

God's Promises and Abram's Faith

Main Idea: God will make and keep His promises. He wants me to believe Him.

Intro: God's mandate to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it is once again in peril. God begins with one man to fulfill His plan for the world.

A .God's Pledge v. 1-2

"The word of the Lord came to Abram"- the only time this occurs in the Pentateuch.

1. Don't fear- why?
2. I am your shield
3. I am your great reward

"This last part of God's word to Abram is as wonderful as it is challenging. On the one hand He is saying, 'A relationship with me is more rewarding than anything else possible. Pleasing me, knowing me, loving me, depending on me will give you infinitely more joy, fulfillment, and security than political power, economic wealth, or human acclaim and affection.' On the other hand, He is calling Abram to serve him for God's sake-simply for the joy and delight of having God as his God." (Keller)

Reflection/Application: 1) Do I follow and serve God for the benefits he gives or promises to give me (forgiveness, heaven, help, etc.) or for God Himself? 2) Do I fear my circumstances? My future? What do I need to believe God to be for me?

B. Abram's Questions v. 3-8

1. The problem: no biological heir
2. The promise: you will have biological children as numerous as the stars
3. Key: ****"Abram believed the Lord, and He credited it to him as righteousness."

"The New Testament finds this a momentous chapter in two respects: first in declaring that Abram was justified by faith (6), and secondly in its record of the covenant- for this, rather than Sinai's, was the fundamental covenant, and it spoke of grace and not law...This great statement is quoted twice by Paul (Rom. 4:3, Gal. 3:6) and once by James (2:23) to confirm that justification has always been by faith." (Kidner)

4. Credited? Not that he was inherently righteous, but his faith was counted as righteousness to him.

"This is what impressed God about Abram. He did not simply believe. In taking God at his word he embraced faith. That is not to say that he adopted a faith system- he simply had faith in God. God is always impressed with faith. We learn here then, what impresses God. Do you seek to impress God? Have faith. Our sacrifices of time or resources do not impress God unless they are motivated by faith. And then, it is our faith that impresses him, not our sacrifices." (Walton)

Heb. 11:6 _____

5. Abram's next question: what about the land? How can I know this?
God's answer: a formal covenant

Reflection/Application: Do I have doubts about God's promises to me? What do I need to believe God for?

C. God's Covenant with Abram is Formalized v 9-21

1. The ritual- Jer. 34:18
2. The future- "*God's delays aren't denials*" (Baldwin)
3. The meaning- the cross?
4. The Promised Land

Reflection/Application: 1) Do I believe Jesus has done it all for me to be accepted by God, and that I can't do anything more to make it more secure? 2) Do I trust God's timing is perfect for me?

References:

Baldwin, Joyce. *The Message of Genesis 12-50*, IntersVarsity Press, 1986

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Longman, Tremper. *Genesis Thru Numbers*, Barbour Publishing, 2009

Walton, John H. *The NIV Application commentary on Genesis*, Zondervan, 2001