

Genesis 15 - Abrahamic Covenant; Justification in the OT; God Confirms Covenant to Abraham; Boundaries of the Promised Land

II. Epilogue: Patriarchal history (Gen 11:10—50:26)

(1) Life of Abraham (Gen 11:10—25:11)

(B) Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 12:1—25:11)

(a) Establishment of the covenant (Gen 12:1—17:27)

(iii) Formation of the covenant (15:1-21)

(a) Heir promised (15:1-6)

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Genesis 15

(iii) Formation of the covenant (15:1-21) [Covenant, Abrahamic](#)

(a) Heir promised (15:1-6)

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1 Some time later, a message came from the LORD to Abram in a vision. "Stop being afraid, Abram," he said. "I myself—your shield—am your very great reward."

1 After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

- "After these things" - after the events of Gen 14

- "...word of the LORD" - first reference in Scripture

- "...vision" - *machazeh*, literally, "in the vision," a specific vision or divinely initiated vision (Cf. Num 24:4,16; Ezek 13:7)

— It is this vision that will lead to the actual sealing of the Abrahamic Covenant

— God's word came first to Abram; this is now the fourth appearance to Abram, and this time it came in a vision

- This is also the first mention of a “vision” in Scripture
- “...Do not fear” - first mention; all three patriarchs at one point in their encounters with God are given this message (Cf. 26:24; 46:3)
- Keep in mind in light of his courage in attacking, and being victorious over, the far superior and out-numbered armies of the kings
- “...I am a shield” - the first reason God told Abram to not be afraid was that God was his shield (defensive protection)
- What God is saying is that He was the one who protected Abram from the four kings
- “...Your reward shall be very great” - the second reason Abram shouldn’t fear is because of Abram’s “exceeding great reward”
- In Hebrew, the phrase could be interpreted two ways: God Himself is the reward, or that Abram’s reward would be very great.
- Both interpretations are valid, but it doesn’t really matter because both are true: God was the reward, and God also rewarded Abram
- This promise of enrichment came in light of Abram’s refusal to accept the spoils of war from the king of Sodom

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?”

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

2 But Abram replied, “Lord GOD, what can you give me since I continue to be childless, and the heir of my household is Eliezer from Damascus?”

2 And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?

- This is the first dialogue between Abram and God. In the past, God merely appeared to Abram, or the word came to Abram to give a message or command.

- This dialogue reveals what Abram was actually afraid of: he heard and understood God’s promise, but he was still childless

- Abram had material prosperity; what he lacked was posterity. Thus, Abram reasoned, what is the value of this “great reward” if it cannot be transmitted.

3 Abram also said, “Since You have given me no son, one who has been born in my house is my heir.”

3 And Abram said, “Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir.”

3 Look!” Abram said, “You haven’t given me any offspring, so a servant born in my house is going to be my heir.”

3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

- The heir of a childless couple in those days was the chief servant. The childless husband and wife were free to adopt their slave in order to have an heir to inherit their possessions.
- Heirship is based upon sonship (Rom 8:16-17; Eph 1:5,11)

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."

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

4 A message came from the LORD to him again: "This one will not be your heir. Instead, the child who will be born to you will be your heir."

4 And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

- God's promise: the heir will not be your servant, but instead someone who you (Abram) fathered

— This reaffirms the previous promise about a seed

— At this point, it is not stated that Sarai would be the mother, only that Abram would be the father

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."

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."

5 Then the LORD took him outside. "Look up at the sky and count the stars—if you can!" he said. "Your descendants will be that numerous."

5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

- A promise of innumerable descendants: as the number of stars in the sky (innumerable, unable to possibly be counted), so will the number of Abram's descendants be

— In 13:16, God compared Abram's seed with the dust of the earth. Here, the comparison is made with the stars of the heavens. In both cases, the illustrations mean the same thing.

— The promises given to Abraham were not generic promises given to everyone...they were specifically given to Abraham, through whom the entire world would be blessed

- This informs us how much Abraham was walking by faith when God asked him to sacrifice his son Isaac, heir of the promises, on Mt Moriah (Gen 22)

— Hebrews says that Abraham went ahead and did this because he knew that God would raise Isaac from the dead...Abraham knew that these promises from God were ironclad...

there was no way God would renege on them.

Some have tried to make a distinction by claiming that the dust of the earth represents the earthly seed, the Jewish nation, while the stars of the heavens represent the heavenly seed, the Church. But the Bible nowhere allows for such a distinction. In fact, in this context He was dealing with a literal son of Abram, not a spiritual son nor an adoptive son, when He gives this illustration of the stars of the heavens.

God simply used two different illustrations to teach the same thing, and there is no biblical basis to teach that Israel is the earthly seed with earthly promises and the Church is the heavenly seed with heavenly promises. In fact, both Israel and the Church have earthly and heavenly promises. The dust and stars are simply symbols of innumerability. In fact, three different illustrations are used to make the same point: dust (13:16; 28:14), stars (15:5; 22:17; 26:4), and the sand of the seashore (22:17; 32:12).

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

6 Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

6 Abram believed the LORD, and it was credited to him as righteousness.

6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

- First mention of the primary condition of salvation (Rom 4:20-21; Heb 11:12); God is beginning to teach us that it is by faith alone in Him alone that results in righteousness (Heb 11:6). Noah also found favor in the eyes of the Lord (Gen 6:8-9; 7:1).

— This foundational truth is repeated 3x in the NT (Rom 4:3; Gal 3:6-9; James 2:23) to show that righteousness is reckoned in return for faith. Note that God did not look on Abram's works and credited them to him as righteousness...it simply says Abram believed God (Cf. John 8:56; 2 Cor 5:21; Rev 13:18)

- "...believed in" - to confirm, support, uphold; to be certain, to believe in; the basic root idea is firmness or certainty (Cf. 42:20; 45:26)

— This is a general declaration of Abram's faith, not a sequential statement with v1-5. Obviously, Abram was already a believer in Gen 11-12 when he obeyed God to leave Ur. Abram's belief in God is clear since at least 12:1.

— The word is correctly translated in the KJV as past tense; there is nothing in the context to suggest it is going to happen later

— What did Abram believe in? This is outlined in Gal 3:16 (see notes there); also see Soteriology 15 Justification (Rom 5:16); Salvation in the OT (Gal 3:16) for more details about Salvation in the OT.

- "...credited" - be credited to, reckoned, impute, accounted to (Cf. Rom 4:3)

— OT saints were given salvation based on credit; they didn't even know the name Jesus at that time, but they believed in a coming Messiah who would remove their sin

- "...righteousness" - an act of God whereby He acquits the wicked
- Throughout Scripture, righteousness is defined by moral actions; however, what is striking in this verse is that Abram is not described as doing righteousness; rather, faith is being counted *for* righteousness. Normally, righteousness results in acquittal by the divine judge. Here faith, the right response to God's revelation, counts instead.
- As the rest of Abram's life demonstrates, this faith leads to righteous action (18:19), but only here in the OT is it counted as righteousness.

There are three NT quotations and applications. First, Rom 4:3,9,22 make reference to this passage to show that Abraham was saved through faith and not through works. Second, Gal 3:6 refers to this passage to show that Abram was saved through faith and not by the works of the Law. So the only way of salvation is still by grace through faith (Rom 3:7-9). Third, James 2:21-23 makes reference to Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac to show that Abraham was justified by faith, because his willingness to sacrifice Isaac was the evidence of Abram's faith as expressed in Gen 15:6. The passage is cited to show that Abram's willingness to sacrifice Isaac was evidence of his previously declared righteousness through faith. In other words, his actions were evidence of his faith in God and showed the maturity of his faith. Therefore, Abram was justified by faith, and his work of offering up Isaac was the evidence of that justification by faith.

Justification in the OT (see also [Progressive Revelation](#))

A common misconception about the OT means of salvation is that Jews were saved by keeping the Law. But we know from Scripture that that is not true. Gal 3:11 says, "Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for 'The righteous shall live by faith.'" Some might want to dismiss this passage as only applying to the NT, but Paul is quoting Hab 2:4—salvation by faith, apart from the Law was an *Old Testament* principle. Paul taught that the purpose of the Law was to serve as a "tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal 3:24). Also, in Rom 3:20 Paul makes the point that keeping the Law did not save either Old or New Testament Jews because "no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law." The Law was never intended to save anyone; the purpose of the Law was to make us "conscious of sin."

In Rom 4, Paul makes it very clear that the OT means of salvation was the same as the NT means: grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. To prove this, Paul points us to Abraham, who was saved by faith: "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness" (Rom 4:3). Again, Paul quotes the OT to prove his point—Gen 15:6 this time. Abraham could not have been saved by keeping the Law, because he lived over 400 years before the Law was given!

Paul then shows that David was also saved by faith (Rom 4:6-8, quoting Ps 32:1-2). Paul continues to establish that the OT way of salvation was through faith alone. In Rom 4:23-24 he writes: "The words 'it was credited to him' were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead." In other words, righteousness is "credited" or given to those who have faith in God—Abraham, David, and we all share the same way of salvation. Heb 12:23 refers to "just men made perfect," an allusion to OT saints. It indicates that OT saints were "made perfect" at the death of Christ.

However, there is a tendency to oversimplify the difference between the OT and NT by saying the OT saint looked forward to the death of Messiah and the NT saint looks back. That is an oversimplification, and the Bible simply does not allow for it. Indeed, there always was, always is, and always will be only one means of salvation: by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. That does not change. What changes is the content of faith. What is it that one has to believe to be saved? This has changed based upon what God has revealed up to any given point in history. What was it that Abram actually believed? Gal 3:16 says that he believed in the promise of seed (plural, referring to Isaac and descendants), and he also believed in seed (singular), referring to Jesus Christ. So what he believed is that from he and Sarah would come innumerable seed (plural) and from that innumerable seed would come one seed (the Messiah).

As early as Gen 3:15, we see the promise of a coming Savior, and throughout the OT there are hundreds of promises that the Messiah would "save His people from their sins" (Matt 1:21; Cf. Is 53:5-6). Job's faith was in the fact that he knew that his "Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth" (Job 19:25). Clearly, many OT saints were aware of the promised Redeemer, and they were saved by faith in that Savior, the same way people are saved today. There is no other way.

Job may have been the first person in history to ponder sinful man's standing before a righteous God (Job 9:2). Job acknowledged his sinful nature (9:20); David did the same (Ps 32:1-2; 103:10).

The simplest definition of justification is: God's pronouncement of a believer as righteous (Cf. Rom 4:25; 5:16,18). A more lengthy definition might be: The act of God by which a sinner who believes in Christ is declared righteous on the basis of what Christ has done for them on the cross.

Justification is a declarative act, external to the sinner, distinguished from an act within a sinner's nature and changing that nature; a judicial act, as distinguished from a sovereign act; an act based upon and logically presupposing the sinner's union with Christ, as distinguished from an act which causes and is followed by that union with Christ.

Augustus H. Strong defines justification as the following: *By justification we mean that judicial act of God by which, on account of Christ, to Whom the sinner is united by faith, He*

declares that sinner to be no longer exposed to the penalty of the law, but to be restored to His favor. Or, to give an alternative definition from which all metaphor is excluded: Justification is the reversal of God's attitude toward the sinner, because of the sinner's new relation to Christ. God did condemn; He now acquits. He did repel; He now admits to favor.

(b) Preparation of the animal pieces (15:7-11)

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."

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."

7 The LORD spoke to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land as an inheritance."

7 And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.

- "...LORD" - God used His Hebrew four-letter name of God, which emphasizes God as the covenant-keeping God

— By using His covenant-keeping Name, God means that the promises already made will indeed be kept

— To verify this covenant that has already appeared in several passages of Gen 12-13, it is now to be signed and sealed

- God also reminded Abram that he was the One Who originally issued Abram's call

— God made a similar statement to Moses in Ex 20:2, identifying Himself as the One Who brought Israel out of Egypt, as a prelude to the Mosaic Covenant

- The purpose of God calling Abram was to give him the Land of Canaan as an inheritance

— Earlier, the focus was on the seed; now it is on the Land. The Land was promised to Abram individually, as well as to his seed.

8 But he said, "Lord GOD, how may I know that I will possess it?"

8 He said, "O Lord GOD, how may I know that I will possess it?"

8 But he replied, "Lord GOD, how will I know that I will inherit it?"

8 And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?

- Abraham asks God for confirmation of His promise; an authenticating sign of the promise of God

— It appears Abraham was concerned about the unconditional nature of God's promise.

The Midrash on this passage states Abram asked for a sign because he feared that as soon as his descendants sinned, they would not be allowed to enter into or be in the Promised Land.

Terms of the Covenant

- Declared eternal and unconditional
- Re-confirmed by an oath (Gen 22:15-18)
- Confirmed to Isaac and to Jacob (Gen 26:2-5, despite their acts of disobedience)
- NT declares it immutable (Heb 6:13-18)

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."

9 So He said to him, "Bring Me a three year old heifer, and a three year old female goat, and a three year old ram, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon."

9 The LORD responded, "Bring me a three-year-old cow, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon."

9 And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.

- Heifer, goat, lamb—each 3 years old

- Normally, when two men made a blood covenant in the ancient Near East, only one animal was used. Here, a total of five animals were used, showing the solemnity of the covenant.

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.

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.

10 So Abram brought him all these animals and cut each of them in half, down the middle, placing the pieces opposite each other, but he did not cut the birds in half.

10 And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not.

- Covenant basis by dividing animal (Jer 34:18-19)

- Abram cut each animal (except the birds) in half, and lined them up in two rows so one half of the animal faced the other half of the body.

— Obviously, this required the shedding of blood

11 And birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away.

11 The birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away.

11 When birds of prey swooped down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

11 And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

- Unclean birds of prey swooped down on the offering animals—an evil omen

— God's announcement of Israel's enslavement in Egypt (v13-14) clarified the meaning of the attacking birds

Blood Covenant

The nature of a blood covenant is spelled out in Jer 34:8-11,17-20. A blood covenant pledged the lives of the ones making the covenant to the covenant: If one failed, his blood was to be poured out just as the blood of the animal had been poured out. In other words, he would invoke upon himself the death penalty. The animal sacrificed was the substitute in death for the two making the covenant.

Once the covenant was made and once both parties walked between the pieces of the animal, the terms of the covenant could not be changed. This covenant should be distinguished from the hand covenant, the salt covenant, and the shoe covenant. The hand covenant was the shaking of hands or the striking of the pelvis when an agreement was reached (Ezra 10:19, Ezek 17:18). In the shoe covenant, two parties making the covenant exchanged sandals; the covenant was in force until they were exchanged again (Ruth 4:7-12). In the salt covenant, one would put his thumb into a salt pouch of the other, then put it into his own salt pouch; the original pinch of salt could never be retrieved (Lev 2:13; Num 18:19; 2 Chr 13:5). Of these four types of covenants, the blood covenant was by far the most solemn.

(c) Prophecy of Egyptian bondage (15:12-16)

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

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

12 As the sun began to set, Abram was overcome with deep sleep, and suddenly a frightening and terrifying darkness descended on him.

12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.

- "...the sun was going down" - it was dusk, which shows that a whole day had passed since v5

— The entire vision moves from night to day until night

- "...deep sleep" - *tardeimah*, a supernatural deep sleep; this was a visionary sleep, as Abraham was fully aware of what was happening

— It was the same deep sleep that fell upon Adam (2:21) in preparation for God creating Eve; it also fell upon Saul (1 Sam 26:12; Dan 8:18; 10:9)

- "...terror *and* great darkness fell upon him" - shows that Abram was conscious but asleep during this event (he felt horror after he was in a deep sleep)

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**.

13 *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 four hundred years.

13 Then the LORD told Abram, "You can be certain about this: Your descendants will be foreigners in a land that isn't theirs. They will be slaves there and will be oppressed for 400 years.

13 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

- For a 400-year period, Abram's descendants will live in a land that is not their own.

Initially, this was Canaan; ultimately, it was Egypt

— Furthermore, they will end up as slaves, and the slavery will come with affliction

- "...enslaved and oppressed" - '*anah*, the same word used in Ex 1:11-12 to describe Egypt's oppression of Israel; this provides the fulfillment of this prophecy

— Egypt, like birds of prey, opposed the covenant, but ultimately the covenant will be fulfilled (Cf. Gen 6:16)

- "...for four hundred years" - afflicted (enslaved) in Egypt 400 years (Acts 7:6); the dates were 1846-1446 BC

— A timespan of 430 years is given in Ex 12:40-41; Gal 3:17, which would cover 1876-1446 BC. This number accounts for the total time in Egypt, whereas the 400-year timespan refers to the amount of time the Israelites were under affliction.

— The 400-year time period accomplished 3 things:

(1) It gave the Amorites (a collection of 10 peoples) the time to repent that God had apparently promised them, even though He knew they wouldn't (v16).

(2) It gave the Egyptians time to acquire the wealth that they would later hand over to the Israelites at the time of the Exodus (Ex 3:21-22; 12:35-36)

(3) It gave the Israelites time to become a nation of over 1 million people, large enough to populate and defend the land God was promising Abraham.

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

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

14 However, I will judge the nation that they serve, and later they will leave there with many possessions.

14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

- God will judge the nation (Egypt) that the Israelites would serve (as slaves)
- This is another outworking of the cursing aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant
- Stephen refers to this promise in his speech to the Sanhedrin (Acts 7:17)
- "...they will come out with many possessions" - fulfilled in Ex 3:21-22; 12:35-36

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

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

15 Now as for you, you'll die peacefully, join your ancestors, and be buried at a good old age.

15 And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.

- God promised Abram that he would die peaceably of old age; he would not see his descendants enslaved
- "...go to your fathers" - God is saying that Abram's ancestors are viewed as being in a definite place to which Abram will go after his death
- That definite place is Sheol
- This would also have to be a reference to Abram's soul, not his body, because his fathers were in Haran and Ur, not in the Land where Abram's physical body would be buried
- Abram would die at age 175 and be buried in the Land

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

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

16 Your descendants will return here in the fourth generation, since the iniquity of the Amorites has not yet run its course."

16 But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

- Abram's descendants will return to the Land in the fourth generation (Ex 6:16-21): Levi, Kohath, Amram, and Moses and Aaron
- Generation does not always mean 40 years, as is commonly taught. These generations are 100 years.
- "...the wrongdoing of the Amorite is not yet complete" - this was the reason for the delay in giving Abram and his descendants the Land
- The "iniquity of the Amorite" is described in Lev 18:24-30; 20:22-27; Deut 18:9-14
- Thus Joshua's future conquest of the Land would be not only militaristic, and not only nationalistic, but also judicial, a divine judgment, because by then the iniquity of the

Amorites would be full.

— God's waiting until four generations had transpired shows the extension of His grace, leaving the Amorites without excuse

— See Tag: **Canaanite Genocide**

(d) Covenant ratified (15:17-21)

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.

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

17 When the sun had fully set and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a fiery torch passed between the animal pieces.

17 And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.

- God signed and sealed the covenant

- "...a smoking oven and a flaming torch" - the Shekinah Glory, the visible manifestation of God's presence

— "smoking oven" - "a smoking flower pot" or "a smoking oven"; it was a pillar of smoke

— "flaming torch" - "a rising flame"; this would keep the fire going in the "smoking furnace"

This covenant signing ceremonial was both normal and abnormal. The normal procedure was for *both* persons making the covenant to walk between the pieces of the animal, rendering the terms of the covenant obligatory to both parties. This procedure also rendered the covenant conditional: If one party broke the terms and forfeited his life, it would exempt the other party from keeping his part of the covenant. Since the covenant was between God and Abram, it was normal here that God passed between these pieces. The previous abnormality was the fact that in place of one animal, there were five. Now there was a second differentiation. It was not God and Abram that walked between these pieces of the animals, but it was God alone Who passed between the pieces of the animals, which rendered the covenant *unconditional*. Abram's lack of participation emphasizes the unconditionality of this particular covenant. So Abram did not become an active participant in the signing and sealing of the covenant as such; he was only the recipient of the covenant and the covenantal promises. It meant that no matter how often Abram failed (and he will fail again very soon), and no matter how often his seed, the Jewish people fail, the Abrahamic Covenant cannot be rendered null and void.

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:

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:

18 That very day the LORD made this covenant with Abram: "I'm giving this land to your descendants, from the river of Egypt to the great Euphrates River—

18 In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

- What was promised in Gen 12-13 is now visibly sealed and guaranteed; whatever now may be added cannot change the original content

- It was permitted to make additions to a blood covenant, but none of these conditions could change the original terms of the agreement

- "...covenant" - this is the first time "covenant" is used in relation to Abraham

- The only other time "covenant" was used was God's covenant with Noah, which was not a covenant of redemption, but a covenant in which human government came into existence in order to restrain evil

- It's hard to overstate what a big deal this word is: God is legally obligating or contracting Himself to fulfill the 8-9 promises to Abraham in Gen 12. This is why these promises must be interpreted literally...because the rest of Scripture is ascertaining whether God has met His obligations under the covenant.

- In order to determine breach of a contract, you have to look at the performance of the parties

- Think of all the contracts you have entered into...financing contracts with lenders to buy a house or car, a real estate contract, an employment contract, a contract with a contractor to build something...are any of these contracts allegorical? No...they have to be literal because you have to determine compliance and breach.

- Everything that God has said he would do to this point has been a promise, which from God, is enough. But now God says that these promises are so important, I'm going to take these promises and put them in the form of a legal contract (covenant). At this point, Abraham's promises take on covenantal force.

- "...To your descendants" - this is in addition to the promise of 15:7, where Abram was promised possession of the Land individually; the Land is to be inherited by Abram's seed

- "...given" - God turns to the past tense now; no future tense occurs after this point as Jesus previously employed

- It is essential to understand that the area God describes is quite large, with a landmass of approximately 300,000 square miles, or 12-1/2 times the size of Great Britain and Ireland.

- This stands in contrast to Israel's borders today...about 150 miles north to south and an average of 30 miles east to west, from the Mediterranean to the Jordan River Valley, which

covers about 10,000 square miles.

- "...From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates" - for the first time, the northern and southern borders of the Promised Land are given

— "river of Egypt" - many different speculations as to which river this refers to...

- Fruchtenbaum: the eastern-most branch of the Nile River delta
- Constable: the *Wadi el-Arish*, the wadi that runs through the center of the Sinai Peninsula
- Woods: the Nile River

19 the *land of the* **Kenite**, the **Kenizzite**, the **Kadmonite**,

19 the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite

19 including the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites,

19 The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites,

- "...Kenite" - inhabited the Arabah

- "...Kenizzite" - location unknown

- "...Kadmonite" - location unknown

20 the **Hittite**, the **Perizzite**, the **Rephaim**,

20 and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim

20 the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim,

20 And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims,

- "...Hittite" - originally came from Asia Minor, but migrated to the Land

- "...Perizzite" - location unknown

- "...Rephaim" - lived on both sides of the Jordan

21 the **Amorite**, the **Canaanite**, the **Girgashite**, and the **Jebusite**."

21 and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite."

21 the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

21 And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

- "...Amorite" - a Hebrew word meaning "western"; these people flooded the Land around 2000 BC

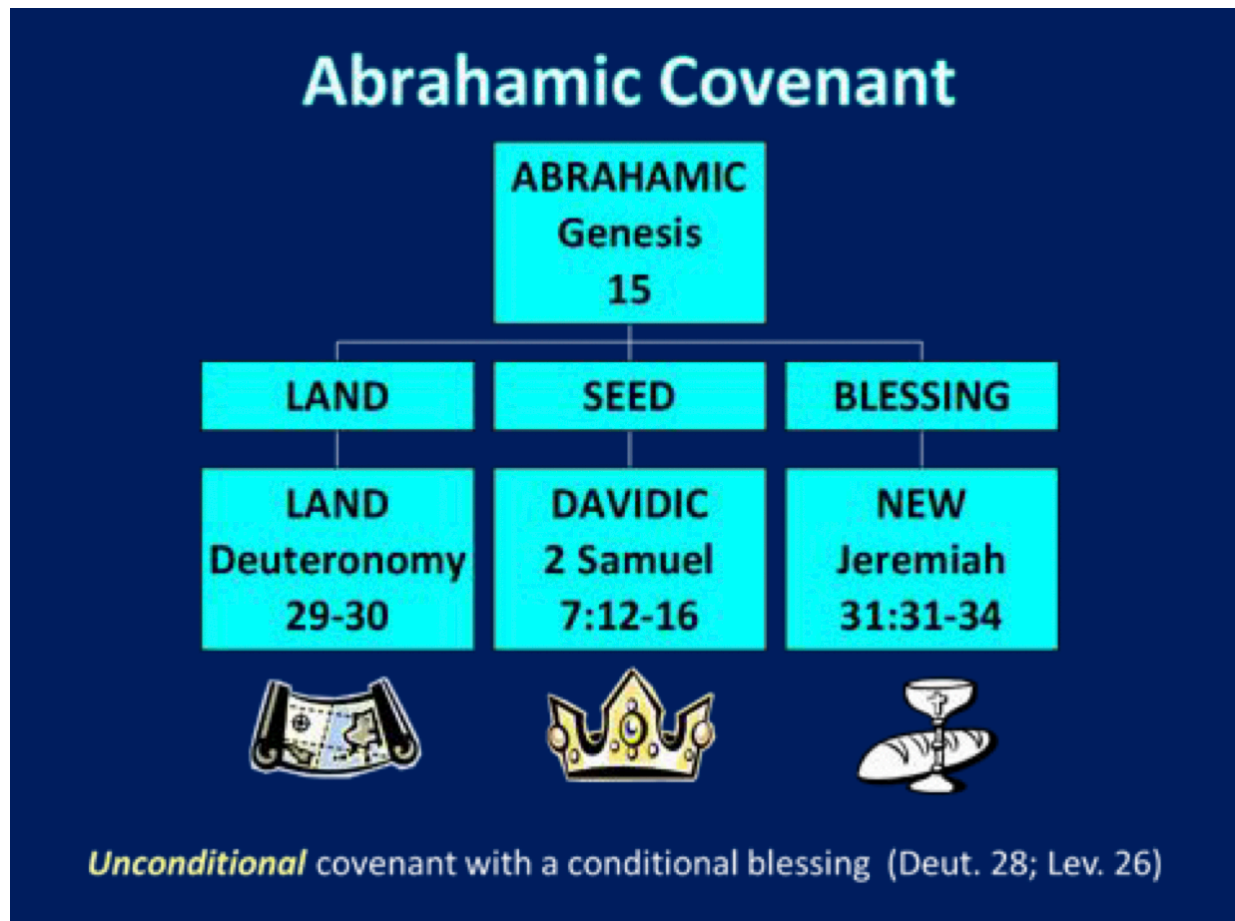
- "...Canaanite" - referred to the inhabitants in general, but to the Phoenician area in particular

- "...Girgashite" - same as the *Karkisha* of Asia Minor who migrated south

- "...Jebusite" - inhabited the area around Jerusalem

- Verses 19-21 list of 10 nations who will need to be defeated; summarized as "Amorites" or "Canaanites"

— This is the most complete list of nations inhabiting the Land; other passages list six nations (Ex 3:8,17; 23:23; Deut 20:17) or seven nations (Deut 7:1; Joshua 3:10)



These sub-covenants never alter the "parent" (Abrahamic) covenant in any way...they simply provide additional details and revelation about each category.