

Remnant Life Church
January 14, 2018
Genesis: Abraham-Going it Alone
Part I
Genesis 12:10-20

Last week: The tower of Babel (**Gen 11**) and how the people came to move about the earth

- Noah – Shem; Ham; Japheth
- This morning we well talking about Egypt, the name of the second of Ham’s 4 sons (also called Mizraim)
- Eventually the people at Babel suffered the judgement of God
 - confusion and failure came because they separated themselves from God
 - they not only separated but removed God from their lives to worship false gods

It is always dangerous when you idolize someone...

- The desire to emulate someone when, in reality, you are created unique by God
- The great disappointment when they are shown to be very flawed
- Easy to idolize the great men of the Bible but...
 - Noah got drunk (**Gen 9:21**)
 - Moses murdered a man (**Ex 2:12**)
 - Elijah ran and hid (**I Kings 19:3**)
 - Samson could not control his lusts (**Judg 16:1**)
 - David had an adulterous affair (**2 Sam 11:3-4**)
 - Peter was a coward and denied Jesus (**John 18:17, 25-27**)
 - The list goes on and on...
- Even the father of the nation of Israel, God’s chosen, revealed himself to be very flawed
 - We see again, just as we did last week, the great peril of omitting God from our lives

READ: Genesis 12:10-20

- Abraham is living and moving about the region of the Negev desert
 - Located in southern Israel - a desert and semi-desert region
 - Desert region in the northern area and semi as you move south toward the eastern gulf of the Red Sea (Gulf of Aqaba)
 - A famine has prompted Abraham’s journey to Egypt
- The Negev region would have been dependent on regular rainfall to promote the growth of vegetation and crops
 - Any sustained drought would severely affect the growing cycle causing famine
 - When drought and famine occurred, it became necessary to go to where the food was
- Abraham’s decision was to go to Egypt
 - Egypt was much less dependent on rain as the ground was kept watered by the great Nile river
 - Loam soil – dirt mixed with the best properties of sand, clay, and silt

- This composition makes the ground ideal for growing

To the natural eye Abraham deciding to go to Egypt would make sense – you need to go to the place that can provide for your needs needs

- But Abraham has a problem...
- **The Problem –**
 - It is not recorded that Abraham checked with God first
 - On 2 separate occasions, recorded in just 2 prior verses, Abraham builds 2 altars to God
 - (v 7) God appears to Abraham and he builds Him an altar to worship
 - (v 8) Abraham builds an altar and calls on the name of the Lord (meaning seeks God direction)
 - But then Abraham makes the simple, but glaring mistake, of not asking God
 - Joshua at Ai (*Josh 7*)
 - Saul did not seek God but instead went to a medium (*I Sam 28:7*)
 - Most of the kings who followed Solomon
 - Both Isaiah and Jeremiah repeatedly warned the people to not forsake God in their lives
 - Abraham had been following the direction of God
 - We read that he had been calling on the name of the Lord
 - Now he was striking out on his own
 - Was this because God had deserted him?
 - NO – because the flesh always desires independence
 - Even from God
- Because Abraham is going into Egypt on his own initiative we can better understand why he devises his own scheme to protect himself
 - Sin and selfish motivation is almost never a singular event
 - It becomes a pattern of behavior
- Canaan and Egypt were the areas of land where Abraham dwelled
 - But they were also used as identifications of the heart
 - The early 19th century English Baptist pastor and biblical scholar, F.B. Meyer wrote: *In the figurative language of Scripture, Egypt stands for an alliance with the world...Abraham acted simply on his own judgment. He looked at his difficulties and became paralyzed by fear. He grasped at the first means of deliverance that suggested itself, much as a drowning man will catch at a straw.*
 - In other words, an act of desperation
- Egypt is most often used in the Bible as a symbol of the world
 - It was where the people of God would be held in captivity for over 400 years
 - Even after they were set free, during the time of the exodus, it was the land they still wanted to return to
 - It was the example the prophet Isaiah used when describing how Israel responded to an invasion
 - *What sorrow awaits those who look at Egypt for help, trusting their horses, chariots, and charioteers and depending on the strength of human armies instead of looking to the Lord, the Holy One of Israel - Isa. 31:1*

- We, too, must guard against using our own “Egypt” to deal with life
- For Abraham Egypt was the most obvious and easiest solution
 - Abraham was from the land of Ur which was located on the Euphrates River
 - Like Egypt with the Nile, Ur also had a constant source of water to irrigate the fields
 - That was from a life before his faith in God was beginning to develop
 - He went back to what was safe, familiar, but separate from God
 - His decision to go to Egypt was not one based on a sinful desire but it was born out of the flesh, not the spirit
- Now before we condemn Abraham remember that he is a “young” believer
 - He had already showed great faith by leaving his land as God told Him (**Gen 12:1**)
 - We are not given a time-line but it was fairly early in his walk with God that the famine occurred
 - Christians do not generally engage in overtly sinful actions
 - But when a crisis or an event that challenges our faith comes how do we respond?
 - Abraham’s default response led to a false belief in his life
 - False belief – God cannot take care of or supply my needs

Before we look at how this all played out (next week)...

- Abraham’s plan was wrong for 4 very specific reasons which we need to keep in mind today when living our own lives as God’s children
 - 1. It was wrong because it minimized and even dismissed the power and presence of God**
 - a. God had already made the promise of giving the land to Abraham
 - b. This ensured Abraham’s survival
 - c. So while God could promise the end, according to Abraham’s actions He could not provide the means
 - d. God made the promise of the blessing, the seed, and the land but Abraham felt it was up to him to make sure it happened
 - e. How much of this action was from the way Abraham was raised in Ur, the land of Mesopotamia?
 - i. Polytheism in that day meant each region, each nation, even each city had its own gods
 - ii. Did Abraham believe that God could not help him away from where He spoke to him?
 - f. Similar to David numbering his fighting men (**I Chron 21**)
 - i. Relying on yourself rather than on the promises and presence of God
 - g. When God makes a promise He will provide what is needed to accomplish and complete it

2. **Abraham's action jeopardized the purity of his wife and the promise of God**
 - a. God's promise was to be fulfilled through Abraham (**Gen 12:2-3**)
 - b. Now he was willing to risk giving her to another man?
 - c. Your plans – separate of God – almost never go the way you expect them to and they will never be according to the Will of God

3. **Abraham was looking to and counting on his wife for the blessing that God had promised**
 - a. God had promise to make Abraham into a great nation
 - b. **V 2** - I will make you into a great nation; I will bless you; I will make your name great
 - c. **V 3** – I will bless those who bless you; I will curse those who curse you
 - d. He did not say “through your wife”
 - e. Whenever we look to other sources to fulfill our lives we are doing it out of our own desires, our own strength, and our own will – not His
 - f. The example of Samson's life

4. **All of Abraham's fears were of his own creation**
 - a. **V 11** – *As he was about to enter Egypt...*
 - i. He had not even entered the land when he allowed fear to grip his heart and effect his faith
 - ii. Fear brought unreal expectations that altered his thinking and belief
 - b. **V 12-13** - no one had said anything to him yet about Sarah but his fear caused him to believe that it would (not could) happen
 - i. To talk yourself into something that has not occurred as it were reality is to make situational ethics the god of your life
 - ii. Situational ethics – 4 parts
 1. First – you create a hypothetical situation; something that has not happened
 2. Second – you pre-determine that the outcome will be negative
 3. Third – you, once again, pre-determine your response which will always be morally unacceptable any other time
 4. Fourth – you justify your actions making it right in your own eyes
 - iii. i.e. – “If we don't get the money by the end of the year to purchase that new washer and dryer we need, I'm going to have to change the numbers on our tax return so that our refund will cover the cost.”
 1. You have created a hypothetical situation (we don't get the money we need)
 2. Pre-determined negative outcome (can't get the washer and dryer)
 3. Determine your response (cheat on my taxes)
 4. Justify your actions (the need supersedes what is right)
 - To live this way is to remove God from your life and put yourself in a place where the enemy will have clear access to your decisions and your actions