

## • LESSON 2 (January 8) •

# The God of Covenants

The word *covenant* is found 311 times in the Bible. That's significant. Any time such a specified word appears such a large number of times in God's written revelation to mankind, we should pay attention. We are being taught something, and what we are being taught is worthy of our attention.

- ❖ In your own words, what is a covenant?
  
- ❖ Can you think of some modern examples of covenants?
  
- ❖ Why are covenants even a thing? Why do people enter into them?
  
- ❖ On what do covenants depend? What makes them work? What makes them fail?

### GENESIS 17 AS AN EXAMPLE

We will get into the specifics of the covenant God made with Abraham in a later lesson. For now, carefully read what God did in Genesis 17.

When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly." Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, "Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."

And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations." (Gen 17:1-9)

- ❖ What stands out to you about God's interaction with Abraham? What can we learn, especially as we are looking to grow in our understanding of the nature of covenants?
  
- ❖ In our last lesson, we talked about promises. We know that God has made a great many promises throughout human history, but how is his interaction with Abraham in Genesis 17 different? Is there any difference between a promise and a covenant?

### **JEREMIAH 31 AS AN EXAMPLE**

Again, we will get into the specifics of the covenant God is foretelling through the prophet Jeremiah in a later lesson. For now, think through what God is communicating.

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” (Jer 31:31-33)

- ❖ How does this example enhance our understanding of what God means when he describes a covenant?
  
- ❖ In simple terms, what did God want with these people?
  
- ❖ What did God expect of these people?
  
- ❖ Putting everything we've learned in this lesson together, if I have entered into a covenant with God, what does that mean?