

The Gospel of Abraham

Genesis 12:1-3

INTRO – God gives commands and promises to Abraham that bring to focus his promise through the seed of the woman at the time of the fall. In this passage we will see that God has always had a plan for the salvation of the world. Through Abraham the world would be blessed. This is the gospel of Abraham. The New Testament quotes this and related passages in several places. Jesus Christ came not to change these plans, but to fulfill them. The church today must obey the Lord by obeying the same covenantal commands and believing the same covenantal promises.

TEXT – Now the LORD had said to Abram: “Get out of your country, From your family And from your father’s house, To a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” Gen 12:1-3

COMMANDS – God spoke to Abraham with imperatives. From the beginning God has not worked with an invitation system. In this sense, God is not a gentleman, waiting for free men to choose for themselves. (Ex 3:10, Jer 1:7, Jon 1:1, Matt 9:9, Matt 28:19, Acts 1:8). His commands almost always demand separation of some kind. They always require faith because God regularly does not give all the details of His plan. “We must quit the things that are seen for the things that are not seen, and submit to the sufferings of this present time in hopes of a glory that is yet to be revealed.” Matthew Henry.

PROMISES –

- God promised Abraham that he would be great and a great blessing (v2).
- This promise is to Abraham and to his descendents/seed (Gen 12:7, 13:15).
- All the earth is to be affected for blessing or for cursing from this covenant (v3).
- But the ultimate outcome will be a blessing to the world. All the families of the earth will be blessed (v3).

FAITHFUL STEPHEN – Acts 6:8ff. Stephen understood these promises better than the established church and called for a reformation. He is accused of blasphemy (6:11, 13), and yet his face shines like an angel. Who else had a face that shined? A reformation is not a commitment to new-fangled ways, but to the old paths. God was never limited to revealing Himself only in Jerusalem or in the Temple (7:1-2, 9, 30, 47-49). He never intended to just stay there.

THE BLESSING OF A PEOPLE – Gal 3:7-9. Sons of Abraham are defined by their faith and not by their physical ancestors. The promised blessing to Abraham and his descendents is a preaching of the gospel. In that gospel, the nations, the Gentiles, have always been destined to become sons of Abraham. How would God do this? By faith.

THE BLESSING OF A LAND – Abraham is promised a land in Gen 12:1, 4-7 and again in 13:14-15. Moses refers to this as a promise to those who are keeping the fifth commandment (Deut 5:16). Paul refers to the same promise when speaking to Gentile children (Eph 6:1-3). But notice the change in language. In the Sermon on the Mount we are told that the meek will inherit the earth, presumably all of it.

SEED AND SEEDS – Gal 3:16. The principle application of the word seed is Christ, who is the Promised One. The issue is not whether it is singular or plural. The issue is that all who are the seed of Abraham are so only because of the promise through the Seed, the Lord Jesus Christ. We must be in Christ to be the seed of Abraham (Gal 3:29). And if we are Christ’s then we are heirs according to the promise. What does that mean?

CHRIST, THE CHURCH, AND THE WHOLE EARTH – World conquest is complete (John 12:27-33, Col 2:15) and is being completed (Matt 28:18-20). Remember that we do not do anything; it is all accomplished in Christ. He has ordained both the ends and the means. We are in a flowing stream of God’s providential plan. Our ineffectiveness to change the world is not because of the impotency of the gospel, but because of God’s chastisement of His people. The response should not be to develop new and fancier methods – that shows a lack of faith. Rather, the response should be to repent of our man-centered, ‘we can do it’ mentality, and cry out to the Lord of mercy for mercy. Repentance begins in the house of the Lord. We preach and teach the way we do, not because we do not want to see the world saved, but because we do and because we believe that it will be. Evangelism begins by standing on some high mountain or building overlooking the Eastside, believing Gen 13:14-16 and then obeying verse 17 “Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you.”