



Trusting God in the Dark

(Genesis 15:1-21)

*Hudson Taylor once said to a friend,
"I cannot read; I cannot think; I cannot even pray; but I can trust."*

"...behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him." (Genesis 15:12)

I. Our **Anxiety** in the Dark (15:1-3)

(v.1) "Do not be afraid" Thomas writes, "Abraham must have had some fear. What was this? Was it not a natural dejection after victory? May it not have been caused by inevitable physical, mental, and moral reaction after the strain involved in the recent events? Fear before battle is the characteristic of cowards; fear after battle is the mark of a hero. This is the first occurrence of the Divine 'Fear not' which is afterwards found so often as God's message to His weary and tired servants. Either 'Fear not,' or its equivalent 'Be not afraid,' occurs some eighty-four times in Holy Scripture."¹

(v.2) "What will You give me, seeing I go childless?" His disappointment is evident. It had been 10 years since Abram had entered the promised land of Canaan. God had promised a seed, but still no fulfillment had been experienced.

II. God's **Assurance** in the Dark (15:4-5, 7-21)

- God **corrects** our misconceptions. Eliezer will not be your heir (v.4).
- God **reminds** us of His promises. Your heir will come from your seed (v.4).
- God **shows** us His power. Nothing is impossible – look at the stars (v.5).

III. God's **Announcement** in the Dark (15:7-16)

(v.13) This verse relates to the people of Israel living in bondage to Egypt for 400 years.

¹ W.H. Griffith Thomas, *Genesis: A Devotional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1953), 137.

IV. God's Action in the Dark (15:17-21)

(v.17) “And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces.”

Typically, when two parties “cut a covenant” between one another, they both would walk through the half-cut animals. This would symbolize a similar fate awaits the party that went back on his part of the covenant. What is unique about this covenant, **God Alone walks between the pieces**, as if to say, “I Alone am responsible in this covenant, which I will not break.”

Hebrews 6:13–15 - ¹³ For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, ¹⁴ saying, “Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.” ¹⁵ And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

V. Our Acceptance in the Dark (15:6)

(v.6) “And he believed in the Lord” The original Hebrew for “believed” comes from a root from which we derive the word “amen.” We can say “Abraham said amen to the Lord.” “Amen” in an agreement with someone or something – “let it be so.” Abraham took God at His Word.²

“In the Gospel of John, which was written to tell people how to be saved (John 20:31), the word ‘believe’ is used nearly **100 times**. Salvation is the gracious gift of God, and it is received by faith (Eph. 2:8–9).”³

(v.6) “counted” – “The verb *hāšab* means, as our text has it, ‘counted [or reckoned or imputed] it to him as righteousness’ (cf. Leviticus 7:18; Numbers 18:27; 2 Samuel 19:19; Psalm 32:2; and 106:31, which is the closest parallel). Note that Abram is not described as doing righteousness, but his faith was credited as righteousness.”⁴

Applications for Today:

- 1) **Don't be surprised when you seem vulnerable after experiencing success.** Doubt and fear are not uncommon after great spiritual victories. Abram is victorious in **chapter 14**, and here he is doubting and fearful in **chapter 15**. Elijah runs for his life after a great victory against the prophets of Baal in **1 Kings 18 and 19**.
- 2) **Faith is what is still required to be right with God.** “Righteousness” means being in “right standing with God.” Abram was made righteous because of his faith (not by his works). We, too, are made righteous with God by our faith in what Jesus did on the cross for us. Genesis 15:6 is quoted three times in the Bible: **Galatians 3:6-9, James 2:20-24, and Romans 4:3**.
- 3) **God is patiently waiting for mankind to repent.** **Genesis 15:6-7** describe God as waiting on the Amorites. He even prophesies that Israel will be in Egypt 400 years. Ultimately, after all the waiting, the wickedness is too great and must be punished. 2 Peter 3:9 says God is longsuffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all will come to repentance.

² Paraphrased from Thomas, *Genesis*, 138.

³ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Obedient*, “Be” Commentary Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1991), 48.

⁴ R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 225.