



**Course:** A Survey of the Bible: Genesis to Revelation

**Lesson:** 5a

**Title:** A Covenant

**Passage:** Genesis 15

**For Our Learning** (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 11:6, 11; Luke 4:4)

**Abram Believed GOD** (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3-6, 9, 20-25; Galatians 3:6-14; Hebrews 11:8; James 2:23)

• Abram **believed** (*trusted completely*) in God's Word:

- ① "I AM your SHIELD."
- ② "I AM your GREAT REWARD."
- ③ "I AM your FUTURE."

- Abram **believed** that God would bring an **HEIR** from his body that would fulfill the promises in Genesis 12:2-3.

- Abram **believed** *the Gospel!* (Galatians 3:8)

★ Understanding "FAITH" ----

- ❶ Christians are commanded to believe (present tense - something we are do continually every day). See Mark 1:14-15.
- ❷ Man is **commanded** (not invited) to believe. (1 John 3:23)
- ❸ Man is **not** saved because of his faith!!!!
  - Faith is like drinking. It is not the act of drinking that quenches my thirst - it is the water.
  - Faith is like eating. It is not the act of eating that satisfies my hunger - it is the food.
  - Faith is like cleaning. It is not the act of cleaning that cleanses me - it is the soap and water.
  - I am NOT SAVED by believing, but by the obedience and death of Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

**God Imputed (Accounted) Righteousness to Abram** (Gen 15:6)

- God did not reckon *some* righteousness.
- God did not reckon the righteousness of *good* men.
- God reckoned **HIS** righteousness – **ALL** His righteousness.

**The Land** (Genesis 15:7, 8)

- "I AM the LORD (Yahweh – promises keeping name) who brought you our of your **old life** and planted you in a **new life**." God did it NOT Abram!
- "I give you this land." See v. 18 – "I **have given** your descendants the land!"
- **THE LAND:**
  - Israel is the land of "salvation history."
  - The Land was where salvation was PURCHASED.
  - The Land will be the **STAGE** where God's FINAL ACT of "salvation history" will be played out.
- Abram looked around and asked God, "HOW?"
- (12:6; 13:7) "The Canaanites were in the land."
- (vv. 19-21) Abram looked around and saw **10** nations occupying the Land.
  - Abram **did not doubt God**, but he could not imagine how God would accomplish His promise!
- This is the **SAME** question those of us who believe in God's promises ask.
- We look at ourselves and see ALL the sin STILL in us and ask God, "HOW?"
- Abram addresses God as, "אֲדֹנָי" ('Adonay {ad-o-noy'} *Lord, owner, master*) יהוה (Yehovah {yeh-ho-vaw'}) - Some translations translate it, "O Sovereign God or LORD."

**God "Cuts A Promise"** (Genesis 15:9-13)

- Literally v. 9 says, "The LORD **cut a covenant** with Abram . . ."
- This kind of covenant making showed the seriousness of break a covenant. Literally the parties passed through the cut bleeding animals and affirmed to each other, "May the same happen to me if I break this promise!"
- Breaking such a covenant would bring **great dishonour and was worthy of DEATH**. (See Jeremiah 34:18-20)

- God says, “**KNOW FOR CERTAIN . . .**” Literally, “Knowing know . . .”
  - ① Your descendants will be strangers in a land not their own.
  - ② Your descendants will be servants in the land not their own.
  - ③ Your descendants will be afflicted 400 years!
  - ④ I will judge the land that your descendants will be strangers in.
  - ⑤ Your descendants will come out of that land with great possessions.
  - ⑥ You will die in peace and buried at a good old age.
  - ⑦ In the fourth generation your descendants will return HERE.
  - ⑧ It will be when the sin of the Amorites is complete.

### God’s Covenant (vv. 14-21)

- ① It was **ONE-SIDED!**
  - MARK THIS: **God put Abram to sleep and then passed through the animals HIMSELF.**
  - Abram (and Israel) was NOT a party to this covenant, yet they would receive the benefits of it!!
  - HIGHLIGHT THIS! Man **cannot** keep his promises to God. God would do this great work **despite** what His people would do or not do.
  - The two symbols help us understand the covenant:
    - “smoking firepot” used by a refiner and symbol of suffering. (John 16:33; Acts 14:22; 2 Timothy 3:12; Philippians 1:29; 1 Thess. 3:4)
    - **AND/WITH** the “burning torch” – God is Light (1 John 1:5) and promises to be with His people through suffering. (Isaiah 43:2)
- ② It was **ETERNAL!**
  - Consider circumcision! (Genesis 17). It is done by ANOTHER! It is PERMANENT! It cannot be UNDONE! (Rom. 2:28-29; Php 3:3; Colossians 2:11; Deuteronomy 30:6)
  - (v. 18) God says, “I **have given** this land . . .” Consider: Isaiah 14:24-27; 46:9-11; Proverbs 19:21; Acts 15:18. See tense in Rom. 8:29-30; Ephesians 2:6.
- ③ It was **ALL GRACE!**
  - Abram had done NOTHING to deserve this promise.
  - Abram HAD NOTHING to offer or promise in return.
  - Abram could DO NOTHING in return to deserve this promise.

