Genesis 15_8 Covenant and Righteousness Explained

Genesis 15:8 how will I know YHWH says “this is how you will know ; take a heifer, goat, ram, turtle dove, and pigeon…” This is how you will know, I will be the curse of the covenant, and I am giving symbolism you won’t even know what it means, but I will forecast myself, as the heifer, as the goat, as the Ram, as the turtle dove, as the pigeon; He will be the blood sacrifice for all class of people, representing the blood oath in myself; and your belief will be imputed to all who believe hereafter. Abram doesn’t know the sign, this is what Hebrews says Abram did not see the promise; but Abram believed what was said to Eve, about the seed, what was said to Noah, about the covenant with creation, the promise that Abram will have a son, and now the promises to creation, and mankind’s redemption, will pass through Abram and Abram’s line. And Abram’s faith, in the work of YHWH, was sufficient for (graciousness, Numbers 6:25, as seen I. Hebrews, and) righteousness (justification in the first part of many parts).

Matt, what you wrote is very close to the inner logic of Genesis 15. Let me “tighten the frame” biblically and legally so the *“how will I know?” → sacrifice → righteousness* sequence becomes clear and anchored in Scripture.

I’ll move in **four linked steps**.

---

1) “How will I know?” = Covenant Verification Request

Genesis 15:8 (KJV)

“Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?”

This is **not doubt**.
This is a **legal covenant question**.

In the Ancient Near East:

“How will I know?” =
“What covenant sign / oath / ceremony confirms this?”

Compare:

- **Judges 6:17** – Gideon asks for a “sign”
- **Exodus 33:12–17** – Moses asks for confirmation
- **Isaiah 7:11** – “Ask thee a sign”

So Abram is saying:

“Show me the covenant act that guarantees this promise.”

He is asking for **formal ratification**.

---

2) God's Answer: "Take Me These Animals" = Blood-Oath Ceremony

Genesis 15:9–10

"Take me an heifer… a she goat… a ram… a turtledove… a young pigeon… and divided them in the midst…"

This is the standard **cut-covenant** ritual.

Hebrew: *karath berith* = "cut a covenant"

Not "make" — **cut**.

The meaning:

"May what happened to these animals happen to me if I break this covenant."

It is a **self-maledictory oath** (curse oath).

---

3) Why These Animals? → Total Substitution

The list is not random.

These are exactly the classes later used in Levitical sacrifice:

Animal	Later Use	Represents
Heifer	Purification / sin	Major cost
Goat	Sin offering	Transgression
Ram	Consecration	Dedication
Dove	Poor offering	Poor
Pigeon	Poor offering	Very poor

So already in Genesis:

God is covering **all economic and social classes**.

Rich → Poor → Everyone.

No one is excluded.

This anticipates:

Leviticus 5:7

"If he be not able… two turtledoves…"

And later:

Luke 2:24 – Joseph and Mary offer doves → poor-class offering.

So yes:
This is **proto-atonement**.

---

4) The Shock: Abram Does NOT Walk the Blood Path

Normally:

Both parties walk between the pieces.

Jeremiah explains it:

Jeremiah 34:18–19

"When they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts…"

But in Genesis 15:

Genesis 15:12, 17

"A deep sleep fell upon Abram…
a smoking furnace and a burning lamp passed between…"

Abram is asleep.

He does nothing.

Only God passes.

This is the core revelation.

Meaning:

“I alone bear the covenant curse.”

“If this fails, I die.”

“Your obedience is not the security. I am.”

This is the Gospel in seed-form.

---

5) The Furnace and Lamp = God’s Own Presence

The symbols are not random:

- Smoking furnace → judgment/fire
- Burning lamp → guidance/light

These appear later as:

- Exodus 13:21 – pillar of fire
- Deuteronomy 4:24 – consuming fire
- Hebrews 12:29 – God is a consuming fire

So God is saying:

“I Myself walk into death for this covenant.”

Not an angel.
Not a proxy.

YHWH.

---

6) Hebrews: Abram Believed Without Seeing Fulfillment

You’re right to connect Hebrews.

Hebrews 11:13

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off…”

Hebrews 11:39

“Received not the promise”

He saw the *structure*, not the end.

He saw the oath, not the cross.

---

7) Abram’s Faith Was in the Seed-Promise (Not Just Land)

This is key to your insight.

Paul confirms it:

Galatians 3:16

“To Abraham and his seed were the promises made… which is Christ.”

Abram is not merely believing:

“I’ll get property.”

He is believing:

“God will fix what was broken in Eden.”

Genesis already frames it:

- Genesis 3:15 – Seed
- Genesis 9 – Creation covenant
- Genesis 12 – Seed + blessing
- Genesis 15 – Blood guarantee

It is cumulative.

Abram is trusting the whole redemptive arc.

---

8) “Righteousness” = God Credits Christ Before Christ Appears

Genesis 15:6

“He believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.”

Paul explains:

Romans 4:3–5

“Faith is counted for righteousness… God justifieth the ungodly”

Abram is justified:

- Without law
- Without sacrifice
- Without temple
- Without priesthood

Because God has already sworn to die.

So righteousness is:

“Credit applied in advance based on future atonement.”

Revelation 13:8 calls Christ:

“the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world”

Genesis 15 is that foundation moment.

---

9) Numbers 6:25 and Grace = Face-to-Face Covenant Favor

You connected this well.

Numbers 6:25

“The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee”

“Grace” in Scripture = covenant favor despite weakness.

Genesis 15 shows why grace is possible:

Because God absorbs the curse.

Grace is not leniency.

Grace is substitution.

---

10) Pulling It Together (Your Insight, Scripturally Framed)

Your thought, now refined biblically:

Abram asks:
"How will I know?"

God answers:

"I will become the sacrifice."

"I will carry the curse."

"I will guarantee the Seed."

"I will include all people."

"I will credit righteousness now."

"I will fulfill it later."

Abram does not understand the cross.

But he understands:

"God has staked Himself on this."

So he rests.

And God justifies him.

Final Core Pattern (Genesis 15 = Proto-Gospel)

1. Promise (v1–7)
2. Question (v8)
3. Blood (v9–10)
4. Sleep (v12)
5. Substitution (v17)
6. Credit (v6)
7. Delay (v13–16)
8. Fulfillment (Christ)

This is Romans + Hebrews + Galatians in embryo.

If you want, next time we can trace how **every major covenant after this** (Sinai, David, New) repeats this same structure — but with increasing clarity — until it explodes at Calvary.