

# **In the Beginning, God...**

## **The Thread of Redemption**

### **The Promises of God**

#### **Introduction**

What do you fear most in life?

Every one of us carries fears—some spoken, some silent. We fear that we may not make it financially. We fear our children may not turn out the way we hoped. We fear being alone in our struggles.

Sickness, brokenness, financial strain, fractured relationships, pain—life gives us plenty of reasons to be afraid.

But into the middle of every fear, God speaks His promises.

“I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

“I will be with you.”

“I go to prepare a place for you.”

“I will come again and receive you to Myself.”

“I am the Lord your God.”

“Whoever believes in Me shall not perish.”

God’s Word is filled with promises—promises that steady us when everything else is shaking.

Tonight, I want us to look at what God's promises did for Abram, because the same God who banished his fears, strengthened his faith, and unveiled his future is the God who speaks to us today. What He did for Abram, He will do for us.

## **Message:**

### **1. The Promises of God Banish Fear**

Genesis 15:1–21 (ESV) 1 After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision:

“Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.”

Abram had defeated and killed Chedorlaomer, but the other kings—Goiim, Shinar, Ellasar—each powerful in their own right, were now Abram's enemies.

Sodom had proven ineffective in battle and was not an ally Abram could count on.

He knows that what he faces is now a time of possible conflict in which he will have to defend his family and his own life.

God has elevated him in the eyes of those around him but he has also become a target to those enemies who want what he has.

It is in those moments of contemplation, concern and fear that God comes to reassure him that God Himself is the One who shields him.

2 But Abram said, “O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” 3 And Abram said, “Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir.”

After being reassured by God, Abram does what we all do, he picks up another concern, another fear.

Have you ever been frustrated by God’s plan? Has that led to worry over what happens next?

Abram understood something that is important. Sonship determines heirship.

No son, no heir. So all that God had given to him would go to the servant who cared for him and Sarai in their old age.

This is a principle that is spoken of in the New Testament.

Romans 8:16–17 (ESV) 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we

suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

When we are His children then we are His heirs according to His promise.

## **2. The Promises of God Promote Faith**

4 And behold, the word of the Lord came to him: “This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir.” 5 And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” 6 And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

Sometimes God gives us a fresh vision of what He intends and what He has promised.

God does not always answer our questions directly, but in this instance He did.

“This man shall not be your heir” “So shall your offspring be.”

You and I must be willing to hear from the Lord even when circumstances seem to contradict His promises.

Abraham is old, in fact he and Sarah are so old that to have children at their age is virtually impossible.

But God has a plan, God has made a promise and God does not lie.

But Abraham was faced with a lot of pressure. The possibility of another attack, this time on him and his encampment, the lack of an heir, the age that he and Sarah now are.

Circumstances can create clouds that obscure the original promise.

So, God moves Abraham out of the tent to give him a different perspective. A new view and a new way to see the promise that was already made.

“This man shall not be your heir” “Number the stars” “So shall your offspring be.”

A really big promise and a whole new vision of what is possible with God.

Whatever we may face in this life, nothing we face is as big as the God who has promised eternal life to us.

Nothing we face can ever thwart the promise God has made, and like Abraham, in the moment we

see again the vision He has for us, we should believe.

In Hebrew the word for believe, is the same word used for secure - anchored to something immovable.

### **3. The Promises of God Unveil the Future**

7 And he said to him, “I am the Lord who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.”

8 But he said, “O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?”

God brings Abram back to the larger picture and reminds him that His work is far from finished.

There is still land to be inherited. There are still some tests that will come.

And God allows us to ask for a measure of reassurance.

9 He said to him, “Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.”

10 And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half.

The most significant covenant in the Old Testament was a blood covenant. In the ancient world, nations ended conflicts through covenants sealed by sharing bread or salt—sitting together and eating. But the most binding covenant of all was a covenant sealed with blood.

11 And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

Abram becomes the shield to protect the sacrifice that would become the symbol of the covenant. But something more dramatic and important is about to happen.

12 As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. 13 Then the Lord said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years.

14 But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. 15 As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. 16 And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

God speaking of Abraham's future children and in very specific ways explains what will happen to them, the length of time it will take and why.

And as Abram sleeps this deep, God-induced sleep, the Lord reveals the future of his descendants.

17 When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces.

With a blood covenant, both parties would pass between the divided sacrifice, indicating that they would prefer to be torn apart like the sacrifice rather than break the promise being made.

But in this instance, only God passes between the divided sacrifice. This is a unilateral covenant—its fulfillment rests on God alone.

And here is the promise God made that day.

18 On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, 19 the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, 20 the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, 21 the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites."



It was only during the days of David's reign that much of this was fulfilled. Not the full measure but much of God's promise came to pass.

Today, many look with anticipation toward the day when the full measure of this promise will be honored.

And it will be honored because God does not lie.

### **Conclusion**

A fresh vision of God's promise—and a covenant God Himself guaranteed—revived Abram's faith, calmed his fears, and renewed his hope for the future.

May the promises of God banish our fears, strengthen our faith, and anchor our hope—in every season of life.