
Genesis 15 – God Reassures Abram and Establishes the Covenant

1) The setting: “After these things...”

- This comes **after**:
 - Abram’s rescue mission and victory over the kings (Gen 14)
 - The encounter with **Melchizedek**
 - Abram’s refusal to accept reward/wealth from the king of Sodom
- The narration frames this as a natural moment when **adrenaline fades** and fear can creep in.

2) God speaks: “Fear not... I am thy shield... thy exceeding great reward”

- **Key insight**: God’s opening words (“fear not”) imply Abram was afraid.
- The narration imagines Abram replaying the battle mentally:
 - “What if the kings regroup?”
 - “What if I’m ambushed?”
 - “What if my wealth is taken?”
- God answers those exact fears with two promises:
 - **“I am thy shield”** → God is Abram’s *defense and protection* (even if Abram lacks physical defenses).
 - **“I am thy exceeding great reward”** → God is Abram’s *resource and provision* (even if riches vanish).
- **Narration’s “why”**: Abram was wise to refuse “puny treasures” from Sodom because God Himself becomes the **greater wealth**.

3) First-usage emphasis (as highlighted in the narration)

The narrator repeatedly points out “first time” appearances:

- **“The word of the LORD”** – first usage in Scripture (as a phrase).
 - The narration connects this to John 1 (“In the beginning was the Word...”) and suggests a possible link to Christ as “the Word.”

- “I am” – God revealing Himself in this manner (the narration ties this to Jesus’ “I am” statements in John).
- “Shield” and “reward” noted as first usages (as the narration emphasizes).

4) Abram’s honest question: “What will you give me, seeing I go childless?”

- Abram doesn’t reject God – he’s wrestling with the problem:
 - “Any blessing I receive will go to **Eleazar**, my steward.”
- **Narration’s point:** As people age, they think less about *what they gain* and more about *what they can pass on*. Abram wants an heir.

5) God’s promise: not Eleazar, but your own offspring

- God promises Abram an heir “from your own body.”

6) The stars and the defining verse: Faith counted as righteousness

- God tells Abram to look at the stars → “**So shall thy seed be.**”
- Abram believes, and **God counts it as righteousness.**
- **Narration’s theological “why”:**
 - God doesn’t credit righteousness based on:
 - works, prayers, devotion quality, sincerity, or law-keeping
 - God credits righteousness based on **believing** God’s promise.
- The narrator connects this to Paul’s teaching about righteousness through faith (not personal righteousness).

7) “How shall I know?” – Covenant ritual and prophecy

- Abram asks for a sign about inheriting the land.
- God instructs a covenant-cutting ceremony:
 - animals split, laid opposite each other
 - birds not divided
 - Abram drives away vultures (a vivid, exhausting scene)
- **Then:** Abram falls into a deep sleep and experiences “horror of great darkness.”
 - Narration interprets this darkness as connected to the future suffering of his descendants.

8) Prophecy: Egypt, affliction, and deliverance

- God foretells:
 - Abram's descendants will be strangers in a foreign land
 - oppression/affliction for "400 years" (with narration clarifying the chronology)
 - God will **judge** that nation (Egypt)
 - they will come out with **great substance** (the "back pay" idea for slavery)
- "Fourth generation" return is tied to:
 - "the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full"
 - meaning: judgment is delayed until moral corruption reaches its "full" measure.

9) The covenant is confirmed: the smoking furnace and burning lamp

- The presence passes between the pieces.
 - God defines the land promise with major boundaries:
 - "river of Egypt" to **Euphrates**, and broad territory.
 - Narration notes Israel historically hasn't possessed the land at that maximal boundary – but the promise is stated expansively.
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Genesis 16 – Hagar and the Consequences of "Helping God"

1) Sarai's plan: Hagar as a surrogate

- Sarai proposes Abram take Hagar to obtain a child.
- Abram agrees – narration calls this:
 - **a lapse of faith** (trying to force the promise through human methods)

2) The relational fallout

- Hagar conceives and begins to despise Sarai.
- Sarai blames Abram ("My wrong be upon thee...").
- Sarai treats Hagar harshly → Hagar flees.

3) The angel of the LORD meets Hagar

- Hagar is heading back toward Egypt through wilderness where she likely would have perished.
- The angel tells her:
 - return and submit (because she was also in the wrong, despising Sarai)
- Prophecy about her son:
 - Name: **Ishmael** (“God hears”)
 - Meaning: God heard her affliction/cry
 - Future: a “wild man,” conflict-oriented (“hand against every man...”)

4) “Thou God seest me” – Hagar’s naming of God

- Hagar identifies God personally:
 - “You are the God who sees me.”
- The well receives a name tied to that theme (“the well of him that lives and sees me”).

5) Timeline marker

- Ishmael is born when Abram is **86**.
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Genesis 17 – El Shaddai, Name Changes, Circumcision, and Covenant Clarified

1) 13 years later: Abram is 99

- God appears and reveals Himself as:
 - **El Shaddai** (“Almighty God”) – narration highlights as first usage.
- God reasserts covenant and multiplication.

2) Name change: Abram → Abraham

- Meaning in narration:
 - from “high father” to “father of many nations”
- God repeats covenant themes:

- nations and kings
- everlasting covenant
- land of Canaan as everlasting possession

3) Circumcision as covenant sign

- Outward ritual meant to symbolize inward reality:
 - “cutting away the flesh” (living after the Spirit, not after flesh)
- **Narration’s “why”:**
 - people often mistake the ritual for the reality
 - physical circumcision without spiritual change is meaningless
 - comparison made to baptism:
 - baptism doesn’t save by itself; it points to an inner work of the Spirit

4) Sarai → Sarah (“princess”)

- God promises Sarah will bear a son.
- Abraham laughs – narration says:
 - not disbelief, but joyful amazement

5) Isaac (“laughter”) and the covenant line

- Sarah later laughs differently (narration: disbelief/incredulity).
- Their laughter makes Isaac’s name fitting.
- Abraham’s stumble:
 - “Oh that Ishmael might live before thee” (a “forget it, Lord” moment)
- God responds:
 - **The covenant will be with Isaac**, not Ishmael.
 - Ishmael will still be blessed (fruitful, “twelve princes,” great nation)
 - but covenant promise is explicitly tied to Isaac.

6) Abraham obeys circumcision command

- Abraham, Ishmael, and household follow through.
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Genesis 18 – The Visit, the Promise Repeated, and Abraham’s Intercession

1) Three visitors at Mamre: hospitality and “entertaining angels”

- Abraham runs to meet them, bows, offers water, rest, and food.
- Narration ties this to Hebrews:
 - you may entertain angels unaware
- Abraham prepares a real meal:
 - cakes (bread), calf, butter, milk

2) Kosher commentary (from narration)

- The narrator notes: butter + milk + meat together is “not kosher”
- Explains how later Jewish practice interpreted “do not boil a kid in its mother’s milk”
 - and how traditions expanded it into a broader dairy/meat prohibition
- The narrator argues Abraham’s example shows the later strict rule isn’t what the original command meant.

3) The promise repeated and Sarah’s laughter

- Visitors announce: Sarah will have a son within the “time of life.”
- Sarah eavesdrops and laughs internally.
- God’s key question:
 - **“Is anything too hard for Jehovah?”**
- Narration’s “why”:
 - Sarah laughed because she focused on human limits, not God’s power.
 - We often dismiss God-sized promises when we only measure by human possibilities.

4) Jehovah remains: a theophany and divine disclosure

- The narrator distinguishes:
 - two are angels
 - **one is Jehovah** (interpreted as a manifestation of Christ)
- “No one has seen the Father...” → narration frames this as God revealed through the Son.
- Jehovah chooses to disclose judgment plans to Abraham because:
 - Abraham will become a great nation

- Abraham will command his household in God's ways (justice and judgment)

5) The investigation language: "I will go down and see..."

- God acknowledges the "cry" against Sodom and Gomorrah is great.

6) Abraham's intercession: the logic behind mercy and justice

- Abraham pleads starting at 50 righteous down to 10.
- **Key "why" from narration (your exact request):**
 - Abraham's whole argument is built on God's justice:
 - It would not be right for the righteous to be judged with the wicked.
 - "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"
- **Narration's additional principle:**
 - God's patience: even **50** righteous would spare a whole city.
 - A few righteous can "hold back" judgment (salt of the earth theme).

7) The conclusion: deliverance before judgment

- Narration applies the principle:
 - God led Lot out before destruction
 - "God knows how to deliver the righteous and reserve the ungodly for judgment"
- The narrator then uses that logic to argue for a "delivering out" pattern before divine wrath.

8) Sobering warning about Lot's family (preview)

- Though Lot personally escaped pollution, his family did not.
 - His move toward Sodom cost him dearly:
 - his children absorbed the culture and were destroyed (as the narration foreshadows).
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