

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Let's pray...

In last week's study, we left off with Abram getting in big trouble while down in Egypt.

If you remember, he decided to go down to Egypt to escape a famine in the land despite God never telling him to go there.

Abram then continues in his missteps as he asked Sarai to lie about being his wife and to tell the Egyptians that she was his sister in order to protect his own life.

Abram takes upon himself to use deception to protect himself instead of trusting God and His promises.

We are then told that God brought a plague among the household of Pharaoh and Abram's deception was revealed and Abram and Sarai are asked to leave Egypt by Pharaoh.

This is where where our study picks up this week.

[Gen 13:1-4 NKJV] 1 Then Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, to the South. 2 Abram [was] very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. 3 And he went on his journey from the South as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, 4 to the place of the altar which he had made there at first. And there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

There is **no** record of Abram pitching a tent or building an altar while in Egypt.

However, here at the start of chapter 13, we see Abram return to the place where he had pitched his tent already, we see him return to the altar once more.

Abram returned to the Promised Land, to Bethel and, significantly, to the place where he had built the altar back in the chapter 12.

Church, this is a wonderful picture of the believer who wanders from the will of God.

When we find ourselves in Egypt – in the world, when we come to the understanding that the decisions that we have made are not the right ones, there is only one place to go and that is back to Bethel.

Listen to the words of our Lord to the church of Ephesus in the book of Revelation.

[Rev 2:5 NKJV] 5 “Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.

Maybe there was a time in our lives in which we were reading the word of God faithfully, maybe there was a time in our lives where we used to share the gospel more faithfully with our loved ones or our coworkers.

If we find ourselves in a period where we are not growing spiritually, maybe it is time where we repent and return to what we were doing when we were growing spiritually. This is Bethel for us.

This is what Abram has just done as he has returned to Bethel.

Look at verse 2, it says Genesis 13:2 **Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold.**

Wait just a minute. You mean that Abram avoided the famine and came out of Egypt far wealthier than before? Yep.

Listen, when we are in Egypt – when we are in the world doing our own thing, there may be times when it appears that we are prospering and we can even begin to think that it is God prospering us because somehow, we are so resourceful.

Examples of compromise

Maybe we fail to claim income in our taxes in order to get a bigger tax return.

Maybe we decide to lie on an application in order to get a position we don't deserve or benefits that we don't deserve.

The question we must ask ourselves is...at what cost are we prospering?

Abram did get wealthier in Egypt – at what cost though...

You see,

Abram lost his testimony in Egypt, Abram lost his integrity in Egypt, and he almost lost his wife in Egypt.

Always remember that “Livestock, silver, and gold” are no substitute for the testimony of a godly man who leads his family in the ways of the Lord.

We must always remember that when we sin, God’s grace abounds, but we should never conclude that we ought to sin so that it will.

We cannot cheapen grace.

Notice that when Abram reaches Bethel it says that he came to the place where the altar stood.

It’s possible it was no longer standing.

- Maybe it fell by itself from disrepair
- Maybe it had been destroyed by the Canaanites
- Maybe it was demolished by Abram himself before he left for Egypt

It is important to note that we don’t build altars anymore.

Instead we are described as living sacrifices to the Lord.

Our lives - every aspect of them - are to be dedicated to worshipping and serving Him.

We can still suffer from disrepair, destruction, and demolition.

- Living sacrifices fall into disrepair when we withhold those things God is asking from us
- Living sacrifices can be destroyed, in a sense, by too much compromise with the world
- Living sacrifices can be demolished by our own decisions, discouragements, and depressions

I believe Abram stood there where his altar had once stood reflecting upon his excursion into Egypt.

He realized he ought to have remained in the land –

He realized that the famine was a simple test of faith.

And let us not forget that we too will have many tests in our lives that will test our faith in Him.

We could run to Egypt, if you remember, Egypt is a type of the world, or we remain at the altar and rely on the word of God and trust the promises that He makes to us.

[Gen 13:5-13 NKJV] 5 Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents. 6 Now the land was not able to support them, that

they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together. 7 And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land. 8 So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we [are] brethren. 9 "[Is] not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If [you take] the left, then I will go to the right; or, if [you go] to the right, then I will go to the left." 10 And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it [was] well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. 11 Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other. 12 Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched [his] tent even as far as Sodom. 13 But the men of Sodom [were] exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD.

As I mentioned last week, one of the consequences of going to Egypt is that now Abram and Lot have all these animals and servants that their servants start to buttheads because the land that they were on could not sustain them.

So Abram pulls Lot aside and says, “We need to separate, I am going to let you pick the land and whatever you decide, I will take the opposite”

Abram was the uncle; Lot his nephew. He could have told Lot what to do. However, Abram allows Lot to make the decision.

Why did Abram let Lot choose? There are at least two reasons:

1. First, it was a way of letting God choose for him. He would leave it up to Lot and thereby leave it in God’s hands.

Abram is demonstrating faith in the promise God had given to him. So no matter what land he ends up with, Abram knows that God will bless him.

2. Second, Abram gave Lot an opportunity to choose for himself whether he would pursue a spiritual path or a carnal one. You can’t really force spirituality. At some point a person must choose for themselves.

So far, we only read about Abram building the altars, there is no mention of Lot building an altar. Lot will make his decision based on what is going to benefit him immediately, he sees that the land is green with vegetation – perfect for grazing for his animals.

Verse 10 states that Lot lifted up his eyes, but he only lifted them high enough to see the financial possibilities.

Lot's error was his failure to lift his eyes even further and seek guidance from the Lord on what land to pick.

This decision from Lot is just the beginning of many bad decisions Lot is going to make.

- He looks toward Sodom in verse 10
- He pitched his tent toward Sodom in verse 12
- In Chapter 19, we will see him become a leader in Sodom.

Little by little, Lot continues to compromise in his decisions.

Lot left Ur to follow God, but he will find himself entrenched in Sodom.

This is one of the biggest problems that affect believers today. We make a decision to follow Jesus Christ and then through compromise, we return to the world – we can't leave it.

[Gen 13:14-18 NKJV] 14 And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are--northward, southward, eastward, and westward; 15 "for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. 16 "And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, [then] your descendants also could be numbered. 17 "Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you." 18 Then Abram moved [his] tent, and went and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which [are] in Hebron, and built an altar there to the LORD.

So Abram allows Lot to pick the land in which he was going to settle and after Lot leaves, God speaks to him and shows him all the land that He is going to give him – "for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever.

Even the land that Lot claimed as his own, God promised it to Abram.

These words of promise from God literally changed Abram. Abram responded as a man of faith does. He had seen through the eyes of faith what God proposed to bless him with.

Now in faith, he built an altar and praised God ahead of time.

Notice how Abram did not wait until the realization of God's promise to worship God. He received God's promises by faith and worshipped Him now! By building an altar Abram was saying, "I trust you Lord and believe your word." That is one of the greatest signs of maturing faith.

And up to this point, we have seen Abram's faith mature,

He took the initial step to go to Canaan, but then he went to Egypt, but then he returns to living a life of trusting the Lord and we see the Lord speak to him.

Even though Abram was not perfect in following the Lord, we see in his life that God speaks to those who worship and obey Him. That is one lesson we should take to heart.

[Gen 14:1-12 NKJV] 1 And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and

Tidal king of nations, 2 [that] they made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). 3 All these joined together in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). 4 Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled. 5 In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings that [were] with him came and attacked the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh Kiriathaim, 6 and the Horites in their mountain of Seir, as far as El Paran, which [is] by the wilderness. 7 Then they turned back and came to En Mishpat (that [is], Kadesh), and attacked all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who dwelt in Hazezon Tamar. 8 And the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that [is], Zoar) went out and joined together in battle in the Valley of Siddim 9 against Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of nations, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar--four kings against five. 10 Now the Valley of Siddim [was full of] asphalt pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled; [some] fell there, and the remainder fled to the mountains. 11 Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. 12 They also

took Lot, Abram's brother's son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

So in the first 12 verses here in chapter 14, we have the first mention of war in the bible.

Four kings in the region of the Dead Sea decide that they are going to rebel against the five nation confederation that ruled over them.

The only reason that this is significant and is mention in scripture is that Lot becomes entangled in this mess and is taken prisoner.

Notice verse 12 that now states that Lot dwelt in Sodom.

Remember, Sodom was the place where the men were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the Lord, but we have Lot, a Godly man living in Sodom.

The trouble with sin is that sin will always put you in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Believers who conform to the world must expect to suffer for it. That is what happened to Lot. Lot's lusts led him to a place where he and his entire family were in jeopardy.

[Gen 14:13-17 NKJV] 13 Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, for he dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner; and they [were] allies with Abram. 14 Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained [servants] who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. 15 He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which [is] north of Damascus. 16 So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people. 17 And the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that [is], the King's Valley), after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who [were] with him.

Even though Lot was in the midst of suffering the consequences for his choices, God showed mercy upon him and allowed someone to escape and to go tell Abram.

And Abram reacted by gathering 318 of his servants and going to battle against those that had captured his nephew.

And even though Abram was greatly outnumbered, Abram knew that God was on his side.

Here is something to think about,

Sometimes we face opportunities or challenges that seem to be overwhelming.

Yet if you are doing what God wants you to do, it doesn't take much for a victory.

In scripture we find many examples,

Gideon fought and defeated almost 150,000 Midianites and was victorious with an army of 300 men. If you read Judges 7, God doesn't allow Gideon to go into battle until he reduces his army down.

David and Goliath, a shepherd boy against a giant.

Jesus changed the world with twelve disciples.

Jesus said it only took faith the size of a mustard seed to move mountains.

(Rom 8:31 NKJV) What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

[Gen 14:18-20 NKJV] 18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he [was] the priest of God Most High. 19 And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; 20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all.

So after the battle, two kings meet Abram, verse 17 told us that the king of Sodom went out to meet Abram – I want to focus our attention to the King of Salem for a moment because the King of Salem appears to be another Christophany – remember, we spoke about this last week, we said that these are manifestations of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.

How do we know?

First of all, it says that he was a priest and a King.

The name Melchizedek means righteousness

Salem, means peace –

So he is the King of peace and righteousness

Then, it says that He (Melchizedek) brought bread and wine.

2000 years before Christ came to die for our sins, Melchizedek brings a symbol of His death – the bread and the wine.

When we participate in communion, we do it in remembrance of Jesus, Abram partakes of the bread and wine in anticipation of Jesus.

Turn with me to the book of Hebrews

[Heb 7:1-3 NKJV] 1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2 to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace," 3 without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.

In verse three, the author of Hebrews adds that Melchizedek has no beginning or end and His priestly duties will never end –

In the same way that Jesus Christ is the Alpha and the Omega and Jesus is also our High Priest who sits at the right hand of the Father for eternity.

Amen.

Another thing to point out is that we have Abraham tithing to Melchizedek.

Abraham gives a tenth to Melchizedek.

Now, another king also approaches Abram and that is the King of Sodom. If the King of Salem, Melchizedek is Jesus Christ – then the King of Sodom is a picture of Satan.

[Gen 14:21-24 NKJV] 21 Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself." 22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, 23 "that I [will take] nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that [is] yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich'-- 24 "except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion."

As I had mentioned earlier, Sodom was a wicked city. So the king of the wicked city comes up to Abram and offers him riches in exchange for souls.

Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself

How do we say no to Satan – by saying “yes” to Jesus Christ – which is what Abram does here in chapter 14.

By refusing to receive anything from the king of Sodom, Abram was assuring that all glory would go to God Most High.

God alone is to receive glory (Psalm 145:10-13). He will not share His glory (Isaiah 42:8; 48:11). And therefore, we should always give all glory to God.

Giving glory to God and upholding the pure motive of acts of faith is a further indication of Abram’s faith in God.

Amen...

Let’s pray...

Dear Jesus,

Please forgive me of all of my sins.

I know that my sin has separated me from You and I am deserving of death.

I believe that you died for my sins and rose again.

I turn from my sins and I am asking that You come into my life.

Show me how to live my life that is right and pleasing to You.

I accept You as my Lord and Savior.

In Jesus name I pray.