

Genesis Chapter 15 Commentary

1 After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

First notice; God tells Abram; "***I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.***" Does this sound familiar to you? Who is our protector? It is Jesus Christ, who has filled us with himself, in the form of the Holy Spirit presence. Who is our exceeding great reward? It is Christ, who has promised to return and carry us away; to that place that is beyond our imagination for its magnificence and glory.

We see here that the "***word of the Lord***" came to Abram. Because the "***word of the Lord***" came to Abram; he was caused to see a vision. God told Abram to "***fear not***" (your salvation is sure) because "***I am thy shield***" (we are protected by God) and "***thy exceeding great reward***" (we have an exceeding great reward in eternal life with Jesus). This gives us a picture of what happens to a dead sinner who is visited by the "***word of God.***"

Reward means; *payment of contract; concretely, salary, fare, maintenance; by implication, compensation, benefit:--hire, price, reward(-ed), wages, worth.* We see from this definition; God is telling Abram; I am going to make a contract with you. God is telling Abram that I am "***thy exceeding great reward,***" which tells Abram; I am going to be with you, and you with me, not only on earth, but in heaven.

2 And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? 3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. 4 And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. 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. 6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

This is right after Abram has rescued Lot and met Melchizedek, King of Salem and High Priest of God. We see that Abram is explaining to God, I don't understand. You promised me to be father of a great nation, seen in: ***Ge 12:1-3; "1 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."*** Abram tells the Lord; I don't have a son to raise up seed in my name; how shall I become a great nation? But we see, as scripture dictates; Abram believed God, by faith, and it was counted to him for righteousness. From scripture, we know; God did fulfill his promise; and Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob had 12 sons; of whom the nation Israel is formed. Thus, we see that the natural lineage of Abram was established on earth.

We also see that the promise of God is further reaching than just to the natural family of Abram. "***and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.***" In this phrase we see the promised blessing to all the families of the earth. We see fulfillment of this promise in the New Testament, seen in; ***Re 5:9 "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof:***

for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." We know from scripture; when Christ came and established the church of salvation by grace, he also grafted in the Gentiles; so that both Jew and Gentile are one nation in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. The church, which Christ established, is inclusive of every "born again" sinner.

The nation Israel was addressed as being the Old Testament church in New Testament scripture in: ***Ac 7:38 "This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:"*** Did you notice that it was the church in the wilderness? It was not called a church until God delivered it from Egypt. The church today is a people chosen by God and brought out of bondage of sin and satan.

The Old Testament church, the nation Israel, served under the sacrificial/ceremonial law service. This church also included the strangers, the Gentiles, which dwelt with Israel and lived by the laws of God. God had instructed Israel to not have, any among their body, any that did not declare faith and trust in God, and yield obedience to his commandments.

If we compare the Old and New Testament churches we see:

- Both were/are inclusive of both Jew and Gentiles;
- Both were/are a chosen group of people saved by God's amazing grace; God chose Israel to bear his name on the earth as the people of God. Christ established the church and in it are the people chosen by God, regenerated, and saved eternally.
- Both were/are required to live by God's commandments;
- Both were/are looking for the coming of the Messiah, The Old looking for the first coming and the New looking for the second coming;
- Both were/are required to exercise faith and trust in God and his promises.
- Both were/are required to meet together as a congregation and give praise, glory, honor, and thanksgiving to God.

The difference in them is the sacrificial/ceremonial law service. The New Testament church does not have to offer up any burnt offerings and sacrifices for sins, as they did in the Old Testament. Christ has fulfilled this requirement for us; Praise and Glory to God! Hallelujah!

Heb 11:6 "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." We don't always see and understand what God is doing in our lives. We do know when He is speaking to us; just as Abram was given faith to believe God; so we too are given faith to believe God and to trust fully, in the Work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; when we hear the Word of the Lord speaking to us. Understand this, a preacher can only bring the word of the Lord to your ear, it takes the Holy Spirit and power of God to give an ear to hear, and to penetrate into the heart and make it real.

7 And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.

Ur means; *flame*, and Chaldees means; *astrology*. These definitions demonstrate the place that Abram was removed from was an evil place. A place where they worshipped the created things, as is

still practiced today by those who are into witchcraft and idolatry. How can you determine this? Astrological worship is demonic and leads to the fires of hell.

We see; God has removed Abram from the satanic worship of the created heavens, and is directing his pilgrimage to a land where he is to freely worship God only. This is a biblical reason that when we are born again; we are to not live like the world but to come out of the world ungodliness, join the church body and make that public profession of faith, and live godly lives.

8 And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?

Don't we often question God when we don't understand things, just as Abram did here? Know means; *properly, to ascertain by seeing; acquainted with, be aware*. Just as Abram wanted to "**know**" that God's promise was sure; so we to want to "**know**" our salvation is sure. We can know by the teaching of scripture. Here is one reference: **1Jo 3:14 "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."**

9 And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. 10 And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not.

In these times; this was the custom of making a covenant, by dividing a sacrifice in half and then the parties making the covenant would walk between the two sacrifices and seal the covenant.

11 And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away. 12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.

Adam Clarke's Commentary: A deep sleep: the same word which is used to express the sleep into which Adam was cast, previous to the formation of Eve; Ge 2:21.

"a deep sleep fell upon Abram;" We need to understand that as mentioned by Adam Clarke above; Adam had nothing to do with the creation of Eve as he was in a deep sleep. His only contribution was the rib that God took from him of which God made the woman.

Here; Abram is put into a deep sleep; which teaches us that the covenant that God is making does not require Abram. The covenant is being made by God to Abram. It is not God and Abram making a covenant. This contract is God telling Abram this is what will happen in the future.

We see this was happening during the day time, and now, as the sun is going down, "**A horror of great darkness**" comes upon Abram. Horror means; *fright, dread, fear, terrible terror*. This reminds me of a verse of a song we sing in the Lloyd Hymnal; Hymn 152; "I walked abroad one morning fair" In verse 5 it says: "**Black Horrors seized my guilty soul, Billows of woe did o'er me roll, I fell and almost lost my breath, I thought I soon should sink in death.**" These are the emotions of a lost and ruined sinner, who is seeking the forgiveness of sin, and desires to be brought forth from the womb, and enter into the marvelous light of the appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This horror comes upon the sinner being born again as they see their life is leading them to an eternal death penalty for sin in

their life. As this is made know to them; the sun is going down meaning; the life of the natural man living according to his own will and purpose is coming to an end. As the sinner dies in this condition, God come forward in the manifestation of the Holy Spirit and regenerates the heart and soul and makes a covenant promise to the one being born again, as we shall see going on in this chapter.

13 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

We have a scriptural record that this actually came to pass. When the children of Israel came forth from Egypt; it was four hundred years after this prophesy. Thus, God fulfilled the promise to Abram that was given here.

When we are born again; we can "**know of a surety**" that we are strangers and pilgrims in this world of sin and sorrow. We are just passing through life, and time, until we see the fulfillment of God's promise of eternal life in the resurrection to come. We certainly know from New Testament scripture that in this life we shall have trials, troubles, and tribulations; "**afflictions**" as seen in: **2Co 1:3-7; 3 "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; 4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. 5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. 6 And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. 7 And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation."** This is an evidence to us that God has entered into an everlasting covenant of salvation by grace with us. Hallelujah! We didn't have to do anything but be there and since God made the covenant we can't tear it up. Hallelujah! Thank you Lord Jesus!

14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

We see this promise fulfilled in: **Ex 12:35-36; 35 "And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: 36 And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians."** What a promise to Abram and to his descendants.

We too, the born again sinners, have a promise; that we shall come forth from the grave with the greatest substance that can be had, eternal salvation, to be forever in the presence of God and our Saviour.

15 And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.

In our bible study in Revelation chapter 6; we discussed that the soul does not die; the body only dies when we pass from this life on earth. This scripture is a testimony to that.

"And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace;" Your body shall die, but your soul shall join those who died before you, that are God's chosen and saved people. Notice also that it is a death in peace. We are at peace with God because of Christ' finished work. Remember what Jesus told the malefactor who was crucified with him? **Lu 23:43 "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."** Just like Jesus when he died; his spirit/soul was moved to paradise and his body was buried.

"thou shalt be buried in a good old age." Another, scriptural, confirmation; that the Christian should be buried, not cremated.

16 But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

"But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again:" God is telling Abram what will come to pass after he is gone. The fourth generation of his descendants will come forth, from the place they are carried, and return to the place where Abram is now, Canaan.

"for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." We discern from this that God is still exercising long suffering toward the Amorites, who are occupants of the land of promise to the seed of Abram. We also see that God will exact vengeance and judgement upon those who do not fear and worship him.

There is a prophetic picture of the end of time in this also. How? When the iniquity of this old world is come to the fulness of its fruition; the judicial judgment of God will be carried out; and those, that are not saved by grace, will suffer the eternal consequence of the pleasures of their sins, and their rejection of Jesus Christ. Oh, what a sad day for those that will be cast into the eternal lake of fire.

On the other hand; God will have saved all of his people, and will bring them out of bondage to the eternal land of promise; the place that Jesus has gone to prepare for us. What a day that will be for God's people!

17 And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.

Many commentators say that the **"smoking furnace"** is an emblem of the suffering that Israel would go through before they were delivered; and they say the **"burning lamp"** is typical of; the divine presence of God ratifying the covenant he was making. The light at the end of the tunnel, so to speak.

To me; the **"smoking furnace"** is demonstrating to us today that Jesus Christ would come, before us in time on earth, and he would bear the judicial penalty for our sins. The **"burning lamp"** is emblematic of the light, of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, which is revealed to the children of promise. It is the revelation to us, the saved by grace sinners, that Jesus has paid the debt we could not pay, and in so doing, Jesus has caused us to be born again by the holy presence of God manifested in the form of the Holy Spirit; signifying that we are sealed in the eternal covenant of salvation by grace. Consider these thoughts in conjunction with the following references:

- **De 4:24 For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.**

- ***De 9:3 Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God is he which goeth over before thee; as a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD hath said unto thee.***
- ***Heb 12:29 For our God is a consuming fire.***

If we go and study the scripture of these references; we discover that the smoking furnace is a picture of the consuming fire of God. We will see that the consuming fire of God is used against; the enemies of God; and against the enemies of God's people.

18 In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: 19 The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, 20 And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, 21 And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

Now Abram sees the covenant promise sealed, and hereby his faith is strengthened. For us we see the picture of the completed work of Christ when we are born again.

We also see a prophetic picture of the coming of Christ, how? When Christ came into the world it was in the evening of the sacrificial age. When Abram was raised from his deep sleep he awoke to the expectation of a new day dawning. The birth, life, death, and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour brought to us the fulfillment of the promise of God and the expectation of an eternal day.

How do we know this is true? Read the scriptures following these verses; and you will see that God didn't just give the promise of the land; but he added Israel as the inhabitants to that land, and drove out and destroyed the original inhabitants.

When we are born again; we are given to the land of promise, the church of Salvation by Grace; and we are added as inhabitants thereof. It is a picture of our eternal deliverance and the fulfillment of God's promise to give to the "***promised seed***" and land of promise and habitation therein. Praise the Lord; for the eternal promise of God, which man cannot change, nor fix according to his own imagination. We see this same picture and a further explanation in: ***Ga 3:13-29; 13 "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: 14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. 15 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. 16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. 17 And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. 18 For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. 19 Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. 20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. 21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. 22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. 23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. 24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us***

unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. 26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Thank you, Father God and our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ, for the promise of not only eternal life, but eternal life in the eternal land of promise. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!