

Israel's Patriarch

A Study in Genesis 12-24

A Seed and a
Land Confirmed
through Covenant
Genesis 15:1-21
August 16, 2020

MAIN POINT: The LORD ensures his promises through covenant, and we receive those promises by grace alone through faith alone.

I. THE LORD'S PROMISE OF A SEED (vv. 1-6)

- The LORD Promises Safety and Security (v. 1)
 - Abram is described in prophetic terms (cf. Gen. 20:7; Isa. 1:1; Jer. 1:1; Ezek. 1:1).
 - The LORD declares that he will be Abram's shield and source of reward.
- The Apprehension of Abram (vv. 2-3)
 - Abram's apprehension isn't a lack of faith, it simply begs for more faith (cf. Mark 9:24).
- The LORD Promises Progeny (vv. 4-6)
 - The LORD promises old Abram a son "from his inward parts" (cf. 2 Sam. 7:12).
 - Abram believes, and through faith he is counted as righteous (cf. Rom. 4:1-8).
 - ◆ We, too, are counted as righteous and receive that very declaration from God on the basis of the true seed of Abram, Jesus Christ, and his righteousness that we receive by grace alone through faith alone (cf. 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:16; Phil. 3:9).

II. THE LORD'S PROMISE OF A LAND (vv. 7-21)

- The LORD Promises a Place (v. 7)
 - The land that was promised to Abram is the same land that Israel was to receive after their exodus from Egypt (cf. Exod. 20:2).
- The Apprehension of Abram (v. 8)
 - Just as in vv. 2-3, we should hear in Abram's apprehension, "Help my unbelief!" (cf. Mark 9:24).
- The LORD Confirms His Promise through Covenant (vv. 9-21)
 - The LORD cuts a covenant with Abram in a way that was common in the Ancient Near East of Abram's day.
 - ◆ The slaughtering of the animals would have created a "blood path" through which the parties of the covenant would walk, in effect saying, "If I fail to fulfill my end of the covenant, may I be like these slain animals."

- The LORD reveals to Abram both the suffering and affliction of his offspring, as well as their promised victory and plunder of Egypt.
- The LORD alone traverses the "blood path," showing forth that fulfillment of the covenant will ultimately depend on him and him alone.

III. THE LORD'S COVENANT-KEEPING WORK

- The LORD will be faithful to his covenant despite his people's unfaithfulness.
- The true and better seed of Abram, Jesus Christ, who is the better Son from his inward parts, is our covenant-keeping, promise-fulfilling King, who steps into the place of covenant-breaking, wrath-deserving sinners, to endure our shame and punishment and curse so that we might be declared covenant-keepers before our holy God (cf. Matt. 1:1; Gal. 3:16).

Suggested Reading:

- *A Christian's Pocket Guide to Being Made Right with God* by Guy Waters
- *Echoes of Exodus: Tracing Themes of Redemption through Scripture* by Alastair Roberts and Andrew Wilson

Questions/Discovery Points for Life Groups/Families

Please Read Genesis 15:1-21

1. How is it helpful to see Gen. 15 as a "hinge" chapter, moving from the promise of land to the promise of seed in the Genesis narrative?
2. Discuss how the reality of the LORD being our shield and the source of our reward encourages your heart, and share ways in which you have personally experienced the LORD's deliverance and reward.
3. Gen. 15:6 is quoted all over the New Testament. Why is the doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone to the glory of God alone so wonderful (you may need to take some time to define justification)?
4. Had you noticed before how much exodus-like language was present throughout Gen. 15? How is this "exodus motif" seen throughout Scripture?
5. Covenant faithfulness ultimately depends on the power of the LORD and not on our ability to pull up our bootstraps. In what ways does that reality encourage your heart and strengthen you in your walk with Christ? Does this nullify the need for Holy Spirit-dependent effort on the part of the Christian?
6. Take some time praising our triune God, the Father and the Son by the Holy Spirit for our great salvation... wrath-deserving sinners being declared covenant-keepers before our holy God!