

COVENANTS SERIES | HOPE CHAPEL

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

Week 3 | God's Promises Rest on His Faithfulness
Sunday 15 March 2026 | 9AM Gawler

1 Adamic	2 Noahic	3 Abrahamic	4 Mosaic	5 Davidic / New
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Big Idea: *God's promises rest on his faithfulness, not on our performance. The covenant God made with Abraham was entirely one-sided. Abraham was asleep. God walked through alone. The promise rests completely on God.*

Introduction - Promises Made and Broken

Has anyone had a promise made to them that was broken? Most of us have. Small promises, big promises, promises that really cost us. And sometimes, because of how we experience broken promises from people, we project that onto God. We wonder: does God break promises too? Do his promises come with a catch? Are they based on my performance?

The Abrahamic Covenant answers those questions clearly and completely. God's promises rest on his faithfulness, not on our performance. That is the heart of this message, and of the entire covenant series.

Ten generations passed from Adam to Noah. Ten more from Noah to Abraham. This is not coincidence — the Bible never works that way. This is a plan, put in place before the foundation of the world. Abraham fits squarely in the middle of it. It was always going to go this way.

THE PROMISE Given — Genesis 12 & 15	THE PROMISE Tested — Genesis 22	THE PROMISE Fulfilled — Jesus Christ
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PART 1 | The Promise Given — Genesis 12 & 15

Genesis 12:1–3 *The Lord had said to Abraham, 'Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will*

bless those who bless you and I will curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.'

Notice: God speaks first. Abraham didn't put his hand up. He didn't have an impressive resume that got him the role. This was God's sovereign choice. He calls Abraham out of Ur and makes a promise with three specific parts:

- A land — a real place to live. God doesn't say, go find it. He says, I'll show you.
- A nation — a wild promise to a man with no children. Out of you will come a people.
- A blessing for all nations — the heart of it all. Not just for Abraham, not just for Israel. For every family on earth. All inclusive. That includes every person in this room.

God's blessing was always meant to push outward. It was never just for one person, one family, or one nation. It was for every single person who has ever lived on this planet.

Ten Years of Silence — Genesis 15

Genesis 15 takes place about ten years after the original promise. Abraham is still waiting. Sarah is still not pregnant. And Abraham, honestly and boldly, says to God what he's actually feeling:

Genesis 15:2 *What good are all your blessings when I don't even have a son?*

God doesn't rebuke him. He takes him outside into the night sky — the stars blazing overhead, no light pollution, the universe right on top of them — and says: look up. You're limiting my promise to one son. You're going to be the father of a universe of people.

The Ceremony That Changes Everything

God then seals the promise in a way every person in that culture would have understood immediately. Animals are killed, cut in half, and laid apart. Both parties making a covenant would normally walk between the halves together — symbolising: if I break this promise, what happened to these animals happens to me.

But then something extraordinary happens. Abraham falls into a deep sleep. And God — as a smoking fire and a blazing torch — walks through the animal pieces alone.

Abraham was asleep. God walked through alone.

This promise 100% depends on God. If this covenant ever breaks, the cost is his. Promise before performance. Covenant before conduct.

God plus nothing equals everything. Before Abraham has done a single thing, God says: I'm yours. Completely and entirely one-sided. This is the same covenant God makes with us. The promises he has made to you are just as one-sided. Your standing before God is held together by his faithfulness and what he has already done.

Reflect: *Most of us believe that God exists. But what we can doubt is that he is actually committed to us in the same way he was committed to Abraham. We think the promises are for someone else — someone who has it more together, who hasn't done what we've done, who hasn't failed the way we've failed. But God locked himself into Abraham before Abraham did anything. He has locked himself into you the same way.*

PART 2 | The Promise Tested — Genesis 22

Decades pass. Abraham fails repeatedly — he lies about Sarah in Egypt to protect himself, tries to fulfil the promise through his own plans, and then does the exact same thing in a different city. The Bible doesn't whitewash its heroes. It shows everything, because God wants us to see that we are in the same position. We fail too. All the time. And that's okay.

Finally, Isaac is born. The son of the promise. And now all of it can start coming true. And then God does something that almost breaks the whole story:

Genesis 22:1–2 *God tested Abraham. He 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.'*

There is no record of Abraham complaining, bargaining, or hesitating. He gets up in the morning, cuts the wood, and goes. They walk for three days — seventy-two hours. Every conversation on that path. Every night by the fire. Every time Isaac looked over and said, Dad, where's the lamb?

Abraham answered: 'God himself will provide the lamb, my son.' He didn't know the full weight of what he was saying. But he spoke more truly than he could ever know.

They reach the mountain. Abraham binds Isaac, lays him on the altar, and raises his knife. At that final moment, an angel calls out:

Genesis 22:12 *Do not lay a hand on the boy. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your only son.*

Abraham looks up and sees a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. A substitute. The ram dies in Isaac's place. And Abraham names the place Jehovah-Jireh — the Lord will provide.

What Was Abraham Thinking?

Hebrews 11:17–19 *Abraham reasoned that God was able to bring the dead back to life. And in a sense, Abraham did receive his son back from the dead.*

Abraham had worked through the logic of faith: either God stops this, or God raises Isaac afterwards. Either way, the promise holds. The land. The family. The blessing to all nations. He trusted so completely in God's faithfulness that he concluded the promise was secure no matter what happened.

Reflect: *We live between Genesis 12 and Genesis 15. We have heard from God, we believe the promise, and we are waiting. Maybe for a child, a prodigal to come home, grief to lift, a diagnosis to change. God's silence is not a no. God's delays are not always denials. The same God who took Abraham outside and said, 'Look up at the stars' — he knows your name the same way. He hasn't moved on. He sees you today.*

PART 3 | The Promise Fulfilled — Jesus Christ

This story is a shadow cast 2,000 years forward. Look at the details:

- A father and a son
- Wood carried up a mountain
- A sacrifice
- Mount Moriah

Isaac carried the wood up the slopes of Mount Moriah for his own sacrifice. Nearly 2,000 years later, another son climbed that same hill. A father and a son. Wood. A mountain. A sacrifice.

Genesis 22	The Cross
Isaac carries the wood	Jesus carries the cross
Mount Moriah	Golgotha — the same hill
A ram caught in a thicket — a substitute	Jesus — Jesus was that lamb
God stayed Abraham's hand	This time, the Father did not stay his hand

This time there was no ram in the thicket. Because this son — Jesus — was the ram. He was the substitute. God himself provided the lamb. Jehovah-Jireh. Now we know where that name for God comes from. Now we know what Abraham was saying when he said it.

And through Jesus, the promise to Abraham reaches its complete fulfilment. All the families of the earth are blessed through the offspring of Abraham — through Christ. The covenant God made in the dark, walking through animal pieces alone while Abraham slept, finally and completely comes good at the cross.

Conclusion

God's promises rest on his faithfulness, not on our performance.

Before you've done anything, he says: I'm yours. Completely one-sided. God plus nothing equals everything.

Abraham is in the hall of faith in Hebrews, listed as a hero. And yet the Bible shows every one of his failures. Why? Because God wants us to see that we are in the same position as Abraham. We fail too. And the promise still holds. Because it rests on God's faithfulness, not ours.

The same God who named the stars knows your name. The same God who took Abraham outside in the dark and said, look up, sees you today. He hasn't moved on. His silence is not absence. His delays are not denials. The promise still stands.

Reflection & Discussion Questions

Use these on your own during the week, or with your LifeGroup.

1. Has a broken promise from a person ever affected the way you see God's promises? How does understanding the one-sided nature of the Abrahamic covenant challenge that?

2. God walked through the animals alone while Abraham slept. The promise was entirely God's to keep. How does it change things to know your standing before God depends on his faithfulness, not your performance?

3. Abraham waited ten years between Genesis 12 and 15 before voicing his doubt to God. Is there a promise you're still waiting on? What would it look like to bring that honestly to God, the way Abraham did?

4. The Bible doesn't whitewash Abraham — it shows his failures alongside his faith. How does that give you permission to be honest about your own failures while still holding to faith?

5. Abraham told Isaac, 'God himself will provide the lamb,' without knowing how true that was. Can you think of a time you spoke faith over a situation and later saw how completely God honoured it?

6. The shadow of Genesis 22 falls all the way to the cross — same hill, same wood, same sacrifice, but no ram in the thicket this time. How does seeing the Abraham story through the lens of Jesus change the way you understand what God did at Easter?

Key Scriptures This Week

- Genesis 12:1–3 — The original promise: land, nation, blessing to all families
- Genesis 15:1–6 — Look up at the stars; righteousness credited as faith
- Genesis 15:17–18 — God walks through the covenant alone; Abraham asleep
- Genesis 22:1–18 — The testing of Abraham; Jehovah-Jireh
- Hebrews 11:17–19 — Abraham reasoned God could raise the dead; the hall of faith
- Galatians 3:16, 29 — The complete fulfilment of Abraham's promise is in Christ

Where We Are in the Series

- Week 1 ✓ The Adamic Covenant — Identity, consequence, the first promise of redemption
- Week 2 ✓ The Noahic Covenant — Renewed purpose, renewed life, renewed grace
- Week 3 ✓ The Abrahamic Covenant — God's promises rest on his faithfulness (THIS WEEK)
- Week 4 ✓ The Mosaic Covenant — Rescue grounds obedience; the law looks inward
- Week 5 ✓ The Davidic Covenant — Permanent protection, presence, and love
- Easter ✓ The New Covenant — The climactic fulfilment of everything in Jesus

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