

Genesis 15:1-21

FAITH ACCORDING TO GOD

What is unusual in Gen. 15:6 is that the writer saw fit to draw attention to Abram’s faith. If all men of the old covenant were expected to be men of faith, why mention it here?... There is an element of paradigm here. Abram is a model for all his descendants to imitate: whatever the circumstances, they must have faith in God. The importance of faith is underlined by the following clause: “It was counted to him as righteousness.” Righteousness is a guarantee of salvation, of acquittal in the day of judgment. It involves conformity to God’s will set forth in the law. In Gen. 15:6, however, **faith counts for righteousness**. It is the response of believing the word of God, not righteous deeds, that is counted for righteousness. To be sure, such faith, when genuine, issues in righteous deeds but that is not what the text says. It says that faith counts for (instead of) righteousness.
—Gordon J. Wenham

In Gen 15, God appears to Abram and reiterates His promise of the land, seed, and blessing (12:1-7). Despite his uncertainty on how God will fulfill His promises, Abram trusts Him. God counts Abram’s faith as righteousness and then cuts His unconditional covenant with him.

15:1	God’s Word to Abram – <i>I am...</i>	15:7
15:2-3	Abram’s Question to God – <i>Lord God...</i>	15:8
15:4-5	God’s Assurance to Abram	15:9-21
15:6	<i>Abram believed the Lord, and He credited it to him as righteousness.</i>	

THE REVELATION OF GOD (15:1-5)

God. Do not be afraid. I am your shield, your very great reward (cf. Psalm 3:3; 7:10; 18:2; 28:7; 33:20; 84:11; 115:9-11; 119:114; 144:2).

- God is our true _____.
- God is our true _____.

Abram. Lord God, what will You give me seeing I am going childless? ... Behold, You have given me no offspring!

Assurance. Look now toward heaven and count the stars if you are able to number them (cf. 13:16; 22:17; 26:4; 28:14; 32:12; Ex. 32:13).

Gen 15 has rightly been called one of the most important chapters in all the Bible. —Ray Pritchard

This is the first “fear not” of ~180 “fear not” commands in the Bible.

There is abundant reason for fear in the facts of life. There are so many certain evils, and so many possible evils, that any man who is not a feather-brained fool must sometimes quail... It is a waste of breath to say, Don’t be afraid, and to do nothing to remove the occasions of fear. It is childish to try to get rid of fears by shutting the eyes tight and refusing to look formidable facts in the face. The revelation of God is the true antidote to fear. —Alexander MacLaren

Abram’s greatest treasure is having the Lord himself as his God. —Bruce K. Waltke

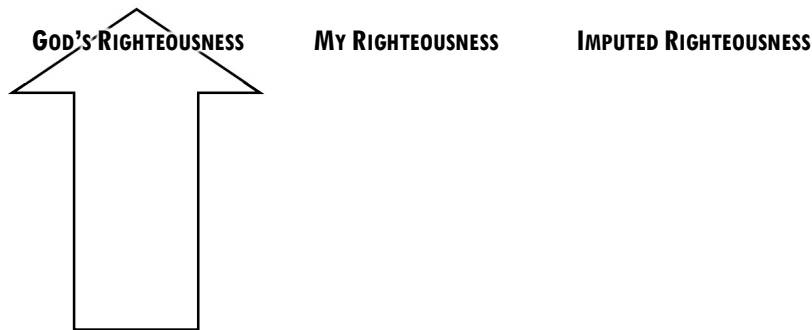
God cannot give us happiness and peace apart from Himself because it is not there. —C. S. Lewis

True love is its own satisfaction. It has its reward; but that reward is the object beloved. —Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153)

THE RESPONSE OF ABRAM (15:6)

Abram believed the Lord, and He credited it to him as righteousness.

- Faith is _____ on the Lord.
- Faith is _____ to our account.
- Faith is _____ as righteousness.



THE RATIFICATION OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT (15:7-21)

God. *I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess (cf. 12:7; 13:15; 17:7-8; Psalm 105:7-12).*

Abram. *Lord God, how shall I know that I will possess it?*

Assurance. *On the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram.*

God instructs Abram to take five sacrificial animals, cut them in half (except the birds), and set up a covenant ratification ceremony. God reveals the future to Abram and binds Himself to Abram in covenant.

The Abrahamic Covenant is...

- _____
- _____
- _____

Believe. Hebrew, *aman*, “to trust, believe in, rely upon.” The picture of a baby in a mother’s arms.

Credit. Heb., *chasab*, “to charge, impute, reckon.”

Righteousness. Heb., *tsedaqah*, “rightness; conformity to a norm.”

Saving faith is a “trust transfer.” It is the removing of one’s hopes and trust from other things to place them on God as Savior.

—Timothy Keller

God crediting faith as righteousness is not a rewarding of merit but a free and unmerited decision of divine grace. —C.E.B. Cranfield

If we compare other verses in which the same grammatical construction is used in Gen. 15:6 we arrive at the conclusion that the [crediting] of Abram’s faith as righteousness means “to account him a righteousness that does not inherently belong to him.”

—Douglas Moo

A proper understanding of the Abrahamic Covenant is key to understanding God’s purpose for Israel and the Nations, as well as His way of dealing with humankind in general—as this covenant is also the basis for the development of other covenants.

—Olivier J. Melnick

According to the text, the Abrahamic Covenant is absolutely conditionless. —Jakób Jocz

A covenant implies two or more parties but it may happen that its stipulations are binding only on one. So here: YHWH alone passes between the pieces because He alone contracts obligation.

—John Skinner