

Folly Does Not Wait for Faith

Introduction

- Abram has just experienced a victorious battle for the Lord as he delivered Lot & many residents of Sodom from their captors (14:1-24).
- Even after the victory, Abram still struggles in prayer before God because he still continues childless after God has promised a child (15:1-4).
- God responds to Abram's prayer with inward assurance that God will keep His promise but Abram must still wait for God's timing (15:4-6).
- God used an outward sign to give Abram reassurance and confirmation that He would keep His promise (15:7-21).

I. A Believer's Folly (Gen. 16:1-16)

A. The plan (v. 1-4a)

Faith involves hope & conviction (Heb. 11:1, 6a). God had promised a child 10 years earlier & reaffirmed it recently (15:1-4). Yet Sarai is impatient & leans to her own understanding (v. 1-2b). Abram compromises his faith under pressure (v. 2c-4a). One believer can persuade another believer to compromise their own convictions leading to sin. This is folly or foolishness when God has already made a promise (Pr. 24:9a).

B. The consequences (v. 4b-16)

*Folly leads to more sin: Hagar – contempt or pride (v. 4b), Sarai – blame (v. 5; Pr. 19:3), Abram – indifference of false innocence (v. 6a) & Sarai – vengeance (v. 6b). God is merciful even in this folly – guidance & instruction (v. 7-9), the son's name (v. 11), the son's future (v. 10-14) & birth of the son (v. 15-16). But *this was the son of folly/foolishness & not the son that God had promised.**

II. God's Faithfulness (Gen. 17:1-27)

A. The covenant reaffirmed by God (v. 1-22)

How many times must God make a promise before a saint will believe Him? Ishmael is 13 years old – Abram & Sarai have given up hope, but God hasn't changed His mind. God reaffirms that Abram will be the father of many nations – changes his name to Abraham (v. 1-8). God instructs Abraham of his role in the covenant – the sign of circumcision (v. 9-14). God informed Abraham & Sarah that neither of their plans of folly was acceptable (Eliezer – 15:2 or Ishmael), but the son of promise was yet to come thru them (v. 15-22). These principles apply to Christ: people had to wait for Him much longer than expected & He was born to the most unlikely parents, but absolutely nothing was going to prevent the miraculous conception & birth of Christ!

B. The covenant affirmed by Abraham (v. 23-27)

Circumcision was a sign of the faith that Abraham had already received & demonstrated (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:1-25). Abraham & all the males of his household demonstrated that they trusted God to keep the covenant thru the sign of circumcision (v. 23-27).

APPL: Many true believers & denominations believe that the true meaning of circumcision in the NT is actually baptism (Col. 2:11-12). This is the basis & justification presented for infant baptism – circumcision was administered to infants. But I, along with many other true believers & denominations, believe that circumcision was to be interpreted & applied spiritually – “circumcision of the heart” (Rom. 2:29). I believe that baptism co-existed with circumcision in the OT & did not replace circumcision in the NT. I believe that there are no clear instructions, principles or patterns of infant baptism in the NT. And finally I believe that baptism & the Lord’s Supper are NT ordinance reserved for people who have experienced inward conversion by the Holy Spirit.