

Genesis

15

An Encounter with God

Recap

Chapter 14 was a war and rescue action movie

- **We learned a lot about Lot's character**
- **We saw more of Abram's character**
- **God loves us more than He hates the sin**
- **Redemptive**

Before 4000 BC	The Creation	Genesis 1
Before 4000 BC	The Garden of Eden	Genesis 2
Before 4000 BC	The Fall of Man	Genesis 3
Before 3000 BC	Cain kills Abel	Genesis 4
Before 3000 BC	From Adam to Noah	Genesis 5
Before 2500 BC	Wickedness Provokes God's wrath	Genesis 6
Before 2500 BC	The Great Flood	Genesis 7
Before 2500 BC	The Flood Subsides	Genesis 8
Before 2500 BC	Covenant of the Rainbow	Genesis 9
Before 2500 BC	Shem, Ham and Japheth	Genesis 10
Before 2100 BC	The Tower of Babel	Genesis 11
2091 BC	God Sends Abram to Egypt	Genesis 12
2090 BC	The Famine in Canaan	Genesis 12:10
2085 BC	Abram and Lot Part Ways	Genesis 13
2085 BC	Abram Promised Many Descendants	Genesis 13:14
2084 BC	Abram Rescues Lot	Genesis 14
2081 BC	God's Covenant with Abram	Genesis 15
2081 BC	Sarai and Hagar	Genesis 16
2080 BC	Ishmael Born	Genesis 16:15
2067 BC	The Covenant of Circumcision	Genesis 17
2067 BC	God Promises the Birth of Isaac	Genesis 18
2067 BC	The Destruction of Sodom	Genesis 19
2067 BC	Abraham, Sarah and Abimelech	Genesis 20

Chapter 15 Summary

- Chapter 15 consists entirely of an extended encounter between the Lord and Abram.
- This concludes with the formal establishment of God's covenant promise to Abram: to give him and his descendants the land of Canaan.

The Word

Genesis 15:1-5

1After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision:

“Do not be afraid, Abram.

I am your shield, your very great reward.”

2But Abram said, “Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?”

3And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.”

4Then the word of the Lord came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.” 5He took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”

Verse 1

“After this...the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision...”

- 1. **After** that famous act of generous charity which Abram had done, in rescuing his friends and neighbours out of distress, and that, not for price nor reward.
- **After** this, God made him this gracious visit.

*Those that show favor to men shall find favor with God.

- 2. **After** that victory which he had obtained over four kings, God comes to him, to tell him he had better things in store for him.

*Sometimes we can get caught up in what we accomplished and forget about blessings of God that are to come...

Verse 1

1After this, the word of the Lord came to **Abram in a vision:**

“Do not be afraid, Abram.

I am your shield, your very great reward.”

- **The manner in which God conversed with Abram:** The word of the Lord came unto Abram (that is, God manifested Himself and His will to Abram) in a **vision**, which supposes Abram is awake, and some visible appearances of the Shekinah, or some sensible token of the presence of the divine glory.

*The methods of divine revelation are different...**how have you heard from God..or how has He revealed Himself to you?**

- **He called him by name-Abram**, which was a great honour to him, and made his name great, and was also a great encouragement and assistance to his faith. Note, God's good word does us good when it is spoken by his Spirit to us in particular, and brought to our hearts.

Verse 2

The divine promise to be a shield to him, that is to say, a protection against all enemies, and a reward, i.e., richly to reward his confidence, his ready obedience, stands here, as the opening words "after these things" indicate, in close connection with the previous guidance of Abram.

Verse 3

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.

He had bestowed many temporal blessings on him, as well as spiritual ones, having given himself in covenant, and all things in it, but he had not given him a child: so... a servant will be my heir-- meaning either Eliezer or his son.

Verse 4

God rebukes that a servant will be Abram's heir...and says this man **will not** be your heir.

At this point, Abram is well over seventy-five years old (Genesis 12:4). God's response is to show Abram the stars. Using this as an analogy, God repeats His promise that Abram's descendants will be so numerous as to be uncountable.

Verse 5

Abram feared he should have no child at all, but God tells him his descendants should be so many as not to be numbered. So illustrious, as the stars of heaven for splendor; for to “them pertained the glory,” Romans 9:4. Abram’s heirs are like the stars of heaven.

Genesis 15:6-11

6Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

7He also said to him, “I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it.”

8But Abram said, “Sovereign Lord, how can I know that I will gain possession of it?”

9So the Lord said to him, “Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon.”

10Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half. 11Then birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away.

Verse 6

6 Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

Abram believes God. This statement, from Genesis 15:6, is one of the key verses in all of the 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.

Romans 4:3 - What does Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

Galatians 3:6 - So also Abraham "believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

James 2:23 - And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend.

Verse 8

Abram's question, "Whereby shall I know that I shall take possession of it (the land)?" was **not** an expression of doubt, but of desire for the confirmation or sealing of a promise, which transcended human thought and conception. To gratify this desire, God commanded him to make preparation for the conclusion of a covenant.

Verses 9-10

"Take Me, He said, a heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon;" one of every species of the animals suitable for sacrifice. Abram took these, and "divided them in the midst," i.e., in half, "and placed one half of each opposite to the other only the birds divided he not," just as in sacrifice the doves were not divided into pieces, but placed upon the fire whole (Leviticus 1:17).

Assurance was given to Abram of the land of Canaan for an inheritance. God never promises more than he is able to perform, as men often do. Abram divided the beasts in the midst, according to the ceremony used in confirming covenants, Jer 34:18,19.

Then he set himself to wait for the sign God might give him and not be distracted by things that come down to take it away.

The birds divided he not, either because:

- there were two birds, and the one was laid against the other, which answered to the division of the larger creatures;
- because they belonged not to the ceremony of the covenant, but were for the use of sacrifice, wherein they were to be offered whole, as afterwards was prescribed (Leviticus 1:15,17).

Genesis 15:12-16

12 As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him. 13 Then the Lord said to him, “Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there. 14 But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. 15 You, however, will go to your ancestors in peace and be buried at a good old age. 16 In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.”

Gen 15: 12-16

Before God completes the ritual, He causes a deep sleep to fall on Abram and reveals to Abram a prophecy about the future of his descendants.

1. **The suffering** state of Abram's seed for a long time. They will live as captives for 400 years in another country, serving that nation. The heirs of heaven are strangers on earth. They shall be servants; but Canaanites serve under a curse, the Hebrews under a blessing.

2. **The judgment** of the enemies of Abram's seed. Though God may allow persecution and oppression, He will certainly reckon with them at last.

3. **The great event**, the deliverance of Abram's seed out of Egypt.

4. **Their happy settlement in Canaan**. 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, but that he will not live to see the troubling events of this prophecy.

Genesis 15:17-21

17 When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. 18 On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, “To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi e of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates— 19 the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, 20 Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, 21 Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites.”

Verse 17

The phenomenon, which **passed through the pieces as they lay opposite to one another**, resembled such a smoking stove, from which a fiery torch, a brilliant flame, was streaming forth.

In this symbol Jehovah manifested Himself to Abram, just as He afterwards did to the people of Israel in the pillar of cloud and fire. by passing through the pieces, He **ratified** (confirm or formalize) the covenant which He made with Abram.

Verse 17

The pieces were not consumed by the fire; for the transaction had reference not to a sacrifice, which God accepted, and in which the soul of the offerer was to ascend in the smoke to God, but to a covenant in which God came down to man.

Although a covenant always establishes a reciprocal relation between two individuals, in this covenant the man did not stand on an equality with God, **but** God established the relation of fellowship by His promise and His gracious **condescension to Abram**, who was at first purely a recipient, and was only qualified and bound to fulfil the obligations of the covenant by receiving the gifts of grace.

Verses 18

The river of Egypt.—That is, the Nile. In the Hebrew the Wady-el-Arish, on the southern border of Simeon, is always distinguished from the Nile.



This map illustrates the Levant region, including parts of modern-day Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Jordan. The Euphrates River is shown as a yellow line flowing from the north (top right) towards the south (bottom center). The Nile River is shown as a yellow line flowing from the south (bottom left) towards the north (top left). The Mediterranean Sea is depicted in blue on the left side. Various ancient peoples are labeled in black text: Kadmonite, Hittite, Girgashite, Rephaim, Canaanite, Perizzite, Jebusite, Amorite, Kenizzite?, and Kenites. The text "The great river, the river Euphrates" is in a white box in the top right, and "River of Egypt" - Wadi El Arish is in a white box in the bottom left.

**"The great river,
the river Euphrates"**

Kadmonite

Hittite

Girgashite

Rephaim

Canaanite

Perizzite

Jebusite

Amorite

Kenizzite ?

Kenites

**"River of Egypt"
- Wadi El Arish**

Verses 19-21

The word used here signifies a river that flows constantly; and Abram's posterity are to found a kingdom conterminous with the Nile and the Euphrates, that is, with Egypt and Babylonia. If these bounds are large and vague, we must also remember that they are limited by the names of the ten nations which follow. Between the Nile and the Euphrates, the territories of these ten tribes is alone definitely bestowed upon Abram.

Ten tribes are mentioned between the southern border of the land and the extreme north, "to convey the impression of universality without exception, of unqualified completeness, the symbol of which is the number ten"





GREAT SEA

MESOPOTAMIA

CANAAN

EGYPT

RED
SEA