

# Abram's Concern of Having No Children Part 1

by Chuck Smith

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*Pastor Chuck Smith explores Abram's concerns about his lack of children and God's profound promises regarding his descendants and righteousness through faith.*

**Duration:** 25:05

**Scripture:** Genesis 15:3-5, Galatians 3:16

**Topics:** "Abram"

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## Description

In this sermon, Pastor Chuck Smith discusses the covenant that God made with Abram in Genesis 15. He explains that cutting animals in half and laying them out was a method of making a covenant in ancient times. God tells Abram that his descendants will be strangers in a foreign land and will be afflicted for 400 years before coming out with great possessions. Pastor Chuck emphasizes God's patience and the eventual judgment that will come upon the wicked.

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## Transcript

Oh, let the Son of God enfold you With His Spirit and His love Let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul  
Oh, let Him have the things that mold you And His Spirit like a dove Will descend upon your life and make you whole  
Welcome to The Word for Today Featuring the Bible teaching of Pastor Chuck Smith Of Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California  
Pastor Chuck is currently leading us On a verse-by-verse study through the entire Bible  
And on today's edition of The Word for Today We'll be looking at Abram's concern of having no children  
As we pick up in Genesis, chapter 15, verse 3 So let's follow along as Pastor Chuck Smith Begins today's lesson  
Abram said, You haven't given me any offspring Indeed, one who is born in my house is my heir  
And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying,

This one shall not be your heir That is, Eleazar, the servant of Abram, is not to be the heir  
And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, One who will come from your own body will be your heir  
Then he brought him outside And he said, Look now toward heaven Count the stars if you're able to number them  
And he said unto him, So shall your seed be Now, there are those who do suggest That when God said,  
Count the stars If you are able to number them The word used for number there is An interesting word in Hebrew  
Which is not really to count by 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 But it is to set into an order And there are those who would suggest  
That God has placed the gospel in the stars That astrology is a sad perversion Of the truth that God has placed within the heavens  
The wise men were guided by

the star They were able to read a message that others did not read And it is quite possible When God is challenging Abram To number the stars, that is, to consider the gospel that is in the star Because God said, So shall your seed be Seed, singular, zero And so Paul picks this up in Galatians, the third chapter As he talks about this experience of Abram Looking up into the stars and receiving the promise of God In the third chapter there of Galatians We are told Now to Abram, verse 16, and his seed Were the promises made He does not say and to seeds, plural, as of many But as of one, and to your seed Who is Christ Now, it is important to note this because the next verse tells us That Abram believed God and it was then counted to him for righteousness It isn't that he just believed that

God was going to give him a lot of kids A lot of descendants Not seeds, plural, you see It isn't that he just believed that God existed Just faith that God exists does not save Faith that the promises of God are true does not save But it is the faith in the Son of God, Jesus Christ, that brings salvation The faith that he died for my sins So Abram, by faith, believed this promise of God that his seed would come And so we read in Romans Concerning Jesus who was of the seed of Abraham Important Because he was the promised seed, the one that Abram believed in And the one because of Abram believing in him God declared him righteous Now, God declares us righteous by the same action of believing in the same one Abram looked forward and he believed the promise of God that it would be We now look

back at the fulfillment of the promise in the coming of Jesus Christ But by our believing that Jesus died for our sins Paid the penalty for our guilt Took our place and was a substitution for us In his death upon the cross And by our faith in him, that death, and in his resurrection We are accounted righteous before God Abram was not accounted righteous because of his works Though he had many good works He was not accounted righteous by his keeping of the law, it was not yet given He was not accounted righteous by the right of circumcision, that was not yet given And so we are not accounted righteous because we keep the rituals of the church We're not accounted righteous because we keep the laws of the church We're not accounted righteous because we have good works We are accounted

righteous when we believe the promise of God through his son Salvation would come to man And that belief in the promise of God concerning the seed that would come Was the thing that God accounted for righteousness Abram's faith was not perfect There were many failures And even in the very next chapter, even after he believed and God counted Abram righteous Even in the very next chapter, we find Abram lapsing in faith As Sarah suggests to him that he might as well take her handmaid Hagar In order that he might have an heir of his own body And in a few more chapters, I think it's about the 20th chapter Where he goes down to the area of King Abimelech and says, she's my sister For fear of King Abimelech And yet God accounted his faith for righteousness Even as God accounts your faith for

righteousness Though it also may be imperfect Then the Lord said unto him I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans To give you this land to inherit it So after God accounted him righteous God now is reaffirming the promise to Abram This is the reward of his faith He believed God, God accounted it to him for righteousness And now the Lord reaffirms the promise Your descendants, your seed Will inherit this land And he said, Lord God How shall I know that I will inherit it?

Asking really in a sense for a sign So the Lord said to him, bring me a three-year-old heifer A three-year-old female goat A three-year-old ram Turtledove and a young pigeon Then he brought all of these to him and he cut them in two Down the middle And he placed each piece opposite the other But he did not cut the birds in two And when the vultures came down on the carcasses Abram drove them away Vultures of course are birds in the scripture Are most generally used in an evil sense You remember the

seed that was sown on the wayside The birds came and we're told that Satan Was the bird that plucked up the seed that it could not bring forth Now the sun was going down and a deep sleep fell on Abram And behold the horror of a great darkness fell upon him Now this cutting of the animals in two

And just cutting them in half and then laying out the carcasses Opposite each other Just halving them and then laying out the carcasses This was a method by which a covenant was made People would make a covenant with each other Now to seal or to bind that covenant They would cut an animal in two And they would lay it out opposite And then they would pass between these in a circle eight And in so doing they were bound then to the covenant that was made So Abram saying Lord how do I know God in essence saying I'll make a covenant with you It's a way by which I will Affirm or seal the promise that I have made I'll make this covenant with you Now you bring the heifer three years old The goat and the ram cut them in two And you lay them out The pigeon and the turtle dove But just lay those out

separately They didn't cut them in two And God is going to make this covenant So as he cut it out and ready for God to make the covenant The vultures came down and He was busy trying to drive the vultures off until evening And then weary no doubt from Trying to drive the vultures off all day He falls into a deep sleep And the horror of the great darkness came upon him Then the Lord said to Abram Know certainly That your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs And will serve them And they will afflict them four hundred years And also the nation whom they serve I will judge afterward They shall come out with great possessions Now here the Lord is telling Abram Of the fact that his descendants are going to go down to Egypt Where they are to be afflicted for four hundred

years Now we know from the book of Exodus that the sojourn In Egypt was four hundred and thirty years And there are those who are always looking for some Contradiction in the Bible Aha found one you know All right just read carefully They'll be afflicted four hundred years First thirty years they had good treatment Joseph was next to the Pharaoh And interestingly enough The Lord here tells him that they will come out With great possessions You remember the night of the Passover the Lord said Now go and borrow all the jewelry and everything else from your masters And they came out with great possessions Now as for you You shall go to your fathers in peace You won't have this great period of great darkness and all in your life But your descendants and of course we know that it wasn't long

after Abram that Joseph was sold by his brothers and then he Brought the family down into Egypt the 70 souls and how that During that sojourn total of four hundred and thirty years of which four hundred years was affliction They multiplied And became a nation in Egypt Before God brought them out with a heavy hand Into the land So you will be buried at a good old age But in the fourth generation they shall return here now here's an interesting how long is a biblical generation Well here it happened to be a hundred years In the fourth generation we know they're going to be there for four hundred years Now if you'll go to the genealogical record you'll find that Levi Was in Egypt one of the sons of Jacob And that Moses is the fourth generation from Levi You trace the genealogies back Moses

is in the fourth generation from Levi So just as the Lord said to Abram Those four hundred years it was only four generations from Levi to Moses They shall return here for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete now As they come back they are going to wipe out the Amorites But the time for the judgment of the Amorites is not yet come though they were wicked Yet their wickedness was not yet complete God is so long suffering as he deals with man in fact I I can't understand it So often as a lord how long how long How vile and wicked can man become before you step in and judge Now know this the judgment of God is coming Though it may seem to be delayed here God was patient with the Amorites And he said they'll go

down there for four hundred years before they come back Because the

sin of the Amorites is not yet complete We are told in the book of Revelation that the cup of the indignation of his wrath finally overflows But it's being filled Man thinks that they're getting by with their wickedness because God hasn't intervened They tragically misinterpret that as God doesn't see Or God doesn't care Or the most blasphemous of all God approves He's so patient So patient And so he was giving the Amorites time He gave them another four hundred years in the land In order that they might continue until the cup of indignation was filled And then his judgment and his wrath was poured out And as they came in they were ordered to utterly wipe these people out So the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete And all I can say is at this point up until right at this moment

The iniquity of the world is not yet complete But I'll tell you I don't see how it can go much further Now it came to pass when the sun went down and it was dark Behold there was a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between the pieces And this of course is typifying of God passing You remember later on God manifested himself to the children of Israel in the cloud and in the pillar of fire And so Abram as it got dark saw this smoking torch Or burning torch and this smoking oven passing between the pieces as the covenant was established And on the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram saying To your descendants I have given this land from the river of Egypt Or to your seed I've given this land from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates The Kenizzites,

the Kananites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Riphim Amorites, Canaanites, Gergashites and the Jebusites Now Sarah, Abram's wife, had borne him no children Abram was 85 years old, she was 75 She had an Egyptian maidservant, remember Abram went down to Egypt Shouldn't have done that, that was a lapse of faith He didn't have confidence that God could sustain him in the land of promise And so he went down to Egypt but oh he came back stained, marked One of the things that they picked up in Egypt was a handmaiden for Sarah, Hagar So Sarah said to Abram, inasmuch as the Lord has restrained me from bearing children Please go in to my maid, perhaps I shall obtain children by her And Abram heeded the voice of Sarah Now we read earlier that Adam heeded the voice of Eve Both of them got into

trouble for listening to their wives But to really balance off, we find later on The Lord said to Abram, listen to your wife Sarah Sarah suggested the use of Hagar the handmaiden As a means by which they could help God perform his promise And so they find themselves in the position of seeking now through natural means To accomplish the purposes of God And let me say, that is always a mistake How many times we have sought by natural devices to accomplish the purposes of God And with the same kind of results we end up making a total mess out of things So many times I have put myself in the position of God's little helper I give him opportunity to work, I give him a time deadline Lord if you don't do it in this length of time, then I'm going to be forced To do something myself And here we

find Sarah saying, look Abram, let's give up Not going to happen So let's help God, he needs our help now You ever been told that God needs your help?

God's program is going to die if you don't help him His whole work is going to cease If you don't step in and rescue him And if you want to see his work continue next week, you better respond today And call the 800 number Bail God out of the problems that he's gotten himself into again God needs your help God needs you to bail him out The minute God needs my help, he's in big trouble The opposite is true I need his help continually The Lord is my helper I need his help, he doesn't need mine He did a fantastic job of running the world before I came along And he'll continue his great job long after I'm gone He doesn't need

me, I need him We'll return with more of our verse-by-verse study through the book of Genesis in our next lesson As we continue with more on the covenant that God made with Abram And we do hope you'll make plans to join us But right now I'd like to remind you that if you missed any part of today's message Or perhaps you'd like to order a copy for that special friend or loved one You can do so by simply contacting one of our customer service representatives And they'd be more than happy to assist you with the ordering details Simply call 1-800-272-WORD And phone orders can be taken Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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There's a big scary giant Don't be afraid we have God on our side My name is David and I know all about big scary giants I've defeated lions and bears And God will help me defeat Goliath too It's true and Pastor Chuck wants to tell you all about the story of David and Goliath In his new book Just for Kids So come along on a great adventure and discover how God used David to defeat a big scary giant And learn why David believed that God was big enough even to conquer Goliath And as a gift each book contains an audio CD of Pastor Chuck actually reading the story of David and Goliath So your kids can read along To order your copy call The Word for Today at 800-272-WORD Or to see a sneak preview of the story of David and Goliath Visit us online at [thewordfortoday.org](http://thewordfortoday.org) Again the number to call is 1-800-272-9673 This program has been sponsored by The Word for Today In Costa Mesa, California

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