

SCRIPTURE TEXTS:

Genesis 15:1 - 18: ¹ After 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.” ² But Abram said, “O Lord GOD, what will You give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” ³ And Abram said, “Behold, You have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir.” ⁴ And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: “This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir.” ⁵ And 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.” ⁶ And he believed the LORD, and He counted it to him as righteousness.

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

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

¹⁷ When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. ¹⁸ On 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, . . .

Luke 13:31 - 35 :

³¹ At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to Him, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill You.”
³² And He said to them, “Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course. ³³ Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.’ ³⁴ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! ³⁵ Behold, your house is forsaken. And I tell you, you will not see Me until you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’”

STUDY NOTES & QUESTIONS:

Genesis 15:

- Vv. 1 - 19:
 - After Abram’s expression of faith in God’s God’s reward (14:22 - 23), God certifies His promise of physical offspring (Vv 1- 6),and of land (v. 7) by making a Covenant with Abram.
 - The two night scenes parallel each other (Vv 5 & 17).
 - God appears and makes a promise in a vision.
 - Abram asks questions for clarification and assurance.
 - The Lord “cuts a covenant” with Abram, a visual & physical demonstration of His promise & of its deliverance.
 - Abram believes and God counts his faith as righteousness.
- V. 1: (From: Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary on the Bible) “God assured Abram of safety and happiness; that he should for ever be safe. I am thy shield; or, I am a shield to thee, present with thee, actually caring for thee. The consideration that God himself is, and will be a shield to his people, to secure them from all evils, a shield ready to them, and a shield round about them, should silence all perplexing, tormenting fears.”
- Vv 2 - 6:
 - Though we must never complain about God, yet we may complain to Him; & to tell the reasons for them. This is to ease burdened spirits and openly tell our Faithful & Compassionate Friend.
 - Abram complains he had no child, is unlikely ever to have any, that this lack is a great a trouble to him and takes because he fears God’s promise is

being derailed. For this reason he seeks God's assurance of the delivery of the promise.

- Vv 7 - 11:

- Assurance was given to Abram of the land of Canaan for an inheritance. God never promises more than He is able to perform, unlike humans who do so routinely.
- Abram did as God commanded him. He cut the sacrificial animals in half in accord with the ceremony used to confirm covenants (in fact, the word "covenant" means "to cut an agreement". Ex: Jer. 34:18 - 19).
- Having prepared the sacrifices, Abram waits for the sign of God's confirmation of the covenant promises. might give him.

- Vv 12 - 16 :

- Abram sleeps deeply and a deep and fearful darkness falls upon him. But, even in his deep fear, the Lord's voice comes to him and several things are promised/foretold:
 - 1. The suffering state of Abram's seed for a long time. They shall be strangers. The heirs of heaven are and will be "strangers on earth". They shall be servants for 400+ years; but Canaanites who have not always treated them well (whose land they will receive by God's direct redemption), and the Egyptians whom they serve will be under a curse, while the Chosen People will be blessed.
 - 2. The judgment of the enemies of Abram's seed: Though God allows persecutors to trample upon and oppress His people for a time, God walks beside His people & will reckon with those tormentors in the end.
 - 3. That great event, the deliverance of Abram's seed out of Egypt, is foretold.
 - 4. The Chosen People will be delivered to the Promised Land in Canaan.

- Vv 17 - 18/9 :

- The Torch and the Smoking Firepot represent & prophesy God's abiding presence with and superintendence over His People, even in their oppression, captivity and redemption from slavery. In short, they represent the Pillar of Cloud by Day and of Fire by Night. In short, these symbols represent Yahweh Himself.
- As God passes between the cut portions of the sacrifice, they represent the maledictory curse upon those who break faith with a solemn accord. Such sacrifices literally signified the "willingness" of the parties to be torn asunder if they forswear their oaths. In other words, God tells Abram, "Let it be with me as it is with these animals if I fail to keep my promises", or "Let me no longer be God, if I fail. . ."

Luke 13 Notes:

- Vv. 31 - 35 :
 - Christ, calls Herod a fox, thus showing his true character. The Jews considered foxes to be both sly and worthless.
 - Even “the greatest of men” are accountable to God, therefore it became him to call this proud king by his own name; but as a negative example for us.
 - Jesus is unimpressed by Herod’s reputation or threats. He is also unimpressed by the Pharisees’ desires to keep Him under their watch & control.
 - He lets them know in a telegraphed fashion that, “I know that I must die very shortly; when I die, I shall be perfected, I shall have completed my purpose.”
 - The wickedness of people & places who publicly and loudly profess religion and relationship to God while ignoring His demands especially displeases and grieves the Lord Jesus.
 - The judgment of the great day will convince unbelievers; but let us learn thankfully to welcome, and to profit by all who come in the name of the Lord, to call us to partake of His great salvation.
-

Questions:

What is the abiding promise we find stated by Yahweh in Gen 15:1 that comes up again and again throughout the whole of Scripture? What comfort and hope does that give to us? Why is that so important in times like now?

What is so important about the double-promise of Offspring and of Land? Where do these promises ultimately lead us? Is our hope still in the physical land we see, or in something else?

Why is this particular sacrifice so terribly important in the grand scheme of covenant history? What is MOST SIGNIFICANT about how it is administered? What does it promise for the future?

How does this promise from the last question set us up for what Jesus is saying, doing and preparing in our Luke passage? What does that mean to us as both promise and warning (think about Jesus’ example as well as His words)?