

A Sign is not Assign

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 17

In Genesis 17, God reminds Abram of his promise. Verse 5 says “***no longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham for I have made you the father of a multitude.***” This is significant because when God changes your name in the bible there is an accompanying change of the heart that God has introduced into the life of that person. God further commanded Abraham to have all men in his household to be circumcised as a sign of God’s covenant with Abram.

What does the word sign mean? And how is it different from assign?

1. it is a mark, an indication, a token
2. that which makes one distinguished from others
3. it can be a warning or an admonition
4. it can be an omen, a beacon, a monument, an evidence, or prodigy

To assign, on the other hand, means to:

1. to give or allocate
2. to give out or announce as a task
3. to appoint as to a post or duty
4. to designate or to specify.

SIGNS

Let us look at some signs and what people have made them out to be:

1. Rainbow – it was a sign of God’s promise to Noah after the flood in Genesis 9.
2. Bronze Serpent – God commanded Moses to make a bronze serpent, so that those who look upon it will be healed in Numbers 21. It became an object to worship, so that in 2 Kings 18, we see that King Hezekiah had it destroyed.
3. Book of the Law – Joshua 1 God commanded Joshua to read, meditate and to obey the Bible and He then promised that they will be blessed. But what did the Israelites do? They began to worship the Word of God. Jesus tells the Jews in John 5:39 ***You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; ⁴⁰and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.*** The Word of God, the Bible is meant to transform us and not merely inform us. Jesus is telling us that while it is important for us to read the bible, it is not the bible who will give us salvation. Only a personal relationship with Jesus Christ will do this. Let us not assign anything to the sign. What then is the purpose of the Bible? Romans 3:19-20 says ***Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are ^[a]under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; ²⁰because by the works ^[b]of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for ^[c]through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.*** It is through the law, through reading the bible then we will realize just how sinful we are compared to our holy God. It is there to make us aware how separate we are from God. It is there to make us realize how much we need a Savior.
4. Circumcision - They also did the same to God’s command for circumcision which was to be a sign of the covenant between Abraham and God (Genesis 17:11). The Israelites later on assigned salvation to circumcision. In Acts 15:1 we are told that ***Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”*** Moreover in verse 5 it says ***But some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed stood up, saying, “It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses.”*** But James tells the crowd in verses 10-11 that it is not in the obedience to the law but rather it is through the grace of the Lord Jesus that all are saved.

was given new meaning. 1 Corinthians 1:11-17, Paul reminds us that though baptism is important more important than that is the preaching of the Gospel. We go through baptism, because it was commanded to us in Mathew 28:18-20. Baptism is the symbolism of our identification in the death of Christ and in His resurrection. It is also a symbol of the new-ness of our life in Christ.

6. Communion – 1 Corinthian 15. When Jesus had the last supper with His disciples, He showed the bread and wine and told them the symbolism for which they are to stand for. The problem is this has been taking out of context and ascribed a different meaning. This is not something we have to do repeatedly in order for us to be saved, Hebrews 10: 11-12 tells us that Jesus Christ offered one sacrifice for all sins for all time and then sat down at the right hand of the Father. He did it only once and it was for all time. His sacrifice was perfect and complete, it encompasses all sins past, present and future for all who have been sanctified.

SEQUENCE (Genesis 15:5-6)

What is the correct sequence? When God gave Abraham the promise, Abraham believed. The object of his faith was God and it was because of this that God credited it to him as righteousness. Abraham was not righteous, it was God who declared him righteous because of his faith. When we come to Jesus Christ, we are likewise declared righteous because of our faith – but the question is do we live righteous lives?

So the sequence is: hear the Word of God --- believe the Word of God --- we have to make a decision, then God will take care of the rest. Ephesians 1:13 – 14 says *In ^[a]Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also^[b]believed, you were sealed in ^[c]Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is ^[d]given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.* It is the Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of our redemption. It is the presence of the Holy Spirit in us, that we can claim a relationship with the Father that will not change. It is when we are in dwelt with the Holy Spirit, then we begin to produce the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

SOLUTION (Romans 2:28-29)

We need to be circumcised in the heart by the Holy Spirit, so that we can see who we really are in the light of God’s holiness. So what do we need to do? John 3:3 says *Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born ^[a]again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”* We have to believe in Jesus Christ then we are born of the Spirit (John 1:12-13) and fix our eyes of Jesus who is the perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:2).

APPLICATION:

Patiently listen as God reveals where you can apply the passage’s lesson in your life. Write down specific action points to what He has revealed to you.

	<p>Personal: Think about this: “We do not obey God’s commandments to be saved, rather we are saved that is why we obey. “ Is this statement true in your life or do you find yourself still trying to earn your salvation? True test of our faith. When we face trials and problems, how do we respond to it?</p>
	<p>Family: The Holy Spirit in us. Talk about the permanence of our relationship to the Father when we received Jesus as our Lord and Savior. How is this evident in our life? Do we live or lives as the co-heirs of heaven that we are? Fruits of the Spirit: What are the fruits that are evident in our life? How are we using these fruits to share the gospel to others?</p>
	<p>Discipleship: Are we intentionally discipling our family? Do we live out our salvation? Do I belong to a discipleship group? Am I obeying the command to make disciples?</p>
	<p>Church/ Ministry: In the light of all that is happening in the world today, how am I actively and intentionally sharing the gospel to those who are around me?</p>

PRAYERS:

Lift all the things that you learned back to God. Share your thoughts to Him. If He is impressing a sin in your life, confess it to Him. He is always ready to forgive.