

Introduction

As we continue through our reading in the book of Genesis, we come to a profound turning point in the life of Abram—a chapter that Paul and the writer of Hebrews point back to as the foundational bedrock of our faith.

In the previous chapter, Abram had just come off a major spiritual victory. He stepped out in courage, rescued his nephew Lot, defeated four powerful kings, and took a firm stand against the King of Sodom, refusing to take even a thread or a sandal strap from the hands of the world. But as many of us know from our own walk with the Lord, right after a mountaintop experience often comes a valley. The adrenaline fades, the quiet of the night settles in, and fear tries to creep into our hearts.

In Genesis chapter 15, the Lord meets Abram right in that place of vulnerability. God speaks comfort to his heart, revealing Himself not just as a giver of gifts, but as Abram's true protection and provision. As we look at this chapter together, three magnificent truths stand out:

First, we see The God Who Is Enough, as the Lord reveals Himself as Abram's shield and exceedingly great reward, reminding us that when we turn down the empty offers of the world, God Himself becomes our true treasure.

Second, we behold The Gift of Imputed Righteousness, where Abram simply believes the promise of God, and God accounts that faith to him as righteousness—a glorious picture of salvation by grace through faith that points us directly to the Gospel.

Finally, we examine The Covenant of Blood, where God passes through the divided animals alone, establishing an unconditional covenant that rests entirely on His faithfulness, foreshadowing the complete and finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Open your heart and your mind to what the Holy Spirit wants to show us today in His Word.

Bible Study

In Genesis, chapter 15 we will look at a remarkable turning point in the life of Abram.

I. The God Who Is Enough

Genesis 15:1 says:

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward" (NKJV).

This is the very first time in Scripture we see that beautiful phrase: "The word of the LORD." It's not just a message; it's a Person. John tells us in the opening of his Gospel that the Word was with God and was God, and that the Word became flesh. I believe Abram was having a "Christophany"—a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ. Jesus even hinted at this when He told the Pharisees, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."

Notice the first thing the Lord says: "Do not be afraid." Whenever God says "Fear not," it's because His servant is trembling. Abram was likely reliving the battle, hearing the clanging of swords in his mind, wondering if those kings would regroup and come for revenge.

God doesn't just give Abram a weapon; He says, "I am your shield." He doesn't just promise a paycheck; He says, "I am your exceedingly great reward."

If you have the Lord, you have everything you need. He is your protection and your provision. Abram had turned down the "puny" treasures of Sodom, and God stepped in to say, "I'll be your treasure." Friends, the world offers us trinkets that rust, but God offers us Himself.

II. The Gift of Imputed Righteousness

Abram looks at his life and sees a gap. He says, "Lord, what will You give me, seeing I go childless?" He's looking at his circumstances. He's 85 years old! But God takes him outside and says, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars... So shall your descendants be."

Then we hit the "Mount Everest" of the Old Testament in Genesis 15:6:

And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness (NKJV).

Abram didn't "work" for this. He didn't offer a sacrifice yet. He simply believed the promise. This is where it all begins for us, too. God doesn't account your church attendance, your "quiet time," or your good deeds for righteousness. He accounts your faith in Jesus Christ as righteousness.

We are saved by grace through faith. As Paul writes in the New Testament, he counted all his legalistic "good works" as rubbish so that he might be found in Christ, having a righteousness that comes through faith. Abram's faith wasn't perfect—we'll see him fail later—but his faith was placed in the Perfect One.

III. The Covenant of Blood

Abram asks for a sign, and God gives him a "covenant." In those days, to make a covenant, you would divide animals and walk between the pieces. It was a way of saying, "If I break this promise, may I be like these animals."

Abram waits all day, driving away the vultures. Finally, a deep sleep and a "horror of great darkness" fall on him. God tells him his descendants will be afflicted for 400 years (a round number for the time from this promise until the Exodus). He promises that after four generations, they will come out with great substance because "the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." God is patient, even with the wicked, but judgment eventually comes.

Then, look at Genesis 15:17:

And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces (NKJV).

Here is the key: Abram didn't walk through the pieces. Only God did. This was a "unilateral" covenant. God was saying, "I will fulfill this promise based on My faithfulness, not yours."

Practical Application:

Are you trying to "earn" God's favor today? Are you driving off the "vultures" of doubt and fear? Stop trying to walk through the pieces yourself. Rest in the finished work of Jesus. He is the one who walked the path of judgment for us.

A Challenge for Believers:

I challenge you this week to stop looking at your "childless" circumstances—those areas where you feel empty—and start looking at the "stars." God's promises are not dependent on your ability to make them happen. Trust Him to be your shield when the world attacks and your reward when the world offers its bribes.

An Invitation:

If you don't know this "Word of the Lord," I want you to know that Jesus Christ shed His blood on the cross to pay for every sin you've ever committed. He took the "horror of darkness" so you wouldn't have to. His resurrection proves He is Lord of all. You can be "accounted righteous" right now, right where you sit, simply by believing in Him. Give your life to Him today.