

THE GREATEST PERSISTENCE IN LOVE

the first rainbow, the idea of the circumcision, the Muslims' origins and the God's love in one short story

In the beginning, it was Eden. “Eden” means pleasure. Adam and Eve were placed there and God made a covenant with them. The covenant consisted of two parts:

- “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it....”(Genesis 1:28)
- “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil ...” (Genesis 2:16-17)

Actually, the covenant had one part – faithfulness. They had to be faithful (by their free will), as God was and had to be. However, Adam and Eve were unfaithful and the initial covenant was broken.

After that came Noah : “But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons’ wives with you...” (Genesis 6:18).

There are interesting similarities between Adam and Noah.

- The Earth has been initially covered with water (Gen. 1:2) and in the flood during Noah’s life, waters once again covered the Earth (Gen. 7:19).
- Adam was putted in the Garden of Eden to work it (Gen. 2:15). Similarly, Noah was a farmer, a husbandman, after the flood (Gen. 9:20).
- The appeal to both of them was “... be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (Gen. 1:28 and Gen. 9:1).

Many more parallels exist (see <http://creation.com/adam-and-noah>)... So, the flood was like the new creation and Noah was like the new Adam, a new hope for faithfulness. Amazingly, according to the Bible, the first rainbow occurred as a result of Noah’s faithfulness (see Gen. 9:15-17). This beautiful phenomenon is said to be created then and indeed, it is hard to believe that it was created by chance (why did the physical laws determine exactly this incredible beautiful phenomenon, but not other, not so beautiful?).

However, at the end, the same way Adam illegitimately ate from the fruit, Noah illegitimately “ate from the fruit” by getting drunk with wine from the vineyard he planted (Gen. 9:21)! Another interesting analogy!

After that came Abram (later called Abraham): "... *The Lord made a covenant with Abram ...*" (Gen. 15:18). Abram received a promise from God (this was the God's part of the covenant) very similar to the previous promises to Adam and Noah. The promise is that he'll have many descendants.

"Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them. So shall your descendants be."

But, after several years, there is no indication that this is going to happen. The wife of Abram, Sarah, is childless and Abram is 86 years old... Then, similarly to the story of Adam and Eve, Sarah suggested Abram to do something. He agreed to lay with one of her handmaid called Hagar. So, Abram has a son from her, called Ishmael. The same Ishmael is a predecessor of all of the Muslims today... The latter even argue that it was Ishmael, not Isaac, Abraham almost sacrificed to God. (see <http://muslimvoices.org/ishmael-islam/>) and that both Jewish and Christians have come from the progeny of the same Ishmael...

That way, Abram and Sarah decided to create a way whereby God's part of the covenant would be fulfilled by them. Abram's job (his part in the covenant) was simply to believe in God's promises, but he didn't do that.

In fact, he decided to solve the problem through his maleness. Several years later, after Abram received the same message. *"I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you"*, God did something weird. He actually said to Abram (now called Abraham) – you will cut the tip of your penis and I will still fulfill my promise to you! (Indeed, Abraham had another son – Isaac) This was a symbol that one should not trust himself in order to fulfill God's promises, because this has been covenant of faith! This is what signifies the ritual of circumcision. An analog of the circumcision in the New Testament, although not exact, is the act of baptizing.

Although, Abraham was somewhat unfaithful, God fulfilled and continue the covenant not only with Abraham, but also with his descendants

(Isaac, Jacob and those after them ... the whole Israel).

To prevent future unfaithfulness God even gave the people a formal law – the Torah given to Moses. Nevertheless, the rest of the Old Testament is full of consistent unfaithfulness. All of the Jewish kings after Moses had been unfaithful, at least at some moment of their lives, including David, Solomon and those after them. We can read very often the words *"... He did what was evil in the eyes of the Lord .."* referring to almost any of these kings of Israel.

After that, came the astounding decision of God to fulfill both parts of the covenant. How? By sending his son on the Earth and establishing a covenant of true faithfulness with him!

Let's look at the prophecy about Jesus in

Isaiah 42:6 – “... I will give you as a covenant of the people and as a light to the Gentiles”

and also in

Isaiah 49:8 – “... and I will keep you and give you for a covenant of the people, to restore the Earth” [restoring the Earth was exactly what Adam and Noah had been supposed to do].

An interesting transition. Now, Jesus is the covenant itself. Jesus is putted at the place of Israel. Amazingly, we can see how Jesus traces the history of Israel, as described in the Gospel of Matthew in a really astonishing way.

Old Testament	New Testament
A man called Joseph had dreams and he lead the children of Israel out of Egypt	[Matthew, Chapter 2] A man called Joseph had dreams and he lead the small children Jesus out of Egypt
After they came out, they crossed the Red Sea	[Matthew, Chapter 3] Jesus is baptized
After crossing the sea, children of Israel go wondering into wilderness in the desert for 40 years	[Matthew, Chapter 4] After the baptizing, Jesus is wondering into wilderness in the desert for 40 days
The law is given to the mount Sinai	[Matthew, Chapter 5-6] Jesus talks about the true meaning of law on a mountain.

For me, this story¹ is a clear evidence at least that the Bible is a set of books with very deep meaning and consistency (and even evidence that God exists!).

¹ This text is based on the sermon of David Asscherick – “The new covenant” [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mjWd2XV-tS8>]