

Summary of Genesis 15

A few weeks ago we were introduced to the life of Abraham (Abram). Abraham is by far the most important figure in Genesis. We noted that the Tower of Babel event in Genesis 11 was the immediate context for his life in the story of Genesis to “Reverse-the-Curse”. Abraham was called out of Ur of the Chaldeans, near the scene of the crime at Babel. Here is a recap of Abraham’s life as recorded in Genesis:

1. **Call of Abram (12:1-3) – age 75**
2. Journey of Abram to Canaan (12:4-9)
3. Famine and travel to Egypt (12:10-20)
4. Abram and Lot settle the land (13:1-18)
5. Abram goes to war to rescue Lot (14:1-24)
6. **God ratifies His covenant with Abram (15:1-21)**
7. Sarai gives Hagar to Abram (16:1-15) – **age 85-86**
8. **God calls for circumcision of Abram and offspring (17:1-27)**
9. Isaac is promised to Abraham and Sarai (18:1-21)
10. Sodom and Gomorrah are judged (18:22-19:38)
11. Abraham encounters Abimelech (20:1-18)
12. Isaac is born (21:1-34) – **age 100**
13. **Abraham offers up Isaac (22:1-24)**
14. Sarah dies and is buried (23:1-20) – **age 137**
15. Rebekah is chosen as Isaac’s wife (24:1-67) – **age 140**
16. Abraham dies and is buried (25:1-11) – **age 175**

I. Genesis 15:1-21 – The Ratification of the Covenant to Abraham

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.” 2 But Abram said, “O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” 3 And Abram said, “Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir.” 4 And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: “This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir.” 5 And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” 6 And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness. 7 And he said to him, “I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.” 8 But he said, “O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?” 9 He said to him, “Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” 10 And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. 11 And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. 12 As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. 13 Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. 14 But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great

possessions. 15 As for yourself, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. 16 And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.” 17 When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. 18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, 19 the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, 20 the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, 21 the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites.”

II. The Problem of Offspring – vs. 1-7

As Abraham was viewing his current situation after saving his nephew Lot and offering tribute to the King of Salem (Melchizedek), it led him to 2 questions for God. The first one had to do with God’s promise that he would have offspring.

Promise:

1 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.”

Question:

2 But Abram said, “O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” 3 And Abram said, “Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir.”

Response:

4 And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: “This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir.” 5 And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”

Commentary:

6 And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

15:6 is perhaps one of the most important verses in all Bible. This passage, along with Habakkuk 2:4, is cited by the apostle Paul in Romans 4 and Galatians 3 as the main verses describing what we refer to as “Justification by Faith”.

III. The Problem of Land – vs. 8-21

Abraham’s second question was a follow up regarding the land he was promised.

Statement:

7 And he said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess."

Question:

8 But he said, "O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?"

Response:

9 He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon."...18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, 19 the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, 20 the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, 21 the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites."

