

# CHAPTER 15

## INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 15

This chapter informs us of a gracious appearance of God to Abram, and of a kind promise made unto him, (<sup><0150></sup>Genesis 15:1); of Abram's request for an heir, (<sup><0152></sup>Genesis 15:2,3); of an answer to it, that he should have one, and even a numberless seed, (<sup><0154></sup>Genesis 15:4,5); which he gave credit to, (<sup><0156></sup>Genesis 15:6); upon which he has a fresh promise of the land of Canaan, (<sup><0157></sup>Genesis 15:7); of his inheriting of which he desires a sign, and this was given him, (<sup><0158></sup>Genesis 15:8-12); and at the same time it was predicted to him how long his posterity should be afflicted in a land not theirs, and afterwards come out with great substance, (<sup><0153></sup>Genesis 15:13-16); and the grant of the land of Canaan to his seed is renewed, (<sup><0157></sup>Genesis 15:17-21).

**Ver. 1.** *After these things*, etc.] The battle of the kings, the captivity of Lot, the rescue of him and his goods, and of those of Sodom and Gomorrah by Abram, and the conversation that passed between him, and the kings of Sodom and Salem:

*the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision*; Christ, the essential Word, appeared to Abram in an human form, visible to him, and with an articulate voice spoke unto him:

*saying*, as follows,

*fear not, Abram*; calling him by his name, the more to encourage him, and to dissipate his fears to which he was subject; which might be, lest the nations that belonged to the four kings he had conquered and slain should recruit their armies, and come against him with greater force; and the brethren and relations of those he had slain should avenge themselves on him, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem suggest; and therefore the Lord bids him not give way to those fears, for, adds he,

*I [am] thy shield*; to protect him against all his enemies, be they ever so strong and numerous; as Christ is the shield of his people against all their

spiritual enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, which being held up in the hand of faith, called therefore the shield of faith, is a security against them:

*[and] thy exceeding great reward*; though he had generously refused taking any reward for the service he had done in pursuing the kings, and slaughtering them, and bringing back the persons and goods they had took away; yet he should be no loser by it, the Lord would reward him in a way of grace with greater and better things; nay, he himself would be his reward, and which must be a great one, an exceeding great one; as Christ is to his people in his person, offices, and grace, all being theirs, and he all in all to them; all the blessings of grace and glory coming along with him, and he being their portion here and hereafter, to all eternity; for since he is theirs, all are theirs, all things appertaining to life and godliness, and eternal life itself.

**Ver. 2.** *And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless*, etc.] As if he should say, what signifies what thou givest me of temporal blessings, if thou withholdest from me the blessing of a child; from whom it might be hoped and believed would spring the promised Messiah, in whom all nations of the earth shall be blessed. All my wealth and riches, victories and honours, are of no avail to me, while I am deprived of this favour; and since I am advanced in years, and going the way of all the earth; or out of the world, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase it, and which is the sense of the word in many places, (see <sup><6234></sup>Joshua 23:14 <sup><6222></sup>Luke 22:22). Should I depart from hence childless, as I am like to do, what pleasure can I take in them, and comfort from them, when I have none to inherit them?

*and the steward of my house [is] this Eliezer of Damascus*; who was his head servant, perhaps the same with him in (<sup><0242></sup>Genesis 24:2) called the eldest servant of his house, who had the care of it, of providing food for it, and supplying with it, and giving to everyone their portion in due season. Some render it, “the son of leaving my house” <sup>f1004</sup>; to whom he left the care of his house, and should leave the administration of all things in it after his death, making him heir should he die childless; and so it may be supplied, “he Eliezer of Damascus is” or “shall be my heir”. Strange and various are the fancies of the Jewish writers concerning this Eliezer; the Targum of Jonathan on (<sup><0144></sup>Genesis 14:14) calls him the son of Nimrod; others say he was the grandson of Nimrod, and others, a servant of his, who gave him to Abram for a servant; and when Isaac married Rebekah he

was made free, and through Abram's influence became a king, and was Og king of Bashan<sup>f1005</sup>; and others say he was Canaan the son of Ham<sup>f1006</sup>; and others again, that he was Lot, who was very desirous of being Abram's heir<sup>f1007</sup>: but with neither of these wilt this description of him agree, who is said to be of Damascus; either he was born there, or his parents, one or other, were from thence, who very probably were Abram's servants; and this Eliezer was born in his house, as seems from (<sup>-0153</sup>Genesis 15:3): or the words may be rendered Damascus Eliezer<sup>f1008</sup>, that is, Damascus the son of Eliezer; so that Eliezer was his father's name, and Damascus the proper name of this servant: and some say Damascus was built by him, and had its name from him, which is not likely, since we read of it before, and it is ascribed to another builder, (see Gill on <sup>“-0145</sup>Genesis 14:15”). Indeed Justin<sup>f1009</sup> says it had its name from a king of it, so called; but who, according to him, was much more ancient than Abram, whom he also makes to be a king of Damascus: after King Damascus, he says, was Azelus, then Adores, and Abram and Israel were kings in that place. And Nicolas of Damascus<sup>f1010</sup> relates, that Abram reigned at Damascus, when with an army he came out of the land of Chaldea, beyond Babylon; and that the name of Abram was still famous in the region of Damascus, and a certain village was shown, called Abram's habitation: and the Jewish writers say<sup>f1011</sup>, that the servants of Abram built Damascus, and he reigned over it: that Abram lived there some time seems reasonable from this Eliezer, who was born in his house, being called Eliezer of Damascus; for which no other reason can well be assigned than his being born there, which must be therefore when Abram dwelt there, since he was born in his house; and this might be the foundation of the above traditions.

**Ver. 3.** *And Abram said, behold, to me thou hast given no seed*, etc.] He had bestowed many temporal blessings on him, as well as spiritual ones, having given himself in covenant, and all things in it, but he had not given him a child:

*and lo, one born in my house is mine heir*; meaning either Eliezer or his son, whom he had made his heir, or intended to make him, since he had no child; or of course he would have been to, Lot his nephew having no sons; and this Eliezer descending from Aram, the youngest son of Shem, was like to be next heir, if Abram should have no child of his own, as Dr. Lightfoot observes<sup>f1012</sup>.

**Ver. 4.** *And behold, the word of the Lord [came] unto him,* etc.] Either having disappeared, and then came a second time, or he again spoke unto him:

*saying, this shall not be thine heir;* this Eliezer, this servant of thine, as thou hast made him, or hast intended to make him, giving up all hopes of having issue by Sarai:

*but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir;* that is, one shall inherit all thou hast, that shall be begotten by thee; an own son of Abram's, and not a servant born in his house; one that should spring out of his own loins: the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "out of thy womb", that is, out of his wife's, which was his; the phrase designs a genuine and legitimate son of his, who would be legally his heir.

**Ver. 5.** *And he brought him forth abroad,* etc.] Out of his tent into the open air, which was done through his call, and at his direction; or by an impulse upon his mind; or this might not be real and local, only vision:

*and said, look now towards heaven;* either with his bodily eyes, or with the eyes of his mind:

*and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them;* this looks as if it were in a vision that this was said to him, and what follows done in the day, since it was in the daytime, before the sun was set, (<sup>152</sup>Genesis 15:12), when the stars could not be seen; and therefore were represented to his mind, and he was directed to consider them in it, whether they could be numbered by him or not: but this might be in the preceding night, or early in the morning, before the sun arose, that Abram was directed to go out of his tent, and view the heavens, and the multitude of stars in them, and try if he could number them; and he might be employed all the day following till sunset, in preparing the creatures for the sacrifice, in cutting them asunder, laying their pieces in order, and watching them, and driving the fowls from them. The multitude of his seed is before signified by the dust of the earth, which cannot be numbered, (<sup>136</sup>Genesis 13:16), and here by the stars of the sky innumerable; as they are to man, though not to God: some have pretended to number them, as Aratus, Eudoxus, and Hipparchus, among the ancients, and also modern astronomers; but then they are such only that are visible to the eye, and in one hemisphere, and their accounts are very various; whereas there are multitudes to be discerned by glasses, and some not to be distinguished, as in the galaxy, or milky way, and others in the

other hemisphere. Now Abram here is bid to try what he could do, and this was in his own way; for he is said by many Heathen writers<sup>f1013</sup> to be famous for arithmetic and astrology, or astronomy; but as great a master as he was in these sciences, he was not able to number the stars, which is here plainly intimated, since it follows:

*and he said, so shall thy seed be:* as innumerable as the stars, as they were, even his natural seed, (<sup><3812></sup>Hebrews 11:12); and especially his spiritual seed, who have the same kind of faith he had, and as they will be in the latter day particularly, (<sup><3010></sup>Hosea 1:10,11).

**Ver. 6.** *And he believed in the Lord,* etc.] The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan are,

“in the Word of the Lord;”

in the essential Word of the Lord, in Christ the Lord his righteousness; he believed in the promise of God, that he should have a seed, and a very numerous one; he believed that the Messiah would spring from his seed; he believed in him as his Saviour and Redeemer; he believed in him for righteousness, and he believed in his righteousness as justifying him before God:

*and he counted it to him for righteousness;* not the act of his faith, but the object of it; and not the promise he believed, but what was promised, and his faith received, even Christ and his righteousness this was imputed to him without works, and while he was an uncircumcised person, for the proof of which the apostle produces this passage, (<sup><4043></sup>Romans 4:3,10,23,24); wherefore this is not to be understood of any action of his being esteemed and accounted a righteous one, and he pronounced and acknowledged a righteous person on account of it; for Abram was not justified before God by his own works, but by the righteousness of faith, as all that believe are, that is, by the righteousness of Christ revealed to faith, and received by it: what is imputed is without a man, and the imputation of it depends upon the will of another; such the righteousness of Christ without works imputed by God the Father. This is the first time we read of believing, and as early do we hear of imputed righteousness.

**Ver. 7.** *And he said unto him,* etc.] After he had expressed his faith in him, and in his word, and the blessedness of a justifying righteousness came openly upon him, and he was declared a justified person:

*I [am] the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees*; not only called him, but brought him out of it; not out of a furnace there, as the Jews fable; but out of a place so called, an idolatrous one, where fire was worshipped, and from whence it might have its name; God had brought him out of this wicked place, and separated him from the men of it, and directed him to the land of Canaan for the following end and purpose:

*to give thee this land to inherit it*; to be an inheritance to his posterity for ages to come; he gave him the promise of it, and in some sense the possession of it, he being now in it; and he mentions his having brought him out of Chaldea into it, to confirm his faith in the promise of it; that that God who had called him, and brought him from thence, and had protected him, and given him victory over his enemies, was able to make good, and would make good the promise and grant of this land for an inheritance to him, that is, to his posterity.

**Ver. 8.** *And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?*] Not as questioning or doubting whether he should or not; but this he asked for the further confirmation of his faith in the promise, and for the sake of his posterity, that they might more easily and strongly believe that they should inherit the land given and promised to them; nor is it culpable to ask a sign of God with such a view; good men have done it, as Gideon, (<sup>(1015)</sup>Judges 6:36-40), and Hezekiah, (<sup>(1218)</sup>2 Kings 20:8-11), without being blamed for it; yea, Ahaz is blamed for not asking one, (<sup>(2370)</sup>Isaiah 7:10-13).

**Ver. 9.** *And he said unto him, take me an heifer of three years old*, etc.] This, with what follows, is the sign by which Abram might know that he, that is, his seed, should inherit the land of Canaan; for the whole of this is an emblem of the state and condition of his posterity, until they should enter into that land: wherefore he is ordered to “take” out of his herds and flocks this and the following creatures, which were used in sacrifice before the ceremonial law was given, as well as under it; and the distinction of creatures for sacrifice, though not for food, was known as early, as appears from (<sup>(1003)</sup>Genesis 8:20); hence Onkelos renders the phrase, “offer before me”; and the Targum of Jonathan is,

“take unto me oblations, and offer before me.”

Though this difference is to be observed, that the Levitical law required creatures of a year old only to be offered; whereas these were three years old, because they are then at their full growth, and in their full strength and

greatest perfection; and such were used among the Heathens for sacrifice; so Lucian <sup>f1014</sup> represents Ganymedes as proposing to Jupiter, that if he would let her go she would offer a ram of three years old: but it should be remarked, that these creatures here were not taken merely for sacrifice, nor is there any mention made of their being offered; though it is probable they might be offered after they had answered the principal end, which was to be a sign, whereby Abram might know that his seed should inherit the land; but the intention of God was, that as by them Abram's seed might be taught what sort of creatures they were to offer for their sins, so chiefly to show that they themselves would fall a sacrifice to the rage and fury of their enemies, in a land not theirs, and be used as these creatures were: and the number three may denote the three complete centuries in which they would be afflicted, and in the fourth come out safe and whole like the undivided birds, the turtle, dove, and pigeon, to which they were comparable. Ramban <sup>f1015</sup> thinks, that this number represents the three sorts of sacrifices, the burnt offering, the sin offering, and the peace offering; and that of these three kinds of animals, only one individual of them was taken, and is called "treble", because each individual were joined together. Onkelos renders it three heifers, and so three goats and three rams afterwards; in which he is followed by Jarchi and Ben Melech; the former thinks the three heifers refer to the heifer of the day of atonement, that for uncertain murder, and the red heifer; and in like manner he interprets the three goats and rams; but the Targum of Jonathan, and Aben Ezra, interpret them as we do of creatures of three years old: it follows,

*and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove and a young pigeon.* Some Jewish writers <sup>f1016</sup> have a notion that these creatures represent the four monarchies; the "heifer", the Babylonian monarchy, which had three kings, Nebuchadnezzar, Evilmerodach, and Belshazzar; but others make this to be the fourth monarchy, they call Idumaeen or Roman, which is like an heifer at grass, (~~2801~~ Jeremiah 50:11), which passage better suits with Babylon; the "goat", Media (or Persia), which had three kings, Cyrus, Darius, and Ahasuerus; and the "ram", Grecia; but others say the goat signifies the Grecian monarchy, and the ram the Medo-Persian monarchy, which latter agrees with (~~280B~~ Daniel 8:3,5,20,21); and by the "turtle", the word for which, in the Syriac language, signifies an ox, they understand, some the children of Ishmael, or the Turkish empire, and others Edom, or the Roman: but it is much better to interpret them of Abram's posterity, comparable to these

creatures, both for their good and bad qualities; to an “heifer” for laboriousness in service, and patience in sufferings; and for their backslidings, (<sup><2046></sup>Hosea 4:16); to a “goat” for their vicious qualities, their lusts and lasciviousness; and to a “ram”, for their strength and fortitude; and to a “turtle”, and a young pigeon, for their simplicity, innocence, and harmlessness, when they were in their purest state, (see <sup><1949></sup>Psalm 74:19); and it may be observed, that these were the only fowl used in sacrifice.

**Ver. 10.** *And he took unto him all these*, etc.] The heifer, goat, ram, turtle, and young pigeon, not to himself, but to the Lord, as he was bid, and offered them before him, as the above Targums paraphrase it; or however he took them for his use, and set them before him, and did with them as he directed him:

*and divided them in the midst*; that is, the three animals, the heifer, goat, and ram; he did not take off their several limbs, and cut them up in small parts, but cut them in halves;

*and laid each piece one against another*; one half against the other, the left side against the right, shoulder against shoulder, and leg against leg, so that they might seem to join, or might be easily joined together again, or however answer one another; though it is generally thought there was such a distance of the one from the other, as that there might be a passage between them; it being usual in making covenants for the covenanters to pass between the parts of a creature slain, signifying, that should they break the covenant made, they deserved to be cut asunder as that creature was, (see Gill on <sup><2818></sup>Jeremiah 34:18”). So a burning lamp, or lamp of fire, an emblem of the divine Being, is said, (<sup><0157></sup>Genesis 15:17), to pass between those pieces: all this was expressive of the afflictions of the posterity of Abram, of their being distressed in the land of Egypt, cut as it were in twain there, and of their various dispersions in other countries; and yet, like the bones in Ezekiel’s vision, were gathered together, and united again: and it may be this may have respect to the division of the people of Israel into two kingdoms, in the times of Rehoboam, and their after reunion, and especially in the latter day, (<sup><2507></sup>Ezekiel 37:7,16-22):

*but the birds divided he not*; but laid them one against another, as the pieces were laid; so the birds used in sacrifice under the law were not to be divided, (<sup><0817></sup>Leviticus 1:17); which may signify, that when the people of the Jews, in the latter day, are converted, and brought together into their



own land, when they will better answer the character of turtles and doves than they ever did, will be no more divided and separated from each other.

**Ver. 11.** *And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses*, etc.] Upon the birds, as Aben Ezra and Ben Melech interpret it, whose carcasses were whole; or rather upon the divided carcasses of the animals, and indeed on both: this is to be understood of birds of prey, as eagles, vultures, kites, crows, etc. and are an emblem of the Egyptians chiefly, and other enemies of Israel, who came upon them to devour them; so the Targum of Jonathan,

“and the idolatrous nations descended, who were like to an unclean fowl, to spoil the goods of the Israelites;”

and likewise the Targum of Jerusalem,

“this unclean fowl are the idolatrous kingdoms of the earth:”

*Abram drove them away*: that they might not settle upon the carcasses, and devour them: the Septuagint version is, “Abram sat with them”; he sat by the carcasses and watched them, that no hurt came to them, and to take notice of them, and consider and learn what they were an emblem of. The Jews <sup>f1017</sup> also observe, that

“Abram sat and waved over them with his napkin or handkerchief, that the birds might not have power over them until the evening.”

This may respect not the merit of Abram, as the above Targums, by which his posterity were protected, and the designs of their enemies frustrated; but the effectual fervent prayer of Abram, his prayer of faith for them, in answer to which they were delivered out of the hands of the Egyptians, and other enemies, whom Abram foresaw they would be distressed with.

**Ver. 12.** *And when the sun was going down*, etc.] Just setting, descending below the hemisphere; or “about to enter” <sup>f1018</sup> into his chamber, as Piscator observes, from whence he went forth in the morning, as a strong man to run his race; which at sunset is finished according to human appearance, and the common apprehensions of men, who have thought it goes under the earth, or drops into the ocean, (see <sup><D18></sup>Psalm 19:5):

*a deep sleep fell upon Abram*: through the great fatigue he had had the preceding day, in doing what is before related; or rather through a more than ordinary influence of God upon him, which bound up his senses, and

cast him into an ecstasy or trance, when he had the following prophecy and vision, which more fully explained to him the emblem he had been conversant with; this was such a sleep as fell on Adam, (<sup><0022></sup>Genesis 2:21):

*and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him*; or such darkness as was horrible and terrible, so it was represented to his mind in vision; which signified the great afflictions after expressed by darkness, that should come upon his children in Egypt and elsewhere: and so Jarchi says it refers to the distresses and darkness of their captivities in Egypt, and in other places. The Targumists observe, that Abram in this vision saw the four monarchies that should bring his children into bondage.

**Ver. 13.** *And he said unto Abram*, etc.] While he was in a deep sleep; this he said to him in a vision of prophecy:

*know of a surety*, or “in knowing thou shall or mayest know”, <sup>f1019</sup>; and be assured of it, being now told it by the Lord himself, who foreknows all things that ever come to pass; many of which he acquaints his people with beforehand, nor would he hide from Abram his friend what should befall his posterity, as follows:

*that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land [that is] not theirs*; this prophecy could not take place at this time, since Abram had then no seed; but at the birth of Isaac, in whom his seed was called, who sojourned, or was a stranger in Gerar, a part of the land of Canaan, as Jacob also in the same land, (<sup><0038></sup>Genesis 36:3 37:1); as well as he and his posterity sojourned or lived as strangers in the land of Ham, in Egypt, (<sup><0423></sup>Psalms 105:23); and neither of these countries were theirs; for though there was a grant of Canaan to Abram and his seed, yet it was not in possession; though a land of promise, it was a strange land, a land of their pilgrimage, and where all the patriarchs lived in it as such, (see <sup><0064></sup>Exodus 6:4 <sup><0119></sup>Hebrews 11:9):

*and shall serve them*; the inhabitants of the land not theirs, that is, the Canaanites and the Egyptians, especially the latter; and these they served after the death of Joseph, by whom their lives were made bitter with hard bondage:

*and they shall afflict them four hundred years*; this term “four hundred years” is not to be joined either with the word “afflict” or “serve”; for their hard servitude and severe affliction did not last long, but a few years at most; but with the phrase, “a stranger in a land not theirs”; and the rest is

to be included in a parenthesis thus, and “thy seed shall be a stranger in the land not theirs ([and] shall serve them, and they shall afflict them) four hundred years”; so long they should be strangers and sojourners, as they were partly in the land of Canaan, and partly in the land of Egypt, neither of which were in their own land, however not in possession; within which space of time they would be in a state of subjection and servitude, and be greatly afflicted and oppressed, as they were particularly by the Egyptians before their deliverance from them, (see <sup><0011></sup>Exodus 1:11-22 5:6-14). These four hundred years, as before observed, are to be reckoned from the birth of Isaac to the Israelites going out of Egypt, and are counted by Jarchi thus; Isaac was sixty years of age when Jacob was born, and Jacob when he went down into Egypt was one hundred and thirty, which make one hundred and ninety; and the Israelites were in Egypt two hundred and ten years, which complete the sum of four hundred: according to Eusebius, there were four hundred and five years from the birth of Isaac to the Exodus of Israel; but the round number is only given, as is very usual; and though the sojourning of the Israelites is said to be four hundred and thirty years, (<sup><0124></sup>Exodus 12:40), this takes in the sojourning of Abram in that land, who entered into it sixty five years before the birth of Isaac, which added to four hundred and five, the sum total is four hundred and thirty; for Abram was seventy five years of age when he left Haran and went to Canaan, and Isaac was born when he was an hundred years old, (see <sup><0124></sup>Genesis 12:4 21:5).

**Ver. 14.** *And also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge*, etc.] It is not said “the land” in which they were strangers, though God did judge, condemn, and punish the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, and drove them out of it, to make way for Israel; but the “nation” they should “serve”, meaning the Egyptians, to whom they became servants, and were very hardly and severely used by them; those the Lord threatens to enter into judgment with, and take vengeance upon them, as he did by inflicting the ten plagues on them, which brought them at last to be willing to let Israel go:

*and afterward shall they come out with great substance*; as they did after the four hundred years were ended, and after the Egyptian nation was judged and punished; then they came out of Egypt, with much gold, silver, jewels, and raiment, which they borrowed of the Egyptians, who were spoiled by them, though very justly; this being but a payment of them for

the hard and long service with which they had served them; see the exact fulfilment of prophecy, (<sup><1211></sup>Exodus 11:2,3 12:35,36 <sup><1945></sup>Psalm 105:37).

**Ver. 15.** *And thou shall go to thy fathers in peace*, etc.] Or die, which is a going the way of all flesh, to a man's long home, out of this world to another, to the world of spirits, to those that are gone before them; which is no inconsiderable proof of the immortality of the soul. Jarchi infers from hence, that Terah, Abram's father, was a penitent, and died a good man, and went to heaven, the place and state of the blessed, whither Abram should go at death; but the phrase of going to the fathers is used both of good and bad men: it is moreover said of Abram, that he should go in peace; being freed from all the fatigues of his journeying from place to place in his state of pilgrimage, and not living to see the afflictions of his posterity, and to have any share in them; and dying in spiritual peace, in tranquillity of mind, knowing in whom he had believed, and where his salvation was safe and secure, and whither he was going; for a good man dies with peace of conscience, having his sins freely forgiven, and he justified from them by the righteousness of the living Redeemer, and enters into eternal peace, (see <sup><1375></sup>Psalm 37:37):

*thou shall be buried in a good old age*; this signifies that he should live long, see many days and good ones, enjoy much health and prosperity, continue in the ways of truth and righteousness to the end, and come to his grave like a shock of corn fully ripe, and fit for an other world; and that he should have a decent interment in the land of Canaan, where he purchased a burial place, and which was a pledge and earnest of the future possession of it by his seed, the thing here promised.

**Ver. 16.** *And in the fourth generation they shall come hither again*, etc.] The seed of Abram were in the land of Canaan before their descent into Egypt; and it is here predicted and promised, that they should come thither again, as they did, in the fourth generation of those that descended thither; for Moses and Aaron were the fourth from Levi, or Eleazar from Kohath, and Caleb from Judah; or rather this was in the fourth age or century from the birth of Isaac, when the four hundred were up before mentioned, men living at that time about an hundred years: Grotius interprets this of the fourth generation of the Amorites, because of what follows:

*for the iniquity of the Amorites [is] not yet full*; and therefore as yet would not be turned out of the land, and the seed of Abram could not till then inherit it: wicked people have a measure of iniquity to fill up, which is

known of God; some are longer, some are quicker in filling it up, during which time God waits patiently and bears with them; but, when it is completed, he stays no longer, but takes vengeance on them, (<sup><4133></sup>Matthew 23:32). The Amorites were only one of the nations of the Canaanites, but were a very strong and powerful one, and are put for them all, and are the rather mentioned, because Abram at this time dwelt among them; and it seems as if there were some good men among them, such as the confederates of Abram might be, and they were not arrived to that depth of wickedness they afterwards would and did, and which brought on their ruin, and so made way for the posterity of Abram to inherit their land. Ben Melech interprets it of the punishment of the sin of the Amorites, the time for that was not come to dispossess them of their land.

**Ver. 17.** *And it came to pass, when the sun went down*, etc.] It was going down when the deep sleep fell on Abram, and now it was quite gone or set:

*and it was dark*; which is not always the case as soon as the sun is set, there is a twilight for a while, and if a clear night the stars appear; but, as Aben Ezra observes, this was a dark and cloudy night; so it was a dark night, a time of great affliction and distress to the posterity of Abram, when their sun was set, or after the death of Joseph:

*behold a smoking furnace*; or the likeness of one, as Aben Ezra notes; for all this was represented in a visionary way to Abram, and was an emblem of the great troubles and afflictions of the children of Israel in Egypt, called the iron furnace, (<sup><6940></sup>Deuteronomy 4:20), and may have respect to the furnaces in which they burnt the bricks they made, (see <sup><1008></sup>Exodus 9:8); the Jewish paraphrases make this to be a representation of hell, which is prepared for the wicked in the world to come, as a furnace surrounded with sparks and flames of fire; and Jarchi says, it intimated to Abram, that the kingdoms would fall into hell:

*and a burning lamp, that passed between those pieces*; or a lamp of fire <sup>f1020</sup>; an emblem of the Shechinah, or majesty of God, who afterwards appeared in a pillar of fire before the Israelites in the wilderness, after their deliverance out of Egypt, and when their salvation went forth as a lamp that burneth, of which this was a token: this burning lamp passed between the pieces of the heifer, goat, and ram, that Abram had divided in the midst, as was usually done when covenants were made, (see <sup><3648></sup>Jeremiah 34:18); and here God made a covenant with Abram, as appears from (<sup><0158></sup>Genesis 15:18); and, as a confirmation of it, passed between the pieces

in a lamp of fire, showing that he was and would be the light and salvation of his people, Abram's seed, and an avenger of their enemies; only God passed between the pieces, not Abram, this covenant being as others God makes with men, only on one side; God, in covenanting with men, promises and gives something unto them, but men give nothing to him, but receive from him, as was the case between God and Abram: however, it is very probable, that this lamp of fire consumed the pieces, in like manner as fire from heaven used to fall upon and consume the sacrifices, in token of God's acceptance of them.

**Ver. 18.** *In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram,* etc.] Which he confirmed by passing between the pieces and accepting his sacrifice:

*saying, unto thy seed have I given this land;* he had given it in his purpose, and he had given the promise of it, and here he renews the grant, and ratifies and confirms it, even the land of Canaan, where Abram now was, though only a sojourner in it; and which is described by its boundaries and present occupants, in this and the following verses, as is usually done in grants of lands and deeds of conveyance:

*from the river of Egypt, unto the great river, the river of Euphrates;* the river of Egypt is the Nile, which overflowed it annually and made it fruitful; so the Targum of Jonathan calls it the river of Egypt; it may be rendered, "from the river Mizraim or Egypt", for the name of Egypt was given to the river Nile as well as to the country, and so it is called by Homer<sup>f1021</sup>; and Diodorus Siculus<sup>f1022</sup> says, the Nile was first called Egypt; some<sup>f1023</sup> think the Nile is not here meant, but a little river of Egypt that ran through the desert that lay between Palestine and Egypt; but it seems to be a branch of the river Nile, which was lesser about Palestine or Damiata, at the entrance of Egypt, than at other places. Brocardus<sup>f1024</sup> says,

"from Delta to Heliopolis were three miles, where another river was separated from the Nile, and carried to the city of Pelusium; and, adds he, this river is properly called in Scripture the river of Egypt, and at it is bounded the lot of the tribe of Judah."

This river of Egypt, or the Nile, was the southern boundary of the land of Canaan, and from hence to the river Euphrates, the eastern boundary, was the utmost extent of it in which it was ever possessed, as it was in the times of David and Solomon, (~~108~~2 Samuel 8:3 ~~102~~1 Kings 4:21).

**Ver. 19.** *The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites.*] In this and the following verses ten nations are reckoned as occupying the land of Canaan at this time, whereas only seven are mentioned in the times of Moses and Joshua; and these three are not among them, and seem before those times to have been extinct, or were mixed with the other nations, and were no more distinct ones; though Aben Ezra thinks these people had two names, and Jarchi interprets them of the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites, who shall be the inheritance of the children of Israel in future times, according to (<sup><23114></sup>Isaiah 11:14); and so the Jerusalem Talmud <sup>f1025</sup>, from whence he seems to have taken it; and some are of opinion that the Midianites are meant by the Kenites, since Jethro, Moses's father in law, who was of Midian, is called the Kenite, as was also Heber, who was of the same race, (<sup><0016></sup>Judges 1:16 4:11); there were Kenites near to the Amalekites in the times of Balaam, and who dwelt among them in the times of Saul, (<sup><0023></sup>Numbers 24:20,21 <sup><0156></sup>1 Samuel 15:6); as there were also some of this name that descended from the father of the house of Rechab, or the Rechabites, who were associates and proselytes to the people of Israel, (<sup><1325></sup>1 Chronicles 2:55); the Kenizzites are supposed by some to be the descendants of Kenaz, a grandson of Esau, (<sup><0331></sup>Genesis 36:11); but then they must be so called here by anticipation, since Kenaz was not now born, and rather then would have had the name of Kenazites; besides, none of the land of the children of Esau, at least of those that dwelt about Mount Seir, was to be given to the children of Israel, (<sup><0605></sup>Deuteronomy 1:5); could indeed the Edomites or Idumeans be intended, it might be thought this had its accomplishment in the times of David, and more especially when the Idumeans became Jews, embraced their religion, and were one people with them, in the times of Hyrcanus <sup>f1026</sup>: the Kadmonites, or the Orientals, were, as Bochart <sup>f1027</sup> very probably thinks, the Hivites, who inhabited the eastern part of the land of Canaan about Mount Hermon, and from thence might have their name, as they are in the Jerusalem Targum called the children of the east; and hence came the names of Cadmus and Hermione his wife, who were Hivites, and the fable of their being turned into serpents, which the word Hivites signifies.

**Ver. 20.** *And the Hittites,* etc.] Who had their name from Heth, a son of Canaan, (see <sup><0105></sup>Genesis 10:15); they dwelt about Hebron, in the south of the land of Canaan:

*and the Perizzites;* these dwelt in the wood country of the land, (<sup><0675></sup>Joshua 17:15); and seem to have their name from dwelling in villages, and at a

distance from towns and cities, and were a boorish and uncivilized people, (see <sup><0137></sup>Genesis 13:7):

*and the Rephaims*; or “giants”, as the Targums of Onkelos, and Jonathan; they dwelt near the Perizzites, (<sup><0175></sup>Joshua 17:15); of these (see <sup><0145></sup>Genesis 14:5).

**Ver. 21.** *And the Amorites*, etc.] The same with the Amorite, (<sup><0106></sup>Genesis 10:16); they inhabited both on this and the other side Jordan:

*and the Canaanites*; which were a particular tribe or nation that bore the name of their great ancestor Canaan, (see <sup><0137></sup>Genesis 13:7):

*and the Girgashites*; the same with the Gergesenes in (<sup><0188></sup>Matthew 8:28); of these (see <sup><0106></sup>Genesis 10:16):

*and the Jebusites*; who inhabited Jerusalem and about it, which was first called Jebus, from the founder of this nation, (see Gill on “<sup><0106></sup>Genesis 10:16”).