

Week #: 15 Text: _____ Title: Follow the Rabbi #4/5

Songs: Oh, Lord, You're Beautiful

Audio: Ray Vander Laan – Follow the Rabbi teaching

Can be found online at: <https://oneinjesus.info/2008/10/ray-vander-laans-follow-the-rabbi-lectures/>

Abram:

- Abram was in the area of Tel Arad
- Abraham was a nomad.
- Abram was promised (by God):
 - the land – both milk and honey
 - a son – of which he had none
 - that through him all the nations of the world would receive a blessing – the Messiah
- The Lord appeared to Abram and said: Don't be afraid, I am your shield and your reward. This literally means your prize money.
 - God speaks to Abram in pictures
 - God doesn't say: "I'll protect you, and I'm the prize money you will need."
- Jewish people have a relationship with God that is intimate and deeply personal – but very honest.
- Abram's reaction was to, very respectfully, push God further by reminding him that Abram had no kids.
 - In Hebrew, this concept is called today:

chutẓ·pah - or - hutẓ-pah
'hooṯspə, 'KHooṯspə/

noun

means: shameless audacity; impudence.

RVL Definition: Intense persistence, will not quit, will not give up, will never let go

- Faith did not mean to a Jew, "I understand and I believe."
- Faith meant, "I'm going to latch onto this thing and I will not let go no matter what."
- Often, Jesus honors people for their persistence.
 - A Gentile woman approached Jesus about her daughter who was sick. Jesus told her he was sent for the Jews first. She tells him that even the dogs sometimes eat the crumbs that the children do not eat. Jesus answered her saying, "*I haven't seen chutzpah like that even among the Jews.*"

- Peter was walking on water, sees the wind and starts to sink. Jesus said, *“Oh you of little chutzpah.”* In other words: *“Why do you give up so easily, Peter?”*
 - God loves people who passionately will not let go.
- Abram thanks God for what He has promised – to be his shield and his reward – but Abram does not stop there. He passionately reminds God that he has no children.
 - God’s response to Abram’s passion is to show him the stars of the sky and the sand of the desert and tell him that’s what his descendants will be like. God honored chutzpah.
- God promises Abram the land – the land of milk and honey – when Abram doesn’t even have enough land to even bury his wife. Abram’s response is to ask God for a sign, an assurance, of this promise. *“Prove it!”*
- Covenant: a relationship between a greater and a lesser party.
 - The conditions of the relationship are always given by the greater for himself and for the lesser. The greater party says, *“This is what I will do, and this is what you will do.”*
 - The lesser party can choose to agree to those set terms or not, but they cannot change those terms.
- God is the greater party. He promises Abram:
 - Land – a place to live in obedience
 - Descendants
 - All the nations of the world will be blessed – in other words, promising a Messiah
- God’s condition for Abram is:
 - Walk before God blameless – in other words, be perfect.
- Abram agrees to make this deal with God.
- The covenant ceremony is then performed.
 - God tells Abram to go out and get: a goat, a ram (probably refers to a sheep), a heifer (female cow that hasn’t given birth yet), a pigeon, and a dove.
 - Abram brought these to God, then he splits them in half and arranges them across from each other in a specific order.
 - Abram understood what God was asking.
 - The split animals, lying across from each other, bleed into the middle between the two halves, forming a pool or path.
 - This is what happens still to this day in that culture when a blood covenant is formed.
 - The greater party then steps into the blood and stomps, as a sign of his conditions. He says in his actions, *“I made promises. If I don’t keep my word, you may do this to me.”* If the conditions he set are not upheld, then his life is on the line.

- The lesser party then steps into the blood and stomps, as a sign of his acceptance of the terms.
 - God is so committed to His promise to Abram, that He's ready to stake his life on it.
 - Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a "thick and dreadful darkness" fell upon him.
 - "thick and dreadful darkness" is a Hebrew colloquialism which means to be terrified out of your mind.
 - Abram knows that if he puts his little toe into the blood in agreement, that he is telling God he can kill him. He knows he can't be perfect. There would be no land, no descendants, and thus no messiah.
 - Two symbols appear: (32:00)
 - First: a smoking firepot
 - This is the GREATER party because in a covenant ceremony the greater party always goes first.
 - Smoke is a symbol of God. Examples in the Bible:
 - Temple filled with smoke
 - Mount Sinai covered with smoke
 - Second: a torch - fire
 - This is the LESSER party because in a covenant ceremony the lesser party always goes second.
 - Fire is always a symbol of God. Not once in the Bible is fire a symbol of man.
 - Burning bush
 - Pillar of fire by night
 - "Our God is a consuming fire."
 - God took Abram's place in this covenant ceremony, stepping in for him, and thus sentencing His son, Jesus, to death – because there was no doubt Abram and his decedents would sin.
- Sacrifices:
 - The sacrifices mentioned in the Old Testament were not to atone for sin. They were a symbol of the covenant between God and Abram – a reminder of that covenant.
 - The animals used were:
 - Cow
 - Goat
 - Sheep/ram
 - Pigeon
 - Dove
 - The sacrifices were the Jews saying to God, "You promised to pay for my sin. Please keep your promise."

- God was so serious about this covenant that 400 years later He told Moses to remember this covenant promise in sacrifice every single day at 9 am and at 3 pm.
 - A lot of Biblical events from then on happen at 9 and/or at 3:
 - Elijah on Mt Carmel – God came down as lightening at 3
 -
- The sacrifices began at the Tabernacle (in the dessert), then continued in David’s Temple, and then also continued in the Temple in Jesus’ day. By Jesus’ day this had become a very elaborate ceremony.
 - In the morning and the afternoon a priest would stand at the altar with a lamb, a knife to its throat.
 - Another priest would stand on the highest point above ground over the Temple, called the pinnacle. He would have a shofar.
 - Someone would also be standing where there would be a sundial (or an hour glass if it was cloudy)
 - The signal would be given to the man with the shofar, and at 9 am and 3 pm he would blow it.
 - Shofar – the horn of a desert goat, reminds Jews of Abraham, their desert father.
 - The shofar would blow so everyone could hear, saying, *“We’re going to beg God to keep His promise.”*
 - In Jesus’ day, the entire city of Jerusalem (80-100k, up to 2m on high holidays) would become still and silent, because right after the blowing of the shofar the lamb would be killed, reminding God to keep His promise.
 - Jesus died on the cross just as the signal was given for the lamb to be slain.
 - *“It’s finished!”*
 - Jesus finished paying the blood for the covenant that had been promised to Abram.
 - God is a God of pictures, because pictures speak to the heart.
 - The picture is that Jesus was nailed to the cross at 9 am and He died at 3 pm
 - For over 1200 years this sacrifice had been performed every single day twice a day by the Jews, to say to God, *“Remember your promise!”*