

Cutting the Covenant

WHAT WE FOUND

- God answered Abram's honest complaint with stars, and verse 6 became the hinge of the Bible: "he believed the LORD; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness." Right standing is received by trust before it is expressed in anything else.
- To cut a covenant, the parties passed between the halved animals, in effect calling the animals' fate down on themselves if they broke their word (see Jeremiah 34:18). In Genesis 15, only the smoking fire pot and the flaming torch, the sign of God's own presence, pass between the pieces while Abram sleeps: the covenant's ratification rests on God's oath, and Christian readers have long heard in it a foreshadowing of the Cross, where God takes the covenant curse upon Himself (cf. Galatians 3:13).
- We opened our sealed guesses tonight and traced the route: "very good" broken, the seed promised in the ruins (3:15), the line carried through flood and scattering, and now sworn with God Himself walking the death-path alone.
- Genesis 16 is what forcing a promise looks like: nobody clean, nothing advanced. And the angel of the LORD's first appearance in Scripture is to a used and discarded slave, who gives God the name no one else ever gives Him: El Roi, the God who sees me.
- God gives what Babel grasped: new names (Abraham, Sarah), and a covenant sign cut into the flesh, given at eight days old: grace embracing its members before they can choose, earn, or understand, the logic baptism inherits (Colossians 2:11–12).

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

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St. Irenaeus of Lyons · *Against Heresies, Book IV*

Abraham is the father of believers because he followed the Word of God: righteous by faith before Law or circumcision, so that the Church of every nation, believing the same Word, is his true family.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH

St. Thomas Aquinas · *Summa Theologiae III, q. 70*

Circumcision was a profession of faith cut into the body, given even to infants, drawing its power from faith in the Christ to come; it prefigures baptism, the circumcision of the heart.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH

St. Catherine of Siena · *The Dialogue*

Christ crucified is the Bridge stretched between heaven and earth: God does not shout instructions from the far bank; He makes Himself the way. The study's gloss: Abram asleep while God walks the death-path alone already sketches this Bridge, God Himself becoming the way.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- Go outside one clear night, look up until you lose count, and pray Genesis 15:6 over the promise you find hardest to trust.
- Name your Ishmael-project, write “El Roi sees me” beneath it, and fast from forcing it for seven days.
- Find out your baptism date if you do not know it, and thank God for a covenant that embraced you before you could earn it.
- Read Genesis 18–21; note every place someone laughs, and who is listening at tent doors.

MEMORY VERSE

“And he believed the LORD; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness.” (Genesis 15:6)

BEFORE NEXT SESSION

Read Genesis 18–21 before next session.

Catechism references: CCC 145–146, 527, 705–706, 762, 1150, 2570.