

Abraham—Genesis 15

God's Agreement with Abram

I. Additional Scriptures/Notes...

15:2... ELIEZER—“the steward of Abram's house, E. of Damascus, literally, 'the son of the business,' or possession (i.e. heir) of my house. Entering Canaan by Damascus, Abram took thence his chief retainer, and adopted him in the absence of a son and heir. He was not 'born in Abram's house' as [Gen_15:3](#) of KJV represents in contradiction to [Gen_15:2](#) (unless it was while Abram was in Damascus); but, as Hebrew expresses, was 'son of his house,' i.e. adopted as such, according to the paternal relations then subsisting between patriarchs and their servants” [*Fausset's Bible Dictionary*].

15:6... COUNTED IT TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS—“One may only be astounded at the amount of nonsense written about this verse, which is hailed as the plan of salvation for the sinners of all ages, some even claiming that Abram was 'saved by faith only,' and trying to find here a corroboration of the great Lutheran heresy. There is no truth whatever in such views. Morris even discovered (?) here 'a new covenant,' and Unger hailed the passage as "the pattern of a sinner's justification"!

- (1) It is absolutely impossible properly to observe this place as the record of a new covenant. Gen. 12:1f contains the embryo of all that is given here. Therefore, this chapter has a recapitulation and further explanation of the covenant God had already made with Abram, a covenant upon which Abram acted, which he received in good faith, and in which actions he had already demonstrated his faith by OBEDIENCE, the prime factor without which salvation for anybody, past, present, or future, is totally impossible. Payne strictly understood this and commented that: "It is the tranquil and obedient acceptance of God's plan (of history and of salvation) which places man in the right relationship with God."
- (2) Luther raised the question of whether or not Abram had been justified already before this time, and upon the flimsiest of reasons decided that here Abram for the first time appears justified. The truth must be that for a long while prior to this reaffirmation of the covenant already in existence, Abram's OBEDIENT faith had been 'reckoned unto him for righteousness.' This chapter began with the revelation that God was already indeed the shield and 'exceeding great reward' of Abram. Therefore, Abram's status before the recapitulation of the covenant here, was definitely NOT that of an alien sinner. As Whiteside, a scholar of great discernment, exclaimed: 'One of the strangest things in all the field of Bible exegesis is the contention so generally made that this language refers to the justification of Abraham as an alien sinner. It seems to be taken for granted that up to the time spoken of in this verse, Abraham was an unforgiven, condemned sinner ... The facts are all against such a supposition.' The notion that Abram had not been justified previously leaves unexplained and, in fact, inexplicable, why God should have providentially intervened in Egypt to rescue him from the situation where his wife was in the harem of Pharaoh, or why God would have aided Abram in the violent little war in which he rescued Lot. No, justification of Abram could not have begun in this chapter. There was a degree in which it already was done, although his final justification in God's sight did not even occur here but came when he offered Isaac (James 2:21).

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- (3) Paul's statements concerning this event in such passages as Rom. 4:3,5, etc., have no reference whatever to Abram's receiving justification WITHOUT OBEDIENCE, but to the fact that his justification was not, in any sense, founded upon circumcision and the Law of Moses. No one in any dispensation was ever justified apart from obedience. Abram's justification was totally apart from the Law of Moses, which came over 400 years afterwards; but it was not apart from obedience" [Burton Coffman Commentary].

15:10... DIVIDED—"For whatever purpose a covenant was made, it was ever ratified by a sacrifice offered to God; and the passing between the divided parts of the victim appears to have signified that each agreed, if they broke their engagements, to submit to the punishment of being cut asunder; which we find from [Mat 24:51](#); [Luk 12:46](#), was an ancient mode of punishment. This is farther confirmed by Herodotus, who says that Sabacus, king of Ethiopia, had a vision, in which he was ordered ἰ ἄοῖ ὀ ἀέαοἰ ἄεί, to cut in two, all the Egyptian priests; lib. ii" [Clarke].

15:12... FOUR HUNDRED YEARS—"The same period is referred to as 430 years in Exo. 12:40, a well-known pseudocon, but no contradiction exists. Note that it is not the total stay in Egypt, but the period of their 'affliction' which is here prophesied as 'four hundred years.' They were not afflicted during the early years of their sojourn there while Joseph was yet Pharaoh's deputy. Also, in all probability, the time period here is stated in round numbers, meaning 'about four hundred years.' The same period is called 'four generations' little later, that being correct in view of the longevity of the patriarchs" [Coffman].

II. Chronology.

BIBLE PERIOD: **Patriarchy.**

III. Summary.

This chapter is a recapitulation of the Abrahamic Covenant. God makes a statement which should make it abundantly clear to Abram that the promise of an heir will not be his servant, but will be literally his seed. The sign of agreeing to a covenant is performed in this chapter by Abraham. The prophesy is made of the sojourn and affliction in Egypt. The extended land promise is given at the end of this chapter.

IV. Outline.

1. Encouragement from the Lord (Gen 15:1).
2. Doubt expressed by Abram (Gen 15:2-3).
3. The Lord reassures Abram concerning his heir (Gen 15:4-5).
4. Abram's faith (Gen 15:6).
5. The covenant is reconfirmed (Gen 15:7-12).
6. Prophecy of the future (Gen 15:13-17).
7. The Extended Land Promise (Gen 15:18-21; c.f., Fulfilled: 1 Kgs 4:21; 2 Chr 9:26).

V. Questions.

True or False

01. _____ Abram seemed to have been worried about how the promise would be fulfilled.
02. _____ As a sign of the covenant, Abram divided the birds of the offering.
03. _____ Birds attempted to take the animals Abram had killed.
04. _____ Abram's seed would be like the stars in multitude.

05. _____ There was a reason for the time period of four generations connected to the Amorites.

Multiple Choice (Select the BEST Answer)

06. _____ The Lord was to Abram what kind of reward: (a) special; (b) exceeding great; (c) unusual.

07. _____ The Lord said that a certain period would pass because this of the Amorites was not yet full: (a) iniquity; (b) house; (c) petition.

08. _____ The animals mentioned in this chapter were divided: (a) among Abram’s servants; (b) for food; (c) in the midst.

09. _____ The one that would be Abram’s heir would come from: (a) Egypt; (b) Ur; (c) his own bowels.

10. _____ Abram was promised that his burial would only come after he was an old man: (a) yes; (b) no.

Fill in the Blanks

11. “...what wilt thou give me, seeing I go _____.”

12. “...Look now toward _____, and tell the stars, if thou be able to _____ them...”

13. “...Unto thy seed have I given this _____, from the river of _____ unto the _____ river, the river _____.”

14. “But in the _____ generation they shall come hither again...”

15. Of Eliezer, the Lord told Abram, “This _____ be thine heir...”

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be found on next week’s handout

ANSWERS to Lesson 02-122... [01—False, Gen 12:1; 02—False, Gen 12:12; 03—False, Gen 12:19; 04—False, Gen 12:6; 05—True, Gen 12:16; 06—d, Gen 12; 07—b, Gen 12:4; 08—a, Gen 12:10; 09—c, Gen 12:5; 10—c, Gen 12:9; 11—nation, great, Gen 12:2; 12—fair, Gen 12:11; 13—all, families, Gen 12:3; 14—plagued, Gen 12:17; 15—Yes, Gen 12:16.]

VI. Lessons & Applications.

1. ...one born in my house is heir (Gen 15:3). Abram is mistaken in this statement. He is seeking to rush God. Abram will learn that he will indeed have a son, just as God had promised. Too many times we try to get ahead of God. If God has promised, it will be so.

2. ...from the river of Egypt unto the Great River, the River Euphrates (Gen 15:18). Here is a significant promise. The Premillennialists claim that God has yet to fulfill this promise. However, 1 Kings 4:21 and 2 Chronicles 9:26 argue differently. There are no promises to the Jews that are yet outstanding, yet to be fulfilled. Such thinking is simply from an imagined system that is totally contrary to that which has been revealed!

VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle.

L G Q A K E N I Z Z I T E S Z A B R A M
 A X R S W E D C V F R T G B C N H Y U M
 N P O E U P H R A T E S I K O M J U Y G
 D H N B A G T R F V C D E W V S X Z A I
 Q W S X C T H I T T I T E S E R F V B R
 B G T K Y H R N M J U I K L N O P L M G
 H Y T A B V F I E D C X S W A Q A Z X A
 C D E D R F V B V V F R T T N B N M N S
 S B V M C X Z A S E C D P E T S R B A H
 M S B O G T Y H N B R Y E D E X S W M I
 I E X N C D E R F V G B G T T Y H N O T
 A E N I H Y T G B E V F I R E K V B R E
 H D B T G T Y H F N M S B G T E E D I S
 P C D E E R F O V B U B G T Y N N J T A
 E X S S W E R C D B E R F V B I B G E N
 R C D E R E F V E B G T Y H N T M J S U
 B G T R V V C J X S W Q A Z X E C D E R
 V F R I P E R I Z Z I T E S B S N H Y U
 V F R F R T G B N H Y U J M K I O L P I
 U Y T R E C A N A A N I T E S C D D R L

[The highlighted words can be found above. They may be backwards, diagonal, upside down, etc. See if you can find them all. The more you use the words of the Bible, the greater blessed you will be! You might be surprised at how much this little exercise will help you retain important truths. THANK YOU for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. DRL]

Gen 15:18-21--¹⁸In the same day the LORD made a **covenant** with **Abram**, saying, Unto thy **seed** have I given this **land**, from the **river of Egypt** unto the **great river**, the river **Euphrates**:¹⁹The **Kenites**, and the **Kenizzites**, and the **Kadmonites**,²⁰And the **Hittites**, and the **Perizzites**, and the **Rephaims**,²¹And the **Amorites**, and the **Canaanites**, and the **Girgashites**, and the **Jebusites**.