

EXPOSITION OF GENESIS

Message #36

Genesis 15:7-21

There are so many promises in the Bible given to God's people that an accurate numerical calculation has never been accomplished by the greatest Biblical scholars of all generations. Estimates range from 8,810-30,000 (Herbert Lockyer, *All the Promises of the Bible*, p. 10).

IN SPITE OF ALL THE NEGATIVE THINGS THAT CONFRONT GOD'S PEOPLE, GOD'S PEOPLE MAY BE CERTAIN THAT THE SOVEREIGN GOD WILL ALWAYS FULFILL ALL OF HIS PROMISES TO HIS PEOPLE.

NARRATIVE SEGMENT #1 - The reassurance of God. 15:7

This reassurance was needed because this land was indwelt by enemies and Abram had just come through a war (14:14-16) and he certainly did not possess the land promised to him. God makes it clear that even though there may be a lapse of time, He would eventually fulfill His promises.

NARRATIVE SEGMENT #2 - The request of Abram. 15:8

When Abram asks God for a sign that he could "know" he would possess it, he uses a Hebrew word "know" that implies knowledge which has understanding. In other words, Abram is not doubting God's word, he wants God to give him further insight about this land inheritance. There is a very important principle to see here - **when we are surrounded by adverse circumstances great comfort comes by learning as much as we can of God's Word** so we may understand His plan and program. Abram wanted a deeper grasp of God's word.

NARRATIVE SEGMENT #3 - The response of God. 15:9

The way God answers this request is significant because obviously the land inheritance is somehow connected to animal sacrifices. The heifer and the female goat and the ram were offerings prescribed in the law of God. The ram consecrated priests (Exodus 29:15-25); the female goat took care of sins of ignorance (Numbers 15:27-29); and the heifer offered cleansing to the nation for worldly defilement (Numbers 19:1-10; Deuteronomy 21:1-9). The turtledove and young pigeon made it possible for those poor to worship God (Leviticus 1:14-17). God is saying - **when your descendants have the righteousness which comes via my sacrificial system, then they will have the land.** The obvious assumption is the descendants will have to admit they need these sacrifices and follow through with them. Abram's descendants have not done this to this day. In fact, one of the reasons Israel rejects Jesus Christ as being her Messiah is because He was crucified and she could not fathom her Messiah having this happen. However, she should have realized that His sacrificial death was critical to her getting her land, for it gave her the righteousness she needed to have.

What happens at this sacrifice is somewhat odd. Normally, the procedure in making covenantal agreements was to cut the animal in two and both parties of the covenant pass between the parts (Jeremiah 34:18-20). However, here only God passes between them (Genesis 15:17), which means this is an unconditional promise. God will give Israel her land, not conditioned on her faithfulness.

NARRATIVE SEGMENT #4 - The response of Abram. 15:10-12

Birds were not divided, which conforms to God's law (Leviticus 1:17). But three animals were divided. If this is a simple dividing, you have two parts or a total of six parts. If the animals were quartered, you have a total of twelve parts. Birds of prey came upon the carcasses. The image is that Israel will be torn apart and evil forces will attack the carcass, until one comes who will chase the evil forces away. By splitting the parts, we may see there are two phases to the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ. Phase one is when He came the first time to offer a Kingdom to Israel and phase two will be when He comes the second time and gives her the Kingdom. Abram wanted to know more of the program of God for Israel and ended up being in the middle of a horror story.

NARRATIVE SEGMENT #5 - The revelation of God. 15:13-21

(Specific Detail #1) - Your descendants will end up a stranger in a land not theirs. 15:13b

Israel would spend time in other areas other than her promised land.

(Specific Detail #2) - Your descendants will end up enslaved to another people. 15:13c

The word "enslave" refers to attending or laboring for a king. Abram's seed would end up in a foreign land working for a foreign king.

(Specific Detail #3) - Your descendants will be oppressed for 400 years. 15:13d

The word "oppress" speaks of a miserable, wretched condition, which includes the idea of being poor and depressed. Israel was oppressed for 400 years by the Egyptians (Acts 7:6). In fact, the actual specific number of years was 430 (Exodus 12:40; Galatians 3:17).

(Specific Detail #4) - Your descendants will eventually be delivered with great abundance.
15:14

God would eventually judge the Egyptians and when Abram's family would leave Egypt they would do so with great prosperity.

(Specific Detail #5) - You will die at an old age having lived in peace. 15:15

Abram would not be one who would be taken into captivity. He would live to an old age and would live his life in peace and then die. Abram would live to be 175 years old (Genesis 25:7-8), but even the great servants of God eventually die.

(Specific Detail #6) - Your descendants will eventually return to the promised land. 15:16

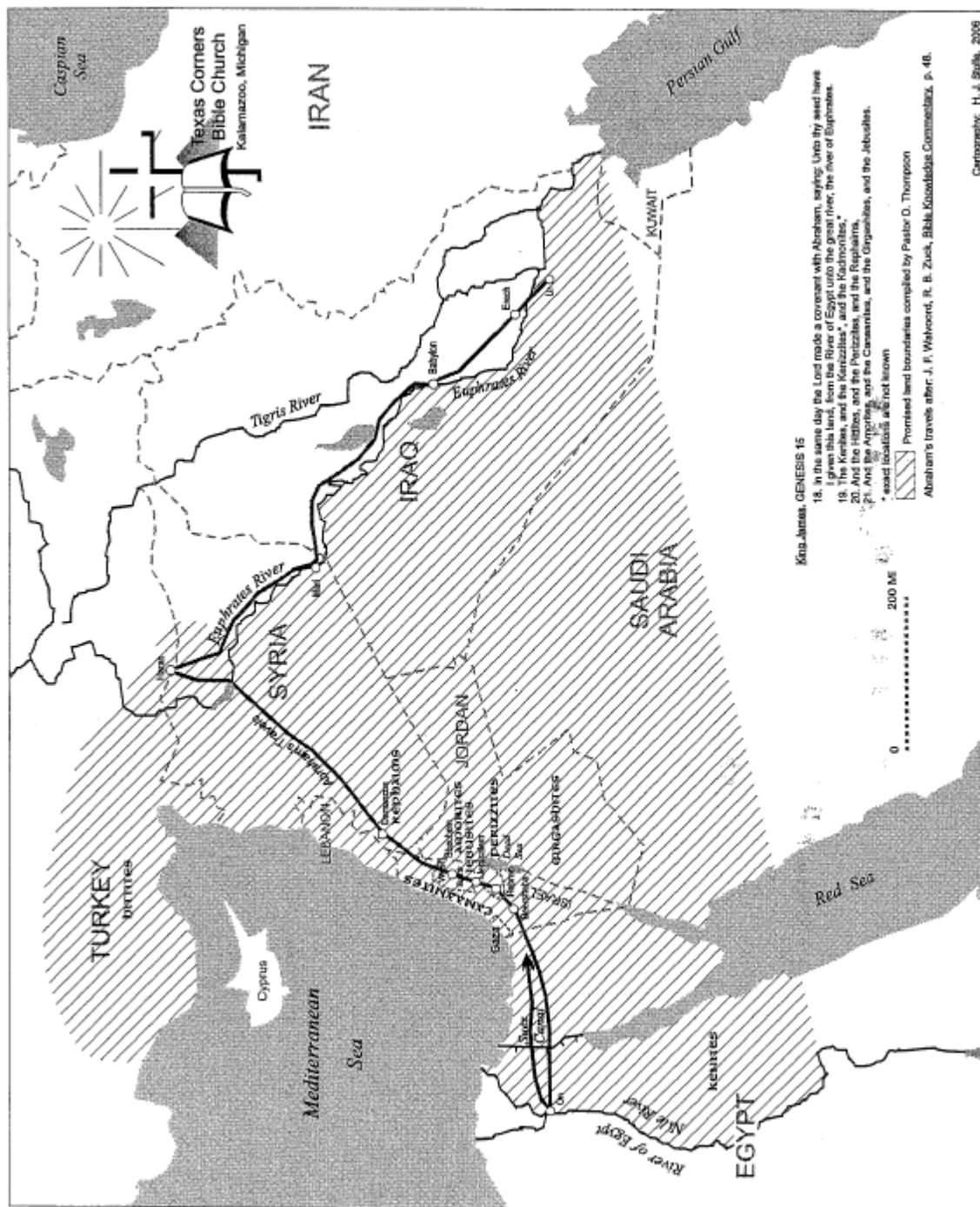
Four generations after Abram, his people would be back in the land where they belonged. A generation refers, in general terms, to about 100 years. The precise number of years was 430 years (Exodus 12:40; Galatians 3:17). Notice this would not happen until the “iniquity” of the Amorites had been completed. God allows wicked powers to exist for His purposes and when His purposes have been completed, He moves in with His judgment.

(Specific Detail #7) - Your descendants will eventually inherit specific promised land.
15:18-21

During the days of King David and Solomon, Israel did enjoy vast areas of land (I Kings 4:21; II Kings 14:25), also during the reign of Jeroboam (II Kings 14:23, 25). However, there is nothing like what is described here. The land boundaries described in these verses are very precise and staggering (see map). These boundaries will not be established until Jesus Christ returns and establishes His millennial Kingdom and personally reigns in Jerusalem.

The river of Egypt is the south western border. The Euphrates is the eastern border, which runs from the Persian Gulf north to Palestine. The Kenites, Kennizzites and Kadmonites all lived in the southern area of Palestine, the first two to the southwest and the last to the southeast. The Hittites lived to the northwest and the Perizites and Rephaim and Amorites lived to the north and northeast. The Canaanites along with the Amorites and others lived in the heart of the land. All of these places and people were known by Abram. He knew exactly what God was promising and the dimensions of this land are staggering.

Abram wanted to know the specifics and God informed him. There would be many hardships, tears, enemies and suffering, but there would eventually come His blessings.



Kins James, GENESIS 15

18. In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, saying: Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the River of Egypt unto the great river, the river of Euphrates. 19. The Kenites, and the Kenezites, and the Kadmonites. 20. And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaim. 21. And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites. *seed localities are not known