

The God who keeps promises

What are the different types of relationships people usually have with God? Here are three common (incorrect) ways to have a relationship with God.

- The Super-Soft Grandfather
- Deism
- Mutual Back-Scratching

Before you decide how you will relate to God, make sure to understand the following

- God Cannot Be Manipulated (Acts 17:24)
- God Does Not Need Us (Acts 17:25)
- We Need God (Acts 17:25)

Moving Past Eden

- **After the fall, what happened to Adam and Eve?** They were kicked out of Eden. Adam lives 930 years and they have many sons and daughters over the course of hundreds of years.
- **Who are Adam and Eve's children?** The bible tells us of Cain and Abel first, but they had other children. We do not know how many. Shepherd Abel gives his best with a heart devoted to God, Cain gives little with a cold heart. Cain is called out. The first murder follows. Cain is cursed and became a "restless wanderer on the earth."
- **From Cain's lineage comes a fellow worth mentioning. Who was it? (Genesis 4:17-4:18) Lamech. What kind of person was Lamech? (Genesis 4:23-24)** Lamech was angry about his great-great-great-great grandfather being cursed by God. He bragged to his wives about his UNRESTRAINED death and killing.
- **What other son does the bible tell us about born from Adam and Eve?** Seth comes along and from his lineage comes Noah who would be chosen to build the ark. **Why was Noah chosen?** Not from perfection or righteousness, but for his genuine and sincere love for God. His righteousness was completely unmerited, but given by God still.
- **Abominations have gotten so bad, God has wiped out nearly all on the planet with the flood except for who?** Noah, his wife, his 3 sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their wives.

Lamech

- **How could God stop such UNRESTRAINED widespread chaos? How does God soon handle this problem?** God will soon bring forth a law system meant to 1) bring order to the land but still deliver justice to those wronged and judgement for those who do the wrongs. The "paybacks" and "judgements" will be restrained according to His word.

Noah

- **After the flood, what's one of the first things Noah does?** Yes, builds an altar to thank God. **Next?** Plants a vineyard, waits for the vineyard to grow all in the plans of getting completely drunk. He gets and passes out naked in his tent. Ham comes in and finds his dad in this state and goes and tells his brothers. **When Noah wakes up and finds out how Ham handled the**

situation. How does he respond and why? (Genesis: 9:24-27) Instead of handling things himself, he goes and tells his brothers (gossips and brings embarrassment to his father). **Can anyone relate to this?**

Tower of Babel

- **What kind of act of rebellion and pride does humanity take part in next?** (Genesis 11:3-4) Humanity once again turns egotistical and proud and builds a huge tower to “make a name for themselves” and defied God. God takes care of the problem.

Genesis Chapter 12: Enter Abraham

- **What’s the first thing Abraham is called to do?** Go, without questions or information, to what would eventually become the land of Israel (12:1). Abraham obeys, even with all the unknowns.
- **For Abraham’s trust and obedience, what is he given?** Abraham is given a promise by God Himself (12:2-3)
 - His descendants would be as numerous as the seas
 - A son was promised to him in his old age

Abraham Exposed

- Abraham prostitutes his wife out to the Egyptian ruler and lies to cover his own butt by telling them Sarah is his sister. He does this later on with another King in Gerar.
- Abraham is 75, his wife is old too, and they both know they cannot have a son. God promises him a son but Abraham gets impatient and sleeps with his slave and the whole thing is a messy story, but **God ultimately keeps His promise.**
- God gives them a son named Isaac.
- **Let’s stop there and talk about Abraham some before continuing...**

A Promise From God That Stands Out (12:3)

- “ALL peoples on earth will be blessed through you”
- **Who are ALL peoples? Just Israelites?** This is not JUST Abraham and his descendants. **ALL PEOPLES** will be blessed. God is graciously and sovereignly promising something, UNCONDITIONALLY to ALL HUMANITY. **What something?**

Then Comes Not Only Promise but COVENANT (17:1-10)

- **Both parties have some obligations. What are they??**
- God will...
 - Be there God
 - Secure the land for them and guarantee entire nations will come from him and the world will be blessed through them.
- Abraham and his descendants will...
 - Seal their allegiance to God
 - The males will be circumcised as a **sign** of their covenant.
 - Abraham fulfills his end of the covenant, all are circumcised. (17:23)

A Covenant Humans Cannot Mess Up

- **What question does Abraham ask God? (15:8).** Basically, “how can I know you will follow up with your end of the deal?”
- **How does God respond?** God responds with some instructions (15:9)
- **What happens in his dream?** Abraham gets his answer in a bizarre dream (15:11-18)

Covenants in the Ancient World

- In those days, covenants were sometimes established as follows between kings and regional superpowers:
 - They would take animals, tear them apart, and put them side by side with an alleyway between the two parts
 - The two parties would walk together between the divided animals to signify “May this be done to me if I break this covenant”
- Let’s return to Abraham’s dream:
 - **What happened in Abraham’s dream?** Abraham falls asleep and sees a smoking firepot and blazing torch pass between the torn animals. **What do you think is represented with the firepot and the torch?**
 - Abraham DID NOT walk with the firepot and torch between the animals. Just the torch and firepot passed between the divided animals. **WHY?** To help Abraham understand his answer, he used the way people already made covenants to answer Abraham. What is God trying to tell Abraham? God is taking FULL RESPONSIBILITY for fulfillment of the covenant
 - No matter what the people do, no matter how bad they mess up, God is telling us He will fulfill his side of the covenant. (The Christ WILL come to save us)

Thank Goodness for God Fulfilling the Covenant without Us

Let’s review and finish up the timeline up to Genesis Chapter 12:

- Abraham sins, is impatient with God, and prostitutes his wife out and lies. Abraham’s sin brings much turmoil to the family.
- Isaac, Abraham’s son, is a wimp and prostitutes his wife out and lies just like Abraham does.
- Isaac marries Rebekah and has twins. The younger (Jacob) is a trickster and deceiver. He deceives his brother (Esau) and steals his birthrights with the help of his mom Rebekah who lies to Isaac. God knew all this would happen and a certain heritage lineage is established generation after generation.
- Jacob has 12 sons, one of them sleeps with his father’s concubine, another sleeps with his daughter-in-law, and 10 of the sons cannot figure out whether to murder the 11th son (Joseph) or sell him into slavery. Joseph is sold into slavery.
- And these are the patriarchs!!!
- Years go by, The Israelites continue to make bad decisions and defy God’s will, but God still fulfills his side of the covenant. The covenant is not dependent on man. From them will come someone that will save humanity.

God’s Ultimate Test of Abraham

- **What does God command of Abraham as a test of his faithfulness and trust?** God commands the sacrifice of Abraham's son (22:1-2)
- The child asks Abraham what is going on (22:7-8)
- Abraham follows God's orders in sadness and despair, but is stopped (22:11-18)
- **What is the point of this madness?** Let's continue below...

A Look at Pagan Rituals

- In the pagan religions, it was not uncommon for parents to sacrifice their sons.
- One false God was Molech who was pictured holding a big stone pot in its hands. A fire would be built under the pot and parents would sacrifice their children.
- As heinous and disturbing as it was, these parents were showing their devotion to their false God.
- This is NOT what God wants!!

Why God Would Test This Way

- God tested Abraham in line with the cultural norms of the day
- God is seeing if Abraham had the same trust in Him as the pagans do their false Gods
- God stops Abraham and provides the sacrifice needed. (22:13-14)

How this all fits into our lives:

- **Based on these messed up individuals we call the "patriarchs", how much weight does God put into "works" or "actions"? Did these folks actions grant them favor with God?** God's promise of a savior is not dependent on anything human beings do. God deemed these people righteous based on their inward love and obedience to God, not their many failures and shortcomings.
- For all the failures in your life, God STILL provides the sacrificial lamb that will freely cover your sins.
- God does not want a sacrifice of some animal, he wants you to turn to Him in love and obedience through Jesus.