



## Lesson 6 | When God Makes a Deal

Genesis 15:7-21

Have you ever tried to confirm with someone that they would do what they said they would do? In this passage God promises Abram that He will give the land of Canaan to Abram's seed, but Abram asks God how he can know for certain that will be the case. In response, God makes an unconditional covenant with Abram guaranteeing that He will certainly do what He has said He will do.

### The Background to the Covenant Ceremony (vv 7-11)

The \_\_\_\_\_ for the Covenant (v 7-8)

God begins by declaring His name and reiterating His promise to Abram. But Abram responds to this powerful proclamation of God with a surprising question, asking how he will know this is true. We might think Abram is out of line to ask such a question, but God not only does not reprimand Abram, He does the very thing Abram asks for. God gives Abram something firm to prove that God will do what He has said He will do.

The \_\_\_\_\_ for the Covenant (v 9-11)

This chapter is one of the strangest accounts in the Bible if you don't know a little bit of Bible background. In Jeremiah 34:18-20, we read about two parties walking through animals that have been cut in half as they make a covenant. Research into ancient near eastern treaty practices confirm that this was a common way of formalizing an agreement. Two parties would walk between the body parts of a dead animal as a gruesome, vivid way of saying, "If I break this promise may



## Lesson 6 | When God Makes a Deal

Genesis 15:7-21

Have you ever tried to confirm with someone that they would do what they said they would do? In this passage God promises Abram that He will give the land of Canaan to Abram's seed, but Abram asks God how he can know for certain that will be the case. In response, God makes an unconditional covenant with Abram guaranteeing that He will certainly do what He has said He will do.

### The Background to the Covenant Ceremony (vv 7-11)

The \_\_\_\_\_ for the Covenant (v 7-8)

God begins by declaring His name and reiterating His promise to Abram. But Abram responds to this powerful proclamation of God with a surprising question, asking how he will know this is true. We might think Abram is out of line to ask such a question, but God not only does not reprimand Abram, He does the very thing Abram asks for. God gives Abram something firm to prove that God will do what He has said He will do.

The \_\_\_\_\_ for the Covenant (v 9-11)

This chapter is one of the strangest accounts in the Bible if you don't know a little bit of Bible background. In Jeremiah 34:18-20, we read about two parties walking through animals that have been cut in half as they make a covenant. Research into ancient near eastern treaty practices confirm that this was a common way of formalizing an agreement. Two parties would walk between the body parts of a dead animal as a gruesome, vivid way of saying, "If I break this promise may

what happened to these animals happen to me.” Abram would have been familiar with this way of making a covenant, and so when God said to him, “Cut up some animals and lay them out,” Abram likely knew what God was planning. It would be as if God told someone today, “I will certainly do that. In fact, why don’t you get your lawyers to draw up the papers?”

### The Covenant Ceremony (v 12-21)

The \_\_\_\_\_ for the Covenant Ceremony (v 12)

Finally, Abram falls asleep and is given a revelatory dream by God. There is a sense of dread and darkness in this dream, which is fitting for the somber occasion of entering into a covenant with God.

The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Covenant (vv 13-16)

God tells Abram his children will inherit the land, but only after being slaves in Egypt for many years. God doesn’t hide the truth from Abram, but rather tells Abram His plan and His rationale. God tells Abram that the iniquity of the Amorites is not full, and it will apparently take at least 400 more years for that to be the case. God is here demonstrating to Abram that He is righteous and just, and that when Israel receives the land it will be the right thing but will take a while.

The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Covenant (v 17-21)

Finally, a torch of fire and a smoking furnace pass through the parts of the animals to seal the covenant that is being made. The Hebrew words used here echo God’s appearance to Israel to make a covenant with them in Exodus 19-20, and careful study of these terms shows that fire, smoke, and lightning often accompany divine appearances. The key thing to notice here is not so much what God is using to depict Himself, but that He alone walks through the animals. God is making an unconditional covenant, promising Abram that He will do what He has said and that fulfillment of the covenant does not depend on Abram.

what happened to these animals happen to me.” Abram would have been familiar with this way of making a covenant, and so when God said to him, “Cut up some animals and lay them out,” Abram likely knew what God was planning. It would be as if God told someone today, “I will certainly do that. In fact, why don’t you get your lawyers to draw up the papers?”

### The Covenant Ceremony (v 12-21)

The \_\_\_\_\_ for the Covenant Ceremony (v 12)

Finally, Abram falls asleep and is given a revelatory dream by God. There is a sense of dread and darkness in this dream, which is fitting for the somber occasion of entering into a covenant with God.

The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Covenant (vv 13-16)

God tells Abram his children will inherit the land, but only after being slaves in Egypt for many years. God doesn’t hide the truth from Abram, but rather tells Abram His plan and His rationale. God tells Abram that the iniquity of the Amorites is not full, and it will apparently take at least 400 more years for that to be the case. God is here demonstrating to Abram that He is righteous and just, and that when Israel receives the land it will be the right thing but will take a while.

The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Covenant (v 17-21)

Finally, a torch of fire and a smoking furnace pass through the parts of the animals to seal the covenant that is being made. The Hebrew words used here echo God’s appearance to Israel to make a covenant with them in Exodus 19-20, and careful study of these terms shows that fire, smoke, and lightning often accompany divine appearances. The key thing to notice here is not so much what God is using to depict Himself, but that He alone walks through the animals. God is making an unconditional covenant, promising Abram that He will do what He has said and that fulfillment of the covenant does not depend on Abram.