

BIBLE STUDY LESSON: 10 PEOPLE IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS

Abraham

Acts 7:2-3 And he said, Men, brothers and fathers, listen. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said to him, "Come out from your land and from your relatives, and come into the land which I will show you."

Gal. 3:14 In order that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

I. CALLED TO BE THE FATHER OF A NEW RACE

- A. After no more than ten generations and through a period of approximately three hundred years (Gen. 11:10-26), the descendants of Noah's family, which was separated from the corrupted world by the judgment of the flood, departed from God's way and fell into Babel, an evil realm that was filled with idols.
- B. As a result, they could no longer be used by God to carry out His economy on earth.
- C. Thus, in the land of idolatry God called Abraham out from the idolatrous people (Josh. 24:2).
 - 1. Telling him to go out of the land of idolatry and out from his idolatrous kindred and his father's house
 - 2. Come into the land that God would show him (Acts 7:2-3), the land of Canaan
- D. This was God's new beginning with fallen man, and it was also a new beginning for the one who was fallen and was called.
- E. God gave up the created Adamic race and called Abraham with his descendants that they might be a new race.
 - 1. With the called race, God was able to continue His eternal purpose
- F. In this way, Abraham became the father of the new, called race.

II. JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

- A. Abraham was in a place and environment that were far from God, fallen, and idolatrous.
- B. However, because the God of glory appeared to him (Acts 7:2), he was able by faith to accept God's calling and obey God to go out from his country, his kindred, and his father's house.
 - 1. He went out from Chaldea without knowing where he was going (Heb. 11:8)
 - 2. Thus, he had to trust in God for His instant leading, taking God's presence as the map by which he traveled
 - 3. When he arrived at a place that God had promised to show him, he could not immediately possess the land
 - 4. By faith, he dwelt in tents as a foreigner in that land, as in a land not his own (Heb. 11:9), and believed God's word of promise: that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars
- C. Because of such faith, he was justified by God (Gen. 15:4-6; Rom. 4:3).
- D. Became the father of all who are justified by faith (Rom. 4:11-12).

III. LIVING BY FAITH

- A. Abraham, the father of faith, believed the God who gives life to the dead and calls the things not being as being (Rom. 4:17).
- B. Being about a hundred years of age:
 - 1. He considered himself and his wife old and unable to beget children
 - 2. He was not weakened in faith, but was fully persuaded that God could give him a seed (Rom. 4:19, 21)
- C. Wherefore also there was born of him, as of one who had become dead, even as the stars of heaven in multitude, and as the sand by the seashore innumerable (Heb. 11:12).
 - 1. This was Abraham's believing that God is able to call the things not being as being
 - 2. After Abraham received a son, Isaac, from the God who calls things not being as being, he was tested by God, who told Him to offer up his only begotten son to Him as a burnt offering (Gen. 22:2)

3. He obeyed and offered up Isaac (Gen. 22:9-10), believing that God was able to raise him from among the dead, whence he also received him back in a figure (Heb. 11:19)
 4. This was Abraham's believing that God is able to give life to the dead
- D. Thus, he, as the father of faith, took the way of faith, and the life he lived was the life of faith.
- E. By faith he lived as a sojourner in the land, always pitching a tent and building an altar and calling on the name of Jehovah (Gen. 12:7-8; 13:3-4, 18).

IV. LIVING IN FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

- A. As a person who walked and lived before God, Abraham lived in fellowship with God (Gen. 18) as one who called on the name of Jehovah, the living God (Gen. 21:33)
- B. The third altar that he built for Jehovah was at the oaks of Mamre, which were in Hebron (Gen. 13:18). *Hebron* means "fellowship."
1. Abraham's building an altar and staying in Hebron shows that he not only worshipped and served God but also lived in constant fellowship with God
 2. Hence, it was at the oaks of Mamre that God appeared to him in a human form (Gen. 18:1-21)
- C. God considered Abraham His intimate friend (Isa. 41:8; James 2:23), Abraham:
1. Welcomed God as a friend
 2. Invited God to rest under the tree in front of his tent
 3. Prepared water that God might wash His feet for His refreshment
 4. Fed God with a rich meal for His satisfaction
- D. Furthermore, he received revelation from God regarding the birth of Isaac and the destruction of Sodom.
1. The birth of Isaac is related to Christ
 2. The destruction of Sodom is related to God's judgment on sin
- E. God showed Abraham that, in order to accomplish His plan for the fulfillment of His purpose, Christ had to come and sin had to go.
- F. This is the important revelation that Abraham received as he lived in fellowship with God.

V. FIGHTING AND INTERCEDING FOR HIS BROTHER

- A. As a person who lived by faith in fellowship with God, Abraham was able to overcome the striving of his brother and to give in to his brother (Gen. 13:7-11).
- B. He knew that he was in the hand of God and under the care of God.
1. Therefore, when his herdsmen strove with Lot's herdsmen, he trusted in God's care, not striving for himself or choosing for himself
 2. He even fought for his brother (Gen. 14:12-16)
 3. After Lot separated himself from Abraham, pitched his tent toward Sodom, and was taken captive, Abraham took three hundred and eighteen men from his house to fight against the four kings and their armies
 4. With a small number he defeated a much larger number of men and thereby rescued Lot.
 5. Then God supplied Abraham's need in a timely manner, sending His priest, Melchisedec, to minister bread and wine to him and to bless him (Gen. 14:17-20)
- C. Abraham's victory adjusted and restored the entire situation, and testified to the fact that God is the Most High God, the Possessor of heaven and earth.
- D. Abraham also went one step further, overcoming the temptation of earthly possessions (Gen. 14:22-23).

VI. FAVORED BY GOD WITH THE COVENANT OF PROMISE

- A. As a person who walked and lived by faith and in fellowship with God:
1. Abraham was favored by God with the promise that all the families of the earth would be blessed in his seed
 2. He also would become one who would be blessed and not be cursed (Gen. 22:18; 12:2-3)

VII. STILL NOT HAVING THE MATURITY IN LIFE

- A. The foregoing weakness manifested by Abraham shows us further that, although he was a great man who had faith in God, he had not matured in the spiritual life.
- B. That he was immature can be proved also by the fact that he remarried and begot children after Sarah's death (Gen. 25:1-2).

- C. This also is a negative model, showing that a person may be called, have faith, live in fellowship with God, and be led by God in his living and actions, yet he may not be fully transformed and may not be a complete pattern.

VIII. SIGNIFYING THE INITIAL STAGE OF A SPIRITUALLY MATURE PERSON

- A. As one of the historical figures in the Bible, Abraham cannot signify a complete, spiritually mature person.
 - 1. He can signify only the initial stage of the experience and life of a spiritually mature person
 - 2. A stage that includes such experiences as
 - i. God's calling
 - ii. Justification by faith
 - iii. Living the life of faith
 - iv. The living that is in fellowship with God
- B. Isaac and Jacob with Joseph were still needed to complete the latter stage in the experience and life of a complete, spiritually mature person.
 - 1. This latter stage includes the inheriting of grace, not using self effort, and the restful enjoyment of the riches of Christ, signified by Isaac
 - 2. Being dealt with by God, transformation, and maturity, signified by Jacob
 - 3. Reigning for God, signified by Joseph
 - 4. Hence, although the Triune God is one, He became the God of those three persons—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob (Exo. 3:15)
- C. In spiritual significance, those three represent the three aspects of a spiritually mature person, just as the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are the three aspects of the one unique God.
 - 1. The God of Abraham denotes mainly God the Father
 - 2. The God of Isaac denotes mainly God the Son
 - 3. The God of Jacob denotes mainly God the Spirit
- D. The three aspects of the Triune God are for, and they also correspond to, the three parts of the experience and life of a complete, spiritually mature person.

Focus: Giving up on the created Adamic race, God called Abraham to be the father of a new called race. Abraham, who was faithful to God's calling, became the father of faith and lived a life of faith. Abraham continued to live in constant fellowship with God, even unto becoming God's intimate friend. Their intimacy allowed God to share matters weighing upon His heart; Abraham resonated by interceding and fighting for his brother. As one favored by God, Abraham inherited the covenant of promise. Abraham signifies the initial stage of a spiritual mature person, however, he lacked the consummate maturity in life.