

FAITH SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

January 10, 2010

Believing God's Promises

Focal Passage: Genesis 15

Cross References: Genesis 12:1-3; Romans 4:1-25; Hebrews 11:8-19

Key Vs: Gen 15:6 *Abram believed the LORD, and He credited it to him as righteousness.*

Central Idea: God promised to bless Abram and counted him righteous because of his faith.

Lesson Idea: We must learn to trust God to keep His promises in order to experience all His blessings.

Historical Context: In Genesis 12 God called Abram (God would later rename him Abraham) to leave his homeland and go to a place that would be shown him later. Abram followed God's leading and at this point he lived near Hebron (about 19 miles SW of Jerusalem. Although God's promise involved giving Abraham all of the land that Israel would later occupy, when Abraham died he only owned a cave near Hebron that was used as a burial place.)

In ch 14 Abram had won a victory to rescue Lot and some local kings, but refused to take any of the spoils for himself. He did give a tithe (10%) of the spoils to Melchizedek, a "priest of the Most High God" who blessed Abram (for more on Melchizedek, see Hebrews 5-7).

In today's chapter 15 God will come to Abram in a vision and reconfirm the promises that He made to Abram.

Gen 15:1-6

15:1 After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision:

"Do not be afraid, Abram.

I am your shield,

your very great reward. "

2 But Abram said, "O Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir."

4 Then the word of the LORD came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir." 5 He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars--if indeed you can count them." Then He said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

6 Abram believed the LORD, and He credited it to him as righteousness.

QUESTIONS:

How did God choose to speak to Abram in this passage?

How do we hear the Word of the Lord today?

When you read vs. 1 what would you say is the greatest blessing in Abram's life?

God told Abram that He was his "shield and his very great reward." When you think of what God has done for you, how would you describe Him?

Why did God tell Abram not to be afraid?

What doubts did Abram express about the promises that God made him in Gen 12:1-3?

What did God do to assure Abram?

Why did God credit Abram with righteousness? How do we get credited with righteousness? (see Rom. 4:18-25).

Gen 15:7

7 He also said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it."

8 But Abram said, "O Sovereign LORD, how can I know that I will gain possession of it?"

9 So the LORD said to him, "Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon."

10 Abram brought all these to Him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half. 11 Then birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away.

QUESTIONS

Abram again asks God about how His promises would be fulfilled. He wondered why the fulfillment of those promises was taking so long.

Why do you think that God does not do things as quickly as people want Him to sometimes?

Read 2 Peter 3:8-9. What does it say about God's view of time and keeping His promises?

Apparently, the dividing of the animals was part of an ancient custom to ratify a treaty or covenant, as well as an act of worship. Does God make many unconditional promises, or does He usually require something of His followers?

In answer to Abram's doubts, God asks him to perform an act of worship. Why is it important for us to continue to worship and serve the Lord as we wait for answers to prayers and requests we make to Him?

Gen 15:12-19

12 As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him. 13 Then the LORD said to him, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. 14 But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. 15 You, however, will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age. 16 In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure."

17 When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. 18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates-- 19 the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, 20 Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, 21 Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites."

QUESTIONS

Abraham is later called a "prophet" (Gen 20:7). What great event in the life of God's people is revealed here to Abram?

In vs. 14 what did God promise to do for Abram's offspring?

In vs. 16 what reason does God give Abram that explains why He would later command His people to destroy the inhabitants of Canaan at the time of the Conquest (as seen in the book of Joshua)?

God told Abram that the fulfillment of His promises wouldn't come for over 400 years. He confirmed the truth of His promise with a fiery presence passing through the sacrifice. What kind of comfort do you think that brought to Abram?

What are some ways that God has confirmed His promises to us?

APPLICATION

Read Hebrews 11:8-19. What drove Abraham's life?

What drives your life? How do you make decisions about your life?

What should drive your life and decisions?

What are some promises God has made in His Word that you have struggled to trust? How can this experience of Abram help you trust God's faithfulness?

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Read the Bible Through Highlights of the Week: January 4-10, 2010

Gen 15: Blessing of Abram

Key vs. 6: *Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.*

Gen 18: Sarah Laughs at God

Key vs. 14: *"Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son."*

Gen 19: Judgment of Sodom

Gen 22: The Sacrifice of Isaac

Gen 24: Finding a Wife for Isaac

Gen 25: A Bowl for a Birthright

Gen 27: A Stolen Blessing

Gen 28: The Stairway to Heaven

Gen 32: Wrestling with God

Gen 33: Reconciliation

Gen 39: Back to Bethel

Bible in a Year Daily Readings

January 2009

Jan 1 Genesis 1 - 4

Jan 2 Genesis 5 - 8

Jan 3 Genesis 9 - 12

Jan 4 Genesis 13 - 17

Jan 5 Genesis 18 - 20

Jan 6 Genesis 21 - 23

Jan 7 Genesis 24 - 25

Jan 8 Genesis 26 - 28

Jan 9 Genesis 29 - 31

Jan 10 Genesis 32 - 35

Jan 11 Genesis 36 - 38

Jan 12 Genesis 39 - 41

Jan 13 Genesis 42 - 43

Jan 14 Genesis 44 - 46

Jan 15 Genesis 47 - 50

Jan 16 Exodus 1 - 4

Jan 17 Exodus 5 - 7

Jan 18 Exodus 8 - 10

Jan 19 Exodus 11 - 13

Jan 20 Exodus 14 - 16

Jan 21 Exodus 17 - 20

Jan 22 Exodus 21 - 23

Jan 23 Exodus 24 - 27

Jan 24 Exodus 28 - 30

Jan 25 Exodus 31 - 34

Jan 26 Exodus 35 - 37

Jan 27 Exodus 38 - 40

Jan 28 Leviticus 1 - 4

Jan 29 Leviticus 5 - 7

Jan 30 Leviticus 8 - 10

Jan 31 Leviticus 11 - 13

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