

Genesis 12

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon emphasizes the importance of separation from the world, faith and obedience, and worship in heaven, as exemplified in the life of Abraham.

Scripture: Genesis 12:1

Topics: "Faith and Obedience", "Separation from the World"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the significance of God's call to Abraham in Genesis 12, marking the separation of the faithful from worldly ties and idolatry. He illustrates how God identifies with individuals, highlighting Abraham's journey of faith and the necessity of obedience to God's word. The sermon discusses the principles of divine calling, the importance of breaking ties with the past, and the believer's position in heavenly places despite the presence of evil. Darby also draws parallels between Abraham's experience and the Christian's call to worship and communion with God, emphasizing that true worship arises from a revelation of God and a response of faith. Ultimately, he encourages believers to recognize their identity in Christ and to worship in the heavenly realm.

Transcript

(Extracted from Simple Testimony Vol. 3, 1851, page 142.)

This chapter occupies a place of great importance, being the first public call by which the saints are separated from the world. Genesis brings out the great principles of God's actings with those taught of the Spirit to know His mind: the God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob - not as the God of the whole world, though this is true, but specially of individuals. God is not ashamed to identify himself with them: God is not ashamed to be called our God, because we are not of earthly but heavenly calling. A time is coming when He will be God of the whole earth, when Satan is bound; till then, God of those called out to Himself. Abraham, the depository of promise - Isaac, in resurrection - Jacob, election of God and type of Israel's history, cast out, brought back again. Thus God gives the principles of His dealing with men (single individuals were called before).

In Noah another principle is brought out - government for the restraint of evil - the whole order of earth formed by families. After this corruption comes in - man is set in responsibility and he fails. Up to this, the history of the world - the violence of men in Nimrod, and the rebellion of men in the confederacy of Babel. Another evil came in - Satan set himself up as head of power - Gentiles worship him - "the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to devils, and not unto God." 1 Cor. 10:20. Then came this delusion -

ascribing those things which God did to Satan, and setting Satan in God's place (Joshua 24:2, 3.) "they served other gods." Hence we see an important principle - false gods - the introduction of Satan as it were, in heavenly places, and worshipped as God. God's people must be called away from this - "they served other gods." Joshua 24:2, 3. In the midst of this, God calls Abraham out.

In this chapter there is a division - what Abraham was, blest in connection with God, and what in failure as to his own thoughts. In the first part two things - God calls to Abraham to come into the land; and the worship of Abraham when in the land. "The Lord had said, Get thee out, &c." This calls for separation from all God's natural order of things. God did not say, leave worshipping Satan, but leave thy kindred - the Jewish system, God's natural order - "when Jesus putteth forth His own sheep He goeth before them." God's ties before were by natural order, by family blessings and inheritances. Out of all this (not only the evil) Abraham is called he breaks the link of idolatry. Not correct your ways in the land where you are, but "get you out of the land, and go into a land that I will shew you." The law was given to Israel in the place where God was to keep them, as a rule for them in that place where they were. Grace brought them out of Egypt - the law was to guide them where they were afterwards..

Moses pitched the tabernacle without the camp, and every one who sought the Lord went out. So there is nothing for us now but the word of God to rest upon. What God calls us to is to believe on His word - by the word of God all things subsist - by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water, overflowed, perished. The word of God is a necessary authority to the believing soul - as under the responsibility of the obedience of faith. The ground of the conduct of faith - "God had said." Abraham could not get into the land of Canaan, because Terah was with him. He went with Terah to go to Canaan, but not in faith, and therefore did not get there, nor yet get the blessing, for they came to Haran and dwelt there. Now Haran was not Canaan. Nature cannot break from nature, but faith can. Here we find natural order - all within the limits of flesh - and therefore no faith in it at all, not faith in the word of God. Nothing can set aside the immediate and personal responsibility of obedience to God's word - nothing between the soul and God but His word. The error of the church in all ages springs from putting something between these. All instrumentality is to bring the soul to God. This is a simple principle God will never give up - the immediate claim of obedience to His word.

Nothing in nature according to purpose - God says " I create," and "I destroy;" but God never says "I purpose," and "I set aside" - the purpose of God can't alter - His calling is without repentance. He calls man out of that which was corrupt through Satan. There are two parts in blessing - first to be recipients of blessing, second, to be the instruments of blessing others - "in thee" - the occasion of blessing - the divine joy of bringing into blessing. Luke 15:9-25. Abraham could not come into the land while one link of natural ties remained unbroken. God had called Abraham out by His word, therefore he had nothing but the word to trust to, which told him he could not have blessing but out of flesh. "Get out of thy country and thy kindred," so Abraham departed as the Lord had spoken. Gen. 12:4. "Salvation is of the Jews" - the moment the Shepherd came - "I am the door" - the sheep must go out at it, recognizing the voice of Christ - "my sheep hear my voice." Abraham got to Haran with his father, then had to begin again when done with his father "unto the land of Canaan he came." v. 5.

The second part of the position of Abraham - now called - our position now in heavenly places while Satan is yet there. Eph. 6:12. So it is with Abraham called to Canaan while the Canaanite is yet in the land. Gen. 12:6. Abraham here presents to us our actual position - the position of faith - to be in conflict with the wicked spirits in heavenly places - our bodies not yet in Canaan, but in spirit we are there. Faith acts upon the word - receiving the testimony, finds it is in heavenly places - not of the world, as Christ was not of the

world - only in heaven, so we in heaven. We walk by faith, and not by sight - not earthly but heavenly things. v. 7. "The Lord appeared unto Abraham" - here all true worship begins, the Lord revealing Himself. Faith taking God at His Word, and acting on it. Faith finds itself in heaven with Christ. So the manifestation to Abraham was the source of worship - "he builded an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him." So we, seeing the glory - worship in heaven - the heavenly Canaan. Worship supposes a man to be at peace - that goes on properly in heaven, where Jesus is, because we worship in Him.

This is unfolded at large in Ephesians. In that epistle it is not grace to the world, but manifesting to principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God. The prodigal son came to his father - he fell on his neck and kissed him. This was not worship, but when in the house then the music and the dancing - that is worship - communion with the father in the house. We are called as knowing ourselves put into the father's house in heaven, and then, being there, He reveals Himself to us there. A very different thing to be on the way to God, and being in spirit there, and having the full revelation of God to our souls, brought to God in spirit, at home there, and what accompanies this is the perpetuity of the blessing, "eternal redemption for us." Then we can worship. The same love when the father fell on his neck and kissed him, as when He had him in the house - but a different thing - the music and the dancing - the adoration and the praise - when God is appearing in His own house to those He has brought there. We should be at home with God now, rejoicing in what the Father is at home in His own house, and not be occupied with what is passing in our own hearts.

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