

GENESIS 15, 16 / COVENANT WITH ABRAM

Verse 1

In his vision, the first thing the Lord tells Abram: "Don't be afraid (Al tireh.) I AM your shield and your great reward."

And why was Abram afraid?

Verse 2

For 10 years he had been waiting for God's promise to come to fruition. Nothing. The closest person to a son for him was his confidant and trusted servant Eliezer.

Verses 3-5

God assures him that he will, indeed, not only have a son but a multitude of descendants. Patience with God's timing. Don't we have the same reaction? It's so hard to wait on the Lord's timing when we desire something so much.

Verse 6

Abram believed and he was credited for righteousness.

Read Galatians 3:6-9.

Just as Abram was taken out of the nations (heathen) and was found faithful when he heard the truth, we gentiles are found faithful and blessed when we believe.

Verses 7-10

The Jews are known for needing a sign. Here, Abram asks for assurance, something to hold onto while he anticipates the promise.

This method of making a covenant was typical of that day. Two people would make a pact and finalize it by going between a divided carcass. If one broke his promise on the deal he would find himself and/or his property "divided."

The difference with this covenant is that God was making the covenant with Himself! That made it a for sure deal.. God can't lie.

Br'yth- compact of passing between 2 pieces of flesh; where we get the phrase, "to cut a deal."

Five animals

A heifer-

A goat-

A ram-

A turtledove and a young pigeon, not divided, but probably placed one on each side

} all three years old: fully grown and their greatest strength; the number 3 stands for "Trinity" and perfection.

These are animals to be sacrificed later in Leviticus, but some see them as representing certain nations- The heifer, Babylon, the goat, Persia, and the ram, is Greece. Who were divided because they tried to divide Israel. The dove and pigeon, not to be divided, represent Israel who will not be destroyed.(forever.)

Verses 11-"Birds came down"- a sign of Satanic attack

What happens when there's a carcass or two lying in the heat of the day? Vultures. These birds are unclean and represent evil. This is a picture of Satan again attempting to thwart God's plan.

All the way back to 3:15-

God tells us that Satan, like a snake, will continue to bite at the heel and this is another example. The way in the Middle east to kill a snake is to cut off the head, just as God promised he will do one day.

Verses 12-21

At sunset, the beginning of a new day, God put Abram into a deep sleep, perhaps what we call a

“coma,” similar to Adam?

Jewish scholars see this passage of Abram's darkness and horror coming as God informs him of the 400 years of affliction his descendants will suffer before returning to the promised land.

Abram, you will live and live and prosper and die in peace.

Your descendants will return after the fourth generation.

How long is a generation? In this instance, a generation is 100 years.

God was allowing the Amorites (Canaanites) to reach their greatest depravity. Even though the Israelites suffered in Egypt during this time, God was protecting them from living in the depravity of the Canaanites until they had a larger population.

Verses 18-21

Then God gave more information about the promised land and confirmed the covenant. He did it all.

The only thing Abram had to do was have faith. Just like us.

Chapter 16 / The beginning of the Arab-Israeli conflict

Verse 1

Ever call out to God after waiting and waiting for a prayer to be answered? Abram and Sarai had been waiting 10 years and still no son.

Why was a son important?

Sarai, at this time was about 75 years old. To her, the situation was becoming unbearable. In ancient times, a woman's value was in childbearing. In that society, a barren woman was looked upon as bereft of God.

Genesis 30:1 Rachel

1 Samuel 2:1-18 Hannah

So, Sarai take things into her own hands. Maybe God will use another body to bring about His promise? It was a legal option of the day. A surrogate mother could give birth and the wife or first wife would claim the child as hers. It was legal that day, but against God's law. We might consider abortion today in that ilk.

Her handmaid, according to Jewish tradition, was the daughter of Pharaoh, whom he'd given to Abram in the deal for Sarai. If so, he probably gave her to Sarai afterwards, as a handmaid.

Verse 2

Abram listened to Sarai's plan and obeyed. “Shemah” - to hear and obey

“OK. Sounds like a plan.” No thought of asking God about the plan. Are we guilty of same thing?

God doesn't need our help. He wants our obedience.

Verse 3-4

Hagar (Agar) Originally Egyptian, but came to mean “forsaken,” or “flight”

So often our plans aren't thought out as to the repercussions. Hagar developed an “attitude.”

Proverbs 31:21-22 “heir to her mistress” She has usurped the place of the wife. In Hagar's eyes, Sarai had lost her position as 1st wife.

Verse 5

Sarai- Abram, this is all your fault! I am injured by you. The word is “chamas” meaning 'violence (this is a violent thing you've done to me!’ Let the Lord judge!

So, how did Abram react to this?

Verse 6

He throws up his hands and says, “She's all yours. You do whatever you choose.”

Happy wife, happy life. He gave Hagar back to Sarai

later, this is addressed in

Exodus 21:8

A man could not take a someone to wife, then sell her to another. It was easier for Abram to toss the whole mess back to Sarai, She, in turn made Hagar's life miserable and publicly humiliated her so she bolted, heading back home to Egypt.

Verses 7-14

She headed south on the road to Egypt, and reached the last outpost before the wilderness (midbar) desert; like "the last gas station for 50 miles."

The Angel of the Lord = Here, we have a visit from Christ, Pre-incarnate.

"Shoob" Return and humble yourself. (What we are all asked to do: surrender our will to God; trust and obey)

"Submit to Sarai. Put yourself in her hands."

He then promises her a son who will give her many, many descendants, and she was to name him, Ishmael. ("to hear") because God heard her cry out. The Lord continued with a description this son . He would be like a wild ass or donkey. They roamed in that area like nomads, uncontrollable but strong and aggressive. No one wanted to mess with them.

"Every man's hand against him." There would be retaliation from other groups, but he would remain living around his "cousins," the Jews.

Some writings indicate he became a thief; a highwayman, Hagar called the Lord El Roe'e', the "God who sees."

Verses 15, 16

She obeyed the Lord, heading back with the promise and Abram was 86 years old when Ishmael was born.

She either told Abram about the visitation of the Lord or the Lord informed him, for the baby was called "God will hear."