

ABRAHAM – “CALLED THE FRIEND OF GOD” GEN. 15:7-21

(5th DIALOGUE WITH GOD) - In these dialogues of God with Abraham, we see the beginning of God's dealings with Israel—it can also be a pattern of experiences for the believer today.

- Spiritually speaking, in Genesis 15, there is a summary of the of Romans 4-8. A great principle -- a daily trust that God was able to do through him what He had promised. By this, Abram was counted righteous when he had no righteousness of his own! "**ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**"
- Romans chapters, 6-8, teach deliverance from the reigning power of sin. If our Christian experience ends in Romans 4-5, we the most miserable, for we have not really entered into the fullness that Christ purchased for us. We need to learn by experience the process of sanctification, taught in Romans 6-8, beautifully pictured here in vs. 7-21 - **It begins with hunger in the heart.**

Gen 15:7-21 "Then He said to him, 'I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it.' [8] And he said, 'Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?'"

- Abram says, Lord, how shall I know that this land will be mine? I have been here now for ten years, walked it as told. I've enjoyed portions of it, but I don't own any of it. Lord, how can I own it? You said you would give to me?" It's his by promise, but he longs to make it his by ownership.
- The land is significant both literally and spiritually. Abram is to possess the literal land, that is, through his natural seed. But through his spiritual descendants, he is to possess fully the land in its symbolic significance.
- This is the fullness of life in the Spirit: **All that God intends us to have in Jesus Christ -- all the victory, the power, the abundance, and the fruitfulness that comes by the Holy Spirit.** This is the land that is already ours by promise, because we belong to Jesus Christ. But have we possessed it? Do we own it? Have we experienced it? And if not, How can we come into the fullness of this experience?
- Do you hunger for this land? **Do you long to have what God offers you?**
- Abram is desirous of learning the process by which God's promise to him will find its fulfillment. God answers Abram's question, by saying, "Come Abram, I will show you."

[9] So He said to him, 'Bring Me a three-year-old heifer (see the characteristics of Christ-patience, strength), a three-year-old female goat (nourishment and refreshment), a three-year-old ram (power and might), a turtledove, and a young pigeon (grace and gentleness-the Holy Spirit at work).' [10] *Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. [11] And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.*

- The first step must be a consideration of a death!
- Each of these animals and birds is a picture for us of Christ, our sacrifice. Our deliverance from the reigning power of sin must be based upon that sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the cross, dying for our sin!
- The perfect character of Christ is pictured for us by these animals and birds, especially as it was poured out in death for us, so that we might have it. **There on the cross, something took place that is able to break the control and dominion of sin over us and allow the Holy Spirit to produce the character of Christ in us.**
- Tree years old – probably a reference to the public ministry of our Lord. All these qualities of his character were publicly made manifest during that time. Here, is a symbolic portrait of Jesus Christ in the beauty and full vigor of His manhood, old and made evident by His life.

- Now in the death of Christ, all that He was is made available to us!! He laid down his life that we might have it! He poured out his soul unto death that all the fullness of his person might indwell my life and yours, that we might have all that He is. The slaying of these animals and birds and Abram's long contemplation of them is the beautiful picture of this for us.
- Whether we view the land as literal or symbolical, the possession of it begins by a thorough understanding of what Christ has done that has made possession possible.
- On the cross, our Lord Jesus won the right to possess all the kingdoms of the earth. Israel, occupying the land, will be the head of the nations at that time. They shall fully possess the land in accordance with the promise to Abram. But on the spiritual level, this is equally true.
- On the cross, the Lord won the right to fully possess the kingdom of the heart, so it becomes no longer a matter of my struggling to do the best I can, which is never good enough. A life is available to me that is all I need and ought to be. I am to consider Him, therefore, as Abram did, until I see in Jesus Christ all that I need.

[12] Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him. [13] Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. [14] And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. [15] Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. [16] But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

- All day long Abram sat and watched the sacrificed animals, waiting and waiting, considering the meaning of all this. When the Satanic doubts, as vultures, descended to rob him of his blessing, he drove them away, as we must do when doubts hit us concerning the work of Christ. All the long day, Abram watched and waited and out of his long contemplation there came the next step:
- At sundown, Abram sinks into sleep. A great sense of horror and of darkness comes upon him. He is given a revelation of the oppression and enslavement of his descendants--fulfilled to the very letter. His descendants did go down into Egypt (a land that was not theirs), and there they were oppressed, afflicted, and enslaved for the duration of time recorded here. Then, at last, God sent Moses to lead them out, Pharaoh and Egypt were judged, and Israel was brought back into the land of Canaan exactly as God had told Abram.
- Also note the great patience of God. He tells Abram that Israel must remain in Egypt for four hundred years because the iniquity of the Amorite tribes in the land of Canaan was not yet full. Vicious tribes, so wicked they were to be exterminated! Some say this pictures God as exceedingly cruel, but the whole picture is that of a God of love who waits with patience until these tribes turn to Him or would infect the nations around, and have to be removed.
- Spiritually, this is a picture of the unveiling which comes to any seeking soul of man's rebellious heart. When we really come to the cross of Christ, we see our own enslavement to sin and self within.
- Often Christians see themselves to be free, simply because they have received Christ. They may acknowledge a few minor weaknesses -- a little temper, a degree of jealousy occasionally, a little lust, a tendency toward stubbornness or willfulness, but these are excused as minor as we live with them.
- Gradually, they (we) begin to see that they are mastered by "self", that the choices they make are all with "self" in view. Ego, as an ugly monster, sits on the throne of their lives and though they pay lip service to the cause of Christ, "self" rules, cracking a whip and driving them to ever more selfish notions. Who are you, am I led by? Self or the Holy Spirit?
- This is the self-revelation which Paul describes in Romans 7:24: "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"
- When this is our cry, we have begun to realize that we are, indeed, under the dominion of sin. We become aware of barrenness, fruitless activity, purpose without

power, effort without effect. Our service becomes a job without joy. Worship is routine and mechanical. Life is a horror and great darkness. We wonder what is wrong, and cry out, "Who shall deliver me from this reigning power of self in my life?" It is right at this point that a new thing occurs -- a vision and victory:

[17] And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces.

[18] On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates—[19] the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, [20] the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, [21] the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."

- At the place of "self"-despair, there comes deliverance!
- When we become aware of how much we are enslaved by selfishness, how little we really experience what God is offering, how much we are victims of our own self-indulgence, self-pity, and self-righteousness, then we are ready for victory. At the moment when the heart is cold and empty and the light of faith has gone out, something will precipitate a crisis, and suddenly you find yourself, without warning, in the midst of a smoking furnace.
- When Jacob met his brother Esau-- when David sat on his throne, Nathan the prophet came saying, "Thou art the man!" Instantly he was aware that he was in a smoking furnace.
- Paul, newly converted, is filled with the desire to be the apostle to Israel and looks upon himself as the chosen vessel by which God intends to reach that people and bring them to Christ. With confidence he preaches in the city of Damascus, but suddenly no one will listen to him and he must at last be let down over the wall in a basket at night like a common criminal. That began the smoking furnace in his life.
- Perhaps with you, it may be a family crisis, a Bible conference, a trip away from home. Some such thing precipitates a crisis, and you become aware that God is speaking to you and there is no way to escape his voice. He is putting his finger on the thing which is wrong in your life. He is going through your life like a furnace of fire, searing, scorching, cleansing and you cannot escape.
- You must face yourself. You have to acknowledge, judge, and reject yourself. The instant you do, God is no longer a furnace but a burning torch a lamp! You see everything clearly in a wonderful, illuminating light. What was confusing before is as clear as daylight now. You know what you have to do and you know how to go about doing it. Your true enemy is clearly defined. There before your eyes you see the enemies...Hittites, Amorites...-- all those filthy tribes that inhabit the human heart. You see that you have been defending and protecting them, though they have been defiling and polluting you. Bitterness, sensitiveness, impatience, envy, self-righteousness, laziness, lust -- these are the enemies you see.
- But you also begin to see that Jesus Christ is more than all of them, that He is adequate for them, and that you can stand up in the strength of the Lord and smite these enemies and they will go. You see clearly in His death that you died with Him to these sins and can now refuse them a place in your thoughts.
- You will find Christ stands in their place and in the fullness of grace and truth becomes to you everything that you need -- your wisdom, your righteousness, your strength, and redemption. Suddenly you discover you are possessing the land! There is

joy and peace in your heart. Something new has come in. You own what God has offered you. You have found the way of deliverance. Joy, peace, grace, glory floods your heart.

- Now, this is the whole story of the Christian life after conversion -- a furnace and a lamp. That is the story of the nation Israel, throughout its history. It is a story of affliction followed by blessing. First Israel is in the furnace, and then the lamp is shining on them again
- This, too, is the whole story of the Christian life. Once you begin to set foot on the land of Spirit-given power, you discover Jesus Christ is always a furnace or a lamp to you.
- When self begins to threaten, he is a furnace -- burning, scorching, searing.
- When self is judged he immediately becomes a burning torch or lamp, flooding the whole life with radiance and glory.
- Have you discovered this experience? Have you found your way to this land of promise?
- The one thing Abram had to do was to hunger for it. When we long for this blessing and freedom, then it is translated out of the realm of theology into experience.
- There must come a time when you acknowledge the slavery of "self" in your life, a time when you have groaned and turned in disgust from the revelation God has given you of your own heart. Only then can there come the wonderful release, the glorious deliverance, the sight of watching Canaanites flee before you. Habits you could not conquer before, you now master in the strength of the Lord and a whole new land of victory lies open before you.
- Begin where Abram began. Say, "Lord God, how shall I know that I shall possess it?
- Reveal to me my own heart, and Your deliverance."
- On the cross, something took place that is able to break the control and dominion of sin over us and allow the Holy Spirit to produce the character of Christ in us.
- Consider how we need to die to self—to the old man!
- On the cross, the Lord won the right to fully possess my heart, so it no longer is a matter of my struggling to do the best I can..
- A life is available to me that is all I need and ought to be. I am to consider Him, as Abram did, until I see in Jesus Christ all that I need.
- To take ownership of what Christ has purchased for us—victory not only over sin and death,
- But victory here and now over our trying harder, vowing to live a better, purer life through our trying harder and doing more good things to become more self righteous.

"SANCTUARY"

Lord prepare me, to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true
With thanksgiving, I'll be a living, sanctuary, for you. [2x]