

Horror
of Great
Darkness

Genesis 15:6 – 16:5



~ We are certainly in one of the deeply profound sections of Scripture in our previous several reports from our Spiritual Safari. Of course, I recognize that I say that about every chapter we come to in the Bible - because they all are. See the prodigious characteristic of Holy Writ is that every monument we are going to examine is just a little more spectacular than the previous. In our last two safari reports, we saw Abraham defeat the kings of the east – or, more accurately, I should say: we saw God defeat the kings of the east for Abraham – God Personally protected Abraham; and He told Abraham that it was He Who was his shield and exceeding great reward. Also, in the last several legs of our expedition through the entire Word of God, we considered exactly how Abraham had believed God by faith; and how doing so was counted to him for righteousness. That is a very important tenet of truth because it tells us, very simply, about the only way Abraham, you, me – or anyone else – can ever be saved....

XV

6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

~ Abraham may have believed God - but was obviously not very comforted by this. I think we can all relate to Abraham here. Abraham asked God when he and Sarah would have a child born in their house to inherit it; and God took Abraham out in the darkness and showed him the stars and said, "...if you could number them you could number your offspring." I'm sure Abraham saw far less than one percent of all stars that night. Today, it would be impossible to number the stars OR the offspring of Abraham. Well, at the time in which we are studying, Abraham believed God when believing God seemed futile and impossible. God said He would do this unlikely thing and Abraham said, "...alright, then I believe You." That was

counted to him for righteousness and, today, it's really just that simple, friends - and, yet it's just that complicated!

Remember, Paul, in the fourth chapter of Romans, asked, "...what shall we say then, that Abraham our father hath found pertaining to the flesh?" Then Paul answers his own question: "...for if Abraham was justified by works he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God and IT was counted to him for righteousness." What is "it?" – Faith! Was it righteousness? – No! - But God COUNTED it to Abraham for righteousness. "Now unto him that worketh is not the reward reckoned of grace but as death." That's pretty strong language – and it's crystal clear, my beloved. See, if we could work for our salvation then God would owe us something, and, friends, God will never be in debt to YOU! You can just write that down – again. God never saves ANYONE by any other means except for grace; never has – never will. If you ever get saved it's going to be because you believed God and accepted Christ as your Savior. Period. Full stop.

Believing God and trusting Christ in difficult areas of our lives also, by de facto, means we believe that God provided salvation for us. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted to him as righteousness," Paul said. So, God declares us righteous by simply accepting Christ! I cannot overemphasize that truth or stress it enough. In the epistle to the Galatians, we have the same truth given again. Paul said, "...and the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed" - Galatians chapter three verse eight. So, those who believe are blessed with the faith of Abraham and, as a result, they are saved by Christ. See, Abraham was a very practical man. He was not filled with some phony, pious self-righteous blah. I wish we could get rid of that in the church today, too, by the way – because it is spiritual cancer – and the church is definitely fatally sick....

7 And God said unto Abraham, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.

8 And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?

Genesis 15:6-16:5

~ If it weren't for this challenge to God by Abraham I would very definitely not be writing this report today. When I originally wrote these reports I broke off the writing at chapter ten of Genesis for several years because I had too much to work out with Abraham. If I had just held on for a few more chapters, it would have been so easy! See, as we read on here, in response to Abraham's challenge, God challenges Abraham right back! God says, "...get these animals and divide them right down the middle. Put one half on one side and the other half on the other side...." Remember, birds are sacrificed altogether differently from other animals in the Bible. In Abraham's day this was comparable to a notary public witnessing and executing a contract. This is all before the Mosaic Law is given, too - so let's not get things mixed up. This is the way a contract was performed in Abraham's day between two men. The two men would join hands and walk between the pieces and parts of the sacrifices. This is one very humanistic scene here, friends. If you had been there you would have seen all these sacrifices laid out everywhere - and it would have been very sensational to observe, to be sure....

9 And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.

10 And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not.

11 And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

~ So, we have this picture of Abraham out there waiting for the Lord to come and finalize this contract; and while he's waiting, the buzzards are circling and buzzing. Jeremiah said that God said, "...and I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof" – Jeremiah chapter thirty-four verse eighteen. I can just see Abraham out there on the plains shooing away all the buzzards and crows in some seemingly big, crazy, dramatic but

meaningless and pointless scene. I'm sure some uber pious Philistine was standing there, looking on, and saying – or, at least, thinking, “....brother Abraham, are you okay? Are you sure this person you're waiting for is going to show up? - Because, if they are, they're late!” I can also imagine seeing Abraham replying, “....no, I don't think He's late; He just told me to get things in order and wait – and that He would be here soon enough.” THAT is the moment the contract was made, my beloved. This is truly remarkable! ~

12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.

~ Faith has Abraham paralyzed now; fast asleep – having nightmares - and wholly set aside. Does it seem strange to you that God would put Abraham to sleep when they are supposed to be making a contract? Well, this is the most unusual contract I have ever seen! God is promising to do something because He has made a contract and Abraham isn't doing anything except for accepting the promise of God. Verse twelve is the proper, correct and complete description of the Sabbath rest for today, too, by the way. Make a note. Friends, this is EXACTLY what took place two thousand years ago when Christ died on the cross. God so loved the world that He gave His Son to die for our sins. Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish; but have everlasting life. I wasn't there and you weren't there - but God was there making a contract. Then, God went to the cross and died for my sins – and yours. The paralysis Abraham is in here in this passage is SIN! I do hope and pray everyone read that correctly.

Now, imagine for a moment that God had said to Abraham, “....Abraham, if you say your prayers every single night, never miss a Sunday school lesson and sing a song for Me then, in return, I'll save you and keep you saved.” Then, four Tuesdays from now, Abraham forgets to pray, then gets sick, and he can't go to church or sing anymore because of illness. Well, the contract would have been broken. God would have been off the hook to make His part good! God said He would do this thing for Abraham and all Abraham had to do was BELIEVE! I wish I could just stop and re-type this 900,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 times or more. At this point I say,

“A-Men to God.” That’s salvation; irrespective of whether you understand it, believe it, accept it, agree with it, like it – or not!

There was a parent that had a child who went away to college. The child graduated with a doctorate degree and came home an intellect, ‘ya know? – Well, his mother was telling her son how great God was and all the things He had done for her; but the son became very skeptical and irritated and provoked, so he blurted out, “....how do you know you’re saved? Your little soul is meaningless compared to the vastness of the universe....” - and he said, “....God could forget all about you; so, you can’t be sure.” Mother didn’t say anything; she just kept making him breakfast. Finally, the meal was prepared, and she sat down with him and said, “....son, I’ve been listening to what you’re saying and you may be right. My little soul probably doesn’t really amount to very much. In the vastness of this universe - God may not miss me at all – BUT - if God doesn’t save me He will lose more than I will lose.” Of course, the son asked, “....what do you mean?” To which mom replied, “....I, actually, wouldn’t lose anything if you are right - but God loses His reputation in the earth if He breaks the contract that HE made to me.” ~

13 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

~ In Scripture, it is predicted that the nation Israel would be put out of the land three times – and this is number one; as they went to Egypt and then God brought them out of slavery. Then, Israel went into the Assyrian captivity and Judah went into the Babylonian captivity - and they came back from being put out that second time. They half-heartedly re-built Jerusalem in that day; but then, in A.D. 70 Jerusalem was destroyed and God scattered them for good. That’s the condition of Israel today. They have never returned to the land after that. I believe they will come back some day - but their return to the land today is not the fulfillment of this third return – because that would be impossible. How do I know? Because the Bible says when they return in fulfillment of prophecy the desert will blossom like a rose. Now, I know they’re planting some trees over there, but that desert is far from blossoming. Second, the Bible says that when

Israel returns to the land in fulfillment of prophecy that they will dwell in peace and safety. To say Israel dwells in peace and safety today is simply not credible. Third, and most importantly, the Bible says when Israel returns to the land in fulfillment of prophecy they will worship the True and Living God – the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, THAT certainly isn't happening in any form of imagination; so, by de facto, Israel cannot be back in the land today according to Scriptural prophecy. Again, impossible....

14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

15 And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.

16 But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

~ This passage is simply amazing. God loved the Amorites and He wanted to give them a chance. God wanted them to turn to Him and God gave the Amorites four hundred MORE years to do just that. I have to wonder: how long had He already given them? Was that long enough? Only one Amorite will turn to God in all of those centuries - and that's Rahab the harlot from Jericho. In the meantime, His chosen nation from Jacob will be down in Egypt in slavery. Friends, are you thinking about what we are reading in this report and the implications thereof? Is this starting to really make some sense to you? Because I feel like I'm just typing on into the horrors of darkness in my own life. Both the smoking furnace and the burning lamp speak of Christ. The furnace is judgment; the lamp speaks of Him as the light of the world – the Word of God – Holy Writ....

17 And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.

18 In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

~ So, God marks out the land. Abraham promised God NOTHING – because Abraham didn't have anything that God would accept, could use or wanted. God will save you – but He will ONLY save you on His terms - by grace. Just believe what He has done for you on the cross and by being raised from the dead for your justification. If you need a mathematical formula in an algebraic calculus equation, the appearance is as follows: Faith + Nothing = Salvation! It may seem overly simple to some people - but I don't think anyone can get this one wrong! Of course, I am wrong when I say I don't think anyone can get this one wrong; because they sure do....

19 The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites,

20 And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims,

21 And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

XVI

~ I'll be perfectly honest with you dear readers – because I always am honest with you – I almost wish this chapter wasn't in the Bible; because we have seen Abraham treading some high places - but now we are going to see a very real, human lapse of faith in this man – and the depths he went to – and it's not a pretty picture. It's going to lead to some of the ugliest stuff we have in the Bible later. Abraham got two things down there in Egypt that would really cause him big problems in his family and in his life: wealth and this little Egyptian maid named Hagar....

1 Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.

2 And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.

3 And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.

4 And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

5 And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee.

~ This suggestion of Sarah was a very common practice of that day. When a wife couldn't bear a child, they utilized the concubine. However, God didn't approve of this at all. This is Sarah's idea and, frankly, we see no mention of the Lord leading Abraham anywhere in this entire passage. Abraham surrenders his position as the head of the home by following her suggestion. Well, friends, when we act outside of the leading of God, we are going to do the wrong thing EVERY SINGLE time. So, the logical question is: why would God give this record if he didn't approve of it? – The answer is: because if He didn't show us our "wrong" we would never see it at all.

If we didn't see how wrong we all are we could never appreciate what Christ did for us when He died on the cross. God definitely doesn't approve of this thing Abraham did with Hagar; you may be absolutely positive. God did not accept it - and He isn't going to bless it. This child is going to be a real heartbreak to all three of them. None of them are really trusting God at all right now. At their age - and at this time in their life - I believe Abraham and Sarah had come to the conclusion that they were not going to have a child. I'm sure Sarah did all the rationalizing she needed to get done what she wanted done. It was all perfectly legal and it was the accepted custom of the day – but it was wrong. There are many things God does not approve of that man does. Many of those things are written about in the Bible; and this just happens to be one of them ~



