

## Reintroducing 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)

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We will camp on v. 6 this week

### HOMEWORK

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

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## The OT's Bold Peter

- \* Verse 6 is important THEOLOGICALLY and PRACTICALLY
- \* It introduces the doctrine of justification ...
  - ◆ Abram's confession ("belief")
  - ◆ God's declaration ("the reckoning/crediting")
  - ◆ God's imputation ("righteousness")
- \* With the exception of "grace" v. 6 embodies each theological element of justification in "skeletal form"

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## Full Theological Definition\*

An instantaneous **act of God** whereby, as a gift of His grace, **He imputes** (i.e. "reckons") to a believing sinner the full and perfect **righteousness** of Christ through **faith alone** (i.e. "belief") and legally **declares** (i.e. "reckons" .. again) him perfectly **righteous** in His sight, forgiving the sinner of all unrighteousness and thus delivering him from all condemnation

\*Biblical Doctrine, MacArthur & Mayhue, p. 612

## Bold Peter

 Practically speaking, v. 6 affirms that salvation does not require us to understand every theological detail!!!!!!!

- ◆ DO NOT MISS-QUOTE or MISUNDERSTAND me
- ◆ Theological precision — when we have the full revelation is important
- ◆ But even then, we are not saved because we are more or less correct about every theological detail

## Bold Peter

\* What then are the essentials?

- ◆ By grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone!
- \* The five sola's of salvation are a helpful reminder
  - ◆ Sola fide — Faith alone
  - ◆ Sola gratia — Grace alone
  - ◆ Sola Scriptura — Scripture alone
  - ◆ Solo Christo — Christ alone
  - ◆ Soli Deo Gloria — to God alone be the glory!

## Bold Peter

- \* Now ... we still have a lot to unravel
- \* Starting with .. does v. 6 mark when Abram was saved?
  - ◆ No ... turn to Heb 11:8-10
- \* So what is the point of 15:6?
  - ◆ To explain how Abram was saved .. and affirm that the means of salvation HAS BEEN THE SAME in every era of human history!
  - ◆ It is a commentary on Abram's salvation that interrupts the two parts of Gen 15 (i.e. v. 1-5 and then v. 7-21)

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## Bold Peter

- \* Let's start by breaking down what v. 6 says ...
- \* Part 1: "And/Then he believed in the LORD"
  - ◆ "he" .. Abram is the referent
  - ◆ "believed" .. the verbal action — and the first instance of the verb to believe in the Bible
    - ▶ Derived from the Hebrew word אָמֵן from which we also get "Amen" ... Abram "amened" God!!

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## Bold Peter

- ◆ The verb form is IMPORTANT ... Hiphil = "Causitive"
  - ▶ Literally translated ... "he was CAUSED to believe"
- ◆ Where is this idea affirmed in the NT?
  - ▶ Ephesians 2:8
- ◆ Abram's belief was "in the LORD (יהוה)"
  - ▶ God is the object of Abram's belief .. BUT we still need to work out the actual content of the belief
- 👉 Simple belief in what God says is Abram's pattern

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## Bold Peter

### \* Part 2: "... and He reckoned it ..."

- ◆ Note the change in speaker/referent "He" is now the LORD
- ◆ And now the "big boy word" — RECKONED!
  - ▶ This is the language of IMPLICATION ...
- ◆ Imputation means to "credit or ascribe" something to someone by virtue of "a similar quality in another"
- ◆ It is a judicial term that articulates the "transfer" .. or the "exchange" of something..
  - ▶ When something is imputed to you, you are considered to have that status ..

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## Bold Peter

### ◆ What does the pronoun "it" refer to?

- ▶ There is no noun that matches in gender and number
- ▶ It is NOT the belief (that is a verb) .. nor can you extract FAITH (a noun that would match) from the verb — that would be grammatical "slight of hand!!"
- ▶ When there is not a matching noun, a pronoun can refer to a concept that has preceded in aggregate ..
- ▶ The question that remains for us to answer is what and how far back — more on this in a minute

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## Bold Peter

### \* Part 3: "... to him as/for righteousness"

- ◆ "to him" — identifies the object of God's reckoning .. who is Abram
- ◆ "as/for righteousness" — identifies what is TRANSFERRED!!!!
- ◆ God is declaring .. or pronouncing .. Abram to be righteous
  - ▶ God is imputing the status of righteousness to Abram

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## Bold Peter

- \* Knowing what it says .. We are drawn back the the BIG and most fundamental QUESTION
  - ◆ WHAT DID ABRAM BELIEVE?
- \* Based on what we have up to Gen 15:6, I would say the content of Abrams belief is twofold ..
  - ◆ A [confident faith](#) in [God's promises](#) with a specific interest in, and expectation of, a [PROMISED SEED](#)
  - ◆ That is, a particular and specific INDIVIDUAL heir

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## Bold Peter

- \* What are the broad promises?
  - ◆ All the elements of the Abrahamic covenant
    - Personal, National, Universal .. we will look at next week
- \* So, who is the promised seed?
  - ◆ Someone who will reverse the curse — Gen 3:15
  - ◆ Someone who will be the channel of blessing to all the families of the earth — Gen 12:3

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## Bold Peter

- \* 2 - things I want you to notice
  - ◆ "Some-ONE" ... Both A&E and Abram would have understood these promises to be embodied in a specific individual though 3:15 is clearest — [turn there](#)
  - ◆ They understood that this "Some-ONE" would be a "Savior" of some sort
- \* There is grammatical & Scriptural support for this assertion

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## Bold Peter

### \* Grammatical Support

- ◆ Hebrew has a category of nouns called “collectives”
- ◆ A collective is a word that only has a “singular” form, but can be translated in the singular or the plural
  - ▶ Context is your guide
- ◆ English has words like this too .. one relevant to this passage is the word **offspring**
  - ▶ We can use that word in a singular or plural sense

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## Bold Peter

- ◆ The Hebrew word translated “descendent(s)” in 12:7, 13:15; 15:18 is a collective noun .. זרע .. means “seed”
  - ▶ Literally — to your “seed” I will give this land

### \* Here's what this all means

- ◆ Abram **WOULD HAVE UNDERSTOOD** the singular AND plural application of this particular word
- ◆ Abram knew he would have both ..
  - ▶ A vast number of descendants (Plural) ... AND
  - ▶ A PARTICULAR DESCENDANT (Singular)

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## Bold Peter

### \* So — what did Abram know?

- ◆ He knew and expected a specific **descendant** would come from his body to be his heir (Gen 15:4)
- ◆ He knew this **descendant** would be a blessing to all the families of the earth (Gen 12:3)
- ◆ He **probably** knew this **descendant** would be the one to reverse the curse (Gen 3:15)
- ◆ He would **NOT** have known this **descendant** specifically as the “Messiah”
- ◆ Abram knew that innumerable **descendants** would come from him

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## Bold Peter

- \* If you still don't believe me ... turn to Gen 22:17-18
- \* The Hebrew word זרע appears THREE TIMES in vv. 17-18
  - ◆ Two times in v. 17 .. clearly to be taken as a plural
  - ◆ One time in v. 18 .. clearly (IN MY MIND) to be taken singularly!!!
    - ▶ A simple question will verify my singular assertion
    - ▶ Were all of Abram's "seed(s) a blessing?"
      - ◆ No, no, no — Proof? — turn to Gen 16:11-12 (Ishmael)
- \* Note that vv. 17-18 are reaffirmed to Isaac (26:4) & Jacob (28:14)

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## Bold Peter

- \* If you STILL don't believe me, the Apostle Paul .. writing under inspiration .. verifies this in the NT; **Where?**
  - ◆ Right — Galatian 3:1-18 ... Let's have a look

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## Bold Peter

- \* Conclusions
  - ◆ Faith is and has always been based on what God has revealed
    - ▶ OT saints had less revelation
    - ▶ NT saints had more revelation
    - ▶ WE have FULL revelation ... and NO EXCUSE
  - ◆ Pre-incarnation saints had faith in a promised and coming seed .. someone who was to come to rescue them

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## Bold Peter

- ◆ True saving faith has three elements
  - ▶ “Notia” = Knowledge: The content of faith (Mind)
  - ▶ “Fiducia” = Belief: The action of faith (Heart)
  - ▶ “Assensus” = Trust: The submission of faith (Volition)
- ◆ Let's see this in action ... **Read Rom 10:8-9**
  - ▶ **Notia** = Jesus is Lord; God raised Him from the dead; You will be saved (MIND)
  - ▶ **Fiducia** = Believe in your heart (HEART)
  - ▶ **Assensus** = Confess with your mouth (VOLITION)

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## Bold Peter

- ◆ Gen 15:6 is IMPORTANT because ...
  - ▶ For the first time in the Bible we are told how a sinful man or woman may become “right with God”
  - ▶ It provides us with the skeletal form of the doctrine of justification by faith
  - ▶ It shows us that God's means of redeeming sinful men and women is the same in every era of human history
  - ▶ It proves that we do not need to be **SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGIANS** to be saved!!

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**TO BE CONTINUED**

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