

January 12-Genesis 12

Chapter 12 begins the historical account of the life of one of the most important figures in the Christian faith, namely the person of Abram (soon to be Abraham). Abram's introduction is rather brief in the Scripture. Genesis 11:27-32 shares with us a few introductory facts. Of immediate importance to chapter 12 is verse 30 of chapter 11 which simply says "Now Sarai (Abram's wife) was barren." Verse 30 is a nail in the coffin of Abram's hopes and dreams regarding descendants from Sarai. Humanly speaking, in Abram's day, infertility could not be cured.

Verse 30 of chapter 11 makes verses 1-3 of chapter 12 all the more shocking. In chapter 12 God speaks to Abram for the first time. It is important to note that to our knowledge there was no prior relationship between the two. In fact, virtually all conservative scholars agree that Abram was not a believer in the one true God but in fact a pagan who worshipped false gods. Truthfully, Abram was not a prime candidate to be used of God to create a great nation, but once again the Scriptures affirm that our God is a great God who can use anyone to do anything He chooses. We can learn so much from the account of Abram in chapter 12 but let us focus on two important lessons in this text. First, we see the importance of obedience. We must not forget that God's instruction to Abram to "Go from your country" in verse 1 is a radical command. Abram is being asked to give up all that he knows to follow a deity that he has more than likely just met! Yet, we read in verse 4 "So Abram went, just as the Lord had told him." Obedience is not an option for the man or woman who desires to be used greatly by God. It is not our responsibility to orchestrate God's plans but it is our duty to obey Him as He works through us. This kind of radical obedience is the outworking of biblical faith. Hebrews 11:8 speaks about this text in Genesis 12 saying, "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." To have faith then is to have confidence that God will accomplish His purposes which leads to obedience as we trust in God's Sovereign plan.

Second, we can also see in this text that God's plans far exceed anything we could possibly fathom. In the second half of verse 3 God promises Abram "in you all that families of the earth shall be blessed." We aren't totally sure what Abram took this statement to mean but we do know what God ultimately meant. In this verse, God was not speaking about some superficial blessing; He was speaking about the salvation of the world through Christ. Galatians 3:7-8 sheds some light on this passage saying "Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'In you shall all the nations be blessed.'"

God is speaking to Abram, whether he realizes it or not, about the coming Christ who will bless the world with salvation! In fact, ultimately Abram's offspring would not be limited to merely the nation of Israel but to all those who would be saved through faith by the seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:16). It would be through the descendants of Abram that the Messiah would be born, blessing the world for all eternity. Indeed, God was preparing to utilize Abram to bring about the greatest event in the history of the world, namely the birth, life, and death of the God man Jesus Christ. Our God is a great God who can accomplish more than we can ever fathom. You and I, as brothers and sisters in Christ, stand together in the Gospel on this day as the offspring of the faithful Abraham (Galatians 3:29). Praise God for His Sovereign and Mighty power and praise Him for utilizing such a faithful saint like Abraham!