GENESIS 15

A Child of Promise

1 After these things, the word of Yahveh came to Abram in a vision. He said, "Do not be afraid,[i] Abram. I AM your shield. I AM[ii] your exceeding[iii] great[iv] reward."

2 But Abram said, "Adonai Yahveh.[v] What will You give me? I am childless. The heir of my house is Eliezer[vi] of Damascus. He is the steward[vii] of my house."

3 And Abram said, "Look! You have not given me any children. So a servant born in my house is my heir."

4 Now watch! The word of Yahveh came to him. He said, "This one will not be your heir. Your heir will be one who will come from your own body."

The Mazzaroth

5 Then Yahveh brought him outside, and said, "Now, look up at the sky. Read[viii] the stars.[ix] If you are able, understand them." He told him, "So shall your seed[x] be."

Imputed Righteousness

6 When he believed[xi] in Yahveh, He credited[xii] righteous[xiii] to him.

7 Then Yahveh said to him, "I AM Yahveh. I brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees. I am giving you this covenant[xiv] land. You will possess[xv] it."

8 But he said, "Adonai Yahveh.[xvi] How will I know that I will possess it?"

The One-Sided Covenant

9 So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old[xvii] heifer, a three-year-old she-goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove,[xviii] and a young pigeon."[xix]

10 Abram gathered all these animals. Next, he cut them in half. Then he laid each half across from the other. But he did not cut the birds.

11 Later, when birds of prey came down upon the carcasses,[xx] Abram drove them away.

12 When the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep. Now look! A terrifying dread[xxi] of great darkness fell on him.

13 Then Yahveh said to Abram, "Know for sure that your descendants will be foreigners[xxii] in a land that is not theirs. Those people will make them slaves and oppress them for 400 years.[xxiii] **14** But I will also judge that nation that they will serve.[xxiv] Afterward, they will leave that nation with many riches. **15** And you will go to your fathers in peace. They will bury you in a good old age. **16** But in the fourth generation, your descendants will come here again. It will take that long because the iniquity of the Amorites has not yet reached completion."

17 It came to pass that the sun went down. When it was dark, Abraham saw a smoking furnace and a burning torch.[xxv] They alone[xxvi] passed between those pieces. **18** In the same day Yahveh made a covenant[xxvii] with[xxviii] Abram. He said,

> "I am giving this covenant[xxix] land to your descendants.[xxx] The land goes from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates. **19** It includes the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, **20** The Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim,[xxxi] **21** The Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."[xxxii]

[i] "Do not fear." This is the first occurrence of the reassurance formula "Do not fear" in the Bible. The expression becomes a common way God (or His messenger) addresses people facing danger, uncertainty, or a major divine calling. In the context of Genesis 14–15, Abram may have feared retaliation after defeating the eastern kings, political danger from the conflict, or the loss of wealth he refused from the king of Sodom. God's response gives two assurances: "I am your shield" (protection from enemies) and "I am your very great reward" (a greater reward than earthly wealth). The verse also introduces the covenant scene that follows in Genesis 15, where divine reassurance precedes God's promise and covenant confirmation. The first "Do not fear" in the Bible introduces one of the foundational covenant passages in Scripture.

[ii] The Hebrew לְךָ שְׂכָרְךָ הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד means "your very great reward." The verb is implied. So the sense is: "God Himself is Abram's reward." When Abram rejected worldly gain he got something far greater — God Himself.

[iii] The Hebrew מְאֹד (*me-od*) means vehemently. Synonyms include very, greatly, exceedingly, fervently, passionately, violently, intensely, much, mightily, and vigorously.

[iv] The Hebrew רָבָה (*raw-vawh*) usually means "to multiply" or "to increase." In certain contexts, especially covenant blessings or promises, it carries a broader sense of flourishing, prospering, or thriving, encompassing well-being, success, and abundance, not only numerical growth.

[v] The Hebrew אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה means "Adonai Yahveh." A reasonable option is "Lord Jesus." This double name is quite common in the Old Testament. It shows up 216 times in the Book of Ezekiel.

[vi] The Hebrew אֱלִיעֶזֶר means "God is help." If I say this is the equivalent of "comforter," then I hope your eyes pop open! God is beginning to show us a Macro-code: His plan of redemption. Eliezer plays the role of the Holy Spirit in the Macro-code that begins here and ends with Rebekah in Gen 24! See the article "Eliezer."

[vii] The meaning of the Hebrew מֶשֶׁק is uncertain. The KJV uses "steward," which makes sense since Abraham sent the eldest servant on an important task in Gen 24:2.

[viii] The Hebrew סָפַר (*saw-fahr*) primarily means "to count," "to number," "to take account of," or "to reckon." Because the context has two meanings, it is impossible to give an exact literal translation.

On one level, Abram is told to count the stars. This is an impossible task even today. It emphasizes the vast number of his future descendants. This idea of counting will apply to the next sentence.

On a second level, it also means "to recount," "to understand," or "to relate to." Abram is asked to see and understand the Mazzaroth — the gospel message written in the stars. This is **NOT** about any corrupted horoscope. See the article "The Mazzaroth."

[ix] God created and named the stars and constellations. He set them in the heavens for signs (Gen 1:14). God named the stars so that they would speak a story (Psa 19:1-2). Everyone in the world can read and understand the stars. The Book of Job has several references to well-known stellar groupings (Job 26:13, 38:31-33). The recognizable constellations were acknowledged in the ancient world.

The Mazzaroth has a complete record of the gospel. The 12 constellations of the Zodiac can be divided into three groups. Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, and Sagittarius speak of the Promised Seed. Capricorn, Aquarius, Pisces, and Aries speak of the Church Age. Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, and Leo speak of Jesus′ Second Coming. God asked Abram to believe the gospel He wrote in the stars.

Scripture sharply distinguishes such testimony from astronomy. The legitimate study of the heavens as God's creation must not be confused with horoscopes or divinatory practices. These represent a corruption of what God made to testify to His glory (Isa 47:13-14). See the article "the Mazzaroth."

[x] The Hebrew זֶרַע (*zeh-rah*) means "seed." It is singular in form but can refer either to a single descendant or to many offspring, children, or descendants. is grammatically singular. This is a dual prophecy. While the Hebrew word can convey both meanings, it is impossible for either "descendant" or "descendants" to communicate both meanings. First, "seed" has a messianic sense. It applies directly to King Jesus. God promises Abram that he will be the father of King Jesus, the coming Savior, the one to whom all the stars point. This relates to the Mazzaroth written in the stars. Second, "seed" as a singular noun can also refer collectively to many offspring. This encompasses the innumerable descendants who arise from Abram. Abram will be the father of many nations (Gen 17:4, Rom 4:17-18). This relates to the number of the stars.

[xi] One cannot believe in a jumbled arrangement of stars. Abraham believed in Yahveh because he believed the gospel story written in the Mazzaroth! This is the same way salvation comes to anyone anywhere anytime. Paul uses Abraham as an example of saving faith in Romans chapter 4.

[xii] The Hebrew חָשַׁב means consider, count, devise, esteem, invent, plot, reckon, think as.

[xiii] Abram was NOT righteous in himself. But God reckoned him to be righteous because of his faith. Because of his faith, God **IMPUTED** undeserved righteousness to him. See Psalm 106:31; Romans 4:3, 22; Galatians 3:6; and James 2:23.

[xiv] The Hebrew זֹאת is a Zayin-**Aleph**-**Tav**. Its basic meaning is to cut, either as a blessing or a judgment. This translation routinely renders this 3-letter word in terms of covenant. See the article "The **Aleph**-**Tav**."

[xv] The Hebrew יָרַשׁ (*yaw-rahsh*) means dispossess, inherit, occupy, possess, and seize. It implies actively driving out the current inhabitants to occupy the land. Technically, the Israelites never do and never will own the land. The land is God's land. But they can inherit the land in the sense of taking it and settling in the land as God allows.

[xvi] The Hebrew is אֲדֹנָי (*a-do-nai*) יְהוָה (Yahveh).This double name is quite common in the Old Testament. It shows up 216 times in the Book of Ezekiel.

[xvii] Notice the threefold repetition of the number three. This points to The Trinity.

[xviii] The Hebrew תּוֹר means turtledove. The KJV uses "turtle." These birds migrate. They know when to leave and when to return. They are smarter than stiff-necked stubborn humans.

[xix] Satan has NOT forgotten about God's Gen 3:16 declaration of war. He is carefully following the "Seed of the woman" to Noah. He hears these instructions and knows that God is preparing some sort of covenant with Abram.

[xx] The devil knows about the rites of a covenant. While he does not yet know what God will do, he still tries to ruin it.

[xxi] The Hebrew אֵימָה denotes overwhelming fear or terror.

[xxii] The Hebrew גֵּר (*geyr*) refers to a sojourner — an outsider temporarily living among Israelites who receives protection under the law and is often included in ethical commands. This status implies peaceful presence and some integration, though not full covenant inclusion. In contrast, נָכְרִי (*nawch-ree*) identifies a foreign national, usually outside the covenant; זוּר (*zoor*) conveys estrangement or religious/moral opposition; and תּוֹשָׁב (*to-shawv*) describes a resident alien with limited rights and no covenant standing.

[xxiii] Satan knows he has 400 years to prepare for Israel's return. The Nephilim and Rephaim are just two of his many attempts to thwart God's plan. Satan wants to kill the "Seed of the woman." But Satan doesn't know what God is planning (1 Cor 2:8)! !

[xxiv] Exodus 3:12, Acts 7:7.

[xxv] The Hebrew לַפִּיד refers to a portable source of fire. Typically, this is a torch made of wood wrapped with oil-soaked material. The term emphasizes visible flame, movement, and illumination, not a contained vessel. Note that there are two great lights, two of *The Trinity*. It is likely to be God the Father and God the Son. They are binding Themselves to the covenant while Abraham is in a deep sleep.

[xxvi] Look closely! God bound Himself to this covenant alone. Pay attention! Abram did not make a covenant promise. He did not walk between the slain animals. Abram had no responsibility in this covenant. God Himself walked between the slain animals. God Himself made the covenant a **ONE-WAY**, **ONE-SIDED**, **UNCONDITIONAL** covenant. The fulfillment of this covenant depends entirely, solely, and only on God. Nothing Abram or his descendants do (good or evil) can change what God has bound Himself to do.

[xxvii] The Hebrew בְּרִית (*b^{e}-reet*) refers to a solemn, binding agreement, often initiated by God. *B^{e}-reet* recalls the ancient covenant ceremonies where animals were cut as a sign of the seriousness of the commitment. *B^{e}-reet* forms the covenantal foundation of the biblical relationship between God and humanity. "The core of the biblical teaching about the relationship between God and humans and among humans rests on *b^{e}-reet*, the covenantal foundation, and *cheh-sehd*, the dynamic that makes God's new covenant work." To prevent *b^{e}-reet* from becoming a mere legal contract, *cheh-sehd* — God's loyal love — acts as the moral force that sustains and enlivens it." (Daniel J. Elazar, "HaBrit V'HaHesed: Foundations of the Jewish System," Jerusalem Center of Public Affairs; http://www.jcpa.org/dje/articles2/britvhesed.htm.)

[xxviii] The ancient paleo Hebrew had no prepositions. Here, William Sanford shows that the **Aleph**-**Tav** is a mark symbolizing the Divine hand and the strength of the Covenant being made with Abram. It shows the importance and relevance of this Divine covenant. Jesus, the **Aleph**-**Tav**, is part of all covenants.

[xxix] The Hebrew זֹאת is a Zayin-**Aleph**-**Tav**. Its basic meaning is to cut, either as a blessing or a judgment. This translation routinely renders this 3-letter word in terms of covenant. See the article "The **Aleph**-**Tav**."

[xxx] The Hebrew לְזַרְעֲךָ (to your seed) is a singular construct that holds a dual meaning. First, "seed" is grammatically singular, but it regularly functions as a collective referring to offspring as a whole rather than to an individual. God's promise is to all of Abram's descendants (Gen 17:9). Second, "Seed" refers to Jesus, the Gen 3:15 "Seed of the woman," through whom the promise is secured. He will rule the land during the 1,000 year Millennium.

[xxxi] The Hebrew word רְפָאִים (Rephaim) means giants. These are not as huge as the נְפִיל (*Nephilim* = fallen ones). None of the tribes listed to this point have patriarchal roots in the Table of Nations (Gen 10). See Gen 6:4 “and also after that.”

[xxxii] The list implies that all these nations share a common bond. They have joined in open rebellion against God by either sex with fallen angels or interbreeding with the Nephilim. They have joined forces to promote their version of Babel.