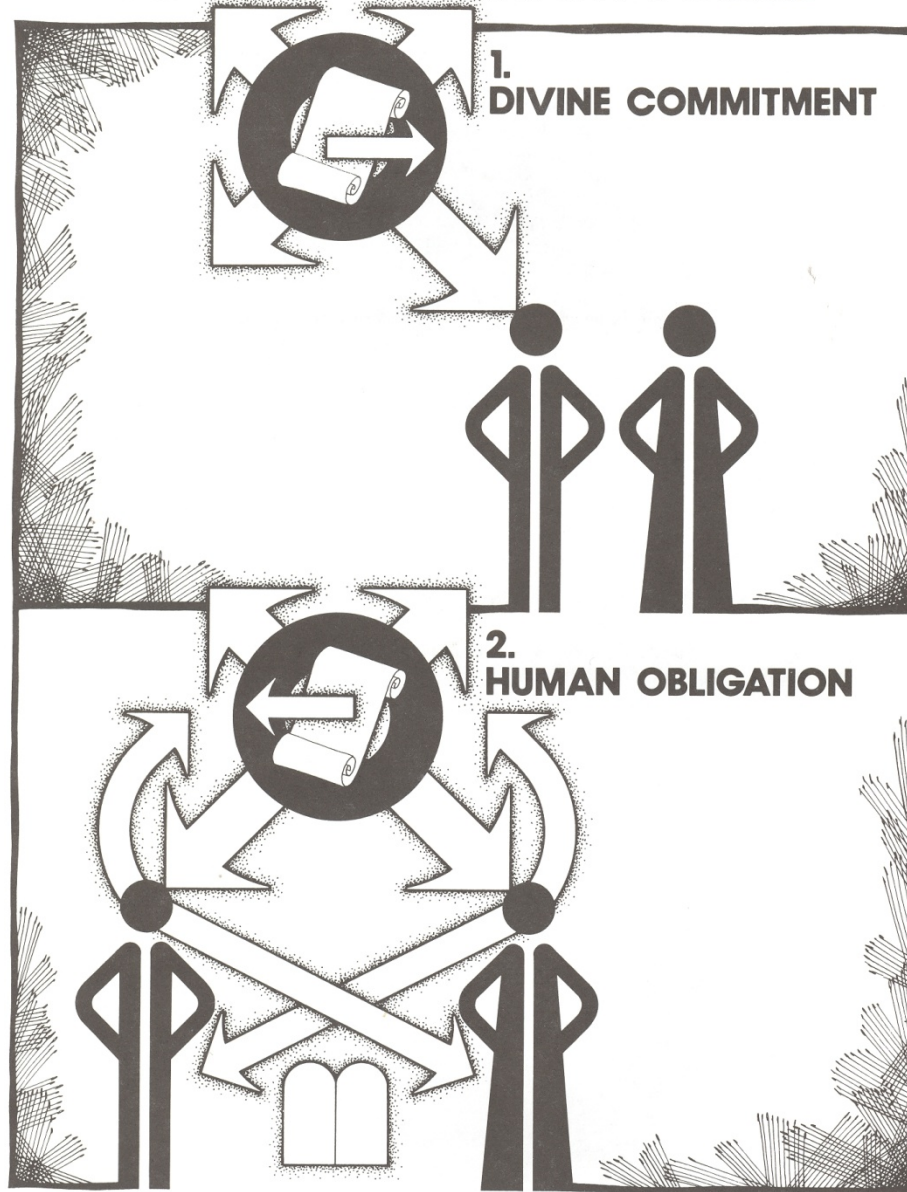


Genesis, Part II

The Abrahamic Covenant

1. Nation – God will give Abraham many offspring and a great nation will come from him.
2. Land – God will give his descendents the land of Canaan as their homeland.
3. Blessing – God will eventually bless all nations through Abraham's descendents (sometimes the singular “descendent” or “seed” is used)

BIBLICAL COVENANT FORMS



- Theophany – a visible manifestation or appearance of God.
- The invisible God takes on some form to show Himself to His people,
 - i.e. a pillar of cloud,
 - a pillar of fire,
 - a firepot,
 - an earthquake,
 - “the Angel of Yahweh”

- Today, God comes to us through Jesus in:
 - the Scripture &
 - the Sacraments.
- In OT days, God had to show Himself to directly communicate to people, since the Scriptures were not written yet.

- 1st Theophany with Abraham – God calls him to leave his country and go to a new land so that God can bless him and bring blessing to many through him.
- God took the initiative!
 - He chose Abraham,
 - He makes the first move,
 - Abraham responds with faith and obedience.

- The Bible does not try to hide the characters' weaknesses:
 - Abe's lie to Pharaoh,
 - Jacob's deceit,
 - David's adultery etc.
- The Bible shows human sin and error to magnify God's grace, action & salvation for us. Grace alone!

- God does not respond to something good in us to forgive and save us, but acts by grace – undeserved mercy.
- All we are to do is say yes –
 - trust in His Words and promises
 - and show our faith through obedience.
 - We do not obey, however, to earn anything or to manipulate God.
 - Our obedience is simply a response to God's love for us.

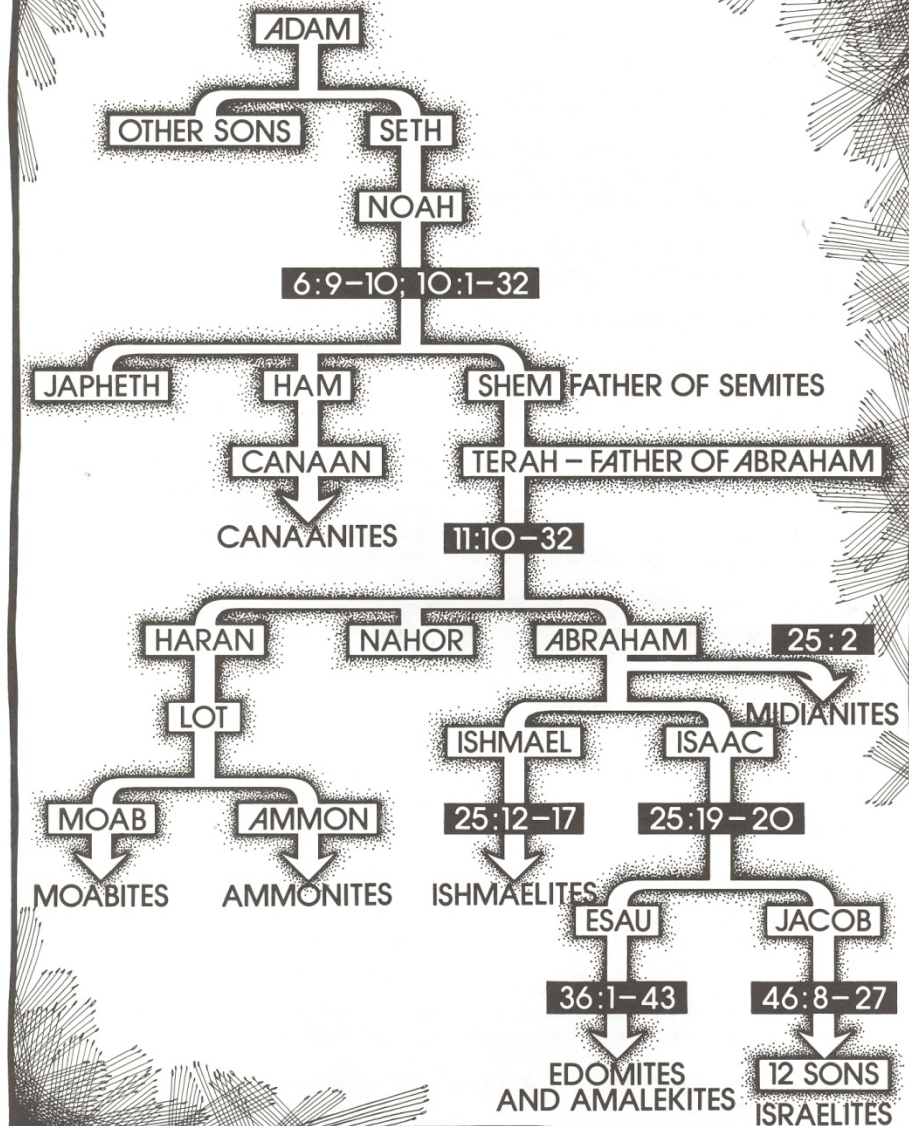
- Sometimes God tests our faith –
- Genesis 22, God asks Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac.
- Abe obeys, God stops the sacrifice and blesses Abraham.
- Abraham fully trusts God, perhaps that God would raise Isaac from the dead.

- After Abe passes the test God repeats his promise to him.
 - not that Abe earned the blessing,
 - but his obedience showed his total faith or reliance upon God;
 - because he is still putting God first, God's plan can now continue to bring blessing to and through Abe.
- Ritual of Circumcision: The mark of the Abrahamic covenant on boys 8 days old.
 - It is a sign that God has chosen them and that they are part of the covenant community by God's grace.

- Circumcision is not unique to the Israelites.
 - It was a common practice in other ancient cultures, like the Arab tribes.
 - But it was usually a puberty rite of passage.
 - God takes something the people know about and changes it for His own purposes.
 - Israel is to do this when the baby is 8 days old, not waiting until some later “age of reason” to include the infant in His kingdom.
 - It is like a brand – they are marked as God’s chosen people, not by their choice, but by God’s!

- St. Paul compares Baptism to Circumcision in Colossians.
 - He indicates that Baptism is the New Circumcision, where God marks people as His own,
 - where God chooses us and brands us with His name in the water,
 - God gives us forgiveness, faith and new life.
 - These are outer marks of an inner relationship.
- Relationship of Foreign peoples: There is a kinship to the surrounding groups, and these relationships affect the history – through Abraham's clan, all other nations will be blessed.

GENESIS ORIGINS



- Name Changes: The name represents the person him/herself.
- People often had 3 different names
 - a secret one known only by family,
 - a personal one known to the public,
 - a nickname used by friends.
- It was thought that to place a curse on someone you had to know their “secret” name – which represented their essence.

- To give a name to someone means you have authority over them.
- God gives new names to represent a new relationship with God or a change in character.
 - Abram-Abraham
 - Sarai-Sarah
 - Jacob-Israel.

- In the New Testament, Baptism indicates a new relationship, a change of status to “a child of God” – ancient practice gave a new “Baptism name” at the Baptism to indicate this change.
- 12 Tribes of Israel (Jacob):
 - Rachael = 2
 - Bilhah = 2
 - Zilpah = 2
 - Leah = 6
 - Levi becomes priestly tribe
 - Levi & Joseph replaced by Ephraim & Manasseh

THE TRIBAL LINEAGE OF THE PATRIARCHS

