

Genesis 15

Verse 1

**After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying,
“Do not fear, Abram,
I am a shield to you;
Your reward shall be very great.”**

Abram had just rescued the people of the 5 cities in the Dead Sea area that were attacked by the 4 kings from the north. Despite his great military victory it seems that Abram had some fears which may have included the following:

1. That the four kings he had conquered might return with a greater force.
2. Having returned home, he was once again confronted with the same problem; he and Sara were still childless

God's reply to those concerns was the following:

1. “I am your shield” was God's answer to his fear of revenge from the 5 kings.
2. “You're reward shall be great” was God's answer to him & Sari being childless.

Verses 2 - 6

² But Abram said, “Lord God, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” ³ Abram also said, “Since You have given me no son, one who has been born in my house is my heir.” ⁴ Then behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, “This man will not be your heir; but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.” ⁵ And He took him outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” ⁶ Then he believed in the Lord; and He credited it to him as righteousness.

² But Abram said, “Lord God, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?”

At this time Abram was about 80 years old and Sara was 70. The childbearing years were coming to an end and they did not have a son.

Eliezer was the oldest and most trusted steward of Abraham's household and it is likely that he was the one that Abram sent to find a wife for Isaac.

See Genesis 24:1- 2

Now Abraham was old, advanced in age; and the Lord had blessed Abraham in every way. ² Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household who was in charge of all that he owned,

⁴ Then behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, “This man will not be your heir; but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.”

This meant Abram and Sarah would have a son but when would this happen?

Abram is about 80 years old now and he will be 100 when Isaac is born, so Abram would have to wait 20 years for this promise to be fulfilled.

⁵ And He took him outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”

God had promised Abram that his seed would be as the dust of the earth and now He compares them to the stars in the night sky. The point being that Abram's descendants would be very numerous.

⁶ Then he believed in the Lord; and He credited it to him as righteousness.

It's obvious that Abraham believed in God prior to this point but he was struggling with God's promise about his seed. However, when God reaffirms His previous promise, Abram truly believed and Abram was seen as being righteous before God.

In Romans 4:5 Paul says,

But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness.

This is also true when we get baptized into Christ. We already believe in God and we have come to know some of His promises but when we are joined with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection then our faith is credited as righteousness. People of faith will do works of righteousness but they do not save us.

Verses 7- 11

⁷ And He said to him, “I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it.” ⁸ But he said, “Lord God, how may I know that I will possess it?” ⁹ So He said to him, “Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” ¹⁰ Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, and laid each half opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds. ¹¹ And birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away.

⁷ And He said to him, “I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it.” ⁸ But he said, “Lord God, how may I know that I will possess it?”

God had just reassured Abram about his future son but now he wanted some assurance that he would inherit the land of Canaan.

⁹ So He said to him, “Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” ¹⁰ Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, and laid each half opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds. ¹¹ And birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away.

The animals were a sacrifice to confirm the covenant between God and Abram

The birds of prey and Abram driving them away seems like an unusual detail to include in this event. There is no doubt that these were real birds but it seems likely that their presence was also a sign that this covenant would have many opponents.

Verses 12-16

¹² Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror *and* great darkness fell upon him. ¹³ Then God said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years. ¹⁴ But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions. ¹⁵ As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶ Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the wrongdoing of the Amorite is not yet complete.”

¹² **Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him.**

The revelation of what would happen to the descendants of Abram was one of trial and tribulation.

¹³ **Then God said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years.”**

See chart 1505

Explaining Genesis 15:13

In Exodus 12:40-41 we learn that the exact period of time was 430 years. God simply rounded it off to "four hundred" when he spoke to Abram. Stephen did the same thing in Acts 7:6 when he spoke before the council. Rounding off dates that cover long periods of time is not uncommon.

There is one other issue that is important to understand about verse 40. The text in Exodus 12:40 should read in Canaan and Egypt. Some versions leave Canaan out but mention it in a footnote. Knowing this explains the other so called contradiction in the text.

Scripture	Event	Person	year
Genesis 22	Abraham offers Isaac	Abraham is 120	1876
Genesis 47:9	70 go to Egypt	Jacob is 130	1706
Exodus 1:6-11	Joseph dies	Joseph is 110	1635
Exodus 1:6-11	slavery begins	30 years later	1606
Exodus 12	The Exodus	Moses is 80	1446

Using the dates above we can determine the following

Years in Canaan	1876-1706	170
Years in Egypt	1706-1446	260
Total	1876-1446	430
Years in slavery	1606-1446	160

¹⁴ But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions.

The ten plagues brought against Egypt were the fulfillment of this prophecy and the Egyptian people gave the slaves silver, gold, and clothing as they left.

¹⁵ As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age.

Abraham would not die in war or some other misfortune and he lived to be 175.

¹⁶ Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the wrongdoing of the Amorite is not yet complete.”

In 4 generations from Abraham they would come back to Canaan. During the time of Abraham a generation (when he had his 1st son) was 100 years.

See pic 1510

	Father	born	son	died	age
15	PELEG	2697	130	2358	339
16	REU	2567	132	2228	339
17	SERUG	2435	130	2105	330
18	NAHOR	2305	179	2001	304
19	TERAH	2126	130	1921	205
20	ABRAM	1996	100	1821	175
21	ISACC	1896	60	1716	180
22	JACOB	1836	91	1689	147

Abraham died in 1821 BC, minus (4 generations) 400 years, equals 1421 BC. The Israelites would enter Canaan in 1406 BC.

1421 minus 1406 is only a difference of 15 years. As we can see, there was some rounding off concerning this event because it covered a long period of time.

The Amorites represents all the Canaanite tribes. God is the judge of mankind and nations, and when a nation reaches a certain point of depravity it will be judged.

Verses 17 - 21

¹⁷ Now it came about, when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, a smoking oven and a flaming torch *appeared* which passed between these pieces.

¹⁸ On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying,

“To your descendants I have given this land,

From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates: ¹⁹ the land of the Kenite, the Kenizzite, the Kadmonite, ²⁰ the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Rephaim,

²¹ the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Girgashite, and the Jebusite.”

¹⁸ On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying,

“To your descendants I have given this land,

From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates:

In chapter 13 God promised to give him all the land he could see but here God gives Abraham a well-defined description of the land his descendants will receive

See Map 1515 Land between the two rivers



¹⁹ the land of the Kenite, the Kenizzite, the Kadmonite, ²⁰ the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Rephaim, ²¹ the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Girgashite, and the Jebusite.”

There are 10 nations listed in verses 19 and 20 during the time of Abraham. However, only seven nations are mentioned at the time of Joshua, some 500 years later.

The four nations not mentioned during the time of Joshua include The Kenite, The Kenizzite, The Kadmonite, And the Rephaim.

The 7 nations during the time of Joshua are highlighted below.

See map 1520

