

The Decisions Of Abraham

Introduction. There have probably been a lot times when you have been driving your car that you have come to what we call a crossroad where two or more roads intersect. There are often crossroad experiences in our lives. We come to a point where we can go in two or more directions, and need to decide which way to go. Such crossroad experiences include decisions about our careers, marriage partners, financial matters, etc. Proverbs 12:15 says, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise."

A Bible character who found himself at the crossroads several times was Abraham. He did not always make the right choices, such as in the case of Pharaoh (Genesis 12:10-20), Ishmael (Genesis 16:1-16), and Abimelech (Genesis 20:1-18), but these four "crossroads," where Abraham made the right decision, revealed his true character.

I. ***God Or Godlessness***

- A. Growing up in a godly home is a wonderful blessing, and all of us who had that experience ought to be extremely grateful to God. However, Abraham did not grow up in what we would call a godly home (Genesis 11:27-32). His relatives were idol worshipers, and in all likelihood, he served idols (Joshua 24:2, 14-15).
- B. In Genesis 12:1-3, God called Abraham to follow Him, and promised him great blessings, including a land, a nation, and a seed which would save the world. This marked an entirely new period for Abraham. He was to be the ancestor of a new race in whom the divine promises were to be preserved, and through whom they would finally be realized.
- C. Abraham had to chose whether he would follow the true God, or would follow the godless idols of his ancestors. But when the divine command came, Abraham was not disobedient (Hebrews 11:8). Will you serve covetousness (Colossians 3:5; cf. Matthew 6:24)? Will you worship your career, children, girlfriend/boyfriend, physical appearance, recreation, etc.?

II. ***Faith Or Fret***

- A. In Genesis 14, for 12 years, the cities of the plain had paid tribute to Chedorlaomer. In the thirteenth year they rebelled. The next year, Chedorlaomer and his accomplices swept though the region of Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot and his family were taken captive. Abraham assembled 318 men, divided his forces, and fell upon them in the dead of night, inflicting a great slaughter and driving them to Damascus.

- B. In Genesis 15:1-3, Abraham was evidently worried about possible retaliation against him, and he was worried because he did not yet have a child. However, God told Abraham, "Fear not." He also took him out and showed him the stars and told him that his seed would be numbered like the stars. In vs. 6 Abraham "believed in the Lord."
- C. From this faith in the living God sprang all the obedience of Abraham. Like the rod of Aaron, his life budded and blossomed and bore fruit. Paul used this statement in Romans 4:1-8 and Galatians 3:6-9 to prove the great doctrine of justification by faith in Christ. When we fret, God still gives us a grand assurance (Jeremiah 15:20; Psalm 91:4; 2 Corinthians 12:9; 2 Timothy 4:17; Hebrews 13:5-6).

III. ***Petition Or Passiveness***

- A. In Genesis 18:17-21, God revealed to Abraham His plan for the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham could have been passive about the information, but chose to intercede on behalf of those in the cities (Genesis 18:22-33; cf. Matthew 24:22).
- B. Even though the petition of Abraham failed because ten righteous people could not be found, he still taught us the beauty and graciousness of intercession on behalf of others. Paul was an extraordinary example of the spirit of Abraham. He wrote many times of his prayers to God on behalf of his recipients (2 Corinthians 13:7-9; Ephesians 1:18-19; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9-12; Philemon 6).
- C. Our greatest intercessor, of course, was Jesus Christ (Hebrews 7:25). Because He always lives to make intercession for us, we ought to go to God on behalf of others (James 5:16). In fact, we are at our best when we go to God on behalf of others, even our enemies (Luke 6:27-28; 23:34; 1 Corinthians 4:12-13; 1 Peter 3:9). In addition, we should not be so full of pride that we neglect to ask others to pray for us (1 Thessalonians 5:25; 2 Thessalonians 3:1; Hebrews 13:18).

IV. ***Obedience Or Obstinance***

- A. In Genesis 22:1-19, God called on Abraham to sacrifice his only son. This was the last and greatest test that God gave to Abraham. All God's previous guidance had been gradually preparing and qualifying him for this test. It stands alone when compared to all others Abraham had to endure.
- B. Abraham surely brought every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ as he made his way up Mount Moriah (2 Corinthians 10:5; cf. Luke 14:26). But he did not doubt and was strong in faith, considering that God would be able to raise Isaac from the dead (Hebrews 11:17-19). Abraham had no assurance, just faith.

- C. Abraham could have balked and refused. Instead, he obeyed God, and was blessed for his obedience (Genesis 22:15-18). His faith was perfected by his works (James 2:21-24). It is also noteworthy to say that when Isaac did not resist his father and allowed himself to be bound and placed on that altar, he entered into the spirit of Abraham, took upon himself his faith, and showed himself worthy to be the heir of God's promises.
- D. As Abraham willfully offered his only beloved son, he and Isaac became glorious types of God offering His beloved Son (John 3:16). As Abraham received Isaac back from the dead in a figure, so we in reality, when God raised up Jesus from the dead, received the ability to reign together with Christ (2 Timothy 2:11-13; Revelation 5:10; 20:6).

Conclusion. The greatest battles are usually fought internally, in quickly moving moments. Abraham's decisions revealed a heart that was full of faith, devotion, and compassion. His exceptional character was revealed by the unquestionably difficult judgments which he had to make. Truly Abraham is the "father of us all" (Romans 4:16). Steve Jobs, in a commencement address a few years ago, said, "Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything -- all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure -- these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important."