

## **Dr. Robert Vannoy, Old Testament History, Lecture 23**

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### **Abrahamic Covenant – Gen 15, 17 and Akedah (Gen. 22)**

#### Genesis 15 & The Smoking Furnace

I pretty much concluded what I wanted to say about Genesis 15. Although let me, before going further, read you a statement from Meredith Klines' book, *By Oath Consigned*. It is in connection with that smoking furnace that passed between the slain parts of the animals in the ratification rites of the covenant here in Genesis 15. On page 45 of *By Oath Consigned*, Kline says: "Genesis 15 tells us of a covenant cutting and a theophany which Abraham witnessed amid darkness and horror, the only proper setting for this Old Testament Golgotha. There in the passage God in the divided theophanic symbol of a smoking furnace and flaming torch between the dismembered creature, the mystery of the abandonment of the Son of God emerged beforehand. For what Abraham witnessed was the strange self-malediction of the LORD of the Covenant who would himself undergo the covenant's curse of cutting asunder rather than fail to lead his servant into the promised fullness of the beatitude."

#### Extent of the Promised Land

He discusses this in much greater length, but that is just a couple sentences from his treatment of it. That is an insight into the passage that is helpful in not only understanding what's going on in the passage, but putting it into the larger context of Scripture.

To go on with that passage (Genesis 15), in verse 18, you come back to the land aspect of the Abrahamic covenant; in verse 18 you read, "On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abraham saying, 'Unto your seed I have given the land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the River Euphrates.'" So the borders of the land are specified. If you go further in the Old Testament, you find that when Moses comes to the Plains of Moab, where Israel's about to take the promised land, you read in Deuteronomy

1:7, “Turn you, and take your journeys, and go to the mountain of the Amorites, and unto all the places near thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale, and in the south, and by the sea side, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, unto the great river, the river Euphrates.” So you get those same boundaries repeated by Moses as promised to Abraham. That is the beginning of the book of Deuteronomy. It is repeated internally in the book of Deuteronomy in 11:24. Then when Moses dies and Joshua follows him in leadership of the nation, bringing them into the land, you find in Joshua 1:4, “From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your border.” So, you get a repetition there as well.

That promise was partially fulfilled under Joshua in the conquest. You read in Joshua 13:1-6 that the land was taken – that is, the land of Canaan. But at that point, concerning the territories, it says “to the entrance of Hamath,” which is quite far north. But, as we read in Joshua 13:1, “There is much land to be possessed.” In each of those tribal territories there remained a job to be done, even though the basic territory was controlled.

So when you come to the first chapter of the book of Judges, you read about the various tribes: that Benjamin didn’t drive out the Jebusites, Manasseh didn’t drive out the inhabitants of various places, Ephraim didn’t drive out the Canaanites, Zebulun didn’t, Asher didn’t. The general picture is that they really didn’t finish the job. It is not until the time of David when he places garrisons on the Euphrates in 2 Samuel 8 that you really get the fulfillment of that promise. 2 Samuel 8:3 says, “David smote Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates. And David took from him a thousand chariots, and seven hundred horsemen,” and so fourth. He put garrisons in other places, which you read in 2 Samuel 8.

When you go over to 1 Kings and Solomon succeeds David, you read in 1 Kings 4:21, “Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life.” “The river” refers to the Euphrates River. If you go down to verse 24, you read,

“For he had dominion over all *the region* on this side of the River, from Tiphseh even to Gaza.” Tiphseh is a city on the Euphrates. So David reigned from Tiphseh down to Egypt. It seems to me that that is a provisional fulfillment at that time of the promise to Abraham that he would occupy that territory. Of course, David didn’t hold it and Solomon, who inherited David’s kingdom, was king at this point.

That covenant is said to go back to Genesis 15. The borders are given in Genesis 17:7-8, where the land is referred to again. In the end of verse eight, it says that all the land of Canaan will be given “for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.” So the promise of the land as belonging to the descendants of Abraham will continue to be valid as long as the Abrahamic Covenant is continuing to exist. It is coextensive with the Abrahamic Covenant, in verses 7 and 8 of Genesis 17.

There’s an interesting reference in Jeremiah 31:35-36, which says, “Thus saith the LORD, who gives the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, who divides the sea when its waves roar. The LORD of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.” The clear implication is, since the sun and the moon are not going to cease to shine, then Israel is not going to cease from being a nation before the Lord. As long as there is continuation of day and night, there will continue to be this nation, Israel as God’s people.

So, the continuance of Israel as a nation is linked to the creation ordinances of the rising and setting of the sun. If you go back to Genesis 8:22, you read, “While the earth remains, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease” in connection with that Covenant with Noah. So both the promise of the land and of the continuance of the nation of Israel is something that will continue on indefinitely into the future.

### Abrahamic and New Covenant

That raises the question of how you relate the administration of the Abrahamic Covenant across the period of the old and new covenant; you really get into the issues of

covenant theology with that. There is an overarching unity of the covenant of grace that is administered differently in the Old Testament economy than in the New Testament economy. That covenant remains perpetual as it crosses and transcends the Testaments. The administration of it differs, and there, you get into this question of the relationship between circumcision and baptism. And I would find baptism to be a counterpart to circumcision continuing on. If you take Paul's statement that the middle wall partition is wiped out and Jew and Gentile are now one in Christ, and those distinctions between male and female, master and slave, Jew and Gentile, are erased, there's a certain sense in which those distinctions no longer apply within the body of Christ in the new economy. But, on the other hand, there's another sense in which that distinction continues to exist; even though you know man and woman are one in Christ, there's still a difference between a man and a woman. Even though Jew and Gentile are one in Christ, there can be still that distinction between those who are the seed of Abraham by the flesh, and those who are not, who are spiritual seed. In that spiritual seed we are all one, but in the physical seed I believe there is still a distinction.

#### Genesis 17 Covenant Renewed and Confirmed

Alright, let's go on to Genesis 17. That is the third passage pertaining to God's covenant to Abraham. In Genesis 17:1-8 we read: "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I [am] the Almighty God; walk before me, and be perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, "As for me, behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. Neither shall your name any more be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made you. And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come out of you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your seed after you in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto you, and to your seed after you.

And I will give unto you, and to your seed after you, the land wherein you are a sojourner, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

What you have in chapter 17 is the covenant confirmed and renewed. It is initially represented in chapter 12, ratified in chapter 15, and confirmed and renewed here in chapter 17. This sort of repetition of material pertaining to the covenant is one of the things the source critics work with and say, “Here we have duplications,” and they ascribe Genesis 17 to the P document and Genesis 15 to the J document. J is more primitive, 17 is more sophisticated, at least in their view, and you have these duplications as a result of variant sources. But it requires nothing of that sort, it is just that the Lord is confirming these promises over and over to Abraham.

#### Abram to Abraham

In Genesis 17:1, it says, “When Abram was 99 years old.” This is 13 years after the birth of Ishmael. You read in the end of chapter 16, “Abram was four score and six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abraham. You remember Ishmael was born not of Sarah, but of Sarah’s handmaiden – Hagar.” Now 13 years have passed and he still does not have a son by Sarah. It is 24 years since the original promise of the seed, if you go back to Genesis 12. When he’s 99 years old, twenty-four years later, the LORD says, “Walk before me, be perfect.” “Perfect” there is not to be understood in the way we understand it as moral perfection, but living a wholesome life, being obedient to the LORD and walking in faith before the Lord. He says, “I will make my covenant, and will multiply you exceedingly.” In verse five he elaborates, saying, “Your name won’t be called Abram, but Abraham.” The etymology or meaning of Abram, the short form, is somewhat disputed. But most feel that it is related to two factors: the *ab*, which means “father,” and *ram*, which means “be high” or “exalted.” So that the idea would be “the father is exalted.” The father in that case, being what’s termed in Hebrew names as theophoric, is a reference to God. So, God is exalted. God is the father. God is exalted would be the meaning of the name, if it is a theophoric name, and if the first element refers to God. Abraham comes from *ab* and *raham* – *raham* meaning “a great number,”

so that the name becomes “father of many.” There the father refers not to God, but to Abraham, so that his name is changed from Abram, “God is exalted,” to Abraham, “the father of many nations” So it is put in connection with his numerous offspring. Notice the statement in verse 6 that “kings shall come out of him.” The promised line is to have royalty developed within it. Of course, that becomes the theme that is picked up and elaborated on later, not only in Genesis but also later on in other places in the Old Testament.

#### Fourth Covenant Reiteration – Genesis 22:17-18

The fourth covenant repetitive passage is Genesis 22:17-18. Genesis 22 tells the story of the LORD’s command to Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. This is after Isaac is born, the son of promise, and that is a real test of faith for Abraham, which we’ll discuss later. But Abraham demonstrates his faith in that context and when you get to verses 16-18, you read: “By myself I have sworn,” saith the LORD, “for because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son. That in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because you have obeyed my voice.”

So you have a reaffirmation in verses 17 and 18, of those central elements of the Abrahamic Covenant, particularly “in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” The interesting thing is that that is enclosed with two statements. In verse 16, “because you’ve done this thing,” then at the end of verse 18, “and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because you have obeyed my voice.” That “because” raises some difficult theological questions. How do you explain that “because”? Is ultimately the promise of Christ contingent on the obedience of Abraham?

#### Abraham’s Response - Obedience

Most commentaries don’t discuss the “because.” You can look that up in most

commentaries and there's nothing there, which is often the case when you get to real tough questions. Commentaries don't help you there. But in Calvin's commentary, two thirds of the way down on page 13 of our notes, page 572 of Calvin's commentary volume one, Calvin suggests that "the language of these texts is intended to stimulate us to holy living by transferring to our works and Abraham's. In this case, what properly belongs to us is pure beneficence." Calvin's suggestion at least points us in the right direction. He says, "We must of necessity conclude that what is freely given is yet called the reward of works." Then later he says, "God pays nothing as a debt, but gives to his own benefits the title of a reward." It may appear that what Calvin is saying is sort of a terminological solution: "What is freely given is called the reward of works. God pays nothing as a debt, but gives his own benefits the title of a reward." That is, God's benefits are not actually a reward; they are only so designated for motivation in our pursuit of godliness.

While that may appear to be the case, and if the distinction is simply that of a label, Calvin is really suggesting that these texts propose that God actually took Abraham and his obedience up into the promulgation of the promise. And here is the important distinction: God does not do that in the sense of efficient cause or meritorious reward, but in the sense of the divinely ordained means of administration of the promise. In other words, Abraham's obedience is included in that divinely ordained means of administration of promise. It is not a meritorious cause, it is not an efficient cause, but it is included. Abraham's faithfulness, then, was the fruit of the grace of God operative in his life, which did not in any way merit the reward of the promise but which nevertheless was an integral feature in the promulgation of the promise. Certainly God's election of Abraham and the promise to him preceded his response of faith and obedience; it goes back years and years at this point. But Abraham's election did not preclude, in the sense of obviating, the importance of his response. Rather, it included it as an inevitable accompaniment of the working of divine grace in his life. That seems to be an attempt to explain the connection here between Abraham's obedience and this promulgation of promise as it is stated in the text. So in that sense, I think Calvin is correct when he says,

“God pays nothing of a debt, but gives to his own benefits the title of a reward.” It is God who is working in Abraham and enabling him to respond in faith, even to the point of this test of his faith in Genesis 22.

I read something that surprised me just recently. Meredith Kline, who wrote *By Oath Consigned*, has come out with a three volume set, *Kingdom Prologue*, which is the beginning of an Old Testament theology that is privately printed. It is available through Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He does deal with these texts, and he claims that there is a meritorious ground that Abraham’s faith here is involved in the promulgation of promise. I find that difficult, but it seems that this is not meritorious; it is the evidence and demonstration of the grace and the work of God in his life.

### God’s Sovereignty and Human Responsibility

You have to be careful how you formulate things like that, because you are putting yourself into a hypothetical kind of situation that tries to separate theoretically the things that we cannot separate. In other words, you are into this whole thing of divine sovereignty and human responsibility and election, and God’s sovereignty in relation to that. “Those who were chosen in Christ before the formation of the world”: could they ever be lost? Well, in one sense you can say if they do not respond to the Gospel, they will be lost, yes. But in the other sense you could say they cannot be lost; they are in Christ who is the foundation of the world. They are going to respond to the gospel. How you unravel all that is very difficult; at a certain point you are better to stand back and let the statements of Scripture with respect to issues of that sort stand on their own, without trying to dissect them to the point where you can logically lay everything out and explain it. It seems to me that there are points you can’t fully understand or explain. When you try to do that, you usually fall into distorting one side over the other side.

Of course then you could ask, “Do you have a basic contradiction?” I would say “No.” There are people who say there is a contradiction between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. But I am not, at the same time, saying I can explain exactly how it works. You can’t, because there’s a fundamental contradiction there; you are in an area of



mystery. It is similar to the two natures of Christ. In one person there was God and man – two natures, one person. You know you can say that, but how do you explain that? It is quite difficult. You can explain what it is not, like the Christological formulation – it is not this, and it is not that, it is not something else. Similarly, when you get into the question of the inspiration of Scripture and the divine and human elements in the composition of Scripture, it is both, but at the same time it is God’s word. We talk about an organic view of inspiration which includes the person, their education, and background, which often comes through, yet that in no way detracts from Scripture’s divine character. It is the word of God. How do you explain that? I do not think you can fully explain it, but there is that interaction of divine and human. It seems that at this point you have to kind of step back a little bit.

There is not any necessary conclusion that is meritorious in Genesis 22, but there is a connection: because you’ve done this, here are these promises. He has worked those conditions in Abraham so that that is part of the whole promulgation of the promise, that he would do those things, but that is just a suggestion.

#### Genesis 17:9-14 Circumcision – Sign of the Covenant

We are talking about Abraham as our spiritual father. We looked at these four passages that speak of the Abrahamic covenant. God’s covenant with Abraham is in Genesis 17:9-14. We have already looked at the earlier part of chapter 17, but let’s go back and look at verses 9-14. We read there: “And God said unto Abraham, “You shall keep my covenant therefore, you, and your seed after you in their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your seed after you; every male child among you shall be circumcised. And you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant between me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every male child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any foreigner, which is not of your seed. He that is born in your house, and he that is bought with your money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the

uncircumcised male child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”

So with God’s promise to Abraham came an obligation on his part and on that of his seed. Circumcision is to become a token or a sign of the covenant between God and Abraham, which you read in verse 11: “You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you.” We find that Abraham had to circumcise himself in verse 11, and then every male child in his household, and not just his own children but everyone who is under his authority, including slaves. Then this striking statement in verse 14, which says not to do that was to break the covenant: “And the uncircumcised male child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.” So circumcision was to be taken very seriously.

You find later when Moses neglected the rite of circumcision how seriously the LORD took it. When Moses was returning to Egypt in Exodus 4:24-25: “And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the LORD met him, and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, “Surely a bloody husband you are to me.” And so the LORD let him go.”

It seems that the issue was that Moses had not circumcised his son, and the LORD threatened his life because he had not done so. The consequence for neglect, as stated in chapter 17, is: “that soul shall be cut off from his people.” That is in the context of the Feast of Unleavened Bread in Exodus 12:15-19: “Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, even the first day you should put leaven out of your houses. For whosoever shall eat leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.” There you have not only a connection with circumcision, but also with the Feast of Unleavened Bread which was associated with Passover. If that is violated, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.

There is some discussion as to what that means: to “be cut off from his people,” or to “be cut off from Israel.” Does that mean this person will be executed? Does that mean

death? Or does it mean excommunication? Commentators are divided on that. Exodus 31:14 says: “You shall keep the Sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you. Every one that defiles it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.” There the parallel suggests that “to be cut off from among his people” means death. If you apply that to these other passages, to the feast of unleavened bread or circumcision, you still do not know who is to administer that punishment. Is the LORD saying he will in some way do it? Or is it the responsibility of the community? That is not spelled out. But the sanction that is included with the command to circumcise emphasizes the seriousness with which God intended this to be taken.

Circumcision as a rite was practiced among other people, even prior to Abraham’s time. That is not something that originated in Genesis 17 when the command was given to Abraham. It did not originate with Israel, but it originated at that point as a sign of God’s covenant with Abraham. Circumcision was not something that was unknown among other peoples, so God gives it to Abraham with a new and special significance. Jeremiah 9:25 says: “The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will punish all who are circumcised only in the flesh – Egypt, Judah, Edom, Ammon, and Moab, and all who live in the desert in distant places. For all these nations are really uncircumcised, and even the whole house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart.” That passage demonstrates how circumcision was not something that was unique to Israel. The Egyptians did it, the Edomites did it, the Ammonites did it, and the Moabites did it. It is well known that other peoples practiced circumcision. However, what Jeremiah is talking about here is that even though some of Israelites are circumcised outwardly, they are not really, in the true sense of the word, circumcised.

### Circumcision of the Heart

This introduction of the rite is found in connection with the Abrahamic covenant. It has significance as a sign of the covenant and points to the need for internal cleansing. In other words, most feel that the basic idea of circumcision is the removal of

uncleanness – that is the symbolism involved. The ritual points to the need for internal cleansing. Sin is a matter of a race; it is something that is passed on from generation to generation. The uncleanness of sin must be taken away. Physical descent from Abraham is not sufficient to make one a true child of God; there has to be that internal cleansing. So circumcision becomes an outward sign of what must take place internally – circumcision of the heart. That idea of circumcision of the heart is also rooted in the Old Testament. Deuteronomy 10:16 says: “Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked. For the LORD your God [is] God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and an awesome one, which regards not persons, nor takes reward.”

And Deuteronomy 30:6 says: “And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your seed, to love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, that you may live.”

If you go over to the New Testament, you find in Romans 4, Paul discusses circumcision beginning in Romans 4:8: “Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Comes this blessedness upon the circumcision only, or upon the un-circumcision also? For his faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.” Faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness, but before he was circumcised. “How was it then reckoned, when he was in circumcision or in un-circumcision? Not in circumcision, but in un-circumcision” (Romans 4:10). Then verse 11 tells what circumcision really is: “And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also. And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had yet being uncircumcised.”

So nobody is saved by circumcision, whether in the Old Testament or in the New Testament (if you follow the analogy of circumcision by baptism when it is applied to infants). But it is a sign of the covenant, and as such is to be passed to the children. The

important thing is not just the sign itself, but the faith in the provision that God would make for the cleansing of the individual.

### Genesis 22 – Akedah, The Binding of Isaac

Let's go on to the high point of Abraham's faith in Genesis 22 – when God tests Abraham. Genesis 22:1 says, "Sometime later God tested Abraham. He said to him, 'Abraham!'" "Here I am," he replied. Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."

I read from the NIV, which is certainly a better translation of Genesis 22:1 than the King James Version. KJV says, "And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, 'Abraham.' and he said, 'here am I.'" The original King James says, "God did tempt Abraham," which can be confusing. "Test" is much better translation of that word. It says in James 1:13-14, "God tempts no man, man is tempted when he is led astray by his own desires." God tests a man, but he does not tempt a man. Satan tempts. Satan brings experiences into life that are designed to draw you away from the LORD. God does not do that. He can bring things into your life that can test your faith, but the intent is to strengthen.

In a practical sense that is the problem that you face every day in your own experiences. If you think of Job, he lost his family and possessions. That was a temptation from Satan because Satan had come to the LORD and said, look, this man you've said is a righteous man, let me do these things to him, and you'll find he's going to fall. And the LORD said alright, within certain limits you can do certain things. And Satan came in there with an attempt to draw him away from the LORD. He did not succeed at that. We know that that is what was going on, because we can read the text. Job did not know that Satan had come in there before the heavenly court and requested permission to do that.

You can apply that to your own experiences. You can have a bad experience and say, "What's going on? Is this Satan at work to draw me away from the LORD? Has he

initiated it?” Well, maybe he has. Or it could be the LORD at work to attempt to strengthen you, and to confirm you in your faith. I think the LORD is always at work. And so maybe both are at work, but you cannot really know in any given incident why that has been initiated in your life, whether it is primarily coming from Satan or whether it is something the LORD has initiated. Here, it is to test and strengthen Abraham’s faith. It was an extremely severe test. There is a battle going on in the unseen world between the LORD and Satan. That battle ground is in our own lives and in our own experiences, so how we respond to those things is significant and important. We should respond to trials by seeking God’s strength and praying for grace, no matter what the situation, but I think that is helpful to know in the struggles of life.

Calvin, again, has made some helpful comments here about this test of Abraham. On page 563. He says of Abraham, “his mind must have been severely crushed and violently agitated when the command and the promise of God were conflicting within it.” So here’s the promise. There is Isaac, Abraham’s son, who is the fulfillment of the promise which God had confirmed. His seed is not going to be through Ishmael; it is going to be through Isaac. These promises have been confirmed over and over, and now God comes and says to slay that son who is the child of promise. Calvin says: “The command and the promise seem to conflict. But when he had come to the conclusion that the God with whom he knew he had to do could not be his adversary. Although he did not immediately discover how the contradiction might be removed. He nevertheless by hope reconciled the command with the promise. Because being persuaded that God was faithful, he left the unknown issue to divine providence. Meanwhile as with closed eyes, he goes where he is directed. The truth of God deserves this honor. Not only that, it should far transcend all human means so that it alone, even without me, shall suffice this. But also that it shall surmount all obstacles.” It was difficult and painful for Abraham to forget that he was a father, and a husband, and to cast off all human affections, and to endure before the world the disgrace of shameful cruelty by becoming the executioner of his son. But, the other was a far more severe and horrible thing. Namely that he conceived God to contradict himself in his own word. And then that he supposes the hope

of the promised blessing to be cut off from him when Isaac is torn away from amazing grace.”

We know from Hebrews 11:17-19 that this was an act of faith by Abraham; he proceeded to do what God had commanded him to do. Hebrews 11:17 says: “By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son of whom it was said, ‘in Isaac shall your seed be called;’ accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.” The test here is a test of Abraham’s faith.

We’ll pick up here tomorrow.

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