

REASSURING FAITH! | GENESIS 15:1-21 | PASTOR MARK BOFILL | 7/30/2023

I. God Encourages Abram (1) | II. God Establishes Faith (2-6) | III. God Ensures The Covenant (7-21)

INTRO: Once again we find Abram in a questionable state of mind. So, God does 3 things to Reassure Abram's faith in His promises.

READ

I. GOD ENCOURAGES ABRAM (1) – God Comforted Abrams Fears! “After these things...”

Abram just rejected the offer from the king of Sodom (22-24). This verse now tells us that

Abram became troubled in his spirit. What was going through his mind? **He possibly...**

- **Feared an ATTACK from Bera, king of Sodom** – He just took a stand for righteousness! – In his integrity he rejected any compensation from Bera! (**James 1:27b**), tells us to “keep ourselves “unspotted” from the world.” (When a Christian chooses to withstand the system of this world, the world often responds with hostility and rejection, and sometimes even retaliation!)
- **Feared RETALIATION from the Eastern kings** – He just launched surprise attack. And as things settled; he was obviously concerned! – But God knew where Abram's heart and mind was. Abram went from a **Man of ACTION** in (ch.14), to a **Man of EMOTION** now in (ch.15).

Encouragement came...

A. By God's Word (1a) – “The word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision...” This is the **1st mention** of the “word of the Lord” in the Bible. – God granted **a vision** of Himself speaking words of comfort to Abram's in his circumstances. – **It calmed Abram's spirit!** – **P/A:** When we go through difficult times in life, do you just sit there and let your “**wheels spin**” in your mind? Oh, that is so troubling! (Open your Bible and make time for God, listen to Him speak to you!)

- **The faith that conquers... is a faith in God's Word and not in our emotions!**

Abram was also Encouraged...

B. By God's Presence (1b) – God immediately identified Abram's emotion when He spoke the words, “**Do not be afraid**” – **He assured Abram that He knew what he needed!** “**Abram. I AM your shield, your exceedingly great reward.**” (I. I AM – II. I Will – III. I Have Given, exp.)

1. **God KNEW** that a SHIELD was necessary for Abram since he anticipated an assault.
2. **God KNEW** that Abram wanted COMPENSATION since he had turned down a substantial prize from the ruler of Sodom. (An emo-moper! i.e., an Emoper!)
3. **God GAVE** a REASON for Abram to put away his fear... ‘I am thy reward.’ (U Believe this?)
4. **God's WORD Reassured Abram's Faith!** – When God is on your side, you have nothing to fear! – I've heard it said, that “**One person with God is the majority!**” (tt. **Psalm 27:1-3**)

P/A – “FEAR NOT” (KJV), is a recurring message throughout the entire Bible. Abram did not need to be afraid of anything, because **God is ultimately in control of ALL THINGS!** The same applies to us as God's children. Whether it be a minor life setback or a seriously frightening situation, Christians are called to face it without undue fear, trusting in God! – (**Isa 41:10**) says, **FEAR NOT, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.** (God's Word always Reassures Faith!)

II. GOD ESTABLISHES FAITH (2-6) – Abram received God’s encouragement, **but he still had questions!** Questions that God would use as a platform to draw out his faith even deeper!

- Ever since God called Abram out of his land, *it seems as if He was dropping breadcrumbs for Abram to follow by faith!* With each finding, his trust in God develops even more and more, and as a result, **his faith is REASSURED.**

- *Throughout the process God had to be patient with Abram who did not yet understand!*

A. God Understands (2-3) – The **Divine Patience** listened to every one of **Abrams Concerns!**

1. **What Will You Give Me? (2)** – The reward he truly desired was a son! (*His clock is ticking!*) – God previously promised **MANY DESCENDANTS (13:16)** and that he would be a **Great Nation (12:2)**, **BUT NOTHING WAS HAPPENING!** – He was frustrated with God’s timing...

2. **He told God to “LOOK” (3)** – **YOU have given me NO offspring.** Abram's brave honesty before the LORD reminds us that we can talk to God about anything! He expressed his annoyance to God with an open heart rather than suppressing it. (*Prayer is talking to God!*)

- **Abram then offers His Own Solution** to give his inheritance to his servant Eliezer, *since God seemingly was doing nothing* (*Don’t rush God! Don’t let your emotions rule you! e.g., King Saul!*)

- **God knew how Abram felt**, He knew how long they waited, but God still had his own time frame for accomplishing His purposes...this is how faith develops... by Waiting and Trusting! (*tt. Ps 37:3-4*). – And so...

B. God Reaffirms His Promise (4-5) – He brings **Clarity** to the situation... *Behold...the word of the Lord came to him, again!* – *“Abby, it’s not going to happen the way you think it should happen!”*

1. **Eliezer is NOT Your Heir! (4)** – And you **WILL have descendants from your own body!**

2. **God tells Abram to “LOOK” (5)** – Step outside with me Abe, *Look NOW toward Heaven Count the STARS, if you can!* Previously **(13:16)**, God’s reference was from the DUST of the earth. Point being...**his descendants would be innumerable!** (*Can you count dust?*)

- **At this visual illustration**, I imagine Abram must have welled-up in tears and even greater emotion. But most importantly, **(v.6)** tells us that **HE BELIEVED IN THE LORD!** – As a result...

C. God Credits Abram’s Belief for Righteousness (6) – This is the 1st time the words **Believe** and **Righteousness** are used in the Bible, which serves as one of the clearest expressions of the Truth of Salvation by Grace, through Faith. An important element for restoration.

1. **Since the fall**, mankind was separated from God. And God has since been working to redeem sinful mankind to himself, as promised through **“His Seed” (Gen 3:15).**

- When Abram believed God, specifically... in “God’s promise” regarding his descendants (*which would lead to Messiah*), God imputed righteousness to Abram’s account! (*in other words*)

- Christ's righteousness was placed "**on credit**" to Abraham's spiritual account. He therefore, stood positionally (and perfectly) righteous and forgiven before a Holy God! – **This Justification allows God to enter into fellowship with sinners**, because they have the very righteous requirement **Imputed to them through Faith**. (Rom 5:1) tells us that being "...Justified by faith we have peace with God..."

2. God later uses **Abram's Example** to **Establish Faith** "as the means" by which salvation can be: **Attained** (Eph 2:8-9) – *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.* And furthermore, **Maintained** (Hab 2:4b) – *But the just shall live by his faith.*

P/A – The fact that our heavenly Father has worked so diligently to **Establish Faith** as a **righteous requirement** should never be taken lightly! **Knowing this should Reassure Faith in us all!**

Finally, we see that...

III. GOD ENSURES THE COVENANT (7-21) – Having Established Faith, God switches to the **previous promises** he made to Abram in (Gen 12: 2,7; 13:14-16). *He does this first...*

READ.

A. **By Reminding (7-8)** – In order to Reassure Abram's Faith in His Covenant, **He reminds Abram WHO HE IS:** the **I AM THE LORD!** – He also reminds him **WHAT HE CALLED HIM TO:** **God brought him out to bring him in!** – God was always working! (John 5:17) Jesus said, *"My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."* (Always for our good!) But..

- **Abram Still Questioned...How Lord?** A real question which required proof! He honestly desired to know how God would do this. So, God showed Him...

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B. **By Requiring Sacrificial Offerings (9-11)** – God tells Abram to fetch and prepare Five Particular Creatures (cf. Lev 1:1-17), to initiate the surety of His Promises to Abram! (Proof!) – This followed an **ANCIENT COVENANT CEREMONY** which involving the "**cutting of animals**" and the "**binding of two parties**" to **a promise**. – The serious meaning behind the agreement was, **Whoever broke the covenant would become as the split animal... DEAD!** (Jer 34:18-19)

- As Abram completed the task, he found himself having to **protect the sacrifices from the Vultures!** This symbolizes how Satan often attempts to hinder the plan of God! (i.e., 1 Pet 5:8)

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C. **By Revelation (12-16)** – As Abram slept, God used **a seeming nightmare** to reveal what would happen to his descendants and their land! – **This reveals that Abrams descendants...**

1. ...would **exist**, as promised by God (13a) – *Know for certain!*
2. ...would **dwell** in a foreign land (13b) – *Egypt...as strangers there.*
3. ...would be there for **400 years!** (13c) – *God had reasons for it. (Growth & Judgment)*
4. ...would be **slaves!** (13d) – *Serving pharaoh's purposes. (Learning of bondage)*
5. ...would **come out** of that land **by God's Judgment** (14a) – *On Egypt and Pharaoh.*
6. ...would **obtain great possessions** from that land (14b) – (cf. Ex 12:36)
7. ...would **return to Canaan** (16) – *In the fourth generation they shall return here (Canaan)*

- **Abrams Fate and God's Foresight (15-16)** – Abram would live to **175 years (Gen 25:7)** – God would grant the Amorites 400 years to repent from their evil, until Joshua's Conquest.

READ

D. **By Ratification (17-21)** – As Abram is in a Deep Sleep, a smoking oven and a burning torch appeared and passed through the pieces (17). – This symbolized the presence of God, similar to Moses' encounter in (Ex 13:21) – By doing this, God gave Abram the strongest **ASSURANCE** possible, because it was an Unconditional Covenant!

1. **God Initiated the Covenant, so only He could ENSURE THE COVENANT!**

– W. Wiersbe comments... *"It was God who made promises to Abram. Not Abraham, who made promises to God. There were no conditions attached; The covenant of grace came from the generous heart of God."* – **Because God cannot fail, this promise could not be broken!**

2. **God's Land Covenant (18-21)** – Was given to Abrams descendants, regardless of claims from other nation. A large area, that unfortunately not fully claimed! (Ex. Joshua, Solomon)

And So, God Reassured The Faith of Abram!

- When Abram was concerned about Himself, God reassured Abram by saying **"I Am!"**
- When he was concerned about his Heir, God said, **"I Will!"**
- When he was concerned about the Land, God responded, **"I Have Given!"**

Do you need to be REASSURED in your faith today?

- Sometimes we get Shaky in our Faith...But God Comforts Us!
- Sometimes we doubt the promises of God, but God Confirms us!
- Sometimes we fail in our relations with God, but God ALWAYS keeps His Promises!

I encourage you to Call upon the Lord this week! Tell him what you're going through.

By faith, surrender it to God so that He can be your shield and exceedingly great reward.