

JESUS IN GENESIS

SEASON 2

JESUS IN GENESIS - SEASON 2: GENESIS 15:1-21

COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY GUIDE - WEEK OF MAY 2, 2021

Introduction:

- Faith is like an immigrant's ability to use his native language; one might be able to survive using it without practicing it outside of his home or comfort zone, but one can only gain confidence using it after he is forced to practice it in a challenging, real world setting for an extended period. God grows Abram's faith likewise by putting him in positions that will force him to practice it. He does the same with us.

1. A Promise Given

- v1: In this chapter, Abram returns from war and God meets him and encourages him in his place of exhaustion and doubt. This is a revelation of the pattern of how God approaches His people; He initiates the relationship and we need to respond. "Shield" is the same word used in Gen. 14:20; a reminder that God is the one who shields us, protects us and delivers us from our greatest afflictions (Satan, sin, death, the flesh). We don't have to fight physical battles as God's servants, but the same spiritual battle still rages today. We have to choose God over all other inferior "shields" in which we're tempted to trust.
- v2: Abram feels so loved that he feels comfortable enough to talk back. A sign of doubt, as shown by usage of "O LORD God." Doubt and unbelief differ in that doubt draws near to God, seeks resolution and wrestles like Jacob, while unbelief condemns God for not blessing a person with what the person thinks God should bless him with.
- v3: Taking the word "son" out of this verse and filling in the gap reveals what we're struggling with and what, perhaps, we think could satisfy us more than God Himself. What is it for you?

2. A Promise Believed

- In these verses, a promise is given by God and Abram responds. What does Abram do? He believes.
- v5: God takes Abram for a walk to stop his "navel-gazing." It "wows" Abram and helps him realize that life is not all about him and his desires. Furthermore, God shows Abram that the blessing to him is not about what He is going to do in and for Abram in this life, but how He is going to make Abram useful for His glory through Abram's ancestors. The greatest blessing God can give us is to make us useful for His kingdom/glory, which is not a guarantee of a comfortable life, but, something praiseworthy when we look at it through the lens of eternity (as Abram did).
- Abram's blessing doesn't just apply to Jewish people, but to all those who are children of God by faith. See Gal 3:29.
- v6: One of the most important verses in all of the Bible. Imputed righteousness and justification by faith are expressed here, very early in the OT text. Abram believed, not just the word of God, but the God of the word, and God counted it to him as righteousness. Believing that there is a God who we can trust is the presupposition that enables us to view life properly and approach it properly, which runs contrary to scientific rationalism, which says, "I need to see, and then I'll believe." See 2 Cor 5:22; Heb. 11:8-16. In some way, Abram believed that God would send a Messiah who would one day come and be the atonement for man's sin.
- We can either lean the fulness of our existence and our salvation on God and His word, other people or ourselves. Critics of Christianity say that Christians use circular reason when appealing to the inerrancy of scripture, but they use circular reason in appealing to the authority of their own reason while making such a claim. We either rely on the circular reasoning of our own mind, or we rely on a word from the outside to justify our existence and receive salvation. We need to listen to God instead of other people.

3. A Promise Guaranteed

- v7: Contains typical language of making an ancient covenant. Similar to the prologue preceding God's covenant with the Israelites when He gave them the Law. See Exodus 2:23-24; 6:2-4; Psa. 72; Luke 1:54-55, 72-73. The central narrative of scripture shows that God is a loving God who doesn't let us go. Ultimately, God provides a way to satisfy His justice and extend his love to his chosen people.
- v8-17: In response to Abram's question in v8 (a humble admission of Abram that he will actually fall short of meeting the covenant commitments), God gives Abram a sign that He Himself will assume responsibility His own responsibilities as well as Abram's responsibilities within the covenant. This is shown in that God causes a sleep to fall upon Abram, and He Himself, in the form of the fire pot and flaming torch, walks through the quartered animals. In this covenant, God invites the just judgement due to man for his sin upon himself. On the cross, Christ, though undeserving in His own regard, bore the punishment that man deserves. By faith in

DISCUSSION GOALS

Head

To understand God's commitment to His covenant with Abram.

Heart

To believe that we are, like Abram, counted righteous before the Father by faith when we trust Him as our shield and deliverer in life.

Hands

To lean the fulness of our existence and salvation on God and His word.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We will hold **9:30AM** and **11:30AM services** this coming Sunday, May 9.

Our Parent Commissioning

(formerly Child Dedication)

Service will be at the **9:30AM service this Sunday, May 9.**

Come and support the families in the the church!

There is a **Baptism Seminar** on **May 16 after 2nd service (1PM)** in the basement of the Temple.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Christ, like Abram, we can have Christ's righteous status applied to our account before the Father.

- The example of a daughter dropping her father's wedding ring into a slot in a metronome and crying out for forgiveness was given to remind us that when we see our sin/sinfulness, God, like a good Father, is delighted to extend mercy and forgiveness to us.
- v18-21: Provides a description of a promised land that is much larger than the territory acquired by Israel at its peak of strength. This should incline readers to understand that there is an offering to come into Christ's promised land to everybody.

Read Genesis 15:1-21

1. Can someone take a moment to summarize the main points of the sermon?
2. Read verse 1. How are these words comforting to Abram?
3. How does Abram express his doubt of God's promise and blessing at the beginning of the passage?
4. What is the difference between doubt and unbelief?
5. **Read verse 6.** How is this an expression of the same gospel that is taught in the New Testament?
6. Can somebody explain what happened during the covenant ceremony?
7. Who is the active participant in the covenant ceremony and what does that teach us about the nature of the covenant that God made with Abram?
8. What steps in the covenant ceremony point to Jesus Christ's atoning death on the cross?
9. What is notable about the mention of the "birds of prey" in verse 11?
10. **Read verses 12-16.** Why does God relent from immediately destroying wicked people like the Amorites? What does this teach about His character?