

REVIEW

Gen 12: God called Abram to **go from** his country, his family, and his father's house **to** Canaan. Likewise, we are called to go from our old lives to the Promised Land where Christ rules.

By faith, Abram believes God and obeys.

But it didn't take long for us to see Abram's weak faith:

Gen 12 : **Abram lied** to Pharaoh.
He brought a curse instead of a blessing.

Gen 13 : God caused Abram and Lot to separate.

Gen 14 : Abram rescues Lot; tithes to Melchizedek.

Gen 15 : **Abram's fears** → God's covenant.

From Fear to Faith

Abram's **F**ears

God's **A**ssurance

Abram's **I**nquiry

God's **T**ranscendent Plan

God's **H**ope-Giving Covenant

Today we will see how God assures Abram.

We will learn that God uses even our fears and failures to make himself known and to make us fully assured and confident in his character and his promise/covenant.

Abram's Fears

Gen 15:1 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."

God speaks to us because we need to hear from him. The modes:

- **Verbal revelation:** 700+ "Thus says the Lord" "The word of the Lord" (audible voice, within the prophets' minds, angels).
- **Visual revelation:** dreams, visions, theophanies.
- **Providential revelation:** miracles and wonders.
- **Incarnational revelation:** **Jesus** is the final revelation!

Hebrews 1:1-2

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son ...

New Testament believers have the most complete revelation of God in the Bible!

Why did God say what he said to Abram? "Fear not," "I AM your shield" "great reward."

Fear not: because Abram fears! He just warred against 4 kings who defeated 5 kings! They might retaliate. He also sees the Canaanites in the land he is supposed to inherit. More wars ahead!

I AM your shield: Abram knows he didn't win and rescue Lot with his own might! The same LORD that fought for him is able to carry him through, and **God promised** Abram exactly that.

Your reward shall be great: Abram refused to take the rewards from the 5 kings (Gen 14:22-24).

But here, God promised Abram a much better reward: **YAHWEH HIMSELF!**

How did Abram react? He doubts!

Gen 15:2 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?"

Gen 15:3 "You did not give me offspring." He sees his situation as a done deal—finalized. He is old. Sarah is not only old but also barren! That's why she laughed when she heard the LORD promised her Isaac.

But our Yahweh is patient and faithful! He assures Abram.

We often allow our heart to preach to us its fears and doubts, but we should rather preach to our heart, "**Is anything too hard for the LORD?**"
Gen 18:14

God's Assurance

God reassures Abram of the offspring he promised.

Gen 15:4 God says, "No, no, not this man, but your **very own son!**

Gen 15:5 Count the stars if you can! So shall your offspring be!

The **Word of God**
gives birth to a
believing heart.

Here is **one of the greatest verses** that **summarizes** our Christian faith:

Gen 15:6 *And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.*

Rom 4:21-22 [Abram] fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness." **Scripture interprets scripture.**

Counted: imputed, credited, (Lev 7:18; 17:4; 2 Sam 19:19, etc.)

Rom 4:1-8 This imputed righteousness is a **gift**, not a salary/wage of your action.

James 2:21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Abraham was declared righteous here, 7 chapters before he offered Isaac (Gen 22)!

James is saying, true faith gives birth to obedience. It is alive and it bears fruit.

The righteousness is a **gift**, the faith is a **gift** (Eph 2:8-9), **credited to Abram. Hallelujah!**

Rom 4:23-25 But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

This is written for you!
BELIEVE in THIS GOD,
Yahweh, who raised Jesus
from the dead!

How God assures us:
Look at the **creation!**
Remember the **works of the Lord** in history, in the Bible and in your life!

Gen 15:7 And he said to him, "I am the LORD who **brought you (the past) out from Ur of the Chaldeans to (the future) give you this land to possess.**" **We have far greater accounts of God's works than Abram had! We see Jesus!** Why are you weary, O my soul? If you are weary, don't be discouraged, Abram was stubborn too...

Abram's Inquiry

Gen 15:8 But he said, "O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?"

Possibility 1: Abram is stubborn, resists to believe.

☞ As finite beings, we tend to **limit** the Infinite God.

☞ Those who like to plan often **demand** God to reveal every detail to us.

☞ We often say, "Unless I **see** or **understand** it, I am not going to believe!"

☞ Other times, we **choose** to dwell in our doubts, misery, sadness, unbelief.

God's providence
"has secret but
gracious designs!"
-Matthew Henry

Possibility 2: Abram desires the promise and inquire to know more!

☞ **James 1:5-6** If any of you lacks wisdom, let him **ask God**, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him **ask in faith**, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.

☞ **When we desire something, we are curious/inquisitive about it.**

Do we desire the things
that God promised us?
Search his Word to know
more and have assurance!

God's Transcendent Plan

See what Abram got from his inquiry: God revealed his elaborate plan to those who ask!

a 7 Give you this land to possess.

b 8-10 Abram laid each half over against the other.

c 11-12 The sun was going down.

d 12 A deep sleep fell on Abram.

e 13 Your offspring will be servants.

x 14 I will bring Judgment on the nation.

e' 14 Your offspring shall come out with great possessions.

d' 15-16 You shall go to your fathers in peace.

c' 17 The sun had gone down.

b' 17 A smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces.

a' 18-21 To your offspring I give this land.

God does more than we
could ever ask or think!
Eph. 3:20

He works all things for
the good of his people.
Rom. 8:29

His plans are to give us a
future and a hope.
Jer. 29:11

God's Hope-Giving Covenant

Not only a **promise**
but God also
swears an oath
with Abram.
A blood-covenant.

Heb. 6:17-18 So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge **might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.**

When two parties made a covenant in the ancient Near East, both parties would walk pass between dismembered animals to signify what would happen if one or both failed to deliver. Abram understood what God was about to do when God commands him in **Gen. 15:9-10.**

Gen. 15:11 And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

Having prepared the sacrifices, Abram faithfully waits for God.

M. Henry: "A very watchful eye must be kept upon our spiritual sacrifice."

"When vain thoughts, like these fowls, come down upon our sacrifices, we must drive them away." **"Attend on God without distraction."**

Drive away all
vain thoughts and
distractions as we
wait for Yahweh!

Before God swears the oath—"signing the contract"—he makes clear that it is not all roses.

Often people try to
"sell" the gospel
by not presenting
the entirety of it.

In **Gen. 15:12-16** tells Abram the suffering that has always been part of God's plan for his people. But **all that Israel had to go through actually shows the graciousness of God: that they might know true blessedness.**

Trust God that every pain and tear is planned for our eternal joy!

Gen. 15:17 When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces.

Normally, both parties of the covenant will pass between the pieces.

Abram, though he was the recipient, was only a spectator here.

This, indeed, is the outworking of the **Covenant of Redemption!**

God, at the right time, fulfills his covenant by sending Jesus

Christ, standing in Abram's and our behalf as our covenant head.

He lived righteous life and died for our sins, thus securing for us all the covenant blessings!

God alone passes between
the dismembered animals;
signifying that **he will see**
to it that both God and His
chosen people fulfill the
promise.

Eph. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

Gen. 15:18 *On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, ...*
 As in an agreement, God describes the borders of the **land** promised, signifying both **dominion** over the land and **rest** from enemies' invasions. The 10 tribes mentioned will be replaced by Abram's countless **offspring**.

The same covenant promises are still being fulfilled in the Church until Christ Jesus reigns over all creation!

How amazing is our God in fulfilling his promise!
 How amazingly patient he is in dealing with us, those of little faith!

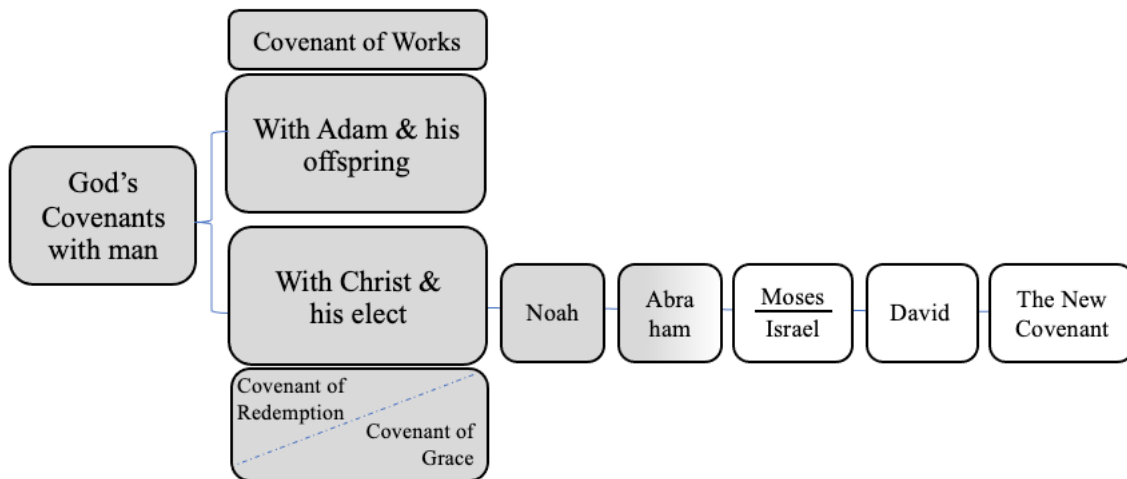
God gives his covenant so that we may have **strong encouragement** to **hold fast** to this hope.

Have you been using the means that God provides to strengthen your faith?

Lastly, Abram fails here and there. But see how Paul describes Abram, who put his faith in Jesus! *He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body which was as good as dead... No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.*

God sees the faith that you put in Jesus! And you will grow strong as you give glory to God. We have all the more reason to be strong, to stand up again though we fail, because he is faithful!

In this series:



- CoR : The Trinity covenanted to elect and redeem a people for God's glory.
- CoW : Every man is God's image bearer thus all must reflect the glory of God.
- CoG : Man failed. God promised the Seed who will deliver us and fulfill this duty.
- w/ Noah : Day-night-season-harvest will be **sustained** for that day when the Seed comes! (rainbow)
- w/ Abraham : **People, land, and blessings** promised, to be fulfilled by the Seed! (circumcision)
- w/ Moses : Nation and priesthood established, law is given, to be fulfilled by the Seed! (law)
- w/ David : Eternal king and eternal kingdom promised, to be fulfilled by the Seed! (throne)
- New Cov. : **Circumcision** of the heart, **law** written in the heart, God **enthroned**, to be fulfilled by the Seed!