

Abraham: A picture of the Elect Walking by Faith

Genesis 13:5-18

Romans 4:9-25; 2 Corinthians 4:7-18



28 August 2022

Pressing Forward into 2022

What We Learnt Last Week

- God does everything, including choosing, for His own glory (Ephesians 1:11)
- God has revealed Himself as a testing God (Deuteronomy 8:1-10)

Abraham's Walk of faith - A Picture of God's Elect Walk of Faith

- We see Abraham's growth in faith through eight tests of his faith
 - ① Separation test. He spent five years in Haran with his father. His obedience was delayed! Do we obey immediately? (Genesis 11:27-12:5; James 1:22; John 15:13-14).
 - ② Selfishness test. Consequences of putting oneself first. Travels to Egypt with no word from the LORD and plans with Sarah to deceive Pharaoh (Gen 12:10-13:4).
 - ③ Self-denial test - Gave the choicest land to Lot (Gen 13:5-18; Philippians 2:4; 1 Corinthians 10:24; Romans 12:10).
 - ④ The "fight test" in defeating the kings who took Lot and his family. God's grace is sufficient (Gen 14:1-16; 2 Cor 3:5; 12:9).
 - ⑤ Commitment test - refusing the fortunes of Sodom. Giving proper honour to God (Gen 14:17-24; 1 Timothy 6:6).
 - ⑥ Test of not following tradition/culture rather than trusting God's promises (Gen 16:1-16; Psalm 27:14; 37:7-9; 130:5; Isaiah 40:31).
 - ⑦ Test to send Ishmael away. God commanded him to send Ishmael away (Gen 21:8-21).
 - ⑧ The greatest test - Obeying God's commandment to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac (Gen 22:1-19).
- Our faith grows through testing! (Exo 16:4; Gen 22:1; Prov 17:3; 1 Peter 1:7).
- God uses tests to teach and show us the true condition of our hearts (Ecclesiastes 3:18).
- All of these variety of tests/trials are part of God unfolding His eternal purpose. God is the one who enabled Abraham overcome (Deut 8:1-3; 1 John 5:4-5).
- Walking has the aspect of progression as seen in the life of Abraham. It is either you are walking (moving forward) or you are drifting away (Hebrews 2:1-3; Gen 11:22; Job 23:8; Isaiah 1:4; 28:13; Isaiah 44:25; Jer 7:24; 15:6).

Contrasting Lot and Abraham "Walks"

- In almost every aspect, Lot compares unfavorably with Abraham.
- Abraham walked by faith, Lot by sight. Lot looked up and saw immediate value (Genesis 13:10) while Abraham looked at the land through the vision of faith that God would keep His promises. God gave faith to Abraham (Eph 2:8-9).
- Abraham was generous and humble, Lot greedy and worldly. The proposal made by Abraham to Lot was exceedingly generous, and in his greed, Lot took full advantage of it. Remember Abraham was the uncle and his elder (Philippians 2:3).
- Abraham was wise while Lot was foolish. Abraham relied on God while Lot relied on himself (Proverbs 3:5-6; John 15:5).
- Lot was rich in livestock, silver and gold but it seems he never built an altar to God. He saw Abraham build altars to worship God, but never builds one. Lot never developed a relationship with God, and we see the results of it in his decision.
- Much later, again in contrast to Lot, Abraham refuses gifts from the King of Sodom because he knew all of his financial blessings came from God alone (Genesis 14:21-24).

Self-denial test (Genesis 13:5-18)

- When we find Abraham in this text, he is leaving where he should not have been-Egypt (v1).
- Sometimes, we do not realize the damage we cause by our disobedience. Whenever we do not seek guidance from God when we are in a famine of life, we may end up going down to Egypt and sinning against God (Psalm 119:11).
- Abraham went to the place where he had built an altar and called on the name of God. While he was in Egypt, we see that he never built an altar.
- Abraham was not in constant fellowship with God, but the first thing he does here, is seek God (v4).
- Verses 5-7 tell us about the developing conflict between Lot's and Abraham's herdsman.
- Then comes the test - to give the choicest land to Lot.
- Walking by faith enables us to relinquish our rights because of our confidence in God's promises (v6-7; Gen 12:1-9).
- Abraham did not want to quarrel or have divisions but rather peace and unity. He did not use his authority as Lot's uncle to tell him to submit to him (v9).
- What is Abraham doing here? He is giving Lot first choice, but really, he is giving God first choice. He is releasing himself to God's sovereignty.
- What Abraham needed (and we need) is right worship. Abraham returned to the place of the altar which he had made and called on the name of the Lord (v4).

- He made better decisions when his worship was right with the Lord.
- How evident it is that Abraham has grown in faith after calling upon the name of the Lord. He triumphs in this test, showing evidence of repentance (v8).
- He is being (ongoing) conformed into the image of Christ - sanctification (Romans 8:29).
- The Elect are also on a journey! A journey of being conformed into the image of Jesus Christ - This is the Glorious Gospel! (Rom 8:28-30; 9:11-16; Eph1:11).
- Lot lifted his eyes high, but not high enough. He did not seek guidance from God. He did not seek God's will. How many times we make the same mistake? (v10).
- Christ commands all his disciples to deny themselves, pick up their own crosses daily and follow Him (Galatians 2:20; 5:16; Mark 8:34).

Accomplishment of God's Purpose in the Journey of Faith of the Elect

- The "strife" which God permitted to arise between the herdsmen of Abraham and Lot was for the fulfillment of His own counsel/plan (Isaiah 46:10; 14:24).
- We see that the purpose of God was to separate Abraham from the land of his birth and from his own kinsmen. God called Abraham "alone" (Isaiah 51:2), yet at least two of his relatives accompanied him when he left Ur of the Chaldeans. Nevertheless, in the end, God's purpose comes to pass.
- In the separation of Lot from Abraham, we see the departure of the last of his kinsmen, and now Abraham is left "alone" with God! Just like God had purposed! This is the Glorious Gospel (Prov 16:33; 19:21; 33:10-11; Job 42:2).

Abraham as a Picture of Jesus Christ

- Abraham was the one to whom God had promised to give the land (Gen 12:7).
- Yet he gladly and voluntarily surrendered every claim and right to put a stop to this strife. Note carefully his words, "Is not the whole land before you?" (Genesis 13:9).
- In the waiving of his rights, Abraham foreshadowed Jesus Christ, "the son of Abraham" (Matthew 1:1; Philippians 2:6-11).
- All power in heaven and earth was His, yet He suffered Himself to be led as a lamb to the slaughter (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus has left us an example that we should follow His steps (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Learning from Abraham's Faith- How Are We to Walk by Faith and Not by Sight?

1. We need to repent continuously and seek God in our Christian walk (Acts 17:30-31; 1 John 1:8-9). We all fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), but when we do, we must ask for forgiveness.

2. We need to acknowledge the problem. How many times do we ignore addressing conflicting issues until it is too late, far out of hand or relationships are broken? Abraham decided to deal with the problem right away (John 15:5).
3. Conflict is not right between kinsmen. Yes, sometimes conflict may arise within a family, but what unites us is far greater than what divides us. There is nothing that should separate the family which is joined in Christ (Romans 12:17-18; Psalms 133:1).
4. Many times, we are quick to point out other people's mistakes and downplay ours, but here Abraham who was older takes the blame first. Let us remember this next time we have disagreements in our family (Proverbs 15:1-2).
5. We need to trust God and believe His word. God has promised and that is enough. God does not lie (Isaiah 26:3-4; Psalms 62:5-8; Proverbs 3:5-7; Psalms 50:15; Titus 1:1-2; Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29).
6. We are to feed our souls/minds with God's word (Matthew 4:4; 6:33-34; Psalms 1:1-2)
7. We must fix our focus on Jesus amidst trials (Heb 12:1-2; Matt 14:28-30)
8. We need to practice this kind of faith. When we put our faith in God, He not only meets our needs but also gives it to us abundantly (Matthew 19:29; Eph 3:20).
9. Lot's behaviour is a great warning to us. We are a lot like LOT. We make many of our decisions based on the information available now, and we fail to seek God's will (Philippians 4:5-7).
10. Our sight is limited and restricted. Lot should have looked higher unto God. Until this point, he went where Abraham went, but when he had to make his own decision, he failed. Brethren, let us not restrict God. Let Him lead us where He wants us to be (Revelation 22:13; 1 Samuel 16:7).
11. We need to flee away from sin. Lot dwelling among the Sodomites, in seeing and hearing, he afflicted his righteous soul day to day with their unlawful deeds (2 Peter 2:7-8; James 4:8; 2 Peter 1:3; Romans 13:14; 2 Corinthians 6:17; 7:1).
12. We need to guard our eyes - one of the avenues/doors through which temptations come (1 John 2:16; Proverbs 4:23-27; Philippians 4:8; Job 31:1; Genesis 3:6).
13. We need to cultivate a lifestyle of thanksgiving in everything (Psalms 106:1; Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).
14. We must Remember, WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE GOD! (Hebrews 11:6).

Where We Are Going in 2022

- Next week Nicholas - Abraham: Struggling with the Promise