

The Big Picture

- * We are studying Gen 12-15
- * The primary theme of these 4 chapters is FAITH — built on the life of Abram
- * These chapters communicate 3 things about faith
 - ◆ How Faith is Recognized — Gen 12:1-9
 - ◆ How Faith is Refined — Gen 12:10-14:24
 - ◆ How Faith is Ratified — Gen 15

Last Week ...

- * We looked at chapters 13 & 14 and learned that God refines our faith through ...
 - ◆ Our **conflicts** with others — Gen 13:1-18
 - ◆ The **crises** we encounter — Gen 14:1-24
- * This week we will finish the Gen 14 narrative with a secondary crisis, which begins with the appearance of ...
 - ◆ A mysterious figure - **Melchizedek** in Gen 14:18;
 - ◆ Then we will start in on how faith is ratified in Gen 15 ... after a short detour on **typology**

As You Recall ...

- * The story of Abram's crisis proceeded as all narratives do ...
 - ◆ First, Abram's crisis is **introduced** in vv. 1-4
 - The characters (2 armies) and the catalyst (rebellion)
 - ◆ Then Abram's crisis is **initiated** in vv. 5-10
 - The Western kings come and defeat the Eastern kings
 - ◆ And more specifically **identified** in vv. 11-12
 - Abram's nephew, Lot, was taken captive

As You Recall .. Cont'd

- ◆ Next, Abram's response is **instituted** in vv. 13-16
 - Assembles his warriors, sets out, and thoroughly defeats the Western kings ...
 - Retrieving Lot AND all the losses of the Eastern kings
- * Now we come to the climax and conclusion of the narrative in vv. 17-24
 - ◆ Abram does something remarkable in these verses
 - ◆ He makes a **declaration of indenture** - he acknowledges and BINDS himself to the LORD's provision .. demonstrating his growing faith!!

The Climax

- * The climax plays out in vv. 17-23
 - ◆ Starts with the expected in v. 17 .. the King of Sodom comes out to greet Abram in the Valley of Shaveh
 - A lot of ink spilled on where .. don't really know, but merit to seeing it as proximate with the city of Jerusalem
 - ◆ BUT THEN — the mysterious & unexpected .. **Melchizedek** in v. 18
- * **What stands out about his introduction?**
 - ◆ There isn't one!! ... He just appears on the scene
 - ◆ Melchizedek is unique in that he is a major Biblical figure ... with no genealogy — in a book of genealogies no less!

Climax .. Continued

- * **So ... Who is this character?**
 - ◆ Can't say definitively yet — but we get some important clues from the text .. look at vv. 18-20
- * **What attributes do you see?**
 - ◆ He is **righteous** — His name means king of righteousness
 - מלכי צדק — His name is a compound of two Hebrew words
 - Thus more a reflection of his character than an actual name
 - ◆ He is a **king** .. of a place named Salem (means "peace")
 - Salem is also a short form of Jerusalem (Ps 76:2)

Climax .. Continued

- ◆ He is a priest .. of God Most High
 - ▶ Performs "priestly functions" .. blesses Abram — v. 19a
 - ▶ YET, he is more than a Levitical priest whose priestly work was limited to the nation of Israel ...
- ◆ He would seem to have an "orthodox-knowledge" of God
 - ▶ Possessor, better translated "Originator" of heaven and earth — v. 19b
 - ▶ Seems to understand God's sovereignty in man's affairs — v. 20
- ◆ Abram views him as a superior
 - ▶ He gave Melchizedek an offering ... a tenth of all
 - ▶ Don't read "tithing" into this!

Climax .. Continued

- * Interesting information — but who is he?
 - ◆ He is a historical person (means he is REAL), with an unrecorded ancestry, who is a TYPE of Christ
- * How can we prove this?
 - ◆ Christ is associated with Melchizedek in Ps 110 — a messianic Psalm; and
 - ◆ The ANTITYPE is specified in the NT ... Turn to Heb 7

Typology Excursus

ANOTHER LESSON IN HERMENEUTICS

Typology

- * What is it?
 - ◆ The study and interpretation of “types” and “antitypes”
- * As applied to the Bible it is ...
 - ◆ A person, event, or thing in the OT ([the type](#)) serving as a foreshadowing of its fulfillment in the NT ([the antitype](#))

Typology .. Continued

- * Formal Definition
 - ◆ A type is an OT person, event, or thing that has a [historical reality](#) and is [designed by God](#) to [foreshadow](#) a real person, event, or thing in the NT that demonstrates [correspondence and fulfillment](#) of the OT type.
- * Types are “signposts” that point toward someone or something yet to come in God’s redemptive plan

Typology .. Continued

- * Five KEY elements to look for ...
 - ◆ [Resemblance](#): Is there a natural, genuine similarity or correspondence between the “T” and the “AT”
 - Not everything that has a resemblance is a type, BUT every type has a resemblance
 - ◆ [Historical Reality](#): The type actually existed in the OT — it is real

Typology .. Continued

- ◆ **Prefiguring/Foreshadowing:** The type has a predictive element to it — it “looks ahead,” anticipates and points to the antitype
- ◆ **Heightening:** The antitype is ALWAYS greater than and superior to the type
- ◆ **Divine Design:** Does the “T/AT” relationship bear the imprint of God’s decretive will
 - ▶ That is .. something He and He alone could have planned and “caused to be fulfilled”

Typology .. Continued

- * Caution, Caution, Caution ...
- ◆ Don’t go “type” crazy ... more frequently it is a symbol, illustration or an analogy that pictures a NT TRUTH
 - ▶ For example: Jonah is not a type of Christ —
 - ▶ His three days days in the belly of the whale can certainly prefigure Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection

Typology .. Continued

- ▶ But note how Christ refers to Jonah in Matt 12:38-40 ... He uses him as a **prophetic sign!**
- ▶ Now as to the rest of the requirements of a type, does Jonah’s character resemble Christ’s?
 - ◆ Jonah ran from God ... Christ ran to God
 - ◆ Jonah disobeyed ... Christ perfectly obeyed
- ◆ It is best to see Jonah’s experience as symbolic of God’s power to restore, NOT typical of Christ

Typology .. Continued

- ◆ We have a good opportunity to practice caution right here in v. 17-24 ... with the bread and the wine
- ◆ Are these a "TYPE" of the body and blood of Christ? Or a TYPE of the sacrament of communion?
 - ▶ Certainly some resemblance — but not a type;
 - ▶ The bread/wine and body/blood connection is made by Christ as He performs the first communion .. Matt 26:26-29 .. with no reference or connection to Gen 14; and
 - ▶ Bread and wine were ANE staples of a "blessing or celebratory event"

Typology .. Continued

- ◆ Excessive typology leads to allegorizing
 - ▶ That is ... spiritualizing the text
 - ▶ Allegory looks for a "deeper meaning" which was never the authorial intent and detaches the text from absolute truth
- ◆ There are differences among good conservative commentators, but in my opinion ... less is more in typology

Clear Examples

TYPE	ANTITYPE	SCRIPTURE REF.
ADAM (Person)	Christ's greater sacrifice (note that Adam is called a "type")	Rom 5:14
MELCHIZEDEK (Person)	Christ as superior King and Eternal Priest .. Simultaneously	Ps 110:4; Heb 7:1-28
PASSOVER (Event)	Christ our sacrificial lamb	1 Cor 5:7
FIRST-FRUITS (Event)	Christ's resurrection	1 Cor 15:20-23
PENTECOST (Event)	Coming of the Holy Spirit	Acts 2
TABERNACLE (Thing)	Christ - the believers access to God and basis of fellowship	Heb 9:23-24
THE VEIL (Thing)	Christ - the believers access to God	Heb 10:19-20

Back to Our Text

- * The two kings meet Abram — picturing two opposing extremes of “piety”
- * Melchizedek, the TYPE of Christ blesses and rejoices with Abram
 - ◆ He commandeers the occasion to “bless God’s instrument” and to proclaim the greatness of GOD who secured victory
- * Abram uses the occasion to worship and thank God by making an offering to God’s priestly representative

Back to Our Text

- * In other words — we have two great men worshipping “THE GREATEST ONE OF ALL!”
- 👉 Wonderful picture of the value of Christian fellowship — Abram could have been cocky in the flush of victory, but Melchizedek pointed him to the ONE behind it all ...

Climax .. Continued

- * Bera (King of Sodom) presents another picture ..
- * He wants nothing to do with God — just wants his stuff back
- * He makes an apparently “magnanimous” offer that is wholly w/o merit ...
 - ◆ Bera has ZERO claim to anything
 - ◆ He is the losing and vanquished King — everything rightly belongs to Abram!!!!

Climax .. Continued

- * Yet Bera is sneaky ... He plays on two powerful realities of “worldly” people with a tempting offer — **What are they?**
 - ◆ First — He plays to Abram's condition
 - He is “flush” with victory and vulnerable to relaxing his “guard” — leading to poor decisions
 - ◆ Second — He plays to Abram's pride
 - By accepting the offer, Abram could **grab some loot** and appear **generous**
 - Abram could have gained BOTH **wealth and reputation** .. Two things the world loves!

Climax .. Continued

- * But Abram is “more flush” with his recent worship and responds WELL
- * He relinquishes what is rightfully his for **God's glory**
- * In so doing he makes his **declaration of indenture** .. he **BINDS** himself solely to God's material provision

Climax .. Continued

- * Note the sequence in vv. 22-23
 - ◆ First he identifies his allegiance — v. 22
 - The **FACT** of it ... “I have sworn”
 - The **TARGET** of it ... repeats Melchizedek's blessing formula from v. 19a — which clearly identifies “his God”
 - ◆ Next he identifies the scope of indenture — v. 23a
 - He will rely solely on God for his provision
 - ◆ Then he provides the reason — v. 23b
 - So that all the glory will go to God!!

The Conclusion

- * The narrative closes with v. 24
 - ◆ Abram takes only what has “already” been taken .. his men’s sustenance along the way
 - ◆ But acknowledges and advocates for his supporters (Aner, Eshchol, Mamre) — whom Bera may have ignored

Implications

- ◆ Abram cares for those who cared for him .. Aner, Eschol, Mamre
- ◆ Abram does not impose his faith on others .. if they are to have faith it will arise from their own volitional belief
- ◆ Abram models his belief in his actions ...
- ◆ In particular, he avoids the dangers of accepting things from the wicked and relies on God to provide what He has promised

Abram’s Faith Ratified

GENESIS 15:1-21

General Observations

- * Taking the life of Abram as one large narrative ...
 - ◆ Chapter 15 is the crescendo of Gen 12-25!
 - ◆ While the theme is FAITH, the obstacles to his faith dominate the story .. **two in particular, what?**
 - ▶ How will I possess the land?
 - ▶ How will I be a great nation with no heir?

General Observations

- ◆ In fact, these two questions are related ... with no heir and subsequent abundant progeny, how will I ever obtain and possess the promised land?
- ◆ At least 1 of these 2 questions is featured in every incident of Abram's life recorded in Genesis
- * **Yet the centerpiece of ALL this is found in Gen 15 — what is it?**
 - ◆ Abram's confession of faith and God's imputation of righteousness in v. 6

General Observations

- * So ... in Gen 15, Abram's faith is ratified
- * **It is ratified in three steps ... what are they?**
 - ◆ By Abram's belief — v. 6a
 - ◆ By God's imputation of righteousness — v. 6b
 - ◆ By God's blood covenant — vv. 7-21

Structure of Gen 15

- * The OT's "Doubting Thomas" — Gen 15:1-5
 - ◆ What can you give me if I have no heir
- * The OT's "Bold Peter" — Gen 15:6
 - ◆ ABRAM BELIEVED
- * The OT's "Conflicted Father" — Gen 15:7-21
 - ◆ "I believe ... but help my unbelief" (Mark 9:24)

The OT's Doubting Thomas

- * Our ever present & gracious God — v. 1
 - ◆ "After these things" ... GOD proactively speaks to Abram in a vision providing two assurances
 - ◆ What are the assurances?
 - Protection and Great Reward
 - ◆ The harder question is why are they offered .. what do you think?
 - Because Abram just forfeited these two things in Gen 14?
 - Or maybe God knows something else is bothering Abram?

Doubting Thomas

- * What is God effectively saying to Abram with His two assurances?
 - ◆ TRUST ME!!!!
- * What makes TRUST so hard?
 - ◆ It frequently rests on things unseen, or not yet fulfilled .. promises
 - ◆ It frequently involves waiting
- * Which requires what?
 - ◆ FAITH
- * This sequence unfolds in vv. 1-5 leading to THE climax in v. 6

Doubting Thomas

- * As Gen 15 starts, Abram is coming down off the high of victory and FEAR has crept in ...
- * Maybe it's a retrospective fear (after these things), thus
 - ◆ Fear of retribution, or ...
 - ◆ Fear of inadequate provisions .. I should have taken some loot!
- * The text doesn't say .. but God's assurances certainly could support these concerns — noting "shield" and "great reward"

Doubting Thomas

- * Or maybe it is a prospective fear, a "looking forward" fear — If so ...
- * It would seem that God is preparing to address a deeper "fear" that might be on Abram's mind
- * After all ...
 - ◆ Abram has already seen God do great things in the realms of physical protection ... and material provision
 - ◆ So why would he need to be reassured about this?

Doubting Thomas

- * Which leads me to believe that God's reference to fear is addressing a bigger nagging DOUBT in Abram's mind —
- * **What do you think that doubt is?**
 - ◆ What about your promise concerning the son (or SON) who is to come?
 - ◆ Which is precisely what Abram expresses in vv. 2-3

Doubting Thomas

- * Abram addresses God in an interesting way that is not well translated ..
 - ◆ Most of your Bibles probably have "O Lord GOD"
 - Note the all caps, larger font "G" convention ... anyone have an NIV?
 - ◆ The NIV actually nails it .. "O Sovereign LORD"
 - ◆ The Hebrew has יהוה אֱלֹהֵי — "O Lord LORD"
 - Abram is expressing God's supremacy .. Hebrew language expresses the superlative by word repetition
 - ◆ Abram has his theology right, but is honestly expressing **doubt** or maybe **apprehension** — WE ALL DO IT!!

Doubting Thomas

- * Maybe Abram's doubt goes like this ...
 - ◆ "How can I count on your promises if You won't even fulfill the first promise of an heir you made to me LONG AGO!" — v. 2a
 - ◆ And further ... "Since you haven't come through for me, I've had to take matters into my own hands and appoint an heir from my household!" — vv. 2b-3

Doubting Thomas

- * God's patient & steady re-assurance — vv. 4-5
 - ◆ No Abram — you've got it wrong again
 - The heir will be your flesh and blood
 - ◆ And from you will spring an "uncountable" number!
 - The stars are not "spiritual seed"
 - Simply employs the same hyperbole as in Gen 13:16
 - And gives Abram a vivid reminder for when he ??'s again

HOMEWORK

What .. specifically .. did Abram believe?
(Restrict yourself to Gen 1:1-15:6)
