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Episode 121 - Abrahamic Covenant Uncovered: It's Not What You Think

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Hey friend — join Scott Stanley as he gently peels back the Abrahamic Covenant to show that "circumcision" points to a change of mind and faith, not just a physical ritual. This short talk ties Genesis and Romans together, explaining how being Abraham's "seed" means thinking and believing like him — a simple, eye-opening shift that will make you want to read the Bible for yourself.

Modified Transcript:

Scriptures are transcribed directly with notations. Refer to the KJV for verbatim wording.

Hi, this is Scott Stanley with DTG Ministries. Today I want to search the deep things of God concerning Abraham. I've been listening to YouTube quite a bit, and I continue to hear things about the Abrahamic covenant, like what did this mean? What exactly is it? How do we apply it today? And there was a particular person that I was listening to that I thought, well, let's hear what they've got to say. In so doing, I began to realize the confusion of everyone that's out there.

So I want to add to it. I'm probably going to add to the confusion, but I hope not to. I hope that this makes sense to you because this, really, I believe, gets to the crux of the

matter, the Abrahamic covenant. How do we see it today? How does that change my life at all, if any at all? So, in listening to YouTube, somebody started getting into Genesis chapter 17. And I want to read in Genesis 17, starting at verse 9.

Gen 17:9 God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.

Of course, we know by now, I hope, that when we're reading the King James, you're reading biblical English, that when you see "thee's" and "thou's" and "ye's" and "you's," all the "t's" are singular, the "y's" are plural. So, let me read this again.

Gen 17:9 God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. (Here we see the seed is plural.)

Gen 17:10 This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you ("you" is plural) and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.

Gen 17:11 And you'll circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant between me and you.

So I turned to Romans 4. In Romans 4, Paul does a dissertation on Abraham, starting at verse 8.

Rom 4:8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

Rom 4:9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

Rom 4:10 How was it reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

Now here is where he's going to get into this covenant we just read about. And you need to pay close attention to what he says.

Rom 4:11 And he received the sign... (Now, what we just read in Genesis 17, King James translated that "token.") He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had when he was uncircumcised...

Now, right here in Romans 4:11, Paul has combined two verses from Genesis. You know, most of my life reading this, I never caught that. But what he just said, again, he uses the sign of circumcision. We just saw that in Genesis 17. But he says, *a seal of the righteousness of the faith*. Well, the righteousness of the faith is Genesis 15. In Genesis 15:6, *he believed in Jehovah, and he counted it to him for righteousness*.

So Paul is saying that when you come to Genesis 17, the token of being circumcised, it's a token of the righteousness of the faith he received in Genesis 15. I'm going to read it one more time.

Rom 4:11 He, Abraham, received the sign, the token of circumcision, a seal or a confirmation of righteousness by faith, which he received when he was uncircumcised (in Genesis 15:6); ... that the righteousness might be imputed unto them also.

Rom 4:12 He's the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of faith, faith that he had.

Okay, let's go back. Look at Genesis 17 one more time. Genesis 17:9. Let's see if you can catch this.

Gen 17:9 God said unto Abraham, You shall keep my covenant therefore, you, and your seed after you in their generations.

Gen 17:10 This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your seed; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.

Gen 17:11 And you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it'll be a token of the covenant.

In other words, in verse 10, every man child shall be circumcised. In verse 11, circumcision in the flesh is the token. Paul just said the circumcision in the flesh, the token, is what happened in Genesis 15. Genesis 17, I'm going to read it again, verse 10.

Gen 17:10 This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your seed after you; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.

Gen 17:11 ... and the token of that is circumcision in the flesh.

Genesis 17 says the circumcision in the flesh is a symbol of the circumcision made in Genesis 15. Paul says in Genesis 15 that circumcision in the flesh is a symbol of that. But when you look at Genesis 15, you don't see the word circumcision. What is he talking about? I want to read the definition of circumcision. And this is key because when we get a handle on what that word means and where it comes from, you'll get a much better idea of what he is talking about in Genesis 15.

Circumcision: I'm going to take this to the ancient Hebrew. Why would I do that? Because the ancient Hebrew is showing you where these Hebrew words originated. And their original meaning was based on the pictures the letters represent. Every Hebrew letter is a picture, and when we look at circumcision, the Strong's number in Hebrew for this is [4135]. Well, this [4135] begins with two letters. The two pictures represent water and a shepherd's staff. Now, don't let me lose you. If you can get the ancient Hebrew lexicon and read along with me, you will be really blessed in this.

The word "circumcise" begins with water and a shepherd's staff. Why? Water is a symbol of thought. The shepherd's staff represents... You know, when a shepherd had his staff, he was walking with the sheep, and he could use the staff and reach out and get the sheep back in line. So I just looked at that symbol as far-reaching. So I've got water that is far-reaching. Well, what does this mean? Put those two together. It means to speak. It means a word. The actual meaning is to speak or to continue. See, water, far-reaching.

You could say that's what we're doing right now. As I speak, my thoughts are far-reaching. So you just start tracing this word down to see other ways... see, they would change this word to continue to fit their need of expression. And if you trace this down, you finally come to the word "circumcise." What in the world does "circumcise" have to do with speaking and far-reaching? What does it have to do with that? Let me read what this word actually means; they translate it as "circumcise." Now listen to this.

"The front of a long series of the same. The past is seen as 'in front' in ancient Hebrew thought." Now stop a minute. What do you mean by "the front of a long series of the same"? Well, a long series of words. Let's say a sentence. The front of a long series of words. "The past is seen as being 'in front' in ancient Hebrew thought because the past can be seen while the future is unseen, and therefore it's behind."

See, in their thinking, you can see the past; you cannot see the future. So "circumcise" means a cutting of the front part of the male member. Well, the male member, a penis, they would cut the flesh away from the front. The penis represents your loins, your thinking, the essence of who you are. See, *out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks*. So God is using the word "circumcise" in Genesis 17, pointing to Genesis 15. So there is a circumcision that takes place. Again, I want to read this one more time and make sure you see the connection here. Look at Genesis 17:10.

Gen 17:10 This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and your seed after you; Every man child shall be circumcised.

Gen 17:11 And you'll circumcise the flesh of your foreskin...

So there is a circumcision being spoken of in this covenant. The covenant is the circumcision. The symbol of it is circumcision in the flesh. So there is a meaning of circumcision we're going to see happen in Genesis 15. What does it mean? A segment of the same, a series of words that you cut away the front. It's a picture of circumcising in the flesh. Look at what happens. Let's read Genesis 15, start at verse 1.

Gen 15:1 After these things the word of Jehovah came to Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

Gen 15:2 And Abram said, Lord Jehovah, what will you give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?

Gen 15:3 And Abram said, Behold, to me you've given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is my heir.

Gen 15:4 And, behold, the word of Jehovah came unto him and said, This shall not be your heir; but he that shall come forth out of your own bowels shall be your heir.

Now question: What does he mean by "out of your own bowels"? In the Old Testament, the word, translated "bowels" [4578] in Psalms 40, is translated "heart." Throughout the scripture, it's translated "belly." Your belly is a symbol of your mind. What is he actually saying to Abraham? Your seed is not going to be literal. It's going to be spiritual. Your seed is going to be the people who will have a mind like yours. They will come forth out of your own heart, out of your own bowels.

That word "out of your own" is [4480], and it literally is the word "kind." Remember how, with seeds of the same kind, you plant a seed? What kind of seed is that? That seed will be whatever kind you planted. Well, Abraham is going to be telling people the promises God has given him. And those who believe what he is saying are going to be his seed. It is not going to be someone literally born in his house. And the covenant of circumcision is symbolized in physical circumcision.

The covenant that you're seeing in Genesis 15 deals with people who will believe and think like Abraham. Let me prove this to you. Galatians 3, let's look at verse 6.

Gal 3:6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness,
Gal 3:7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

It has nothing to do with being physically, literally born in his house. Again, look at verse 9, Galatians 3:9.

Gal 3:9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

You see what has happened here? Look, let's turn to Romans chapter 2. In Romans chapter 2, verse 28,

Rom 2:28 He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

Rom 2:29 He is a Jew, which is one inwardly; circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.

What you're reading in Genesis 17 and 15, and bringing in Romans 4 (which I'm not sure that I did the best job of trying to explain), is that the circumcision happens when Abraham believes that "no one born in my house is my heir. I don't have anyone born in my house." And God is saying, "They're going to come out of your heart. They will come out of your heart." I literally went online and looked up this verse. And when people read, "will come forth out of your own bowels," they say, "that's your body." Well, it is not. It's his mind. It is his spirit.

See, you've got to understand, if you believe like Abraham, then you are the seed of Abraham. That's what the seed of Abraham actually is- to believe the way he believes. What happened? Well, God told him, gave him the promises, and his seed are the people who will believe him when he shares those promises. Those who believe him are believing because it's coming out of his mind. It's coming out of his understanding.

Righteousness that we have is of faith. *Faith comes by hearing, hearing by the word of God. How are they going to hear without a preacher?* If Abraham never said a single word about the promises God made him, if he never told a single person, and just started having children, none of those children would have been the seed of Abraham.

We just read Romans 2. Look at Romans 9. In Romans 9, I want to start reading at verse 6.

Rom 9:6 Not as though the word of God has taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:

Rom 9:7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they children; but, In Isaac shall your seed be called.

Rom 9:8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these aren't the children of God: the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

The whole thing with Isaac, see, think about this. Isaac... his mother was too old to have a child. If you stop and think about this, Sarah's womb was dried up. There isn't a man on the planet who could have gotten her pregnant. That is very much like Mary, who was a virgin who had never known a man. Both of these children, Jesus and Isaac, are children of the promise. Sarah only had a child because God promised her, told her she would, and she believed it, and by means of faith was able to bring forth a child.

Therefore, Paul is using that as a similitude of you and me who believe Abraham's promises. You become a child of promise. If you look at it like this, God gives you a promise, and it's in your mind, and you're going to carry this promise with you and believe this promise everywhere you go. You believe the promise. So, looking at your mind as land, remember, the sower sows the seed. The seed goes into the ground, into the earth. That seed is the word of God. That seed is the truth being planted in your mind.

If you believe that promise, then you are dwelling in the promised land because those seeds are the promises. You dwell in the promised land. And Abraham was given promises. He dwelt in the promised land. And Abraham shared his faith, and those who believed him dwelt in the promised land with him. This stuff is spiritual. What do you think it means that "every male child among you shall be circumcised"?

If you look at Genesis 3, you have Adam and Eve and the serpent. God tells Adam not to eat of the tree. Eve was not there yet. He tells Adam not to eat of the tree. The serpent tempts Eve to eat of the tree. So I have Adam being told by God, and Eve listening to the serpent. Eve represents your emotional side. It's your emotional side that always wants to listen to the serpent, the whisperer. But Adam knew the truth.

Don't eat off the tree. That is the male side of that truth. I have a male and a female. I have what God has expressed to do. I've got the commandment, let's say. I've got the commandment, that is, the male child. Your children are your thoughts. They're symbols of your thinking. So every male child needs to be circumcised. What do you mean?

You need to cut away the flesh of that thought and see it spiritually. *Every man child shall be circumcised.* We take that and run off and think, well, everybody's got to go be circumcised. No. See, circumcision, literal physical circumcision, was a symbol of the spiritual circumcision. Therefore, Abraham had everybody physically circumcised because that was a symbol of the true covenant that you're going to cut away your fleshly understanding of what God is saying.

That doesn't mean, now bear with me, that doesn't mean every single thing you believe has to be spiritual. It does need to be of the Spirit. When God makes a statement, you've got to see it the way he is saying it. Cut away your fleshly understanding of what he means. I have a study coming up, and I've already decided, let's just call this "Every Man Child," because I want to get into exactly what that means and come back to Abraham and show you some things about Abraham that were brand new for me. It carries over into the last generation church, and it will help us understand the way God is explaining to us. See, Philippians 3:3,

Php 3:3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and we have no confidence in the flesh.

How can you be the circumcision, but you don't have confidence in the flesh? Because circumcision is spiritual. We are the circumcision. We are children of faith. Our religion is of faith. Faith comes by hearing the word of God spoken. We do not have in our earthly wisdom the ability to understand. So God puts someone in our lives to help us. I can't tell you how many times I have read that in Romans 4 and never realized he was putting two verses together and showing you that righteousness by faith, this is the covenant, and circumcision is a symbol of it.

Again, circumcision was only a symbol. The true covenant is that every man child shall be circumcised, or every truth God gives you needs to be understood the way he understands it. That may not always be spiritual. There may be a literal thing in there, but you need to see it the way God wants you to see it.

Again, I think the next podcast is really going to be interesting, and I hope I didn't cause confusion in this one. It's my prayer that we can take the time. Read these things ourselves. Get a deeper understanding of what God is saying and glorify him. And I'm going to tell you something. If you're going to understand it the way God means it, you're going to have to read it in the Bible because no one's going to believe you if you think God's just telling you in your head. He isn't going to tell you anything that you cannot prove with the Bible, and it's essential that you understand that.

That is the only thing that is going to keep you safe. You have to see it the way God sees it, and he has given you a Bible for that. He has put a ministry on this planet to help you. All of the church can come together and be in agreement on God's meaning. In my church, in the church I belong to, you're going to have to show me in the Bible, or I'm not going to believe it.

Most gracious Heavenly Father, I don't know. I pray to help people. I pray for your leading in grace. I pray that you become our shield and buckler. That you surround us and protect us from iniquity, and that you're glorified in Jesus' name. Amen.