

# Genesis 15:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

## Analysis

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**And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir...** This passage is part of the Abrahamic narratives which shift from universal human history to God's particular covenant people. The Abraham cycle (Genesis 12-25) demonstrates God's sovereign election, covenant faithfulness, and the development of faith through testing and promise fulfillment.

Central themes include God's unconditional covenant promises (land, descendants, blessing to nations), the call to faith and obedience, the testing of faith through delays and impossibilities, the contrast between divine promises and human schemes, and God's gracious persistence despite human failures. Abraham emerges as the father of faith whose trust in God's promises becomes the model for all believers (Romans 4, Galatians 3, Hebrews 11).

Theologically, these narratives establish:

1. salvation by grace through faith rather than works
2. covenant as God's gracious initiative binding Himself to His people
3. the necessity of patient trust when promises seem impossible
4. the consequences of attempting to fulfill God's promises through human effort
5. the pattern of divine testing producing mature faith.

The Abraham cycle foreshadows Christ as the ultimate seed through whom blessing extends to all nations (Galatians 3:16).

## Historical Context

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The patriarchal narratives (Genesis 12-50) reflect the cultural, social, and legal customs of the ancient Near East during the Middle Bronze Age (2000-1500 BCE). Archaeological discoveries including the Mari tablets, Nuzi tablets, and Egyptian records confirm many details: nomadic pastoralism, covenant-making ceremonies, marriage customs, property laws, and international travel patterns described in Genesis.

The cultural practices reflected include: treaty/covenant forms (Genesis 15), bride-price customs (Genesis 24, 29), inheritance laws favoring firstborn sons (Genesis 25, 27), adoption practices (Genesis 15, 30), levirate-type arrangements (Genesis 38), and Egyptian administrative systems (Genesis 41, 47). These parallels confirm Genesis's historical reliability while showing how God worked within ancient cultural frameworks to accomplish His purposes.

For later Israelites, these narratives established their identity as Abraham's descendants, explained their claim to Canaan, justified their possession of Joseph's bones (Exodus 13:19), and provided models of faith despite imperfection. The patriarchs' failures and God's faithfulness encouraged Israel that covenant relationship depended on God's grace rather than human merit. The movement from Mesopotamia to Canaan to Egypt set the stage for the Exodus and conquest narratives.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

## Study Questions

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1. What does this passage reveal about God's sovereignty and human responsibility?
2. What specific changes in thinking or behavior does this verse call us to make?

3. What connections can we trace from this verse to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection?

## Interlinear Text

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וַיֹּאמֶר	אֲבְרָם	הֵן	לִי	אֵין	בְּהִינֵנִי	זֶרַע
said	And Abram	H2005	H0	no	Behold to me thou hast given	seed
H559	H87		H3808		H5414	H2233
וְהִנֵּה	בֵּן	בֵּיתִי	יֹרֵשׁ	אֵתִי:		
H2009	and lo one born	in my house	is mine heir	H853		
	H1121	H1004	H3423			

## Additional Cross-References

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**Genesis 14:14** (Parallel theme): And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan.

**Proverbs 29:21** (Parallel theme): He that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child shall have him become his son at the length.

**Ecclesiastes 2:7** (Parallel theme): I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me: