

Jan. 7, 2016

- Genesis 12-13– Abraham and Lot.
- Matthew 10 – The Twelve Disciples and Christ’s promises of suffering.
- Ecclesiastes 3:1-8– There is a time for everything.

Reflections:

Genesis 12-13. Chapter 12 begins with God’s command for Abraham to leave his family and country for a new country, which is part of God’s eternal plan. The fact that God should take priority over one’s family and country is also found in the next reading below, Matthew 10. The Abrahamic covenant gives us the principle that those who bless Israel will be blessed and those who curse Israel will be cursed—this applies to all dispensations through the Millennium. One can see the application of this principle on a personal basis with Pharaoh. However, the question is often asked, “Why did God let Abraham prosper by lying?” given that God commands us not to lie (Ex. 20:16). It should be noted that Abraham’s increase in wealth should not be viewed as a divine reward for his lie. It appears that Pharaoh felt like he had to make amends to Abraham for unwittingly taking his wife into his palace. Adultery was strictly forbidden by the Egyptian religion. What is more is that Abraham paid for his lack of integrity with years of trouble before he became mature and respected God enough to exercise unquestionable faith in Him as illustrated with the offering up of his son. The bottom line is that God blessed him in spite of, not because of, his sins. There is one other issue I would like to touch on from verses 1 and 7 in chapter 12, where God speaks and appears to Abraham. It is often taught in Bible and doctrinal movements that we know so much more about God than Old Testament believers. The implication is that we are closer to God because of this greater content. It is true that we have more information, we have fuller written revelation than Abraham. We know more about Jesus Christ than Abraham ever did. However, there is a sense in which Abraham, the friend of God, had a greater personal knowledge due to the fact that God spoke with Abraham and he actually saw a representation of God. As I mentioned in last night’s Bible class, there are ways in which knowledge or faith was more qualitative in the likes of Abraham whereas we have fuller content. Content, or amount of Bible doctrine, tells us a lot more about the Lord. However, in itself is not qualitatively as powerful as if God showed up at our houses and appeared and spoke to us—which would resonate more? Moreover, unless doctrine is learned and applied in a second person relationship, analogous to Abraham’s 2nd person visible relationship, knowledge/doctrine misses the whole point and collapses into a form of doctrinal legalism. In sum, if God appeared to you and spoke to you it would be more real and powerful. However, without content you could have false views of Him. We need both the 2nd person relationship as well as the content of doctrine. While God does not appear to us visibly, He does offer us a 2nd person fellowship with Him (which should never be confused with the 1 Jn 1:9 conduit fellowship model).

Matthew 10. Take a good look at all of the persecutions that the Lord promised His followers. The issue in life should never be on our comfort over the Lord's wishes. The issue is following the Lord regardless of the costs. This is the essence of 'not leaning on your own understanding.' Trust His ways! The Lord is very honest with His followers. What a rebuke for the prosperity movement and to some extent many doctrinal and Bible churches, which are very man- and problem-centered, which just creates giant nurseries dedicated to the selfishness of believers who are always looking for some new gimmick, program, or system in the self-centered life—all the while blind to the true nature of God and the spiritual life as per classical theism.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. As the passage teaches, there really is a time for everything. I often bemoan all of the false views of God, creation, and the spiritual life that I learned and taught for decades of seasons. I really wish I could go back about 30 years and start fresh with an understanding of the Realism in the Bible and the classical view of God. I so wish I could have those 30 years back to focus on the real God of classical theism instead of the neo-theistic God and conduit Christianity. But I can't go back. However, I am well aware that God is always here to take bad decisions of the past and actually turn them into a greater blessing. Only God can do that. In sum, there is a season for everything, but through each season every believer should be advancing in the Total Truth. If he does, God will lead Him to the God of Realism, the 'Ehyeh of Exodus 3:14. What a comfort to know that no matter where we are, God is there to guide us on our various paths to His Path to Him and to the Whole Truth. As a church family, we have been through seasons of great love and have suffered enormous losses, but through it all we continue to advance in the Whole Truth to move closer to the Whole God and Real Christianity and our destiny in Christ. Regardless of what season you are in, God's plan for you is Truth, Truth, Truth as such regardless of the cost! As a pastor I am blessed to have so many believers in our church family who really are interested in the God of the Bible. Thanks!