*Unconditional Covenant*

11-15-2015

Gen 15:1-10, 17-18

*Gen 15:1-10*

*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." 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?" 3 And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." 4 And behold, the word of the Lord came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." 5 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." 6 And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.7 And he said to him, "I am the Lord who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess." 8 But he said, "O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" 9 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." 10 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.*

*17-18*

*17 When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. 18 On that day the Lord 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,*

God’s timetable is not always the same as ours, but it’s always on schedule. [2 Pet. 3:9](javascript:%7b%7d), [Eph. 1:11](javascript:%7b%7d)

* It had been 10 years since the promises were given & there was still no son & Abram did not possess land.
* The Lord comes to Abram in his doubt/confusion & comforts him with His most frequent biblical command …“Fear not” 1st of 84 in OT. *Gen 15:1-5, 12:2; 13:15-16*

He was afraid of enemy retaliation/poverty, God declared Himself Abram’s shield & reward.

* After this verbal encouragement Abram submissively, not defiantly asks for more confirmation!.......*Adonai Yahweh* means Lord, Master, Sovereign.
  + Abram not disbelieve but wondering how. [Luke 1:20](javascript:%7b%7d), 34,

Abram believed when the Lord combined words of reassurance with a visible sign (stars) to remind & confirm of the yet unfulfilled promises. *Gen 15:6,* [*Heb 11:8; Gal 3:6-9*](javascript:%7b%7d)*,* [*Eph 2:8-9*](javascript:%7b%7d)

* By grace Abram believed God’s promise of A coming son & THE Son, a descendant (Messiah), so God announced that Abram’s faith was saving faith.
  + This is thefirst context where faith & justification are linked.
* Abram was legally declared righteous by God because he believed God’s promise & looked forward to a coming Redeemer.
  + Abram’s faith was not exchanged for righteousness.
    - Abram was saved because Jesus’ righteousness was imputed to him.
      * Abram was saved by faith in the One who WOULD come, we by faith in One who HAS come.

Right after he was declared righteous by God Abram has doubts about the future. *Gen 15:7-10*

* God did not rebuke him for the question, but confirmed His promise with a covenant.
* Not animal sacrifice, but a legal/binding agreement sealed by dividing the animal, with the parties passing between the halves while repeating the terms of the covenant.
  + “If defaulted on: what has happened to animals, may happen to me.”
* No stronger way to show that you meant what you said.
  + Today we sign contracts with witnesses before a public official & have collateral.

Verbally, visually (stars) & now ceremonially, the Lord assures Abram by obligating only Himself to fulfill this blood covenant. *Gen 15:7, 17-18, Heb. 6:13-18*

* Typically both parties walk between - here only God (smoking oven & flaming torch), passed between to signify that the covenant was unilateral & unconditional.
  + No conditions were placed upon Abram for its fulfillment.
* Like Abram, we are personally secure (salvation) & our future reward (inheritance) is also secure because God has entered into a similar covenant with us.
  + I promise unto death that I will pay the price to redeem you from your sins & nothing can prevent you from receiving the blessings I have promised because it is sealed with the blood of Christ.
    - The Lord brought us out to bring us in.
    - The Lord’s table is our visual reminder of God’s grace covenant with us.

Our assurance and confidence rests and depends on God’s sure promise, not on our variable performance. [*Rom 8:35-39*](javascript:%7b%7d)*,* [*Heb 12:1-3*](javascript:%7b%7d)*, 2 Cor 1:20, 1 Jn 2:25,* [*Phil. 1:6*](javascript:%7b%7d)

* He loves us unconditionally & is patient, and long-suffering with us.
  + Trust in God’s promises & rest in His covenant.