

## **PUTTING GOD FIRST (Genesis 12:1-3)**

### **I. We see Abraham's motivation for doing so.**

- A. I believe there were at least two motivations for Abraham to put God first.
- B. The first motivation he had was faith (Hebrews 11:8-9).
  - 1. We are not told how Abram knew of God in order to have faith in Him.
  - 2. We know that God did not leave Himself without witness to the Gentile world (Acts 14:17).
  - 3. The Gentile world was without excuse (Romans 1:20).
  - 4. God chose Abram out of all the Gentiles to be the one through whom the Christ would come.
  - 5. Abraham showed himself as one who would carry out the commandments of God.
- C. The second motivation that Abraham had were the promises made to him by God (Genesis 12:1-3).
  - 1. There is a land promise that it reiterated to Abraham when he got into the land (Genesis 13:17).
  - 2. There is a seed promise that through him there would come a great nation that is promised to him again later on in his life (Genesis 17:1-6).
  - 3. The last promise was that all families of the earth would be blessed through him.
    - a. Paul lets us know that this is a reference to Jesus (Galatians 3:16).
    - b. It is interesting to note that "earth" of this verse and "ground" of 3:17 is the same Hebrew word.
      - (1) The ground that is cursed because of sin is now going to be blessed by Christ.
      - (2) This helps to show us the power of Christ over sin.
- D. God made these promises to Abram and combined with his faith in God motivated Abraham to put God first in his life.
- E. We have motivation to put God first in our lives.
  - 1. God has promised us all the necessities of life if we do.
  - 2. He has promised us a crown of life if we remain faithful to Him (Revelation 2:10).
  - 3. Those that don't seek Him first will spend eternity in hell.
  - 4. All of these things, and more, serve to motivate us when combined with an obedient faithfulness.

### **II. We see Abraham putting God first in his separation.**

- A. One of the stipulations of the promise of God is that Abram had to remove himself from his home, kin and father's house.
  - 1. We know that he partially obeyed the Lord's command.
  - 2. He kept his father and one nephew with him (Gen 11:31).
- B. It is interesting to note that after Lot and Abram separated after their

- herdsmen's feud that God reiterated the promises land and nation to Abram (Genesis 13:14-16).
- C. Abraham finally was totally separated from his family as God had originally commanded him.
  - D. God calls us to be separate from the world.
    1. 2 Corinthians 6:17.
    2. John 17:17 - sanctify means to separate oneself from the world in order to join to God.
  - E. We are to be a distinct people from the world (Titus 2:11-14).
  - F. This can only take place when we have sanctified God in our hearts (1 Peter 3:15).
    1. He must have the prominent position in our lives.
    2. If He does not, then we have not completely separated ourselves from the world.
  - G. We can hang on to our Terah's and Lot's, but until we completely separate from the world then God is not first in our lives.

### III. **We see God first in Abraham's life in his dedication.**

- A. The promise for a great nation to come from Abraham was difficult for him to grasp because at 75 he was childless.
- B. Several times God told him that he would have a son (Genesis 15:1-4; 17:19; 18:10).
  1. He showed a lack of faith in coming up with a plan that produced Ishmael.
  2. Sarah even laughed at the thought of her giving birth to a child (Genesis 18:12).
- C. However, God did as He promised and Sarah gave birth to a son they named Isaac (Genesis 21:2-3).
- D. Could you imagine the joy that was their at the birth of their son for whom they had waited so long and had come to believe would never be theirs to hold?
- E. Could you imagine the feeling that Abraham had when God told him to offer that son (Genesis 22:1-2).
  1. It was a test for Abraham and what a test it was.
  2. We do not read anywhere of Abraham questioning God.
  3. He simply did what God told him to do.
- F. He took Isaac up to Mt. Moriah, built an altar, laid the wood on it and placed his son on the altar.
  1. Notice Hebrews 11:17.
  2. In his mind, Abraham had offered up Isaac.
  3. The angel had to call his name twice to get him to stop.
  4. His faith was so great in the promises of God that he believed God would have raised Isaac from the dead in order to fulfill those promises.
- G. There was complete dedication to God on Abraham's part.
- H. God calls us to have complete dedication to Him as well.
- I. Nothing that is valuable is achieved without effort. Fritz Kreisler, the

famous violinist, testified to this point when he said, "Narrow is the road that leads to the life of a violinist. Hour after hour, day after day and week after week, for years, I lived with my violin. There were so many things that I wanted to do that I had to leave undone; there were so many places I wanted to go that I had to miss if I was to master the violin. The road that I traveled was a narrow road and the way was hard."

- J. This type of dedication only comes from separation.
  - 1. Luke 9:62.
  - 2. Ours is a narrow way that takes dedication to walk (Matthew 7:14).
  - 3. We are to present our bodies a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2).
    - a. When a sacrifice was made the animal had to die.
    - b. It gave its all in order to be a sacrifice; it was a total dedication.

#### **IV. Putting God first led Abraham to have an expectation.**

- A. Notice Hebrews 11:10.
    - 1. The word "looked" is interesting.
    - 2. It carries the idea of expecting something.
  - B. Abraham's faith in God and obedience to Him allowed Abraham to have an expectation of heaven.
  - C. His motivation led him to a separation, which gave way to his dedication, which, in turn, allowed him and expectation of heaven.
  - D. The same is true for you and me.
- Titus 1:2.
- 1. John 14:1-3.
  - 2. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.
- E. We can expect heaven because God promised it to us if we are faithful (Matthew 7:21).