

Genesis 15.1-20

"The Street of Blood"

Ch 14 ABE BEEN ON EMOTIONAL ROLLER-COASTER - Highs and Lows
DEFEAT OF HOSTILE FORCES / DOUBTS RAISED BY KING OF SODOM

SOMETIMES GOD'S GREAT PROMISES SEEN HARD TO BELIEVE
HAVE THE WORD - BELIEVE IT - DO WE DARE LIVE IT OUT?? FAITH?

WONDER IF THE LOVE OF GOD SEEMS A VERY DISTANT THING?
TIME OF STRUGGLE OR CHALLENGE? BELIEVE BUT STILL DOUBT!
is there any way we might know God better, more intimately?

One of GREATEST Chapters in Bible > Contains one of Most Important Verses

1. God Needs our Help... 2. God Needs No Help 3. God asks Our Trust

1. God Needs our Help...*we sometimes think*

2.

a. Reminder > things do not happen like we expect, maybe God forgot us!

NAME "Abram" = EXALTED FATHER - had no children

MEET NEW PEOPLE - ONE HATED QUESTION - and how many kids?

JUST ONE CHILD / "Ishmael" /// ABRAHAM = FATHER OF A MULTITUDE

EVEN HEROES OF FAITH STRUGGLE WITH DOUBTS AND QUESTIONS

v. 2 "But Abram said, "O Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless"

FOR ANCIENTS "children are a reward from the Lord" > CHILDLESS = CURSED
NO SON- NO Inheritance - NO GREAT NATION - NO BLESSING ALL PEOPLE

v. 1 PROMISE > BUT > Change direction > Calif Slang added "YEAH BUT..."

AFTER GOD RENEWED HIS COVENANT PROMISE -

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

b. Replacement > when God seems to let us down, we can help him out...

v. 2,3 “and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir." >>> LOT NOW OUT OF THE PICTURE

PERHAPS ON WAY FROM HARAN TO CANAAN - STOPPED IN DAMASCUS
PARENTS OF ELIEZER MAY HAVE JOINED WITH ABE'S HOUSEHOLD

Mesopotamian Tablets found by ARCHAEOLOGISTS IN PLACE CALLED NUZI
Customs of ADOPTION in ABE'S DAY: Childless Couple adopted Servant > Heir
Abe exasperated, “Is that what you want God....?”

Contrary to popular opinion..... 2. God Needs no Help

a. Lord of Creation > AMAZING CONDESCENSION OF GOD

IF ABE DEMANDS PROOF of God’s Promise - GOD SAYS OK, STEP OUTSIDE

vs. 4,5 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."

INFINITE NUMBER OF STARS SUSPENDED IN LIMITLESS SPACE

ISLAND WE ARE FROM HAS MOST POWERFUL TELESCOPES IN WORLD
5000 meter Mt. called “Mauna Kea” – White Mountain > Snow in Hawaii!?
STILL COUNTING STARS > SOME SAY MORE THAN 100 BILLION

TIMES OF FAITH CRISIS AND DOUBT > God points His People to Creation

When Judah was threatened by hostile Babylonians > Isaiah asks:
“Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD; my cause is disregarded by my God"? Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.” Isaiah 40.27-29

When the Jewish Council was breathing murderous threats against Early Church
“On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them.

When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them..."
Acts 4.23,24

When the Roman Empire tried to snuff out God's faithful saints, John records:
"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."
Revelation 4.11

CREATOR GOD FULFILLED HIS PROMISE TO ABRAHAM:

WHEN MOSES TRIED TO TAKE ISRAEL INTO PROMISED LAND -
Deuteronomy 1:10 The LORD your God has increased your numbers so that today you are as many as the stars in the sky.

DURING THE REIGN OF SOLOMON WE READ
"The people of Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand on the seashore; they ate, they drank and they were happy. And Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt."
1 Kings 4.20,21

NOW – ONE GREATER THAN SOLOMON IS HERE!!

BIBLE SAYS WE BECOME MOST LIKE STARS WHEN WE SHARE GOSPEL

Daniel 12:3 Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

Philip 2:15,16 you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life

b. Lord of the Covenant > GOD ENTERS INTO A COVENANT w/ Abe

DEF. "Bond in Blood Sovereignly Administered"

FAMILIAR IN ABE'S DAY - KNOWN FORM & STRUCTURE
Between INDIVIDUALS, NATIONS, Conquering KINGS / SUBJECT PEOPLES

Covenant like Letters in Roman Empire > Common forms of Contemporary Society
God's Servants Used these Common Forms > Vehicles of His Eternal Truth

v. 7 Historical Prologue: Who made Covenant > How did they enter Relationship?

v. 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."

**THIS IS NOT A COVENANT BETWEEN EQUALS - UNILATERAL
NOT BY COMMITTEE OR CONFERENCE BUT BY A CONQUEROR**

UNILATERAL - God alone set the terms

ETERNAL - It would not be revoked or rescinded

GRACE - Based on the mercy of the Sovereign Lord

v. 13-16 "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. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. You, however, will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age. In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.""

GOD REVEALS TO ABE HIS 400 YEAR PLAN / Friend of God

We do not even know tomorrow / God knows details the future

UNFOLDING OF GOD'S PURPOSE – NATIONS // HISTORY IS HIS-STORY

Acts 17:26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.

FRIGHTENING THOUGHT nation becomes so wicked **VOMITED** out of land
If GOD SPARES AMERICA He Will APOLOGIZE TO Sodom and Gomorrah

c. Lord on the Cross VERY UNUSUAL WAY OF MAKING THIS COVENANT

**TODAY WE SEAL PROMISES WITH HANDSHAKES – or if not good enough
GET A LAWYER TO MAKE A CONTRACT...don't forget the NOTARIUS!**

USA > COURT - place hand on Bible - SWEAR TO TELL THE WHOLE TRUTH

MUSLIMS - SWEAR BY THE BEARD OF THEIR PROPHET MUHAMMED

COVENANT WAS CUT "cutting the covenant" / BLOOD WAS SHED

v. 9, 10 “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." Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other”

AS CARCASSES LAID OUT IN HALVES - STREET OF BLOOD FORMED
SOLEMN AND SICKENING REMINDER OF SERIOUSNESS OF PROMISES

PROPHET JEREMIAH TELLS US SERIOUSNESS OF THIS OATH

Jeremiah 34:18-20 “The men who have violated my covenant and have not fulfilled the terms of the covenant they made before me, I will treat like the calf they cut in two and then walked between its pieces. The leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the court officials, the priests and all the people of the land who walked between the pieces of the calf, I will hand over to their enemies who seek their lives. Their dead bodies will become food for the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth.”

IF YOU BREAK YOUR PROMISE - YOUR SLIT CARCASS JOINS THE PILE
MAY YOUR BLOOD FLOW DOWN THE STREET OF BLOOD TOO

v. 17 “When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram”

Familiar Image > Firepot like a Bread Oven > GOD APPEARED in Everyday Life

THE GOD WHO APPEARED IN PILLAR OF FIRE TO CHILDREN OF ISRAEL
THE GOD WHO IS A REFINER'S FIRE FOR HIS PEOPLE'S FAITH
Malachi 3.3 “He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver.”

SHOCKING! INCREDIBLE! GOD HIMSELF WALKS the STREET of BLOOD!

FIRST HE HAD PROVEN HIS PROMISES - showing Abe the Stars
NOW HE PERFORMS HIS PROOF - If I lie, you can slay me!

GOD DARES US - HAVE YOU FOUND FALSEHOOD IN ME -
Have I Broken COVENANT FAITH with you?? IS MY PROMISE HOLDING UP?

LIKE THE DARE THROWN OUT BY THE LORD JESUS TO PHARISEES
John 8:46 Can any of you prove me guilty of sin?

COVENANT HAS 2 MEMBERS WHERE'S ABE?? OUT COLD!!

v. 12 “As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him”

A PERSON DOES NOT MAKE A COVENANT WITH THEMSELVES
Like Shaking Hands with Yourself / Marrying Yourself > this is not Massachusetts

ABE DARE NOT WALK STREET OF BLOOD > Could you keep your Promises?

“But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law” Galatians 4.4,5

JESUS WENT DOWN THE STREET OF BLOOD - VIA DOLA ROSA
CALVARY WHERE HE WAS RENT APART - FOR OUR SINS

“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” 2 Corinthians 5.21

“For our offenses are many in your sight, and our sins testify against us. Our offenses are ever with us, and we acknowledge our iniquities: rebellion and treachery against the LORD, turning our backs on our God, fomenting oppression and revolt, uttering lies our hearts have conceived. So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance; truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter. Truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey. The LORD looked and was displeased that there was no justice. He saw that there was no one, he was appalled that there was no one to intervene; so his own arm worked salvation for him, and his own righteousness sustained him. He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.” Isaiah 59.12-17

3. God asks our Trust

a. Pledge FIRST TIME THE WORD FAITH or BELIEVE IS USED IN BIBLE

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

IF YOU ASKED MOSES - WHO IS THE FATHER OF YOUR FAITH?
or King David, Apostle Paul, even the Lord Jesus > Abraham - Father of our Faith

BELIEVE = "to lean your whole weight upon" // TO SIT IN A CHAIR

WHAT IS FAITH? Forsaking All I Trust Him
 GREAT WATCHWORD OF REFORMATION "sola fide" BY FAITH ALONE

JOHN STOTT "Faith is the eye that looks to Him, the hand that receives His free gift, and the mouth that drinks His living water"

Promise/COVENANT IS NO GOOD FOR US UNLESS WE BENEFIT FROM IT
 BENEFIT OF COVENANT NOT OURS UNLESS WE BELIEVE IT

Hebrews 11.6 "without faith it is impossible to please God"

WE ALL EXERCISE FAITH -

Go to Doctor whose name we cannot pronounce
 has medical qualifications we have never verified
 Scribbles words on prescription tablet we cannot read
 Pharmacist gives us chemical compounds we do not understand
 WE GO HOME AND TAKE TABLETS ACCORDING TO INSTRUCTIONS

MARTIN LUTHER - rediscovered doctrine of Justification by Faith

"When the article of justification has fallen, everything else has fallen...this is the chief article from which all other doctrines have flowed...It alone begets, nourishes, builds, preserves and defends the Church of God; and without it the Church of God cannot exist for one hour"

JOHN CALVIN – "Justification by Faith is the main hinge on which religion turns"

b. Person FAITH IS ONLY AS GOOD AS ITS OBJECT

VALUE OF FAITH NOT FOUND IN ITSELF BUT ITS OBJECT

SIR DONALD MALCOLM CAMPBELL British car & boat racer

HOLDER OF SEVERAL WORLD SPEED RECORDS

Killed in blaze of glory as Speedboat Crashed on Lake in Scotland

EVERYTHING EXPLODED AND RAPIDLY SANK TO THE LAKE BOTTOM

Everything EXCEPT CAMPBELL'S TOY STUFFED ANIMAL - good luck charm

v. 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."

REASSURANCE OF GOD'S PROTECTION AND GOD'S PROVISION

TAKE A BANK CHECK - WRITE \$ 1,000 - WORTHLESS PAPER
NEED 3 THINGS 1) Money in Bank 2) Authorized Signature 3) Cashier / Kacca

NEED 3 PERSONS OF GODHEAD 1) FATHER Money in Bank: Mercy & Grace
2) Authorized Signature JESUS - righteous life and death for us
3) Cashier HOLY SPIRIT - brings the fullness of blessing to us

SO WITH OUR SALVATION // SOURCE - God and His grace
GROUND - Christ and His cross // MEANS - Faith

J. HUDSON TAYLOR - missionary to China > "How do you get your faith strengthened? Not by striving after faith, but by resting in the Faithful One"

THE MORE FAITHFULLY ABE FOLLOWS / MORE HE SURRENDERS
MORE HE KNOWS GOD / GROWS IN INTIMACY OF RELATION WITH GOD

c. Process SEE IN ABE FAITH IS LIVING THING - NEEDS TO GROW

When did Abraham become a Believer? When EXACTLY Did YOU become one?
SOME CAN POINT TO EXACT DAY > EXACT TIME OF DAY > Not Others

Different Examples > MOST DRAMATIC > Saul of Tarsus > Paul the Apostle
PAUL COULD KNEW THE HOUR > Broke his watch when he fell off his horse!

PETER? Came in FITS AND STARTS > Dropped Nets and Followed – 2 X's!
Denied Jesus three times > Confessed his Love three times > Rebuked in Galatians

TIMOTHY > from Infancy knew Sacred Scriptures > Raised in Faith > Embraced

"I would not walk across the street find out when I was saved,
but I would walk around the world to make sure that I was."

NOT SURE WHEN Abraham was SAVED > Growth of Faith in a Faithful God

GOD DID NOT EXPECT ABE & SARAH TO KNOW HOW TO HAVE AN HEIR
God ASKED THEM to TRUST HIM to ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSES in THEM

GOD WAITING FOR THEM TO BE "as good as dead" - GOD GETS GLORY!!

A DELAY IN GOD'S PROMISES IS NOT A DENIAL

LIFE OF FAITH - GOD GIVES US PROMISES NOT EXPLANATIONS

PASTOR SPOKE TO MAN WHO CLAIMED TO BE A CHRISTIAN

PASTOR "Are you active in a local church?"

MAN "No, but thief who died on the cross next to Jesus wasn't either, and he entered Paradise"

PASTOR "Have you been baptized"

MAN "No, but neither was the thief on that cross"

PASTOR "Have you received Holy Communion"

MAN "No but that man on the cross, didn't either, and Christ received him still"

PASTOR "The only difference between you and the thief on that cross is that he was dying in his faith, and you are dead in yours"

MARTIN LUTHER -

"Faith is a living, busy, active, powerful thing; it is impossible for us not to do good continually. It never asks whether good works are to be done, but has done them before there is time to ask the question, and it is always doing them"

ABE MAN OF TENT AND ALTAR

TENT - life is temporary // ALTAR - life is sacred

d. Perfection ABE TO GOD- left my home / ridiculed / faced World War for Lot
"I even gave a tithe to Melchizedek"

GOD TO ABE what about that little stop-over in Haran - 25 years!!
What about the shenanigans down in Egypt / the wife = sister stuff?

PAMPHLET PUT OUT BY SOCIETY TO SPREAD ATHEISM IN USA
CRITICIZED THE SO-CALLED HEROES OF THE BIBLE

JACOB - a cheater, thief, deceiver / MOSES, DAVID, PAUL - murder
ABRAHAM - so called friend of God / Sacrificed his wife's honor

ATHEISTS REALLY ADVANCED CAUSE OF THE TRUE GOSPEL OF GRACE
THAT PART OF PAMPHLET WAS ABSOLUTELY TRUE
THOSE WHO FOLLOW GOD ARE SINFUL, UNWORTHY, HYPOCRITES

FAITH IS NOT AN ALTERNATIVE TO RIGHTEOUSNESS - MEANS TO IT

Romans 3:22 "This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe."

PAUL PULLS RANK ON HIS JEWISH OPPONENTS - "Abe agrees w/ me!"
 Romans 4:1-5 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter?... What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.

RICHARD HOOKER 16th C. Anglican "God justifies the believer - not because of the worthiness of his belief, but because of Christ's worthiness who is believed"

NO ONE WILL STRUT AROUND LIKE A PROUD PEACOCK IN HEAVEN

DONALD GREY BARNHOUSE - would ask 2 evangelistic questions

- 1) If you died tonight where would you go? - CERTAINTY OF SALVATION
- 2) REASON FOR IT - Why should God let you into heaven?

MOST ANSWER ABOUT GOOD WORKS - Barnhouse would cite Romans 3.20
 "no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law"

OTHERS WOULD HUMBLY ADMIT THEY HAVE NOTHING TO SAY
 Romans 3:1 every mouth (WILL) be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.

How WOULD You ANSWER These 2 ETERNALLY IMPORTANT QUESTIONS?

v. 6 "Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness."

RIGHT ANSWER

1 John 2:1-2 we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense- Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IS CREDITED TO OUR ACCOUNT

Galatians 3:9 So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

Believe that?? Then - that NIGHT SKY 4000 yrs ago - GOD Hung a Star for You!