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## Chapter 3 – No Understanding with Man

Unable to Grasp the Obvious (vs.1-9)

The Obvious Determined Purpose of God (vs.6-9)

**Galatians 3:6-9:** Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU.” So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

If I were to describe to you what the book of Galatians is about, I would have to say that it's about you not caring what man thinks, but caring what God thinks. It is a book that begins to deal with things like peer pressure. I would say we are appearance oriented. Wouldn't you say that? We care about what people see and how then they respond to us, and we oftentimes react accordingly instead of responding according to what Scripture tells us to do and what God wants us to do. The fact of the matter is that the concern for what others are thinking is somehow ingrained in us. The fact that Paul actually gives an example of that with Peter and Barnabas in Chapter 2 is pretty interesting to me. Peter, you think of “Wow, foundation of the church.” And yet Peter has gone over to the side of superficiality. Peter has gone into the realm of appeasing man rather than God. You'd think, “Peter, really? I mean, you not only were with Christ, you talked to the resurrected Christ. He forgave you.” And not only Peter, but Barnabas, who was known for really caring for people, bringing people alongside of and now is shunning the Gentiles. The fact of the matter is that they are very much concerned about what the Jews think and the Jewish community, and because of that, they began to do things that they know are wrong. Paul says, “I took it to their face. I told them they were wrong.” And the thought is that “Why would he even have to do that?” It's a powerful pull, peer pressure, your concern for others, and it's seemingly inextricably tied to this concept that God is more Law based than Grace based. That is to say that God is more concerned with your performance than anything else. If you think about Law and you think about performance, you have to think about competition. You have to think about things, of comparisons with people because you're in a realm of rivalry. As Ecclesiastes would say, the result of every man's work is a result of rivalry; that we function in that particular realm because we're constantly comparing ourselves with

other people. Somehow, our perception is that's what God literally had intended by giving us the Law. "He gave us the Law so that we would become better by virtue of our sheer resolve, we're going to be better, and we're going to be really good people this year than ever before." And we continue to find ourselves failing and falling on our face and yet we keep going back to the same formula. It's about the Law. Paul needs to show the people that it's not about the Law, and that this was never the intent of God; that because of our involvement with what everybody else is thinking, it's hard for us to think outside of that box to see the obvious, but God has been showing us all the way what His intent is. I think one of the wonderful things about the word of God is it's showing us who God is, and great theology is in Scripture. Unfortunately, because we are so ingrained in our concern for what everybody else is thinking, it's hard for us to read this appropriately. We come in with fleshly eyes and we are not listening to the Spirit of God. Paul wants to make the differentiation between works and faith. So, he does that very clearly at the very beginning. His point is that you didn't receive the Spirit through Law. I mean, the Law doesn't give you this sense of "Wow. I'm really free. I really want to do this." The desire to do the things that God wants. The Law doesn't inspire trust, and it doesn't inspire affection. It just doesn't. It doesn't have the ability to do it. What Law does is, it encourages performance, and it encourages rivalry. It encourages all those things that really divide, and I would say, put us in bondage. It doesn't set you free. It puts boundaries. Now, the Scripture is very clear about this, the Law is not the enemy here in and of itself. The Law has its purpose, but it wasn't to make you perfect. We've been seeing a lot of lawlessness lately on the TV as we've turned it on and we begin to realize that, as Paul would say in 2 Thessalonians 2, the spirit of lawlessness is already at work. We see that people are in need of, I would say, the Law coming in. What is the purpose of the Law? Well, will the Law make those people better people? No, it will keep them from being more lawless, and that fundamentally is the point of the Law.

In fact, one of the statements that's made here, if you look with me in Galatians 3, it asks the question, "Well, why give us the Law?" That's a good question, isn't it? Verse 19 is the answer to that.

(Galatians 3:19) "Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made."

The fundamental reason for the Law is that it keeps people from being more lawless. That's it.

In fact, the way that it's put in 1 Timothy 1:9,

"Realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious..."

Why do you have to have a law? Well, you know, if people aren't doing the wrong thing, you don't have to invent a law to stop them from doing it, because they're not doing it. So, there is a reason for the Law in that it contains and curtails lawlessness, but it doesn't make people better, and it was never meant for that particular reason. If it were, then the law would have been introduced on day one, but it wasn't. In fact, one of the things that you see in day one is that God was walking in the garden on the cool of the day with Adam. What's really important to God? What's really important to God is the relationship, and it's really demonstrated at the very beginning. It's one of the things that Paul is wanting to make crystal clear in this particular passage. So, what he does is, he goes back to a point in which the Jews, who are very law oriented, are very much attached to, and that is to Abraham. In fact, one of the great arguments of those that were arguing with Jesus was, "We are sons of Abraham." Everybody wants to be sons of Abraham, but did they stop to think that Abraham was before the Law? According to calculations, 645 years before the Law. Now, how in the world could Abraham be sanctimonious if he didn't even have the Law if the Law is that which brings us into a perfect relationship with God. Then, where was it? It wasn't with Abraham. So, Paul's going to bring in that wonderful picture that is going to bring the proof that God's intent was never your perfection through the Law. God was looking for a relationship.

When you read about Abraham in particular, in Isaiah 41:8, God says, "Abraham My friend." What a great phrase that is.

Chronicles actually refers to him in 2 Chronicles 20, "Abraham Your friend forever." Wow. How would you like to hear from God, "You're My bestest friend." Wow. What a what a great thing to have, and to feel that God felt that way towards you. I would have to ask myself, "What is it I did? What is it that brought Him to great joy?" What is it that causes God's joy? Is there something that I could even do that would cause that? And the answer is absolutely yes.

So, the passage reads this way in Galatians as he begins to 3:6, as he begins to once again piggyback on what he's already stated in chapter 3; that is to say, you didn't receive the Spirit by the Law, you received the Spirit by faith. It was you putting your trust in God and His Son Jesus Christ that brought favor upon you. Where did grace come from? How did the favor of God come upon you? The answer would have to be, "I believed in His Son Jesus Christ." Ok, so, it's by faith that you received this. How did that come about? Well, you were stirred. What caused you to believe? See, that's an interesting question. We were talking about this last week. What caused you to believe? The answer fundamentally is that "*paschō*" was moved in you. More specifically, your feelings and your emotions were moved and drawn to the cross of Jesus Christ. Now, if you think about it, there's nothing legalistic about that. Everything about that is affection, love, drawn to because of an awe and a respect, but there's an inspiration

involved here. There's not an oppression involved here. So, he states this, and he fundamentally lays this foundation, and then he ultimately ends in verse 5,

“So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?”

Was it moving by the grace of God that you heard or was it somebody told you that you had to do that? That's the wonderful thing about the gospel. Let me just throw in this, that's why pastors should never throw out the proverbial hook. You know, you don't have to do that. Proclaim the gospel. Those that are listening, His sheep, will hear the voice and they'll come. We don't have to get fancy about this. We just have to be clear about this and when we're clear about God's love for them, those that are longing for the love of God will come. They'll come and God will shower His grace upon them.

(Galatians 3:6) “Even so...”

It now brings it and makes it analogous to the Old Testament to their greatest hero, Abraham.

“Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD...”

How did you come? Wasn't it by faith? Isn't that a great way to do it? Because we get lost in what everybody else is thinking. People build their big edifices. They begin to show this sense of austerity. It's not about you. Faith is not based on your works. It's based on His goodness, and that's why we trust Him. God is not looking for your perfection, obviously. If it was perfection that would be the hallmark of heaven, it would be Lucifer. As Ezekiel clearly says, he was the most perfect of all. It gives that wonderful picture, but it was that perfection that caused the pride. What really does God love? What is His heart? That's the wonderful thing about Scripture.

“Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

James will actually quote this particular verse as well. It's in a very, I would say, obscure place in Genesis. We're going to actually turn to that, but James will quote this text. Paul will use it specifically in Romans 4. Turn to Romans 4, and you'll see Paul using it again, which once again is telling us that it seems to be an issue, that man just is hell bent on making works his way to get to heaven.

(Romans 4:1) “What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?”

(Romans 4:2) For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.”

Of course, he couldn't boast before God because God is greater than he is.

(Romans 4:3) “For what does the Scripture say? “ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.””

Why? Because he believed God.

(Romans 4:4) “Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.”

(Romans 4:5) “But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness.”

In other words, obviously it didn't have anything to do with anything that he did. It had something to do with how he believed; his heart towards God.

He says in verse 15,

“For the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation.”

He then goes on and he says in verse 17,

“(as it is written, “A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU”) in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.”

Hebrews 11:19 actually gives an interesting picture as it goes back to Abraham, and it goes back to the time in which God says, “Take your only son, and I want you to lay him on an altar.” He takes him on a mountain in Moriah, and he does that. You go, “What was going through Abraham's head?” When you look at the Genesis passage, it doesn't tell us, but Hebrews does. Hebrews says that Abraham believed that God was able to raise his son even from the dead if he sacrifices him. He believed that. That's what was going through his head. Now, what's interesting is no resurrection had occurred up to Abraham's point, never had existed. So, he had no point of reference, but somehow, he believed that God was able to do that. That's faith. As he'll go on to say, “In hope against hope he believed.” (Romans 4:18) Realizing that when God promised that through his seed would come the abundance of inheritance, even though he's now close to 100, his wife, 90. The thought is, “It's not going to happen.” But in hope against hope, he believed because God said it was. All the way through, God had reckoned it to him as righteousness.

If you go back to the passage there, in Galatians, it is that fundamental point that Paul's going to build on. You read in the Old Testament, you go, “Well, It's largely about Jews.” Well, it doesn't really become about Jews until Genesis 12, and when it goes into chapter 12, then it's the choosing of Abraham, and Abraham now becomes the one. If you understand the promise to Abraham, it's fundamentally this, in Genesis 12, “Through you, I'm going to bless you, and

then I'm going to bless all the world through you." So, not just Jews, but also all of the world. So, the message becomes universal in the sense of "God so loved the world." What we see is the world left to itself without one that is spared to proclaim the truth (i.e. Noah or Enoch or Abraham), then the world goes into self-degradation, and ultimately implodes. So, God calls out these individuals, not for the sake of exclusivity, but for the sake of saving humanity. So, he calls them, and he tells Abraham, "I'm going to bless you, and it's through your lineage." So, Abraham has Isaac, and Isaac has Jacob, and Jacob has the twelve sons. Then, through the twelve sons, one of them is Judah, and that's where we get the name "Jews." So, our thought is, in a narrow perspective, "Well, God came to save the Jews." As Paul writes, "This is what you Jews think." He goes, "That's not true, for God had planned from the foundation of the world that He was going to use Abraham to save, and through Abraham all the world would be saved through his seed." Now the question is, what is that seed?

So, if you look at the passage, it says this in Galatians 3:7,

"Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham."

Galatians 3:28 reads this way,

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

(Galatians 3:29) And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise."

You see, because through Abraham and through his lineage came the Christ; that was what was being preserved, not Judaism. The Savior was being preserved, the One who would come that would save all. How is one saved? How does one find favor with God? The way he always has. God has not changed the path. God's the same yesterday, today and forever, right? Does He ever change? He's immutable. He never changes. God never changes. So, His rules don't change. His standards don't change. He doesn't change. What does God love?

So, if you look in the passage,

(Galatians 3:7) "Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham."

(Galatians 3:8) The Scripture, foreseeing..."

It's like God knew ahead of time. There's a novel thought.

"The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU."

Before there were any Jews; before there was any law. Why then, the Law? To keep people from being lawless. You've got to put up some boundaries. I mean, why do you call in the police when people are rioting? To keep them from taking over more places. That's what you do, but it's not the law that's making them better, it's holding them back.

The conclusion is,

(Galatians 3:9) "So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer."

What a great title it is. Now, remember, Abram was changed to Abraham, and Abraham meaning "the father of many nations." So, God had ordained that through Abraham, even at this early state, the Gospel is being preached. Now, you open up the Book of Genesis, there's no doubt that God loves man; all the things that He created for him. There's no doubt that He loved Adam. His desire was to walk with him in the garden. There's no doubt about that. Man refuses and rejects. What God wants and has always wanted is that relationship back. One of the things we've been talking about as we're going through the Book of Genesis on Wednesday night is that this is a book about God's grace and reconciliation. It's not as much a book about science or anything else in that, even though there is some science in it, I mean, obviously God created everything, so that's science. Where did it come from? God. So, it's pretty clear, but beyond that, the focus is God reconciling man to Himself.

The wonderful passage that this is taken from, and once again quoted by Paul in Romans 4 and James in James 2 as well, which is interesting. James is talking about, "We need to see some works by virtue of your faith." But his point was that faith is what reckons one to be righteous. In other words, what causes somebody to be declared righteous in the eyes of God. So, I think it's important to understand what faith is; because of how man perceives faith, we are oftentimes confused about what it really means to believe in God. I've had people from time to time ask me how do I know that that I'm really putting my trust in God? So, Paul gives us this perfect example in the Book of Genesis.

So, let's turn there, in Genesis 15. We'll begin to see this friend of God. Why would anybody be called a friend of God? Actually, "thy friend forever," an amazing title as we come to Genesis 15. We actually have the phrase that is quoted so many times,

(Genesis 15:6) "Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness."

Now where this comes in begins in Genesis 15:1. So, we start off with this particular phrase, "After these things." Well, now, it doesn't start with chapter 15. It actually starts with chapter 14. So, we have to go back to chapter 14, and we have to ask ourselves, what are the things that have happened? Well, the things that have happened at the beginning of Genesis 12 is that

God calls Abraham out of the land of Ur of the Chaldeans. Abraham goes. There's a famine that comes into the land. Abraham goes, "I think I maybe have a solution. I'll go down to Egypt because they have the Nile River and there's famine; they still have the river." So, he goes down to Egypt, which God never told him to do, but he goes down to Egypt. Then, he comes into contact with the Pharaoh. Pharaoh sees his wife. Even at maybe 65-70 years old, she's pretty good looking. I mean, that's what the Pharaoh said, and Abimelech too; even Scripture said she was good looking. If God thinks she's good looking, she's probably good looking. So, he's concerned about what the Pharaoh is going to do. So, he says, "She's my sister." Because he thinks the Pharaoh's going to kill them. It's not going to happen because God's going to stop him, and God gives the Pharaoh a vision, and He goes, "Don't mess with this lady." Of course, Pharaoh is really upset. He goes to Abraham and says, "Why did you do this? Why did you lie to me?" And God really rebukes Abraham through the Pharaoh, which is very interesting, that God would use an ungodly man to do a work that way, which God does in our lives. My point is, Abraham is learning. He's learning to not do things his way, but to trust in God.

Now, Genesis 13 goes into the fact that he has his nephew with him, and of course you're wanting to take care of somebody; you're wanting the best for them, but his group of shepherds aren't getting along with his; things are messing up. So, in order to have peace and as part of God's plan, because he really shouldn't have brought his nephew along to begin with, but we won't go into that. The point is that they're starting to fight. So, Abraham turns to Lot, and he goes, "Ok, why don't we do this, you choose where you want to go, and I'll choose the other place, but I'll let you have first choice?" And Lot goes, "Wow, Sodom and Gomorrah." Scripture says at that time it was like the Garden of Eden. So, that's the place to go, and that's where he goes because it's a great beauty. Now, at this particular juncture, we're seeing just a hair into the character of Abraham. That is to say, he's more concerned with his relationship than he is with things. So, he's willing to forego that. Well, he gets word in Genesis 14 that warriors had come down, and the main king that's heading it up that's mentioned is actually a king of Persia, and he heads up with other kings and they come in. I guess it's because Sodom and Gomorrah are wealthy. Because of all the things that they have they come down to raid it. They get Lot with it, and they take him away. Abraham catches word of this, and as he catches word, he gathers all his men together, and according to the passage, he has 318 people under his care. He gathers them all together, and he goes to fight against nations, not just one, but nations; kings. He goes after them to rescue Lot. He gets him. He actually gets him, and from what we understand, he has to go 150 miles to do it. So, this is not an easy track, and he rescues him, and he rescues all the things that the guys stole from these kings. Don't ask me how it happened. Melchizedek will say, "The Lord did this for you." So, he comes before Melchizedek, who is the king of Salem; as we understand the name is just the title "King of righteousness." And he comes before him, and he offers a tenth. Now up to this point, there's



no law, right? So, how do we know “tenth”? Why would he give a tenth? Well, Hebrews even makes reference to the fact that Abraham did that. The point is it seems as if, in many respects, it was something that Abraham just simply gave out of his heart, because there's no law that says you have to give a tenth. Ok, here's the point.

(Genesis 14:17) “Then after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King’s Valley).”

Now, you have to ask yourself, “Where would the king of Sodom and Gomorrah be during this raid?” And just to answer your question, they're hiding.

So, it actually says in Genesis 14:10,

“Now the valley of Siddim was full of tar pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and they fell into them...”

So, it was just God's way of going, “So, you're hiding, and I'll just keep you there in the pits for a while.” So, they fell in the tar pits. So, I guess they're kind of cleaned up by now. They catch word that Abraham has won this great battle, and oh, by the way, he got the possessions too that were stolen, which always gets the attention of kings.

“... the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King’s Valley).

(Genesis 14:18) And Melchizedek (king of peace) king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High.”

We don't even know where this guy came from. I mean up to this point, there's no word about him; all of a sudden, he's here. Of course, the Jews believes that he's actually Shem, of Noah's sons. So, here is this guy and he is a priest of God, and Abram knows he is a priest of God and knows that he needs to give God thanks. So, he goes to him, and it says,

(Genesis 14:19) “He blessed him and said, “Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth.”

Now, in that one simple phrase, “God controls everything. He gives whoever He wants to give to. Nobody thwarts Him. Nobody changes things. You have what you have, Abram, because God deemed it so.”

(Genesis 14:20) “And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.”

“He's the one that's been a shield. He's the one that's protected you. He's the one that has delivered you. He's the one that's kept you.”

(Genesis 14:21) “The king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself.”

That's nice of him since he really has no platform at all.

(Genesis 14:22) “Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have sworn to the LORD God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth.”

Now, stop there. Where did he get that phrase from? It was Melchizedek. He identified who God was, and at this moment, Abram has made a decision, “I'm going to give all praise to Him.” It's just a resolve. Now, what we're seeing is the beginning of faith. In case you're confused about what faith is, it's you believing that He is, and that He's a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Where do we get that from? Hebrews 11, “Without faith, it's impossible to please God, for you must first believe that He is, and that He's a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” Abraham believed at this moment. Oh, he's tried his own hand in trying to figure things out. He obeyed the call, but he's still wrestling with what this faith is. He now realizes, “I can't give any praise to man at all.” So, the king of Sodom goes, “Why don't we make a deal here?” And Abraham goes, “I'm not going to make a deal with anybody on this planet, only God.” Now, faith is that exclusive. Here again, I want to go back to the to the fundamental point of Galatians. Stop listening and stop caring about what everybody else is thinking. Faith is exclusive. God, that's what faith is. It's taking out the voices of man and it's going, “What did God say? What does God want?” That's the way it's thinking. Think about how freeing that is, really. I mean, Galatians 1:10, that I don't have to please men anymore? How wonderful that is.

“Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have sworn...”

Now, I want you to look at that little phrase there, “I have sworn.” He uses the Hebrew word “*rûm*,” which actually gives a picture of taking the hand and putting it up, but it also has the connotation of not only giving in a sense of power upward, but of exaltation. The point of the phrase, “I have sworn.” Is literally, “I have given my word. I have exalted God above all else.”

“... I have sworn to the LORD God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth,

(Genesis 14:23) that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, for fear you would say, ‘I have made Abram rich.’”

“And I'm not going to give you any credit. All credit is due to God. I will take nothing except the young men that I came to rescue. I will take nothing and give all glory to Him.” Now, what a great beginning, because it really is describing it.

So, if you look at Genesis 15:1, “After these things...” God then talks to Abraham. Some people say, “God never talks to me.” What kind of commitment have you made? He's asking you, “Come.” You know, He's proven Himself faithful, not only in creation, but He died for you. It's your turn. You want to hear God talk to you? You come to Him, and you go, “Everything is You. I'm just giving You everything.”

“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...””

“I'm your defender. I'm your protector.” And you can understand that Abraham's going, “You did that, didn't You? You rescued me, didn't you?”

“...Your reward shall be very great.”

The point of the passage is that “You're going to be tremendously compensated for what you've done.” Now, here again, the question is, “What do I do?” And the answer is found in Genesis 14, “I said all glory to you.” God said, “I'm going to compensate that.”

(Genesis 15:2) “Abram said, “O Lord GOD, what will You give me...””

I mean, he's already gotten some extra stuff from Pharaoh, which Pharaoh was kind of bribing him to leave so that God wouldn't kill him. So, he's already gotten a lot of stuff from there. He already has a multitude of herds. He has 318 men working for him as well. So, he's not a poor guy. We also know that he's probably gotten some things from rescuing Lot. Scripture actually tells us that Abram was wealthy, but he's wealthy in everything, but what he really wants. He wants a son. God had called him out at age 75. Scripture tells us in Genesis 12, at age 75, He calls him out. He doesn't have a son. Now, years later, he still didn't have a son. Yet, God has promised him great things.

So, his statement is “O Lord GOD, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?””

Apparently going through Syria, Eliezer became a servant or a worker with him, a best friend of sorts, and he realizes that as Proverbs says, a good servant is like a son. So, maybe in a way, he's kind of adopted him.

(Genesis 15:3) “And Abram said, “Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir.””

(Genesis 15:4) 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 (“*mē'ē*”; internal organs) ...”

(Genesis 15:5) “And He took him outside...””

What a great conversation this this would have been, wouldn't it? I mean, I'm talking to God in the tent, and then He goes, "Why don't we go outside? It's got to be night time at that particular point.

"And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars..."

I have a feeling it wasn't full moon, the stars were just popping; the Milky Way, and all the wonderful things.

"... if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

(Genesis 15:6) Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness."

The word "believed" is actually, and I don't want to get too technical about this, but it's in the denominative. Now, the denominative verb is giving reference to a verb that looks like a noun. So, the reason why I'm telling you this is because I don't want to just throw out things to say, "Well, that's the way it is" and not have a reason for it. So, he's not simply saying that he believed, he's saying he became a believer. At this moment, he became a believer. That's quite a statement, and Scripture tells us that there are these moments in our lives. You're going to watch as you follow the life of Abraham, he's going to fall again. He's going to make mistakes, but this day he became a believer. Scripture tells us that receiving Christ is like a birth, and that's why Jesus tells Nicodemus, "You must be born again." Now, we know that "born again" is punctiliar, that is to say, there's a point in time that somebody is born. You don't start off and 20 years later go, "I'm still working on being born." If you're still working on being born, it's too late, but what you have is a day of birth and we celebrate that day of birth. There's a day you became a believer, and what solidified this was this sense of God's promise; that he's already seen His faithfulness in other areas. Now, God turns directly, and He says, "I promise you, Abram, a kid is going to come from you." I'd be standing there and going, "I don't know why. I mean, I'm like 90 years old getting close to 100 at this juncture. I don't know why I should believe this, but I do." And Scripture begins to define to us as Hebrews 11 says, "Now, faith is the substance of things not seen. In other words, there's a tangibility in what I don't see, but God said it. Now miraculously, I have become a believer.

Let me just say this about the whole thing of Genesis. A lot of people like to go through the investigation of, "Well, science kind of proves this." And even from the Christian standpoint, "We're proving through science that..." If you need science to prove Genesis is true, you're not believing because Faith believes in what it doesn't see. If in fact you see it, if in fact you say, "I understand." It's not faith; it ceases to be faith at that moment. God is looking for us to put our trust in Him, and at that moment, you have to ask yourself, "What pleased God, to the degree that God would say "righteous"? What is it? And I can hear the voice of God, "Abraham. You trusted Me." That's what God's been wanting all along. "You trusted Me." What did He want for

Adam and Eve? "Trust me. Don't touch that tree. It's going to mess you up." "Why didn't you trust Me? I told you it was." He went from the garden of fertility to the fields of labor. What a sad day it was because he simply would not trust God, and God is telling us through His word all along, "Trust Me, trust Me." There has to be a day that you come, and you go, "Ok, it's all You." And in that day, you become a believer. God tells you something. He says, "If you believe in My Son, who died on the cross for you, you'll have everlasting life." You just heard the promise, "I promise you." You go, "I'm a believer. I don't understand how it's going to happen. I don't understand how it's going to all come about, but You said it. It's going to happen. I believe that."

There's a passage I want to close with found in 1 Peter 1.

(1 Peter 1:3) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

(1 Peter 1:4) to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

(1 Peter 1:5) who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

(1 Peter 1:6) In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials."

You go, "I don't see it right now. I'm going through difficulty." Faith is not seeing it, it's believing Him.

(1 Peter 1:7) "so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable..."

Why would he say the proof of your faith is precious? Well, it's not only precious to you, but it's precious in God's sight. God is saying, "You trusted Me." And it would be one thing for God to be pleased with that; it's quite another when you go through difficulty, and then you turn to God, and you go, "I still trust You." God goes, "That's gold. That's gold."

"... the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

(1 Peter 1:8) and though you have not seen Him..."

See, I hear this all the time. "Where is God? If I could just see Him."

“Though you have not seen Him.” It's the not seeing that is the faith that is rewarded.

“...though you have not seen Him, you love Him...”

Who do you love more than anybody else? Somebody I don't see, and yet, He speaks to me everywhere.

“And though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

(1 Peter 1:9) obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.”

We're talking about faith here. We're talking about not listening to man, and we're talking about only You, God. Once we get there, we're on the right path. We're saved, and God begins to work in our lives. He causes all things to work together for good to those who love Him and walk according to His purpose.

#### **Closing Prayer:**

Father, we come before You today, and we ask You, come into our hearts. We declare to You, “We believe.” The moment that we declared You as our Lord and Savior, we became a believer. You changed us. At that moment, we said, “You above all else.” We don't want praise to go to man. We don't want to be concerned about what man thinks, only You. Then, You began speaking to us, and how wonderful it is to be guided and directed by a God of love, Who, though we do not see Him, yet, we love Him. Though we do not see Him now, we believe in Him.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, we're asking you to make a decision. Raise your hand to the sky, and say, “All you. None of me; none of man. Nothing for them, all for You.” We usually sing a song, “*All to Jesus, I surrender. All to Him, I freely give.*” This is what God's been wanting all along. It's the desire of His heart that you would trust Him. He would give you His all. He did give you His all. Why would you withhold anything from Him? Come to Him in this clarity, and believe.