

**Genesis 15:1** After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." 2 But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." 4 And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." 5 And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." 6 And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

Abraham believed the Lord God and God counted his faith in God's word as righteousness. The things of God can only be acquired by faith. God's designs and purposes are above ours, His generosity and mercy is beyond our reason and comprehension. Salvation is a gift that can only be acquired by faith – by trusting in God's word – the Holy Scriptures. We are the recipients of a hope and promise so great and one which we do not deserve - but this great gift can only be grasped by faith because we are sinners. It is faith in a promise for healing from sin and death.

Abraham awed at the promise of offspring as numerous as the stars of the heavens. All those blessings for Abraham – who did not yet have even a single child of his own. Abraham was asking God if Lot, his nephew, was to be his offspring. Abraham was old, Sarah was barren and as each year ticked by the prospects of having a child diminished according to human wisdom. But God told Abraham that Lot would not be the "offspring" which God had promised. God had promised but by human standards the promise was impossible! But God would keep that promise and Abraham's offspring, the Christ, would bring as many to God for forgiveness as the stars of heaven.

Abraham believed and it was counted to him as righteousness. And God is still fulfilling this promise to Abraham in every Christian. We are the offspring of Abraham, the children of the promises of God through Jesus Christ not by the flesh, but in the spirit. The Christ was promised to Abraham so that by Abraham's offspring God's salvation would come into the world. We are the recipients of that blessing in Jesus Christ. In Christ we become part of God's own family, a people redeemed from a sinfully lost and perishing world and set aside – made holy – for life with God. Jesus makes us holy through His atoning death for our sins. The righteous live by faith in God alone – hearing and trusting His Word. Isaac would be born to Abraham and Sarah, and the Christ would be born to Joseph and Mary. God keeps His promises – though they are too grand for us to fathom completely – faith in God is living in those promises!

**Hebrews 11:1** Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. 2 For by it the people of old received their commendation. 3 By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that

are visible. 4 By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. 5 By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God. 6 And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. 7 By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. 8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. 10 For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. 11 By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore. 13 These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. 14 For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. 15 If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

The source of the creation of the universe was not some compressed gob of matter – the source of creation was the Word of God. It was spoken into existence by God the Father and by God the Son (the Word) all things were created. The heavenly, invisible, spiritual realm has power and dominion over the worldly, material, physical creation. Abel sacrificed to God in thanksgiving and praise trusting in God's love so that he had faith that God had a future laid out for him. Cain thought his offering was given so that he could EARN favor with God. Earning favor with God is not possible but we rely upon God who is righteous in all His ways. Since the fall in the Garden we are all born in sin. But Cain thought that after making his offering to God, then God OWED him something in return. He must have thought himself quite righteous that God became indebted to him! But he neglected to see that everything he had was the result of God's pure fatherly love for him. God warned Cain that his heart was being overtaken by the devil. Enoch was taken by God to heaven because of his faith – faith accounted to Enoch as righteousness. Noah believed God's word and built the ark under severe ridicule but by believing God's word he and his family were saved. Abraham left his home and family to wander in the land of Canaan – a land promised to his offspring by God. And Abraham continued on in faith against all earthly estimates – he was old and without a child – and Sarah was old and barren. But God delivered on His word and Sarah became pregnant with Isaac. Is

anything impossible for God? Ephesians 2:8 “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” Faith is believing His word, and believing His word changes us. We live a different life because we live by the promise of eternal life with God. It is no small order to believe that we who are fully unworthy of God are saved by His pure love and mercy – but this was the promise from the beginning. The men of faith were the people made righteous by God’s forgiveness and following the Word and promise! Now, the righteous live by the promise delivered - in Jesus Christ. Because we were sinful and unclean, dead in our sins – God has done the work for us. It is only by faith that we can believe that God revealed His love and mercy for us in Jesus Christ. Jesus is salvation – He is God’s gift to us!

**Luke 12:22** And he said to his disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. 23 For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. 24 Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! 25 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 26 If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? 27 Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 28 But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! 29 And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. 30 For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. 31 Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you. 32 “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Because of Jesus’ atoning sacrifice, we have been reinstated as the children of God and called into salvation by His grace through the same Word that He spoke all things into existence. We are reinstated into the Kingdom of God because of Jesus Christ. Jesus calls us here to a “remembrance” of how God the Creator and the Almighty cares for His creation, His creatures, the raven, the lilies and most important of all His people! The creation was created for the sake of His people who had stewardship over the earth. This was God’s order of creation from the beginning but here we are reminded by Jesus that because God’s good order in us was put under the darkness of sin, all godly relationships are being “tested” by the devil. Sin is the destruction of God’s good order. But Jesus is the Christ and Jesus restores us through forgiveness upon repentance. Repentance is returning to God’s good order and purposes. Though we deserved only death, not food, clothing, shelter or the love of God, in Christ we are

restored and the whole kingdom is put back to its original design. Jesus the God-man who is the only perfect man has taken all the power and authority which the devil had connived from Adam and Eve and now the truly perfect man is steward over the earth. Through His perfect righteousness – given all authority in heaven and on earth. Jesus is calling His disciples to remembrance of God’s good order and to faith in God that the Almighty has not abandoned us but has sent us Jesus Christ for salvation. Seek first the kingdom of God and God will provide you with your temporal needs and even food for eternal life, and the white robe of Christ’s righteousness for your eternal needs. God will restore the earth to its perfected created beneficence and beauty in the resurrection. But even now in the fallen creation – God knows all that you need and is able to care for you just as He did Adam and Eve, just as He did Israel in the wilderness, just as He did Noah on the sea. He revealed Himself in Jesus Christ that those who do believe, become children of Abraham through faith in His Word – Jesus Christ. Amen!