



Handout for week of 3/11/19 Luke 9:28-36 & Gn. 15: 5-12, 17-18

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Fr. Robert Beck ([subscription](#))

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(Material in italics is omitted in the reading)

Genesis 15: 5 And He brought him forth abroad, and said: 'Look now toward heaven, and count the stars, if thou be able to count them'; and He said unto him: 'So shall thy seed be.' 6 And he believed in HaShem; and He counted it to him for righteousness. 7 And He said unto him: 'I am HaShem that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.' 8 And he said: 'O L-rd GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?' 9 And He said unto him: 'Take Me a heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon.' 10 And he took him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each half over against the other; but the birds divided he not. 11 And the birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away. 12 And it came to pass, that, when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, a dread, even a

great darkness, fell upon him.

13 And He said unto Abram: 'Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; 14 and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterward shall they come out with great substance. 15 But thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. 16 And in the fourth generation they shall come back hither; for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full.'

17 And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and there was thick darkness, behold a smoking furnace, and a flaming torch that passed between these pieces. 18 In that day HaShem made a covenant with Abram, saying: 'Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates;

COMMENTARY:

In the reading from Genesis we observe Abraham also negotiating a narrow passage. The strange ceremony is call "cutting a covenant." Presumably this custom, taken from the manners of the time, was meant to signify staunch commitment to the covenant oath. It would probably signify something like - May this destruction happen to me, if I violate this covenant promise. Grim, and gory.

The passage of Yahweh God through the avenue made by the cut animals is described as resembling a smoking firepot and a flaming torch. The smoke and fire remind us of the column of fire and cloud that led the Israelites through the risky passage of the red Sea. The promises made to Abraham, solemnized by the covenant passage, will be made good when God leads the people through the passage through the sea onward to the land that he has promised.

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B 2007. Pgs.59-60.

The Journey

Where are you going i asked / to places i have never been / was the answer / what do you plan to do i asked / my purpose will be evident at journey's end / who has planned your itinerary i asked / its plan will be revealed at times most unlikely / why would you consent to such a vague plan i said / i accepted the challenge / when I accepted life was the answer Mary Elanor Rice Page 135

Janice Grana Ed. [Images](#) St. Mary's College Press, Winona MN 1976