

**Passing Between the Pieces**  
(GEN 15:7-21)

- I. The “word of the LORD” had just come to Abram in a vision. **GEN 15:1.**
- A. The “word of the LORD” is plainly identified as the Person speaking to him in **v. 5** and Who had brought him out of Ur in **v. 7.**
  - B. Having heard this Person speak, the Holy Spirit records that Abram “believed in the LORD....” (**v. 6**), that is, Jehovah God.
  - C. For Abram, therefore, “the Word was God” (**JOH 1:1**) the Creator of all (**JOH 1:2-3**).
  - D. Abram's belief *in the LORD* had just been counted for righteousness. **GEN 15:6.**
  - E. Nowhere does Scripture teach that belief that the Word is “a” god (per Jehovah's Witnesses' doctrine) is counted for righteousness. If anything, such a belief is counted for condemnation. **ISA 43:8-11.**
  - F. Belief in the Word Who was made flesh (**JOH 1:14**) is equal to believing in God. **JOH 14:1 c/w PHIL 2:5-6.**
  - G. Abram's promised inheritance was one wrought by the Word Who is God the LORD, and no less. c/w **ACT 20:28.**
  - H. Of this Word, the Lord God, Abram inquires, “WHEREBY [by what means] shall I know that I shall inherit it?” (**v. 8**). The rest of the chapter is the answer to Abram's question.
- II. God here would make a covenant with Abram. **v. 18.**
- A. covenant: A mutual agreement between two or more persons to do or refrain from doing certain acts; a compact, contract, bargain; sometimes, the undertaking, pledge or promise of one of the parties.
  - B. In this covenant with Abram, God alone is the undertaker and promiser: the benefit would not be a result of Abram fulfilling requirements to bring it to pass. c/w **GAL 3:18.**
  - C. Abram was commanded to present the following animals to God:
    - 1. an heifer of three years old, i.e., a female bovine in its prime of life.
    - 2. a she goat of three years old.
    - 3. a ram of three years old, i.e., a male sheep.
    - 4. a turtledove.
    - 5. a young pigeon.
  - D. These kinds of animals were later prescribed for sacrifices under Moses' law. **LEV 1.**
    - 1. These animals were taken *for God* (“...Take ME an heifer...,” **v. 9**) and slain, which is a picture of a sacrifice.
    - 2. Except for the birds, the animals were divided in the midst and laid each piece one against another. **v. 10 c/w LEV 1:17.**
    - 3. The dividing of the sacrificed animals and the passing in between the pieces signified the making of a covenant. **JER 34:18; PSA 50:5.**
    - 4. The Levitical sacrifices were shadows of Christ's sacrifice. **HEB 10:1; 9:11-12.**
    - 5. Abram was being shown these tokens hundreds of years earlier, another indication of Levi's subordination. **HEB 7:9.**
  - E. Fowls tried to interfere with the process of the sacrifice and covenant, but faithful Abram drove them away. **v. 11.**
    - 1. “Fowls” sometimes represent Satan. **MAR 4:4, 15.**
    - 2. So Christ, like Abram, must drive off the interfering fowl. **MAT 16:23.**
  - F. At sunset a deep sleep and horror of great darkness fell upon Abram. **v. 12.**
    - 1. In a deep sleep one is helpless and vulnerable. **1SAM 26:7-12.**

2. Abram could no longer protect the sacrifice.
3. horror: Roughness, ruggedness. A shuddering or shivering. A painful emotion compounded of loathing and fear; a shuddering with terror and repugnance; strong aversion mingled with dread; the feeling excited by something shocking or frightful.
4. A helpless, terrified man cannot make a covenant sure.
5. In contrast to helpless, horrified Abram is the Almighty Word of the LORD undertaking to make the covenant. c/w **ROM 5:6**.

III. The Lord then prophesied to Abram about the future of his seed. **vs. 13-16**.

- A. The fulfillment of some of this prophecy is found in **EXO 1-14**.
- B. Abram's seed was not an afflicted stranger in Egypt for the full four hundred years.
  1. There were only four hundred and thirty years between the Abrahamic covenant and the Law covenant. **GAL 3:17**.
  2. The lifespans of Isaac, Jacob and Joseph must also be accounted for between **GEN 15** and **EXO 14**.
  3. That Abram's seed would be sojourners and strangers in others' lands and would be afflicted and servile during a four hundred year span is true. But it would not all occur in Egypt.
  4. Egypt would culminate the troubles prophesied to Abram's seed and God surely did judge that nation---by plagues.
  5. Having sorely judged Egypt, the Hebrews truly came out with with great substance. **EXO 12:35-36**.
  6. Before that, Abram indeed lived to a good old age, died in peace and was gathered unto his fathers. **GEN 25:8**.
  7. Abram's seed did return to Canaan ("hither again," v. 16) in the fourth generation---not the fourth generation from Abram, but from Levi who went down into Egypt with Jacob. **EXO 6:16-20**.
- C. Abram's seed would not possess Canaan until the iniquity of its inhabitants (the Amorites) was full.
  1. The Amorites were a very wicked people. **1KI 21:25-26; LEV 18**.
  2. The wicked may seem to be getting away with their iniquity but they are actually filling a measure. It is a treasuring up of wrath and judgment. **ROM 2:5**.
  3. Therefore do not envy them. **PSA 37:1**.

IV. A smoking furnace and a burning lamp passed between the pieces of the sacrifice.

- A. The pieces point us to Christ's body sacrificed on the cross.
- B. The smoking furnace speaks of judgment and affliction. **GEN 19:28; EXO 19:18; DEU 4:20; ISA 48:10; EZE 22:20-22; MAT 13:41-42, 49-50**.
- C. The burning lamp which produced light speaks of salvation and life. **ISA 62:1; 2SA 22:29; JOH 1:4-5; 8:12; EPH 5:8**.
- D. As such, we see tokens of judgment and salvation, death and life, wrath and mercy passing between the pieces.
- E. Judgment and salvation meet together in the cross of Christ. Christ was there judged in the furnace of God's wrath for our sins. **ROM 5:6-10; 1TH 5:9-10; HEB 9:15; 1PE 2:24**.
- F. The smoking furnace and the burning lamp passing between the pieces laid one against another formed the pattern of a cross.
- G. Christ's death on the cross is that which confirms and makes sure God's covenant with its

promise of inheritance. **HEB 7:22; 9:15-17; MAT 26:27-28.**

- H. God Himself undertook in the Person of Christ to be our Mediator, or Go-Between!
- I. This is the means whereby Abram and those of like precious faith as Abram may know that they shall inherit what God has promised!

- V. The covenant was worded, "Unto thy seed I HAVE GIVEN this land..." (**v. 18**). In covenant, the possession of the inheritance was already completed and granted. c/w **JOH 19:30; HEB 10:14.**
  - A. Recall that Abram's seed would come out with great substance. **v. 14.**
  - B. Jesus Christ is particularly Abram's seed. **GAL 3:16.**
  - C. Upon completion of His atonement He came out with great substance. **REV 5:9; HEB 2:10; ROM 8:29.**
  - D. Those who belong to Him are Abram's seed who share in the promised inheritance. **GAL 3:29.**
    - 1. God's judgment of our sin in Christ has given us great substance. **HEB 10:34.**
    - 2. Faith is the substance we have now of that future substance. **HEB 11:1.**
    - 3. "He that believeth on the Son HATH everlasting life..." (**JOH 3:36**).