These separate encounters are united by the narrator through a parallel ABC/A′B′C′ structure:

A  The Lord makes a promise to Abraham, using the formula “I am” (15:1).
B  Abraham apprehensively questions the Lord, addressing him with the rare title “Sovereign LORD” (15:2–3).
C  The Lord reassures Abraham by symbolic acts: the display of stars with reference to the seed (15:4–6).
A′ The Lord makes a promise to Abraham, using the formula “I am” (15:7).
B′ Abraham apprehensively questions the Lord, addressing him with the rare title “Sovereign LORD” (15:8).
C′ The Lord reassures Abraham by symbolic acts: the burning torch and the smoking kiln through the carcasses with reference to the land (15:9–21).1

God’s Two Promises to Abraham: the Seed and the Soil

1. The Seed

A. God Promises Peace

**Genesis 15:1** (ESV) After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.”

B. God Promises Protection

**Genesis 15:1** (ESV) After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.”

C. God Promises Reward

**Genesis 15:1** (ESV) After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.”

D. The Details of the Promise

**Genesis 15:2-5** (ESV) But Abram said, “O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” 2 And Abram said, “Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir.” 4 And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: “This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir.” 5 And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”

2. The Land

A. God’s Promise of the Land

**Genesis 15:7** (ESV) And he said to him, “I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.”

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B. God’s Covenant

- The Reason for the Covenant

  To guarantee Abraham that God would fulfill His promise!

- The Details of the Covenant

  Jeremiah 34:18 (ESV) And the men who transgressed my covenant and did not keep the terms of the covenant that they made before me, I will make them like the calf that they cut in two and passed between its parts—

The Doctrine of Justification

Genesis 15:5-6 (ESV) ⁵ And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” ⁶ And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

The believing.  “Abram believed the LORD”

The blessing.  “and he counted it to him as righteousness”

Justification – “This is the judicial act of God whereby the sinner who repents of his/her sins and believes in Christ is declared free from the penalty of that divine law which he/she has broken. It is God’s verdict of acquittal in the case of a penitent believer.” - E. C. Dargan in The Doctrines of Our Faith, 1920.