

Readings

Scripture

¹After 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." ²But Abram said, "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" ³And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." ⁴And behold, the word of the Lord came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." ⁵And 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." ⁶And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

⁷And he said to him, "I am the Lord who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess." ⁸But he said, "O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" ⁹He 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." ¹⁰And 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. ¹¹And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

¹²As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. ¹³Then 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. ¹⁴But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. ¹⁶And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

¹⁷When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. ¹⁸On 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, ¹⁹the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, ²⁰the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, ²¹the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites."

- Genesis 15:1-21 (*English Standard Version*)

Reflection

A covenant formally binds two parties together in a relationship, on the basis of mutual personal commitment, with consequences for keeping or breaking the commitment. God makes this kind of covenant with a group of people by covenanting with one who represents them: everyone else then experiences the covenant by virtue of being included "in" the representative.

-T. Desmond Alexander, *ESV Study Bible* on Genesis 9:9-11

Sermon Outline

God's Covenant with Abram
Genesis 15

The Life of Blessing
Matt Esswein

The Lord makes a covenant with Abram PROMISING him children and land. Abram remains childless and a sojourner asking honest questions of the Lord, yet responds in FAITH to what the Lord has said and shown to him.

**How did Abram respond to the promises that had not yet been fulfilled?
How are we to respond to the promises of God that are not yet fulfilled?**

Background: The Lord blessed Abram and promised that he would become a great nation (many descendants) and would be given land. (Genesis 12:2, 7)

The PROMISE of Children... (Genesis 15:1-6)

The PROMISE of Land... (Genesis 15:7-21)

How can we respond to God's PROMISES in FAITH like Abram? (Genesis 15:6)

Reflection Questions (taken in part from the *Serendipity Study Bible for Groups*)

- What are some memorable or significant promises people have made to you?
- Have you ever had to wait a long time for a promise to be fulfilled? How did that feel?
- What do you notice about the way the Lord reveals himself to Abram in this text? How does he describe himself? (15:1, 7)
- What strikes you about the questions Abram asks? (15:2-3; 8) What are we to do with the honest questions we have for the Lord? (Look at Psalms 10:1; 13:1; 22:1; 42:9-10)
- What sort of signs from the Lord encourage you in his provision? What can you look at in your times of doubt and trial to remember the faithfulness of our God?
- What actions did Abram take in faith? Why was it so important that he responded in faith to the Lord even amidst his questions?
- What are some ways you can encourage or feed your faith in the Lord this week amidst the questions you have?
- Think of and share some of the ways the Lord has provided for you in these days of Covid-19 and quarantine. Feel free to share the questions you are asking and the ways that your faith is being stretched.
- Why can we have faith in the Lord? (Heb. 10:23; Eph. 2:8-10)
- Pray together with your group (or a family member) that the Lord would reveal himself and his provision to you afresh and grow your faith, even amidst the questions you're asking.