

Gleanings of Grace

Genesis 15

Lesson 1

Genesis, the book of beginnings, recounts for us, the beginning of the universe, the beginning of mankind, and the beginning of the nation of Israel. In this lesson, we will concentrate on the latter, the beginning of a nation of people that God would call His own. To produce a nation which would one day be called a multitude of people, God used a couple who had remained childless into their old age, Abraham (God will call him Abram until chapter 17) and Sarah. The story of Abraham spans chapters 11 through 25 in Genesis. In this chapter, God recorded His calling to Abram to move from his homeland and His many promises, including His promise to grant Him a child through which He would produce a nation.

OBSERVATION: Read Genesis 15

1. Read Genesis 15 using the Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework). After reading through the chapter, what would you say to someone if they asked you what it is about?
2. Key words help us to better understand the verses. We have listed below key words. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. Remember to mark any personal pronouns that refer to *God* and *Abram*.

Key Words: *God (LORD)* and *Abram*
3. The contrasting word *but* is used four times in Genesis 15. Mark the word. Choose one instance of its use and record what is being contrasted.

Background:

1. Genesis 15 begins with the words, *After these things*, which refers back to Genesis 14 when kings battled against other kings of the land, including the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah. According to Genesis 14:11,12, what did these other kings *take*?
2. *When Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his... servants...and went in pursuit.* What was the result of Abram's *pursuit*? See Genesis 14:16

3. What did the King of Sodom say to Abram? See Genesis 14:21

- a. Abram had every right to *take the goods for himself*. It was a common reward for victories in battles. Using verses 22,23 record his response.

1.) Considering this, what do you think was a priority to Abram?

Read Genesis 15:1

1. *After*, Abram's victory and pronouncement, *the LORD came to Abram in a vision*. What did the LORD say to Abram?

2. God's first words to Abram were, *Do not be afraid*. What reason did the LORD give to Abram as to why he did not need to be *afraid*?

- a. Consider the following verses and summarize why God's people do not need to be *afraid*:

Deuteronomy 20:1

Deuteronomy 31:6

Psalm 27:1

Isaiah 12:2

Isaiah 41:10

- 1.) Why do you think an understanding of who God is and an awareness of His presence helps us not to be *afraid*?

3. God proclaimed to Abram that He is his *shield* and *exceedingly great reward*. Define the words, as they apply to God's relationship with His people.

shield

reward

- a. What does it mean to you personally that God is your *shield* and *exceedingly great reward*?

4. God is about to test Abram's faith. Why is it important to understand these attributes of God in times when we don't understand or see what He is doing?

Read Genesis 15:2,3

1. Genesis 15:2 begins with Abram saying: *Lord GOD, what _____ _____ _____ _____?*
 - a. How might Abram have missed God's intentions in asking this?

2. Although God had declared Himself as Abram's *shield* and *exceedingly great reward*, what did Abram say in verses 2 and 3 that appeared to be more important to him?
 - a. Reflect upon a time that you thought as Abram did, wanting something more than you wanted God. What are your thoughts?

 - b. Why might our perspective be awry when we say to the LORD, *what will You give me?*
 - 1.) What are some better things to say to Him?

3. In 2 Corinthians 12, Paul recorded his struggle with some sort of trial that he referred to as *a thorn in the flesh*. Each of us has something in our lives that we wish wasn't there. In Paul's case, God did not remove the *thorn*. Rather, what did the Lord say to Paul in the beginning of verse 9?
 - a. For Paul, the Lord's answer was enough. According to the end of verse 9 and all of verse 10, what did Paul declare?

 - b. What are some characteristics of God that you have grown to appreciate?
 - 1.) How does your emotional tone change when you choose to focus on and appreciate these characteristics?

 - 2.) In what ways are the attributes and care of God more important than the desires of the flesh?

Read Genesis 15:4-6

1. God had promised that He would make of Abram a great nation. Record His promise to Abram in Genesis 12:2,3 and Genesis 13:15.

2. God could have rebuked Abram for questioning Him in Genesis 15:2,3. But He did not. Rather, He chose to confirm to Abram that he indeed would have an heir. That heir would not be born of Abram's servant, but of Abram's *own body*. What example did God use to declare to Abram the *number of his descendants*?

3. What are some promises God has made to you in His word that you find to be beyond your understanding?

4. Thoughtfully record the words of Genesis 15:6, underlining the word *believed*.
 - a. A secular dictionary defines the word *belief* as "to accept something as true; to hold as an opinion, think or suppose". What kind of *believing* is necessary to trust God in the things we don't understand?

 - b. God loves it when we truly *believe* Him. What does verse 6 say God did when Abram *believed*?
 - 1.) Notice, it was *Abram's belief* that caused God to do this, not something Abram did. What does Romans 4:1-3 say that confirms this? Use other translations to give you further understanding.

5. Read Romans 4:20-23. Abraham did not *waver at the promise of God*. Explain what it means to *waver*.
 - a. According to verse 21, of what was Abraham *convinced*?
 - 1.) Although Abraham did have times of wavering faith in his life, Hebrews 11:17-19 records another time Abraham's *faith did not waver*. He believed God's promises that *his seed* would come from his son Isaac and therefore was prepared to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. What does verse 19 proclaim that Abraham *concluded*.

b. Why is it important to be *convinced* that God is *able to* do the impossible?

1.) Why do you think God favorably takes note of this kind of *faith/belief*?

Read Genesis 15:7-21

1. God had told Abram that He would give the land of Canaan to him and his descendants. In verse 7, God reminded Abram that He had brought him out from his homeland and family for a purpose. What was that purpose?

a. Why is it important to remember that God has a purpose for everything He does?

1.) According to Jeremiah 29:11, what is His purpose (*plan*) for you?

2. Abram asked God "*how shall I know...*"(Genesis 15:8). Sometimes God answers that question. Other times He directs us to His character and past faithfulness, and asks us to trust Him. God assured Abram through what is called the "cutting of the covenant". Summarize verses 9-12.

3. Abram probably had not anticipated the next words the LORD would say to him. Out of *horror and great darkness* (verse 12) Abram heard the terms of God's covenant and discovered God's plan for the nation, himself, and the land. Using the following Scriptures, record God's plan.

the *nation* (verses 13,14,16,17):

Abram (verse 15):

the *land* (verses 18-21)

a. Abram would only see the fulfillment of God's promises for his own life. Hebrews 11:13-16 was written about Abraham and the many others who, through faith, *were assured of God's promises*. Record some statements about these *faithful* ones that you would like to emulate.

1.) What has been the effect of *embracing God's promises* in your life?

REVIEW: Genesis 15

1. In what ways:

has Abram been an example to you?

is God your *shield*?

is God your *exceedingly great reward*?

do you have a deeper understanding of the importance of *believing* God?

2. What is the most significant lesson you have learned from Genesis 15?

a. How do you intend to personally apply it?

*And the Scripture was fulfilled which says,
"Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."
And he was called the friend of God.
- James 2:23*

Observation Worksheet

Genesis 15

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." ² But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" ³ Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!" ⁴ And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." ⁵ Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." ⁶ And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. ⁷ Then He said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it." ⁸ And he said, "Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit 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, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. ¹¹ And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. ¹² Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him. ¹³ Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that *is* not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. ¹⁴ And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶ But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." ¹⁷ And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. ¹⁸ On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates-- ¹⁹ the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, ²⁰ the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, ²¹ the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."