



# Genesis 15:1-6

When the Promise Is All You Have

# Chapter breakdown

- Fear Replaced by Divine Assurance (15:1)
- The Problem of the Heir (15:2–3)
- The Promise of Descendants (15:4–5)
- Faith Counted as Righteousness (15:6)
- The Question of Assurance (15:7–8)
- The Covenant Ceremony Prepared (15:9–11)
- The Prophetic Revelation (15:12–16)
- The Unilateral Covenant Confirmed (15:17–21)

# Foundation!

- Genesis 15 becomes one of the foundational salvation passages of Scripture.
- Paul uses Genesis 15:6 repeatedly to explain justification by faith.
- The Abrahamic Covenant becomes the backbone for Israel, Messiah, and ultimately the blessing of all nations.
- Remember the freeze point teaching from last week.

# Why this is important.

- Genesis 15 answers one of the most important questions in Scripture.
- How can sinful man stand right before a holy God?
- Abram has obeyed.  
Abram has worshiped.  
Abram has won battles.  
Abram has refused the riches of Sodom.
- Yet none of those things form the basis of his righteousness.

# And so we ask.

- What does God require from a person in order to stand righteous before Him?

# GENESIS 15:1

- God starts off by reminding Abram who HE is.
- In verse 2 Abram will try to remind God who he is, but we will get to that.
- Notice how God spoke to Abram.
  - A Vision.
  - There are a few ways recorded in the Bible in how He speaks to man.
  - A Vision (as we see here)
  - Direct Audible speech.
  - Dreams
  - Messengers
  - Theophanies
  - The Angle of the Lord.

- Through Prophets
- Through circumstances and Providence
- The Holy Spirit.
- The Scripture
- How to test!
  - Does It Agree With Scripture?
    - **1 John 4:1** "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God..."
  - Does It Exalt Christ?
    - **John 16:14** "He will glorify Me..."
  - What Fruit Does It Produce?
    - **Matthew 7:16** "You will know them by their fruits."
  - Is It Consistent With God's Character?
    - God may convict. God may warn. God may correct. But God does not manipulate like the enemy.
  - Does It Survive Time?
    - **Isaiah 28:16** "Whoever believes will not act hastily."
  - Seek Confirmation From Mature Believers
    - **Proverbs 11:14** "In the multitude of counselors there is safety."
  - Examine Your Own Heart
    - **Jeremiah 17:9** "The heart is deceitful above all things..."
  - Does It Require Faith or Merely Gratify Desire?
- God often calls people into something that requires trust.
  - The flesh usually wants:
  - comfort recognition control

## But also notice this.

- The words are do not be afraid!
- Abram had just won a war.
- He turned down the riches from the king.
- He is on a spiritual high.
- The Lion and the Fox.
- The lion and the fox see the world differently because of who they are.

# Lion Vs the Fox

- The lion is strong, confident, and unafraid.
- He focuses on the objective, moves forward with power, and is rarely intimidated by obstacles.
- His greatest danger is not his enemies but the traps he overlooks because of his strength.
- The fox is small, vulnerable, and aware of his limitations.
- He survives by observation, caution, and discernment.
- Because he cannot overpower danger, he learns to spot traps long before others see them.
- The lion teaches courage. The fox teaches wisdom.

- Strength without awareness gets caught in traps.
- Awareness without courage never leaves the den.
- The mature person learns to have the heart of a lion and the eyes of a fox.
- Many believers want to be lions—bold, fearless, and strong in faith.
- But Scripture also calls us to be fox-like in discernment.
  - **Proverbs 22:3** "A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, but the simple pass on and are punished."
  - **1 Peter 5:8** "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion..."
- The enemy rarely defeats strong believers through direct confrontation; more often he uses traps, distractions, pride, compromise, and deception.
- Courage helps us advance, but discernment helps us avoid the snare. The goal is not to choose between the lion and the fox, but to develop the strength of the lion and the awareness of the fox.

# So back to Genesis

- Why did the Lord say this?
- I believe because the Lord knew what Abram was struggling with on the inside.
- He was wrestling with something he could not see.
- Lot, the King, Egypt, all these things he could SEE.
- What could he not SEE? The promise of a son.
- Abram had riches, he had A lot
- God says I will be your shield, and your reward.
- So what was the inner battle?

## Verse 2-3

- On the surface, God addresses Abram's fear:
- "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." (Genesis 15:1)
- But Abram's response is very telling:
- "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless...?" (Genesis 15:2)
- He does not say:
- "I'm afraid of the kings returning."
- "I'm afraid of losing my wealth."
- "I'm afraid of retaliation."

# The heart of Abram

- Lord, all these promises ultimately depend on an heir.
- How can they happen if I remain childless?
- God often answers the question beneath the question.
- We can relate to Abram!
- In one sense, Abram clearly trusted God.
- He left Ur without knowing where he was going (Hebrews 11:8).
- He obeyed God's call in Genesis 12.
- He refused the wealth of the king of Sodom in Genesis 14 because he trusted God's provision.
- Genesis 15:6 says he believed the Lord.

# BUT

- Abram still struggled to trust God fully.
- So Abram is simultaneously a man of faith and a man learning faith.
- Or think of it this way.
- Abram trusted God enough to follow Him, but not yet enough to stop asking questions.
- This is often how faith works in Scripture.
- Faith is not the absence of questions.
- Faith is continuing to follow God while you still have questions.

# Consider this.

- Moses trusted God yet argued at the burning bush.
- Gideon trusted God yet asked for signs.
- David trusted God yet wrote psalms full of doubts and fears.
- The disciples trusted Jesus yet repeatedly misunderstood Him.
- One of the most honest prayers in Scripture is:
  - "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24)
- That sounds contradictory, but it perfectly describes many of us!
- Don't worry Genesis 15 gives us the answer!

# GENESIS 15:4–5

- God does not rebuke the question!
- He answers it plainly. NOPE!
- But note this. God now speaks.
- Began with a vision, now turns to a voice that is heard.
- It is like:
  - God speaks (v.1).
  - Abram responds (v.2–3).
  - God answers specifically (v.4).

# And behold

- This draws attention to what follows.
- It is a direct answer to Abram's specific concern.
- God does not say:
- "Stop asking questions."
- Many believers assume questions are the opposite of faith.
- Abram brings his struggle to God, and God responds with more revelation. AND I would say more clear revelation.

# How clear?

- Vs 5
- He takes Abram outside from the tent.
- Don't miss this, from the tent perspective, Abram could only see what he had.
- He saw:
  - An aging body.
  - An aging wife.
  - No son.
  - No heir.
  - No **visible** answer.

- Everything Abram could see inside the tent seemed to contradict the promise.
- The tent represented the limits of Abram's perspective.
- BTW this is what happens when we live in a 70-80 life span perspective!
- **GOD HAS TO CHANGE THE VIEWPOINT!**
- This is not saying that Isaac would be born at night.
- In fact, nothing changed for Abram!
- What changed was where Abram was looking.

# How often do we live inside our own tents?

- We sit inside the tent of:
  - our bank account,
  - our diagnosis,
  - our business struggles,
  - our family problems,
  - our failures,
  - our fears,
  - our past.
- And from that tent perspective, all we can see is what we currently possess, what we currently lack, and what appears impossible.
- We begin measuring God's promises by our circumstances instead of measuring our circumstances by God's promises.

# FACT!

- Many believers are trying to solve spiritual problems while staring at earthly limitations.
- God's first step is often not changing the problem.
- His first step is changing our perspective.
- Before He changes what is in our hand, He changes what is in our vision.
- Think about it.
- Abram says:
- "I have no son."
- God says:
- "Look at the stars."
- Those two things seem unrelated.

# The lesson.

- But God is teaching Abram that faith grows when we stop staring exclusively at what we lack and start looking at the God who made the promise.
- So how?
- Every believer needs regular "outside the tent" moments.
- Time in:
  - God's Word.
  - Prayer.
  - Praise.
  - Fellowship.
  - Quiet reflection on God's faithfulness.

- These are the places where God lifts our eyes above immediate circumstances.
- Because if all you ever look at is the tent, your faith will shrink to the size of the tent.
- But when God gets your eyes on the stars, your faith begins to grow to the size of the God who hung them there.
- Abram stated the truth and seemed justified in that truth!
- But God stated a bigger truth, **HE WAS NOT FINISHED YET!**
- Could Abram have been stuck in a freeze point?
- It is okay to ask questions but listen Faith grows when we step out of the tent and see our situation from God's perspective and not ours.

# GENESIS 15:6

- "And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness."
- believed<sup>H539</sup>
  - *aw-man'*
  - A primitive root; properly to *build up* or *support*
- This is much deeper than our modern idea of "I believe that."
- In Hebrew thought, **Aman is not primarily intellectual agreement.**

# Word Picture

- Think of a pillar supporting a roof.
- The pillar is **Aman**.
- Think of a foundation supporting a house.
- The foundation is **Aman**.
- The idea is stability and support.

# Ancient Hebrew Pictograph

- **Aleph**
- Strength  
Leader  
Ox
- **Mem**
- Water  
Chaos  
Life
- **Nun**
- Seed  
Continuation  
Future generation
- One possible word-picture:
- Strength that carries through chaos into the future.
- The strong support that preserves life and carries the promise forward.

- How fitting is this for Genesis 15.
- Abram is worried about the future.
- God points to the stars.
- Abram places the weight of his future upon God's promise.
- That is **Aman**.
- When we say:
  - "Amen"
  - We should not be saying:
    - "The prayer is over."
    - We are saying:
      - "That is firm."
      - "That is true."
      - "That is trustworthy."
      - "I can stand on that."
- Every time we say "Amen," we are using the same root as Abram's faith.

# First mention

- This is the first time this VERB is used. Aman from Amen.
- But it is the same root.
- Even More Interesting
- The first appearance of the noun form is actually connected to God Himself.
- Deuteronomy 7:9
- "Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God..."
- faithful<sup>H539</sup> (SAME WORD!)
- "Faithful" is the same Aman.

# Tie these together.

- We don't have faith (Amam the verb form) because faith (Amam) is powerful.
- We have faith (Amam) because **God is amen the noun!**
- **We are the house that rests (Aman, faith) on the foundation (Aman, GOD)**
- God is reliable.
- God is stable.
- God is trustworthy.
- God is the One who can bear the weight placed upon Him.

# Danger!

- Many people define faith as:
- "I hope things work out."
- "I hope God comes through."
- "I'm optimistic."
- But biblical faith is much stronger than wishful thinking.
- Back to the chair
- If you sit in a chair, you are not hoping the chair holds you.
- You have committed your weight to it.
- That is Aman.

# There is also an interesting Hebrew distinction.

- The Hebrew word **Tikvah** (hope) is not weak optimism like our English word hope.
- It carries the idea of an expectation tied to something secure—a cord, a rope, something you can hold onto.
- So again in Scripture:
- Hope is not a wish.
- Faith is not a feeling.
- Both are anchored in God's faithfulness.

# What Changed?

- This is the amazing part.
- Nothing changed.
- Sarah was still barren.
- Abram was still old.
- No son existed.
- No pregnancy existed.
- No evidence existed.
- The promise was all Abram had.

# Something did change!

- God did not credit righteousness to Abram because Abram produced Isaac.
- God did not credit righteousness to Abram because Abram had evidence.
- God did not credit righteousness to Abram because the promise had already come to pass.
- God credited righteousness because Abram rested the weight of his future on God's word.

# Huston, we have a problem!

- No mention of Christ.
- Abram does not know:
  - the name Jesus,
  - the cross,
  - the resurrection,
  - the church,
  - the details of redemption.
- He simply believed the promise God had made to him.

# But don't forget!

- Genesis 15 was not the promise.
- It started in Chapter 12!
- **Genesis 12:1-3**
- God promised:
  - a land,
  - a nation,
  - descendants,
  - blessing,
  - a future,
  - that all families of the earth would be blessed through him.

# Genesis 15 is not a new promise.

- It is a reaffirmation and expansion of an existing promise.
- In a sense, Abram's "Aman" in Genesis 15 is the culmination of years of walking with God since Genesis 12.
- This is where I think many modern presentations of faith become too narrow.
- Sometimes people make it sound as though Abram was saved because he knew detailed facts about Jesus' death and resurrection.
- The object of faith was God.

# Galatians 3:8

- "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, 'In you all the nations shall be blessed.'"
- Abram may not have understood all the details,
- but here is the KEY, he trusted the God who did.
- Please don't miss this. Abram did not have Jesus, but we do!
- Abraham was responsible for the revelation God had given him.
- We are responsible for the revelation God has given us.
- **Hebrews 1:1-2**
- "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son..."



# Genesis 15:1-6

When the Promise Is All You Have