

# A LASTING INHERITANCE Sunday, October 6, 2013

## Unifying Topic: A PROMISE OF LAND

### Lesson Text

I. God's Reassurance (Genesis 15:7-8)

II. Preparation For A Covenant (Genesis 15:9-16)

III. The Establishment Of A Covenant (Genesis 15:17-21)

**The Main Thought:** In 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. (Genesis 15:18, KJV).

**Unifying Principle:** Many people hope to leave an inheritance for their children. What sort inheritance has lasting value? God's promise to Abram was the promise of creating a special relationship—a chosen nation—with Abram and Sarai's heirs.

**Lesson Aim:** To demonstrate God's faithfulness and to show He kept His promise to Abram and the children of Israel.

**Life aim:** To remind believers that God is totally trustworthy. Furthermore, the life aim of the lesson is to teach that we, as believers, also have an inheritance with God.

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- 15:7 And he said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.
- 15:8 And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?
- 15:9 And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.
- 15:10 And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not.
- 15:11 And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.
- 15:12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.
- 15:13 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;
- 15:14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.
- 15:15 And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.
- 15:16 But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.
- 15:17 And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.
- 15:18 In 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:
- 15:19 The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites,
- 15:20 And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims,
- 15:21 And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

### HISTORY

#### Genesis 15:1-6

##### THE LORD'S PROMISE TO ABRAM

**15:1 After these things...** The previous chapter focused on Abram's actions, but this chapter deals with his emotions. "*After these things...*" What things? - After the battle and all other things that had occurred. ...**the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.** This presents one of the four ways which God spoke to individuals in Old Testament times (Num.12:6-8).

1. He spoke in visions (Amos 7:1).
2. He spoke in dreams (Gen.41:1; Dan.2:1; 3).
3. He revealed Himself by speaking directly to the Prophets mouth to mouth (Dan.12:8).
4. And He spoke through His Word (the time of the Gospels was still under Old Testament authority—under the Law).

God called him by name. He knew Abram's heart, his fears, and disappointments. The tenderness of this act really brought Abram prostrate before God and encouraged him beyond all measure. When God called Abram's name, Abram knew above all else that he truly belonged to God. In this vision; in this mental picture, God gave a threefold message:

1. "*Abram do not fear.*" It seems that along the way fear came into the picture. Why? He had just come out of a war and perhaps he feared the revenge of the kings he had just defeated or he feared being childless.
2. "*Abram I am your shield.*" God wanted to reassure him that He is his shield, a protector and defender. God shielded Abram...

- a. from being hopelessly discouraged and giving up.
  - b. from denying the faith and the promises of God.
  - c. from being defeated by the enemies of life.
  - d. from losing his soul to the spiritual enemies of God.
  - e. from losing heart in the face of weakness, temptation, and trial.
3. "*Abram I am your exceeding great reward.*" God would continue to fight for him as He had just demonstrated in chapter 14. And He would continue to reward Abram, especially since Abram had returned all the goods; valuables and gold, livestock and possessions, to all the people he had rescued. All the wealth was rightfully his by the law of conquest, but he had returned all and kept nothing for himself. God had truly made a Covenant with Abram, and Abram needed not fear because "*I Am*" had spoken. Abram was to be rewarded by God Himself, His very nature, beyond and above anything Abram could ever guess.

Just like Abram's experience, emotions can fall apart; darkness can sweep over our souls; trials can sap our strength; temptation can cause us to question and doubt God's promises. In fact, times do arise when we need a fresh experience with God, a brokenness experience, a deep sense of His presence, a special reassurance from His Word. It is in such moments of need that God always comes to us to meet our need, and the depth of the experience with God, always matches our need. The experience of His presence and the power of His Word and assurance, are always just what we need. This was the case with Abram, and it is always the case with the genuine follower of God.

**15:2 And Abram said, LORD God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?** Now we see, something else that Abrams feared: having no child. He was too old; too many years had passed since the promise had been given. <sup>1</sup>The last time God had spoken to Abram about the birth of a son, he had promised him he would make his descendants like the dust of the earth (Gen.13:16); but now the promise is that they shall be like the stars of the heaven in multitude (Gen.13:14-16). His nephew Lot whom he had reared and loved like a son had chosen to follow after the world instead of God. Therefore, he was unfit to be the heir, so the question to the Lord was, "*what will you give me?*" Abram comes up with the idea of the steward, Eliezer of Damascus, his most trusted servant in his household to inherit his wealth; a Mesopotamian custom—if Abram died without a son of his own, then his eldest servant would become his heir.

**15:3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.** Abram is wondering what happened to the promise. He's saying Look now; I still don't have a seed. He was disappointed and getting impatient! We can look at this in two ways: The male carries the seed for the baby, and as of yet, Abram has not seed for the baby to be born; or that Abram's seed or heir has not been born. However, Abram is now considering his servant Eliezer of Damascus in the house; he could be his heir. How much longer would he wait?

**15:4 And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.** There is a regular dialog between he and God. After God hears him, God said no, Eliezer will not be his heir. God then told Abram that he and Sarai will have a son who will come from her own body; her own flesh and blood; from their own bowels— this is where their heir will come from. The promised seed was sure to come.

**15:5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.** Remember, God was giving Abram a vision of all this. God took Abram outside, which means that Abram was inside his tent. Now He tells Abram to look up and if he is able to count the stars, so will his seed (descendants) be. What a glorious encouragement! Everytime Abram looked up at the stars he would think of the great promise of God and be encouraged and strengthened in his faith. <sup>2</sup>No one knows how many stars there are. That's precisely God's point. Abraham will have so many descendants that he will never be able to count them all.

**15:6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.** To "*believe*" means to rest upon, to lean upon, to be sure of, to have complete and full confidence in. There are essentially two types of righteousness: righteousness we think we accomplish by our own efforts, and righteousness accounted to us by the work of Christ when we believe. God took Abram's faith and counted or credited it to him for righteousness. No person is righteous before God. Our righteousness is always seen **in** Christ Jesus, for we are **in** Christ! The key word is "in." Our faith is

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.raystedman.org/old-testament/genesis/faith-conquering-fear>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/1996-04-28-How-to-Overcome-Fear/>  
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

in the Person of...; our belief is in the Person of... When a person deposits his money in a bank, the bank credits the money to his account. When Abram deposited his faith in God; laid his life into the hands of God; God credited his faith as righteousness because Abram deposited his faith in God. What did Abram believe? He believed God's promise to give the promised seed.

## LESSON:

### Genesis 15:7-8 God's Reassurance

**15:7** And he said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. God identifies Himself, *"I am the Lord"* (Jehovah, Yahweh), the God of redemption and salvation; the God who establishes a personal relationship with people, and enters the covenant of redemption with them. God's character lies at the basis of any covenant He makes, therefore God refers to His name. He is reminding Abram, *"I am the Lord that brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees."* There was a reason to come out of Ur; it was not only to give Abram the Promised Seed but also the Promised Land as an inheritance.

**15:8** And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? Abram is asking for more assurance. He wanted his faith to be so rooted and grounded that he would never again question God's promises. Thus, he asked God for a specific sign that would absolutely confirm the promise (covenant) of the Promised Land.

### Genesis 15:9-16 Preparation For A Covenant

**15:9** And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. God heard Abram's request and God moved to give Abram a visible sign that would establish the covenant forever in Abram's mind. Remember all this was taking place in a vision that God was giving Abram. God said, *"Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon."* Note, the animals used: a heifer, a she goat, and a ram—all three years old, which meant they were grown or mature. Also, he was to use a turtledove and a young pigeon. There were a total of five animals to be sacrificed. Five is the number for Grace. One commentator expresses it as the fullness of the great sacrifice of Calvary:

1. The heifer symbolized the Priestly Office of Christ.
2. The she goat symbolized His Prophetic Office.
3. The ram symbolized His Kingly Office.

Jesus was Priest, Prophet, and King.

4. The turtledove symbolized Him being led and guided strictly by the Holy Spirit, while
5. The pigeon symbolized Him obeying the Spirit in every capacity.

I do know Abram asked God how would he know that he would get this inheritance, and God is about to show him once and for all. This was the kind of sacrifice Abram was familiar with. God dealt with Abram on the level of using a human covenant to seal the deal.

**15:10** And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not. God leads Abram through this vision. The division of the animals refers to the covenant God is making with Abram. Note the covenant ceremony involved cutting the larger animals into halves and laying each piece opposite each other with a walking path between them. The turtledove and pigeon were to be kept whole; not to be divided; one laid at the end of one row and the other at the end of the other row. The idea is for Abram to see a human covenant— *[each party entering the covenant (contract) was to walk down the path between the pieces of sacrificed animals. While walking, they were to declare this promise. If they failed to keep the covenant then they deserved the same fate as the animals (Jer.34:18-19).]* In this case God would become like the dead animals if He does not keep His Word! He alone is making this covenant and God is not a man that He should lie...

**15:11** And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away. So God had not appeared just yet to take part in the covenant ceremony, thus Abram had to drive off the vultures that kept sweeping down to consume the carcasses.

**15:12** And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. Again, remember Abram was receiving a vision from God. The revelation comes to Abram in a trance of deep sleep. Lying there, deep in sleep, a thick darkness moved in upon him and some sense of horror and dread began to strike his heart. What was the message? It was a prophecy foretelling the triumphant future of the Abram's

promised seed (v13-16).

- a. Abram's promised seed shall enter a foreign land to be oppressed and enslaved for a period of 400years (V13).
- b. Abram's promised seed shall be delivered from the oppressing nation (Egypt), and when they are delivered they will have great possessions (V14).
- c. The believer (Abram) will join his fathers in peace (v15).
- d. Abram's promised seed shall return to the Promised Land after 400years (V16).

It represented the sufferings which would come to God's people Israel and as well to Saints presently. Abram's descendants would possess the land of Canaan, but not until after a considerable delay and many difficulties.

**15:13 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;** God tells Abram that Israel must remain in a land (Egypt) for four hundred years (their entire stay). This is a rounded figure, the precise number being 430 (Exo.12:40-41).<sup>3</sup>Four hundred years are to elapse before the seed of Abram shall actually proceed to take possession of the land. This interval can only commence when the seed is born; that is, at the birth of Isaac, when Abram was a hundred years of age and therefore thirty years after the call. During this interval they are to be, "*first, strangers in a land not theirs*" for one hundred and ninety years; and then for the remaining two hundred and ten years in Egypt: at first, servants, with considerable privilege and position; and at last, afflicted serfs, under a hard and cruel bondage. This is a certainty!

**15:14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.** At the end of this period Pharaoh and his nation were visited with a succession of tremendous judgments, and Israel went out free from bondage "with great wealth." This passage teaches us that we will go through difficult seasons, which sometimes last for generations. Nevertheless, God knows the end from the beginning and causes trials to work for the benefit of those who trust him.

**15:15 And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.** "*Going to his fathers*" meant joining them in heaven. Abram will die a happy old age (he was 175 years old when he died in Gen 25:7-8). Abram would have peace—eternal life and peace.

**15:16 But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.** The iniquity of the Amorite tribes living in the land of Canaan was not yet full; God gave them more time to repent. The Amorites were one of the nations living in Canaan. God knew the people would grow more wicked and in their iniquity they would be punished. This prophecy was literally fulfilled. Moses, for example, who led the Israelites back to Canaan after their 400years in Egypt, was in the fourth generation from Jacob—Levi, Kohath, Amram, Moses.

## **Genesis 15:17-21 The Establishment Of A Covenant**

**15:17 And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.** God gave Abram a deep experience of His holy presence. But note how God appeared to Abram: God's presence was symbolized in a smoking firepot with a blazing torch. God often symbolized His presence by using fire. The Bible says that God is a consuming fire. There had to be shed blood to seal the covenant. To confirm His promise:—the smoking firepot and flaming torch passing between the parts of the sacrificed animals. Ancient covenants were sometimes confirmed by the halving of sacrificial animals and the passing between them of the two parties to the covenant (Jere.34:18). However, there was only one to pass through the carcasses and that was God. This indicated that Yahweh alone was undertaking the fulfillment of all the conditions attached to the covenant. The sign to Abram was a visible assurance to him that the covenant God had made was real. Therefore, if the covenant of the promised seed and the Promised Land was to ever be established and fulfilled, it had to be established by God and by God alone; by grace and by grace alone. A person is saved—receives the promised seed (Christ) and the Promised Land (heaven)—by grace and grace alone.

**15:18 In 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:** This is an expansion of the covenant given earlier by God: here the actual boundaries of the Promised Land are given. The Promised Land will stretch from somewhere close to the great Nile River to the great Euphrates River. Note, at that time, there were apparently ten significant tribes of Canaanite people occupying the land. The Amorites were the largest, and the name Amorite was sometimes used to refer to all the Canaanite people.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Bible.show/sVerseID/374/eVerseID/374/RTD/Barnes>  
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

### 15:19 The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites,—

- The **Kenite** dwelt in the country bordering on Egypt, and south of Palestine, in which the Amalekites also are found. They were friendly toward the Israelites, and hence some of them followed their fortunes and settled in their land.
- The **Kenizzites** dwelt apparently in the same region, having affinity with the Horites, and subsequently with Edom and Israel.
- The **Kadmonite** seems to be the Eastern, and, therefore, to hold the other extreme boundary of the Promised Land, toward Tadmor and the Phrat. These three tribes were probably related to Abram, and, therefore, descendants of Shem.

### 15:20 And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims,—

- The **Hittites** were descendants of Ham through Heth who was the second son of Canaan.
- The **Perizzites** were a tribe that opposed Israel and was driven out of Canaan.
- The **Rephaims** were a strong people living in Palestine before Abraham. They are one of the groups of peoples who had been defeated by Chedorlaomer. They seemed to live in a rather large area, just east of the Salt Sea.

### 15:21 And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

- The **Amorites** were mountain dwellers; one of the Canaanite tribes often fighting Israel.
- The **Canaanites** were a Semitic tribe that lived in Canaan before the Israelites conquered it. They were descendants of Ham, the son of Noah.
- The **Girgashites** were an original tribe of Canaan, son of Ham, son of Noah. The name means "*dwelling on clay soil*".
- The **Jebusites** were a tribe of Canaanite people who lived in and around Jerusalem.

Ten nations are listed here, nations which occupied the land of Canaan. Ten is the number signifies the perfection of Divine order, completeness, nothing lacking which indicates that the entirety of this land which would also include other tribes would be given to Abraham's descendants.

#### SUMMARY:

In this vision from God, God reminds Abram where he comes from and who brought him out. God brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees. Why? It is for God's purpose to give him the Promised Land as an inheritance. Abram wanted proof that he was going to inherit it, so God says take these five animals as a sacrifice. The heifer, the she goat, and the ram were to be three years old; split them in half and lay them opposite of each other. The other two animals were a turtledove and a pigeon. They were to be left whole; not to be cut in half. And when the vultures came to eat of the carcasses, Abram was to drive them away (vv7-11).

Abram falls into a "deep sleep" and God speaks that Abram's descendants will be "strangers in a land not their own." They will be "enslaved and mistreated for four hundred years". However, their oppressors (the Egyptians) will be punished in the end and God's people will come forth with great wealth that would bring them to the Promised Land. Abram now knows that he will be able to go with his fathers and die in peace at a good old age. In this vision, Abram also sees a smoking firepot proclaiming the furnace of affliction that Israel will have to pass through; and a flaming torch move between the split carcasses of animals sacrificed. This represented the manifestation of God's divine presence passing through the sacrifice showing that He was and would be the light and salvation of His people. In Exodus He was their pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. The purpose was to settle the matter of His covenant He had made with Abram: The promised seed was reaffirmed and the Promised Land was reaffirmed with given boundaries (v v.12-18).

#### APPLICATION:

Whatever we have on earth is only temporary, homes, cars, money, etc; and whatever we leave for our children is only temporary. But the inheritance God leaves is eternal, forever and ever. Which will you choose; something temporary or something eternal which can never be lost?