

## Abram's Faith in God

### Genesis 15

#### Faith Concerning the Inheritance

##### Genesis 15:1-6

#### **Abram's Vision:** *Genesis 15:1*

##### **The LORD Appeared unto Abram**

This was the fourth visit from the LORD and it occurred while Abram was in Hebron. The entire chapter covers a period of about one day, beginning in the evening, going through the night, continuing the following day, and ending in the hours of darkness. It begins with the LORD'S appearance and ends with the LORD'S covenant.

For the first time in the Bible, we find 'the word of the LORD' mentioned. Does this passage refer to the Son Jesus Christ or God's audible word? The Scriptures clearly present Jesus Christ as the living word (John 1:1-2, 14; Revelation 1:8). The Bible tells us no man hath seen God the Father but men did see Jesus Christ, who was God manifested in the flesh (John 1:18, 14:9-11). Jesus also stated that Abraham saw Him and rejoiced (John 8:56-58). It is likely that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, appeared unto Abram in the form of a man.

##### **The LORD Encouraged Abram**

Apparently Abram was troubled and afraid. He had finished conquering a powerful army led by King Chedorlaomer, who may have been in the process of planning a counterstrike. If so, Abram may have wondered if he could withstand it, seeing he returned the people and riches to Sodom. Abram had also rescued Lot, his nephew, only to watch him run back to the world. On top of all this, he was promised an inheritance but had no son. Abram trusted God but did not know how the LORD would work (Romans 11:33). We find Abram prosperous but troubled. He was wealthy and successful but remained unsatisfied.

The LORD immediately directed Abram to fear not. As Abram would learn, there is no need to fear when one walks with God (Hebrews 13:5). The LORD provided a pledge to strengthen Abram's resolve.

1. *The LORD was Abram's shield* – a shield protects from enemy attacks (Ephesians 6:10-18). God was Abram's protector, if King Chedorlaomer, or anyone else, attacked, God would take care of Abram. God is able to protect us in a world of turmoil. *If God be for us, who can be against us?*
2. *The LORD was Abram's reward* – a reward is a prize. Abram had just given up earthly treasures to honor God and was reminded that the LORD could provide far more than what he had turned down.

The LORD was aware of Abram's fears and provided the encouragement required. God alone satisfies human hunger and thirst (John 4:14).

### ***Abram's Faith: Genesis 15:2-6***

#### **Abram Looked to God**

Instead of looking within or without, to the world, Abram took his concern to the LORD. Abram knew God's promise but was also aware of the situation. Filled with fears, Abram sought reassurance to strengthen his faith. In times of doubt or fear it is best to look to God and trust His Word (Psalm 119:105). Abram talked and the LORD listened. Abram spoke plainly, directly, and specifically and received the LORD'S answer in a similar fashion.

#### **Abram Received an Answer**

The LORD confirmed His promise to Abram and made it clear he would have a child. To display His power to bless, the LORD led Abram outside, directed him to look upon the stars and challenged Abram to count them. As Abram gazed into the night sky, God promised that his seed would be like the stars in heaven, great and innumerable. The LORD is able to answer prayers and sometimes provides more than what we ask. Abram found this to be true, he was concerned with having one child and God would provide a multitude of descendants.

Abram still had no son and when he would be blessed was unknown, but he set aside his concerns and trusted the LORD'S word. This faith in God was counted unto him for righteousness (Romans 4:3; Galatians 3:6). It is evident that Abram's righteousness was not produced from his power or earned through works. He received righteousness from the LORD; it was imputed to him, put on his credit. The LORD gave and Abram received. Abram, like all of the redeemed, was saved by grace and through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9). He was rich both in possessions and works but was justified by faith. There is no other plan of salvation found in God's Word; only those that approach God by faith in His Son Jesus Christ will be accepted (Acts 4:12; Hebrews 11:6).

### ***Faith Concerning the Land Genesis 15:7-21***

#### ***Abram Given the LORD'S Plan: Genesis 15:7-16***

#### **Abram Reminded**

The LORD, by an act of grace, directed Abram to leave his homeland in order to bless him. Through the years, the LORD remained faithful and Abram dwelt safely in the new land. It is good to reflect upon the blessings God has provided (Psalms 77:11). Our faith is strengthened when His faithfulness is recalled.

Abram, realizing the land remained inhabited and out of his possession, sought confirmation. He was not reprimanded for asking the question, it was a legitimate request based upon his understanding, or lack of. It is important to remember that Abram did not have the complete Word of God, like we do today. There is nothing wrong with seeking direction or desiring clarification. We must understand that God is not bound to answer all of our questions. Be grateful for information provided and trusting when knowledge of His ways remains incomplete.

### **Abram Directed**

Under God's orders, Abram gathered specific animals and sacrificed them. The heifer, goat, and ram were divided and the halves set on opposite sides making a lane to pass through. The fowls remained intact and one was placed on each side. The LORD was about to make a covenant with Abram. In those days, a contract was confirmed when both parties walked between a divided sacrifice (Jeremiah 34:18). The LORD would validate His promise to Abram, making it legal and binding. As Abram faithfully waited, perhaps all day, he protected the carcasses from other birds. Night finally came and Abram fell into a deep sleep and was overcome with great darkness.

At this time the LORD spoke to Abram concerning the future of the land and his descendants. Abram was concerned about the land, so God provided information regarding possession of it. The land would be given to his family, but not immediately.

1. *They would be strangers in a foreign land* – Abram was not told where but we know it to be Egypt.
2. *They would become servants* – afflicted 400 years.
3. *They would be delivered* – the nation, Egypt, would face the LORD'S judgment and Abram's descendants would be enlarged with substance.
4. *They would claim the land* – the timing would be correct.

Abram would not live to see this transpire but was comforted knowing he would have a long life and die in peace. Abram would be buried in Canaan, the land of promise and though he would not inherit the land personally, he would also not endure the afflictions. He would have to live by faith, believing God would give his family the land, and knowing he would not be alive to witness it.

The reason for the promise being delayed was made known, the Amorite iniquity (1 Kings 21:26). The LORD is gracious and merciful and He would not remove the Amorites from the land until they deserved to be moved. Their iniquity was not yet full, and apparently they had not reached their limit. Sin accumulates like treasures in storage and provokes God's wrath, which results in His judgment (1 Thessalonians 2:16). What we find here is that the LORD looks differently upon nations than we do. He is more concerned with their moral well being than their technological advancements or possessions. The Amorites had a limit on their wickedness and when their iniquities were complete God would deal with them. Most nations and their leaders arrogantly ignore this Biblical principle, but the LORD is observing and when a nation's iniquities are full, He will deal with them accordingly.

## **Abram Given the LORD'S Promise: *Genesis 15:17-21***

### **The Covenant Confirmed**

The smoking furnace is thought by many to represent the affliction Abram's family would endure while in Egypt. The burning lamp was an indication of God's presence (Exodus 3:2, 13:21; 2 Chronicles 7:1-3). Notice, the burning lamp alone passed between the sacrifices. Abram remained asleep and never walked through because he had nothing to fulfill in the contract. It is God who made the contract and God who would keep His word. Likewise, it is God who promised to save all those that seek Him through His Son Jesus Christ (John 3:16). Jesus alone went to the cross, made atonement for sin, and arose to conquer the grave. Sinners are not required to live correctly or do good works in order to attain salvation. It is God who will keep His word and save sinners due to the finished work of Jesus Christ (Romans 10:13).

The LORD gave Abram and his descendants the land. The portion extends from the Nile River in Egypt to the Euphrates River in Mesopotamia and covers approximately 300,000 square miles. It is believed they possessed the land, or much of it, during the reigns of David and Solomon (2 Samuel 8:3; 1 Kings 4:21; 2 Chronicles 9:26).

### **The Covenant was Unconditional**

Nothing was required to gain the promise and nothing can be done or not done to lose it. The Israelites have been placed out of the land three times and they returned after the first two, from Egypt and Babylon. The Romans destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD, the Jews were dispersed and have yet to return, but according to God's Word they will. Today, the Arab countries inhabit most of the land, but the Bible indicates that God will give the Israelites possession in the future (Romans 11:26-36). The LORD will keep His word because He is faithful, and they will again possess all that God has granted them (2 Thessalonians 3:3).

## **Conclusion**

After Abram's great victory, he was filled with fear and uncertainty. Our achievements, though they may be great, will not provide comfort for the heart. Abram was in need of God's encouragement, so he looked to the LORD and trusted Him. Today, it is important to place your faith in God. Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation and follow Him. *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Proverbs 3:5-6*

### **Point to Ponder**

Abram, a man of great works, was justified by faith.

**Quote**

"If a man have all things else and not God, he is poor indeed. If he has God and nothing else, he is rich indeed." B.H. Carroll

**Questions**

Why was Abram fearful?

What two things did God promise to be to Abram?

What did Abram do for righteousness?

What did God give Abram and his family?

What new truth have you learned from this lesson?