

One More Time

Scripture Reading — Genesis 15

Abram said, "O Sovereign LORD, how can I know that I will gain possession of it?" Genesis 15:8 —

"How can I know ... ?" Whatever age we are, we can all think of a time when we wanted to be sure of something. We have all wanted someone to repeat a promise they've made or to make clear what is still not certain.

Abram asked God to affirm his promises one more time. While our reading today confirms that Abram believed, it's also clear that he asked for certainty.

Is it all right to ask God to repeat his promises, or to make clear what seems cloudy? We may not immediately receive an answer from the Lord, but one thing we can be sure of is that God understands we are like children on a journey who will ask, "Are we there yet?" God shows his patience with Abram, and we can be sure that God is also patient with us.

What is the source of certainty, the key to the promise? In this conversation, God not only repeats his promise to Abram but also makes clear that in this covenant arrangement the key is God himself. Instead of asking Abram to walk between the halves of the animals, God moves through them as pictured by a smoking firepot and a blazing torch. God explains that Abram's descendants will be enslaved and mistreated for a time but that they will also prosper and eventually have all the land Abram could see around him. And God would be with them always--ever faithful, ever sure.

Prayer

God of promise, when our path seems dark, help us to see your light. When we are uncertain, help us to rest in you. Lead us, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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Written by Julius Medenblik — <https://todaydevotional.com/authors/julius-t-medenblik>

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