

## Smoking Pot with Abram

### Genesis 15:1-21

*Genesis 15:1-5* <sup>1</sup>After these things the word of YHWH came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." <sup>2</sup>But Abram said, "O Lord YHWH, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" <sup>3</sup>And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." <sup>4</sup>And behold, the word of YHWH came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." <sup>5</sup>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." <sup>6</sup>And he believed YHWH, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

- 1 "After these things"- indicates a chronology and NOT a circling back in the narrative  
"came to Abram in a vision"- in 12:1,7 YHWH speaks & appears to Abram, here through a vision  
"I am your shield; your reward shall be very great."- What does this mean?
- 2 "I continue childless"- a complaint over how long he has waited on YHWH to fulfill his promise  
*Is it acceptable to complain to God?*
- 3 "you have given me no offspring"- Abram & Sarai do the work, but God is the source of children
- 4 "your very own son shall be your heir"- a direct, explicit promise!
- 5 What a majestic view of the promise!
- 6 "he believed YHWH"- the Hebrew verb for "believe" here is "Amen"  
"he counted it to him as righteousness"- Gal 3:1-9; Rom 4:13-25. What is Righteousness?  
Luther: "Righteousness is nothing else than believing God when He makes a promise."

*Genesis 15:7-16* <sup>7</sup>And he said to him, "I am YHWH who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess." <sup>8</sup>But he said, "O Lord YHWH, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" <sup>9</sup>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." <sup>10</sup>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. <sup>11</sup>And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.  
<sup>12</sup>As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. <sup>13</sup>Then YHWH 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. <sup>14</sup>But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. <sup>15</sup>As for yourself, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. <sup>16</sup>And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

- 7 "I am YHWH who..."- YHWH gives rationale for our belief
- 8 "how am I to know"- faith is fleeting, now he wants signs
- 9 heifer, goat, ram, turtledove & pigeon- why? All are mentioned in the later sacrificial system  
Why three years old? We don't know.
- 10 "cut them in half"- this is what it means to "make" (cut) a covenant.
- 11 Why is this verse included? Is it significant? What does it add to the narrative?
- 12 "a deep sleep fell on Abram"- last "Deep Sleep" we saw in Gen 2:21- God's working!  
"dreadful and great darkness fell upon him"- darkness has a spiritual element.
- 13-14 God foretells the exile in Egypt and the Exodus

16 “the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete”- God will not punish that people until they are at the height of their decadence. Martin Chemnitz writes, “God does not cause wills to be evil nor does He produce evil in the hearts of the ungodly, but He only permits it... God determines the boundaries when He is going to give permission, as to when and where he will restrain the ungodly.”

*Genesis 15:17-21* <sup>17</sup>When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. <sup>18</sup>On that day YHWH 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, <sup>19</sup>the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, <sup>20</sup>the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, <sup>21</sup>the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites."

17 smoking fire pot & flaming torch- displays God’s presence, pointing forward to the Shekinah  
**WORD OF THE DAY**

Shekinah- the cloud and pillar of fire that is God’s presence for the wandering Israelites  
“passed between these pieces”- God alone is at stake in this covenant.

**BONUS WORD OF THE DAY**

Unilateral Covenant- God’s covenant goes one way. Abram does not walk through and has no conditions in this covenant. When is this covenant ultimately fulfilled and who bears the burden for our redemption?

19-21 Not all the tribes are identifiable to modern scholars, but they are the peoples of that land before the Israelite conquest. The boundaries described are not achieved fully till the reign of David

**Psalm 32**

N: <sup>1</sup>Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven,

S: whose sin is covered.

N: <sup>2</sup>Blessed is the man against whom YHWH counts no iniquity,

S: and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

N: <sup>3</sup>For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away

S: through my groaning all day long.

N: <sup>4</sup>For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;

S: my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

*Vicar: Selah*

N: <sup>5</sup>I acknowledged my sin to you,

S: and I did not cover my iniquity;

N: I said, "I will confess my transgressions to YHWH,"

S: and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

*Vicar: Selah*

N: <sup>6</sup>Therefore let everyone who is godly

S: offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found;

N: surely in the rush of great waters,

S: they shall not reach him.

N: <sup>7</sup>You are a hiding place for me;

S: you preserve me from trouble;

N: you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

*Vicar: Selah*

S: <sup>8</sup>I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;

N: I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

S: <sup>9</sup>Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding,

N: which must be curbed with bit and bridle,

S: or it will not stay near you.

N: <sup>10</sup>Many are the sorrows of the wicked,

S: but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in YHWH.

N: <sup>11</sup>Be glad in YHWH, and rejoice, O righteous,

S: and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

**ALL: Glory be to the Father and to the Son**

**And to the Holy Spirit as it was in the beginning is now**

**And will be forever Amen**

