

We will generally find that when we cry out in distress, he doesn't remove us from our suffering, but brings brothers and sisters from our church family into our troubles, to carry us when we're too weak to stand up ourselves. —Richard Coekin

It is tempting to draw inward and focus on survival when life is hard. But remember that holding on to Christ is survival, and it's how we let perseverance complete its work. —Glenna Marshall

The Baptist Catechism (Keach's Catechism)

1677

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Q. 77. What is required in the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment requires the preservation of our own and our neighbor's chastity, in heart, speech, and behavior.

(1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2; 2 Tim. 2:22; Matt. 5:28; 1 Peter 3:2)

Q. 78. What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment forbids all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions.

(Matt. 5:28-32; Job 31:1; Eph. 5:3-4; Rom. 13:13; Col. 4:6)

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Sunday Morning Bible Study -- 10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship -- 11:00 AM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

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“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

Volume 15, No. 51

December 18, 2022

THE ASSURANCE GIVEN TO ABRAM

After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. (Genesis 15:1)

The fourth verse of John Newton’s most famous hymn reflects that he was probably thinking of this text when he wrote it. It reads, “The Lord has promised good to me, His Word my hope secures; He will my shield and portion be, As long as life endures.” This verse of Amazing Grace is now rarely sung and that is unfortunate in that it expresses the believer’s assurance and hope and is an essential part of our God’s amazing grace to us. In this verse we are brought to Newton’s expression of complete faith and thus, believing Him and the promises of eternal life to all who come unto God by Christ our Lord. It has been well said of assurance and hope that, “Assurance is the fruit that grows out of the root of faith (Charnock);” “Assurance is glory in the bud, it is the suburbs of paradise (Brooks);” “Faith is our seal; assurance is God’s seal (Christopher Nesse).” The blessedness of this thought from John Newton is that the Lord is the promised good and He is as good as His word. The puritan Cruso wrote: “The being of God may as well fail as the promise of God.”

The fact is that Abram (Abraham) had many reasons to fear. He was in a land that was promised but not yet claimed. He had been told unequivocally it was all his and yet he found himself dwelling in the midst of idolaters and other evil men who had no regard for the Lord, a tenuous situation at best. He had been promised that he would be the source of

blessing to all the families of the earth but had no child. The Lord knew of His fears and assured Abram that He personally stood between him and the most fearsome of circumstances. Often one’s protector will place himself between the enemy that threatens – “you will have to go through me.” The Lord was promising the same to Abram. Later, Aaron would be told to stand in the gap as the vengeance of God raged in the camp of Israel and the plague was stopped. We note that to all who are secured by the will and purpose of God and are trusting in Him that Jesus, our Lord, stood between us and the wrath of God. Indeed, He is our shield from all that would harm and so we often read in His Word, “Fear not!”

The Lord had brought Abram to a critical point regarding promises made and assurances given. He had just returned from the battle with the kings and the deliverance of Lot. Much of that which was reaffirmed in the words of this text had been manifested in these preceding events. He had been given a great victory. It was there that he had met and was blessed by Melchizedek (a most notable type of Christ). In this encounter there is much to suggest that Abram sensed who this “Priest of the Most High God” might be. He gave tithes to him. And Melchizedek blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: *And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy*

hand. And he gave him tithes of all. (Genesis 14:19-20). Having first heard this, Abram hears it from the Lord Himself.

So comes the promise to all who believe as did Abram: *For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee. (Psalms 84:11-12).* The presence of the Lord is greater than any material wealth: *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. (Hebrews 13:5).* And we remember the ever-present Romans 8:28. Abraham is called the “Father of the faithful.” That being the case, it follows that the same things that were secured to Abram here are properly claimed wherever true faith is found.

Newton expressed the promise of the Lord as being both “thy shield and thy exceeding great reward” as hope secured by faith. We rejoice at the operations of the providence of God whereby things are brought about in accordance with His will and purpose. But we are delighted as we come to experience Him as well as the effects He brings about. Thus, we are brought the embodiment of such hope as Paul expressed in such passages as, *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: (Colossians 1:27).* Or the cry of the Psalmist: *I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my refuge and my*

portion in the land of the living. (Psalms 142:5). When it seemed that all hope was gone Jeremiah was comforted at the thought that, *The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. (Lamentations 3:24).* The songwriter expressed it well in saying “I’d rather have Jesus than silver or gold...” Is the Lord truly our portion? Are we among those named by Peter in writing, “Unto you therefore which believe he is precious...” There is no greater good than to know the presence of our Lord, to know Him personally, to sense the expressions of His love, to know the peace that attends us in Him, and to realize such joy as the world can never give. *For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off. (Isaiah 55:12-13).*

To be able to claim this promise is amazing to say the least. That we should be the objects of such precious benefits as He provides; that He should engage to defend us against every enemy of our soul; that He should commit to us in such a fashion as this – to so promise as to stake His integrity on the success of things promised. What could be greater than to dwell in the safety of “Our Shield” and to be able to say without hesitation, “The Lord is my portion.”
bhs

A NEW HEART

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. —Ezekiel 36:26 In Ezekiel 36:26, we find one of Scripture’s most picturesque and instructive descriptions of the doctrine of regeneration. It is essential that we not only come to a biblical understanding of this doctrine but that we also comprehend something of its vast importance. It is not an exaggeration to say that our understanding of regeneration

will determine both our view of conversion and our methodology in evangelism. The doctrine of regeneration refers to the supernatural work of the Spirit of God whereby the spiritually dead sinner is made alive, his radically depraved nature is transformed, and he is enabled to respond to the gospel call with repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. The Westminster Confession and 1689 London Baptist Confession describe the Spirit's work of regeneration as "enlightening the mind spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God, taking away the heart of stone, and replacing it with an heart of flesh; renewing the will... and effectually drawing [persons] to Jesus Christ: yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace." —Paul Washer, *The Gospel Call and True Conversion*

From Dane Ortland, *In The Lord I Take Refuge*

Three hundred years ago the pastor and theologian Jonathan Edwards captured the glad contentment of this psalm [Psalm 16] when he said in one sermon: The heart of a godly man doth freely choose God and Christ for his portion. Take away all torment and set hell aside and he could and might have his choice and he would choose God rather than anything else. If the godly man might have his choice either to live always in this world in the enjoyment of all manner of worldly prosperity or else in God's time die and go to heaven to dwell forever there in the enjoyment of God and Jesus Christ, he would choose the latter.

He knoweth the way that I take. —Job 23:10. Untried, untrodden, and unknown as your future path may be, each step is mapped, arranged, and provided for in the everlasting and unchangeable covenant of God. To Him who leads us, who accepts us in the Son of His love, who knows the end from the beginning, it is no new or uncertain or hidden way. We thank Him that, while He wisely and kindly veils all the future from our knowledge, all that future—its minutest event—is as transparent and visible to Him as the past. Our Shepherd knows the windings along which He skillfully, gently, and safely leads His flock. He has traveled that way Himself and has left the traces of His presence on the road. As each follower advances, the new path unfolding at each step, he can exultingly exclaim, "I see the footprint of my Lord. Here went my Master, my Leader, my Captain, leaving me an example that I should follow His steps." Oh, it is a thought replete with strong consolation and well calculated to gird us for the coming year: the Lord knows and has ordained each step of the untrodden path on which I am about to enter. Then, too, the infinite forethought, wisdom, and goodness, which have marked each line of our new path, have also provided for its every necessity. Each exigency in the history of the new year has been anticipated. Each need will bring its appropriate and adequate supply. Each perplexity will have its guidance. Each sorrow, its comfort; each temptation, its shield; each cloud, its light. Each affliction will suggest its lesson. Each correction will impart its teaching. And each mercy will convey its message of love. The promise will be fulfilled to the letter: "As thy days, so shall thy strength be" (Deut. 33:25). —Octavius Winslow, *Morning Thoughts*