

God Makes a Covenant with Abraham (Gen 15:1-21)

God had promised Abram that his offspring will be given the Promised Land:

The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him. (Gen 12:1-7, CSB)

Later, this would prompt two questions.

1) How can I have an heir if I am childless?

1) After these events, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield; your reward will be very great.

2) But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what can you give me, since I am childless and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3) Abram continued, "Look, you have given me no offspring, so a slave born in my house will be my heir."

4) Now the word of the LORD came to him: "This one will not be your heir; instead, one who comes from your own body will be your heir." 5) He took him outside and said, "Look at the sky and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "Your offspring will be that numerous."

6) Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness. (Gen 15:1-6, CSB)

2) What guarantee is there of the Promised Land?

7) He also said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess."

8) But he said, "Lord GOD, how can I know that I will possess it?"

9) He said to him, "Bring me a three-year-old cow, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon."

10) So he brought all these to him, cut them in half, and laid the pieces opposite each other, but he did not cut the birds in half. 11) Birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away. 12) As the sun was setting, a deep sleep came over Abram, and suddenly great terror and darkness descended on him.

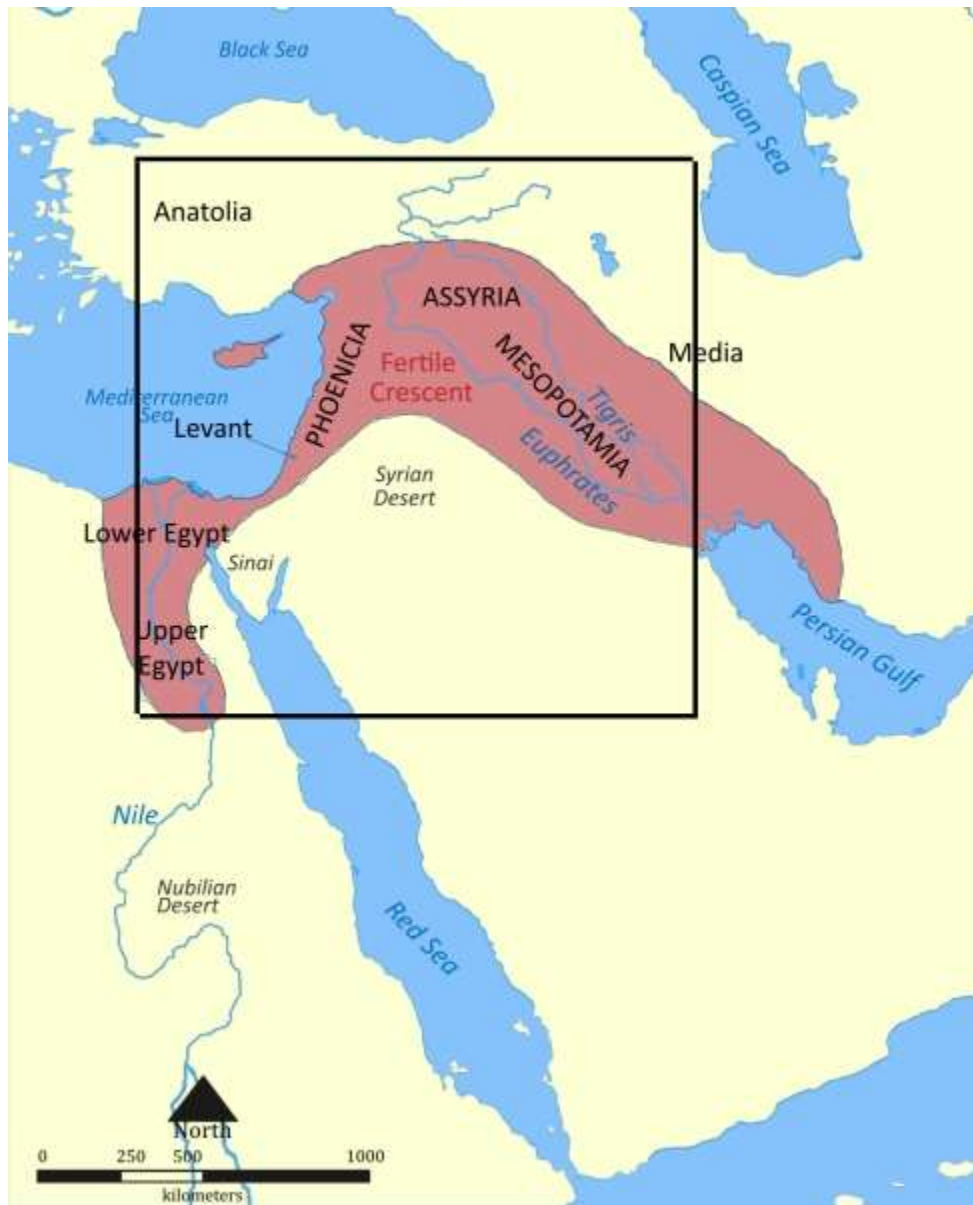
13) Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know this for certain: Your offspring will be resident aliens for four hundred years in a land that does not belong to them and will be enslaved and oppressed. 14) However, I will judge the nation they serve, and afterward they will go out with many possessions. 15) But you will go to your ancestors in peace and be buried at a good old age. 16) In the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure."

17) When the sun had set and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch appeared and passed between the divided animals. 18) On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "I give this land to your offspring, from the Brook of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates River: 19) the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, 20) Hethites, Perizzites, Rephaim, 21) Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites." (Gen 15:7-21, CSB)

1. Why did God consider Abram righteous?

2. How does God assure Abram that Abram will possess the Promised Land?

3. Look at the size of the Promised Land. Where is Israel today?



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Video Abstract (Author: Max7.org): God commands Abraham to pack up his life and leave his home and extended family and go! Learn how God assures Abraham of the Promised Land with a covenant. This animation is suitable for school-aged children and teens.

Before watching the video, inform the student what God promised to Abram in person, "To your offspring I will give this land." This would cause Abram to ask two questions later:

- 1) How can I have an heir if I am childless?
- 2) What guarantee is there of the Promised Land?

Now watch the video.

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1. Why did God consider Abram righteous?

Help the student observe and understand the verse, "Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness (Gen 15:6). Did Abram hear God in person?"

Abram heard the word of the Lord in a vision.

When Abram believed God's voice in his dream, he was confident and did not doubt that God would provide him with an heir. This confident belief that does not doubt God's word and causes Abram to be obedient to God is the behavior that God deems righteous.

2. How does God assure Abram that Abram will possess the Promised Land?

Inform the student: contractual agreements in ancient times involved the dividing of animals and walking through their parts. Both parties of the agreement walk down the center to ratify the covenant.

In the Abrahamic Covenant, only God walks down the center of the divided animals. This means that God is making a unilateral agreement to His promises to Abraham and these promises are unconditional. Abraham is not required to do anything to receive the benefits of the contract!

Note to Teacher: little is known about this ancient contractual custom. However Jeremiah 34:18 does shed some light on this:

And the men who transgressed My covenant and did not keep the terms of the covenant that they made before Me, I will make them like the calf that they cut in two and passed between its parts-- (Jer 34:18, ESV)

3. Look at the size of the Promised Land. Where is Israel today?

Using the larger map in the handout, show the student where the Nile and Euphrates rivers are.

Using a marker, color in the approximate area that encompasses Israel.

Teach the student that it is important to understand where areas of the Bible are, because that information can be helpful in understanding other parts of the Bible.

The dimensions of the Promised Land later match the dimensions of New Jerusalem that is mentioned in the last book of the Bible, Revelation.

This will be where all Believers go in the future to be with God and His Son Jesus Christ.

