

• LESSON 10 (March 8) • Genesis 15-16 •  
**The Beginning of God's Covenant with Abram**

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." (Gen 15:1)

- ❖ How had Abram already shown himself susceptible to fear?
  
- ❖ "I am your shield." Meditate on that promise of the LORD. What does it mean? What did Abram need to understand?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ What is Abram worried about in Genesis 15:2-4?

And (the LORD) brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness. (Gen 15:5-6)

- ❖ Take the time to reflect on that summary statement—"he counted it to him as righteousness." It is referenced by Paul in Romans 4:3. What does it *mean*?

Genesis 15:7-20 is not the easiest section of Genesis to understand. Carefully read through what God has recorded and let's think our way through it together.

- ❖ What was the point of cutting the animals in half in Genesis 15:9-11? What did this symbolize?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ What is the LORD foretelling Abram in Genesis 15:12-16?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ Why is God's statement about the Amorites in Genesis 15:16 significant?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ What is the significance of the smoking fire pot and the flaming torch in Genesis 15:17-20 and how do they relate to the covenant that the LORD made with Abram on that day?

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said to Abram, "Behold now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress. And Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the LORD judge between you and me!" But Abram said to Sarai, "Behold, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please." Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her. (Gen 16:1-6)

- ❖ What can we learn from this troubling scene in the life of Abram and Sarai?

Interestingly, the narrative briefly follows Hagar as she flees from Sarai. Read Genesis 16:7-14.

- ❖ What do we learn about the LORD from this recorded interaction with Hagar?
- ❖ What does the name *Ishmael* mean?
- ❖ What is God foretelling about Ishmael and his descendants?

And Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Gen 16:15-16)

- ❖ If you were going to summarize what we have learned and what we should take away from Genesis 15-16, how would you do it? What should we, as disciples of Jesus who live long after the days of Abram and Sarai, apply to our hearts from this text?