

GENESIS 15

Expounding God's Word

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KEYWORD

REVERANCE

God (Plural)
God (Singular)
LORD
GOD
Lord
lord
El Olam
Bara
Asah
Beth
Numbers

Elohim (The Trinity)
El
Jehovah & or Yahweh (YHWH)
Jehovah & or Yahweh
GOD the Master (Kurios), Adonai
Man the Master
Everlasting God
God creating from nothing
God making or assembling from existent materials
House

- 1 - Unity between God the Father & His Son Jesus (John 10:30)
- 2 - Represents union, division, and verification
- 3 - Harmony, New Life & completeness (467 times)
- 4 - Creation & The creative ability of God.
- 5 - God's grace, goodness and favor toward humans (318)
- 6 - Imperfection of man and the sin and weakness he has
- 7 - Perfection
- 8 - New beginnings
- 9 - Divine completeness or conveys the meaning of finality (49)
- 10 - God's authority, completeness, order, and divine perfection
- 11 - Disorder, chaos and judgment (11 - 24 & "11th" - 19)
- 12 - God's power and authority (187)
- 13 - Rebellion
- 40 - Represent completeness or wholeness.
- 70 - Perfect spiritual order carried out with all power.

Keywords

“create” (bara), “make” (asah), and “form” (yatsar). In Isaiah 43:7 – All the three are used.

Jehova means the becoming one as God relates to man and man's needs and becomes to man whatever man may need

PRAYER

Blessed be God Most High, who has blessed us beyond measure in Sending his Son

Granting redemption through His blood,

The forgiveness of our sins;

Choosing us and calling us and filling us with His Spirit and sealing us with the Spirit of promise, making us his heirs forever.

In Jesus's name and everybody say Amen!

GENESIS 15

REVIEW

Genesis 15 consists of an extended encounter between Jesus and Abram and concludes with God's promise to Abram to give him and his descendants the land of Canaan.

Also the chapter begins with the "word of the Lord" coming to Abram in a vision. Abram takes the opportunity of this visitation from the Jesus to ask some hard questions.

First, addressing the promise that God will make of him a great nation, Abram respectfully points out that his current heir is a servant, not a son. He has no children. And, at this point, Abram is well over 80 years old.

God responds by showing Abram the stars. Using this as an analogy, God repeats His promise that Abram's descendants will be as numerous as to be uncountable.

In Genesis 15:6 (which reads "Abram believed God"), is one of the key verses in the entire Bible. Abram's belief in God is credited to him as righteousness. In the New Testament, both Paul and James quote this verse (Romans 4:3; Galatians 3:6; James 2:23), making it a cornerstone of the Christian teaching that God's acceptance of us comes by His grace and through our faith.

Even though Abram has faith, he respectfully asked Jesus one more question, in response to the repeated promise regarding the land of Canaan:

"How am I to know?" God doesn't reject Abram's request for reassurance. Instead He instructs Abram to gather five specific animals, to cut some in half, and to arrange them in a specific way.

Then Jesus causes a deep sleep to fall on Abram and reveals to Abram a prophecy about the future of his descendants. They will live as captives for 400 years in another country, serving that nation.

When the time comes, they will be released with abundant possessions and return to execute God's judgment on the Amorites and other inhabitants) of the land of Canaan. Abram learns that he will live to a good, old age.

Finally, God completes the covenant ritual in a dramatic fashion. Abram witnesses a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch pass through the pieces of the animals, a sight he would likely long remember as evidence of God's covenant promises.

God completes the covenant by describing both the southern and northern borders of the Promised Land, as well as identifying the peoples who would have previously occupied the various regions of the land when Abram's descendants would receive it as their own.

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GEN 15: 1

After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision,

(This is the first place where God is represented as revealing himself by his *word*.)

The **word of the LORD** came to the people of the Bible in many different ways.

- It came by a personal appearance of God as we did see with Jesus Christ
 - By an audible voice,
 - By visions or dreams,
 - By the ministry of angels,
 - By the working of the Spirit of God upon the mind,
 - By the making alive of a passage of Scripture to the heart
 - By the ministry of a prophet or preacher.
-

Here the LORD appeared to Abraham in a vision.

A vision is spiritual insight. We're surrounded by spirit beings and the spirit world is real.

Once in a while, God will open a person's eyes to behold the spirit realm and this is called a "vision."

It is while a person is in a state of being awake that he suddenly sees the spirit realm.

There were those prophets of God, who had a very keen insight into the spirit realm.

Remember the story of Elisha's servant when Ben-hadad's army surrounded them in Dothan in II Kings 6:14-17

"Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host; and they came by night, and compassed the city about, And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots.

And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw; and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."

With our limited vision, we often look at the circumstances and say, "LORD we've had it!"

Paul says don't look at the things which are seen, they are only temporal; while the things which are not seen are eternal.

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When we see the truth, it is often just the opposite of what the obvious seems to be.

God also speaks to people through dreams as He often did in the Old Testament. Again, this is an insight into the spirit realm. Now, it is important to realize that the spirit realm is timeless, and only man dwells within the time zones.

The spirit realm is outside of the time zone; so, then, when a person is able to see in the spirit realm, by vision or dream, it is not unusual for them to see into the future.

Oftentimes, speaking of the future as though it were the present.

God spoke face to face with Moses.

So often we read, for example, “The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, the prophet, saying...” and we wonder just how God said it to him.

It was interesting that when God finally spoke to Elijah, down in the area of Mount Sinai, that He spoke to him through the still small voice.

In the New Testament as John wrote the Book of Revelation, he said,

”I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day...”

And how the word came to him, we do not know. Much of it was in the form of a vision and he conversed with various characters, often in heaven; he would converse with the elders concerning the events and receive clarity of what was going on.

God can speak to people in different ways and it is wrong for us to confine God to any one pattern or way.

We are so anxious to put God in a box. We want to formulize God, such as, steps one, two, three, four, and then five will fall in line. It can’t be done.

- In Chapter One of the Book of Hebrews, the author tells us that God, who in diverse times and in diverse ways, spoke to the fathers by the prophets and has in these last days spoken to us by His Son.
- Even after the Revelation of Jesus Christ, God continued to speak through the Holy Spirit to the Church.
- In the Book of Acts the Holy Spirit said, *“Separate unto me Paul and Barnabas for the ministry wherein I have called them.”*

Have you ever wondered how the Holy Spirit spoke? We are told in that same verse that there were in that church certain prophets. My assumption would be that God spoke to them through the gift of prophecy.

When Paul told Timothy to stir up the gifts that were in him; he said they were given to him by the laying on of hands and by the word of prophecy.

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- There were times when the angel stood by Paul and encouraged him.
- The angel came to deliver Peter out of the prison.
- God spoke to them through angels.
- In Jerusalem, at a time of crises, the Lord stood by Paul and spoke to him and encouraged him.
- So, the Lord spoke directly to them, angels spoke to them, and according to the prophecy of Joel, God said, *"...I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions..."*

For the most part, God speaks to me through dreams and His word.

It is always exciting to me, when God causes His word to come alive to my heart and suddenly I begin to see and understand.

His word is illuminated and I begin to see and understand things I have never seen before and that excites me.

Here, **the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision.**)

saying, Fear not,

(This phrase, "fear not" is used over one hundred times in the scriptures. We have a tendency towards fear, but it is interesting that God so often addresses his servants, "Don't be afraid." Jesus told his disciples many times, "fear not.")

In the last episode we learnt that with 318 servants he pursued after these powerful kings, who had defeated the whole area towards the south, west, and east of him.

Now, he starts thinking, what if they regroup? What if they come back to get revenge?

Abraham probably became a little fearful as he began to think about all these things; so, the LORD spoke to him in a vision and told him not to be afraid.

God spoke to Abraham and told him not to be afraid.)

Abram; I am thy shield,

(Remember from the last Episode, Abram had just defeated a much larger army made up of a partnership of four kings.

So Abraham was probably thinking that he had no defence against these armies, if they came back; so, God gives him a *reason* to put away his fear by saying to him, "I am your shield."

God doesn't tell us **not be afraid** without giving us a reason to put away our fear.)

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and thy exceeding great reward.

(Abraham could have been remorseful that he didn't take some of the spoil and the LORD declared to him,

"I am your exceeding great reward." You've got me Abraham, you don't need anything else.

How true that is. The Lord is our inheritance.

If we would only understand that the person who possesses the Lord, possesses the resources that can never be diminished.

How sad, the person who relies upon his own strength. Though he be the strongest man in the world, his strength is still limited.

How blessed the man, who is going to trust in the strength of the Lord, no matter how weak he is. He is never without strength if he is trusting in the Lord.

That's the whole idea: The Lord is my strength, The Lord is my keeper.)

GEN 15: 2-3

²And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me,

(The anxiety to have offspring is intense and universal. In fact among the *Hindoos* the want of children renders all other blessings of no esteem.

Now, we know that Abraham was already very rich, in fact that is what perpetrated the separation from Lot. When they left Egypt, the Pharaoh enriched them so much that there was strife among their herdsmen. The land wasn't big enough for the two of them anymore.

Pick up episode 13 if you haven't already.

In the previous verse, the LORD said to Abraham,

"I am thy exceeding great reward."

Here now Abraham says,

"Yeah, but what good is that?" "I don't have any heir to pass it on to and I have more than I can ever spend."

Although Abram's question sounds like a complaint, it's however built on his faith in God's power and promises.

Abram believes God, but he cannot yet see a path to the things God has promised.

Instead of ceasing to believe, Abram takes the opportunity to ask his hard question to the source of his hope.

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Sometimes asking a hard question in prayer is the most faithful step a believer can take.

Acknowledging our own limitations to God, while asking for His wisdom, is a much better approach than suffering in silence or ignorance.

At times, admitting that we cannot understand God's plan is part of submitting ourselves to it)

seeing I go childless,

(Abram's bold honesty before the LORD is a wonderful example of prayer. Instead of holding in his frustration, he brought it before God with an honest heart.)

and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?

(The name Eliezer is an interesting name. It means, "God my help." One who helps is always a comfort.

In the New Testament, the Greek equivalent to Eliezer would be "paracletes."

Paracletes is one of the names given for the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said that He would pray the Father and He would give them another "paracletes."

The word in Greek means literally, one who comes along side to help.

Eliezer was Abraham's chief servant and head of the other servants.

Later on, we'll find that Eliezer is the one sent to Babylon to find a wife for Isaac. Abraham as the Father sends Eliezer, a type of the Holy Spirit, to search out a bride for his son.

It becomes a beautiful picture of the work of the Holy Spirit searching out a bride for the Son.

He took gifts and said, "My master's house is rich and he's a great man. I've brought some of the riches for you and want to take the bride back with me. He offered to Rebecca the gifts and put bracelets on her.

These gifts suggest the gifts of the Holy Spirit, by which we're adorned and drawn unto our bridegroom.

In the 22nd chapter of Genesis, when Abraham returns from the mount, after God stopped the sacrifice of Isaac and provided the ram; we read that Abraham came back to the servants and they journeyed back to Hebron.

There is no mention of Isaac. It doesn't say Abraham and Isaac returned, it just says Abraham returned.

Where was Isaac? No doubt he came back with Abraham, but the Holy Spirit is silent and doesn't tell us that. In fact, after the sacrifice, Isaac is not brought into the record again until Eliezer is returning with the bride.

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Isaac is out in the field meditating and he sees the camels coming and arises to meet the camels and to meet the bride.

Even so, Jesus, after his sacrifice, ascended into heaven and is out of the picture, on earth, until the Holy Spirit has prepared the bride to bring to Him and then shall He arise to meet His bride.

Here, in Chapter 15 of Genesis, is the only place that Eliezer's name is mentioned.

When he is sent by Abraham to get the bride, it only says that he was one of the chief servants.

This is totally in keeping with the character of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said,

"When He comes, He will not testify of Himself; but, He will testify of me."

So even as the Holy Spirit inspired the type, in the Old Testament, He is careful not to include his name in the ministry of getting the bride.

I have a problem with so much emphasis and talk on the Holy Spirit. He did not come to speak of Himself, but came to exalt and speak of Jesus Christ.)

³ And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed:

(If Abram died at that very moment, all that he owned would be passed on to one of his servants. Being well over 80 years old, this is not an unreasonable fear on Abram's part.

Even in this, Abram manages to express faith in God. Those who ask hard questions of God are, in fact, acting in faith.

Abram had not ceased to believe. If so, why speak to God, at all? He is not accusing God or rejecting God.)

and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

GEN 15: 4-5

And behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir..." Eliezer shall not be your heir. "...but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

(In the chronology of Abram's life, the fulfillment of *this* promise was still 15 years away. In Hebrews 6:11-12 it's written that:

And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

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Without a doubt we need faith and patience to inherit God's promises.

Take note **"From thine own bowels":**

God explained exactly what He meant in His promise to Abram. He meant that it wasn't a spiritual descendant who would inherit the promise (such as Eliezer), but an actual flesh-and-blood descendant. This was necessary, because we sometimes *misunderstand* God's promises.

It's very important for you to remember that. **The fact that God has not yet given what He promised does not mean He will not. Time does not empty God's promises of their power, even if waiting challenges our patience and, sometimes, our faith.)**

And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them;

(They had crystal clear skies with:

- No smog or air pollution of any kind in those days;
- No industries, automobiles or power plants to pollute the skies.
- No lights of cities to distract or diminish from the illumination of the canopy of stars,
- But only the blackness of the desert night.

Abraham looked up and saw the billions of stars that were in the heavens stretched above him, and God said, "So shall thy seed be."

There are those, who do suggest, that God has placed the Gospel in the stars.

When God said to count the stars and if thou be able to number them, so shall thy seed be; the Hebrew word for number means to "set in order" and not necessarily: one, two, three, etc.

Astrology is a sad perversion of the truth that God has placed within the heavens.

The book "The Gospel in the Stars" by Bollinger and also one with a similar title by Seiss, go through the Zodiac and show that originally God intended it to have the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In Psalm 19, we read, "The heavens declare the glory of God."

We usually say that means the vastness of His creation, but it is also possible that the story of redemption is there in the Zodiac; because, the real glory of God is the redemption of man.

We shy away from astrology and rightly so. Astrology deals in areas that God never intended man to get into and was forbidden in scripture by Isaiah the Prophet.

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It is foolish to think that astrological forces have an influence upon your life and to actually govern your life by these charts of the Zodiac.

The Wise Men were guided by a Star and they were able to read a message that others did not read.

It is quite possible when God is challenging Abraham to number the stars, He might be saying to consider the Gospel that is in the stars; because, God said, "So shall thy seed be."

The word for seed is singular "sperma."

Paul picks this up in the third chapter of Galatians 3:16 as he talks about this experience of Abraham looking up into the stars and receiving the promise of God.

"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."

Also, according to the book of Revelation 22:16:

One of Abraham's descendants – the greatest of his descendants – would be the *Bright and Morning Star*)

and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

GEN 15: 6

And he believed in the LORD;

(For Christians, this is one of the key verses in all the Old Testament.

It isn't that he just believed that God was going to give him a lot of kids or descendants because it wasn't seeds, plural but seed, singular.

It isn't that he just believed that God existed. Even demons know and believe this.

Plus just faith that God exists does not save; just faith that the promises of God are true does not save; but it is the faith in the Son of God, Jesus Christ, that brings salvation.

The faith that He died for my sins.

So, Abraham by faith believed this promise of God that his "seed" would come. We read in Romans, concerning Jesus, that He was of the "seed" of Abraham.

This is important, because, He was the "promised seed," the one that Abraham believed in and because of this, God declared him righteous.

God declares us righteous by the same action of believing in Jesus Christ. Abraham looked forward and believed the promise of God.

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We, now, look back at the fulfillment of the promise in the coming of Jesus Christ.

By our believing that Jesus died for our sins, paid the penalty for our guilt, took our place and was a substitution for us in His death upon the Cross; our faith in His death and resurrection is accounted to us for righteousness by God.

- Abraham was not accounted righteous because of his works, though he had many good works;
- Abram's heroic rescue of Lot, from chapter 14, was not credited to him as righteousness
- Nor by his keeping of the law, because it wasn't given yet.
- He was not accounted righteous by the act of circumcision because that was not given yet.
- We are not accounted righteous because we keep the rituals of the church or the laws of the church or have good works.

We are accounted righteous when we believe the promise of God through his Son and as such It is faith in God that makes people acceptable to God.

This idea is key to Christianity, and this verse is referenced by the New Testament writers in Romans 4:3, Galatians 3:6, and James 2:23.

Paul will write in Galatians 3:6 millennia after Abram saying all those who trust God are the sons of Father Abraham, who believed.

So when Abram put his trust in God, specifically in the seed, God credited this belief to Abram's account as righteousness.

i. There are essentially two types of righteousness:

- Righteousness we *accomplish* by our own efforts, and
- Righteousness *accounted* to us by the work of God when we believe.

ii. Since none of us can be good enough to accomplish perfect righteousness, we must have God's righteousness accounted to us by doing just what Abram did:

He believed in the LORD.

BTW: Abraham's faith was not perfect. There were many failures. Even after he believed and God found him righteous, we find Abraham lapsing in faith when Sarah suggested that he might take her handmaiden, Hagar, that he might have an heir of his own body.

In a few chapters, Abraham lies to Abimelech about Sarah being his sister and yet, God accounted his faith for righteousness; even as He accounts your faith for righteousness though it also may be imperfect)

and He counted it to him for righteousness.

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(This is one of the clearest expressions in the Bible of the truth of salvation by grace, through faith.

This also is the first time *believe* is used in the Bible and the first time *righteousness* is used in the Bible.

This basically is the New Testament gospel in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Later also quoted four times in the New Testament.

1. *What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." (Romans 4:1-3)*
 2. *Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. (Romans 4:9-10)*
 3. *And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness." Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. (Romans 4:19-24)*
 4. *Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? – just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. (Galatians 3:5-7).*
 5. Romans 4:9-10 makes much of the fact this righteousness was accounted to Abram before he was circumcised (later happening in Genesis 17). No one could say Abram was made righteous *because* of his obedience or fulfillment of religious law or ritual. It was faith and faith alone that caused God to account Abram as righteous.
 6. The faith that made Abram righteous wasn't so much believing *in* God (as we usually speak of believing in God), as it was *believing God*. Those who only believe *in* God (in the sense of believing He exists) are merely on the same level as demons (James 2:19.)
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GEN 15: 7

And He said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees,

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(As the LORD puts it, He brought Abram out of his old life, his former home, for this very purpose)

to give thee this land to inherit it.

(This wasn't the first time this promise was given (see also Genesis 12:1-3, 12:7, and 13:15-17).

After God accounted Abraham righteous, God is now reaffirming the promise to him. This is the reward of his faith.

He believed God and God accounted it to him as righteousness and now the LORD reaffirms the promise.)

GEN 15: 8

And he said, LORD GOD (*Adonai Yehovah*), whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?

(The power and clarity of the promise makes us somewhat surprised by Abram's response. Abram boldly asked God for *proof* of the *promise*.

Though God had just accounted Abram as righteous, Abram could still demonstrate some degree of doubt, as indicated by his question,

"How shall I know that I will inherit it?"

Abram experienced what many of us do. It was as if he said,

"I believe when I hear God say it, but five minutes later, I'm not sure – please prove it to me."

You need to understand that Abram had no title deed to the land, no certificate of ownership that another person would recognize.

Abram had nothing to make anyone else believe he actually owned the land.

All he had was the promise of God.)

GEN 15: 9-11

And He said unto him, take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.

(It is worthy of remark, that every clean animal allowed or commanded to be sacrificed under the Mosaic law is to be found in this list.

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It's also amazing that God was now giving to Abram an *epitome* of that law and its sacrifices which he intended more fully to reveal to Moses which was a shadow of the Lamb of God that would take away the sin of the world.

Based on the several animals which God ordered Abram to take:

The idolatrous nations are compared in the Scriptures to *bulls, rams, and goats*; for it is written,

- **Psalms 22:12:** *Many bulls have compassed me about.*
 - **Daniel 8:20:** *The ram which thou hast seen is the king of Persia. The rough goat is the king of Greece.*
 - **Daniel 8:21.** But the Israelites are compared to *doves*,
 - **Song of Solomon 2:14:** *O my dove, that art in the cleft of the rock.*
-

The *division* of the above carcasses denotes the *division* and *extermination* of the idolatrous nations; but the birds not *being divided*, shows that the Israelites are to *abide forever*.)

And he took unto Him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another; but the birds divided he not.

(Abram knew exactly what to do with these animals; he understood that according to the custom of his time, God told him to get a contract ready for signing.

- In those days, contracts were made by the sacrificial cutting of animals, with the split carcasses of the animals lying on the ground.
 - The covenant was made when parties to the agreement walked through the animal parts together, repeating the terms of the covenant.
 - *The LORD made a covenant* in Genesis 15:18 is literally, “the LORD cut a covenant.”
 - Jeremiah 34:18-20 makes reference to this same practice of a covenant made by cutting animals and repeating the oath of the covenant as one walks through the animal parts.
 - The symbolism was plain.
-

- First, this is a covenant so serious, it is sealed with blood.
 - Second, if I break this covenant, let this same bloodshed be poured out on my animals and me.
-

When Abram had his doubts and wanted assurance from the LORD, God said to him clearly, “Let’s sign a contract and settle this once for all.”)

And when the fowls

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(The fowls were vultures which are always a sign of evil in the scripture.

Remember the seed that was sown by the wayside and the birds came. We are told in Mark, chapter four,

“And these are they by the wayside, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.”

So here the bird is Satan that plucked up the seed that it could not bring forth.)

came down upon the carcasses,

(As Abram waited for the LORD to appear and walk through the carcasses with him to sign the covenant, God didn't come right away. He had to wait and fight off the.

Abram had reason to expect that God would come down and walk through the animal parts with him, because God had previously appeared to him in some way (Genesis 12:7).

It seems that Abram knew that God was capable of taking some physical form.

Now take note that before the ritual ended, a group of unclean birds of prey descend upon the remains of the animals. Abram is forced to drive them away.

This seems to be an omen of the coming 400-year affliction of Abram's descendants described by the LORD's prophecy in the following verses.)

Abram drove them away.

GEN 15: 12

And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep

(This is the same word which is used to express the sleep into which Adam was cast, previous to the formation of Eve; **Genesis 2:21**.

So as evening came, God had not yet appeared to walk through the animal parts with Abram and seal the covenant. Instead, God caused a **deep sleep** to fall upon Abram.

Apparently, at least part of what followed came to Abram in a dream while he was under this **deep sleep**.)

fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness

(God designed to be expressive of the affliction and misery into which his posterity should be brought during the *four hundred* years of their bondage in Egypt; as the next verse particularly states.)

fell upon him.

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GEN 15: 13-14

And He said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

(The LORD is telling Abraham that his descendants are going to go down to Egypt and they will be afflicted for 400 years.

The count began when Ishmael, son of Hagar, mocked and persecuted Isaac in **Genesis 21:9; Galatians 4:29**.

- We know, from the Book of Exodus, that the sojourn in Egypt was 430 years.
- There are those people who are always looking for some contradiction in the Bible.
- But read carefully and it says they will be afflicted 400 years.
- The first 30 years they had good treatment because Joseph was next to the Pharaoh in command.
- It wasn't until after Joseph died that they began to be afflicted.

Israel's captivity will begin in a very similar way to the start of Abram's adventure in Egypt in Genesis 12:10–20.

They will come seeking survival during a time of famine in Genesis 46)

And also that nation,

(Take note that God never mentions that the nation bound to enslave Abram's people is Egypt)

whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

GEN 15: 15-16

And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace;

(Two things seem to be distinctly marked here:

1. The soul of Abram should be introduced among the assembly of the first-born; *Thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace.*

2. His body should be buried after a long life, 175 years, **Genesis 25:7**. The body was buried; the soul went to the spiritual world, to dwell among the *fathers* - the patriarchs, who had lived and died in the Lord. **Genesis 25:8**.)

thou shalt be buried in a good old age.

GENESIS 15

(Abram is already about 85 years old (Genesis 12:4; Genesis 16:16). God's words about Abram's immediate future are a comfort, but they also let Abram know not to expect to possess the land of Canaan in his own lifetime. Instead, it will one day belong to him through his descendants)

¹⁶But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

(It is probable that the *fourth generation* here means the *same as the 400 years* in the preceding verse. Implying a generation was 100 years.

Some think it refers to the time when *Eleazar*, the son of *Aaron*, the son of *Amram*, the son of *Kohath*, came out of Egypt, and divided the land of Canaan to Israel in **Joshua 14:1**.

Others think the fourth generation of the Amorites is intended, because it is immediately added,

The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full; but in the fourth generation they should be expelled, and the descendants of Abram established in their place.

Now we know that it wasn't long after Abraham died that Joseph was sold by his brothers and then he brought the family of seventy souls down into Egypt.

During that sojourn they multiplied and became a nation in Egypt before God brought them out with a heavy hand into the land.

Moses is the fourth generation from Levi and so, just as the LORD said to Abraham in the fourth generation; they shall come back into the land again.

As they come back, they are going to wipe out the Amorites; but, the time for the judgment of the Amorites was not fulfilled at the time of Abraham.

God is so long suffering as He deals with man, I can't understand it. He is so patient that I get upset with Him sometimes.

So often, I say, "Oh Lord, how long are you going to put up with this stuff?"

You read about these people who are exploiting children.

These people that do such things make you wonder how long God is going to put up with them.

How violent and wicked can man become before God steps in and judges?

Know this that the judgment of God is coming, though it may seem to be delayed.

Here God was patient with the Amorites, saying, the children of Israel wouldn't come back from Egypt for four hundred years; because, the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full.

GENESIS 15

We are told in the Book of Revelation that the cup of the indignation of His wrath finally overflows.

The cup is being filled, but, man thinks he is getting by with his wickedness because God has not intervened.

They tragically misinterpret that as:

- God doesn't see; or
- God doesn't care; or the most blasphemous of all,
- God approves.

In one of the parades of the Gay Community, they had a banner which read, "God is gay."

Boy! I'm surprised that God let them get to the end of the parade.

He's so patient and He was giving the Amorites time, another four hundred years in the land, in order that they might continue until the cup of indignation was full and then His judgment and His wrath was poured out.

As the children of Israel came into the land, they were ordered to utterly destroy the Amorites.

Up until this moment, the iniquity of the world is not yet complete; but, I don't see how it can go much further.

When the cup is full, God will exercise His powerful judgment on an unsuspecting world.)

GEN 15: 17

And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark,

(As Abram was either asleep or perhaps still groggy from the deep sleep, he saw God do an amazing thing. Abram saw God pass through the animal parts all by Himself, while Abram watched on the sidelines.)

behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.

(In walking through the sacrificed animals in the covenant ceremony, God represented Himself by two emblems – a **smoking oven and a burning torch**.

i. The **smoking oven** reminds us of the many times smoke or a cloud represented the presence of God:

- As the pillar of cloud with Israel in the wilderness in Exodus 13:21-22.
 - As the smoke on Mount Sinai in Exodus 19:18.
-

GENESIS 15

- As the cloud of God's Shekinah glory in 1 Kings 8:10-12.
- ii. The **burning torch** reminds us of the many times fire represented the presence of God:
 - As the pillar of fire with Israel in the wilderness in Exodus 13:21-22.
 - As the burning bush displaying the presence of God before Moses in Exodus 3:4.
 - As the fire from heaven that at times consumed sacrifices that pleased God in 1 Kings 18:38, 1 Chronicles 21:26, 2 Chronicles 7:1.

Now this ritual of passing between the halves of sacrificed animals was meant to imply a binding oath on those who participated.

By walking between the animals, the person was accepting that same destruction if they broke their end of the bargain.

Now, note that Abram does not pass between the halves—only God does, via the symbolism of the pot and flame.

The promise God has made here is entirely dependent on His will and His work.)

GEN 15: 18-21

Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt

(Not the Nile, but the river called *Sichor*, which was *before* or on the *border* of Egypt, near to the isthmus of Suez; see **Joshua 13:3**; though some think that by this a branch of the Nile is meant.

This promise was fully accomplished in the days of David and Solomon. See **2 Samuel 8:3**, c., and **2 Chronicles 9:26**.)

unto the great river, the river Euphrates; The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

(God gets very specific about the boundaries of the land He is promising to Abram and his descendants.

Covenants between God and humans are significant, of course. Often they include conditions from God which, if met by the people involved, will result in God keeping His end of the agreement.

This covenant is different. Sometimes referred to as the Abrahamic Covenant, this was an agreement in which all the conditions and promises were on God's side.

For example, in the prior passage, God symbolically passes between the severed halves of the animals.

GENESIS 15

Notably, only God is shown to do this in the preceding verses—Abram's work is not part of this promise.

God was binding Himself to do as He promised no matter what Abram or Abram's descendants did or did not do.

Now take note that here are ten nations mentioned, though afterwards we see seven nations in Deuteronomy 7:1; Acts 13:19.

Probably some of them which existed in Abram's time had been blended with others before the time of Moses, so that seven only out of the ten then remained; see part of these noticed Genesis 10:1-31.

This final verse lists the Amorites, who were already mentioned as the future recipients of God's judgment, as well as the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.)

As we conclude chapter 15, there are three subjects which must be particularly interesting:

1. GOD in revealing himself to mankind in a variety of ways, so as to render it absolutely evident that:
 - a. He had spoken,
 - b. That he loved mankind, and
 - c. That he had made every provision for their eternal welfare.
2. God gives the promise of salvation, and by means in which it was impossible, humanly speaking, that it should take place; teaching us,
 - a. That the whole work was spiritual, supernatural, and Divine; and,
 - b. That no human power could suffice to produce it.
 - c. This Abram believed while he was yet uncircumcised, and this faith was accounted to him for righteousness or justification;
 - d. God thereby teaching that he would pardon, accept, and receive into favour all who should believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - e. And this very case has ever since been the standard of justification by faith; and the experience of millions of men, built on this foundation, has sufficiently attested the truth and solidity of the ground on which it was built.
3. The foundation of the doctrine itself is laid in the covenant made between God and Abram in behalf of all the families of the earth, and this covenant is ratified by a sacrifice.
4. By this covenant man is bound to God, and God graciously binds himself to man.

As this covenant referred to the incarnation of Christ; and Abram, both as to himself and posterity, was to partake of the benefits of it by faith; hence faith, not works, is the only condition on which God, through Christ, forgives sins, and brings to the promised spiritual inheritance.

This covenant still stands open; all the successive generations of men are parties on the one side, and Jesus is at once the sacrifice and Mediator of it.

As therefore the covenant still stands open, and Jesus is still the Lamb slain before the throne, every human soul must ratify the covenant for himself; and no man does so but he who, conscious of his guilt, accepts the sacrifice which God has provided for him.

We will start from Chapter 16 next week ...

IF YOU HAVEN'T RECEIVED JESUS CHRIST AS YOUR PERSONAL SAVIOUR, I WANT YOU TO PRAY THIS PRAYER WITH ME RIGHT NOW

- Heavenly Father, I realize that I'm a sinner
- But right now I repent of my sins
- I make you my Lord
- I receive the free gift of forgiveness of sin
- I need you, Jesus
- Be my savior
- So right now I declare by faith that I am saved in Jesus' name. Amen & Praise God

If you just prayed that prayer with me online, please let us know through our website and we shall send you a free eBook as a gift to you today.

Otherwise, welcome to the family of God. Amen!

