

Names of God
Session 3- Adonai
Genesis 15
05/8/2019

Teaching Notes

Read with me Genesis 15:1-8

God speaks again to Abram to reassure him of His promises. Unlike in previous encounters with God (Gen 12:1–9), Abram does not remain silent. Abram’s reply to Yahweh demonstrates his frustration at Yahweh’s delay in fulfilling what Abram views as the first necessary step in making him a great nation—providing him with a son and heir. Yahweh’s answer to Abram addresses his concerns by clarifying that his heir will be his biological son and that his offspring will eventually be as numerous as the stars.

Usage:

'Adhonay, as a name of Deity, emphasizes His sovereignty and corresponds closely to Kurios (Lord) of the New Testament. It is frequently combined with Yahweh and with 'Elohim.' Genesis 15:2- **O Yahweh, my Lord** This Hebrew title, *adonay yhwah*, is rarely used in the Pentateuch (see Gen 15:8; Deut 3:24; 9:26). The combination of the titles literally means, “my lord, Yahweh”—phrasing a servant would use to address his master.

Adonai in Scripture:

Moses in Exodus 4:13 after arguing with God said, *Please Lord now send the message by whomever You will.*

Joshua in Joshua 3:11 when the people were crossing over into the Promised Land said, *“Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over ahead of you into the Jordan.*

David when he became the king of Israel and Judah said, *“Then David the king went in and sat before the LORD, and he said, “Who am I, O Lord GOD, and what is my house, that You have brought me this far?”*

- 19 *“And yet this was insignificant in Your eyes, O Lord GOD, for You have spoken also of the house of Your servant concerning the distant future. And this is the custom of man, O Lord GOD.*

Isaiah in announcing the promises and prophecy of God in Isaiah 61 said;

*The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
Because the LORD has anointed me
To bring good news to the afflicted;
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to captives
And freedom to prisoners;*

In each one of these examples, we can see the commonalities:

- There is a recognition of the Lordship of God and His sovereignty
- There is also a surrender to the plans of God over my plans.

This was Abraham's story. He was called from a distant land to be a great nation. It had not happened yet. And yet here was God stating to Abraham, I am going to make you into a great nation and then he begins to fulfill this promise to him.

So when we come to this name of God and view its significance in our lives we begin to ask the questions:

- Am I recognizing the Lordship of God in my life?
- And am I surrendering to the plans of God?

What does it look like for you to recognize the Lordship of God in your life?

What does it look like for you to surrender to His plans?

Group Discussion

| Have a volunteer read Genesis 15:1-3.

While grateful for God's promises, Abram wondered about the value of the reward if he had no son to give it to. Abram had entered Canaan at 75 years of age with Sarai, who was then 65 years old. Several years had passed and the couple remained childless. Abram may have wondered if he would ever have a son. He apparently had considered designating his trusted servant, Eliezer of Damascus, as his heir.

Why did Abram doubt he would ever become a father? Do you think Abram had given up hope? Why or why not?

How would you expect God to respond to Abram as he struggled to believe and lamented his circumstances? What does God's kind response tell us about His character and grace? How does the Lordship of God give us hope?

| Have a volunteer read Genesis 15:4-6.

To illustrate and emphasize His promise of numerous descendants, God invited Abram to gaze at the night sky and try to count the stars. For those who live in the city, the beauty of the night sky has to compete with artificial lights. As a result, we probably do not see as many stars as Abram did. Imagine standing in a field with no artificial lights to interfere. So many stars fill the sky that counting them is impossible.

What reasons or personal experiences did Abram have to believe God's promise in verse 4?

Why do you think God gave Abram the sign of the stars as a reminder of His promise?

What steps are involved in the process of moving from unbelief to belief?

What evidence do we have of Abram believing God before now?

Abram responded to God's promises by believing Him. This verse is the first appearance of the word "believed" in the Bible, but certainly not the first occurrence of Abram's faith. Abram's belief already had led him to leave his father and move to a land he had never seen.

His belief had led him to worship God regularly and to allow Lot to choose the best land because Abram believed God would fulfill His promises. Although he could not understand how God could or would fulfill His promises, Abram trusted God.

What is the relationship between belief and righteousness?

Abram did not earn righteousness through his behavior; it was given to him by God through faith. The same thing is true for us. We become righteous not because of what we do but because of what Jesus did. When we trust in Christ, His righteousness is exchanged for our sin.

| Have a volunteer read Genesis 15:7-21.

What does verse 8 tell us about Abram's faith? Is that encouraging or discouraging to you? Why?

Saving faith is not always perfect faith. Abram himself cried out to God a couple of verses later, immediately after God had just reminded him of the promise He would keep. After everything, Abram's heart was still saying, "Yes, I believe You, but how will I know that You are going to come through?" God credits our faith in Him to us as righteousness, but we also have fears, doubts, and struggles.

How did God answer Abram's question in verse 8? What is the significance of God's covenant with Abram?

What promise that God makes to Abraham amazes you the most? How did God promise to give Abraham all He is?

God answered Abram's questions by assuming the full risk of the covenant. He walked through the slaughtered animals as a sign of His faithfulness to Abram. In other words, if He didn't fulfill His promises, then let His holiness and perfection be chopped into pieces like the animals. God provided a reminder. In essence, God was letting Abram know that nothing would stand in the way of His faithfulness to him.

How can we know, like Abram, that we will possess all of God's amazing promises?

| Have a volunteer read Romans 4:18-25.

Paul picks up on this concept in Romans 4:18-25, explaining to Romans that from the earliest days, God has always credited righteousness to His covenant people through faith.

According to this passage, what has God promised us?

How does belief in God's promise result in our righteousness?

Abraham was convinced of God's ability to do as He promised. God has the integrity and power to be trusted with salvation. As Abraham was completely persuaded God can be trusted, so must we trust God to take care of us in salvation and in all other matters of life.

APPLICATION

What are some ways that your heart is like Abram's heart? In what ways are you struggling to believe God's promises?

How does knowing that God is always faithful to His Word help us through seasons when our faith is weak?

What does it look like to trust in God's promises? How is such trust essential to our spiritual growth?

How can you begin to live in recognition of God's power and sovereignty in your life?

How can you begin to surrender to God's plans in your life everyday?