



## Lesson 10

# GOD RATIFIES HIS COVENANT

### Story Elements

- **TEXT:** Gen. 15:1-21
- **Setting:** circa 1900 B.C. in Canaan
- **Characters:** God & Abram
- **Plot:** God ratifies his covenant with Abram.
- **Key words:** “ \_\_\_\_\_ ” (vv 3, 5, 13, 18)
- **Climax:** *Genesis 15:5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.*

## Abraham Justified

- 1) (v 1) “After these things” God spoke to Abraham. The “things” referred to are the events in the preceding chapter. Why did God speak to Abram after his victory over Chedorlaomer? Perhaps...
  - a) ...to temper Abram’s earthly victory with a reminder of his spiritual \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b) ...to reassure Abram that God’s promises would not be voided by any vanquished kings who might seek revenge. Notice that God’s first words to Abram in this passage are “ \_\_\_\_\_ not.”
  - c) ...to encourage Abram that his refusal of the earthly reward offered by the king of Sodom was no loss when compared to the reward of the LORD God. God is not just a rewarder of the obedient, but he is the \_\_\_\_\_.

*1 Cor. 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

- 2) (vv 2-4) Abram’s response shows us God’s mercy in choosing to be the father of the faithful a man so very human.
  - a) Abram poured out his complaint before the Lord: “I go \_\_\_\_\_.” God had promised so much, but Abram struggled to apprehend how these things could be when child-bearing was beyond his and his wife’s physical capabilities.
  - b) Abram suggested his servant could be considered a son through adoption, but this was not what God was planning: “but he that shall come forth out of thine own \_\_\_\_\_ shall be thine heir.”
- 3) (v 5) In a demonstration of condescending grace, God directed Abram’s attention to the starlit sky: “tell the \_\_\_\_\_, if thou be able to number them...so shall thy seed be.”
- 4) (v 6) At that moment, we are told that Abram believed in the LORD. In the New Testament, this is a foundational verse for the doctrine of \_\_\_\_\_.

Before the Mosaic Law was given, before Abraham was circumcised, by faith he was justified. His faith was counted to him (imputed) for righteousness. (cf. Rom. 4:9)

## Affliction Prophesied

- 5) (vv 7-11) Abram's faith was sincere, but he needed more \_\_\_\_\_. He asked, "Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?"
- a) It was then that God instructed him to prepare the covenant sacrifice (an heifer, a she goat, a ram, a turtle dove, and a young pigeon). These animals (except the birds) were cut in two, and each piece laid across from the other.
  - b) Abram watched the sacrifice \_\_\_\_\_, and when scavenging birds came, he drove them away.
- 6) (v 12) When the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep and "an horror of great darkness fell upon him."
- a) (vv 13-14) In this nightmare, God told Abram that his future descendants would not possess the land until they had suffered under bondage for \_\_\_\_\_ years.
  - b) (v 15) God also promised that Abram would die \_\_\_\_\_ and in a good old age.
  - c) (v 16) A reason was given for the delay in the possession of the land: God was giving the Amorites (Canaanites) more time to \_\_\_\_\_ of their wickedness.

## Covenant Ratified

- 7) (v 17) When the sun was fully set, the sign that Abram requested was given: a smoking furnace and a burning lamp passed between the pieces of the sacrifice.
- a) When an ancient covenant was ratified, it was customary for the parties involved to pass between the \_\_\_\_\_ animals, thus showing that if promises were broken, they would be met with the same ignominious fate as the sacrificial victims.
  - b) God's \_\_\_\_\_ was symbolized in the smoking furnace and the burning lamp. They were small token of how God would later show his presence to the Hebrews: a cloud and a pillar of fire.
  - c) God's grace was symbolized in the fact that he was the one who passed through the sacrificial pieces, not Abram. God would bear the responsibility of making good on the covenant promises. This was fulfilled in \_\_\_\_\_, who bore the shame and suffered a violent death as our sacrifice.

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## Answer Key

"Key word(s): "seed"

- 1. a) purpose; b) fear; c) reward
- 2. a) childless; b) bowels
- 3. stars

- 4. justification
- 5. encouragement; b) expectantly

- 6. a) 400; b) peacefully; c) repent
- 7. a) halved; b) presence; c) Christ