

Genesis 15

Verse 1

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying,

**“Do not fear, Abram,
I am a shield to you;
Your reward shall be very great.”**

After what things?

After he rescued Lot and the many other citizens of the 5 cities that were attacked

And after he met the great king and priest Melchizedek

Do not Fear, Abram

Despite his great victory he begins to have some doubts and fears

What fears might Abram be having?

1. That the four kings he had conquered might return with a greater force
2. Having returned home, he was once again confronted with the same problem; he and Sara were still childless

I am a shield to you; you're reward shall be great

1. I am your shield was God's answer to his fear of revenge from the 5 kings
2. You're reward shall be great was God's answer to them being childless

However, both of these statements required faith on the part of Abram

Because that which is unseen (promises yet to be fulfilled) can only be known by faith

We know that God kept his word concerning these promises because we know the history of Israel from Abram to Christ.

Abram did not have that same advantage

Verse 2-3

² But Abram said, “Lord God, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” ³ Abram also said, “Since You have given me no son, one who has been born in my house is my heir.”

What will you give me, since I am childless?

For Abram and Sara the years were slipping away

Abram was 75 when he left Haran and will be 99 in a few chapters

At the age of 99, Abram was said to be “as good as dead” as far as having children was concerned.

And the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus

Eliezer is often assumed to be the eldest servant of Abram

65 years later he will be sent to obtain a wife for Isaac

See Genesis 24

Verse 4

⁴ Then behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, “This man will not be your heir; but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.”

This meant Abram and Sarah would have a son

This also required faith because the promise did not come quickly

Abram will be 86 when Ismael is born, and 100 when Isaac is born

So Abram had to wait 15 years or more for this promise to be fulfilled

Verse 5

⁵ And He took him outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”

God had promised Abram that his seed would be as the dust of the earth

Now he compares them to the stars in the night sky

The point being that Abram’s descendants would be very numerous

Verse 6

⁶ Then he believed in the Lord; and He credited it to him as righteousness.

It’s obvious that Abraham believed in God prior to this point

But he was struggling with God’s promise about his seed

However, when God reaffirms his previous promise, Abram truly believed

And Abram was seen as being righteous before God

In Romans 4:5 Paul says,

But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness

Is this not also true when we get baptized into Christ

We know that baptism is an act of faith

We are saved by our union with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection

This is the moment when we are united with Christ

Verse 7-8

⁷ And He said to him, “I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it.” ⁸ But he said, “Lord God, how may I know that I will possess it?”

God had just reassured Abraham about his future son

Now Abraham wants proof or assurance that he will inherit the land of Canaan

Verses 9-11

⁹ So He said to him, “Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” ¹⁰ Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, and laid each half opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds. ¹¹ And birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away.

The slaughtered animals were the confirmation of a covenant

God was taking an oath for the purpose of reassuring Abram

And the birds of prey came down upon the carcasses

Christ used "the birds" as a symbol of Satan in the N.T.

See Matthew 13:4

And Abram drove them away

This may symbolize the need for people of faith to be alert

Because Satan is always looking for opportunities to interfere

Especially when it comes to a covenant relationship with God

Verses 12-14

¹² Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror *and* great darkness fell upon him. ¹³ Then *God* said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years. ¹⁴ But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions.

Your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years

See chart 1505

Explaining Genesis 15:13

In Exodus 12:40-41 we learn that the exact period of time was 430 years
God simply rounded it off to "four hundred" when he spoke to Abraham
Stephen did the same thing in Acts 7:6 when he spoke before the council
Rounding off dates that cover long periods of time is not uncommon

There is one other issue that is important to understand
The text in Genesis 15:13 should read in Canaan and Egypt
Some versions leave Canaan out but mention it in a footnote
Knowing this explains the other so called contradiction in the text

Scripture	Event	Person	year
Genesis 22	Abraham offers Isaac	Abraham is 120	1876
Genesis 47:9	70 go to Egypt	Jacob is 130	1706
Exodus 1:6-11	Joseph dies	Joseph is 110	1635
Exodus 1:6-11	slavery begins	30 years later	1606
Exodus 12	The Exodus	Moses is 80	1446

Using the dates above we can determine the following

Years in Canaan	1876-1706	170
Years in Egypt	1706-1446	260
Total	1876-1446	430
Years in slavery	1606-1446	160

But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve

The ten plagues brought against Egypt were the fulfillment of this prophecy

And afterward they will come out with many possessions.

The Egyptian people gave the slaves silver, gold, and clothing

Verses 15-16

¹⁵ As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶ Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the wrongdoing of the Amorite is not yet complete.”

You shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age

Abraham would not die in war or some other misfortune and he lived to be 175

Then in the fourth generation they shall come here again

In 4 generations from Abraham they would come back to Canaan

During the time of Abraham a generation was about 100 years

See pic 1510

	Father	born	son	died	age
15	PELEG	2697	130	2358	339
16	REU	2567	132	2228	339
17	SERUG	2435	130	2105	330
18	NAHOR	2305	179	2001	304
19	TERAH	2126	130	1921	205
20	ABRAM	1996	100	1821	175
21	ISACC	1896	60	1716	180
22	JACOB	1836	91	1689	147

Abraham had Isaac when he was 100 years old (one generation)

Abraham died in 1821, minus (4 generations) 400 years, equals 1421

The exodus occurred in 1446 BC, a difference of 25 years

As we can see, there was some rounding off concerning this event because it covered a long period of time

For the wrongdoing of the Amorite is not yet complete.”

Here the Amorite represents all the Canaanite tribes

God is the judge of man and nations, and when a nation reaches a certain point of depravity it will be judged

Verses 17 - 21

¹⁷ Now it came about, when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, a smoking oven and a flaming torch appeared which passed between these pieces.

¹⁸ On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying,

“To your descendants I have given this land,

From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates: ¹⁹ the land of the Kenite, the Kenizzite, the Kadmonite, ²⁰ the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Rephaim,

²¹ the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Girgashite, and the Jebusite.”

¹⁸ On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram

In chapter 13 God promised to give him all the land he could see in all directions

Here God gives Abraham a well-defined description of the land he will receive

To your seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates

See Map 1515 below

Land between the two rivers



The land of the Kenite, the Kenizzite, the Kadmonite,²⁰ the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Rephaim,²¹ the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Girgashite, and the Jebusite.”

There are 10 nations listed in verses 19 and 20 during the time of Abraham

However, only seven nations are mentioned at the time of Joshua, some 500 years later

The four nations not mentioned during the time of Joshua include,

The Kenite,

The Kenizzite,

The Kadmonite,

And the Rephaim

It is possible that 3 or 4 of these nations were absorbed into the other 7 tribes or they were defeated by surrounding nations since they were located on the outer boundary of Canaan

The 7 nations during the time of Joshua included:

See map 1520 below

