

Sermon #2: Genesis 15:1-21

May 17, 2026

BREAKING THE ICE

What is the most significant promise someone has ever made to you. Did he/she keep it or not? How did that impact the way you trusted him/her or others?

SUMMARY

Genesis 1–11 spans thousands of years — creation, the fall, the flood, Babel. In chapter 12, God narrows His focus to one man, one family, and forty years that will change everything. That man is Abram — a pagan with no prior knowledge of God — and in Genesis 15, God does something that has never been done before: He makes a personal covenant with him.

A covenant in the ancient world was a binding agreement sealed in blood. Two parties would cut animals in half and walk between the pieces, declaring: *may I end up like these animals if I break this*. Normally both parties walked through. In chapter 15, Abram falls asleep, and God alone passes through the pieces. No conditions. No performance required. God binds Himself to His own promise. It is, simply, unheard of.

UNDERSTANDING THE TRUTH

Read the Passage: Genesis 15:1-21

1. In verse 1, what form does God appear to Abram, and what two things does God declare about Himself?
2. What is Abram's concern in verses 2-3, and why is the question of his assumed heir so distressing to him?
3. In verse 5, what does God instruct Abram to do, and what is the significance of that action?
4. What does verse 6 say Abram did, and how did God respond to it?
5. In verses 7-8, God identifies Himself in relation to a specific act in Abram's past. What is it, and what does Abram request?
6. Read verses 13-15.
 - a. What are the three things God says will happen to Abram's descendants?
 - b. What does God say will happen to Abram personally, in contrast to his descendants?
7. In verse 16, God tells Abram the 4th generation will return, but not until the sins of the Amorites has reached its full measure. God gives the Amorites generations before judgment comes.
 - a. What does this reveal about the kind of God who is making this covenant?
 - b. What does this reveal about how God balances patience toward sinners with faithfulness to His promises?
8. In verses 17-21, describe what is happening and why this is significant?

SEEING JESUS CHRIST

Abram believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness – not because of what Abram did, but because of what he trusted God to do. In the covenant ritual, God alone passed through the pieces, binding Himself to keep His promise regardless of human failure. The promise was ultimately fulfilled at the cross. Jesus is the fulfillment of everything God promised Abram that night, the seed through whom

all nations are blessed (Galatians 3:16), and the one who walked through the darkness on our behalf so that we too could be credited righteous – not by performance, but by faith.

- How does knowing that God alone walked through the pieces change the way you understand what Jesus did on the cross?

MAKING IT MATTER

1. Abram was a pagan. He had no background, no context, no religious resume, but God called him anyway. Do you ever feel like your past or your lack of spiritual credentials disqualifies you to serve or know God? How does Abram's story challenge that?
2. Where in your life right now is God asking you to trust a promise you can't yet see fulfilled? What do you learn about the ways Abram trusted God, even when he didn't fully understand?
3. God is infinite. How intentional are you about the ongoing process of *knowing Him*, not just knowing *about Him*?

PRAYING FOR GOD'S POWER

"He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Genesis 15:6

When we bring our raw, honest belief to God, even when we don't fully understand, God meets us. Prayer is not a performance. It is simply trusting God with what we cannot see yet.

- Is there a promise of God you have stopped believing, or never fully trusted? Name aloud or write it down.
 - In partners, confess where you need to trust God's covenant faithfulness in your current circumstances. Pray for one another that God would credit belief where doubt has taken root.
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