

## **Day 14 - SATURDAY: November 5th**

### **Genesis 15**

Genesis 15:1-21 NKJV After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!" And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. Then He said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it." And he said, "Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?" So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him. Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. On the

same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates—the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."

### **Daily Deep Dive:**

Verse 6 – Abraham trusted and had faith in God. This is no small statement and is later quoted in Romans 4:3 as proof that we are brought into a right relationship (justification) with God through faith, not through something we can physically do. While obedience to God is required, no amount of obedience can ever bring us into a right relationship (justification) with God. Justification is possible only through Faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Lord & Savior.

Verse 9 through 18 – God makes a covenant with Abraham.

There have already been several other covenant's made in the Bible (Eden, pre-flood Noah, post-flood Noah). Covenant's are a major part of the Bible and form the lens through which we understand prophecy.

There is so much to be said on these covenant's that I'm currently studying & hoping to give a series of sermons in the near future on covenants.

Verse 18 – NKJV of the Bible says "the Lord made a covenant with Abram..." The Hebrew for "made" means "to cut". The phrase literally means to "to cut a covenant". When covenant's were made in ancient times, they were made binding by killing & cutting an animal. Even in our English language, we still use the term "to cut a deal" which seems to have stemmed from this ancient practice. Non-biblical documents from the first millennium before Christ imply that the cutting of the animals represented what would happen to a person who broke the covenant.

Backing up to verse 17 – It appears the smoking furnace and burning lamp were signs of God's presence (similar to the pillars of cloud & fire in

Exodus). What we see here is that God is shown to have passed through the cut animals essentially promising Abraham that all this will surely happen. Hebrews 6:13 tells us “For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself,”

There is no life great than that of Almighty God. This was a powerful message to Abraham. Abraham did not pass between the animals. This promise was unconditional in that God would absolutely bring about the Savior of the world through this family line.

It’s worth noting, that the five different animals (verse 9 – heifer, goat, ram, turtledove & pigeon) were the same that were allowed/commanded to be sacrificed under the Mosaic law.

We’ll finish this week by reading the UCG reading program for this chapter:

“Once again, the promises God made to Abraham are about to be expanded. This is a frequent pattern in Genesis—promise or covenant followed by expansion.

The events narrated here occurred some years after Abraham had come out of Haran and into Canaan in obedience to God’s call. He had as yet no child, neither by Sarah nor by any other woman. Here he was an old man, years after God’s promise was first given, and there was no sign of the fulfillment of that promise. But, as Paul wrote in the book of Romans, speaking of Abraham when he was even quite a bit older and at an age when he would be unexpected to be able to father children, “Not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead” (Romans 4:19). Abram had confidence that God would fulfill His word. For he walked by faith, not by sight.

Nevertheless, the wait was difficult.

When God appeared to Abram in a vision and assured him of protection and reward, Abram reminded God that he had as yet no child, and that according to custom Abram’s steward, Eliezer, would become his heir. God then took Abram outside into the night and showed him the stars, saying: “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.... So shall

your descendants be” (Genesis 15:5). The magnitude of this promise can often be lost on us in our modern world, for man has so fouled the air with pollution and has so obscured the starry brilliance of the heavens with our city lights that the number of stars we can behold on any given night is often a paltry few. But go out into the desert, or up on a mountain, on a clear night and, with this scripture in mind, you will be astounded by what you behold. Imagine, then, how Abram felt. Though awestruck, no doubt, “Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness” (verse 6, NIV). God promised multitudinous descendants to Abram, but He also promised that they would be enslaved for a period of time before being delivered with great wealth. The period of 400 years mentioned in verse 13 is not the period of their slavery. Biblical chronology indicates that Israel was enslaved for just over 200 years. The 400 years appear to date from Abraham’s death to Israel’s possession of the Promised Land (though there are other possibilities).

But why was there to be a delay in Israel’s possessing the land and servitude to a foreign nation? One reason is expressly stated. God says that the iniquity of the Amorites, who dwelt in Canaan, was not yet full—meaning that God was extending mercy to them, allowing them time to repent. God deals justly with all people, and He often delays punishment until the situation shows no hope of betterment. But another reason for the delay and servitude was probably to condition Israel. If Israel had developed in the land, unmolested, they may have acquired a general disposition of rejecting any dealings with God whatsoever—“Who needs God if everything is fine,” human reasoning says. But by allowing Israel to be enslaved, they would be humbled and willing to listen. Though they ultimately displeased God by rebelling against Him, they undoubtedly went further in serving Him than they otherwise would have. As God told Paul, in weakness we can be made strong (2 Corinthians 12:9; compare Hebrews 11:34). Additionally, if Israel would be taken out of slavery and made great, the credit for the greatness would more obviously be God’s.” [END]