

Genesis 15

Scriptures:

Genesis 12:2-3 - I will make you a great nation;

I will bless you
And make your name

great;

And you shall be a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you,

And I will curse him who curses you;

And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Genesis 14:14 - Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were **born in his own house**, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.

Psalms 44:21 - Would not God search this out?

For He knows the secrets of the heart.

Notes:

Faith = righteousness is not new with Abram. Abel, Enoch, and Noah all modeled faith that God accounted as righteousness.

The context of chapter 15 is chapter 14. Four northern kings wage war all around Canaan. Abram's nephew Lot is swept up in this conflict. Abram rescues him and everyone else in a tremendous victory by God.

It is not uncommon for spiritual attack to follow spiritual victory. Abram is beset with fear and doubt. The same thing happens with Elijah and the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18-19).

Abram had just defeated four powerful kings. They were now his enemies. He may have been afraid that they would come back stronger to take revenge.

God had promised to make Abram a great nation (Gen. 12:2-3). When God made that promise, Sarai was barren. After everything that has happened, Sarai is still barren. Culturally, it was very important to have children. Others in his household are having children (Gen. 14:14). Little children are all around him. Doubt and fear are creeping into Abram's heart and mind. Will God keep His Word? Is it even possible?

It doesn't indicate if Abram expressed his fear and doubt. God knows our secret thoughts (Psa. 44:21).

Scriptures:
Hebrews 4:13 - And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

Psalms 63:3-5 -
Because Your lovingkindness is better than life,
My lips shall praise You.
4 Thus I will bless You while I live;
I will lift up my hands in Your name.
5 My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness,
And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.

Job 1:20-22 - Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.

¹ After these things the word of the Lord came to

1697 -

Notes:
'vision' – supernatural communication from God that includes a visual element.

God knew that Abram was afraid of something, even if he didn't vocalize it (Heb. 4:13).

Abram told the king of Sodom that he would take nothing that the king could use as leverage against him. It is likely that Abram got no reward at all from rescuing Lot.

'your shield' – Abram was afraid of the new enemies he had created by rescuing. God is telling Abram that no enemy can get past Him, if only he will believe.

'exceedingly great reward' – Didn't get a reward for rescuing Lot. God is all the reward you need!

'exceedingly great reward' – if all you have is this life is God – is that enough? The answer should be, 'yes!' (Psa. 63:3-5)

Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid,

4236 -

3372 -

Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great

4043 -

3966 – used as an intensive or superlative

7235 -

reward."

7939 -

Scriptures:

² But Abram said, “Lord God, what will You give

5414 -

Notes:

Abram attempts to justify his doubt and fear. Ever share the truth with someone and have them respond ‘yeah, but...’? That is what Abram is doing here.

‘Eliezer’ – only mention in Genesis

me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my

house *is* Eliezer of Damascus?”

Scriptures:

³ Then Abram said, “Look, You have given me no

Notes:

Abram comes up with a natural process for God to fulfill His promise to Abram of descendants. The practice of adopting a servant provide an heir for the family was common where Abram had come from.

offspring; indeed one born in my house is my

heir!”

Scriptures:

⁴ And behold, the word of the Lord ^A *came* to him, ^A

Notes:
This is a further clarification of the promise. Abram would be the biological father of the child through whom God would make him a great nation. IN the next chapter the question arises regarding whether Sarai will be the mother.

saying, “This ^{EWEE} one shall not be ^A your heir, but one

who will come from ^A your own body shall be ^A your

heir.”

Scriptures:

⁵ Then ~~He~~^A brought him ~~outside~~^A and said, “Look

Notes:
Abram was accustomed to looking up into the heavens. He came from a people who worshipped the moon-god – Nanna.

now toward heaven, and count the stars if ~~you~~^A are

able to number them.” And ~~He~~^A said to him, ~~him~~^A, “So

shall ~~your~~^A descendants be.”

Scriptures:

Matthew 16:13-17 -

When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"

14 So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

⁶ And ^Ahe believed in the ^ALord, and ^AHe accounted it

539 -

2803 - "To deem or reckon to be."

to ^Ahim ^{OK}for righteousness.

6666 - rightness

Notes:

'he believed' - we derive the word 'amen' from the Hebrew word here. It means that he accepted and agreed with God. If some says 'amen' in the form of a question, they are asking if you believe, agreed with, and accept what is being said.

Where did Abram's faith come from? Jesus asked His disciples who people said that He was? Peter responded, 'You are the Christ...' Jesus said that didn't come from man, but from God (Matt. 16:13-17).

Faith is like t-ball. God sets up the tee, places the ball on it, brings you up to the plate, and places a bat in your hand, and then invites you to swing. Faith is taking a swing.

This is not the first time Abram has believed God. He has been walking with Him for over a decade.

"Note that Abram is not described as doing righteousness, but his faith is credited as righteousness." (Hughes, 2004) page 225

This verse is quoted three times in the New Testament (Rom. 4:3; Gal. 3:6; James 2:23).

Scriptures:
Exodus 20:2 - I am the
LORD your God, who
brought you out of the land
of Egypt, out of the house
of bondage.

⁷ Then He said to him, “I *am* the Lord, who

Notes:
The Lord will use almost identical
language with Moses at Mount Sinai
as He gives him the Law ([Exo. 20:2](#)).

brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give

you this land to inherit it.”

Scriptures:

⁸ And he said, “Lord God, how shall I know that I

3045 -

Notes:
We can tell by God’s response that
Abram’s question was born out of his
faith. He believed God, but he didn’t
understand how God could do it.

will inherit it?”

Scriptures:

⁹ So He said to him, “Bring Me a three-year-old

Notes:

All these animals would be a part of the sacrificial system. This was not a sacrifice.

heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-

old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.”

Scriptures:

¹⁰ Then he brought all these to Him and cut them

Notes:

Abram knew exactly what God was doing. This was a custom in his homeland. Two parties who wanted to enter into a covenant with each other would take an animal and cut it in two. They would then walk between to two parts in a self-imposed curse that should either of them break the covenant that they should become like the severed animal.

in two, down the middle, and placed each piece

opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in

two.

Scriptures:

¹¹ And when the vultures came down on the

Notes:

carcasses, Abram^A drove them away.

Scriptures:

¹² Now when the sun was going down, a deep

Notes:

sleep fell upon Abram^A; and behold, horror *and*
367 - dread

great darkness fell upon him^A.

1419 -

2825 -

Scriptures:

13 Then He said to Abram: “Know certainly that

Notes:
'strangers in a land' = Egypt. Moses
telling this to the Israelites after they
had left Egypt after four hundred
years.

your descendants will be strangers in a land ^{EGYPT} that is

not theirs, and will serve them, and

they will afflict them four hundred ^{years}.

6031 -

Scriptures:
Exodus 12:35-36 - Now the children of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, and they had asked from the Egyptians articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing. 36 And the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they granted them what they requested. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.

14 And also the nation whom they serve I

will judge; afterward they shall come out with

1777 – to execute judgment

great possessions.

Notes:
Ten plagues of Egypt.

'great possessions – Egyptians were so eager for the Israelites to leave that they gave them anything they asked for (Ex. 12:35-36).

Scriptures:

15 Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in

Notes:

peace; you shall be buried at a good old age.

7965 – “shalom”
First occurrence!

Scriptures:
Romans 2:4 - Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

Leviticus 18:24 - Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you.

Acts 14:21-22 - And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."

^{ABRAM'S DESCENDANTS}
16 But in the fourth generation they shall return

^{CANAAN}
here, for the iniquity ^{xxx} of the Amorites is not yet

5771 – perversity,
evil (moral), sin

complete."

8003 -

Notes:
'four hundred years' & 'fourth generation' = same period of time. Patriarchs lived a long time.

'Amorites' = the inhabitants of Canaan

'not yet complete' – The Amorites were exceedingly wicked and worthy of God's judgment. Instead of judging them when they deserved it, God showed mercy and waiting an additional four hundred years. This is an act of God's longsuffering kindness (Rom. 2:4).

They practiced every imaginable sexual perversion and violence was common, including child sacrifice. God warned the Israelites not to practice any of the practices of the Canaanites and told them that was why God was driving them out of the land (Lev. 18:24).

If God had judged Canaan when they deserved it, at least four hundred years of Canaanites would not have been born and lived lives in rebellion and wickedness. If God had not judged them when they did, hundreds of years more of them would have lived even more wicked lives than their ancestors.

The ultimate flood of Israelites into the Land under the leadership of Joshua was an act of God's justice finally being carried out.

Instead of questioning God's righteous judgment of the wicked we ought to be thanking Him for His patience for not judging us before we accepted Christ.

Abram learned that suffering would precede glory (Acts 14:22).

Scriptures:
Exodus 3:1-2 - Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed.

Galatians 3:13-14 - Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), 14 that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

¹⁷ 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.

Notes:
'smoking oven and a burning torch' = theophany – a visual manifestation of God! Moses would have a similar experience at the burning bush (Exo.3:2).

Abram was not invited to pass through the parts of the animals. This means that the covenant God is making is unconditional and unilateral.

"It was an acted-out curse, a divine self-imprecation (a spoken curse) guaranteeing that Abram's descendants would get the land or God would die. And God cannot die." (Hughes, 2004) page 234

God established an unilateral, unconditional covenant with His people. And then for two thousand years His people broke their covenant with Him. What more could God do? He took on human flesh and became a curse in our place (Gal. 3:13-14).

Scriptures:

18 On the same day the Lord made a covenant with

1285 – a
contractual
arrangement
between God and
humans

Notes:
First time the word 'covenant' is
used with Abram.

Abram, saying:

“To your descendants I have given this land, from

the river of Egypt to the great river, the

River Euphrates—

Scriptures:

¹⁹ the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites,

Notes:

Scriptures:

²⁰ the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim,

Notes:

Scriptures:

²¹ the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites,

Notes:

and the Jebusites.”

[Return to top](#)