

He Believed In the Lord

Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3, 9, 22; Gal. 3:6; James 2:23

Introduction:

1. Abram had just defeated Chedorlaomer and his allies who had taken Lot captive. Melchizadek, king of Salem said, "Blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And then God said, "Do not fear Abram, I am a shield to you" (Gen. 15:1).
2. A shield is an instrument of protection. It is designed to deflect the offensive blows of the enemy. Paul says, "Take up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one" (Eph. 6:16).
3. Abram's response is interesting. He immediately reminds God that he is childless. Abram's future looked bleak.
4. But God promised that He would give him descendants like the stars of heaven in number. Even though in ancient cultures having a large family to act as your army provided some protection, it was God who was a shield to Abram.
5. The text says, "Abram believed in the Lord; and it was reckoned to him as righteousness" (15:6).

Discussion:

I. There is a difference in believing that God exists, and believing in what God has said, and in placing one's trust in Him.

- A. Abraham's believing in God was more than believing in His existence.
 1. Believing in God's existence is critical. The one who comes to God must believe that He is (Heb. 11:6).
 2. But Abraham's belief was more than this.
- B. Abraham's belief in God was more than believing what God said.
 1. Believing what God says is critical.
 2. But this text does not say Abraham believed what God told him about having many descendants. It says, "He believed in God." As a matter of fact when God promised Abraham the land, Abraham asked God, "How may I know that I will possess it?" Seems like there was some uncertainty in Abraham.
 3. There is more to faith than believing that God is telling the truth.
- C. Abraham placed his trust in God.
 1. God was the object of Abraham's faith.
 2. Not just what God said, but God Himself.
 - a. It involves considering God faithful who has promised (Heb. 11:8-12).
 - b. It involves trusting God even though you may not understand exactly what He plans to do (Heb. 11:17-19).
 3. To trust in God Himself means that one believes what He says, although you may

not know how He will accomplish what He has said, and you may need reassurances, as Abraham did (Gen. 15:8ff).

II. Abraham had his flaws.

- A. Repeatedly lied about Sarah presenting her as his sister, fearful for his safety (Gen. 12:10ff; 20:1ff). It seems that they have agreed together in this ploy (Gen. 20:13).
- B. They agreed together to fulfill God's promise through Hagar (Gen. 16:1ff).
- C. When jealousy and despising arose because Hagar had a son and Sarah did not, Abraham told Sarah to treat Hagar any way she saw fit and she dealt harshly with her (Gen. 16:6).
- D. We have already observed that Abraham asked for proof of God's promise (Gen. 15:9). Fear, doubt, lies, jealousy, despising, harsh treatment surrounded Abraham.
- E. There were probably more flaws than this. Abraham was not righteous by means of good moral behavior.

III. It is the kind of faith that trusts God that results in being treated as righteous, innocent, justified and acceptable.

- A. Our world is characterized by doubt and uncertainty. It tries to find meaning in pleasure (1 Pet. 4:3; Heb. 11:25), materialistic pursuits (Heb. 11:26; Lk. 16:19ff), and in human relationships (Jn. 4:15ff).
 - 1. All are insufficient.
 - 2. Only by trusting in God do we find the satisfaction and hope we are looking for.
 - 3. Such trust prompts gratitude and obedience even if all our questions are not answered. We press on.
- B. Because Abraham had this kind of faith God considered him righteous, innocent, justified and acceptable. Gen. 15:6 is quoted by Paul and James to this effect.
 - 1. Rom. 4, 3, 9, 22.
 - 2. James 2:23.
- C. Paul and James call on us to have this kind of trust so that we will be considered righteous, innocent, justified and acceptable.
 - 1. This kind of trust results in our forgiveness.
 - 2. The object of our trust is focused on what God has done in Jesus Christ.

Conclusion:

- 1. All around us there is confusion.
- 2. We are beset with temptation, bewildered by the climate of counterfeits in religion, overwhelmed by contrary teachings. How is one to figure it all out?
- 3. God has made it pretty simple. Abraham got it right!!

4. Place your trust in the Lord. Allow Him to be a shield about you.