

Fire Blight & Other Pests

Text: Genesis 15:5-14 (ABRAHAM) And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. 6And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness. 7And he said unto him, I *am* the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. 8And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? 9And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. 10And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not. **11And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.** 12And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. 13And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; 14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

Matthew 11:2-6 2Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, 3And said unto him, **Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?** 4Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: 5The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. **6And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.**

Hebrews 10:38 *Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*

Introduction: Abraham and John the Baptist – 2 Mighty Men of the Bible

ABRAHAM, an Old Testament Friend of God - JOHN the BAPTIST, a New Testament Prophet & Forerunner of the Messiah

What did they have in common??? – THERE WAS A COMMON LINK BETWEEN THEM – A COMMON LINK AMONG EVERY FOLLOWER OF GOD - PAST & PRESENT – EVEN TODAY!

Hebrews 10:38 *Now, the just shall live by faith:* but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. **FAITH IS THE COMMON LINK BEWEEN ABRAHAM, JOHN, AND ALL BELEIVERS!**

❖ **ABRAHAM DIED IN FAITH NOT HAVING RECEIVED THE PROMISE!**

Hebrews 11:13 *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

God foretold of a long list of tribulation to come BEFORE FULFILLMENT OF HIS PROMISE:

- 400 years of living as strangers in a foreign land – **Genesis 15:13**... four hundred years
- Living on land that belonged to someone else -- **Genesis 15:13**... thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs,
- Living as servants -- **Genesis 15:13**...ye shall serve them
- Suffering under affliction -- **Genesis 15:13**... they shall afflict them four hundred years
- Waiting for an unknown amount of time for God's judgement to fall upon the strangers -- **Genesis 15:14** 1 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: **and afterward shall they come out with great substance.**

❖ **JOHN the BAPTIST – Matthew 11:6- blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.**

HE NEVER LIVED TO SEE THE GLORY OF THE RESURRECTED MESSIAH! HE DIED IN A LONELY PRISON CELL – FAR FROM THE SPOTLIGHT OF THE CROWDS – FAR FROM THE FREEDOM OF THE WIDE-OPEN PLACES HE HAD LIVED IN – THE LIFE OF THE HISTORY'S

GREATEST PROPHET TAKEN BY A WICKED DRUNKENED PAGAN KING as a payment for a single dance from a silly, young girl who had to ask her mother what to ask as payment!

JOHN DIED IN THE FAITH NOT HAVING RECEIVED FREEDOM OR DELIVERANCE!

- I. FIRE BLIGHT & OTHER PESTS** - *A personal look at my backyard small-time fruit growing projects and home gardener – 9 types of fruit trees and bushes (apple, peach, pears, plum, blueberry, grapes, blackberry, strawberry, fig)*
– *ALSO, annual backyard vegetable gardening of various home grown vegetables*

Problems to Fight seeking a Successful Harvest:

it's not easy being successful!

Droughts-Wet Seasons

Under Fertilizing – Over Fertilizing

Pest – unseen: aphids/mites, fruit worms, beetles, spiders, tomato worms, slugs, etc,

Pest - seen – birds, (raccoons--captured/killed 5), (possums--captured/killed 3), (3 squirrels-- shot), armadillos, (1 chipmunk--shot)

Diseases – FIRE BLIGHT, powdery mildew, bacterial blight, black rot, and many more!

II. Backyard Gardening Issues are examples of our life on Earth!

- *It is not a perfect world - we live in a Fallen World - we all face our own unique challenges*
- *God Blesses but we are expected to work too! God causes things to grow but we must plant seed and till the soil - ABRAHAM CHASED AWAY THE PESTS!*
- *Life on earth is a mixture of both GOOD and BAD – IT RAINS ON THE JUST AND THE UNJUST IN OUR WORLD TODAY!*

III. THE JUST SHALL WALK BY FAITH –

- *EVERYTHING IS NOT GOING TO BE PERFECT FOR US WHILE ON EARTH - NOT EVEN FOR CHRISTIANS!*
- *FAITH MEANS WAITING ON GOD'S TIMING - NOT ALWAYS AN INSTANT MIRACLE!*
- *FAITH MAY MEAN EVEN DYING BEFORE IT IS BROUGHT TO PASS BY GOD!*

IV. IF ANY MAN DRAW BACK MY SOUL SHALL HAVE NO PLEASURE IN HIM!

- **Hebrews 11:6** WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE GOD
- QUITTING or GIVING UP ISN'T AN OPTION!

V. Lessons I CAN SEE from our TEXT & from over 40 years of Ministry about the Walk of Faith:

- 1) It's not about us – it's all about Jesus and doing God's Will - God has a whole world to take in consideration. We will not always get our own way – SOLDIERS IN A WAR SELDOM CHOOSE THEIR ASSIGNMENTS!
TRUST HIM - HE IS GOD ALMIGHTY AND HE KNOWS WHAT HE IS DOING!
- 2) We are fighting against Powerful Forces – EXPECT INTERFERENCE FROM TIME TO TIME - even when you are trying your best to obey God!
***Abraham Drove away the pest -- TRUST HIM - HE IS GOD ALMIGHTY – we chase the devil away – God's BLESSINGS WILL COME in the end!
*** John died in PRISON and was not set free!
- 3) God's Plan and our plan are very different. **Don't be offended if God takes you to places outside of your comfort zone!** TRUST HIM - HE IS GOD ALMIGHTY AND HE KNOWS WHAT HE IS DOING!
 - **Abraham may have thought** – what a strange PLAN -- 400 years? Is this correct God? It won't be fulfilled in my entire lifetime?

- **John did question Jesus** – ARE YOU THE TRUE MESSIAH or DO WE LOOK FOR ANOTHER? Jesus' ministry wasn't what John had envisioned in his mind. The true PLAN and PATH of the Messiah was different from what he had pictured!
- 4) We may not understand the path that God has laid out for us. TRUST HIM - HE IS GOD ALMIGHTY AND HE KNOWS WHAT HE IS DOING!
- 5) Our vision and God's vision of victory are measured differently – defeat to us may be victory to God! (e.g., martyr vs prosperity). TRUST HIM - HE IS GOD ALMIGHTY AND HE KNOWS WHAT HE IS DOING!
- 6) FAITHFULNESS IS HIGHLY ESTEEMED BY GOD! If we stay true to him, He will be pleased with us - we will be honored for our faithfulness in the end. TRUST HIM - HE IS GOD ALMIGHTY AND HE KNOWS WHAT HE IS DOING!
- 7) We are never REALLY Alone - whether in a prison cell or in a prison of trying circumstances – GOD IS WITH HIS CHILDREN. TRUST HIM - HE IS GOD ALMIGHTY AND HE KNOWS WHAT HE IS DOING!
- 8) God can Strengthen us with Comforting Reassurance - wherever we are! TRUST HIM - HE IS GOD ALMIGHTY AND HE KNOWS WHAT HE IS DOING!
- 9) God will work it out for us in the end - no matter what happens.
Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.
TRUST HIM - HE IS GOD ALMIGHTY AND HE KNOWS WHAT HE IS DOING!
- 10) Our Life on Earth is BRIEF - A Much Greater Future is Ahead for us – an eternity in heaven. This is God's REAL Plan for us!
II Corinthians 4:17-18 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

TRUST HIM - HE IS GOD ALMIGHTY AND HE KNOWS WHAT HE IS DOING!

VI. CLOSING: Let us Look AROUND

– LOOK BEYOND WHAT WE MAY BE FACING TODAY – LOOK AT OTHERS WHO HAVE ENDURED FAR WORSE – TAKE COURAGE – GOD STILL LOVES US - IT WILL BE OK IN THE END!

Remember Job and the Prophets – WHO WAS IT THAT LED THEM DOWN THEIR OWN PERSONAL JOURNEY OF LIFE??? IT WAS THE SAME GOD WHO LEADS US TODAY!

Jasme 5:11-13 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

Hebrews 10:38 *Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*

TRUST HIM - HE IS GOD ALMIGHTY AND HE KNOWS WHAT HE IS DOING!