

Abrahams Journey of Faith

I. Luke 16:19-31. They have Moses and the Prophets...

- A. Moses? The whole Pentateuch and all the prophets.
- B. We are reading and meditating on Moses—Genesis.

II. We are in Genesis 12. Abraham! No way to over-emphasize Abraham.

A. He is the focal-point of Genesis.

- 1. Everything up to here leads us to Abraham, everything after is about Abraham ...
- 2. This is the beginning of the blessing of God on humanity through Abraham's seed.
- 3. *We spend a lot of time arguing about the wrong things (Gen.1-11)*

B. He is the friend of God. (!)

- 1. Jas. 2:23; 2 Chron 20:7; Isa 41:8
- 2. *If a person is God's friend, it's because God initiated it. Amazing.*

C. He is the most widely respected man on earth (though history books in the west give him little attention)

- 1. Judaism, Christianity, Islam (all of monotheism) traces back to Abraham.
 - a) They all agree on two things:
 - (1) That there is only one God.
 - (2) That this God entered into covenant with Abraham to save the world.
- 2. *But there is more to salvation than just being a monotheist (Jas. 2:19)*

D. His Covenant will save the world. (Note three covenants in Gen.1-12)

- 1. Implied in Adam's covenant. Gen.2-3
 - a) *Which they broke in the garden.*
- 2. Broadened in Noah's covenant. Gen. 9
 - a) *Which they broke at Babel.*
- 3. Personalized in Abraham's covenant. Gen.12:1-3
 - a) Out of the confusion of Babylon God selects one man to create a nation and a presence on earth, eventually redeeming and blessing the whole world.
 - b) *Which will ultimately rely on God himself at the Cross.*

E. He is the archetypical believer, prototype of all faithful people. Gal. 3:7-9; 26-29

- 1. He is the most common illustration of faith and fidelity in the NT.
 - a) His name occurs 67 times in the NT
 - b) In the Epistles, 4 main times he is used as the example of faith
 - (1) Romans 4; Gal. 3; Hebrews 6, 7, 11; James 2

III. Genesis 12. Abraham learns to walk with God.

A. Getting up and following the Lord. 12:1-9

- 1. God calls him. 1-3
 - a) Beginning of the all-important Abrahamic covenant.
 - b) *Starts by leaving the world behind and following the Lord.*
- 2. God promises him blessing beyond his own ability (by grace). 1-3
 - a) He will father an entire nation. (Land and descendants)
 - b) He will have a great name.
 - c) He will be blessed in order to be a blessing (5 times)
 - d) Not just for Abraham, but for the whole fallen world.
- 3. God appears to him. 7
 - a) Theophany! Confirming land and descendants.
- 4. Abram responds in worship. builds an altar. 8-9
 - a) Wherever Abe went, he built altars to the Lord.
- 5. *This is a very good beginning...But...*

B. Straight Into a Famine. 12:10-13:4

1. A real crisis and a desperate strategy. 12:10
 - a) Severe famine. 10
 - b) *Famine in the Promised Land? Can hard things happen within God's Promise?*
 - c) A desperate strategy, sojourn in Egypt for a while.
 - (1) Was it a mistake? Maybe. It set up the lying and the potential for Sara to be taken into Pharaoh's harem, which would stop the "seed of Abraham" before it even got planted!
 - (2) But God did not forbid Abram from going to Egypt for pasturage.
 - (3) God does not rebuke Abram for this trip.
2. A dire situation, but a bad plan. 12:11-16
 - a) Abraham's fear was well grounded.
 - (1) Pharaoh could do this! He did abduct Sarah anyway. And if it wasn't for the plagues God sent, he would have kept her.
 - b) But lying about Sarah potentially made it worse.
 - (1) The "seed of Abraham" was in jeopardy if Sara became Pharaoh's wife.
 - c) *But if you must lie in order to get God's will done, you need to re-think everything.*
3. An embarrassing rebuke, but a divine intervention. 12:17-20
 - a) God steps in and hits Pharaoh (plague = "hit" same word in Exodus)
 - (1) Pharaoh gets a lesson in divine power. Abraham's God...
 - (2) This releases Abraham and his family and protects the covenant.
 - b) Abraham is rebuked by an arch-pagan.
 - (1) Pharaoh was a 'god' in his own eyes. Total pagan.
 - c) *When the world has a higher standard than God's people, we need to re-think our position.*
4. A humble exit, but return to faith. 13:1-4
 - a) *Where his first altar had been built.*
 - b) *Calling on the name of the Lord—worshipping and relying on the Lord first.*
 - c) *What would have been different if he had done this first?*

IV. How can we deal with a threatening world? We can...

- A. Expect challenges in the promised land.
 1. We can be right were God wants us, facing real fears and challenges.
 2. One of the biggest problems in trauma is the surprise it is to us.
- B. Live from within the Covenant rather than the Culture. 1 Pet.1:1-3
 1. Abraham should have "done the math" and realized the implications of the Covenant God made.
 2. Being enamored of the world around us will drive us into disobedience.
 - a) 1 Jn.2:15-17. Compassion (Jn.3:16), not lust.
 3. Being fearful of the world will rob us of ministry.
 - (1) Anxiety sponsors bad decisions.
 - (a) *Anxiety sells, though. It is everywhere in social media.*
 - (2) *Perfect love casts out fear, but also perfect fear casts out love. (1 Jn.4:18)*
 - (3) Abraham's fear of Pharaoh overwhelmed his sense of calling and blessing.
 4. *We are New Covenant expats, sojourners, on our way to "another country." Heb.11:8*
- C. Trust the Covenant Providence of God to use our mistakes. Rom.8:28
 1. God did not let the covenant promise fail. He will complete the work he began in you. **Phil.1:6**
- D. Get back up after we falter. 13:4
 1. Trusting the New Covenant means accepting God's forgiveness and pressing on.
 2. Don't let our mistakes or sins stop us from repenting and worshipping the Lord.
 3. *Our distinctive as believers is not that we never make mistakes (or sins), but that we turn back to the Lord. We see our failures as real failures and we try again.*

V. Why? Because the Grace of God stands firm in the New Covenant in Christ! Rom.8:28.

1. *The covenant promise for us to be Christlike and inherit his eternal life. Rom.8:28*