

Genesis 13:1-18 (Put your finger there & turn to 1st Peter)

“Abram Changes... A Lot”

We’re coming back into the context of Abram’s excursion to Egypt. He’d come to Canaan as God had commanded; he’d pitched a tent & built an altar. His life was one of *separation from the world & consecration to the Lord*. He was a man of *witness & of worship*. He was hearing *from* the Lord, walking in obedience *to* the Lord, then dry times hit. Question, what do you do when dry times hit?

There you are, you’re walking *w/the Lord*, you’re a worshiper *of the Lord*, you’re hearing *from* the Lord, then it’s like a spiritual famine enters the equation of your life... What do you do? Do you wait *on* the Lord, cry out *to* the Lord, trust in the promises *of the Lord*? Or do you take matters into your own hands & seek to change the situation, change the circumstances in order that life might become little easier on you? Abe (the father of faith) opted for the latter.

So we read in the 10th Vs of the 12th Ch that because there was a famine in the land of Canaan, Abe elected to go *down* to Egypt... Last week I made mention to you of the fact that “Egypt” in the scriptures isn’t simply a matter of location geographically, but that spiritually & metaphorically “Egypt” is a type of the world. Of course all that is in the world (1John 2:16) the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh & the pride of life being typified *thereby*. Therefore when we read of someone going to Egypt, than like Abram we read of them “going down” because anytime you depart from the place of walking *w/the Lord* &/or being a worshiper *of the Lord* to walk in the ways or direction of this world you’re going *down*. It’s not a *progression* in your walk *w/Christ*, it’s a *regression* in your walk *w/Christ*. It’s choosing the prodigal path.

But here’s what I hinted at, but didn’t really rest on, for the sake of time last week. It was one thing for Abram to take a journey *out of God’s will & into* the world, but it was another thing altogether for him to take his wife & everyone he knew along *w/him*. We said it like this; a husband out of the will of God can bring untold troubles into the lives of his wife & family (& even his friends).

His lack of spiritual leadership created a major spiritual crisis for his wife because she would have *lie* in order to submit to him. He tells Sarai, “Look, you’re beautiful, therefore when they see you they will kill me & take you. Therefore, please say you’re my sister that it may be well *w/me* for your sake, & that I may live because of you.” Wait, what!? Yet, evidently that’s exactly what she did & the NT holds her up as a model wife...

You're in 1st Peter, turn to Ch 3 & look at Vs 1 (Vs 1-6).

Now she doesn't become the model of a godly wife because she called him "lord" though I'm sure your husband would dig that 😊. But she becomes a model (in the midst of other things) of the incorruptible beauty of a gentle & quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of the Lord... In other words she didn't say, "Abe, you're an idiot & I'm not about to be taken by an Egyptian in order to save your skin!" But rather she submitted to him, even in his stupidity & God honored her integrity. She *knew* he was acting foolishly, yet she trusted that God would preserve her despite his irrationality so she followed his lead. She wasn't afraid, but she trusted the Lord regardless of her husband's reckless behavior.

"Jeff, are you saying we should sin in order to submit to our husbands?" I don't recommend anyone to willfully, knowingly sin, we're to submit to God 1st. Having said that here's what I'm saying. If your heart in submitting to your husband is to honor God, than God is well able to honor you.

God *took care* of Sarai, & *taught a lesson* to Abram. Now he didn't teach Abram through the words of his wife (in this case), but through the Pharaoh's rebuke. That's not to say that you can't (or shouldn't) seek to reason w/or speak wisdom to your husband, but it *is* to say that God is well able to teach *him* as you honor *Him* (that is, the Lord).

The Lord began to plague Pharaoh & his house so that he didn't lay a hand on Sarai & Pharaoh called to Abram rebuked him & booted him out of Egypt. Look at Vs 20 of Ch 12.

Rebuked by the world, beat down by sorrow (probably filled w/shame), Abe heads *back up* the Bethel. Listen, it's a shameful thing to allow circumstances to take us the way of the world. Yet even there God can bring us low, so as to bring us *back up* to that place of walking w/Him once again. If you've been leading your life in a worldly way as of late & in your heart you're ashamed & filled w/sorrow over that; that's good news. How so?

Paul the apostle (in speaking to the Corinthians) put it this way, "Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death."¹ You see, the sorrow of the world (condemnation) will lead me away from God (producing death), but godly sorrow (conviction) will produce repentance, a turning away from my sin & a return to *intimacy w/God*. Notice.

¹ The New King James Version. (1982). [2 Co 7:9-10]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Vs 1-4

You might say that Abram went “#b2tb” back to the beginning. There are a number of things we might glean here. #1 we want to take note of the fact that even as when Abram went *to* Egypt he went *down*, even so as he returns to the land of promise *from* Egypt he’s headed back *up*. In returning from worldly ways that he might walk again by faith he’s headed in the right direction.

He’s going back to the place (Vs 3) where his tent had been *at the beginning*. You might say that having repented he’s starting over; it’s a new beginning for Abram. What is the Christian life, (the life of faith) if not a series of new beginnings. I’m so grateful that we serve a God who’s gracious & full of compassion, whose mercies are new every morning. A God who has told us, *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*²

Hey, we don’t want to down play the seriousness of Abram’s sin; but we do want to *magnify* the greatness of God’s forgiveness, His grace, His willingness (& even want) to reconcile us to Himself.

Someone might look at Abram’s excursion to Egypt & say, “It wasn’t that bad was it? He avoided the famine, God protected his wife & he returned wealthier than when he left.” He may be wealthier *materially*, but it cost him *greatly*. Abram’s unbelief in God’s ability to provide for him too him from his place of worship; it led him into sin & caused him to lead others (friends & family) into sin. It gave him greater confidence in his ability to scheme & to lie than in God’s ability to protect & provide. It even broke apart his marriage for awhile & ultimately he was rightly rebuked by an ungodly king!

You see, what’s your priority? The world can prosper you materially, but the price might be your testimony, your marriage, your integrity & a forsaking of intimacy w/God...

Then, when you finally wake up to the fact that you’re in the pig pen eating the slop of the world rather than feasting w/your heavenly Father (Luke 15:11-32) & you return to that place of intimacy, (though there’s joy & great feasting at your return) you’re essentially going right back to the beginning. Right back where you started, all that time spent in Egypt, spent in the world was just wasted time that brought nothing of eternal value whatsoever & you’re at a place of beginning again.

What’s the lesson? There’s multiple lesson’s aren’t there?

² The New King James Version. (1982). (1 Jn 1:9). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

I think the primary thing to realize is that it's best to simply trust in the Lord w/all your heart, & lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him & He'll lead your life. Better to trust God in times of famine rather than forsake Him when the "heat is on" & dry times hit. God is w/you, He will never leave nor forsake you & as you seek 1st the kingdom of God & His righteousness, He will meet your needs.

The next lesson is this: You wish that's what you'd have done, but what you did was what Abram did. You forsook following the Lord & went the way of the world, now what? Come back, you may be starting over, you're sorry, you're ashamed, that's great, let's begin again. That's God's heart for you.

Perhaps you may recall, that was actually the Lord's instructions to the church at Ephesus there in Rev 2. Now they hadn't forsaken the Lord outwardly, but inwardly they had checked out. Religion, not pursuing a relationship w/God. Their services were happening, the best bulletins, video announcements, things to do for every age group & demographic. But it was all motion w/out emotion, they weren't serving the Lord from the heart. Do you remember what Jesus said? He said, *"Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works,"*³ Translation? Go back to the beginning, remember from where you have fallen, repent & repeat the 1st works. When you were in church every time the doors were open, when you were at every women's study or every men's group. When, if there was a function you were serving. Go back to that place of worship & communion w/the Lord. Whatever it was that you were doing when you were so fresh on fire for J.C. ... do it again.

Having said all that I want to say this as well. Abram went back to the beginning & he gives to us a great example. Because rather than wallow in his past sin, rather than torture himself over his previous failures, he got busy doing what he needed to do: living once again as a sojourner (not attached to this world) & he came to the altar as a worshiper of the Living God. Paul said that like this, *"...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."*⁴

Abram (see it there in Vs 4) "called on the name of the Lord." What does the bible say? *"For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For 'whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'"*⁵

³ The New King James Version. (1982). (Re 2:5). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ The New King James Version. (1982). (Php 3:13-14). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁵ The New King James Version. (1982). (Ro 10:12-13). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

& Again, *"The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth."*⁶

Vs 5-7

Now again this strife would've been avoided, could've been avoided had Abram complied completely in the beginning when God called him out, away from his family, to leave his old life behind & begin to walk by faith. He didn't do that & it's still causing conflict.

Having said *that*, we need to see *this*. This conflict came about *after* Abrams rededication & fresh *consecration* to the Lord. You & I should learn to anticipate *conflict* after times of *consecration*. When you resolve in your heart to get right w/God, the enemy of your soul (the devil) will have a problem w/that. How many of you have come to realize that? It's seems that there's always *retaliation* after times of *revelation*.

Perhaps you recall the situation; there they were, Peter, James & John up on the Mt w/Jesus & we read that He was transfigured before them so that His face shone like the sun & His clothing was as white as the light, Moses appeared, Elijah appeared, the Father made it real clear that Christ was over them, that they were merely pointing to Him...(talk about receiving incredible illumination & revelation of Christ; that's as glorious as it gets this side of heaven☺). *Yet when they came down from the mountain, all jazzed & jacked up on a spiritual high do you recall what was awaiting them? A man w/his demon possessed son, the enemy was awaiting, retaliation after revelation. Of course Jesus made quick work of him, but the point remains... conflict on the heels of consecration, revelation (a renewing if you will).*

Perhaps you've experienced something similar. You've had a MT top type experience, a fresh sense of consecration *to* the Lord, revelation *of* the Lord only to discover conflict/retaliation on the heels of it.

The enemy wants to take the wind out of your sails, get you to think it's just easier to live a life of apathy, or be content w/spiritual lethargy rather than serve God whole heartedly. *"Man every time I come to the altar, every time I return to my 1st love from my prodigal path it's like bombs dropping on my life, why risk it, it's not worth it."* That's the mentality that your enemy wants you to take. God wants you to take confidence in His word, to walk by faith realizing greater is He who is in you, than he that is of this world.

That when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him (Is 59:19-20). That He will save those who return to Him, don't give the enemy's ability to destroy you more credit than God's ability to protect/save you. Eph 6 informs you that you've been given the armor of God, we're more than conquerors through Him who loved us... *Believe it, walk in it & God will be glorified in your life because of it.*

Something else that the text is careful to point out is that the Canaanites & the Perizzites were in the land. They were witness to the strife that was taking place between these 2 companies of believers. It was affecting the fellowship of the herdsmen & was ruining their witness to the on-looking unbelievers around them.

This is why the bible says, *"Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time."*⁷ Be aware of the fact that the way you interact w/one another &/or talk about one another as the body of Christ will have a significant impact on the unbelievers around you. One has said, "Many people will never listen to what *any* believer says because of what *some* believers are." (Barnhouse)

Conflict & strife is readily available in the world, we don't need it in the body of Christ & we certainly don't need it spoiling our witness to the on looking unbeliever. Jesus said, *"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*⁸ *Not, how we quarrel/contend & fight w/one another. The "Canaanite & Perizzites" are still in the land (that is around our lives), I pray that the see that we love one another, not that we fight w/each other & speak ill of one another.*

Vs 8-9

To be fair, we've pointed out a lot of failures in Abram's faith so far. This isn't one of them, he's exceling in his example of faith at this point. He's saying, "Look, I trust in the Lord, if you want the left, than I trust God will provide for me to the right. If you want the right, I trust God will provide for me to the left." This is an OT picture of the NT principle that Paul develops for in the book of Rom Ch 12, *"Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;"*⁹

Abram didn't need to give Lot 1st pick on 2 counts. 1st of all God promised all the land to *him*. It was his, this was pure humility & generosity for him to offer *any* of it to Lot, not to mention the 1st pick.

⁷ The New King James Version. (1982). (Col 4:5). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁸ The New King James Version. (1982). (Jn 13:35). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁹ The New King James Version. (1982). (Ro 12:10). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

2^{ndly} Abe was the elder, Lot should've defaulted on that privilege & threw the ball back in Abram's court on that count alone.

But I remind you that Abe had been to the Altar, Lot had not. Lot is never seen at an altar even once. Oh he had tents (Vs 5) he was saved, separated from the world, but not consecrated to the Lord. He's what we'd refer to as a "carnal" Christian. Saved, but still subjected to the desires/drives of his flesh. Abram's devotion redirected his desires, Lot's lack of devotion left him ruled by worldly desires resulting in wrong decisions (we'll see that play out more clearly in future studies).

It's so important that you develop personal (& public i.e. church) times of worship, dedication, consecration to the Lord (a devotional life, times of worship between you & the Lord). It will help you maintain an eternal perspective rather than be gripped by the passing pleasures of this world.

Abram is exceling here, he's not stirring the pot of his personal rights, he's opting to be a peacemaker rather than a peace breaker. He's not taking his fate into his own hands but he's showing wisdom in being willing to let God look out for his interests. Right or left, doesn't matter, God's going to take care of me.

Vs 10-13

We'll note a downward progression in Lot's life as the narrative continues in the coming weeks. Lot goes from lifting up his eyes *toward* Sodom, to pitching his tent as far *as* Sodom, to eventually living *in* Sodom (that place that was exceedingly wicked & sinful against the Lord).

It seems as though he's deceived himself into thinking that he can give way to his worldly desire w/out the danger of defilement. But don't be deceived, evil company corrupts good habits (1 Cor 15:33), & none of us are an exception to that rule.

Lot is being overtaken by covetousness. He's making his decision based solely upon material gain, the insatiable appetite for more, he's not considering uncle Abram, only himself. & Did you see his motivating factor? It wasn't "How will this impact my family? Will this in anyway compromise me spiritually?" It was, "Man, it looks just like Egypt down there! ..." It's as though Abram took Lot out of Egypt, but couldn't take Egypt out of Lot. It would *ultimately* be the ruin of his *family*. So as to where Abe was walking by faith (right, left, I trust the Lord), Lot was walking by sight. Be careful when you're making decisions based upon the passing pleasures of this world as opposed to word of God for your life.

Lot may've left Ur, but he embedded himself in Sodom... How many people say "yes" to heaven, but they never say "no" to the world? & Like Lot they end up w/their lives & all that they counted of value in ruins, completely destroyed.

It wasn't that he made a bad choice & therefore his heart went astray, it was that his heart had gone astray (longing for the things of Egypt) therefore he made a wrong choice.

It always come back to the heart, doesn't it?

Vs 14-16

Notice as soon as Abe was separated from Lot, the Lord spoke to him again. Lot lifted up his eyes & seen what the world had to offer; now God invites Abram to lift up his eyes & see what heaven had to offer. Lot said, "I'll take", God said, "I'll give..." & Even though Abram had generously offered land to Lot, God says, "It's yours... I give it *to you*."

& As to where Lot was living for what was possible, Abram would trust God for the *impossible*, descendants innumerable, though currently (even at 75 or older) he had no children of his own. God is just continuing to confirm his word to Abram (& God will do that, if He's spoken to you, He will confirm His word to you.)

Vs 17-18

From, "lift up your eyes & look", to "lift up your feet & walk". He's encouraged to lay hold of God's promise by faith, enjoy his inheritance, and explore his heritage.

Even so God has given you promises in His word, explore them, enjoy them, lay hold of them by faith.

It's interesting that "Mamre" means "fatness" & "Hebron" means "communion". Lot would enjoy the passing pleasures of this world, but Abram would enjoy the "fatness" or "richness" of "communion" w/God. "He built an altar there to the Lord." Abram changed "a Lot" in this season of his life, & God honored it. He lifted up his eyes to heaven, lifted up his feet walking in the promise of God by faith & lifted up his heart in worship once again at the altar. Separated from the world, consecrated to the Lord.

Maybe there's a "Lot" that needs to change in your life today. Separate yourself from the world, consecrate yourself to the Lord & God will honor you & bless your life as well. Amen? Amen.

Prayer Points:

God, how we want a "Lot" in our lives to change. Whatever it may be that's holding us back from complete compliance, that which may represent compromise in our lives, may we separate ourselves from that today. Reveal Yourself to us in a tangible, personal, powerful way, teach us to lead lives of holiness, laying hold of your promises by faith, that we might glorify You in our lives.

It's hard to glorify God in your life in God's not in your life. Perhaps today as we've been going through God's word He's been speaking to your heart about a need for change. [A separation from the world, turning from your sin, giving your life to Him. Jesus went to the cross for your sin, shed his blood, died & rose again 3 days later so that by faith in Him you could be forgiven & made right in the sight of God.](#) For whoever calls upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved. Don't wait another day, surrender your life to Christ right here, right now.