

GENESIS 15: GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAM

I. OVERVIEW

- A. God appears to Abram in a dream after winning the battle against Chedorlaomer
 - i. Do not fear
 - a. For I am your shield
 - b. For your reward shall be very great
 - ii. Abram questions God
 - iii. God says his offspring will be as the stars in the heavens
 - iv. Abram believes God
- B. God's covenant with Abram
 - i. Abram questions God again
 - ii. God tells Abram to bring
 - a. A three year old heifer
 - b. A three year old female goat
 - c. A three year old ram
 - d. A turtledove
 - e. A young pigeon
 - f. 5 animals represents God's grace and goodness to humans¹
 - iii. Abram cut them all in half except the birds
 - iv. Abram falls asleep and a "dreadful and great darkness" comes upon him
 - v. God provides new information
 - a. Offspring will be sojourners and servants in another land
 - b. They will be afflicted for 400 years
 - c. But God will judge that nation and bring them back
 - d. The reason?
 - i. The sin of the Amorites has not reached its fullness
 - vi. A smoking pot and burning torch passes through the animal pieces
 - a. God promises to give him the land of ten nations

¹ Armstrong, Stephen. "Genesis 2011 - Lesson 15B." *Verse by Verse Ministries International*, 3 Oct. 2011, versebyversemministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_15b. Accessed 23 May 2023.

- i. Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaim, Amorites, Canaanites, Gergashites, Jebusites
- ii. God has authority over those nations

II. FEAR NOT – V. 1

- A. Why would he fear?
 - i. He just defeated four Babylonian kings
 - a. He could fear retaliation²
- B. But God would be his shield
 - i. To protect him against the evil kings
- C. God would be his reward
 - i. Since he gave up his reward from battle³

III. BUT ABRAM SAID – V. 2

- A. God's promise to be his shield and reward brought to mind another promise
- B. What would his reward be?
 - i. The reward promised by God years ago still hadn't happened

IV. YOU HAVE GIVEN ME NO OFFSPRING – V. 3

- A. Doubt that creates increased desire for God's promise
 - i. As opposed to doubt that denies that God made a promise⁴
- B. Appealing to God's character⁵

V. RIGHTEOUSNESS – V. 6

- A. Melchizedek (king of righteousness) blessed Abram
 - i. Abram blessed the king of righteousness
- B. Then Abram believed God and was blessed with righteousness
 - i. He didn't believe in God⁶
 - a. James 2:19 ***You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!***

VI. GIVE YOU THIS LAND TO POSSESS – V. 7

² Guzik, David. "Study Guide for Genesis 15." *Blue Letter Bible*, 2018, www.blueletterbible.org/comm/guzik_david/study-guide/genesis/genesis-15.cfm. Accessed 23 May 2023.

³ Guzik

⁴ Guzik

⁵ Armstrong, Stephen. "Genesis 2011 - Lesson 15A." *Verse by Verse Ministries International*, 25 Sept. 2011, versebyversemministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_15a. Accessed 23 May 2023.

⁶ Guzik

- A. Like he gave the land to Adam and Eve – new Eden

VII. HOW AM I TO KNOW – V. 8

- A. Give me a sign

VIII. GOD RESPONDS WITH MAKING A COVENANT WITH ABRAM

- A. Covenant is more than just a contract
- B. Oath between two parties often sealed in blood
 - i. Animals were cut in half and two parties would walk through the pieces declaring terms of covenant
 - ii. Consequences if one party doesn't fulfill the terms
 - a. If covenant is broken, this is what would happen⁷
 - iii. Then animals were roasted and two parties ate the meat
- C. This means God is serious

IX. DREADFUL AND GREAT DARKNESS – V. 12

- A. Abram felt terror at God's presence
 - i. Fear of the Lord

X. 400 YEARS – V. 13

- A. From time Isaac is weaned to when Israel leaves Egypt⁸
 - i. But four generations will be away from the land
 - a. Levi, Kohath, Amram, Moses
 - ii. Or the genealogy is incomplete
 - a. Four generations representing the completeness of the time of the Amorites
- B. 40x10
 - i. Extended period of testing to establish God's authority over them

XI. INIQUITY OF THE AMORITES IS NOT YET COMPLETE – V. 16

- A. Crookedness, twistedness⁹
- B. Sin will reach its fullness
 - i. God will wait to deal with it until then
 - ii. Parable of wheat and the weeds

⁷ Guzik

⁸ Armstrong, Stephen. "Genesis 2011 - Lesson 15B." Verse by Verse Ministries International, 3 Oct. 2011, versebyversemministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_15b. Accessed 23 May 2023.

⁹ Mackie, Tim, and Jon Collins. "Avon - Iniquity." Bible Project, bibleproject.com/explore/video/avon-iniquity/. Accessed 23 May 2023.

- a. Matthew 13:24-30 ***He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, “Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.”’”***

XII. SMOKING FIRE POT AND A FLAMING TORCH – V. 17

- A. God’s presence is manifested as smoke
 - i. Pillar of cloud
 - a. Exodus 13:21-22 ***And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.***
 - ii. Smoke at Mt. Sinai
 - a. Exodus 19:18 ***Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the Lord had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly.***
 - iii. Cloud of glory in temple
 - a. 1 Kings 8:10-12 ***And when the priests came out of the Holy Place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord. Then Solomon said, “The Lord has said that he would dwell in thick darkness.”***
- B. God’s presence is manifested as fire
 - i. Pillar of fire
 - a. Exodus 13:21-22 ***And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.***
 - ii. Burning bush

- a. Exodus 3:2-4 *And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, “I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.” When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.”*
- iii. Flame that consumed sacrifices
 - a. 1 Kings 18:38 *Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.*
 - b. 1 Chronicles 21:26 *And David built there an altar to the Lord and presented burnt offerings and peace offerings and called on the Lord, and the Lord answered him with fire from heaven upon the altar of burnt offering.*
 - c. 2 Chronicles 7:1 *As soon as Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices...*
- iv. Ezekiel's vision of the throne
 - a. Ezekiel 1:26-27 *And above the expanse over their heads there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness with a human appearance. And upward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were gleaming metal, like the appearance of fire enclosed all around. And downward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness around him.*

XIII. PASSED BETWEEN THESE PIECES – V. 17

- A. Abram did not pass through to sign covenant
- B. God made this covenant with Himself
 - i. His word cannot be broken
 - ii. Not dependent on Abram in any way¹⁰

XIV. THE LORD MADE A COVENANT – V. 18

- A. Abram entered into it
- B. God put His own deity on the line if He broke the covenant¹¹

XV. I GIVE THIS LAND – V. 18

- A. Specific promise

¹⁰ Guzik

¹¹ Guzik

- i. Physical, not spiritual¹²
- B. Israel has only possibly possessed all this territory once or twice briefly
 - i. They will possess it one day in the future
 - ii. After a time of darkness – “church age”¹³

XVI. POINTS TO JESUS

- A. Abram believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness
 - i. This is the gospel of grace
 - a. We believe Jesus’ sacrifice was sufficient
 - b. We receive His righteousness
- B. Covenant made with blood
- C. Jesus made covenant with His blood
 - i. We enter in by faith

XVII. QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

A. Is it ok to question God regarding His promises?

B. What is the proper response to doubt?

C. What can we learn from Abraham as we wait for God’s promises in our own lives? See Hebrews 6:11-12.

¹² Guzik

¹³ Armstrong, Stephen. “Genesis 2011 - Lesson 15B.” *Verse by Verse Ministries International*, 3 Oct. 2011, versebyversemministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_15b. Accessed 23 May 2023.

D. In what way does God extend grace in His covenant to Abram? How does this relate to the grace He gives in the new covenant?

E. What does God's covenant say about His faithfulness? About the reliability of His word?

F. Why does God wait until sin has fully matured on a national level before dealing with it?

G. What then can we infer about God's promises regarding the borders of Israel? What does this mean for the future of that nation?

XVIII. FURTHER STUDY

A. What would be the result if our works were enough to justify us? See Romans 4:1-3

B. Why was Zacharias struck mute for asking the same question as Abraham in Luke 1:18? What are the parallels in Luke 1:5-20 to the story in Genesis 15?

C. How was Abraham able to comprehend and believe God's promises when they seemed foolish and unbelievable? What can we learn from this? See 1 Corinthians 2:6-16.

D. What was the promise God made to Adam that Adam didn't believe resulting in death? What has God now restored through Abram's belief?

E. What are the similarities between Genesis 15:12 and Genesis 2:21? What is the message here?

F. What was Paul implying about the Jews in 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16? How does this compare to the Amorites and how will God deal with it?
