God Makes a Covenant With Abram

Genesis 15:1-18

BIBLE BACKGROUND FOR LEADERS

God Reveals His Plan to Abram

Abram had just returned from defeating a coalition of kings to rescue his nephew, Lot, and God appeared to him in a vision. Notice that in Haran God simply spoke to Abram; later in Canaan God appeared before Abram; now God appeared in a lengthy vision. With each meeting, God's plan for Abram became a bit more clear.

God's first words to Abram were words of comfort. What was bothering Abram was Abram's continuing lack of a son to be his heir. In response to God's words of comfort, Abram poured out his heart—pleading with God to bless him in this one area he'd not yet received God's promised blessing.

Abram Displays Faith in God

When God assured Abram by restating his promise that Abram would have his own son, Abram responded in faith. He believed God, and God declared him righteous because of his faith! Nothing that Abram could *do* in obedience to God could make him righteous, but his faith in God did!

To give Abram complete assurance, God made a covenant with him. In those days a covenant was a very serious thing. The cutting in half of animals described in Genesis 15:10 was to signify that the same would happen to any party breaking the covenant. Notice, however, that Abram wasn't asked to pass between the animals, which would have sealed his commitment to the covenant. Only God, symbolized by the smoking firepot and blazing torch, passed and sealed God's commitment to the covenant. Only God was required to fulfill the covenant.

God Promises to Bless Abram's Descendants

Another interesting note is that each type of animal that was sacrificed was later used in particular cleansing ceremonies and sacrifices.

God's listing of all the things that were to come for Abram's descendants accomplished at least two things: First, it confirmed that God's promise would come true because God could see the results more than 400 years in the future. Second, it assured Abram that even though his people would endure hardship, they would eventually possess the land as God had promised.

The Jesus Connection

Make this your prayer today: *God, your plans are perfect. We thank you for Jesus, who revealed your plans and helped us see that when we follow your direction, you're with us at every step.*

When have you recognized God's plans for you? It's a special feeling when God guides you. Pray for God's guidance for the individuals in your ministry. You can write your prayer here.