

## BLESSED ASSURANCE - Genesis 15:1-6

### I. Historical Perspective

J. In order to appreciate the struggle in the heart of Abram in this particular context, we need to go back to Gen. 12:1-3.

1. Herein, God called Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees.
2. Abram did not grow up in a God centered home, where the Word of God was read each day and children were taught to love the Lord with all their heart, soul, mind and strength.
3. Therefore, the Lord called him to separate himself not only from that heathen culture in Dr, but also from his own family and close relatives, who were an intimate part of it.

B. "Wherefore, come out from among them and be ye separate" (2 Cor. 6: 17) is the constant call of God to His covenant people.

1. In the institution of marriage, a man is called to "leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife".
2. In Ruth 3:1 Naomi says to her daughter in law, "Shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?"
3. In that context, she is referring to the rest that Ruth would find in the covenant of marriage with Boaz.
4. Boaz is a near kinsman and therefore a potential redeemer.
5. The redeemer pays off all the creditors, and raises up a male child, who receives the name and the inheritance of the deceased spouse.

C. Matt. 11 :28-30

1. We receive a Sabbath of rest, as we cease to labor to justify ourselves and trust solely in the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.
2. Likewise in Zeph. 3: 17 we read, "The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing."
3. Do you ever think of the fact that Jesus Christ sings with great joy as delights Himself in the bride, whom He has redeemed through His blood?

D. In Gen. 12:3 the verbs "to bless" and "to curse" are in the reflexive tense.

1. Thus we may translate the passage as "Those that bless themselves in Abram, I will bless and those that curse themselves in Abram I will curse."
2. Or even better, "Those that count themselves blessed in Abram, I will bless and those that count themselves cursed in Abram, I will curse."

3. Thus, our attitude toward Abram and his son will bring either an infinite blessing from God or a curse that will last through all eternity.
- E. When Abram left Dr of the Chaldees, he was 75 years old.
1. Now as we come to chapter 15 of Genesis, God still has not shown Abram where to settle down in a permanent dwelling place.
  2. Even worse than that, he and Sarah still do not have any children.
  3. I can image him saying, "Lord, I am 85 years old, sO' you know I am not getting any younger. Furthermore, Sarah is no spring chicken either! So when am I going to have a son?"
  4. Abram had started out in faith, but now doubt begins to raise its ugly head.
- F. But are we so very different than Abram?
1. We start out in life with absolutely nothing, not a penny to our name.
    2. But after the Lord enables us to accumulate a lifetime of material possessions, we begin to worry that we might outlive our assets.
    3. Psalm 78:19 "Can God provide a table in the wilderness?"
- G. Likewise, as we experience the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, we say with Paul, "For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain"! (Phil. 3:14).
1. But after we are buffeted by the trials and tribulations of life, like Abram we begin to hesitate, being doubtful that God is always merciful and kind.
  2. We want some blessed assurance that the words of Rom. 8:28 are always true.

## II. God's Remedy-for a Anxious Follower.

- A, In Gen. 15:1, the Word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision saying,
- "Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward."
1. So in essence God is saying, I will protect you from evil & will keep the promise that I made to you.
  2. The evil that Abram was worried about was their lack of a child.
- B. As old people get even older, they often become preoccupied with 3 things:
1. Who will take care of me, when I can't take care of myself?
  2. What kind of funeral service and burial do I want?
  3. To Whom shall I give all the things that I have accumulated in life?

- C. These questions raise a lot of anxiety, especially when a husband and wife have no children.
1. So from the beginning of time, ancient societies have had to wrestle with these problems.
  2. In archeological diggings at Nuzi, clay tablets were discovered that show how the legal system in the patriarchal period handled such matters.
  3. A husband and wife would instruct a servant to take carry out these responsibilities on behalf of his master.
- D. Furthermore, if they had no heir, the first servant that was actually born in their household would become their legal heir.
1. Notice in Gen 15:2 that Abram refers to Eliezer of Damascus as the "steward of my house".
  2. The Hebrew text actually reads, "the son of my house".
  3. Thus, while Eliezer's parents were from the Syrian capital of Damascus, he was actually born as a child in the house of Abram.
  4. His name means, "God is help".
- E. Now there are two possible interpretations as to why Abram was bringing up the subject of Eliezer:
1. The first is that Abram wanted God to accept Eliezar as the promised son, through whom all the families of the earth would be blessed.
  2. In this line of thinking, Abram would later again try to help God fulfill His promise by having a child by Hagar, who functioned as a surrogate mother.
  3. The second view is that Abram was fearful that if God did not hurry up and give them a son, then Sarah and Abram might die without ever receiving the heir that God had promised.
  4. In the second case, Eliezat would receive Abram's inheritance and God's promise would never be fulfilled.
- F. God's answer appears in Gen. 15:4 "This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall comeforth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir".
1. Then God told Abram to count the number of the stars, if you are able. So shall your seed be." (Gen. 15:5).
  2. We know that there are about 4,000 stars which one can see with the naked eye.
  3. But even the most powerful telescope that currently exists can not see and calculate the billions of stars that are in countless galaxies.
- G. Abram's response is given in Gen. 15:6.
1. We shall dwell on the idea of imputed righteousness at another

time and in more detail. (IRS - "imputed income").

2. But at this point I merely want to point out that Abram's assurance of a son was not based on what he had done or could do in the future.
3. Rather, it was based on the fact that God connected His promise of a son with the stars which the Lord had made.
4. It was an external sign, which God created in the heavens without Abram's advice or help.
5. This is similar to the promise given to Noah in Gen. 9:13.

iii. This brings us to a discussion of the distinction between insurance and assurance.

A. In old English, insurance refers to the protection I receive by virtue of the premium which I pay to the company which insures me.

1. If I have an accident in my car, State Farm Insurance will reimburse me to a certain extent for damage to my car and my bodily injuries.
2. However, assurance is the protection I receive by virtue of the premium paid by someone else on my behalf

3. When my father died, I received the sum of \$600, being my share of the life insurance policy paid for by my father.

4. Since my mother and dad were legally separated when I was 9 years old, I didn't even know that he had a life insurance policy, let alone that I would receive a payment as a result of his death.
5. Nevertheless, I receive a benefit by virtue of a premium that someone else paid on my behalf.

B. It is exceedingly noteworthy to see that the Bible never talks about insurance of salvation.

1. That is to say, we receive a benefit of salvation by virtue of the payments we have made by our faith and good works.
2. Rather, it talks about assurance of salvation, that is to say, we receive a benefit of eternal life by virtue of the perfect life and sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.
3. This salvation we receive is by virtue of the faith, which the Holy Spirit gives to us as a gift.
4. Out of the mass of mankind, God the Father chooses to whom He will show mercy. Jer. 31 :3
5. Then He sends the Holy Spirit to open the heart of the elect by means of the Word of God. Acts 16:14 Lydia
6. Thus, salvation is all of grace apart from anything that we might

do, think, or say to merit it. Eph. 2:8,9; Phil. 1 :29

- C. This distinction between insurance and assurance of salvation is very important.
1. Why? Because many born again Christians lack assurance of salvation because they become focused on themselves, that is, what they do or fail to do.
  2. Such mislead believers are often preoccupied with the following questions:
    - a. Do I read the Bible enough as I should?
    - b. Do I repent enough? Do I pray enough?
    - c. Do I witness enough to call myself a real Christian?
    - d. While self examination is good, these particular questions are often symptomatic of a person trying to buy insurance by good works.
  3. Satan is in the business of selling insurance:
    - a. He focuses on some particular quality that ought to be in our life, and says that we really can't call ourselves to be Christian, if we don't constantly display that quality.
    - b. If you don't tithe, he emphasizes that as being inconsistent.
    - c. If you correct that practice, then he wants to sell you another insurance policy, you don't pray very much & when you pray you are always asking for things from God. Why don't you stop asking and just spend your time in praise and thanksgiving .
    - d. If you make progress in that issue, he says that you seldom if ever memorize scripture! How can you call yourself a Christian if you don't memorize at least one new verse every day?
    - e. Then he reminds us that we are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strengths and our neighbor as ourselves.
    - f. And since none of do that 100% of the time, he says then you must not be born again!
  4. What we need to do is to focus on the perfect life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and thereby be assured that He has done all that needed to be done, to which nothing else can be added.
    - a. The most expensive insurance policy that can be sold is a single premium whole life policy.
    - b. This is where a person pays one huge premium and is insured for life.
    - c. This is what Jesus did when He died on the cross on our behalf.
    - d. John 10:27-29.