

Genesis Chapter 15

Review:

- Invasion / war between kings of Chaldees, Shinar, Elam – and kings of Sodom, Gomorrah – near the area in which Abram dwelt.
- As the powerful army of Chedorlaomer returned to their kingdom having been victorious, with plunder, and captives – including Lot and his family.
- Abram intervenes, pursues, and catches them by surprise – and “slaughters” the kings and rescues Lot and his family.
- Abram encounters two kings: The king of Sodom offers him worldly riches which he refuses.
- Abram then meets the King of Salem, Melchizedek: who offers him broken bread and poured out wine – Communion; fellowship with God. Abram received a (better) blessing from God, and pays tithes to Him.
- Abram is dwelling in richness and communion with God and...

V: 1 We know that the Lord has spoken to Abram a few different times (Genesis 12:1, 12:7, 13:14) – the Lord has “appeared” to Abram – and Abram responded by building an altar and worshipping God.

- Here again God speaks to Abram:

Principle of 1st mention:

- Significant.
- Sets precedent.

“*the Word of the Lord*”: (1st mention) came to Abram in a vision, presumably of God...

The Word of the Lord is Jesus:

John 1:14 “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

“*Word*” (H-1697). “dabar”, translated mostly, “word” but also “speak(s)”, and “commandment”;

Exodus 34:28 “So he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.” (dabar – used both times.)

- Here we see something different – “*the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision*...” (1st mention)

“*Vision*” (H-236). mahzeh; only used 4 X's in the Bible, essentially a waking dream.

- A spiritual insight, a glimpse into the spiritual reality around us.

Numbers 24:16 “The utterance of him who hears the words of God, and has the knowledge of the Most High, who sees the vision of the Almighty, who falls down, with eyes wide open.”

- **1st** “vision” – in this book of beginnings – Elisha and the prophets in the OT.
- Here we are in the last days, waiting on the Lord.

Proverbs 29:18 “Where there is no vision, the people perish; but happy is he who keeps the law.” (connection between vision & God’s Word)

Joel 2:28 “And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.”

- God speaks to Abram through a vision, he spoke to Moses face to face, he spoke to Elijah through a still small voice, Belshazzar saw the handwriting on the wall – the book of Revelation comes to us as John was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day (Rev. 1:10) on top of that, and more - God has given us the Living Word – Jesus Himself.

Hebrews 1:1-2 “¹God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ²has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;”

Psalms 138:2 “...for You have magnified Your Word above all Your name.”

- [This how I find that God speaks to me, mostly through His Word.](#)
- **1st** “*vision*” – is about God, our shield and very great reward.
- **1st** admonition / command to “*do not be afraid / fear not*”.
- “Fear” is first used in **Genesis 3:10** – where the voice of the Lord caused Adam to fear because he was in sin.
- Now the same voice is telling Abram to “*not be afraid.*”

Adam	Abram
Father of all mankind.	Father of all those that believe. (Rom.4:11)
Had a fig leaf.	Had a shield. (Gen.15:1)
Received a curse.	Received a reward. (Gen.15:1)
Was afraid.	Was afraid – and was comforted. (Gen.15:1)

- God wouldn't tell Abram not to be afraid if Abram wasn't already afraid of something. (We're not told what or why, speculating:)
- Abram had just gone through a battle – concerned about reprisal or revenge.
- Abram had just told the king of Sodom – essentially – “go take a flying leap, I won't take anything from the likes of you.”
- Abram is getting older, maybe feeling his age – wondering if he was ever going to have children.
- *“I am your shield”* (1st) – I am your protection.

Psalm 91:4 “He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler.”

- In Acts Ch. 7 Steven describes the battle that resulted from Abram chasing Chedorlaomer down and rescuing Lot as *“the slaughter.”*
- Sometimes you're in a situation that is so hairy that you don't even comprehend the gravity of it until later.
- You're wrapped up in events that are moving quickly.
- Returning from the battle, the re-union with your family – dealing with the king of Sodom – fellowship and communion with Melchizedek.
- Finally there is that time to unwind – and it all kind of hits you.

Psalm 18:2 “The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

- God further communicates to Abram:

“I am your exceedingly great reward” (1st / only) – I'm the prize, the goal, the treasure that you seek.

- Significant - this is the only time that this phrase is used in the whole Bible.

Revelation 22:12 “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with me, to give to everyone according to his work.”

“Exceedingly great reward” – sounds pricey:

1 Peter 1:18 “knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers,

¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

V: 2 “*Lord GOD*” – (Adonai -YHWH) reverently, humbly – right attitude.

- It’s ok to question God – with the right heart, from the right perspective positionally, humbly. *Asking*: “**how**”, “**when**”, not: **can You?**
- What great reward could you give me? Wealth, status, victory are great, but what I really want is a son, and heir.

Psalm 37:4 “*Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.*”

- Abram laments that he’ll be leaving all his inheritance to his steward:
- “*Eliezer of Damascus*” – Eliezer is only mentioned here, he later comes into greater play and significance a few chapters down the road.

Eliezer: “God our help” – “ Comforter” – a type or model of the Holy Spirit.

V: 3 You promised that I would be the father of many nations, that my descendants would be as innumerable as the dust – but so far “zip - zero - nada!”

Proverbs 13:12 “*Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when the desire comes, it is a tree of life.*”

V: 4-5 The word of the Lord comes to Abram – and God affirms His promise to Abram.

- No sense of criticism or condemnation – just affirmation.
- Picture the scene:*
- God puts His arm around Abrams shoulder and says walk outside with me and check out the stars.
 - I know you can’t number them, but that is what your descendants are going to be like, like the stars of heaven – innumerable.
 - This is the 3rd time that God makes or re-affirms His promise to Abram about his children.
1. **Genesis 12:2 & 7** Great nation, bless you, name great, you’ll be a blessing.
 2. **Genesis 13:16** Descendants dust of the Earth
 3. **Genesis 15:5** Descendants Stars of Heaven

- Abram had 2 seeds:
 1. Physically, the nation of Israel.
 2. Spiritually, the father of all that believe – the church.

Romans 4:11 “And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also,”

- By faith in Jesus Christ we are sons of Abraham and heirs to His promise.

Galatians 3:29 “And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

V: 6 Abram believes!

- Abram didn’t just “believe the Lord” – as in He would give him lots of kids.
- Abram “*believed in the Lord...*”

James 2:19 “You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe – and tremble!

- And God accounts that belief, that faith to Abram as righteousness!
- Key principle: Not by works do we attain or manifest righteousness, but by faith! This is huge! – Abram hasn’t seen it come to fruition yet. He simply believes!
- This scripture is directly quoted in three New Testament passages: **Romans 4:3, Galatians 3:6, and James 2:23.**

Hebrews 11:1 “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

Hebrews 11:6 “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

Ephesians 2:8-9 “⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

- We’ve seen justification through faith modeled through Noah, but this is the first time we’ve seen it directly stated.
- Abram was faithful to God, but Abram was not saved for being faithful. He was saved for believing in God.

- Abram had been out of sorts, he'd been grieved seemingly about not having a son.
- Abram is comforted: God re-assures him – and Abram believes, he trusts God taking God at His Word.
- How did Abram get there? (Examining cause & effect.)
 1. **V: 2-3 Prayer:** – Abram talked to God.
 2. **V: 4 God's Word:** – Then the Word of the Lord came to Abram.
 3. **V: 5 Communion / fellowship** with God: – Then "He" / God brought him / Abram outside – they moved together, they walked together.
 4. **V: 5 Abram looked to Heaven:** – Look now toward Heaven.
 5. **V: 6 Abram listened to God and believed.**
- People ask: *"how do I give this problem or that concern, or grief to God?"*
- Prayer – God's Word – Communion – Fellowship w/ God – looking to Heaven, a right perspective – incline your ear & listen to what God says – and believe!

V: 7 God declares Himself to Abram, reminding Abram that He is the One who called Abram out of the Ur of the Chaldees and has taken care of him ever since.

- 163 X's to Abraham, Jacob, Moses, the children of Israel, to kings and prophets.

Isaiah 43:3 "For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior..."

- God also re-affirms His promise to give Abram the land.

Psalm 105:42, 44 "⁴²For He remembered His holy promise, and Abraham His servant." - "⁴⁴He gave them the lands of the Gentiles, and they inherited the labor of the nations."

V: 8 Abram asks "how shall I know?" – "What is the sign that these things will happen?"

- He's not questioning God's ability, or goodness – he is questioning his own ability to perceive.
- Abraham is being transparent & honest:

Psalm 51:6 "Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom."

- Abram asks "how will I know?" – God replies, we'll make a covenant – a contract.

V: 9-21 At first glance it looks like God is giving Abram a shopping list.

- The Lord is setting up a contract, a covenant – which will end up being one sided – yet binding from God’s perspective.
- In that day and time when two people wanted to make a binding agreement they would take an animal sacrifice and cut it in half, separating both halves.
- The parties in the agreement would then hold hands and walk in between the two portions of the sacrifice, then having done so it was considered a binding contract or agreement.

V: 9 Abram is told to get a 3 year old heifer, a 3 year old female goat, and a 3 year old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.

- Specifically 3, 3 year old animals: 3 = Trinity / the Tri-Unity of God, perhaps invoking the fullness of the God head, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

1 John 5:7 “For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are One.”

- Each is a ceremonial clean animal, acceptable for sacrifice.
- Each animal will later be used as a sin offering of various kinds.

V: 10 Each animal is cut in two and laid out, the birds are set opposite of each other as if they were each a ½ .

Jeremiah 34:18-19 “¹⁸And I will give the men who have transgressed My covenant, who have not performed the words of the covenant which they made before Me, when they cut the calf in two and passed between the parts of it –
¹⁹the princes of Judah, the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, the priests, and all the people of the land who passed between the parts of the calf-.”

V: 11 While waiting on the Lord, the vultures come in, but are driven away.

- Birds are usually analogous to evil in the Bible.

Matthew 13:4 “And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds (¹⁹“the wicked one”) came and devoured them.”

1 Peter 5:8 “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”

V: 12 Sun set, “*a deep sleep*” - no doubt from the Lord.

Genesis 2:21 “And God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam,...”

- Possibly exhausted by his own efforts...
- Abram is set aside, incapacitated, God will do all the work.
- Similarly, God sacrifices His only begotten Son for our sins which had incapacitated us just like Abram. To take advantage of this wonderful gift all we need to do is believe.
- Horror & great darkness fell upon him. Fear? Dread? ???

Job 4:13-14 “¹³In disquieting thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falls on men, ¹⁴Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones shake.”

Isaiah 8:13 “The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow; let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread.”

Deuteronomy 10:17 “For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome (terrible), who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe.”

V: 13-15 Abram is told what the future holds – as much for our benefit as his.

- Abrams descendants will be slaves in a foreign land – Egypt.
- They will be afflicted for 400 years.
- In the 4th generation they will be delivered and brought back to the land of promise.
- They will bring out great possessions and that foreign nation will be judged.

V: 13 400 years. They will go to a land that is not theirs, meaning Egypt. They will leave their God given land, spend time in a land that is not theirs, and eventually return to the land of promise.

Exodus 12:40 “Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years.”

- Exodus describes the total time in Egypt, Genesis describes the time spent in affliction.
 - 30 years of blessing under Joseph.
 - The scriptures describe 3 different times when the Hebrews are put out of their land.
1. Here in Genesis to Egypt.
 2. Later in the Babylonian captivity.

3. 70 AD, the Diaspora following the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

V: 14 The nation / Egypt will be judged by God. Plundered.

Exodus 12:36 “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.”

- The most powerful nation in the world at that time: Their economy & agriculture destroyed, the nation plundered. Their work force set free, removed from the land. Their army and king destroyed in the Red Sea – leaving Egypt as a desolate wasteland, living in subjugation to all the other world powers.

V: 15 Abram will live a good life, then “go to your fathers in peace” - “be gathered to his fathers.” A phrase indicating that he will die, but he’ll die in peace.

- Because he’s been living in richness & communion, in fellowship with God.

V: 16 Moses is the 4th generation.

- The sin of the Amorites is not yet complete:
- God is going to use the Nation of Israel to bring judgment to the Amorites – but they still have a chance to repent.
- God loved the Amorites also and is giving them an opportunity for repentance & forgiveness.

2 Peter 3:9 “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”

V: 17 As the sun went down – darkness.

- Smoking furnace: judgment – Jesus Christ - will judge the living and the dead.

2 Timothy 4:1 “I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:”

- Burning Torch: Jesus Christ is the Light of the world.

John 8:12 “... I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”

- Only God Himself passed in between the two parts of the sacrifice – God Himself bears the full burden – there is nothing that we can do.
- Abram’s only part was to believe, our only part is to believe in the Son of God.

John 6:28-29 “²⁸Then they said to Him, what shall we do, that we may work the works of God?” ²⁹Jesus answered and said to them, this is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”

V: 18 This is the 3rd time that God has promised to give the land to Abram and his descendants.

Genesis 12:7, Genesis 13:14-15, and here.

- The boundaries: from the Nile to the Euphrates –

V: 19-21 Currently occupied by 10 groups of peoples.

Deuteronomy 7:1 “When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you.”

- What about the Kenites, the Kenezzites, and the Kadmonites?
- Kenites are spoken of later on as dispossessed and subjugated.
- The Kenezzites & Kadmonites are never spoken of after this.