EVERLASTING LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT, PART 2

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Genesis 15:1-21
Seed

The record of Abram's life at this juncture, recorded in **Genesis 15**, finds him to be childless. The promise of being a great nation in **Genesis 12:2** and the amplification of the promise in **Genesis 13:16** – "and I will make your seed as the dust of the earth" – had not begun to be realized, even with a solitary offspring.

Abram proffered a solution to Yahweh, an alternative, in fact, to the apparent means of reproduction through him and Sarai. The repudiation of Abram's suggestion was immediate (**v. 4**), as well as the announcement that the heir would be his own biological child (**v. 4**). To impress upon Abram and restate the magnitude of his descendants, Yahweh used another aspect of nature that was beyond human calculation—the stars (**v. 5**). Abram did not even blink. He believed Yahweh, and Yahweh counted it to him as righteousness.

This was not the first time Abram believed Yahweh. He had believed Yahweh and left his own country to go to a place the Lord would show him. The verb form of the word *believe* in the Hebrew text indicates a repeated action on the part of the patriarch.[1] Faith was Abram's normal response to the words of Yahweh. We see instances of Abram's repeated obedience in **Genesis 12:1-4, 7; 13:14-18**.

Genesis 15:6 is a significant verse in the Bible. It is quoted three times in the New Testament: **Romans 4:2; Galatians 3:6; James 2:23**. The first occurrence in Genesis and the subsequent usage in the New Testament assert without equivocation that righteousness, or justification, is not obtained by works or human achievement of any

[1] Keith Essex, *The Master's Seminary Journal,* Fall 1999.

kind, but by means of faith. People are reckoned, or accounted righteous, by Yahweh by faith and by faith alone.

Land

Yahweh declares the purpose for which he brought Abram from Ur of the Chaldeans to the land of Canaan (**v. 7**). The term *possess* (Legacy Standard Bible translation) is rendered in other renderings as *inherit*. The words *inherit* and *possess* come from the same Hebrew root and connect the *land* with the *heir* in verses 3 and 4, according to Professor Keith Essex. "Thus," says Essex, "the inheritance to be given to Abraham's seed refers primarily to the land."

"Cut a Covenant"
Genesis 15:9-12

Yahweh's response to Abram's desire for assurance regarding possession of the land (**v. 7**) is to perform a ceremony by which He binds Himself to do what He has promised. The ceremony itself is called in **verse 18** "cut a covenant."

It is important to understand that this covenant is not a mutually binding one, i.e., both parties, Yahweh and Abram, bind themselves to fulfill it. The ceremony demonstrates that the obligation to fulfill the covenant is unilateral. Yahweh alone has the obligation to see to its fulfillment. The common element in each case is the animal's life being taken. The implication of this is that God's own divine life forms the surety for this promise.

Boundary of the Land
Genesis 15:18-20

These verses give the boundaries of the land given to Abram's seed – Israel.