

Devotional Thoughts :: Abraham, My Friend_07

Abraham, My Friend_07 - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/1/15 6:28

Abraham, My Friend
The Making of a Praying Man

Chapter Two: The Blessing

back on the flight path

It is time now to examine the Blessing. Thus far we have identified Abraham as an ordinary man who became an extraordinary man. He was born into no special family and had no special advantages but he is a man with an amazing destiny. My purpose in making such a leisurely start has been to emphasise that in choosing Abraham God did not choose a star or a man with all the right qualifications. What God has done once He can do again, and what He has done with one He can do with another. Why not you, why not now?

Let's see if we can reconstruct the events of the Blessing. We have two accounts and we shall see if we can combine them to discover the original scenario. One of the questions we must answer is "Was there one call, or two". Where was Abraham living when God pronounced this blessing? Was it in Ur of the Chaldees or 600 miles to the North West, in Haran?

Stephen tells us plainly that it was in Ur that God appeared to Abraham. And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. A careful examination of Stephen's words will show that this is not the promise of blessing that we find in Genesis 12 but a series of separate commands; Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. It links very neatly with the letter to the Hebrews where an important truth is almost lost by the position of a verb. The KJV says By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. The verb is pushed to the end of the sentence. The original word order is captured much better in the NKJV By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called... The first word to Abraham was not the promise of a blessing but a command to obey; faith is necessary for such obedience. This was not a conditional promise, it was a non-conditional command; and Abraham obeyed. So too pilgrims in our own age must bow the knee to become heirs of the promise, And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent. God's first word to us is a command not a promise and all men, everywhere, doesn't leave many escape clauses.

I suspect that the best known translations of Gen 12:1 have based their translation on evidence gathered from Acts 7 and have now the LORD had said. This had said pushes the next verses back to Ur, but there is no real reason to have translated it like this. It simply says as in the ASV Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. So Abram went, as Jehovah had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. When did God say this? Well, the end of this section has the location as Haran. In other words this is a second encounter. The first was a revelation of God in Ur of the Chaldees with a command, the second is a word which comes to Abraham years later and one which adds a series of blessings to the original series of commandments. The first half of the message is a repeat of the original, but the second part is just full of 'blessing'.

If this scenario is true we can construct an interesting history for Abraham. Abraham's departure from Ur was triggered by the circumstances of his father's migration AND by a clear word of command from God who appeared to him. Terah was heading for Canaan; Abraham had no idea where he was going, but went anyway. When the clan arrived at Haran they settled down. Later Haran is referred to as the city of Nahor; that branch of the family had found all they wanted.

d in Haran and saw no need to further their journey. Terah died here. The story could well have died here too except that Abraham had a second encounter with God who reminded him of the original command and added that series of amazing blessings; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

This is enough for Abraham. He loads up and moves on, leaving Haran behind. The truth that excites me in this account is what we might call the gospel of the second chance. Now, I know that evangelicals can get very worried about that kind of language, but what I mean is simply the truth captured in Jonah 3. Jonah had 'blown it'; he was the 'prodigal' prophet. The consequence had been ejection into the storm and finally a place in the stomach of a great fish. When you have 'blown it' do you ever feel 'down in the mouth'? No-one was ever so 'down in the mouth' as Jonah! ;-)

But what a prayer! When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD. The Prodigal Son came to himself, the prodigal prophet remembered the LORD. In Jonah chapter 3 the story just flows on without a break and with the words And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time. Oh Hallelujah, this is the God of all grace, Who comes the second time.

GREAT God of wonders! all thy ways
Display the attributes divine;
But countless acts of pardoning grace
Beyond thine other wonders shine:
Who is a pardoning God like thee?
Or who has grace so rich and free?

Perhaps someone who reads feels that they have 'blown it'. Prodigals! The Bible is full of them; prodigal sons, prodigal kings, prodigal wives, prodigal prophets, prodigal apostles. Men and women who started well; they began with such courage but somehow they find themselves in Haran, and the vision has dimmed. You were running well, who hindered you? Is it too late now? Not while we have a God who will speak the second time, and with such grace, adding to what He has already said. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him. So here he is, back on the flight path; a fresh start with even greater possibilities. My old Bible School principal used to say "can the bird with the broken wing ever fly as high again?" then he would pause, smile and say "no... higher!"

Re: Abraham, My Friend_07 - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/1/15 7:05

Quote:
-----What God has done once He can do again, and what He has done with one He can do with another. Why not you, why not now?

Yes Lord! Work in our life's just the same :-D

Travaile to be familiar and acquainted with thy God, be prayer and meditation, and walk with Him.
-Alexander Hume

Re: Abraham, My Friend_07 - posted by Clutch (), on: 2004/1/15 8:29

Hi Ron,
I am apt to read your postings more than once, because there is usually more there than I can absorb from one reading. However, this is the first time that I've sent a reply three times on the same thread. The Prince of the power of the air (cleverly disguised as Greg) has been erasing my replies to this posting. :-D

"So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him. So here he is, back on the flight path; a fresh start with even greater possibilities. My old Bible School principal used to say "can the bird with the broken wing ever fly as high again?" then he would pause, smile and say "no... higher!"

This is the part on my first read that ministered to me, and is EXACTLY what I needed for today. ;-)

You're right on time Bro.. 8-)

Clutch :-P

Re: Abraham, My friend""07 - posted by eagleswings (), on: 2004/1/15 20:07

"My old Bible School principal used to say "can the bird with the broken wing ever fly as high again?" then he would pause, smile and say "no... higher!"

In our training to master the elements, we learn one lesson amongst many. It is that here is Divine providence and love that intervenes when things have got beyond a certain point. The fact is that many times we thought that the end had come; that now, at length, we were going out or under. We saw nothing beyond and "despaired of life". But, equally, the fact is that we have not yet gone under, and are still going on. Resurrection has taken place many times. We do not know just how it is, but here we are, and that after many years in which not a few experiences of imminent disaster have been ours. Well, He spread His wings under us and bore us up again, and He "Who delivered us.... will deliver.... will also still deliver us."

T.Austin-Sparks

Re: Abraham, My Friend_07 - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/1/16 6:09

Quote:
----- When you have "blown it" do you ever feel "down in the mouth"? No-one was ever so "down in the mouth" as Jonah!

Love your sense of humor.:-D

And speaking of second chances, wasn't that the outcome of Jonah's 'obedience' in preaching to Nineveh, "So the people of Nineveh believed God"

"And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not." Jon 3:5, Jon 3:10

If my math is correct, this morning will be my Fourteen thousand, nine hundred and fifth, "second chance" :-o

The equation would be then:
Command + Obedience = Blessing!
Seems simple enough...

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/1/16 13:21

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Command + Obedience = Blessing!
Seems simple enough...

it is, it is

Acts 5:32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

mmm? that's an interesting verse in the light of some of the Calvin v Arminius threads. :-D