



OPENING COMMENT

Genesis 15 gives us intimate insight into the relationship between God and Abram. As Abram struggles to understand how and when God's promises will come to fruition God reveals himself more fully to the man. Yet, even here, at the beginning of the relationship with the people of God the roles and responsibilities are outlined. God is a God of faithfully declaring and keeping promises and his people are people who believe those promises.

READ THE TEXT: Genesis 15

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." ²But Abram said, "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" ³And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." ⁴And behold, the word of the Lord came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." ⁵And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." ⁶And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

⁷And he said to him, "I am the Lord who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess." ⁸But he said, "O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" ⁹He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." ¹⁰And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. ¹¹And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.



¹²As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. ¹³Then the Lord said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. ¹⁴But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. ¹⁶And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

¹⁷When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. ¹⁸On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, ¹⁹the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, ²⁰the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, ²¹the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites."

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

1. In Light of Genesis 14, why is God declaration as shield significant?
2. What is Abram's complaint?
3. What made Abram righteous in God's sight?
4. What are the components of God's promises to Abraham? (vs. 13-16)
5. What is the covenant God makes with Abram in verses 18-20?

APPLYING THE TEXT

1. This passage is full of God making promises to Abram. He promises abundant offspring, he promises judgement on the nations that persecute his people, he promises deliverance, and he promises the land. All of this Abram believed and it was counted as righteousness. What promises has God made in his word that you struggle to believe?
2. God grants Abram a look into the future in verse 13-14. How might we better understand suffering, and God involvement in it from a passage like this?
3. How does verse 16 help us understand the wrath of God, particularly in the Old Testament as he instructs Israel to "devote to destruction" the people they conquer?
4. The ritual covenant pictured here is a declaration of "I should be cut in half like these animals should I fail to keep my promises" by the party making the promise. In Hebrew, the word is actually to "cut" a covenant. How does this frame the promises of God to his people moving forward? Particularly in light of the new covenant in Jesus blood?
5. How does a passage like this help us live as ambassadors for Christ in a world that is not our home?



BIBLICAL THREAD

1. Exodus 1 – The prophecy of oppression comes to fruition.
2. Exodus 12:33-42 – The prophecy of deliverance and possessions is confirmed.
3. Joshua 13-18 – the promise of the land is fulfilled.
4. Galatians 3:1-9 – Paul expounds on Abram’s faith leading to righteousness.
5. Hebrews 11:8-12 – Abraham’ faith in the promises of God outlined.
6. James 2:14-26 – James argues that Abraham’s faith produced good works.

CONCLUSION

This passage points to an unwavering God who knows the future and remains faithful to his promises. He is not flippant or unconcerned with the plight and struggle of his people. He has a plan that is grander than our understanding and is faithful to it. His plan spans generation after generation and is for the good of those who believe His promises. Abraham believed and it was counted to him as righteousness.

The beauty is that God continues to promise a future and a hope for those who cast themselves in faith on his work and word. He was faithful to Abram in bringing about the promises made in this passage and He is faithful towards us. We can expect, with full assurance, the promises of God to come to fruition in our lives, for our good, and for His glory.

SHARE & PRAY

LIFE GROUP VISION:

The goal to meeting together around the word of God is three fold. First, we want to more clearly understand what God is saying to us through his Word and apply it to our own hearts and minds. Secondly, we want to build a loving community with each other to disciple one another toward maturity in Christ. Thirdly, we desire each of us, as ambassadors of Christ, to look outwards to our community and ask how we can bring the truth of the gospel to bear on those whom God has placed in our lives.

