

Opposing God

Introduction

1. In our lesson this morning we will look at the lives of some good men who opposed God and draw some lessons regarding these men.
2. Let us understand that while we may oppose God, that God is willing to work with us to bring us around to His point of view.

Genesis 18:16-23

3. In this passage of scripture God came to Abraham for a visit.
 - A. In the course of this visit, God told Abraham about Sodom and Gomorrah's destruction.
 - B. Abraham didn't like this news and set about to change God's mind.
4. How often do we want to "change God's mind?"
 - A. Is it easy for us to rationalize God out of our decisions?
 - B. Is it easy for us to make excuses when God wants us to act otherwise?
 - C. Is it easy for us to make exceptions to God's will when we want it?
5. The scriptures tell us about some good people who were opposed to God's will.
6. Let's study about them this morning.

Abraham

Genesis 18:23-33

1. **God's plan was to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah.**
2. **Abraham didn't want God to act unjustly and destroy the righteous with the wicked.**
3. **So he negotiated with God for the safety of the cities.**
4. **For the sake of the righteous, Abraham opposed what God was going to do.**
 - A. **Abraham didn't want the cities destroyed because Lot was there.**
 - B. **Abraham wanted God to be just. But God in fact IS just.**

Isaiah 45:21 Tell and bring forth your case; Yes, let them take counsel together. Who has declared this from ancient time? Who has told it from that time? Have not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, A just God and a Savior; There is none besides Me.

- C. **God heard Abraham's pleas even though the course was set.**
 - 1) **As much as Abraham protested, it was futile.**
 - 2) **There were not even 10 righteous people in the city.**
 - 3) **God's purposes were to be done.**
- D. **God knew that Lot was there – and that he was righteous.**
2 Peter 2:7
5. **God delivered Lot AND He accomplished what He purposed to do.**

Moses

Exodus 3:1-4:17

1. God's plan was to save Israel out of Egyptian captivity and Moses was the chosen leader.
 - A. Moses didn't think that he could do it.
 - B. He offered excuses as to why he couldn't.
2. Moses opposed God's selection of him being the leader for this task.
 - A. In Exodus 3:11 Moses wondered, "Who am I to do this?"
 - B. In Exodus 3:13 Moses asked, "What shall I tell them?"
 - C. In Exodus 4:1 Moses said, "They won't believe me."
 - D. In Exodus 4:10 Moses said, "I'm not a good speaker."
3. But God answered Moses' objections.
 - A. God told Moses that he wouldn't be alone but that He would be with him (Exodus 3:12).
 - B. God told Moses to tell them that "I AM" had sent him (Exodus 3:14).
 - C. God gave Moses the ability to do miracles so that the people would believe the message (Exodus 4:5).
 - D. God told Moses that He would be his mouth and then told him to take Aaron as he was a good speaker (Exodus 4:12, 14ff).

4. **God knew all these things about Moses.**
 - A. **God's purpose was going to be done despite Moses' objections.**
 - B. **Ultimately, Moses obeyed the voice of the Lord and did as God commanded.**

"Nothing will ever be attempted if all possible objections must be first overcome" (Samuel Johnson).

Zacharias

Luke 1:5-25; 57-80

1. **God's plan was for Zacharias and Elizabeth to have John so he could prepare the way for Jesus.**
2. **God revealed this to Zacharias through the angel Gabriel.**
 - A. **But Zacharias did not believe the message (Luke 1:20).**
 - B. **God proved the truthfulness of the message.**
 - 1) **Zacharias was stricken so as to not being able to speak.**
 - 2) **Then Elizabeth conceived.**
3. **God brought John into the world.**
 - A. **Upon John's birth the family asked Zacharias his name.**
 - B. **He said it would be John.**
 - C. **At this point his tongue was loosed and he prophesied.**

- 4. God knew Zacharias' doubts.**
 - A. God worked to convince Zacharias of the truth of His word.**
 - B. God overcame Zacharias' doubts.**
 - C. Zacharias glorified God and raised John to be God's prophet.**

Saul of Tarsus

Acts 9

- 1. God's plan was for the church to grow.**
- 2. Saul was opposed to God's plan.**
 - A. Saul persecuted the church.**
 - B. Saul thought he was doing God's work.**
 - 1) Jesus prophesied that some would kill his disciples thinking they were offering service to God.**

John 16:2 They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service.

- 2) In Acts 23:1 Saul said he had lived in all good conscience.**
- 3) Saul said he was a "Hebrew of Hebrews" (Phil 3:5).**

- 3. God proved to Saul that he was not doing His will.**
 - A. Jesus spoke to Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:5).**
 - B. He said it was hard for him to kick against the goads – meaning, to oppose God!**
 - C. Jesus told Saul to go into the city and it would be told to him what he must do.**

- 4. God knew Saul's heart.**
 - A. God was able to take Saul and make him into a great preacher of truth.**
 - B. He became the apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13).**

Conclusion

- 1. Even the best of characters in the Bible had flaws and opposed God at some point (Romans 3:23).**
 - A. Others that did so were David, Peter, Thomas, etc.**

- 2. In the hearts of good men, God's ways will ultimately be respected.**
 - A. It is the characteristic of a good person that regardless of what he has done in the past, he will strive to do God's will in the future.**

Philippians 3:13-14 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

3. Man's lack of trust in God doesn't change God's will.**A. How many thousands didn't believe Noah?****1) Yet did that stop the flood?****4. God's purposes are always fulfilled despite any opposition.**

1 Timothy 1:12-13 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I **was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man**; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

5. Man is not wiser than God though sometimes he thinks he is.

1 Corinthians 1:25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

6. God knows how to save the righteous and punish the wicked despite our concerns.

2 Peter 2:9 then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,

7. God knows the heart of those with whom He works.

1 Samuel 16:7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

8. We can take comfort in knowing that God will help us as he helped these who opposed him.

Romans 8:28

A. Strive to know and to do God's will in our life!

