

“DO NOT BE AFRAID....I AM YOUR SHIELD, YOUR EXCEEDINGLY GREAT REWARD”!

"Gen 15:1-6 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." [2] But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" [3] Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!" [4] And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." [5] Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." [6] And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness."

Questions:

- **Do you ever look at the faith of the Abrahams of the Bible and think that your faith is almost nothing—so weak and so little?**
- **Do you ever get really afraid? Are you absolutely gripped with fear?**
- **Note in this account God and Abram, the answer, the remedy to fear, to being afraid!**
- **Do you see our Lord as being your shield? Your exceedingly great reward?**
- **How successful are you in accepting to put the matter in the awesome hands of God, for Him to handle and to solve, and not to look at your present circumstances and our very limited abilities?**

"Gen 15:1a After these things the word of the LORD came" (First of "first uses" in these verses)

- **God manifested Himself and His will to Abram) in a vision, which may indicate that Abram was awake, and some visible appearances of the Shekinah, or some sensible token of the presence of the divine glory. God's methods of divine revelation are adapted to our state in a world of sense.**

" Gen. 15:1b Do not be afraid, Abram." (Second of "first uses")

- **This reveals what is going on in Abram's heart. The vision could have occurred during a sleepless night or during the day. It showed that he was afraid.**
- **Coming after Abram's return from his battle with the four eastern kings and his encounter with the king of Sodom, it's easy to see why he is so fearful. He is afraid of this man, Chedorlaomer, the great king whom he had conquered. Abram had publicly humiliated him by overthrowing his vast army with only a handful of men. Dictators do not take this kind of treatment lightly!**
- **We can easily understand the justified fear that Abram felt as he faced the possibility of Chedorlaomer's return. Abram may have said to himself, "What have I gotten myself into now? I am almost sorry that I won this battle, for when he comes back what am I going to do? I won't be able to catch him off guard another time." So fear fills his heart.**
- **Perhaps also there was fear because he had turned down the king of Sodom's offer of a fortune. He did it, of course, in the strength of the fellowship he had enjoyed with**

Melchizedek. With his heart aflame with the love and grace of God, Abram had said to this king, "I want nothing of all that you have. I don't want you saying that you made Abram rich." So the king went back to Sodom with all his riches and now Abram is back in his tent, experiencing a very human reaction. After the wealth and luxury of Sodom, think how shabby his tent must have looked -the wind was howling around it, and the sand was sifting through its cracks. Doubt begins to rise in his heart as to whether he did the right thing or not. And doubt is a form of fear!

- 2Co 7:5 *For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears.*
- Psa 91:15 *He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him.*

"Gen 15:1c I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." (Third of "first uses" in these verses)

- If this had happened to us, we would have taken a couple of aspirin and gone back to sleep. If Abram had, of course, he would have missed the whole marvelous revelation of God's love!
- There are times when Christians may be justified in using tranquilizers, but there are also many times when to do so is to miss God's purpose in trial. To run to the drug cabinet whenever anything goes wrong, to be unwilling to allow any unrest or bit of tension, to insist that life must maintain a steady, even keel at all costs, under every circumstance, is to thwart and miss the very purpose for which God sends difficulties into our lives. He only desires to create an atmosphere where he can manifest his glory.
- Now suddenly, as Abram is possibly tossing and turning there comes a sense of a presence with him. In his heart, he hears that mysterious word of the Lord.
- Sometimes the Lord spoke audibly to these Old Testament men; sometimes it was in the heart, with a quiet, deep conviction that God is speaking. Every Christian who has ever walked in fellowship with Jesus Christ for very long knows what I mean. We are not told how God spoke to Abram, but in the midst of his fear and doubt and loneliness there comes a sense of relief and the word of the Lord says, "Fear not, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." I am the sufficient answer to all your fear!
- Of course, God is the answer! If God be for us. who can be against us? If God is our shield, whom should we fear?
- Heb 13:5 *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU NOR FORSAKE YOU." [6] So we may boldly say: "THE LORD IS MY HELPER; I WILL NOT FEAR. WHAT CAN MAN DO TO ME?"*
- "I am your shield." That is what comforted Abram's heart there in the darkness. It was all he needed to settle his worries about the return of Chedorlaomer and the loss of his fortune in Sodom.
- Have you learned yet to count on the invisible protection of God? Can you stand before danger as our Lord did before Pilate and say in John 19:11b, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above.." Oh, the sense of the invisible shield of God!
- As someone once said well, the Christian is immortal until his work is done. Nothing can touch him nor hurt him except it come by permission of God, who is a living shield around him. We would lose most of our fears if we realized this.

- This is what God is saying to Abram -- I am your shield. Abram, a practical defense against any force that would destroy you. Fear not. Nothing shall touch you unless I permit it. Do not fear -- I AM! Have you noticed how many times in the New Testament our Lord Jesus calms his disciples with these words, "Fear not"? And the ground of His reassurance is always that He is with them. When the storm threatens to overwhelm the little boat; when the cold fist of fear clutches their hearts as they sense the shadow of the Cross on their path; when Peter goes weeping bitterly out into the night; His words ring in their ears -- "Fear not." "Let not your hearts be troubled," (John 14:1a). Why? "You believe in God, believe also in me!" (John 14:1b).
- But God is more than a shield. He says also to Abram, "I am your exceedingly great reward." God is our dearest treasure, the only genuinely satisfying joy we will ever know.
- This is what Abram experienced when God said to him, "I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." And we never again read of Abram worrying about Chedorlaomer or the loss of Sodom's wealth. All these pressures from without were fully met by the sense of God's presence with him, there in the dark.

"Gen 15:6 And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness." (Fourth of "first uses" in these verses)

- Now the last statement comes before us. It concerns Abram's faith. " And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness." " Paul refers to this mighty act of faith in Romans 4. He reminds us that Abraham believed God before he was circumcised, that is, before he had any continual guarantee that God would do this thing. The account of Abram's circumcision comes a couple of chapters later. Paul infers from this that acceptance before God has nothing to do with circumcision, as the Jews were insisting. Paul says that when Abram heard God say, "So shall your descendants be" that he looked up into the stars, saw their vastness, their multitude, and relaxed -- resting in faith upon the power of God.
- If we focus our view on Abram's faith, we are going to miss the point of this whole matter. There is a sense in which we make far too much of these men of old and their faith. "What mighty men of faith," we say; "how tremendous to believe God against all the evidence of the circumstances around. If we only had faith like that we could do the things they did!" Then we compare our feeble faith with theirs and try to work up a feeling of faith within us until we are turned into spiritual hypochondriacs, always going about taking our spiritual temperature and feeling our spiritual pulse. It is indeed true that when God saw Abram's faith, it was reckoned to him for righteousness, but it is also true that when Abram saw God, he reckoned him able to perform what he had promised, and so was able to rest his faith on God's adequacy.
- What was it that made his faith so strong? The answer is that he did not look at the difficulty so much as he looked at the One who had promised. His eye was not resting on the problems, but upon the Promiser. When he saw the greatness of God, the might and majesty displayed before him on that oriental summer's night, he said to himself, "It makes no difference how I feel, nor what may be the difficulties involved, the Creator of that multitude of stars is quite capable of giving me an equal number of descendants."

- Today we are exhorted to believe God about the Son who has already come, and when we cease our own works and rest in helpless dependence upon that Living Son, we too are counted righteous by faith. And that act of faith which first introduces us to the power of God exercised on our behalf, must become an attitude of faith governing each moment of our life.
- Don't think you have come to the end of the road when you believe in Jesus Christ. You are then standing at the beginning, and every experience of the power of God in your life must come from a fresh appropriation by faith of the promise of God!

We Glorify Your Name – Hillsong Music

Verse 1:

Maker of the heavens/ Master of the seas/ Mover of the mountains/ Majesty

Chorus:

We glorify Your Name/ We glorify Your Name/ We glorify Your Name/ In all the earth

Verse 2:

Awesome God in power/ Author of my life/ All consuming fire/ Alive alive

Verse 3:

You are seated on/ A throne of praise/ Unto You alone/ Let our voices rise

Lord, I need you – Chris Tomlin

Verse 1:

Lord, I come, I confess/ Bowing here I find my rest/ Without You I fall apart/ You're the One that guide my heart

Chorus:

Lord, I need You, Oh, I need You Every hour I need You/ Every hour I need You/ My one defense, my righteousness/ Oh God, how I need You

Verse 2:

Where sin runs deep Your grace is more/ Where grace is found is where You are/ And where You are, Lord, I am free/ Holiness is Christ in me

Verse 3:

Teach my song to rise to You/ When temptation comes my way/ And when I cannot stand I'll fall on You/ Jesus, You're my hope and stay