



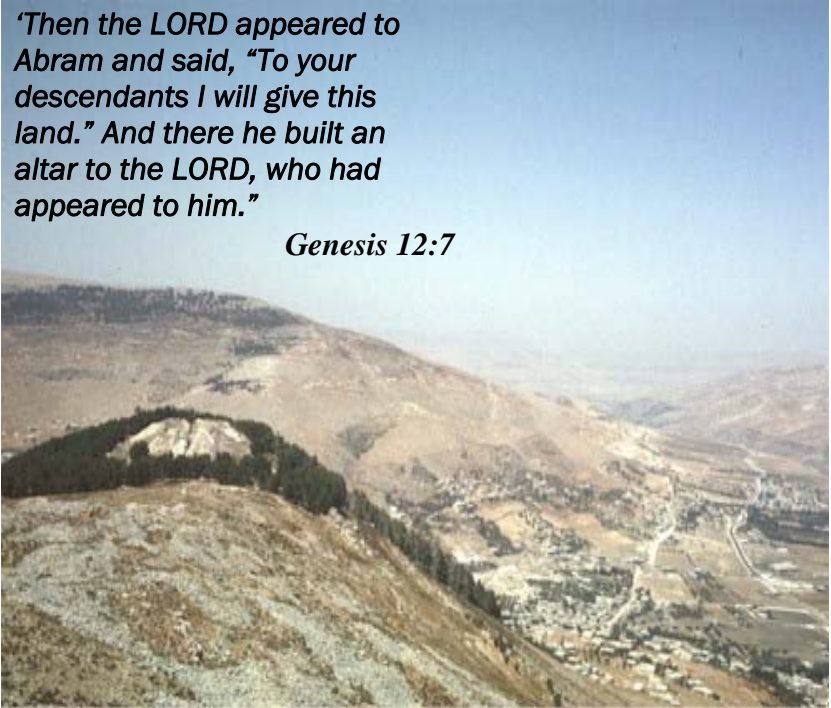
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## Sowing the Word

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*'Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.'*

*Genesis 12:7*



## Genesis 12-13

February 4th, 2009

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So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped *them* to understand the reading.

(Nehemiah 8:8)

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## **Helpful Study Links:**

Additional Commentary: (Great Resource!)

[http://preceptaustin.org/genesis\\_commentaries.htm](http://preceptaustin.org/genesis_commentaries.htm)

## **Further Research Sources**

<http://www.answersingenesis.org/>

Ken Ham's Website. Great resources, articles. Also a great source for books and videos you can get a hold of. (we have these in our library too)

<http://www.drdino.com/>

Kent Hovind's website. Another great site, with lots of answers, and another great video series you can get a hold of. (We also have these in our library)

<http://www.creationscience.com/>

Walt Brown's website. Very helpful, detailed, but not too hard for a non-science major to read. Has a book you can order that has all that is on this website if you prefer it in your hands.

<http://www.discovercreation.org/>

The Alpha Omega Institute's website. This institute is dedicated to teaching the Biblical and scientific evidence of creation throughout the world.

<http://www.icr.org/>

The Institute for Creation Research.

## **Helpful Study Resource:**

*Explore the Book* by J. Sidlow Baxter

### **Commentary:**

The commentary used with permission throughout this booklet is:

**With the Word Bible Commentary**

**by Warren W. Wiersbe.**

ISBN 0-8407-9108-9

# Outline

## Genesis Outline

- I. Creation (1-2)
- II. The Fall of mankind (3)
- III. Early History of mankind – first thousand years (4-5)
- IV. Noah and the Flood (6-9)
- V. Tower of Babel (10-11)
- VI. Abraham (12-25:18)
- VII. Isaac (25:19-27)
- VIII. Jacob (28-36)
- IX. Joseph (37-50)

## Detailed Outline for this week

### VI. Abraham 12-25

- A. Abram's Journey to Canaan!
  1. The Calling of Abram (12:1-3)
  2. Abram leaves for Canaan (12:4-6)
  3. God Appears – Abram's 1<sup>st</sup> Altar (12:7)
  4. Abraham continues in land – 2<sup>nd</sup> Altar (12:8-9)
- B. Abram and his flight to Egypt
  1. Abram runs to Egypt in Famine (12:10-16)
  2. God protects His plan for Abram (12:17-20)
  3. Abram returns from Egypt- calls on God (13:1-4)
- C. Abram and Lot
  1. Abram and Lot split up (13:5-13)
  2. God Promises Abram land, descendants (13:14-18)

# Booklet Notes

## Chapter 12 Highlights and Helps by Pastor Jim

### Abraham

Abraham's name originally was Abram, yet God changes Abram's name in Gen 17:5 to Abraham – the name we all know him by.

Abram —Mrba means "*exalted father*"

Abraham—Mhrba means "*father of a multitude*"

Consider the amazing faith of Abraham!

*"By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going." (Hebrews 11:8)*

Consider that the promise given to Abraham has its ultimate fulfillment in Christ

*"Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ." (Galatians 3:16)*

Consider that for the Christian today, we are blessed with and in Abraham (*"And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham." (Galatians 3:8-9)*

### The Abrahamic Covenant

In Genesis 12 God makes a three-fold promise to Abram:

I will show you.

I will make you.

I will bless you.

There is a uniqueness about this covenant with Abraham – a promise for Israel.

- God has a land for Israel (here He is promising to show it to them).
- God promises to make them a nation – and continue them.
- God promises to bless them, and deal with the world by them.

These promises are wonderful, and we must see in them the specific promises that apply to Israel then and now. Yet, once we see those, we

also see that in this covenant, is a picture of what God longs to do with each and every one of us.

God wants to SHOW us what He has for us.

God wants to MAKE us into all that we can be in Him.

God wants to BLESS us and make us a blessing.

### Abraham's Wanderings

Chapter 12 begins —with a backwards look. God “HAD said” to Abram...it was before this. Notice the emphasized word...had. This is something that God HAD said to Abram before this point in Genesis 12.

God gives us some further insight on this in the NT.

*And he said, “Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said to him, ‘Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.’ Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell. (Acts 7:2-4)*

It seems when Abram first heard this call, it was some years before the account in Genesis 12. When Abram began to follow God...he only went half way. God called him out of Mesopotamia and into a land that was 1000 miles away. But you know what? He stopped 600 miles into that journey, he stopped in Haran.

The word Haran literally means “parched”, and that describes the spiritual condition of a person with one foot in the world and one foot with the Lord. The most miserable person in the world is the believer who follows the Lord half-way. It wasn't until Terah, Abram's father, died that he moved the remaining 400 miles. Apparently, Terah was holding Abram back.

Here's the question for us, what's the Terah in our lives? What habit or allegiance or preoccupation needs to die before you and I are willing to become a fully-devoted follower of Jesus? Often faith begins with a funeral. It's only when we bury that old desire or habit that we become free to move on with God.

## A Name Made Great

In Genesis 12:2 God promises Abram, "I will make your name great". In contrast, Genesis 11:4 reveals the heart of the people who constructed the tower of Babel. They said, "let us make a name for ourselves...".

The babblers at Babel wanted to be esteemed, and God scattered them. Abram obeyed God, by faith - and God made his name great.

Often people try to build their own little kingdoms, but in the end, only God's kingdom will stand.

Build your own kingdom, and your efforts will be scattered. Cooperate with God in the building of His kingdom, and He will make your name great.

In so many ways, this is a great illustration of what Jesus taught us. He said if we try to keep our lives, and hold on to them, we will lose it—but if we lose our lives for His sake—then we gain them. To seek our own kingdom is like trying to build the tower of Babel —God resists that, and the proud. But to surrender to God, is like Abram—and to him the promise is given—because he gave up his life to God.

## The Land

After telling Abram to survey the land God says to him in verses 14-15, "all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever." That should settle all the squabbles in the Middle East. "Forever" constitutes a pretty long-term lease. God gave the land to Israel.

In Genesis 15:18 God provides the boundaries of His gift to Abram's heirs. The land God gives to Abraham not only encompasses the West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan Heights – today's disputed territories. It includes the lion's share of Egypt, the Siani, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq, and Kuwait. About 300,000 square miles will one day belong to the nation Israel.

## Chapter 13 Highlights and Helps by Pastor Jim

### A Famine?

Imagine what Abram might have felt and thought—a famine in the very land where God led him! Sometimes we get the crazy idea that if we do what God has for us, if we walk in obedience that life will cooperate perfectly and without any problems. Yet what we often discover is the opposite. We begin to pursue what God has for our lives...and things begin to fall apart, things around the house begin to break, life becomes difficult. If you have experienced this, then you know the test Abram was facing here in our chapter. Don't think just because something has become hard, that it is not God's will. Often it is a sure sign that we are in God's will! The Spiritual truth is that if everything is easy in life...it may mean that satan is leaving us alone, because our life is not of any consequence spiritually at the moment. Christian, learn to expect difficulties as you step out to pursue God's will.

### Running away to Egypt.

Throughout the Bible, Egypt is a picture of the world. Here we see Abram turning from the land God called him to, and running to the world when things got tough. Sadly, it is not an unfamiliar picture in our own lives.

The amazing thing – is God's faithfulness and grace. God does not let Abram mess up the plans that He has for him. God steps in and stops Pharaoh from marrying Sarah. There is much to consider in this...but it is a great picture of grace.

### Sodom and Gomorrah – like Eden?

Lot chooses the location for himself, Sodom and Gomorrah. Our passage tells us that it was beautiful...like the Garden of Eden. Yet, morally – it was far from what Eden was – it was sinful. So where is this Eden like place....God destroys it in Genesis 19. Today, that location is the lowest place on the entire earth – the Dead Sea. It is a place of such salt content that nothing lives – no animals, no bacteria, no plants. I cannot help but wonder if God did not leave this for you and I as a reminder of the folly of choosing what looks good to the eyes...but is morally corrupt. Something to think about.

## After Lot leaves....the promise is confirmed and greater

Abram was called to leave his land and his family (Genesis 12:1). Abram seems to really struggle with this. It is not until his dad dies that he comes all the way into Canaan. Further, he brings Lot with him. In chapter 13 he and Lot finally split up...seemingly by God's working, not Abrams. But when they are finally separated – God confirms His promise to Abram – all the land (including what Lot just took). God is continuing to whittle away at the things that are holding Abram back from all the promises that He has for him. It is an interesting picture to consider for us today.

## What is the Abrahamic Covenant?

by Paul Enns

A covenant is an agreement between two parties. There are two types of covenants: conditional and unconditional. A conditional or bilateral covenant is an agreement that is binding on both parties for its fulfillment. Both parties agree to fulfill certain conditions. If either party fails to meet their responsibilities, the covenant is broken and neither party has to fulfill the expectations of the covenant. An unconditional or unilateral covenant is an agreement between two parties, but only one of the two parties has to do something. Nothing is required of the other party.

The Abrahamic Covenant is an unconditional covenant. God made promises to Abraham that required nothing of Abraham. Genesis 15:18-21 describes a part of the Abrahamic Covenant, specifically dealing with the dimensions of the land God promised to Abraham and his descendants.

The actual Abrahamic Covenant is found in Genesis 12:1-3. The ceremony recorded in Genesis 15 indicates the unconditional nature of the covenant. The only time that both parties of a covenant would pass between the pieces of animals was when the fulfillment of the covenant was dependent upon both parties keeping commitments. Concerning the significance of God alone moving between the halves of the animals, it is to be noted that it is a smoking furnace and a flaming torch, representing God, not Abraham, which passed between the pieces. Such an act, it would seem should be shared by both parties, but in this case it is doubtless to be explained by the fact that the covenant is principally a promise by God. He is the one who binds Himself. God caused a sleep to fall upon Abraham so that he would not be able to pass between the two halves of the animals. Fulfillment of the covenant fell to God alone. God determined to call out a

special people for Himself through whom He would bring blessing to all the nations. The Abrahamic Covenant is paramount to a proper understanding of the kingdom concept and is foundational to Old Testament theology. (1) The Abrahamic Covenant is described in Genesis 12:1–3 and is an unconditional covenant. There are no conditions attached to it (no “if” clauses, suggesting its fulfillment is dependent on man). (2) It is also a literal covenant in which the promises should be understood literally. The land that is promised should be understood in its literal or normal interpretation—it is not a figure of heaven. (3) It is also an everlasting covenant. The promises that God made to Israel are eternal.

There are three main features to the Abrahamic Covenant.

1. The promise of land (Genesis 12:1). God called Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees to a land that He would give him (Genesis 12:1). This promise is reiterated in Genesis 13:14–18 where it is confirmed by a shoe covenant; its dimensions are given in Genesis 15:18–21 (precluding any notion of this being fulfilled in heaven). The land aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant is also expanded in Deuteronomy 30:1–10, which is the Palestinian Covenant.

2. The promise of descendants (Genesis 12:2). God promised Abraham that He would make a great nation out of him. Abraham, who was 75 years old and childless (Genesis 12:4), was promised many descendants. This promise is amplified in Genesis 17:6 where God promised that nations and kings would descend from the aged patriarch. This promise (which is expanded in the Davidic Covenant of 2 Samuel 7:12–16) would eventuate in the Davidic throne with Messiah’s kingdom rule over the Hebrew people.

3. The promise of blessing and redemption (Genesis 12:3). God promised to bless Abraham and the families of the earth through him. This promise is amplified in the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31–34; cf. Hebrews 8:6–13) and has to do with “Israel’s spiritual blessing and redemption.” Jeremiah 31:34 anticipates the forgiveness of sin. The unconditional and eternal nature of the covenant is seen in that the covenant is reaffirmed to Isaac (Genesis 21:12; 26:3–4). The “I will” promises suggest the unconditional aspect of the covenant. The covenant is further confirmed to Jacob (Genesis 28:14–15). It is noteworthy that God reaffirmed these promises amid the sins of the patriarchs, which fact further emphasizes the unconditional nature of the Abrahamic Covenant. God’s method of fulfilling the Abrahamic Covenant is literal, inasmuch as God partially fulfilled the covenant in history: God blessed Abraham by giving him the land (Genesis

13:14–17); God blessed him spiritually (Genesis 13:8, 18; 14:22, 23; 21:22); God gave him numerous descendants (Genesis 22:17; 49:3–28). The important element of the Abrahamic Covenant, however, demands a future fulfillment with Messiah's kingdom rule. (1) Israel as a nation will possess the land in the future. Numerous Old Testament passages anticipate the future blessing of Israel and her possession of the land as promised to Abraham. Ezekiel envisions a future day when Israel is restored to the land (Ezekiel 20:33–37, 40–42; 36:1–37:28). (2) Israel as a nation will be converted, forgiven, and restored (Romans 11:25–27). (3) Israel will repent and receive the forgiveness of God in the future (Zechariah 12:10–14). The Abrahamic Covenant finds its ultimate fulfillment in connection with the return of Messiah to rescue and bless His people Israel. It is through the nation Israel that God promised in Genesis 12:1–3 to bless the nations of the world. That ultimate blessing will issue in the forgiveness of sins and Messiah's glorious kingdom reign on earth.

## Q & A With Pastor Phil

### **How has God's covenant with Abraham been fulfilled?**

The story of the Jewish people is a fascinating one. It is also completely unique. No other people group has been subject to such occupations, dispersions and persecutions and still preserved their identity. Even their language is largely intact. The re-establishment of Israel in 1948 further testifies in our generation that the words of scripture are trustworthy. In Genesis chapter 12 God's voice speaks out five powerful "I will" statements to Abraham (then called Abram) that form the basis of the Abrahamic covenant. Although, a required obedience is implied, they are otherwise unconditional. God's promises to Abraham have very little to do with him, and everything to do with God. We have the fortunate perspective of being able to look back through history and see how these promises have been fulfilled.

### **Why Abraham?**

After the flood, people again began to multiply quickly on the earth. With a great multitude of people on the earth, why did God choose Abraham? Very little is revealed about Abraham before God calls him to leave his family. We do know that Abraham lived in the midst of idolatry (Joshua 24:2). It seems very likely that Abraham, along with his father, served other gods and did not know the true God. And yet, God chose Abraham. There was nothing about Abraham that made him deserving. From a human perspective he was a poor choice because of his age and the fact that his wife was barren. Abraham was simply the recipient of marvelous grace from the Lord. In the same way, this is true for all who believe. We are not deserving of God's grace but God chooses to call us to Himself (John 15:16). Throughout the Bible, we see God's use of the weak to demonstrate His great strength.

### **Blessed By God**

We can see that God blessed Abraham. While he was still alive he became very wealthy and had great possessions (Genesis 13:2). More than that, he had God's protection. Abraham was not a perfect man and in his moments of weakness he allowed fear to influence him. When Abraham and Sarah went to Egypt, he instructed Sarah to say she was his sister because he feared that they would kill him. In doing so, Pharaoh seeks to take Sarah as a wife. But the Lord intervened and miraculously protected Sarah and Abraham by sending plagues upon Pharaoh's house.

Throughout history God has protected the Jewish nation from enemies far greater in strength and number. Even when Israel turned aside to other gods, God preserved a holy remnant within the people who remained pure. We can also see that God has made Abraham's name great. It is not only the Jews who view Abraham with high esteem. The Arabs are also the natural descendants of Abraham. It's interesting that Jews, Arabs, and Christians all hold Abraham's name in high regard.

### **A Greater Fulfillment**

Although Abraham had great wealth he lived out his life in tents. The whole land of Canaan would be given to him, but he never established a city or even built for himself a great house. He had the means to do so, but it appears that these things were not of importance to him. Instead he sought the eternal. Hebrews 11:9, 10 speak of Abraham in this way:

*"By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God."*

Abraham received much from the Lord during his life, but the greatest blessing would come much later. Jesus Christ becomes the ultimate fulfillment of the promises to Abraham. He is the Savior not only for the Jew, but for the gentile as well. God is drawing to Himself a people from every tribe, tongue and nation. It is through Jesus, the seed of Abraham, that all the families of the earth are blessed.

### **Blessing and Cursing**

An interesting promise is found in verse 3, *I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you.* How we deal with God's people has a direct impact on how God deals with us. This has the potential to be both favorable as well as unfavorable. How does this affect us as a nation? There are many who believe the United States has been prosperous because as a nation we have been allies with Israel. Even before 1948, when Israel became a recognized nation, this was true. Many came to America in search of freedom and relief from persecution and found great success here. In fact, there are more Jews living in the United States than in Israel. It is interesting to note just how quickly the United States became so prosperous. In less than 200 years America became a superpower. Today the United States still wields more power and influence than any other single nation in the world. Could this be changing? History is filled with examples of those who cursed Israel and paid dearly. Even the nations whom God used to discipline His people suffered great judgment.

It is amazing to see the extensive list of nations and people who stood against Israel and that now have ceased to exist. It would seem that in recent years the United States has backed off in its support of Israel. Pressure from other nations and changing sentiment from within have caused many in public office to adopt policies less favorable to Israel. Meanwhile, the Arab Israeli conflict shows no signs of dissipating. Could the United States turn its back on the tiny nation of Israel? If so, how will God deal with us as a nation? There is still widespread support throughout the United States for Israel, but many feel that the tide is turning in a different direction.

### **The Church**

The blessings of Abraham are not only for the Jews. *If you are Christ's then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise* (Galatians 3:29). Abraham becomes the father to all who believe and are born of the spirit. We are now a holy nation before the Lord. *But you are a chose generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light* (1 Peter 2:9). As believers in Christ we are those who are a blessing to the world around us. We bear the message of salvation by grace. The blessings of Abraham now belong to us as the church of Jesus Christ. This does not mean God is finished with Israel. In the last two thousand years the church has struggled with finding this balance. At times the church has believed they have replaced Israel entirely. At other times, the church has sought to adopt doctrines requiring Christians to take on the Jewish traditions. Both extremes are dangerous. God has a purpose for Israel that will come to pass, however, right now He is working through His church.

### **Final Thoughts**

It is fascinating to look upon how God took a man from Ur of the Chaldees, set him apart, caused him to bear a son in his old age, and made him the father of great nation. As scripture unfolds God's plan, we don't see Abraham's greatness. Instead we see God's greatness. God has carried His people through incredible circumstances and enabled them to survive despite great opposition. The fact that Israel is back in the land is proof of God's power. Moreover, Abraham has descendants from every corner of the world – a people who by faith have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Gal 3:28)

# With the Word Bible Commentary

## Genesis 12

**God's Word leads to faith (1–3).** Abram was an idolater when God called him (Josh. 24:2), revealed His glory to him (Acts 7:2), and spoke to him. Abram turned from vain idols to walk with the Lord, and all of this was by God's grace. The hearing of the Word creates faith (John 5:24; Rom. 10:17). Again God's creative Word is at work.

**Faith leads to obedience (4–6).** The New Testament states, "By faith Abraham obeyed" (Heb. 11:8). "I will show you, I will make you, I will bless you!" were God's promises, and Abram believed. It has well been said that faith is not believing in spite of evidence; it is obeying in spite of consequences. The proof of faith is obedience, for true faith always leads to works (James 2:14ff.). Hearing leads to heeding.

Obedience leads to blessing (7–9). We are told nothing about the journey, which must have been very difficult; but we are told that God met Abram when he arrived and gave him a new promise. God always goes before us and has His Word ready to encourage us. From now on, Abram's life will be marked by the presence of the tent (a pilgrim on earth) and the altar (a citizen of heaven).

**Blessing leads to testing (10–20).** Faith is always tested for at least three reasons: to prove whether our faith is real; to help our faith grow; and to bring glory to the Lord (1 Pet. 1:6–9; James 1:1–8). Imagine a famine in the very land where God led him! We can be in the will of God and still suffer trials. It has been said that "faith is living without scheming," but Abram began to scheme. He was walking by sight and not by faith, and it cost him his testimony—and almost his wife! Note that Abram had neither a tent nor an altar in Egypt. "Going down to Egypt" is Bible language for getting out of the will of God.

God blessed Abram that he might be a blessing. Through Abram and his descendants, the whole world has been blessed. Whenever God gives you a blessing, it's so that you might be a blessing to others. God's blessings are not luxuries; they are opportunities.

**Am I Living by Faith?:** When you live by faith, you make your decisions on the basis of the Word of God (Rom. 10:17), and you seek to glorify God alone (Rom. 4:19–20). True faith is not in a hurry; it is willing to wait (Isa. 28:16; Heb. 6:12).

Faith obeys God in spite of circumstances or consequences, and it is

not afraid of what others may say or do (Heb. 11:29–30).

—Wiersbe, W. W. (1997, c1991). *With the word Bible commentary* (Ge 12:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

### Genesis 13

A new beginning (1–4). God chastened Abram in Egypt, and Abram returned to the land he never should have left. He was a very wealthy man, but his tent and altar were the most valuable things he possessed. When we fail, the Lord is ready to forgive and restore (1 John 1:5–2:2). “The victorious Christian life is a series of new beginnings,” said Alexander Whyte.

A new burden (5–13). While in Egypt, Lot acquired wealth and a taste for the world, and his temporal interests were partly Abram’s fault. God forgave Abram’s sin, but He did not prevent the sad consequences. We reap what we sow, even after we are forgiven. Abram’s first test of faith came from a famine; his second test came from his own family. Family tests are the hardest tests of all.

Abram was a peacemaker because he lived by faith; Lot was a troublemaker because he lived by sight. Abram chose a heavenly city (Heb. 11:13–16); Lot chose an earthly city, and a wicked one at that. The city appeared to be ideal, but it was headed for destruction. You can move your tent nearer and nearer to sin, but you cannot take your altar with you. Lot left God behind and destroyed his home.

A new blessing (14–18). The man of faith always receives a special word from God after a time of testing. Let others take what they want; our God gives us far more than they can ever imagine (Pss. 16:5; 33:12). Abram lifted up his eyes and saw the land. He lifted up his feet and claimed it by faith (Josh. 1:3). Then he lifted up his heart and worshiped God. Lot had broken Abram’s heart, but God blessed Abram’s heart—and made him a blessing.

—Wiersbe, W. W. (1997, c1991). *With the word Bible commentary* (Ge 13:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.









