Abraham about Ishmael show both justice and mercy?**

**In what ways does God's provision for Hagar and Ishmael illustrate His care for those outside the covenant line?**

God fulfills His promise to Abraham and Sarah with the miraculous birth of Isaac. Sarah rejoices at the fulfillment of God's word, and Abraham circumcises Isaac as a sign of the covenant. Conflict arises between Sarah and Hagar when Ishmael mocks Isaac, leading Sarah to ask Abraham to send Hagar and her son away. God reassures Abraham that Ishmael will also become a great nation. In the wilderness, God cares for Hagar and Ishmael by providing water and guidance, demonstrating His provision and faithfulness even outside the covenant line.

#### **HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 22:1-19**

**How does Abraham respond to God's request to sacrifice Isaac?**

**Why do you think God tested Abraham in this way?**

**How does Abraham's obedience reflect his faith and trust in God?**

**What does the ram provided as a substitute teach about God's provision?**

**How does this event foreshadow the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ in the New Testament?**

God tests Abraham by asking him to sacrifice his son Isaac, the child of promise. Abraham obeys without hesitation, demonstrating profound faith and trust in God. As Abraham prepares to carry out the sacrifice, God stops him and provides a ram as a substitute, showing His provision. Because of Abraham's obedience, God reaffirms His covenant, promising blessings, numerous descendants, and that all nations will be blessed through his offspring.

#### **HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 12:1-9**

**Why is God's command to "leave your country, your people and your father's household" significant?**

**What does Abram's obedience teach us about faith and trust in God?**

**How does building altars reflect Abram's relationship with God?**

**What does God's promise in verse 3 ("all peoples on earth will be blessed through you") indicate about Abram's role in God's plan?**

**How does this passage introduce the theme of God's covenant relationship with His people?**

God calls Abram to leave his homeland, family, and familiar surroundings, promising to make him a great nation, bless him, and make him a blessing to all peoples. Abram obeys, traveling to the land of Canaan, and builds altars along the way as acts of worship and remembrance of God's guidance. God reaffirms His promise to give the land to Abram's descendants, highlighting the beginning of His covenant relationship and the unfolding plan to bless all nations through Abram.

#### **HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 4:1-5**

**How does Paul use Abraham as an example in these verses?**

**Why is faith, rather than works, the basis of righteousness according to Paul?**

**How does Paul's argument challenge human ideas of earning favor with God?**

Paul explains that Abraham was credited with righteousness because of his faith, not his works. Abraham trusted God's promises, and God counted that trust as righteousness. Paul emphasizes that

righteousness comes through faith, not human effort, and is a gift for anyone who believes. Verse 5 highlights that God credits righteousness to those who trust Him, even when they do not earn it through works.

## HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GALATIANS 3:6

**What does it mean that Abraham's faith was "credited as righteousness"?**

**What does this verse teach about the relationship between faith and works in being justified before God?**

**How does Paul use Abraham's example to explain God's plan for both Jews and Gentiles?**

Paul points to Abraham as the ultimate example of justification by faith. Abraham trusted God's promises, and God credited that trust to him as righteousness. This shows that being right with God is not based on human works or effort but on faith in God's Word and promises.

## APPLICATION

**How is Abraham a model of faith? What did he do to demonstrate his faith? Is this idea of covenant new to you? Does it change how you look at your relationship with Christ? Does it change how you view your connection to the church?**

**How did Jesus ultimately fulfill the Biblical Covenants (i.e.. Genesis 3:15, 1 Peter 3:21, Genesis 22:12-14, Matthew 22:44, & Matthew 26:27-28)?**

**Share an area of your life you feel like God would want you to increase your faith-not how much you believe but your fidelity to obey.**

## PRAYER

## COMMENTARY

### Genesis 15:6

Genesis 15 is part of God's covenant with Abram. God reassures Abram that he will have an heir and countless descendants despite his old age and childlessness. This verse highlights the central role of faith in Abram's relationship with God.

"Believed" (Hebrew: 'aman) – implies trust, reliance, and confidence in God's promise. It's more than intellectual agreement; it involves surrendering one's understanding and plans to God.

"Credited as righteousness" (Hebrew: chashab le-tzedakah) – God counts Abram's faith as righteousness. This shows that right standing before God is not earned by works but granted through trust in Him.

Faith precedes fulfillment. Abram believed before seeing the promise realized (his descendants), emphasizing trust over visible evidence.

### Genesis 21:1

Verses 1–7 – The Birth of Isaac - God’s faithfulness: Despite Sarah’s old age, God fulfills His promise. This demonstrates His sovereignty over time and human impossibilities. Sarah’s response: She rejoices and names her son Isaac (“he laughs”), reflecting the joy and wonder at God’s miraculous provision. Covenant sign: Abraham circumcises Isaac at eight days old (v. 4), showing obedience and continuity of the covenant initiated in Genesis 17. Faith and fulfillment: This birth underscores that God’s promises are certain, even when circumstances appear hopeless. Insight: God honors His promises and invites His people to rejoice and trust in His timing.

Verses 8–21 – Hagar and Ishmael- Conflict arises: Ishmael’s mocking of Isaac (v. 9) reveals tension between the covenant line and the firstborn outside the promise. Sarah asks Abraham to send them away. Abraham’s distress: He is concerned for Ishmael but obeys God’s guidance (vv. 12–13). God reassures Abraham that Ishmael will also become a great nation, showing mercy alongside justice. God’s provision: In the wilderness, Hagar and Ishmael face near-death from lack of water. God opens Hagar’s eyes to a well (v. 19) and provides guidance, illustrating His care for the vulnerable and marginalized. Faith in God’s promises: Hagar names God “El Roi” (vv. 13–14, 20), meaning “the God who sees,” acknowledging His personal care. Ishmael grows into a skilled archer, and God blesses him to become the father of a great nation. Insight: God cares for all people, even those outside the covenant line, and His provision sustains them in trials.

### **Genesis 22:1-19**

Verses 1–2 – The Test - God calls Abraham to offer Isaac, his long-awaited son, as a burnt offering. This is a test of faith, obedience, and trust in God’s promises. Isaac represents the fulfillment of God’s covenant (Genesis 17:19). Insight: True faith may involve difficult obedience, even when God’s instructions challenge human understanding.

Verses 3–10 – Abraham’s Obedience- Abraham rises early, takes Isaac, and journeys to Mount Moriah without hesitation. Abraham demonstrates complete trust: he does not argue or delay, showing total submission to God. Isaac carries the wood for the offering, foreshadowing Christ carrying the cross (John 19:17). Insight: Faith often requires action before full understanding; obedience itself is evidence of trust.

Verses 11–14 – God’s Provision - The angel of the Lord stops Abraham before the sacrifice. God provides a ram caught in the thicket as a substitute. Abraham names the place “The LORD Will Provide” (Yahweh Yireh), acknowledging God’s provision. Insight: God provides solutions and substitutes, teaching reliance on His provision rather than human effort. This event foreshadows Christ as the ultimate substitute sacrifice.

Verses 15–19 – Covenant Reaffirmed- God blesses Abraham for his obedience, reaffirming the covenant promises: Numerous descendants, Blessing to all nations through Abraham’s offspring, and Abraham returns home with renewed faith and God’s favor.

Obedience and trust in God lead to covenant blessings. Faith demonstrated in testing strengthens the relationship between God and His people.

### **Genesis 12:1-9**

Verses 1–3 – God’s Call and Promise - Call to leave: God instructs Abram to leave his country, relatives, and father’s household. This represents a total step of faith, leaving behind security and familiarity. Promises given: Make Abram into a great nation, Bless him personally, and Make him a blessing to all peoples on earth. Significance: Abram is chosen not for his merit but for God’s

purposes. His obedience initiates God's plan of redemption for all nations. Insight: God's call often requires stepping into the unknown with faith, trusting His promises over circumstances.

Verses 4–7 – Abram's Obedience and Worship - Immediate obedience: Abram leaves Haran at God's command, demonstrating trust and faith. Journey to Canaan: Abram travels through the land God promises, showing faith in God's future provision. Building altars: At Shechem and Bethel, Abram builds altars, acts of worship and acknowledgment of God's presence and faithfulness. Insight: Faith is expressed through action. Worship and remembrance are essential markers of spiritual journey.

Verses 8–9 – God's Covenant and Continuing Journey - God's reaffirmation: God promises the land to Abram's descendants. Continuing obedience: Abram continues moving, settling near Hebron, and continues building altars, demonstrating ongoing trust and worship. Themes of faith and covenant: The passage emphasizes trust in God's promise, God's faithfulness, and the beginning of a covenant relationship that will shape history. Insight: God's promises require a lifetime of faithful response and continual trust. Worship serves as a reminder of God's faithfulness.

### **Romans 4:1-5**

These verses emphasize Abraham as the model of justification by faith, showing that righteousness is credited by God apart from works. Paul uses Abraham to explain that faith, not human effort, is the key to being in right standing with God.

Verses 1–3 – Abraham Credited with Righteousness - Paul asks, "What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter?" He answers that Abraham was justified by faith, referencing Genesis 15:6: "Abram believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Key insight: God's approval is not earned by deeds but is granted based on trust in His promises.

Verse 4 – Faith versus Works- Works earn payment, but righteousness is a gift from God, not something earned.

Verse 5: Faith places the believer in a relationship of trust with God. God credits righteousness even to the ungodly—those who cannot earn it.

### **Galatians 3:6**

Galatians 3 emphasizes justification by faith rather than by the works of the Law. Paul uses Abraham, the patriarch, as a model to show that righteousness has always been based on faith, not human effort. This supports his argument that both Jews and Gentiles are saved through faith, not law-keeping.

Paul directly quotes Genesis 15:6, highlighting that Abraham's faith preceded circumcision and works.

Faith is the root of righteousness: Abraham's belief was credited as righteousness before any legal or ceremonial requirements were fulfilled.

God initiates righteousness: It is God who "credits" righteousness; it is not earned by human merit.