

February 2/3, 2002

Study Questions

By Faith We Live: A Study of the Life of Abraham

Faith and Righteousness

Genesis 15:1-21

Opening Discussion

1. How is faith being defined in our culture today?
2. Many people today consider themselves to be very spiritual and people of faith. Does this mean they know God? Why or why not?
3. Do you ever struggle to believe and stand on the promises of God? Is it possible to truly believe the promises of God and be characterized by fear and anxiety? Why or why not?

Bible Study

1. Based on Genesis 14, why do you suppose Abram was fearful and in need of a shield in 15:1?

Have you ever noticed that great victories of faith are often followed by periods of fear and doubt? Why is this?

2. Read 15:1-6. It's interesting to notice that this passage records the first dialogue between Abram and God. Abram may not be questioning God's promise as much as wanting to know how God will do it. He's childless, but God says he's going to be a great nation. He is to possess the land, but someone else lives in it. God's promises certainly don't line up with current reality. In what ways are we encouraged by faith to believe what doesn't seem to line up with our circumstances?
3. Compare Hebrews 11:8-16. In practical terms, what is faith as it relates to our current reality?
4. Genesis 15:6 is a critical moment for Abram. Read the following passages that provide commentary on 15:6:

Galatians 3

Romans 4

In both NT passages, Paul is using Abram as an example to combat legalism or salvation by works. What do we learn from these passages to strengthen our belief in salvation by faith in Christ?

5. Review the details of the “cutting of the covenant.” What is the symbolism of the ceremony as it relates to our doctrine of salvation in the NT?

In what way does this ceremony strengthen our belief in the security of the believer?

6. Putting Genesis 15 together with the NT commentary on it, were people in the OT under the Old Covenant saved in a different way, or the same way as people today under the New Covenant?

Application

1. Identify 3 areas of your life right now where God is asking you to trust Him by faith. How does the story of Abram strengthen your resolve to trust God?
2. Each person should examine his/her own heart to make sure he/she has believed and it has been credited as righteousness. Find out if anyone has any questions about what this means to us today.
3. Pray, thanking God for His salvation and His faithful promises.