

Abram's Faith Inaugurated

GENESIS 12:1-9

Section Outline

- * In this opening section we will see how faith comes about
- * It is a two-step process, comprised of ...
 - ◆ God's call — v. 1-3
 - ◆ Our response — v. 4-9
- * Let's see how this happened in the life of Abram

READ 12:1-3

God's Call

- * Verses 1-3 provide more detail about 11:31-32
 - ◆ Gen 15:7; Neh 9:7; Act 7:2-3 affirm the call from Ur!
- * What are the 2 primary elements of the call?
 - ◆ First — The command to go
 - 2 Parts: A call "from the familiar" (note the progression — country, family, father) and a call "to the unfamiliar"



The road ahead won't always be clearly marked

The Call .. Continued

- ◆ Second — The promises to prosper
- * w. 1-3 form the skeleton of the Abrahamic Covenant .. **what are the provisions (I see 7)?**
 - ◆ A land - v. 1
 - ◆ A great nation - v. 2
 - ◆ A blessing - v. 2
 - ◆ A great name - v. 2

The Call .. Continued

- ◆ A "blessor" - v. 2 ..
 - 👉 God's blessings overflow through His people
- ◆ A channel for blessings and curses - v. 3
- ◆ A SEED promise - v. 3 (cf. Gal 3:6-8) .. far reaching impact and a **complicated** topic!
- * Promises fall into three categories
 - ◆ Personal, National, and Universal

The Call .. Continued

- * **What phrase is repeated in w. 1-3?**
 - ◆ ... I WILL
- * **Who is the "referent"?**
 - ◆ God
- * **What is the significance?**
 - ◆ The promises are UNCONDITIONAL
- * **What is the further significance?**
 - ◆ They WILL BE FULFILLED!!!!

Implications

- 📖 God calls unlikely people from all walks of life
- 📖 God may call you as a “young believer”
- 📖 God needs to get us away from what we know to accomplish His purposes
- 📖 God doesn't give us the “FULL PLAN” up-front
- 📖 God's call requires us to exercise faith ... a call to leave is a call to follow ... Jesus did the same!
- 📖 God provisions those whom he calls ... even when His promises might feel outlandish to our “mortal minds” and are not immediately fulfilled

READ 12:4-9

Abram's Response

- * So what should we note about Abram's response?
 - ◆ Just like Noah ... he obeyed ... an equally shocking command!
 - ◆ Though it does appear to have been a “staged” obedience as some time was spent in Haran
- 📖 What would you do?? — Have you had an “Abram-like” experience in your walk??

Response .. Continued

- * Would also appear that Abram had accumulated some wealth .. possessions & slaves
 - ◆ Which makes the obedience all the more impressive ... could have stayed in comfort
 - Perhaps prefiguring Moses in some ways!
 - ◆ Lot's inclusion is probably tied to Patriarchal practice
 - i.e. he first left Haran under his Grandfathers authority ... subsequently assumed by Abram upon Terah's death
 - Abram was NOT disobedient — His charge was to leave, which he did. He was not told to prevent others from going with him!

Response .. Continued

- * His first stop in Canaan was Shechem where we get two interesting insights - v. 6
 - ◆ The Oak of Moreh — probably a “holy place”
 - Hebrew word means either “the teachers terebinth” or “teachers hill” — so a place of instruction
 - Shares the same root (ירה) as the Hebrew word תורה
 - Therefore was a notable place of religious teaching
 - ◆ Making the following phrase ... “at that time the Canaanites were in the land” ... significant
 - This was an idolatrous site worshipping other gods

Response .. Continued

- * Note God's response in v. 7
 - ◆ He appeared to Abram again — **Why?**
 - ◆ I can't be dogmatic, but I would surmise ...
 - Affirm that this is the LAND God intends for Abram
 - Maybe also reassurance in a foreign land as Abram was obedient
 - Maybe reinforcement not to pursue foreign gods or get tangled up with foreign cultures .. these are cursed descendants of Canaan (Ham's son)
- * To which Abram responds with worship .. this is an instructive sequence in God's dealing with His people!!

Response .. Continued

- * From Shechem, Abram “gets off the beaten path” - v. 8
 - ◆ He pitches his tent .. Between Bethel and Ai
 - Establishing a “home base” in the land?
 - ◆ Builds another altar
 - ◆ And he “calls on the name of the Lord” .. cf Gen 4:26 and the line of Seth
 - Abram would seem to be demonstrating belief — though how much he really understood cannot be stated dogmatically at this point
- * Then he journeys on to the Negev

Closing Thought

- * Why did God pick Abram?
- * I HAVE NO IDEA ... Which should affirm
- * That God's call ... then and now ... is always a matter of pure grace
- * And not based on any position, appearance, or merited favor ... think of David's selection (1 Sam 16:6-7)

Abram's Faith Refined

GENESIS 12:10-14:24

Section Outline

- * We will see three narratives in the life of Abram that illustrate how God grows our faith
 - ◆ Through the circumstances of everyday life — Gen 12:10-20
 - ◆ Through our conflicts with others — Gen 13:1-18
 - ◆ Through the crises we encounter — Gen 14:1-24

READ 12:10-20

The Circumstances of Everyday Life

- * Up to this point it has been a “stressless trip”
 - ◆ But now we learn that Abram experiences a famine
 - ◆ This would be a significant problem given the size of his “traveling troupe”
- * So how does Abram go wrong in responding to this circumstance?

Circumstances .. Continued

- ◆ Doesn't consult God
- ◆ Acts in human wisdom and strength
- ◆ Disregards God's instruction .. he was in the land
- ◆ Doubts God's provision
- ◆ Exposes himself .. and others .. to danger
- * How is this an encouragement to us?
 - 👉 God works with and through FLAWED people

Circumstances .. Continued

- * But that's not all ..
 - ◆ Left “unchecked” sin always begets more sin — what else does Abram do?
 - ◆ He adds lying and deceit to the equation
 - It's a lie worthy of Satan
 - Abram conjures up a “HALF TRUTH” ... What is it?
 - Sarai is his 1/2 sister — Same Father, different Mothers

Circumstances .. Continued

* Why do you think God brought this about?

📖 To show Abram that God's call is not exempt from suffering ...

📖 To perfect his faith ... God orchestrated a "teaching moment"

* Spiritual high-points are often followed by unusual testing

◆ Elijah after defeating the Baals - 1 Kgs 19:1-4 (Jezebel)

◆ Jesus after His baptism - Matt 4:1-10

▶ Whom of course gives us the perfect and right response to trials —
SCRIPTURE

Circumstances .. Continued

* Summing up vv. 10-13

◆ In his favor — Abram correctly assessed the risk

◆ In his disfavor — He did not engage God in the solution

📖 When we "take over" we rob God of the opportunity to show us His provision!!

📖 Yet despite our failures God remains faithful ...

NOTE: I say FAITHFUL, not BLESSING

Circumstances .. Continued

* We see God's faithfulness in two-ways in vv. 14-20

◆ God adds to Abram's provision - vv. 14-16

◆ God protected all the innocent parties - vv. 17-20

▶ Pharaoh and his house

▶ Sarai and her purity

▶ Lot and his possessions

Hermeneutical Excursus: How to read and understand Narratives

Why does the OT use narratives so extensively?

Because everyone loves a STORY ... they are MEMORABLE and they engage our EMOTIONS

Because the Bible was originally transmitted orally

What is Hermeneutics?

- * A big word for the principles of interpreting Scripture
- * Historically .. as it relates to the Bible .. two broad methods have been employed
 - ◆ The allegorical method
 - ◆ The literal method

What Is .. Continued

- * The allegorical method ...
 - ◆ Asserts there is a “higher meaning” behind the words of the text that must be sought for understanding
 - ◆ Sometimes referred to as spiritualizing the text
- * The literal method ...
 - ◆ Asserts the words of the Bible should be understood in their normal or “plain” sense

What Is .. Continued

- * We ascribe to the **literal method** ...
 - ◆ Sometimes called the “**literal - grammatical - contextual - historical**” method
 - ◆ This method seeks to understand the Bible’s words in their plain or ordinary sense, in its specific context, and acknowledges that Biblical authors use **figurative language** as one of many literary techniques.

What Is .. Continued

- * Working definition
 - ◆ A collection of interpretative principles that are used to discover the meaning of a passage ...
- * There are different principles for different genres
- * The **foremost and most fundamental principle** is that the biblical authors intended ...
 - ◆ To be understood, and
 - ◆ For their writings to mean **1-thing**, and **1-thing only**

What Is .. Continued

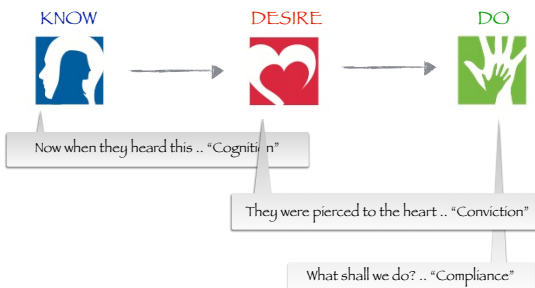
- ◆ Exegesis is the process of applying the interpretive principles (i.e. hermeneutics) to a particular text
- ◆ Homiletics is the process and **ART** of turning the “science” of interpretation into a sermon!
- ◆ The goal of a sermon is to explain what a passage of Scripture means and then to explore the contemporary **implications** — i.e. the “heart change issues”

The Focus of Implication

As a result of reading this passage,
what does God want me to:



Working Example (Acts 2:37)



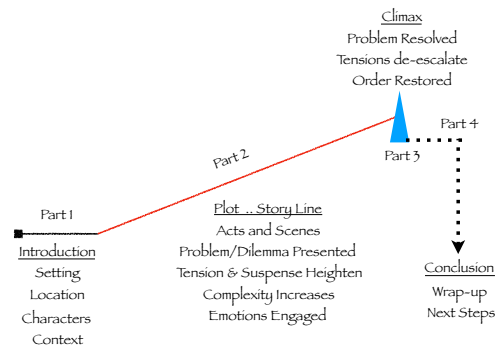
Hermeneutical Principles for Narratives

- * Narrative is a story that intends to convey a message
 - ◆ Through the characters;
 - ◆ Their problems .. or victories; and
 - ◆ Their circumstances
- * Biblical narratives are intentionally selective and illustrative .. *under inspiration, of course*

Narrative .. Continued

- * For Example
 - ♦ The writers choose those aspects of the historical account that would suit their purposes ..
 - ♦ Sometimes providing ... more or less detail, and different emphasis
 - Which is why we see the differences we do in the three synoptic gospels
- * Narratives generally follow a four-part pattern ...
- * Our job is to find the main point of the story

The Four Parts



Narrative .. Continued

- * Six different types of narratives
 - ♦ **Tragedy** - Story of an individual's decline
 - Samson, Saul
 - ♦ **Epic** - Long story with a series of episodes unified around an individual or group of people
 - Israel's wilderness wandering .. the Book of Numbers
 - ♦ **Romance** - A courtship between a man and woman
 - Ruth, Song of Songs

Narrative .. Continued

- ◆ **Heroic** - Story built around the life and exploits of a “hero” figure
 - Abraham, David, Daniel
- ◆ **Satire** - Story exposing human vice or folly through ridicule or rebuke
 - Jonah, Prov 1-9
- ◆ **Polemic** - An aggressive attack against or refuting the views of others
 - Elijah and his contest with the Baals, Moses and Pharaoh

Homework

Using Gen 13:1-18 tell me which verses belong to each of the four narrative parts ... AND

In a sentence of 18 words, or less, tell me what you think the main point is!
