

**GENESIS 14-15**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Genesis chapter 14 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

As we closed last time in our study, we saw that Abram pitched his tent in Mamre, which means *“fatness”* and in the land of Hebron, which means *“fellowship or communion.”*

And the point I want to bring out and I want you to remember is that as Abram is walking with the Lord, as he was in fellowship with God, he had fatness of soul or he was so overwhelmed with the Lord, which then causes him to worship the Lord as he builds an altar to the Lord!

Abram left all that the world had for him behind and looked to the richness of communion he had with God!

On the other hand, Lot was in the world and that is never a good place to be living. And what I mean that Lot was in the world is that he was right in the center of wickedness and it will not only affect him, but his family as well.

Let me share with you these words from Ray Stedman about this chapter. He wrote,

To many, the Christian life appears prosaic [mundane], dull, uneventful.

It is anything but that!

If it appears to be so, it is almost certainly a life out of focus with true spirituality; in other words, a carnal Christian life.

We have seen already that whenever Abram is found with a tent and an altar in the land of Canaan, he is a wonderful picture of a Christian living in the power and enjoyment of his pilgrim life, in this world but not of it, daily judging self by the cleansing of the cross.

Lot, on the other hand, is a picture for us of the carnal Christian, flesh-governed, living for self. He has forsaken the place of fellowship with Christ. Lot left Abram up on the hillside and moved down toward Sodom and Gomorrah, the cities of the plain. He was drawn by the allurements of the world and began to live for himself and for the pleasures of life. He pictures a Christian who is born again, but enmeshed in the enticements of the materialistic, commercialized world around.

Now, suddenly, a shattering experience breaks into Abram's quiet, pleasant existence.

Life in the Spirit is like that. We are never permitted to rest beside the still waters very long, nor would we want to, for life there soon grows dull and uninteresting.

In Genesis 14, we are introduced to the first war ever recorded in Scripture. It is a stirring account, vividly contrasting the blustering armies of earth with the quiet, overcoming power of faith.

- <https://bit.ly/3R8sBCc>

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in Genesis chapter 14, beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

## **GENESIS 14**

### **VERSES 1-4**

Here we see a confederation of four powerful Kings invading the Jordan Valley, near the Dead Sea or Salt Sea.

Let me show you where they are coming from. We see Chedorlaomer of Elam (modern Iran), Amrahle of Shinar (Babylon or modern Iraq), and the two other Kings, Arioch and Tidal, represented the Hurrians and Hittites (peoples from areas within modern Turkey).

And these Kings were brutal. Archaeologist Nelson Glueck documents the destruction left by these Kings.

He tells us: ***“I found that every village in their path had been plundered and left in ruins, and the countryside was laid waste. The population had been wiped out or led away into captivity. For hundreds of years thereafter, the entire area was like an abandoned cemetery, hideously unkempt, with all its monuments shattered and strewn in pieces on the ground.”***

And what we see is that these four Kings defeat these five Kings in the Jordan Valley and they served them for twelve years.

Where did these five Kings live and reign? They lived and reigned in the area east and south of the Dead Sea, which today is the Trans-Jordan Valley but biblically and historically is the area of Ammon, Moab and Edom.

So for twelve years they were in bondage and as you can imagine, they did get tired of that kind of relationship and so in the thirteenth year they rebelled against these Kings.

Did they succeed? Let's read on and see.

#### VERSES 5-10

These Kings put up with their rebellion for one year, maybe gathering their forces together during this time and they came down hard upon them, defeating them and taking many captives.

How did they do this?

We see that Chedorlaomer gathered up his forces in an effort to reconquer these Kings and his strategy was to attack all of the cities around Sodom and Gomorrah.

Why?

To wipe them out, these smaller cities and that would then make the larger ones more vulnerable to his attack.

Now we read all of this and really, who cares? Why do we need to know this? What is the point of mentioning this war?

We will see that there are a few reasons but one of them, as we will see next, is one of the captives they took away in this battle.

Also, we are told that there were “**asphalt pits**” there and this is a little side note regarding this.

Did you know that this information here in Genesis 14:10 caused John D. Rockefeller, the founder of the Standard Oil Company, to conclude where there is asphalt or tar pits there must be oil! And that led him to drill in the area where he did find an abundance of crude oil.

#### VERSES 11-12

Keep in mind that Lot was living in Sodom at this time and when these four Kings with their armies came down into Sodom, they took Lot and his possessions captive with them.

Is there an application for us as Christians? Can we as Christians glean anything from what is going on here? I believe we can.

You see, Lot was living in a place he was not to be in, among very wicked people, in Sodom. And what happens when he is there? He is taken captive!

Spurgeon makes this point, *“Those believers who conform to the world must expect to suffer for it.”*

You see, if you are living in this world, conforming yourself to this world, you will be swept away with it, you will be taken captive by it! We are to be in the world but not of the world!

One more point before we move on. Amraphel King of Shinar is thought by some to be the great Babylonian King, Hammurabi of Yore.

He is famous for the code of Hammurabi or laws to live by you might say.

Consider the following from Compton’s Interactive Encyclopedia regarding Hammurabi, *“In a small room in the Louvre Museum in Paris, France, stands a black diorite stela, or column. On it is inscribed in Akkadian, a Semitic language, the Code of Hammurabi. This collection of laws has been ascribed to the reign of Hammurabi, the sixth and best-known of Babylon’s First Dynasty.”*

It is possible that he was one of the Kings involved in this invasion!

#### VERSES 13-14

Here we see the first mention of Abram being called a *Hebrew*, which means *“one who has crossed over.”* In other words, he crossed over to the life of faith, walking in the spirit, living in the land of promise!

As these four Kings and their armies are winning this battle, one of the captive’s escapes and he heads to see Abram for help, to rescue his nephew Lot.

And notice what Abram doesn’t do when he hears his nephew is in trouble.

He doesn't say, "*He is only getting what he deserves living out there in the world like that!*"

He could have said, "*Look, they are not attacking me, bothering me, I am not going to get involved!*"

He also could have said, "*Look, Lot should have been more careful in choosing where to live. He placed himself in this situation, now it is up to him to get out of it!*"

But Abram did not say any of those things.

He sees his brother in the Lord in trouble and he gathers up his troops and is going to come to the aid of Lot!

Now we need to be careful here and not respond like that, in a cold and harsh way, not caring for people, no matter how they got into that situation.

Remember what Cain asked God, "**Am I my brother's keeper?**" (Genesis 4:9)

And what is the answer to that question? *Yes*, of course you are!

It is what Abram did, he was his brother's keeper, or he was willing to care for his brother who was in trouble.

Now how about you? When you see a brother in trouble do you come to his aid, rallying the troops? That is what we are to do.

Paul, in I Thessalonians 5:14-15 tells us, "**Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.**"

Now here in Genesis 14:14 we are told that Abram had 318 trained Special Forces you might say.

Did you ever think about that? God had blessed him and with those blessings he made sure that he was going to be protected from the enemy.

People see that today as wrong, as a lack of faith that you have to fight, but we see it often in the Scriptures.

Francis Shaeffer said, ***“I am not a pacifist. For me to be a pacifist in an evil world would mean I would have to abandon the people I love when they needed me most.”***

Let’s face it, in the days we are living in we are in a battle, we are not on vacation! And if we don’t take the battle seriously, we are going to be in trouble.

And if we know someone needs help and we have the attitude that they can deal with it or whatever excuse you want to put in there, that is not godliness, that is not faith, not even close.

These 318 Special Forces went out with Abram, at his command to rescue Lot. And they go as far as Dan, the northern border of Israel.

Let’s see how they did.

#### VERSES 15-16

We see here that Abram and his Special Forces do a reconnaissance mission in Hobah, some 100 miles north of Dan and then are able to rescue Lot and the people, bringing back the goods that were taken by these Kings.

Do you think God was warning Lot that his living in Sodom was not a good idea?

I think He was, but Lot does not listen, and he will go back to Sodom to live.

Folks, God does warn us and if we refuse to listen there are consequences to our failure to obey.

For Lot, he will eventually lose everything, even most of his family because he refused to listen to the voice of God and obey His leading.

As we read on we will be looking at one of those difficult and controversial passages of Scripture for some.

I hope you will see what a beautiful picture we have here of our Lord as we read through these verses. But first, we will see a picture of Satan come forth.

### VERSE 17

Here the King of Sodom, Bera, comes out to greet Abram and thank him for rescuing his people. (Genesis 14:2)

But, as we are going to see as we read on in this chapter, this King of Sodom is a type of Satan who is not interested in people, but their souls and we will see that in a few minutes.

Now, in contrast to the King of Sodom, who is a type of Satan, there is another King we are going to meet, who is a type of Jesus Christ!

That is what we will look at next.

### VERSES 18-20

This is an interesting character and there are many ideas of who this is, and I hope to clearly show you who this is.

First of all, Melchizedek only appears once in the history of God's people in the Old Testament and that is right here in Genesis 14:18-20.

Then, we don't read of him again for another thousand years as David mentions him in Psalm 110:4.



Then another thousand years goes by before he is mentioned again in the Book of Hebrews where he becomes a central figure in the writer's theology of the new covenant with Jesus Christ as its Great High Priest.

So let's look at this person named Melchizedek.

The name Melchizedek means "*King of righteousness*" and he is also the King of Salem or the "*King of peace.*" And this King was a priest.

Folks, these are titles that are given to the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Jeremiah 33:15-16 we are told, "**In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David A Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In those days Judah will be saved, And Jerusalem will dwell safely. And this is the name by which she will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**"

In Isaiah 9:6 we are told, "**For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**"

In Hebrews 4:14 we are told, "**Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.**"

You see, the King of righteousness, the King of peace and Our Great High Priest!

Now who is this Melchizedek?

In Hebrews 7:1-3 we are told, **“For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated ‘king of righteousness,’ and then also king of Salem, meaning ‘king of peace,’ without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.”**

Because there were no genealogies of this man, no report of his birth or death, many believe this is none other than Jesus Christ, an Old Testament appearance of Jesus or a Christophany.

I don’t believe that is what the text is saying here.

I believe this is a picture or type of Christ, but not an Old Testament appearance of Him.

How can I be so sure?

Let me explain why I believe this.

In verse 3 of Hebrews chapter 7 the Greek word for **“made like”** is APHOMOIOO, (af-om-oy-o’o) and it speaks of a model or a copy.

Also, in verse 15 of Hebrews chapter 7 we are told, **“And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest.”**

The word **“likeness”** or **“similitude”** is the Greek word HOMOIOTES, (hom-oy-ot’-ace), which speaks of being similar, a resemblance to but not the person. It is a copy of that person, a picture you might say.

I personally believe that Melchizedek is a type of Christ or a picture of Christ, that this man was real, not an angelic being as some think, or even Jesus Christ.

Now, what about his eternal existence, that he had no father or mother?

I believe the Holy Spirit edited it out to fit the type. So I don't believe this is an Old Testament appearance of Jesus Christ.

We also see here that this King and priest offer's bread and wine to Abram, which should get our attention.

You see, these are the symbols of the New Covenant that Jesus instituted the night before His crucifixion.

The bread symbolized life, (John 6:35) and the wine spoke of the joy we have in the Lord, (Psalm 104:15).

The Holy Spirit is once again showing us that this King is a type or picture of Jesus!

In regard to His priesthood, we are told in Psalm 110:4, "**The LORD has sworn And will not relent, 'You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.'**"

This is some 500 years before the Exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Law, the establishment of the Levitical priesthood that Melchizedek was a priest!

Here's the thing. The Levitical priesthood was not sufficient; it could not take away a person's sins through their sacrifices. In fact, that is what Paul tells us in Hebrews 7:11-28, "**Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly**

**commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. For He testifies: ‘You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.’ For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God. And inasmuch as He was not made priest without an oath (for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him: ‘The LORD has sworn And will not relent, “You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek”’), by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant. Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever.”**

Thus, Jesus is from the priesthood of Melchizedek, not the Levitical priesthood, He is from an eternal priesthood that can save to the uttermost!

And Abram pays a tithe or one-tenth of the spoil to this King and priest. The point being is that Melchizedek is greater than Abram or Jesus is greater than Abram.

But what about this guy, this King of Sodom?

Let's read on and see.

VERSE 21

Remember I said that this King of Sodom is a type of Satan just as the King of Salem is a type of Jesus Christ.

Here is the reason I believe that is the picture the Holy Spirit is painting for us.

The King is interested in the people or literally their souls and not the possessions.

This King of Sodom was named “**Bera**” which means “*burning.*” (Genesis 14:2)

The word “**persons**” in Hebrew means “*souls.*”

And so the King of burning said to Abram, “*Give me the souls and take the goods for yourself!*”

Who does that sound like?

Isn't that true of the Devil? He doesn't care about toys, about possessions, he will use them to destroy people's lives, but he is interested in their souls, he wants to destroy them and keep them from the true and living God, keep them from heaven!

May we be wise and not let the possessions of this world that Satan dangles in front of us cause us to go down that path of destruction!

As this King makes this proposition to Abram, let's see how he will handle it, what he will tell this King!

VERSES 22-24

Why did Abram refuse the spoil from this victory?

Because he did not want any man to take credit for what he had obtained, he wanted God to get the credit, God to get the glory for it was God who gave him the promise and what God has promised He is more than able to bring to pass!

And thus, instead of grabbing for the possessions, he raises his hands to the Lord in praise and thanksgiving. What a great lesson for us.

Abram does allow those who went with him to partake of the spoil from the victory as they were entitled to.

We don't know if they took anything or not, but contentment in what God has given to us is a safe place to be.

It is as Paul said in I Timothy 6:6-12, **“Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”**

May we be content with what God has given to us and learn to walk by faith, trusting in the Lord and not trying to pursue human measures for success, fleshly methods.

God will bless as He sees fit and then He gets the glory as it comes to pass. Let love flow from our lives, let God shine through our lives as we walk by faith and not by sight, and let us fight for those we love and even those who we might not get along with, may have had a dispute with!

**GENESIS 15****VERSE 1**

Now this is interesting because Abram just got back from rescuing Lot and defeating these four Kings, so why did God tell Abram not to be afraid?

Because he was afraid!

Yes, he obtained this great victory, but he was also aware that these were four powerful Kings, and their army far outweighed the men he had and he could expect retribution for his actions.

Now, on what basis should Abram not be afraid?

God tells him.

First of all, God will be his shield of protection from the enemy!

It is as the Psalmist said in Psalm 33:16-20, "**No king is saved by the multitude of an army; A mighty man is not delivered by great strength. A horse is a vain hope for safety; Neither shall it deliver any by its great strength. Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, On those who hope in His mercy, To deliver their soul from death, And to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waits for the LORD; He is our help and our shield.**"

You see, protection does not come from our might, our resources, but it comes from the Lord and the Lord wants Abram to understand that fact, just as He wants us to understand it!

Not only will the Lord protect him, but the Lord will also bless Him.

Keep in mind that Abram refused the reward that the world had for him, the King of Sodom, who is a type of Satan. Those possessions could have helped him buy some protection, but that wealth was now gone. Not only that but he gave to the Lord a tenth of his possessions to Melchizedek who is a type of Jesus.

Thus, the Lord is his reward, or the Lord will bless him exceedingly abundantly above all that he could ask or think!

It is as Paul said in Philippians 4:19, **“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”**

The Lord wants us to understand that also!

In other words, ***“Don’t be afraid Abram - I am your Protector and Provider.”***

Let me ask you this. What are you going through right now?

Maybe you feel the enemy is surrounding you, maybe you feel like you have nothing.

Can you hear God’s promise to you – **“Do not be afraid. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward”** and then walk by faith believing in His promise to you?

The Lord wants you to because He is your shield, and He is your reward!

But I don’t think Abram believes that yet as he looks at things through his physical eyes instead of the eyes of faith!

### VERSES 2-3

You might call these verses, ***“Lord, strengthen my faith.”***

Here’s the thing. I don’t believe that Abram doubted God’s promise of being His shield and reward, but he is trying to figure out how this is going to take place.

You see, he has no children and who would he pass down these promises of God to?



And in his mind, as he tries to figure this out, when he does die, in his mind, his servant, Eliezer would inherit it all.

Keep in mind that God promised that through Abram would come a great nation, and that was when he was 75 years old!

Here we are some ten years or so down the road and still no children and how is God going to accomplish this.

I don't think Abram was doubting what God said, but, like I have said, he is trying to figure this out.

How can I be so sure?

Because of what Paul tells us in Romans 4:20-21 about the faith of Abram or Abraham. Paul wrote, **“He [Abraham] did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.”**

There is nothing wrong with asking God to help us understand situations that we are going through, to strengthen our faith as we go through those times.

But some ask God in a defiant accusatory way, ***“God, how can you let this happen? Why did you allow this to happen?”*** and they are mad at God.

Abram was not mad; he was just inquiring of God how this would all play out.

This is a timing issue, and it was not time yet.

You see, Abram is around 85 years old and his wife, Sarai was around 75 years old! I guess you can say that they were not spring chickens you know! No children yet and no hope for children outside of God interceding. They were past the age of child bearing as you can see!

And yes, his descendants would be as the sand of the sea, as the stars of heaven, that he would bring forth a great nation, but how?

Again, this is a timing issue, and it is not the right time yet for God to act. In fact, that promise won't be fulfilled for another 15 years or so!

How about you? Has God promised you something and since it has not happened yet, according to your timetable, are you beginning to doubt God or are you going to try and help God out, like He would need your help!

The lesson God is showing us is that we need to learn to wait upon Him and what He has promised He is more than able to bring to pass. Thus, we need to learn how to wait upon the Lord!

Now how is God going to respond to Abram's question?

Let's read on and see.

#### VERSES 4-5

Didn't God already tell Abram these things?

Yes, He did!

Then why does He have to tell Abram again about what He has promised him?

Because we either forget what He has said to us or we doubt what He has promised to us, and thus, like Abram, He has to remind us.

And the reason for the doubt is either because it has not happened as quickly as we thought it should or trouble has caused us to doubt what God has promised us!

Jim Boice put it like this. He wrote, *“Has God ever repeated a promise to you? I’m sure he has. He taught you something in the past; but you got into a muddle, and God came and taught the lesson again. You were reading the Bible, and you came upon a certain verse, and God said, ‘Don’t you remember what I promised? I’m the same God. I haven’t changed my mind.’ God repeated his promise so you would grow by the repetition.”*

Now look at this promise. God tells Abram that Eliezer will not be his heir but a son from his own body will be, and Abram’s descendants will be as the stars in the sky!

Again, keep in mind that the fulfillment of this promise is still some 15 years away!

It is as Paul reminds us in Hebrews 6:11-12, **“And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”**

May we hold on to the promises that God has given to us and rest in Him.

How is Abram going to respond to what the Lord just told Him?

Let’s read on and see.

## VERSE 6

Was Abram saved by the Law or by grace?

Obviously his good works did not save him, for the Law was still over 430 years down the road and circumcision was still not instituted yet!

Thus, Abram was saved by faith and not by works, just as we are.

That is exactly what Paul said in Romans 4:1-3, **“What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’”**

You see, it was faith and faith alone that caused God to account Abram as righteous, for the Bible tells us that our righteousness, as well as Abram’s, is like filthy rags!

What we see here in Genesis is the Gospel message in the Old Testament. Abram looked to the coming of the Messiah by faith and we look back to the Messiah who has come by faith, the one who has come and taken away the sins of the world, Jesus Christ. And that free gift of God is only received by faith and not by works!

And look at the faith of Abram as Paul tells us in Romans 4:19-24, **“And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore ‘it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.”**

Abram believed in the promise that God had made to him and that faith in the promise, and specifically that through his seed all the nations of the world would be blessed, which is speaking of the coming Messiah, and that was accounted to him as righteousness, not his good works!

And Paul applies that to us in Galatians 3:5-7 as he tells us, **“Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? -just as Abraham ‘believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.”**

In other words, it is our faith in the Messiah that saves us, the faith that Abram had and not our good works.

Luther commented on this by writing,

*When the article of justification has fallen, everything else has fallen. . . . This is the chief article from which all other doctrines have flowed. . . . It alone begets, nourishes, builds, preserves, and defends the church of God; and without it the church of God cannot exist for one hour.*

- Luther, cited in Boice

In other words, if our salvation is not built upon grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone, the church will not stand because it is an organization or a faith that is built upon good works and good works do not save us, never have and never will!

#### VERSES 7-8

Abram’s faith was not perfect and even after all God had promised him, he has some doubts and asks God to prove what He is saying, that it is true, and it will come to pass.

Now we may be thinking, ***“How could he do that?”***

Folks, we do that all the time! One minute we praise the Lord for what He is doing and the next minute, when the situation changes a bit, we doubt what God has said!

Like Abram, we are learning to trust in the Lord more and more, to believe in His promises to us. And in that there may be times where we struggle. God knows and the best thing we can do is to get into His Word and let Him speak to our hearts by His Spirit and as we do, we will learn how to trust in His promises!

Spurgeon put it like this. He wrote, *“What! Abraham, is not God’s promise sufficient for thee? . . . Ah, beloved! faith is often marred by a measure of unbelief; or, if not quite unbelief, yet there is a desire to have some token, some sign, beyond the bare promise of God.”*

How true that is!

But God does not give up on us and He will help our faith to grow.

#### VERSES 9-11

This may seem strange to us, but this is equivalent to our modern-day contracts that are signed.

They would cut these animals in two and then each party that was involved would walk through the middle of them, sealing the deal.

And back then this covenant was serious, not like today.

And as Abram obeyed the Lord, he waited for God to appear and walk with him between these animals.

As he waited the vultures came and in the Scriptures, birds are often symbolic of evil.

Thus, as he waited for the Lord Satan and his demonic forces tried to discourage him with doubt and unbelief.

As Christians he does the same thing, thus, don’t listen to his lies but trust in the Lord, the promises that He has made to you!

And look at what is happening in the church today with Replacement Theology where they tell us that the Jews forfeited this promise that God gave to them and now it has been given over to the Church! Foolishness!

And if they would only read the Scriptures they would see over and over again that God is not done with Israel, with the Jews! (Romans 9-11)

As we read on, we will see that this covenant that God made with Abram was not based upon his faithfulness, or the faithfulness of the Jewish people, but upon God's faithfulness!

#### VERSES 12-16

As Abram waits for the Lord, he falls asleep. Now the big question is, ***“Did the Lord put him to sleep, or did he just fall asleep?”***

We don't know for sure, but the Hebrew word for **“sleep”** is the same one used for the sleep God put Adam into when He took from Adam's side a **“rib”** from which God made Eve for Adam.

So it would seem here that the Lord causes Abram to fall into a deep sleep.

So as Abram falls asleep, we see that **“horror and great darkness fell upon him.”**  
Genesis 15:12.

Why did horror and great darkness come upon him?

This may be a picture of the affliction and misery into which his descendants would be brought to during their four hundred years of their bondage in Egypt. And that seems to fit as you look at Genesis 15:13 and see that the Lord speaks to Abram about the affliction they will suffer in Egypt!

Now, as you read through this the Lord does not start out with very comforting words, as I have said. They brought **“horror and great darkness”** upon Abram.

Again, He told Abram that his descendants would be slaves in Egypt for 400 years, they were going to face this affliction!

And Abram said to the Lord, **“Okay Lord, then I don’t want any children!”** No, he did not say that!

That is what we might say, **“I don’t want to go down that path if it is going to be painful, if it is going to be hard!”** That is how we often look at things and we forget that out of the pain, there is good that will come, God will use it in our lives somehow, someway!

You see, it is out of that pain and suffering that the Lord tells Abram that He will bring them back to this land of Canaan; the land of promise after the iniquity of the Amorites has been completed.

What is that about?

God is gracious, He is merciful, and one day He would deal with the sin of these people and under the leadership of Joshua, as they entered the Promise Land, the Amorites will be defeated.

Now that may not seem fair, but please understand that God knows their wickedness and He knows their end.

They are like a dog with rabies who is going to die anyway, and the dog needs to be put down before he infects anyone else!

But don’t forget that God waited and gave them time to repent, and then judgment came upon the Amorites!



Not only will they come out of Egypt but also, they will come out with great possessions, more than what they entered the land with!

In Exodus 12:35-36 that is what we see take place as we are told, **“Now the children of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, and they had asked from the Egyptians articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing. And the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they granted them what they requested. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.”**

Keep in mind that they were slaves in Egypt, and they were being let go and yet, they plundered the Egyptians just as God said they would do. You see, it was not by might, the Egyptians gave it to them!

One more point here before we move on and it is an *apparent* discrepancy in the Scriptures, a discrepancy in the time they were down in Egypt.

Here in Genesis and in Acts 7:6 we see the time frame as 400 years.

But in Exodus 12:40-41 and Galatians 3:17 it says they were down there for 430 years.

Thus, is this a mistake? Some say the 400 is rounded off, but I don't believe that, nor do I believe that there is a discrepancy in the Scriptures!

You see, the total time in Egypt was 430 years but they were oppressed for 400 of those years!

In Exodus 1:8-14 we see this played out as we are told, **“Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, ‘Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we; come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and so go up out of the land.’ Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread of the children of Israel. So the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor. And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage - in mortar, in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. All their service in which they made them serve was with rigor.”**

Thus, there is no discrepancy, in fact, the Scriptures are very accurate, they are very detailed with the time frame of how long they were down in Egypt and how long of a period of time they were oppressed down there!

#### VERSES 17-21

What is this smoking oven and burning torch all about?

I believe this is speaking of the Shekinah glory or the presence of God as represented by a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

We see that spoken of in Exodus 13:21-22.

Thus, who walked through the midst of these animals?

It was the ***LORD, YAHWEH!***

Where was Abram?

He was still sleeping or at best groggy at this time.

What is my point?

That tells me that this covenant that God gave to Abram and his descendants is a unilateral covenant or a one-party covenant that is not based upon the faithfulness of Abram or his descendants, but upon the faithfulness of God.

Thus, I don't care what this group or that group says regarding the Jews forfeiting their land. I don't care what the Pope says or the Lutheran Church or whoever, God gave it to them not because they deserved it, but God made a covenant with them, and He will keep it and He has, and He will do so even in the Millennial Kingdom!

David Baron explains it like this, *“According to the ancient Eastern manner of making a covenant, both the contracting parties passed through the divided pieces of the slain animals, thus symbolically attesting that they pledged their very lives to the fulfillment of the engagement they made (see Jer. 34:18, 19). Now in Genesis 15, God alone, whose presence was symbolized by the smoking furnace and lamp of fire, passed through the midst of the pieces of the slain animals, while Abram was simply a spectator of this wonderful exhibition of God's free grace.”*

This signified that it was an unconditional covenant, dependent for fulfillment on God alone!

God made a covenant with Abram and not God and Abram made a covenant together because then this covenant would be based upon the faithfulness of God and of Abram, and it would never work!

One author put it like this as he wrote, *“This was an unconditional, unilateral covenant. God (with astounding condescension) was symbolizing that if He were to break his word, He would be sundered (cut in two) like the butchered animals. It was an acted-out curse, a divine self-imprecation guaranteeing that Abram’s descendants would get the land or God would die. And God cannot die!”*

Another wrote, *“This covenant God signed alone; Abram did not haggle with God over the terms. God established and Abram accepted. Abram could not break a contract he has never signed!”*

Why is this so important to us?

Because there is another covenant made by God alone for us. It is a unilateral covenant or a one-party covenant that is based upon His faithfulness and not ours and that is our salvation!

You see, our salvation is not based upon our good works, our efforts, but upon the finished work of Christ on the cross of Calvary!

Just as Abram and his descendants didn’t deserve this land, neither do we deserve salvation, but God freely gives it to us in Christ!

It is as Peter tells us in I Peter 1:3-5, **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”**

If it was by our works, then God couldn’t have promised us eternal life when we put our faith in Jesus because we could blow it and thus, lose it. No security there in our salvation!

And basically, all He could have done was to say, ***“We’ll see if you live a good enough life to earn the eternal life I’m offering - and if you’re good enough and work hard enough when you die, you’ll receive it.”***

You see, the fact that God promised it to us instantly and forever the moment we put our faith in Jesus testifies to the fact it was by grace and not by our works.

I hope that is clear!

Now the Jews have occupied this land of Canaan, the borders that God gave to them maybe one brief time in their history.

That was under King Solomon, (I Kings 8:65).

But one day God will give them all this land as He has promised them, in the Millennial Kingdom!

One more thing, the river of Egypt is not the Nile River but a stream south of Gaza that is known today as Wadi el Arish, at least that is what many believe!

May we trust in the promises that God has given us and as we do, learn to walk by faith and not by sight, as Abram was learning to do!