

Genuine Faith Expressed by Abram (Part 3)

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Date: 12 November 2025

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[0 : 00] We're in Genesis chapter 15.

Recall now that God has made promise to Abram time and time again about the fact that he would give to his descendants the land.

And Abram then comes along in time and says, The Lord, what will you give me, seeing I have no child? He knows that there's got to be a son born to him in order for the promises of the covenant come to pass.

And so, what's the indication? There's a servant in my house called Eliezer. He's from Damascus. Maybe he's the one. And God said, No, that's not going to be the heir.

One from your own vows will be the one that will be the heir. So, that's what God did in the belief of Abram. Abram believed God. And God counted that belief, that faith in him for righteousness.

[1 : 08] Now, in verses 7 and 8, again, God brings him out and says, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.

And again, Abram now says, Lord God, whereby shall I know I shall inherit it? In other words, Abram is just saying, I would really like some confirmation here.

Some confirmation that this is really going to take place. And so, God responds to that. It wasn't a doubt here. He just, you know, still a man that's young in the faith, if you will, though he's an old man.

Needs some confirmation from God about all this coming to pass. And so, in verses number 9 and 10, God tells him what to do to begin the process of God giving him confirmation of it all.

So, in verses 9 and 10, again, 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 turtle dove, and a young pigeon.

[2 : 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. Now, it's interesting here, to me, you know, of course, there's a lot of things that transpire that God doesn't pin down for us.

All right? But we don't see any indication here where God told Abram to lay those pieces against each other.

He may have. But it also may be that when God told him to do that, that Abram began to understand what was happening here.

That God was going to show him through the customary Chaldean tradition of fulfilling an agreement with one another.

All right? In other words, a contract or a covenant. So, whatever the case may be, Abram then does that. He goes on then in verse 11. So, Abram's taken those animals.

[3 : 14] He's laid them apart with a spaced aisle, if you will, between the two sets of pieces. And in verse 11, when the fowls came down upon the carcass, Abram drove them away.

So, you get the picture here. All these various birds come down and lay upon those pieces as if they're going to devour them. You know, I don't know if they're vultures or what they were. You know, you drive down the road and you see a bird in the middle of the road chewing on something. You know what it is. It's a vulture. And having breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Now, same type of thing happens here. Abram does something else.

He shoes them off. So, those birds come down upon those animals. And then Abram drove them away. He scattered them.

All right? Now, pick up in chapter 15, verses 12 through 15. And this is where we left off last week. When the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram.

[4 : 20] Now, remember, this is all a vision. All of chapter 15 is a vision that God has given. Abram is not asleep in the vision yet until this point. It's an ecstatic state that he puts him in.

But now, in that ecstatic state comes that prophetic picture in which now he puts a deep sleep upon Abram.

Let me read that out of the amplified for you.

So, you get the picture of what that was here.

It's not just the fact that things got dark. It's not just the fact that things got dark. But it says it's a horror of darkness. Something that brings great fear. It's like a kid that's watched some crazy horror movie on TV and then goes to bed.

[5 : 28] You know, the lights are out. It's dark. And he's scared. Something's under the bed. You know, that kind of thing. Only it's worse here for Abram. All right?

And he said that as God said, when that darkness comes now, God's just really setting the picture here for Abram. In that great darkness, when it falls upon Abram, he says, God says 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.

And also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge, and afterwards shall they come out with great substance, and thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace.

Thou shalt be buried in a good old age. Now, I find this interesting here. All right? God's just, again, reiterated the fact he's going to give this land that he's presently in to the descendants of Abram, to his seed.

Got to give it. It's going to be theirs. So the idea there is, if it's going to be theirs, they'll inhabit that. But now he says, be sure here, understand, be assured that before that takes place, they're going to be a stranger in a land that's not theirs, and will serve them and be afflicted for four hundred years.

[7 : 07] Now, let me ask you something here. Put your mind to work here. Open the resources of your file cabinet in your mind. We know, of course, this is speaking about their time in Egypt, four hundred and thirty years.

What took them there to begin with? Famine. Oh, familiar picture here, huh?

What took Abram to Egypt earlier? Famine. Like father, like son, right? Yeah. Yeah.

Only there are mitigating circumstances here with Joseph and all those things. All right. But nonetheless, kind of a repetition of what's happened in the past here. But take notice here.

This great deep sleep falls upon Abram. Dreadful darkness. Think about it just a moment. It kind of prefigures something here to Abram.

[8 : 09] When that sun goes down and darkness comes, that dreadful darkness. Spiritually speaking, we can see a picture here of God's grace to begin with upon the seed of Abram.

But then as the sunshine, if you will, of that grace goes down and disappears, terror and darkness, the departure of grace is followed then by a period of suffering and dread.

All right. So Abraham sees this and no doubt has to be aware of what's taking place. And I think God showed him that so he could anticipate the reality of that.

Now, again, in the darkness, Abram hears God say, Know of a surety, be assured, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs.

They shall serve them. That is, the lords of the strange land, they'll serve them. And they shall oppress them 400 years. Now, again, 400 years, rounded off number symbolically, if you will, prophetically, they actually spent 430 years there in Egypt, according to Exodus 12, verse 40.

[9 : 31] Now, again, in verses 12 through 15, he says, Also, all right, so they're going to be in that darkness, in that bondage, 430 years.

But also, that nation whom they shall serve will I judge. Okay? And afterward shall they come out with great substance. Thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace and be buried in a good old age.

And in the fourth generation, they shall come hither again. All right? Now, when God says, Know of a surety, that's the beginning of the response to Abram's question, Whereby shall I know that I'll inherit this?

In verse 8. All right? 430 years are to elapse before the seed of Abraham can actually begin the process of taking possession of the land.

Now, we're earthly people. Time is important to us. God's eternal. Time means nothing to Him. We're earthly.

[10 : 42] Can you imagine God giving you a promise? And it's a great promise. I mean, after all, the picture there is, I'm going to make you mine, going to give you a descendancy.

They're going to inherit the land that you see. All right. Yeah. But you're going to have to wait 430 years for that to become a reality.

Wow. Yeah. Remember what the writer of the Hebrews says about Abram? He said, He looked for a city whose builder and maker is God.

Though he did not inherit in his lifetime the promises, he went along faithfully, following whatever the will of God for him and through him was.

Amen? How many times do we like to see fruit for our labors? Especially when it comes to the Lord.

[11:47] Amen? Yeah. The laborer is supposed to get the first of the first fruits. Yeah. But Abram was not going to see that in his lifetime.

But God had for some reason given him some spiritual insight about eternity. Because he looked for a city, the city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

That should say something to us in our faithfulness. We, though it's nice to get, and God does show us from time to time, the fact that he has used us for whatever, to whatever degree, for whatever purpose, and it pleased him.

We're glad to be able to see that. But recognize it should not have to be a necessity in order for us to continue in our faithfulness. Amen? No over surety.

It's going to take 430 years. But after that, I'm going to bring judgment upon that kingdom, that nation that brings them bondage.

[12:57] Okay? Now, 430 years to elapse, that time can only begin when the seed of Abraham, according to the covenant, begins.

So that means it's not until the birth of Isaac that that can transpire. Abraham. All right? Abraham was how old when Isaac was born?

100 years old. Yeah. That's 30 years after God called him out of Ur the Chaldees. Now, first, a stranger in the land that is not theirs.

For 190 years, and then for the remainder, they'll be the strangers in the land. You know, Joseph dealing with them, they had freedom in the land, and so forth for a while.

Then, after that 190 years, the remainder 210 years, they were at first servants, then Pharaoh dies, you remember? A new Pharaoh is put on the scene, doubles the harshness of the people of Israel, and so now they are slaves under hard and cruel bondage.

[14:22] now, at the end of that time though, what happened? After the end of that 430 years, God visits Pharaoh with the judgment he promised to Abram.

All right, we saw that when we studied through the book of Exodus, when we continued what Lee had started. Remember that? He looked at the life of Joseph. We took it on from there.

All right? Now, God brought that judgment that not only that, but God took them out.

Take notice what he says here. They will come out with great wealth. Go back over to Exodus chapters, well, it's really pictured in chapters 12 through 14, but go to chapter 11 with me, if you will, of the book of Exodus.

Let's remember something here. Ought to be a good picture for us as to what one of the extraordinary things that God can and does do.

[15:29] All right? God is using Moses here and dealing with Pharaoh with the plagues. Go ahead and pick up verse 1 of chapter 11. And the Lord said unto Moses, yet will I bring one more plague upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt.

Afterwards, he will let you go hence. When he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether. All right? Speak now in the ears of the people and let every man borrow of his neighbor and every woman of her neighbor jewels of silver and jewels of gold.

And the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people.

All right? God just dealt with the heart and mind of the people of Egypt. Of course, you've lived there for 400 some odd years now.

All right? So, Egyptians have gotten acquainted with some of them. But if they would come to your house and say, hey, I need to borrow some jewelry, ladies.

[16:42] Amen? How many of you would say, oh, here, you just take them into your bedroom and open your jewelry box and say, take your pick. Yeah?

Now, I know some of you are gracious enough and you're saying in your mind, yeah, I'd do that. But would you really? Yeah.

You go in there and you start taking and you just gather it all up. You would say, wait a minute, my husband gave me those.

God just put it in the heart of the Egyptians to let them have what they wanted. Yeah? Now, remember what those were to be for. Remember?

They were to be used in the service of the tabernacle, in the construction of the tabernacle. But, of course, later on instead, they used it for golden calf.

[17 : 40] Yeah. But, you recognize they came out of Egypt just the way God said they would with wealth. All right? Gave them favor in the mind and the heart of the people of Egypt.

Now, then he says, thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace. Now, interesting statement here.

Amen? Don't know if Abram's gray-headed here yet by this time. But, anyway, he's going to go, he's going to pass away at a ripe old age.

Now, notice the phrase here. You'll go to thy fathers in peace. Picture here of what's called the soul's perpetual existence, doctrine of that.

All right? As if they're still alive. The soul did not die. All right? You'll go to be with them. I see that a few times in the scriptures. And so, we find that Abram did die in peace and happiness, if you will, at 175 years old.

[18 : 54] All right? Can you imagine? Ripe old age here, he says. Now, that's 115 years before the time of Joseph and Israel descending down to Egypt because of that famine.

Now, verse 16, but in the fourth generation, 400 years later, because 100 years is a generation prophetically, all right? They shall come hither again.

There's that word, hither again. For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. All right? Amorites, the name of the largest tribe, if you will, of Canaanites, but the word is also used generally of all the tribes of the Canaanites.

All right? So, he says their iniquity, if you will, is not yet full. In other words, they had not come to the place yet in their wickedness and their ungodliness to the point where yet they were ripe for God's judgment.

All right? Is the picture here. Sin comes to its fullness at a point. He does that with the Gentiles and they'll do that with Israel as well. All right? So, that time had not yet come for those that presently possess the land.

[20 : 22] So, it's part of the reason why it's going to take 430 years before they can start the process of possessing that land. Now, look at verse 17 of Genesis 15.

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.

All right? Now, a smoking furnace or a stove, a cylindrical fire pot like that that was used in houses of that region. The phenomena which passed through those, all right, passed through those pieces, that aisle, if you will, between the sets of pieces, resembled a smoking stove with a torch, if you will, or a flame, a bright flame that came up from that.

Now, recognize here, this is a picture of God manifesting himself to Abraham, in essence, in the same way about that he did to Israel later on as they left Egypt to go to Canaan.

The picture then is this. God passes through the pieces, ratifying the covenant now with Abraham that he's just now establishing.

[21 : 47] That flame of fire and that smoke is kind of a picture of God's majesty, God's glory, but also fiery judgment. Okay?

But notice, if you will, that the pieces were not consumed by fire. We'll see that. The picture is that covenant that God makes with Abraham will include the fact that he will bring judgment against the nation of Egypt, the kingdom of Egypt.

All right? Pharaoh and all of his kingdom. That's the picture that we have there. in the wrath of God as a consuming fire. Psalm 18, 6-9, In my distress I called upon the Lord and cried unto my God, and he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him even into his ears.

Then the earth shook and trembled, the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken because he was wroth. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils and fire out of his mouth devoured.

Coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also and came down and darkness was under his feet. So, to establish the reality of that covenant, God has to pass through the descendants of Abram in their captivity, in their darkness, in their oppression, and execute then judgment upon the

people of Egypt.

[23 : 24] Exodus chapter 7 verse 4 says, But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you that I may lay my hand upon Egypt and bring forth mine armies and my people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgment.

Remember Genesis chapter 12 verses 1 through 3 included in that promise. God said, I will bless them that bless thee, I will curse them that curse thee.

God remaining faithful to every single promise here that he makes to Abram. Alright? Now, this is something different by God passing through the pieces, something different than making that oath that we have seen before talked about in chapter 22.

God pictures for Abraham here the fact that he condescends down to the seed of Abram. Alright? With all of his glory, all of his majesty, and everything that he is, alright, as the judge of their enemies, of their foes.

Again, the pieces were not consumed by fire, recognized here. So, it was not a sacrifice, but a covenant in which God came down to man through Abram.

[24 : 49] Alright? Now, recognize again, we mentioned this last week, and I think it even left you with a question about it, that God passed through those pieces.

Abram did not. Alright? The picture is Abram had nothing to offer God. Alright? There was no way he could be considered equal with God.

But not only that, what else was God showing when he did that? Because remember, the common tradition would be both parties of the agreement of the covenant would pass through those pieces to indicate that they will do everything in their power to satisfy their part of the agreement.

But here, only God passed through those pieces. So what does that say to us? God is showing here that he was the one, and only he, was the one that will be sure that every aspect of the agreement was satisfied.

Because realize, in this agreement, Abram didn't promise anything. Amen? He was just the recipient of God's grace and God's blessings, and the only requirement for him would be obedience and the satisfaction of satisfying the will of God as God revealed that to him.

[26 : 30] That's all. So God said, I'm going to do this. And when God says, I'll do this, it's going to get done.

Amen? Yeah. Six days, God created all of the creative works. He sat back and said, as he looked at it, what did he do?

It's good. Amen? It's good. We've done a lot of stuff on our house since we bought it. One of the things we did is replace the flooring.

We did carpeted areas, but where there was linoleum, we wanted to change that out and just put some of the plank, linoleum planks and stuff. I did that myself.

And there was one area, if you've ever been in our house, you know that right between the kitchen and the den area, there's a hallway where the washer and dryer is and there's a little bathroom right there off of that.

[27 : 34] When I was putting those tiles down, that planking, I had a problem because there's a doorway there that leads into that bathroom, all right?

But the way I laid, and it was the right way to lay it down that hallway to go into that bathroom, there was no way to do it with the edges of the plank being where they need to be.

I could do it on one side, but not on both sides. So I thought, okay, here's what I'm going to do. We'll see how it works.

I took a razor knife very carefully cut down one side of that plank. I did the same thing on the other side where it was in the doorway.

I put those together to see how closely I came. Oh, perfect, perfect fit. So I had some super duper glue, and I just glued those seams.

[28 : 50] and you know, every time I go into that bathroom, whether it's to blow my nose or use the bathroom, I look at that. Still there.

Yeah, still there. Good job. Yeah, yeah. What God's going to do, he's going to do, and that is good enough.

Amen? God condescends down to man, and he's going to do everything he promised he's going to do, and he can take that to the bank.

Father, thank you again for your loving kindness tonight, and goodness and grace in the night and the time in your word, and thank you, Father, for the reality of showing us more and more how faithful you are in who you are to your people.

And so, Father, we thank you for that, and I pray you'll just use that as encouragement to us as well. And we'll thank you for it. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.