

Encouragement after the Battle

Introduction & Review

- As a resident of Sodom, Lot was taken captive in a war between the unbelieving kings (Gen. 14:1-12) – *ensnared by this evil lifestyle in Sodom.*
- God delivered Lot from captivity through Abram & a few courageous men (Gen. 14:13-16) – *miraculous deliverance.*
- King Melchizedek praised God & honored Abram for this victory with the deliverance of Lot (Gen. 14:18-20).
- The king of Sodom expressed no gratitude, blessing or praise toward God or Abram (Gen. 14:17, 21) – *ungrateful & proud.*
- Abram demonstrates complete trust in God (Gen. 14:22-24).

I. The Believer's Inward Struggle (Gen. 15:1-6)

A. God knows the struggle (Gen. 15:1-3)

Even after a great victory for the Lord, many problems are still present in a believer's life – 10 yrs. waiting, no children & old age. A believer must faithfully have private time to hear from God (v. 1) – “in a vision” [before & after the victory]. God wants us to focus on Him & His promises before we address problems in prayer – “I am your shield...”. God wants honesty in prayer about a believer's struggles in life (v. 2-3; Ps. 139:1-4) – “I continue childless”. A believer must honestly confess confusion, disappointment, frustration, etc. in prayer.

B. God addresses the struggle (Gen. 15:4-6)

*God gives a believer wisdom & removes confusion in sincere prayer (v. 4; Jas. 1:5-6). God's answer is that Abram must still wait for the birth of his own child – God's will, way & time. God's plans are often so great that it's difficult to comprehend (v. 5). God accepts faith from a believer even when we do not understand & struggle (v. 6; Pr. 3:5-6; Rom. 4:3; Gal. 3:6). *Faith in the Lord = security for the future!**

APPL: Believers face circumstances of life that we don't understand causing disappointment, etc. Believers have inward struggles when life seems to be conflicting with the promises/principles of the scriptures. Only God can address those struggles & bring peace.

II. God's Outward Assurance (Gen. 15:7-21)

A. The believer's need for reassurance (Gen. 15:7-8)

A believer's struggles are not always limited to one area – Abram also owned no land. God brings the focus to Himself, His works & His word in prayer (v. 7). This is how the Holy Spirit & the word of God function in prayer – the Lord wants us to know Him first (Phil. 3:10). He has saved us out of this world to give us the true promise land – heaven! Abram is stirred up to speak honestly about another area of struggle in prayer (v. 8) – “how am I to know”. God wants us to have the assurance that heaven is our home & He will keep every promise that He has made to us in His word.

B. God's unmistakable reassurance (Gen. 15:9-21)

God's word & promise should be sufficient to sustain a believer, but He knows we still need help – signs! God met Abram where he was spiritually & provided a tangible sign of His faithfulness to His promise (v. 9-11, 17-21). God used biblically established worship ordinances to give Abram reassurance – NT worship for us today. God accepted the worship & revealed His presence = reassurance (v. 17). God helped Abram understand that His promise involved a much longer timeframe, many more people & difficult circumstances (v. 12-16).

ILL: Many other believers in the scriptures like Abram have asked God for a sign to help them in their struggle in faith – Moses (Ex. 3:12; 4:1f), Gideon (Jg. 6:17-18), Hezekiah (2Ki. 20:8-9), father of the demon-possessed boy (Mk. 9:14-24), etc. God graciously responded to their need as they struggled in faith to obey God.

APPL: The same is true for us today. God truly knows when we are struggling in disappointment or a lack of understanding & not simply making excuses for disobedience. God knows the heart; He knows the difference between someone stubborn in unbelief like Zacharias (Elizabeth's husband - Lk. 1:18-23) & Abram in Genesis 15.