

# Genuine Faith Expressed by Abram (Part 4)

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[ 0 : 00 ] In our study now, in the book of Genesis, chapter 15, looking again at the life of Abram and! God's dealing with him and what God reveals to Abram about himself and what he is and what God is.

His attributes and characteristics. Last week, we were in verses 16 and 17, in essence, where God has now begun the process of entering a covenant relationship with Abram.

Instructed him, you remember, to place the pieces of certain animals against each other with an aisle in between. And the things that Abram saw there when the birds came and landed upon those pieces, he shooed them away.

And then God gave him a vision to instruct them as to what all that meant. His descendants that will come. And gave them the fact that that descendancy will end up in great tribulation as far as bondage and servitude in a country and a land that is not theirs.

And that, of course, is speaking about the time that Israel has in Egypt. And then, verse 17, it came to pass that when the sun went down, it was dark.

[ 1 : 34 ] Behold, a smoking furnace and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. Again, the picture there is that he had caused a deep sleep to fall upon Abram. And as that happened, then God passed through that symbolic means of the fire and the smoke, passed through those pieces as an indication that he himself will be the one that sees to it that every aspect of that covenant he's entering into with Abram will be fulfilled.

Remember, naturally, in the traditional sense, both parties of the agreement would pass through those pieces. To indicate that both of them would guarantee the best they could, that their aspect, their part of the bargain or the agreement would be fulfilled.

But that deep sleep and horror of darkness came upon Abram, and God himself passed through the pieces to indicate that he and he alone will see to it that that is brought to pass.

Abram had no equality with God in that. Usually, in that agreement period, both sides of the agreement were kind of an equal basis. But Abram was nowhere near equal to God.

He was just one that needed to be obedient, but he would be also the recipient of God's grace through this and through the covenant relationship that he formulates with him.

[ 3 : 01 ] So we saw that somewhat last week, but I wanted to look at something else in lieu of that. When we started our study in Abram, we said that we want to keep an eye out and see what God makes himself to Abram so that you and I can do a reflective thinking on our own lives to see and remember what God has done and what he has been to us throughout our life.

So when we come to this portion of God passing through the pieces to guarantee the fulfillment of the covenant relationship with Abram, what does that have to do with us?

Think about it just a moment. Here, God is entering a covenant relationship, and it's a relationship not just built on promises, but it's a relationship of fellowship as well.

All right? Look what God has done for you and I in the day of grace through Christ Jesus. All right? He has brought us into that relationship with him that I think even supersedes what the relationship with Abram was because of what the end result of all that is.

So the great picture that he paints for us in that. But I want us to turn over to Hebrews chapter 6 and kind of look at a deeper aspect of how this fits into you and I and our relationship to God.

[ 4 : 33 ] Hebrews chapter 6. We've been here before, but I want us to look at part of it in a little deeper realm here, if you will. Of course, the first part of the chapter, the writer of the Hebrews speaks of the idea that in the picture is that there were Jewish people, Hebrews, that had professed Christ, but yet were going back to the Old Testament sacrifices.

And he's saying if you do that, you're counting the blood of Christ as insufficient. Trotting underfoot the blood of Christ and so forth. All right? So now he picks up in verse number 9.

But beloved, we are persuaded better things of you and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love which you have showed toward his name in that you have ministered to the saints and do minister.

And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of the hope unto the end. Now notice that. He said, I want them to express the reality that you have that full assurance of the hope, and that's the hope of salvation, unto the end.

That you be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. So you get the picture here. These that he's writing to, no doubt are people that are in the midst of struggle.

[ 6 : 08 ] Because he's encouraging them to continue on this life of faith and faithfulness in accordance to the promises that God has made.

In the context that God has made to the Hebrew people. All right? So he said, do that. Continue in that. Because you are those that are people that will inherit the promise.

Now look at verse 13, and he gives a reason why they can, or they have the wherewithal to remain faithful and strong in the midst of difficulties.

For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself. Now, this particular oath that he's speaking about here is the time that God gave an oath to Abraham at the time of the offering of Isaac.

All right? When God saw Abraham was more than willing to slay his son. God stopped him, had a ram caught in the bushes, remember? And God then made the promise.

[ 7 : 15 ] There's two things. All right? He said in that, in Genesis 22, that I swear by myself. All right? And then he swore that because of what Abraham did here in his faithfulness to God and obedience to him, he reiterates the promises of the land that he would give his descendants.

So the oath and the promise are the two things that he speaks of here. But he could swear by no greater because there's nobody greater than himself. So he swore by himself. Verse 14.

Here was the promise. Saying, surely blessing, I will bless thee. Multiplying, I will multiply thee. And so notice, after he had patiently endured, he obtained a promise.

All right? That's patience, enduring, whatever comes. For men verily swear by greater and oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of the promise the immutability or the unchangeableness of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath.

That by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.

[ 8 : 42 ] Now, two things here before we go further, before I forget it. All right. Notice again in verse 17. The purpose of what God's doing here is that he wants to show unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath.

It's an interesting word, counsel here. Surely it deals with the idea of what God said to and promised Abram. But if you go to Acts chapter 2, we've been there before.

You remember the picture here that the scripture speaks of the determinate counsel of God. It's in eternity past. Father, Son, Holy Ghost, the Godhead meeting together in counsel.

To lay out their plan, in essence, their plan of redemption for man. So, you got to include all of that, not just the promises to Abram, but everything that pertained to the counsel of God.

It's not just what he was going to do in bringing redemption, but every single piece of activity that goes into bringing all of that to pass is included in that.

[ 10 : 08 ] It's like putting together a gajillion, bajillion piece puzzle, if there is such a word. All right? You get the picture here. Every single piece is necessary for that gigantic piece of puzzle to be put together.

And you can see the final result. Same thing with what God did from eternity past till the day it's all consummated. Every piece.

So, he wanted to show the unchangeableness of all of that counsel. So, he did that by confirming it by an oath.

By two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have, what? Strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hopes set before us.

Now, so that then we might have strong consolation. Consolation here is a word that, you know, comes from a combination of words that means to call earnestly so that you have the idea to exhort or to encourage.

[11:15] So, so we might have strong encouragement if you will. Now, the word strong here, got to see this. Strong in this text in the Greek is an indwelling strength.

All right? Embodied or put forth. That strength doesn't just sit there. All right? It's active within the life of the believer.

Why is it there? How can it be there? Because we recognize and see what God did in making promise to Abram and what he did to make sure we see that that's an unchangeable promise. It's immutable. All right? So, we might have that indwelling strength. All right? That's put forth. That's that embodied strength like an obstacle to resistance such as an army or a fortress.

So, that encouragement which God promises to us and God's oath together afford for us a strong army or fortress against doubt and against discouragement.

[12:27] All right? God never wants us to doubt him even in our humanity. Why? because he has not only made the promise and all that counsel that he's determined but he has sworn by himself in giving those promises and you can't swear by anybody higher.

That makes all those promises unchangeable. So, anytime we have a doubt about God's faithfulness especially in the matter of salvation we need to wake up and remember what God said what God did to show us how unchangeable that is so that we might have strong consolation who has what?

Who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us. Now, the refuge refers as you probably determine and figure it out the refuge refers back to the cities of refuge that God established in the nation of Israel.

Deuteronomy chapter 19 remember what that is. Deuteronomy chapter 19 beginning verse 2 thou shalt separate three cities for thee in the midst of thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it thou shalt prepare thee away and divide the coast of the land which the Lord God giveth thee to inherit into three parts that every slayer may flee thither now this is the case of the slayer which shall flee thither that he may live whoso killeth his neighbor ignorantly whom he hated not in time past as when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbor to hew wood and his hand fetch a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree and the head slippeth from the half and lighteth upon his neighbor that he die he shall flee unto one of those cities and live lest the avenger of the blood pursue the slayer while his heart is hot and overtake him because the way is long and slay him whereas he was not worthy of death in so much as he hated him not in time past so you get the picture there of the cities of refuge you know and that's not just the idea of chopping the wood that's the scenario he uses as an example anything that caused a neighbor or friend to die at their hand without premeditation all right accident then he can flee to a city of refuge lest some family member of the deceased in that passion of anger come to seek to put him to death all right now here the writer of the

Hebrews said God did what he did in the oath and the promise so that we could recognize that those were unchangeable promises all right so that we that flee for refuge now our refuge what would our refuge be what were we finding refuge from what would be after us sin and the wages wages of sin is what death so that we who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope that is set before us that hope is the hope of salvation all right so the idea here is this we then are running to the city of refuge for refuge to keep us from having to pay that penalty for sin who is it there then at that city of refuge to whom we run our high priest all right

[16:59] Christ Jesus that we run to for that hope of salvation now look at verse 19 talking about the hope now remember we've said before good definition of the word hope it's not the balance of probabilities maybe so or maybe not so it's the idea we have a steadfast sure hope expectation all right assured expectation in what the promise of God is so we having fled for refuge from the death of sin are gone there to lay hold of to grab a hold of that assured expectation of eternal life of salvation all right verse 19 which hope we have as an anchor of the soul anchor is described as sure and steadfast now the word sure here has the definition of not to make to totter or to baffle or to foil it speaks of something here that cannot be caused to totter when put to the test now think about that folks you talk about steadfast assurance of salvation that's it and it's all based on what

God did in the promise to Abram now so we have that steadfast hope that we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast steadfast speaks of something which does not break down under

the weight of something that steps on it yeah that's what that is doesn't break down here Paul says we have that anchor the hope of salvation as an anchor which will not break down it won't be moved even if something that's heavy falls on it amen now good question for us that salvation that we have as the believers through Christ Jesus being our anchor should not be able to be moved we should never have to doubt our salvation if for no other reason because of this right here yeah yeah that's what

God's promised and that promise is as solid as it can be now that hope is sure and steadfast and notice which entereth into the veil within the veil whether the forerunner is for us entered even Jesus made in high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek now within the veil talks about the holy of holies all right it's the picture that Christ Jesus as the great high priest after he has died ascended back to the father into if you will the high the holy of holies in the heavens as our rock all right now he is the rock

Christ Jesus that is entered there not as our representative but as a forerunner high priest of Arianic priesthood was simply one that represented the people the people's representative Jesus is our forerunner and so the rest of the group followed the forerunner right and that's the picture you and I have here Christ Jesus our forerunner gone before us it's like Paul said in 1 Corinthians what 15 that Jesus is the first of the first fruits in the resurrection all right first fruits determined there are more to come a song came to mind when I was going through this back in the 1800s 1834 is when this guy was born Edward Mote wrote this song wrote the words to the song my hope is built on nothing less than

Jesus blood and righteousness I dare not trust the sweetest frame but wholly lean on Jesus name when darkness veils his lovely face I rest on his unchanging grace in every high and stormy gale my anchor holds within the veil then the third verse his oath his covenant his blood support me in the whelming flood when all around my soul gives way he then is all my hope and stay when he shall come with trumpet sound oh may I then in him be found dressed in his righteousness alone faultless to stand before the throne on Christ the solid rock I stand all other ground is sinking sand all other ground is sinking sand great song with so much spiritual truth within it our pastor that married calvita and I performed the ceremony gone to be with the

[ 23 : 07 ] Lord now had a granddaughter he told us one day he said when she would sing that song with they be in the car she said my hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness I dare not trust the sweetest frame holy lean on Christ the solid rock I stand stinking sand stinking sand he looked at her you're right babe it's all stinking sand except for Christ let's pray father again thank you for your loving kindness for your goodness and grace to us tonight and for again the privilege of being back together to study your word together and so father thank you thank you for what you have done for us Lord that you have made it safe and secure so that nothing can rob us of the salvation and blessings that you have provided for us through your precious son so father

I pray that you'll just enable us to ponder that and ingrain that so deep within our soul and spirit that father will not just nothing moves us but that we will just rejoice in it day by day and we'll thank you for it praise you for it now in Jesus name we pray amen