

Genesis 15

Genesis 15 consists entirely of an extended encounter between the Lord and Abram, the man who will later be renamed Abraham. This concludes with the formal establishment of God's covenant promise to Abram: to give him and his descendants the land of Canaan.

“Do not be afraid, Abram.” v.1

Abram had been given mighty promises, but there were seasons when God did not directly speak to His servant. Much had happened between Abram's call to leave Ur and this event.

God says, “Do not be afraid, I am your shield and your great reward.”

It is very important to cling to God, even when God seems to be silent. He rewards patient endurance and He will protect us.

Abram is concerned about having no heir. v.3-4

Time has passed, and he has no son. So, who will he pass his wealth on to when he dies? However, God has already made His plans.

“Look at the stars v.5-6

God tells Abram to go outside and gives him a sight of the heavens. As they look at the night sky full of stars, God reaffirms his promise to give Abram a vast number of descendants. This personal moment with God touches Abraham's heart and his faith is restored. God credits Abraham with righteousness as he gets back on track, believing God to do exactly what He has promised. We see how in the Old Testament God establishes the principle that faith and trust pleases Him more than anything else.

God prepares a covenantal sacrifice. v.7-11

A heifer, a goat, a ram, a dove, and a pigeon are required. Everything is to be cut in half except the birds. They are to be laid out so that it is possible to walk between them. Birds of prey are driven away by Abram so that the sacrifice remains unspoiled. These animals and birds as offerings for sin are mentioned elsewhere in the Old Testament. Today, we rejoice that Christ is the once and for all sacrifice for our sins.

Prophetic words regarding Abraham's descendants. v.12 -16.

Abram fell into a deep sleep and darkness came over him.

There will come a time when God's people will be slaves in a foreign land for 400 years. But God will act in sovereign power, and His people will be led out by God's mighty hand with great wealth and many possessions.

The Smoking fire pot and a blazing torch. v.17-19

These objects confirm the holiness and the glory of God. They pass through the sacrifice and show that God's character cannot be compromised as He extends mercy to sinful men and women. God will give His people, Abram's descendants, the land of Canaan as their inheritance. Hallelujah!

Points to consider

What does God say to take away Abraham's fears and ours?

How often do we think God has changed His mind about what He has promised us?

The night sky speaks of God's glory. Are we looking up to Him or looking down at our feet?

Consider how Jesus is the perfect offering for our sin.

God's timing is perfect: even after hundreds of years, He will still fulfil His purposes.

Do we reflect often enough on the holiness and righteousness of God?