

Series: God & Abraham #1290

Title: Genesis 15.6

Faith and Righteousness

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. As we begin, I want to read for us the first eighteen verses of Genesis chapter 15. Thus far we have studied the first five of these verses and today we will begin our focus on verse 6. I want to read 18 verses because I want to point out something about the flow of the writing of Moses. I believe Moses wrote Genesis and he does something specific with verse 6.

If you have your Bible handy, please follow along in Genesis chapter 15. I am reading from the New American Standard Bible, the 1995 edition. **“After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying ‘Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great.’**

² Abram said, ‘O Lord God, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?’ ³ And Abram said, ‘Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir.’ ⁴ Then behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, ‘This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.’ ⁵ And He took him outside and said, ‘Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.’ And [the Lord] said to [Abram], ‘So shall your descendants be.’ ⁶ Then [Abram] believed in the Lord; and [the Lord] reckoned it to [Abram] as righteousness.’

I am reading in Genesis chapter 15 and now verse 7. **“And He said to [Abram], ‘I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it.’” ⁸ [Abram] said, ‘O Lord God, how may I know that I will possess it?’ ⁹ So [the Lord] said to [Abram], ‘Bring Me a three year old heifer, and a three year old female goat, and a three year old ram, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.’ ¹⁰ Then [Abram] brought all these to [the Lord] and cut them in two, and laid each half opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds. ¹¹ The birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away.**

¹² Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him. ¹³ God said to Abram, ‘Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. ¹⁴ But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions. ¹⁵ As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶ Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete.’

¹⁷ It came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces. ¹⁸ On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram...” That was Genesis chapter 15, verses 1-18.

I am not sure if you picked up on this or not, but verse 6 seems to be an interruption in the flow of the story. Verses 1-5 is a dialogue between God and Abram, regarding God’s promises and God’s proof that His promises are true. Verses 7 and following deals with the strengthening of covenant between the Lord and Abram. Again God’s promises and how they will be fulfilled in Abram’s life. But in verse 6 there is this statement: “Then [Abram] believed in the Lord; and [the Lord] reckoned it to [Abram] as righteousness.” This seems a bit of an odd spot for a statement such as this. And it would be easy for us to have this verse get lost in the verses around it.

But that would be a tragic mistake, because verse 6 of Genesis 15 is a monumentally important verse in all of the Old and New Testaments, in all of the Bible. This is the first time a person’s *faith* in God and a person’s *justification* before God are linked together specifically – by word – in the Bible. In this verse we have the doctrine or the teaching of salvation and justification by faith in God.

In fact, this verse is so important that we are going to dedicate a lot of time to it. So that what we will do as a community dedicated to knowing who God is, we will move off of Genesis and go to the New Testament. In the New Testament we will see how Abram believing in the Lord and the Lord reckoning or crediting to Abram righteousness is the template for how God rescues from sin anyone He does save. Verse 6 of Genesis 15 will send us on a journey to discover the doctrine of salvation.

I want to invite you to be with us in the weeks ahead. And I really want to encourage you to be engaged in the Bible each day we meet together, so that you can understand that we are all sinners, that God is holy, that we need to be made holy before we can be accepted by God, and that *God Himself* provides salvation from our sin such that we will live in right relationship with Him all the remaining days of our lives here on earth and forever in the eternal heavens and the new earth.

Let me also say that now, beginning on Monday, is a very good time, this gives you a great opportunity, to invite someone to join us who is not yet a Christian. If you know someone who needs to hear the gospel again or for the first time, a person who requires understanding of how God will rescue and deliver him or her from evil, or maybe even someone who has questions or has confusion about how salvation works – this broadcast and podcast will be beneficial to them as we discover what the Lord did in Abram's life at this point in history. And how this mirrors what God does in our lives, when we are saved from our sin by Him.

Furthermore, invite Christians you know to listen on the radio at this time on this station and/or via the God Is Podcast, available from godisministry.org. And here is why: *many* Christian people, themselves, do not understand *how* God has saved them from sin. They believe by their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and their sins have been forgiven. These men and women are in our churches and they are bound for heaven when they die. But, because they have not been diligent in studying the Bible, or have lacked good preachers and teachers, or perhaps because they are new believers, these friends lack comprehension on one of the most important doctrines in all of the Scripture: the teaching on salvation!

By now, you know of my teaching style – as I, by the grace of God, try to make sometimes challenging-to-understand theology something that can be grasped and applied to one's life. I try to be *clear*. And to keep all of the teaching very *biblical*. And also to be joyful in our study and discussion. The style of this broadcast and podcast may be just what a friend or family member or someone from your church or synagogue will enjoy and find beneficial. I cannot invite them because I do not know them. I am counting on you for that. So, reach out to someone this weekend and encourage them to join us on Monday.

If you are saved, learn how you are. If you are not saved, learn how to be saved. Believe me, this one verse in Genesis 15 points us clearly in the direction of salvation. The flow of Moses' writing here is interrupted intentionally, on purpose. He wants us to see, and certainly the Holy Spirit, wants us to see how it was that God considered Abram righteous. Be sure and highlight it in your printed or electronic Bible. I chose a red marker to underline this verse in my Bible. And if you are able to take notes, come prepared to do a bit of note-taking as our series develops.

I have used our time today to emphasize our next verse and to tell you where we are going. And so now let us dedicate these next steps in our quest to know God, let's dedicate this to Him in prayer. O Lord God, thank You a million times over and more for who You are, Your nature, and Your character. And we praise You that You have revealed Yourself to us, simple people, through Your Holy Word. The Bible. I pray You will direct new listeners here, people who do not adequately understand Your saving grace. I pray someone will listen who is not yet a Christian, and through what they hear, they will bow before You in repentance of sin, believing *in* Christ.

I pray for people who think they are saved, but who are not. Religious people, even church goers. Please genuinely redeem them. And I seek You for these, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, who want to know You more. They come here, faithfully, because they have a hunger and a thirst for the meat of Your Word. Give each of us wisdom, discernment, and knowledge. And always help us apply what we learn to how we live before You in this world. You have been with us this week. We are grateful. Go with us now into the weekend and watch over us, and bring us back together safely on Monday, to discover who You are. Amen. ---END---