



ABRAHAM

FRIEND OF GOD AND FATHER OF FAITH

by

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INTRODUCTION

GENESIS 11:27 - 12:5

We enter into a study dealing with one of the great men of the Bible. This man is one of my favorite characters in the Scriptures. He is one of my favorites not because he was great, but because he was small. He was small in the sense that he was human just like us all. Abraham had his “issues” just like all men do. Early on in his walk with God he was prone to wander just like us. But, the Bible calls Abraham the **“friend of God.” (James 2:23)**. What a reputation and memorial for any human! Is that not a tremendous statement concerning someone, anyone? To be able to say that man is a **“friend of God”** should be the longing and goal of every believer in Jesus Christ.

It is important to study the life of Abraham because his experiences with God are great pictures of the Christian’s walk with God. In Abraham we see God calling a lost sinner to follow Him. We see the failings of an immature believer. We see the mountain top experiences and the deep valleys of the spiritual life. We see the great triumph of one whose faith was tested and ultimately found to be true.

Three of the major religions of the world find their roots in Abraham. Judaism, Christianity and Islam all claim heritage in Abraham. The biblical record dealing with Abraham encompasses fourteen chapters of the book of Genesis chronologically spanning about one hundred years. Yes, Abraham is probably about 60 years old when he is introduced in chapter 11 but 75 when God begins to deal with him in earnest. He dies at the ripe old age of 175. Abrahams’ life during that one hundred years impacted the history of the human race as no other mere human.

I. WHO WAS ABRAHAM?

A. WHERE DID ABRAHAM COME FROM?

Abraham’s birth place was in Ur of the Chaldees. It is found near the mouth of the Persian Gulf. Because of the silting process brought on by the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, the ancient ruins of the city lie about one hundred miles inland from the sea. Interestingly, today it is the land of Kuwait, which is situated where the southern most borders of Iraq and Iran come together.

B. WHAT WAS ABRAHAM’S SPIRITUAL LIFE LIKE?

Abraham lived about two thousand years before the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ and it had been about four hundred years since the world wide flood of Noah’s day. The flood was God’s judgment upon man for his paganism. But by Abraham’s day mankind had once again slid back into the same idolatry. The people of Ur worshiped nature and everything in nature. There was a great focus upon the worship of the sun, moon and the stars.

They believed that the moon ruled the climate thus controlled whether or not their crops would be good or not. With that belief as a motivation, they worshiped the moon with fervent passion. In fact there was a great temple in Ur dedicated to the worship of the moon. We do not know for certain but it is possible that Abraham was a moon worshiper before God intervened in his life.

C. WHAT WAS ABRAHAM'S FAMILY BACKGROUND?

He was a descendant of Shem, one of Noah's sons. His father's name was Terah. He had two brothers whose names were Nahor, and Haran. Haran died relatively young and his son Lot came into the direct household of Terah. Lot would have become as a younger brother to Abraham.

Abraham married a beautiful lady named Sarai while he still made his home in Ur.

Genesis 11:29

"And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai; . . ."

Verse 30 tells us that she was barren. Scripture emphasizes this by repeating her situation two ways. **"But Sarai was barren; she had no child."**

Summing up Abraham's early life, he was probably about 60 years old at the outset of the Bible record. He was married and seems to have been very close to his family. Spiritually, he was possibly an idolater, maybe a worshiper of the moon. Tradition says that Abraham always went against the grain in Ur in that he refused to worship the idols of the rest of his family and countrymen. But there is no Scripture proof for this, only wishful thinking. F. B. Meyer refers to tradition when he writes,

Amid such scenes ABRAHAM was born, and grew from youth to manhood. But, from the first, if we may credit the traditions which have lingered in the common talk of the unchanging East, he must have possessed no ordinary character. According to those stories, which if not literally true are no doubt based on a substratum of fact, as a young man Abraham offered an uncompromising opposition to the evil practices which were rife, not only in the land, but in his father's house.^(12a)

Scripture does let us know that some of his family members were idol worshipers.

Joshua 24:2

"And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods."

Also remember that it was Rachel, Abraham's grandson Jacob's wife, who stole the idols from her father Laban, who, interestingly, was Abraham's nephew.

In looking at the general spiritual condition of man we find that he had again degenerated into idolatry. He worshiped the creature rather than the Creator. We find one thing for certain man does not learn very well from his past errors but is rather prone to repeat them.

It was time for God to once again step in. This time he would not destroy the human race as He did with the flood. Rather, He would call out a man for Himself. Abraham was a man that God would use in a very amazing way in His dealings with the human race.

II. GOD'S CALL TO ABRAM.

Abraham's original name was Abram. And we will call him such until God moves to change it.

A. HIS COMMAND TO LEAVE.

Albert Baner tells us that it has been **“Four hundred and twenty-two years by the lowest calculation after the last recorded communication with Noah, the Lord again opens his mouth, to Abram.”**^(1a) It is significant to mention that of all men alive upon the earth at the time, God chooses to speak to this man, Abram.

1. GOD COMMANDS ABRAM.

Genesis 12:1

“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee”

God's words to Abram were simple when boiled down. Separate yourself from your present life.

Acts 7:2-3

“And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.”

If we take both these passages together, we find out that the words of Genesis 12:1 actually take place before the events of 11:31. Abraham was told by God to leave everything behind him. His home, his secondary family, the security of Ur and go into a land that He will show him.

2. ABRAM'S INCOMPLETE OBEDIENCE.

The Bible does not say it but it seems apparent that Abram shared all this with Terah, his father. Terah decided that He would go with Abram. So they all leave Ur: Terah, Abraham, Sarai, and Lot.

Be mindful that Abram was told to go to Canaan and the group sets out with Canaan as its destination but it only gets to Haran. This is interesting because Haran would have been like a miniature Ur. The society and religion were very much like that of Ur. Unfortunately, that is where they stopped. John Phillips comments on Abram's first steps of faith as follows:

... it was only partial obedience, for Abram was told to give up both natural and national ties. There was to be a complete break with the past. Partial obedience resulted in the loss of further progress, for the whole venture ground to a halt before it had progressed very far.^(17a)

It is important to realize that civilization at this time was a patriarchal society. The elder of the clan (family) had a very strong rule and control. So Terah was still in charge and things are pretty much like they were in Ur. Abram remained in Haran until the death of his father.

3. ABRAM'S FURTHER OBEDIENCE. (12:4)

Abram leaves Haran and goes down into Canaan as God had instructed him in Ur and repeated in Haran. There is one problem though, he still has Lot tagging along. He is still not in complete obedience to God's command to separate himself from his father's house.

Various events take place in Abram's life during this time and he continues to be God's called out one but we do not find God moving ahead with His program for Abram during this period of partial obedience.

In God's providence, Abram's and Lot's herds grow to the point that these men finally have to split up. God prospers materially in this case in order to providentially get things the way He desires them to be.

4. ABRAM'S COMPLETE OBEDIENCE. (13:14-17)

After Abram had obeyed and separated himself from Lot, God comes to him and shares more of His plans for him. Note the words of (**Genesis 13:14**) **"after that Lot was separated from him."** It is possible to have unfulfilled spiritual lives because of only partial obedience to God. There is a biblical principle to be learned here; God will only reveal truth to us to the extent that we are willing to act on and obey that truth.

God has called the believer to separate from the world and the things of the world. We read in

1 John 2:15-17

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

God saves us to be a people for His own Name. And we are often trying to continue with one foot in the world and the other in the Kingdom of God. Such compromise just will not work. The Lord Jesus said,

Matthew 5:24

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

How complete should our obedience to God's word be? Dear one, if you are trying to live for God and continue in friendship with the world; I can only ask, "why?"

We will see the lesson of separation from the world over and over again in the life of Abraham. He was to leave his old life behind. It is extremely important for the child of God to separate himself from world and part ways with the old life.

III. GOD'S PROMISE MADE TO ABRAM. Genesis 13:14-17.

We look at these aspects of God's promise to Abram in introductory form only. They will all be dealt with much detail in later chapters.

Genesis 13:14-17

“And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.”

A. ABRAM'S RECEIVES PROMISES FROM GOD.

1. GOD PROMISES TO GIVE HIM A LAND.

God gave Abram the land of Canaan. He was instructed to look out across the land in every direction; it was all his. We will deal with this more in a later chapter.

2. GOD PROMISES TO MAKE OF HIM A GREAT NATION.

Of course God did this as well. **“I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth.” (Genesis 13:16)**

3. GOD PROMISES TO MAKE HIS NAME GREAT.

Abram became one of the richest men in the ancient world. He was called a prince amongst the peoples of the land. His name has been echoed by the people of God for four thousand years.

**4. IN ABRAM ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH WOULD BE BLESSED.
(Genesis 12:3; 22:18)**

Genesis 12:3

“And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

a. THE BLESSING OF ABRAM'S TESTIMONY.

God intended that Abraham would be a living witness to the nations concerning what a relationship of faith between God and man is. God had chosen to use Abram to reveal Himself to the lost who lived around him.

b. THE BLESSING OF ABRAM'S SEED. (Genesis 22:18)

The Seed, singular, of Abram was Jesus Christ Himself. In Christ salvation would be brought to all nations. All of this boiled down to one thing.

B. ABRAM'S BELIEVING OF GOD. (Genesis 15:6).

Romans 4:3

“Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.”

God stepped into Abraham's life in the midst of his sin and called him out for Himself. Abram becomes a tremendous picture of God's working by grace in the heart of an individual.

Ephesians 2:8

“For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God.”

Abram believed, he trusted God. It is the same requirement for salvation today as then. **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” (Acts 16:31)**

Is God, speaking to you? Where will you spend eternity? Do you know you will go to heaven when you take your last breath on this earth? The Bible says you can know.

CHAPTER 2 DOWN TO EGYPT - GENESIS 12-13

I thank God for the honest way the Holy Spirit records events in the Bible. In the passage before us, God gives us the unvarnished truth concerning Abram. If the Bible was the product of man would it not try to cover over or leave out some things that cast a dark shadow on its heroes? There is no rewriting of history in the Bible. The Lord teaches us much on how to live the Christian life through this man. We learn through his victories but also through his failures.

1 Corinthians 10:11

“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

It is profitable for us to look at our spiritual fore, fathers that we might learn, and be admonished in our own lives. In this chapter we learn valuable lessons from some bad decisions that Abram made.

I. GOD’S PROMISE TO HIS MAN. Verses 12:1-8.

We read in verse one that God has given some clear instruction to Abram. He is to separate himself from his country, his kindred and his father’s house. After a delay in Haran until his father’s death he has now moved into the land of Canaan, as God had told him to.

A. PLACE OF GOD’S BLESSING. Verse 8.

This location is between Bethel, “the house of God” and Hai - “a heap of ruins,” which was to the East back toward Ur. Be mindful that Ur was also East of where Abram now was. God has Abraham in a tremendous place.

Abraham has the “house of God” for his dwelling place and a “heap of ruins” nearby to remind him of the old life that he left behind. It is good to be reminded of what a mess our old life was before God intervened and brought us to himself.

God saved Abraham out of the sin and wickedness of his old life in Ur and had given him a new life in His land, Bethel, the house of God. We notice that Abraham had some spiritual growth in this place.

B. PLACE OF WORSHIP. Verse 8a. “there he builded an altar unto the LORD.”

Abraham built an altar there. That was a very good start. The purpose for an altar is worship. Abraham now becomes a worshiper of Jehovah.

C. PLACE OF PRAYER. Verse 8b. “And called upon the name of the LORD.”

When a child of God is growing, he is a worshiping, and praying believer in God. His relationship with God will be spiritually enriched and temporally blessed.

Unfortunately, through Abram we now see what the consequences from moving away from God’s place and house.

II. THE FAILURE OF GOD'S MAN. Verses 12:9-10.

For some reason Abraham gets restless. The old bedouin, vagabond spirit hits him. He feels he has to move on. Through Abram we see the consequences from moving away from God's place and house.

A. A TIME OF TESTING FOR GOD'S MAN.

1. THE TEST. Verse 10a. "And there was a famine in the land."

A famine comes into the land, but notice we hear nothing of this famine until Abraham has begun to leave from God's house, the place he was supposed to be. As Abraham moves toward Egypt, he loses God's blessing. God had promised to take care of Abram in Canaan, but when he leaves the place God had told him to be the results are not good.

Reader, even when things get tough we need to hang on to God's promises. His promise is **"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."** That verse comes from a passage that gives us some understanding with what is happening to Abram.

Hebrews 13:5-6

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

The testimony of God's faithfulness is involved here. I grant you that it is very hard at times to simply rest in God's promise to us. But, beloved, do we believe His promise or not?

2. ABRAM'S FAILURE. Verse 10.

When the believer leaves God's will, he is an absolute failure. Abram took his eyes off God and looked to the world for help. Abraham goes down to Egypt. In the Scriptures Egypt is a type, or picture of the world.

Notice: Abraham goes down into Egypt. Anytime you move away from the house of God toward the world it will be a downward trip. The world will always seek to drag you down. It will try to pull you down to its level. Moving toward the world will never be a positive spiritual move.

B. THE DEPARTURE OF GOD'S MAN.

Abraham now finds himself in Egypt. As soon as he gets there, trouble begins.

1. ABRAHAM'S FEAR. 12:11-12.

When he moves away from God he loses fellowship with God and fear gets hold of him. His dear wife, Sarai is a beautiful woman and he was afraid that the Egyptians would kill him to take her from him. He decides to have her hide the fact that she is his wife for the sake of his own safety. Rather than being her protector and provider, he is worried about himself. What a horrible thing to do to your wife!

2. ABRAHAM'S LIE. 12:13.

Abraham lies to protect himself, it is really only a half lie because Sarai was his half sister. But in God's eyes a half-truth is a whole lie.

Sure enough, when the Egyptians lay eyes on Sarai they are taken by her beauty and she is removed to the house of Pharaoh. All the while Abram is lying about his wife; Pharaoh is pouring gifts on Abram. It looks like Abram's scheme is going to work, but God is not going to allow His plans for Abram to be destroyed. In order to protect His program, God plagues Pharaoh and his house.

Notice something significant: in a short time Abram has gone from being a praying and worshipping man of Jehovah God to a lying compromiser. So before you say, "I would never do such a thing," take care to set boundaries in your life that you will not cross in order to ensure your walk with the Lord. Simply refuse to lie about anything. Be completely honest in your dealings with everyone. Most importantly remain in the house of God.

C. THE OBVIOUS EFFECTS OF A BAD TESTIMONY. Verses 14-17.

Because of Abram's lie, others are punished. We can bring great pain upon others through our sin. Our sin can bring consequences not only upon us but upon innocent people around us. There is no one more miserable than a Christian out of fellowship with God. Imagine how this affected his relationship with Sarai! After this terrible denial of his wife, how much respect do you think Sarai had for her husband?

Abram's sin brought judgment upon Pharaoh and his household. Very seldom will our sin only effect us.

D. THE WORLD REBUKES ABRAM. (12:18-20)

1. GOD'S REBUKE OF ABRAM AT THE HAND OF A SINNER.

Pharaoh, a lost heathen leader asks God's chosen man: "**What is this that thou hast done unto me?**" (Genesis 12:18a). It is a very sad day when God has to use a lost man to rebuke His child.

Pharaoh did not want to mess around with Abram's God, but the testimony of God's man did not say much about what a believer in Jehovah is to be. What sort of savor did Abram leave in Egypt of what a believer is? It is mindful of the reproach; "if that is a believer then I hope I never meet another one."

2. GOD'S UNEXPECTED ESCORT FOR ABRAM. (12:20)

The sense of the words "**and they sent him away**" are very strong. It is as if Pharaoh has to use force to get rid of Abraham. God wanted Abram in Canaan, and He will do what He has to do to get him where He wanted him.

III. THE REVIVAL OF GOD'S MAN. (Chapter 13)

God gets Abraham up and out of Egypt.

A. ABRAM GETS BACK TO GOD'S HOUSE. Verse three. Abram gets back to Bethel.

We need God's house, and we need the ministry of God in His house. When we absent ourselves from God's house we quickly grow cold, and it is sure that we will not grow in the things of God.

B. ABRAM GETS BACK TO SEEKING GOD. Verse 4.

When back to where God's child should be, we find him praying and calling on the Name of the Lord. We see from these events in the life of Abraham three very important marks of the spiritual man. Remember this though, these things do not make a person spiritual. They are the marks of the one who is spiritual, one who is where he ought to be with the Lord.

1.) He will be a separated man.

Abraham got out Egypt and put some distance between himself and the world. Some Christians confuse separation with isolation. Separation should be thought of as insulation. That is, insulating yourself against spiritual danger.

It is the truth of John 17 in that God has been pleased to leave us in this world but we are not to be of this world. **"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."** (John 17:16).

2.) He will be a sanctified man.

What is sanctification? It is the other side of separation. In separation we seek to separate ourselves from the effect of the world in our lives.

In Sanctification the believer separates himself to the Lord. It is being set apart for the LORD. It is a wise believer that puts distance between himself and the spiritual dangers of the world.

Take note of this illustration from John Phillips concerning the woman seeking a new coachman.

She had three applicants, to each of whom she put the same question. "You know that steep hill just outside town and that narrow spot where the road drops away to a gully. How close could you drive my coach to the edge without losing your nerve?" The first man said, "Madam, if the wheels of the coach came within six inches of the edge I would feel quite safe." The second coachman said, "Madam, I reckon even if one of the wheels went clean over the edge I could hold those horses and recover the coach without harm." It was the third coachman who secured the job. "Madam," he said, "I would keep that coach as far away from that gully as I possibly could." ^(17b)

That is a good picture of sanctification. It is not getting as close to the world without falling into sin or hurting our testimony. Rather, it is keeping as far away from it as we can by drawing as close as we can to the Lord.

3.) He will be a man of sacrifice.

Abram is back to the altar. He is back to the place of worship, back to the place where he **"called on the name of the Lord."**

Back to where God was in control.

Proverbs 3:5-6

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding: in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

Within the simple words of these verses from the Proverbs lay the key to a victorious Christian life. Trust God absolutely and do not look to your own wisdom or ability and in every area of your life give God complete authority and then God will direct your life for His glory and your good.

ABRAHAM: FRIEND OF GOD AND FATHER OF FAITH
CHAPTER 3 - STRIFE OR SATISFACTION OF THE BELIEVER
LOT'S LOSS GENESIS 13:5-18

We come to chapter 13 finding Abram experiencing a time of personal revival in his life. Reading verses 1-4 we discover that he is out of Egypt (a picture of the world in the Bible) and back to Bethel, the house of God. We find him back to the place of the Altar and calling upon the name of the Lord.

Our passage deals with a situation where the relationship of Abram and his nephew Lot has become strained. At first reading we might not pick up on the spiritual significance of what takes place here, but God is on the scene and working to accomplish His perfect will in the life of His man. God is working through His providence to bring events about in such a way that His will is accomplished. He wants Lot separated from Abram and it is interesting that He blesses them both so much that they just cannot live in the same place anymore. The way that Abram deals with all of this is a testimony of the spiritual growth that is taking place in his life.

We are going to see very clearly the difference of how a spiritually minded believer and a carnally minded believer deal with problems and decisions that must be made in the course of life. Please take note that we are talking about two believers that approach life and what is important in life very differently.

IV. THE STRIFE BETWEEN THE BRETHREN. Verses 5 -7.

A. THE MIXED BLESSING. Verses 5 - 6

Not only has Abram increased in wealth over the years but Lot has also amassed a great deal of possessions. He has accumulated “flocks, and herds, and tents.” And evidently he now has a number of men working for him.

B. THE HERDSMEN’S STRIFE. Verse seven.

1. THE OBVIOUS PROBLEM.

With the blessing of the increase of Abram and Lot’s wealth in possessions there came a problem. The land could not support them both and strife developed between these two men’s herdsman.

We can imagine that they were probably fighting over grazing land, wells and such like things. The question is, what should they do about it?

2. THE OBSERVING PEOPLE. Verse 7b.

We could very easily just read over this statement but the Holy Spirit recorded it for a reason. “. . . **the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.**” These two groups of people were the native inhabitants of the area. There are a couple things that come to mind here as to possible considerations about this.

a. THE POTENTIAL DANGER.

What would happen if Abram and Lot allowed this strife to continue to the point that they got into violence with each other? The Canaanite and the Perizzite potentially could have taken advantage and let them fight it out and then move in on the weakened survivor.

b. THE POOR TESTIMONY.

Not only was there a potential danger but this strife amongst these brethren was a poor testimony to their lost neighbors. As long as there is more than one person in this old world there will be the possibility for disagreement. It is a sad situation though when two brethren fall out into strife before the ungodly.

Philippians 2:14

“do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.” Emphasis is the author’s.

Abram wants to avoid this. And to this point it seems that the strife was limited to the herdsmen and had not affected Abram and Lot’s relationship.

V. SEPARATION IS NOW NECESSARY FOR ABRAM.

Be mindful that God had initially called Abram to separate himself from country, kindred and his father’s house, to the land that He had for him. God was now going on with Abram in separating him from his father’s house. We have no idea how much of a hindrance Lot has been on Abram’s spiritual life.

Take note of something extremely important: when God calls His follower to separate from the world and worldly associations it is not to create a vacuum in the believer’s life. We are to separate from the world unto God. His desire is to have our lives for Himself. Abram will now be separated from Lot and Lot’s continual drag on his spiritual life. When God sees fit to do such a thing it is a good thing. Never again will the Holy Spirit record the words, **“and Lot also, which went with Abram.”** **Verses 1 & 5.**

VI. SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT OF ABRAM. Verses 8-9.

A. ABRAM’S CONCERN.

What is Abram’s desire? **“Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee . . . for we be brethren.”** (Genesis 13:8)

The word “strife” carries the meaning of contention or to have a quarrel with another. Abram did not want this issue to become a further problem that would cause a quarrel between himself and Lot. Abram’s relationship to his nephew was more important to him than things.

MAKING THE APPLICATION:

It is a sad thing when brethren lose sight of the importance of a right testimony for God in the

community. They forget the bond that they have in Jesus Christ. They forget the important matters and get caught up in strife over things that have no (absolutely no) eternal significance.

B. ABRAM'S DISCERNMENT. Verse 9.

Abram behaves in a very admirable way. He gives Lot the choice of all the land. Essentially he is saying, "Whatever way you go I will go the other. Whatever you choose I will take what is left." Abram did not have to do this. After all, God had given all the land to Abram. Who was the senior man here? Abram. Who was probably still the stronger and greater in possessions? Abram.

Abram displays his superior character and superior spirit in this most generous offer. It is not an easy thing to do, but it is a mark of spiritual character when a person can defer his rights to another. Paul wrote to the Philippians "**let each esteem other better than themselves.**" (Philippians 2:3)

Their lost neighbors (the Canaanites and Perizites) probably scratched their heads wondering why Abram would yield his rights and withhold his strength in this matter. But God would greatly bless him for it.

VII. LOT MAKES A SHALLOW DECISION. Verses 10-11.

A. THE INFLUENCE OF ABRAM LOST.

While these two men are close to each other Abram has influence in Lot's life. It is tremendous when a mature believer can serve as a mentor in the life of a new or younger believer. But, there should come a time when the younger believer is able to stand on their own spiritual legs. Unfortunately, many a professing believer's walk is born along more by the influence of another faithful follower of the Lord than it is of their own faith in God. We see this sometimes amongst husbands and wives. We see it amongst believing friends. We see it in most any relationship where there is strong leadership, but where another or others that are more "hangers on" than they are leaders in their own right. C. H. McIntosh describes the present situation between Abram and Lot with these words:

Such persons go on for a time either as a dead weight upon the testimony or an active hindrance to it. Thus, in Abraham's case, the Lord called him to leave his kindred; but he brought his kindred with him. Terah retarded him in his movement, until death took him out of the way: Lot followed him somewhat further, until "the lust of other things" overpowered him, and he entirely broke down.^(14a)

When the day of separation comes the one will go on in his faithful walk with God, but the other will in short order find themselves under the spell of the world, the flesh and the devil. We have no evidence that Lot had a vital spiritual walk with the Lord of his own. We have no record that he had an altar of his own, no indication that he called on the name of the Lord for himself. And now we find him making this decision out of his own wisdom. John Philips comments: "**A man who is weak in his devotions and worldly in his desires will inevitably be wrong in his decisions (13:11-13). Lot chose all the plain of Jordan and separated himself from his godly uncle.**"^(17c)

B. THE INFLUENCE OF LOT'S FLESH GAINED.

What is Lot's reaction when Abram submits himself to his nephew's choice? "ALL RIGHT!" He does not say, "Oh no, uncle Abram, you are the leader of the family. You have the right to choose over me." No, we do not find him protesting at all. Rather he looks around the countryside and sees the well-watered plain of Jordan. He tries to put a spiritual spin on his decision and describes it, "**even as the garden of the LORD.**" But his true motivation comes through when he further identifies it, "**like the land of Egypt.**" Lot had enjoyed the luxuries of Egypt during his time there and the plain of Jordan reminded him of it.

Lot chose with his flesh through worldly minded thinking. He did not consider what would be best for his family spiritually. He did not weigh the potential consequences of his decision.

VIII. BEING SURRENDERED TO OUR CHOICES. Verses 12-18.

We all have to live with the choices we make in life. And we see here that the biblical principle of "**reaping what you sew**" is once again proven true.

A. THE SAD CONSEQUENCES OF LOT'S CHOICE. Verses 12b -13.

We are not going to really deal with the results of the choices Lot is making for his life at this time but only to say this. What on the surface may appear to be a good decision does not always prove good in the long run.

I have heard some say. I know this decision or move was God's will because of how great things worked out. By that statement they are referring to apparent material blessing. Dear ones, that is not always, in fact seldom is, the best indicator to judge things by.

Two important issues to remember when one is making decisions.

- 1.) How does my decision line up with the Word of God?
- 2.) How is my decision going to effect not only me but those that I am spiritually responsible for?

B. THE CONSEQUENCES OF ABRAM'S CHOICE. Verses 12a & 14 -18.

1. THOUGH HE DEFERRED TO LOT, ABRAM LOST NOTHING. Verses 14 -15.

What an amazing word Abram receives from God. The Lord tells Abram to look around himself in every direction and informs him that it all belongs to him. Wow, Abram is blessed even though he deferred to Lot!

2. THOUGH SUBMITTED ABRAM IS ENCOURAGED. Verses 16 -17.

God goes on to encourage Abram for his wise handling of the strife with Lot and his subsequent separation from him. The Lord reiterates that He will bless him with a great multitude of descendants. He again gives Abram a word about the land. This is paraphrasing but the message is, "Abram wherever you set your foot down I will give it to you."

3. SPIRITUAL SEPARATION BRINGS ABRAM FATNESS IN ASSOCIATION

WITH THE LORD. Verse 18.

The word “Mamre” means strength or fatness and “Hebron” means association or fellowship. In ancient culture “fatness” suggested wealth. We find Abram blessed with “fatness” in the place of fellowship and worship of the LORD.

Dear ones, how are you making decisions for your life? Do not make the mistake Lot made as he, **“lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan” (Genesis 13:10)** and was impressed with what the physical eyes may see.

**ABRAHAM FRIEND OF GOD AND FATHER OF FAITH
CHAPTER - 4 - TO THE RESCUE OF LOT
GENESIS 14**

What does it mean to be friends with someone? It can mean several things. First, it will mean that there is a friendly relationship. Second, friends have fellowship with each other. Third, friends are often companions. Fourth, friends like each other and desire prosperity and success for each other.

It is recorded by the Holy Spirit in the Word of God that Abraham was known as the friend of God. That is a testimony to be desired. It is also a reason why Abram was prepared to do a great and heroic deed at a critical time.

In this chapter we have a lot of Bible firsts. The Book of Genesis is loaded with these and rightly so since its name means, “beginnings” it is the book of beginnings. There are many doctrines and biblical principles that are introduced or mentioned for the first time in Genesis. Among these first mentions we have in this chapter the first priest, the first king, the first war, first time wine is mentioned, and the first time a tithe is received.

In this record of the first war in the Bible we have ten kings that come upon the scene. Out of all ten only one is a truly righteous king and he comes on the scene at the very end. In this we have a thumb nail picture of all history played out with the coming of the King of kings at the end of time to set up His kingdom.

Though he is very much involved in our story, Abram remains separated from the cities to the plain of Jordan. Through this war God uses Abram to teach us the proper balance between separation from the wickedness of the world without becoming isolated from the world’s needs. Abram lived totally separated from the world, pictured here by Sodom, Gomorrah and the other cities in the plain of Jordan.

Abram had no use for Sodom and its wickedness, its amusements, its pleasures and its prosperity. He kept a good distance between himself and Sodom. With that said though, he did not pretend that it did not exist. He had a family interest in Sodom. His worldly, weak, and back-slid nephew lived in Sodom. Yes, we find Lot now living in the midst of all that wickedness. How could that happen? Not really hard to understand and follow the downward steps that landed Lot in such a wicked environment.

1.) He looked at Sodom. Which pictures the world and all that it had to offer.

Genesis 13:10

“And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.”

2.) Then he moved in the direction of Sodom.

Genesis 13:12

“Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.”

3.) Now we find him dwelling in Sodom.

Genesis 14:12

“And they took Lot, Abram’s brother’s son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.”

With all that is about to transpire, we find Abram willing to get involved for Lot’s sake, but only at the right time and in the right way. Because Abram had remained separate from the worldly cities of the plain, he was now in a position to be used of God to see their deliverance.

I. THE BATTLE AMONG THE NINE KINGS. Verses 1-12.

A. THE BATTLE INVOLVES FOUR AGAINST THE FIVE.

The narrative of the chapter tells us that the cities of the plain had been in subjection to King Chedorlaomer for 12 years. While under his rule Sodom and the other cities had been paying tribute (taxes) to him. In the 13th year they chose to rebel. This must have been repeated in other places because in the 14th year we find Chedorlaomer massing his armies along with three other kings and moving to reconsolidate his kingdom.

We find this great army moving through these lands and destroying all opposition. No one was able to stop him. In the plain of Jordan Bera, king of Sodom and four other kings thought they would be able to stand against Chedorlaomer’s forces but they too soon found out otherwise.

In verse 10 the wicked kings of the plain fell and fled in the slime pits in the vale of Siddim. It was appropriate for these ones who were so filthy on the inside to now be outwardly what they were inwardly. John Phillips writes:

There seems to be a poetic justice in it all. Sodom and Gomorrah were vile and filthy beyond words. Their sin was a stench in the nostrils of God. It was fitting that their kings would be hauled off to captivity all besmirched and bedaubed with slime. ^(17d)

B. THE CAPTIVES.

With the ragtag armies of the plain routed it left the cities unprotected to be spoiled. Many were taken as prisoner, including Lot and all he owned. They were carried away to be sold as slaves to the highest bidder.

II. THE RESCUE WON BY THE MAN OF GOD. Verses 13-16.

A. ABRAM’S STRENGTH.

1. HIS SEPARATION.

He is called “Abram the Hebrew” which means the “one from beyond.” He was an outsider. He was one who had pulled out of the world and crossed over to the place God had given him. Even here in his new home Abram’s neighbors saw him as an outsider. It is good way for the believer to see himself as Abram saw himself.

Hebrews 11:9-10

“By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

2. HIS SITUATION.

He was dwelling at Hebron. Genesis 13:18; 14:13. Hebron means “association” or “fellowship.” Abram was in the place of fellowship with his God. It was a place of the altar, a place of sacrifice and worship. Abram was in a place where he could hear and get leadership from God.

B. ABRAM’S STRATEGY.

Abram was certainly aware of what was going on in the world around him. It was in his own best interest to keep track of men like Chedorlaomer and his armies. Abram had great holdings and would be a real prize for these invading armies. For the most part, Abram’s wealth would have been in his sheep, goats, cattle and other tangible riches. Chedorlaomer would have been glad to relieve Abram of all those things.

Abram, being in the place of fellowship with God, had without a doubt spent time with the Lord about this situation. Now the word had come to him of the battle in the plain of Jordan and the capture of Lot and the others. We see the “Friend of God” prepared to get involved and take action when he was desperately needed. He was ready to do what needed to be done with God’s help and for God’s glory.

1. THE HARD PURSUIT. Verse 14.

Without hesitation, Abram knows what he must do. He arms his men, 318 of them along with the men of a couple of his neighbors, and goes after this mighty army that was drunk with their successes. There is no question in Abraham’s heart as to if he should seek to rescue Lot.

The claims of a brother’s trouble are answered by the affections of a brother’s heart. This is divine. Genuine faith, while it always renders us independent, never renders us indifferent; it will never wrap itself up in its fleece while a brother shivers in the cold. ^(14b)

2. THE TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF THE ENEMY. Verses 15-17.

a. THE BATTLE. Verse 15.

Abram recognized that he and his men would be no-match for Chedorlaomer’s armies on the open battlefield so he divides his forces and launches a surprise attack at night and destroys the enemy and chases the survivors nearly to Damascus.

b. THE RESCUE. Verses 16-17

Everyone is rescued, including Lot, along with all of their material goods. On their return the king of Sodom goes out to meet the heroic Abram.

III. THE MINISTRY CARRIED ON BY THE PRIEST-KING. Verses 18-20.

Suddenly, another king shows up out of nowhere in our story and in the Bible and afterward he disappears just suddenly as he appeared. We know nothing about him except his name and the city he ruled and that he was a priest of the Most High God.

A. MELCHIZEDEK WAS KING OF SALEM.

This King shows up out of nowhere in our story and in the Bible in general and then disappears just as quickly as he appeared. We know nothing about him except his name, the city he ruled and that he was a priest of the Most High God.

He becomes in Scripture a:

1. HE IS A TREMENDOUS PICTURE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

The name Melchizedek means King of Righteousness, and Salem means peace. We see this man as the King of Righteousness, King of Peace.

2. HE HAS A MINISTRY AS A HIGH PRIEST. Verse 18.

We find out here that this man is not only a king but also a “**priest of the most high God.**”

It is peculiarly sweet to observe the manner in which Melchisedek introduces God to the thoughts of Abraham. He calls God to the thoughts of Abraham. He calls Him “the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth;” and not only so, but pronounces Abraham “blessed” of that same God. ^(14c)

a. HIS MINISTRY IS ON BEHALF OF JEHOVAH.

He comes to Abram to minister to him for “the Most High God.”

b. HIS MINISTRY PROVIDES BREAD AND WINE.

He sets bread and wine before Abram. The Lord provides a table of sustaining and satisfaction for Abram. Abram is about to face a great temptation. God is intervening and preparing him to deal with this temptation. This is the first mention in the Bible of these elements that since the death of Jesus Christ at Calvary have represented the body and the blood of our Savior, the divine King of Righteousness that gives men peace.

For the Christian these elements **look back** in memorial and remembrance of the cross. They are set before Abram as a picture, and a foreshadowing of what was to come, **looking forward** to the cross.

What a tremendous picture we have here. The King/priest, Melchizedek, the type of Christ comes and ministers to Abram in a living type or illustration of how Jesus Christ ministers to the needs of men.

3. ABRAM IS BLESSED. Verses 19-20.

Melchizedek blesses Abram, and reveals a new name of God to him, **“the Most High God which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand.”** Melchizedek makes it clear who it was that really won the victory that day, and it was **“The Most High God.”**

4. ABRAM’S RESPONSE. Verse 20b.

Immediately, Abram responds by giving tithes unto Melchizedek. Giving is an act of worship. Abram gives tithes unto Melchizedek as an act of Worship unto God in response to the great victory that God gave him. It was an expression of his gratitude for what God had done for him.

Abram gives tithes of all the spoils to the **“Most High God, possessor of Heaven and Earth.”** His giving is a returning back to the One who had given him the victory. There is no question in Abram’s mind that in the face of unsurmountable odds God gave him and his men the victory. To not return to the Lord of the spoils would be a brazen act of pride.

IV. THE TESTIMONY MADE CLEAR BY THE MAN OF GOD. Verses 21-24.

A. THE TEMPTATION. Verse 21.

If Melchizedek is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Sodom is a picture of the tempter, Satan. Immediately after the tremendous victory of faith for Abram Satan comes along with an attempt to steal away the blessing from this growing believer. He offers Abram the spoils of battle. Be mindful that Abram had already given tithes from it.

This is the way it always is. It even happened to our Lord. After the beautiful time of His baptism He was led away into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. The spoils were an appealing temptation. After all, Abram had won the victory of battle and to the victor go the spoils. But Abram was spiritually wise enough to keep his hands off the spoils of Sodom.

B. THE TESTIMONY DECLARED BY ABRAM. Verses 22-23.

1. HIS CONTINUED GROWTH IN FAITH. Verse 22.

He gives the credit to whom it belonged. He lifted his hand to God! And notice, he uses the Name of the God that he had just learned from Melchizedek. This action indicates that Abram may well have sworn unto the Lord before he ever left him that if God gave him the victory he would make no advantage of it for himself.

2. HIS FIRM REJECTION OF THE SPOIL. Verses 23-24.

He refused to make himself liable to the King of Sodom. He turns down the possibility of being put in the place where this worldly king could claim that he had made Abram rich. Abram wanted the Most High God to receive all the glory for the victory.

Abram is once again drawing a line between himself and wickedness, putting distance between himself and the world. He did what he had to do to help his brother but he did it for the glory of God and not for the pleasures or riches of the world. He met their need, rescued them, saved them from destruction. Lord help believers to learn from Abram. There is a great biblical principle to be

learned: The world needs us but we do not need the world.

NOTE: Lot returns to Sodom, but Abram returns to Hebron and please take note of the words of

Genesis 15:1

“After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.”

Our reward is not in the things of this world that are here today and soon gone. We rest in Him where we need not fear. He is our protection and our reward for all eternity. Believer, are you ready for the battles that may come your way? Only the separated believer who is in fellowship with God will be truly ready to face the foes that inevitably will come your way.

(Hebrews 12:1-2) “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.”

ABRAHAM: FRIEND OF GOD AND FATHER OF FAITH
CHAPTER 5 - GOD'S PLEDGE TO ABRAM
GENESIS 15.

Chapter 15 begins with the simple words, **“after these things.”** After what things would that be? Abram, along with his few hundred men have routed the rampaging army of King Chedorlaomer. God had given an amazing victory to His fledgling disciple. Abram rescues his nephew Lot along with the people and possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah. In a surge of victorious faith Abram refuses the tempting offer of the King of Sodom to take what he wanted of the spoils.

Now the dust of battle has settled. The captives have been rescued. The ministry of the priest of the Most High God, Melchizedec is accomplished and he has returned to Salem. Lot and the King of Sodom have returned to their wicked city.

It may be that the stark reality of what has transpired had begun to dawn on Abram. He had just defeated the most powerful King in all the East. Could it be that he will want to get revenge?

Then there were also the spoils of war that he had refused to take from the King of Sodom. Oh, my! That was a lot of wealth. Abram had valiant faith but maybe there were some second thoughts. We also have some more first mentions in this chapter.

1.) First time in the Bible we have the wonderful phrase “and the word of the Lord came.” God’s word came to minister to this believer’s heart to comfort and encourage him, saying, **“I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.” (Genesis 15:1b)**

God was saying, “Abram, I am your protection provider.” The relationship between this man, Abram and Almighty God is deepening. It is an amazing thing that three times in the Bible, Abraham is referred to as God’s friend.

2.) First time we have the word “believed.”

We will talk more about this later. Suffice it to say, the proper response to the word of God is to believe. We can believe God, and we can trust His word, just as He has given it to us. We can depend upon it. It is a wonderful truth that God does not always wait until we come to Him. Here God’s word comes to Abram. It is an expression of His loving grace when He comes to the believer through His word and assures and meets his need.

I. THE QUESTION CONCERNING THE PROMISE. Verses 2-7.

A. ABRAM’S QUESTION ABOUT THE SEED. Verses 2-3.

“LORD God what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless”

The mention of God’s reward reminds Abram of something. Obviously, this is something that has

been on Abram's mind and a burden on his heart.

Psalm 127:3

“Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.”

So God's mention of His reward stirred Abram to ask God about the seed, his heritage. There is no note of bitterness in Abram's words. In fact he shows true reverence in addressing God by the name “Lord God.” Which is “Adonai, Jehovah.” Abram has a question, “I have no children, am I to leave all my house to my chief servant?” Which would have been the customary practice of the day for a man who had no heirs.

B. GOD'S PROMISE TO ABRAM. Verses 4-7.

1. THE PROMISE. Verse 4.

But this was not to be, Abram would not be left childless; God had promised Abram a seed of his own. A son that would come forth from him.

2. THE PICTURE. Verse 5.

Genesis 14:5

“Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.”

The Lord leads Abram out away from the fires of camp and asks him to “Look up into the night sky, can you number the stars? So shall thy seed be.”

It is impossible to give a number to the stars. There is no known end to the universe. And notice here the words, “look now toward heaven.” It is as if God is saying, “look toward me, look toward the One who overflows the universe. Abram, look to me and believe that as I have placed the countless stars in the night sky so shall your seed be.”

The eternal God is superabundant in His response to the believer's request. God had previously promised him a child and yet the promise was unfulfilled. Abram asks concerning his seed. God repeats His promise to Abram but goes on to establish a home for his heritage. Hamilton Smith expands for us: **“Abraham had asked for a son, and God promised him not only a son but also an inheritance for the seed. Sonship and inheritance are the two great themes of God's reply.”**
(18a)

3. THE PROVISION. Verse 7.

God did not call Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees to make him homeless. No, quite the contrary, God had an inheritance for His friend. He had provided a possession for Abram's heritage.

II. THE SEAL OVER THE PROMISE. Verses 8-21.

A. ABRAM'S REQUEST FOR A PLEDGE. Verse 8.

Humbled, Abram seeks some assurance of this promise. God has made an awesome pledge to a mere man. Abram is not being disrespectful, just honest.

Let us rejoice in what we learn of God's love and patience as he deals with his child. Abram in his childlike faith asks God to give him some assurance of the promise. A stepping stone, if you will, for him to step out upon. We witness here an awesome and amazing covenant established between God and a man.

B. GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS TO ABRAM. Verse 9.

We have described for us a common ritual that would be used to seal a contact between two parties.

1. THE PREPARATION OF THE PLEDGE. Verse 10.

Abram carefully goes about to prepare as God had instructed him. He takes the heifer, she goat and ram and divides them in half and lays out the pieces along with the birds.

2. ABRAHAM'S WAITING. Verse 11.

Abram has everything ready, and now proceeds to wait for the Lord. He waits upon the Lord. Something that every believer must go through in his pilgrimage with God. Learning to wait upon the Lord.

Imagine the looks and the questions Abram may have had from his dear wife and his servants. What are you doing out there Abram? But Abram is waiting on God. He is acting in obedience to God and nothing and no one would deter him.

The fowls of the air, (probably vultures) come and try to peck and tear away at the sacrifices. Birds of the air in this context speak of evil spirits and the attacks of Satan. You can be sure that as you wait upon God, Satan will try to discourage you and keep you from the blessing that God has in store for you. **“Submit therefore unto God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7).**

Abram illustrates for us that the believer must fight off Satan's attacks that he wages against us. Resist, refuse to allow God's blessing to be stolen from you and wait patiently with the Lord.

It is not easy to watch with God, or to wait for Him. The orbit of His providence is so vast. The stages of His progress are so wide apart. He holds on His way through the ages; we tire in a few short hours. And when His dealings with us are perplexing and mysterious, the heart that had boasted its unwavering loyalty begins to grow faint with misgivings, and to question-When shall we be able to trust absolutely, and not be afraid? ^(15b)

C. GOD'S PROPHECY UNTO ABRAM. Verses 12-16.

1. CONCERNING THEIR CAPTIVITY IN EGYPT. Verses 13-14.

God gives Abram a word concerning the 400 years that his heritage would spend in cruel bondage under taskmasters in the land of Egypt. The Lord assures Abram though that their captors would be judged and they would be delivered. Such records in the Word of God give the Bible student great

confidence in its trustworthiness.

2. CONCERNING HIS OWN DEATH.

A word of encouragement to Abram, he had no need to fear his enemies. He would live a long life and **“be buried in a good old age.”(Genesis 15:15b).**

3. CONCERNING THE SEED’S RETURN. Verses 16; 18.

The promise that He will bring them back to the land. Look at this promise. God promised that all the land between the Nile and Euphrates rivers belonged to the Seed of Abram. Who is that seed? Israel. This promise is yet to be completely fulfilled. It was nearly fulfilled in the reign of Solomon but never to its completion. Be assured, as God is true to His word, it will be carried out. God keeps His promises to their complete fulfillment. The efforts of the Arab world coupled with the United Nations will not prevail. Believers must enter in and pray for God’s shielding and reward to be brought to pass for the seed of Abraham.

All this carried out with an:

D. UNCONDITIONAL PLEDGE TO ABRAM.

1. ABRAM IS PUT ASIDE. Verse 17.

Usually both parties would take part in the pledge and walk between the animal parts together signifying the covenant to each other.

2. GOD PLEDGES ON HIMSELF. Verse 18.

God makes it clear that He was guaranteeing the conditions of this covenant in Himself. Abram would simply be the recipient of all its benefits. The fulfillment of the pledge did not rest upon him, but upon God.

In our redemption from sin, we are set aside and God accomplishes it all. Jesus Christ stepped in and took our place and gave Himself as the sacrifice that sealed the New Covenant in His blood. We simply believe and by God’s grace through faith the believer becomes the recipient of God’s reward.

III. THE BELIEVING OF THE PROMISE. Verse 6.

Abram believed the promises of God. He believed that God would raise up a great multitude through him.

A. THE TIME THAT ABRAM BELIEVED.

When did Abram believe? After this demonstration concerning the promise or before? Before. Abram believed what God told him. He believed that God would multiply him as the stars of heaven.

B. THE TRUTH THAT ABRAM BELIEVED. Romans 4:1-5.

Romans 4:1-5

“What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?

For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”

1. ABRAM HAD NOTHING TO BOAST IN. Romans 4:2.

Abram’s salvation rested upon what God did. Abram’s responsibility was but to believe. His faith rested in God and God accounted it to him for righteousness. No works, no accomplishments of the flesh- simply believe.

2. ABRAM BELIEVED. Vs. 3.

Abram believed God. God’s program for man is not a complicated one.

C. THE TRUTH THAT WE BELIEVE. Verses 20-25.

Today all of us who believe God’s promise to save **“by grace through faith,”** will receive that same accounting from God.

Ephesians 2:8-9

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

What do you have to do to be saved? Simply believe! All those who trust God’s word to them and place their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord will be saved.

ABRAHAM: FRIEND OF GOD AND FATHER OF FAITH
CHAPTER 6 - THE BREAKDOWN IN ABRAM'S HOME
GENESIS 16

This time we get to know Sarai a little better, unfortunately we don't get to see her in a very good light from what we read here in Genesis. So let's look at this lady from God's perspective. Be mindful that Chapter 16 of Genesis she has yet reached this point in her spiritual life.

Hebrews 11:11

“Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.”

It is interesting that God often sees things and people a lot differently than we do. At any rate, we find in Genesis 16 the first biblical record of domestic strife within the home. This is a hard story to report about one of your heroes, but I thank God that He is honest about His children's failures as well as their victories.

We would like to believe that when the Lord saves us that the problems with the old man and his ways are over. But the truth is we, and as we see in this chapter, Abram had trouble with self and with rationalizing situations in spite of the promises of God concerning those situations.

I. THE STRIFE WITHIN ABRAM'S HOME. Verses 1-4.

Sarai despaired over her barrenness. We can assume that Abram has shared the amazing promises that God had made to him concerning blessing him with a great posterity. This dear lady was depressed over the fact that she had not been able to give Abram a single child.

A. SARAI'S PROTEST. Verses 1-2a.

1. THE WIFE IS BARREN.

Sara was about seventy years old at this time. So humanly speaking she was convinced that it was not very likely that she would have a child. She is dealing the heartache of unfulfilled dreams of motherhood.

2. THE PRESENCE OF HAGAR.

Hagar is the other woman in this odd triangle of relationships. She is introduced to us in the first verse. She was probably acquired or given to Abram during his stay in Egypt. Remember that Egypt is a picture and type of the world, including all of its temptations and snares for the child of God.

Please consider this biblical principle; when God's people return to the world they will more than likely get involved in things they ought not, and even when they get right and get back out of the world and return to the Lord they will carry things with them that they would be better off without.

Remember that while Abram was in Egypt he found himself caught up in a life that brought shame to himself and put his wife in a very bad situation. Now, even though he left Egypt years ago, he is

still carrying baggage in his life that he picked up there.

3. THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF GOD'S RESTRAINT.

As Sarai airs her complaint to Abram she acknowledges that it is the Lord that has kept her from having a baby, **“Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing.” (Genesis 16:2a)**. And yet she proceeds to reveal to her husband her scheme to circumvent the will and timing of God to get her will accomplished.

The Lord says **“not my will but thy will be done.” (Luke 22:42)**. Sarai says, “Not Thy will but my will be done.”

B. SARAI'S PLAN. Verses 2b-3.

The plan was very simple. Abram would take Hagar as a secondary wife and have a child by her. Since Hagar is Sarai's maid, the child will actually belong to her.

It was a customary practice of Canaan, the land in which Abram lived, that a child born through a secondary wife could legally be made Sarai's. Abram desperately wanted a child and in his flesh it was not hard for him to succumb to this idea.

Sarai had come to him with this option; it was her idea. And after all, the Lord never said Sarai would have to be the mother of the promised seed just that Abram would be the father. It is much easier to err from God's word when others are on the same path.

C. ABRAM'S PLIANCY. Verse 4a.

We have no record here of Abram protesting that this plan was contrary to the will of God. Rather, he submitted to his wife's scheme. He rationalized away all of the problems that were present with this fleshly action.

Abram consented to use the methods of the world to accomplish God's work. Remember, this was an acceptable practice to the lost world around him. But, God's people are called to live above the world's standards and the world's reasoning. The world is all for, “the end justifies the means.” But the believer is to have a much different rule for his life. If the glory of God is the ultimate end of all the believer does then it should not be “the end justifies the means” but rather, “the end determines the means.”

We might be quick to say, “shame on Abram, why didn't he just wait.”

Spiritual Lesson: Unfortunately, what Abram did is quite common in our day. Take heed to the warning of John Phillips:

We see a similar kind of thing done all the time. A church or a child of God is barren. There is seemingly no blessing, no fruit. Instead of waiting for God, Hagar is brought in, some worldly expedient is adopted. It gets results of course - but of the wrong kind. ^(17e)

The temptation is very real. Our labor for God does not seem to be blessed. Souls are not being saved and God's promises seem so unreachable. We would like to see something happening. So we bring in a Hagar. A worldly option is adopted, and sure enough "results" are achieved, but they are not of God. As a result, they create far more problems than they solve.

II. FRUIT OF SARAI'S PLAN. Verses 4b-6.

A. HAGAR'S PRIDE. Verse 4b.

Once Hagar conceived she is suddenly the host of the camp. No doubt, Abram is overjoyed that he is finally going to be a father. Now Hagar begins treating Sarai with contempt. "Look, I have done for Abram what Sarai could not do. Now I will be the favorite." Well, she greatly miscalculated. How our sin can haunt us!

B. SARAI'S BITTER HEART. Verses 5-6.

1. SARAI'S BLAMING OF ABRAM. Verse 5.

a. SHIFTING OF THE BLAME. Verse 5a.

Some things are constants in human nature. We always want to blame someone else for our sin. Sarai puts the blame on Abram.

b. ABRAM'S RESPONSIBILITY.

Who ultimately is responsible for this mess? Abram is. He was responsible to lead his home in righteousness. It was his duty to do right regardless of what his wife suggested.

2. ABRAM'S APPEASING OF SARAI. Verse 6a.

Abram wants peace in his home. And he is not willing to deal with his own mess so he invites his wife to do whatever she desires with her slave. And so she does.

3. HAGAR'S FLEEING FROM SARAI. Verse 6b.

Hagar's name means "flight" and we find her taking off. These three people are in a real mess.

III. THE SAD RESULTS OF SINFUL BEHAVIOR IN ABRAM'S HOME.

A. ABRAM LOSES CONTROL OF HIS HOME.

Abram behaves shamefully here. He knew better. He knew God's promise, and had been previously satisfied to wait on the Lord. Now he succumbs to his wife's misdirected advice. To her credit, Sarai had probably advised Abram wisely and helpfully many times in other areas in their years together. But this emotional and desperate plan should have been immediately rejected by the head of the home, Abram.

Be careful of well-intentioned advice. (**Deuteronomy 13:6-8**) warns that it may take you away from the Lord.

“If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; Namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him.”

Abram was to be the physical as well as spiritual leader in his home. Remember Sarai’s was a secondary faith. All she knew of the Lord was what Abram had taught her. The word of the Lord did not come to Sarai. It came to Abram.

Abram could have nipped this whole thing in the bud, but he did not. Now he is reaping the results of his sin.

B. SARAI LEAVES HER BIBLICAL ROLE AS WIFE.

1 Peter 3:6

“Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.”

From what we read of Sara in the New Testament this whole scene seems out of character. Peter holds her up to wives as an example of a godly submissive wife. Remember ladies, she called her husband lord. For the normal husband that does have a nice ring to it.

But once this home started down this road away from the Lord we find Sarai tangled in a web of emotions she can no longer control; bitterness and anger overwhelm her.

C. HAGAR IS EXPLOITED AND MISTREATED.

1. SHE IS TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF.

She is treated like a piece of property. Worse yet she is used as breeding stock. She was to be the first surrogate mother. And just as now it created a tangled mess of bitterness and jealousy.

2. SHE IS AFFLICTED BY HER MISTRESS.

Sarai’s jealousy causes her to mistreat Hagar. The words, **“dealt harshly”** mean to humiliate, afflict, and to mistreat. Sarai, venting her vengeance for Hagar’s prideful spirit openly shamed her before those she had briefly felt so superior to.

3. SHE IS SHOWN A POOR TESTIMONY.

This Egyptian maid, a person from the world, is brought into the home of a believer and treated shamefully. In a place where she should have been treated with graciousness and kindness, she is done horribly.

IV. GOD'S SOVEREIGN INTERVENTION IN ABRAM'S HOME. Verses 7-16.

Bless the Lord for His mercy even to an Egyptian slave girl.

A. THE LORD'S APPEARANCE TO HAGAR. Verses 7-8.

It appears that Hagar intends to go home to Egypt. This fountain in the way to Shur is on the border of Egypt. One thing for sure, she wants to get as far as she can from these "believers." May the Lord ever remind us that our bad testimony can drive folks away from God.

Notice something very significant: the Lord did not appear to the believer, Abram, and tell him to go get Hagar. Rather, He appears to an unbeliever, to this lost and fearful slave girl. The Angel of the Lord, goes to this tired, dejected, worn out, slave and meets her at a well.

B. THE LORD'S ADDRESS TO HAGAR. Verses 8-12.

1. HIS QUESTION. Verse 8b.

We realize of course that the Lord knows exactly what has happened to Hagar. For whatever reason He wants to hear from her heart. But they are the age old questions: where have you come from and where are you headed? A couple of thoughts come to mind:

- 1.) What is your life all about and where is it taking you? Are you going with the Lord?
- 2.) Yes, things can get very hard in life but running away is seldom the best answer.

2. HIS INSTRUCTIONS. Verse 9.

Return and submit. But, God also gives this mistreated young woman a promise.

3. HIS PROPHECY CONCERNING THE CHILD.

A word of comfort.

- a. **GOD CALMED HER FEARS.**
- b. **GOD HEARD HER CRIES.**
- c. **GOD SAW HER AFFLICTION.**

What a wonderful that even in the midst of this human tragedy; God is there to minister to this dear lady in a great time of trial.

C. HAGAR'S CONFESSION OF THE LORD.

Genesis 16:13

"And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?"

Hagar makes an oral confession and responds with obedient repentance; she returned.

Believers, might we learn from the mistakes made in this home. Our home is to be a place ruled and controlled by the Lord and His Word. The things that go on behind closed doors might not be known

to our neighbors but they are surely known unto the Lord.

1.) Men, you are responsible for the spiritual growth and welfare of your family.

You are to be the spiritual leader in your home. You are responsible to teach your family the word of God and be God's representative within your home. You cannot pass that off to your wife or the church.

2.) We must never supercede the will of God by our will.

Our God desires our love and obedience to Him more than anything else. In fact our love for Him will result in our obedience to Him.

Jesus said, **“if you love me, keep my commandments.” (John 14:15)**

Our overstepping God's Word will always affect many others, possibly for a long, long time.

We are in the midst of a war of terror with the descendants of Ishmael. Israel, Abraham's descendants through the promised seed have been threatened by the Arab peoples throughout their history. We can never minimize the repercussions of our actions.

3.) Realize God does not need our help to accomplish His purposes.

Doing things God's way and within His timetable is important. Abram thought he could help God's program along and it didn't work. Result, Abram spent the next 13 years in silence from God. No word, no growth.

ABRAHAM: FRIEND OF GOD AND FATHER OF FAITH
CHAPTER 7 - GOD RENEWS HIS COVENANT
GENESIS 17

Humanly speaking, Abram had it made. He had all the wealth he could ever need. He had the blessing of knowing the living God. He had the promise from God that he would be given a great posterity. He was told that a great nation would come from him. He was also assured that he and his posterity had the promise of a homeland for ever. He had the Word of God on it. But, as time passed, Abram allowed anxiety to get the best of him. Rather than wait for God to accomplish His plan, His way; Abram took matters into his own hands and with his wife's encouragement, married Hagar and produced Ishmael.

As a result of Abram presumptuously moving ahead of God, he experienced thirteen years of silence from heaven, covering Genesis 16:16 through 17:1. No further word from God during this time, no growth in his relationship with God, nothing worth noting happens for thirteen years. What was going on during this time? What was going through Abram's mind? He now enjoyed the company of a son. Everything seemed just fine. But, he would soon learn otherwise.

Before we go on, might we ask the question that Abram should have asked himself, "are we in a spiritual drought in our lives? Are we in the proverbial wilderness, spiritually?" If so, I pray we might be helped through God's dealing with Abram.

I. THE RENEWAL OF THE COVENANT. Genesis 17:1-16.

In the first 21 verses of this chapter God speaks of this covenant with Abram as, "my covenant" eight times. Beloved, once again God is emphasizing that He is the author and guarantor of this covenant.

A. THE SILENCE IS BROKEN. Verses 1-3.

1. GOD'S WORD TO ABRAM.

God once again talks to Abram as He did before. God is the initiator in renewing fellowship with Abram.

a. THE NAMES OF GOD.

We have three names for God used in the first three verses of chapter 17. **JEHOVAH** translated **LORD**, meaning the Existing One. This is the "I am" that met Moses at the burning bush and delivered the Jews from the Egyptian bondage. This is also Jesus (Jehovah's Salvation) of the New Testament; the great "I AM" of the Gospel of John, the ever-existing God.

The second name we have here is **EL-SHADDIA** translated "The Almighty God," declaring God's all powerful, enabling and giving of Himself for His people.

The third name is **ELOHIM**, translated "God," which speaks of His ultimate and absolute nature. It is the plural name for God. We get the picture in this name that the entire Trinity is involved in what is going to take place. It intimates to us that all three persons of the Godhead are part of

communicating these words to Abram.

b. THE WORD FROM GOD. “Walk before me, and be thou perfect.” (Genesis 17:1b)

The idea is not sinless perfection but spiritual completeness. Indeed the believer is never sinless but is completely complete in his Savior. Very simple instructions are given to Abram, but what an enormous responsibility. Abram is told to live and walk before God in wholehearted sincerity.

2. ABRAM’S RESPONSE. Verse 3a.

Abram does not respond with single a word, he simply falls on his face. Thirteen years of silence had been broken and Abram simply prostrates himself in subjection before God. Not a bad idea for anyone. “Oh Lord, help us to walk in complete submission and sincerity before You.”

B. GOD’S WORD CONCERNING THE COVENANT SEED. Verses 4-7.

1. ABRAM’S PLACE IN THE COVENANT.

God had chosen to create a people for Himself out of Abram. Abram was the recipient of God’s special attention and privilege. Along with that special attention comes responsibility.

2. ABRAM’S NAME IS CHANGED.

No longer was his name to be “Abram” or high father. It was now to be “Abraham,” which means “father of a multitude.” That is very interesting since up to this point Abraham had one child, Ishmael, and he was NOT the Lord’s child of the promise. Five times in the first six verses God mentions His promise to make many nations of Abraham.

But looking at this from God’s perspective, the Lord had not even begun to build this great nation out of Abraham, yet it was as good as done in the mind and purposes of God Verse 5 says, “**a father of many nations have I made thee.**” *Emphasis mine.* The Hebrew grammar has this in the perfect tense which describes a completed action. But, how can that be when it is yet future. When God declares something will be so it is as if it is already completed and its certainty is as if it were already accomplished.

3. GOD PROMISES TO BLESS ABRAHAM’S SEED.

a. NATIONS AND KINGS WOULD COME FROM ABRAM. Vs. 6.

God is going to take this 99 year old man and bring out of him many nations and kings. And so God did. Indeed, this was fulfilled in a literal sense. There would be kings come from the twelve tribes of Ishmael, and the twelve tribes of Israel, and then there are also the sons that would come of Abraham’s third wife Ketura, who he married after Sarah’s death. But, supreme to it all is the King of kings, the Lion of the tribe of Judah that would one day come from Abraham.

b. THE COVENANT PROMISE TO ABRAHAM WAS ETERNAL. Verse 7.

Jehovah, the eternal LORD, El Shaddai, “All Mighty,” Elohim, Triune God promises that the duration of this covenant is perpetual, it will continue for ever.

C. THE WORD CONCERNING THE COVENANT LAND. Verse 8.

- 1. THE EXTENT OF THE PROMISE. “All the land of Canaan.” (Genesis 17:8a)**
- 2. THE DURATION OF THE PROMISE. “For an everlasting possession.” (Genesis 17:8b).**

There is no way of explaining this away. The Arabs deny it. The nations of the earth may ignore it, but these promises are certain and eternal. John Phillips comments: **“The land of Israel does not belong to the Arabs, for all their clamor. It was not deeded to Ishmael, but to Isaac.”** ^(17f)

D. THE WORD CONCERNING THE COVENANT MARK. Verses 9-14.

This subject takes up a big section of this chapter.

1. THE MARK OF THE COVENANT. Verses 9-10.

A knife was to be taken up against the flesh. All males eight days old and over were to be circumcised. This mark was to be a token of the covenant that God had established with Abraham. They did not receive the blessings of the covenant because of the mark but circumcision was to be a distinguishing mark or sign that Abraham and his seed were the covenant people of God.

2. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE MARK. Verses 11-14.

a. IT INVOLVED THE SEED.

All of Abraham’s posterity plus all who came under his care were to receive the mark.

b. IT CONCERNED A TOKEN. Verse 11.

The mark was to be a sign of the covenant that God was establishing with Abraham.

c. IT CONCERNED OBEDIENCE. Verse 14.

The Bible makes clear that God desires obedience from those who have placed their trust in His promises. But God does not want simple outward obedience. His desire is that the child of God obey Him from their heart.

Romans 2:29

“But he is a Jew, which is none inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”

God desires the believer’s obedience not simply out of conformity to the letter of the law but from the heart. Summed up in the old saying I have heard much lately, “The Lord desires us to do right with the right heart attitude.”

Colossians 2:10-12

"And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the

sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”

Where circumcision was the Old Testament physical mark of the believer, baptism is the New Testament spiritual mark of the one who has been made complete, perfect in Christ. Baptism is the obedient expression of the operation of God to give the believer a circumcised heart. Baptism no more saves the New Testament believer than circumcision saved Abraham. **“Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” (Romans 4:3)** The believer is saved by grace **“through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” (Ephesians 2:8)**

E. THE WORD CONCERNING SARAI AND THE COVENANT PROMISE. Verses 15-16.

This promise also involved Sarai. Which is where Abraham had missed it 13 years earlier. God would fulfill His promise to Abraham through his true wife, Sarai, Not Hagar.

1. THE WORD CONCERNING SARAI’S NAME. Verse 15.

Abraham’s wife would no longer be called “Sarai” now she would be known as “Sarah,” “a princess.” What is the difference? Sarah was to be considered a noble princess, a princess from whom kings would come.

2. THE WORD CONCERNING SARAH’S BARRENNESS. Verse 16.

The promise was once again reiterated. Sarah would bare Abraham a son. This ninety year old woman would be the mother of nations.

It has now been twenty-four years since Abraham left Haran. The promise has not changed, rather it has been reinforced and clarified time and again. Sarah would bare Abraham a son at this time the next year according to verse 21.

II. THE RECEPTION OF THE COVENANT. Verses 17-18.

A. ABRAHAM’S HOLY LAUGHTER. Verse 17.

There are different kinds of laughter. Abraham’s laughter is not the laughter of unbelief. It is the expression of the overwhelming joy that comes from the heart that is sweetened by the Word of God through the Spirit of God. This is the rejoicing laughter of faith.

B. ABRAHAM’S HEARTFELT LONGING. “Oh that Ishmael might live before thee.” (Genesis 17:18)

Abraham’s thoughts go to Ishmael. He had poured his life into the young lad. For thirteen years he had tried to convince himself that Ishmael was the promised seed. But, God does not, and will not accept the works of our flesh to accomplish His plans. This is nothing new, it is the tendency of human flesh to produce Ishmaels rather than depend on God to accomplish His work His way.

Christians and churches are begging God to bless their programs and their man made, flesh centered

methods and plans. And God will have nothing to do with it. He will not own such things. It may appear that God is blessing the worldly plans and fleshly methods of many churches. But, flesh, no matter how much you clean it up; no matter how you dress it up; is still nothing more than flesh. Remember, God told Abraham, **“walk before me, and be thou perfect.” (Genesis 17:1)** That is all that God requires of His children. He requires that they submit to Him and obey His word with all of the heart.

III. THE REWARD OF THE COVENANT. Verses 19-22.

A. THE PROMISED SEED SHALL COME THROUGH SARAH.

1. THE PROMISE OF ISAAC. Verses 19, 21-22.

It is not accident that the name Isaac means “laughter.” There is true joy in God’s blessing. It is as though God is saying, “Abraham, I will give you true joy through my promised seed to you.”

2. THE INHERITANCE OF ISAAC. Verse 19b.

The covenant would be passed on through Isaac. He would receive the promise of the seed and the promise of the land. God makes this promise to an unborn and yet future child. He even names him for Abraham.

B. A PROVISION IS MADE FOR ISHMAEL. Verse 20.

God responds to Abraham’s intercession for Ishmael. The LORD is a God of abundant and amazing mercy to His children and that even when they have not been faithful to His Word He blesses them.

1. THE PROMISE OF A SEED FOR ISHMAEL Verse 20a.

God promises fruitfulness for Ishmael and that he would become a great nation as well.

2. THERE IS NO PROMISE OF LAND FOR ISHMAEL.

God would bless Ishmael for Abraham’s sake but note must be taken of the obvious omission of a promise concerning a land for Ishmael’s descendants, the Arabs. Abraham was promised all the land of Canaan in verse 8 but that promise would proceed to Isaac.

The Palestinian people have no legitimate claim to Canaan. Their desire for a Palestinian homeland is a Satanic plot to drive Israel into the Mediterranean Sea. To a very great extent their purpose in turning world sentiment for them and against Israel has been extremely successful. God will fulfill His promise to Abraham as He ordained it in spite of the Arabs, and in spite of all those who are in league with them to destroy Israel.

IV. ABRAHAM’S RESPONSE TO THE COVENANT. Verses 23-27.

A. ABRAHAM OBEYED GOD. Verse 23.

Obedience to the revelation of the Lord is what God expects from us. If you are lost, His word to you is, **“believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.” (Acts 16:31)**. If you are saved it is, **“walk before me and be thou perfect.” (Genesis 17:1)**.

B. ABRAHAM OBEYED IMMEDIATELY. Verses 23 & 26.

The same day Abraham received this word from God he obeyed. Delayed obedience is nothing more than disobedience until the believer moves according to the command of God.

C. ABRAHAM OBEYED COMPLETELY. Verse 27.

Abraham did exactly what the Lord told him to do. Every male in the camp eight days old and up was circumcised.

D. ABRAHAM OBEYED BY EXAMPLE. Verses 24-26.

The believer here sets the example for those around him. He led the way for the camp.

Brothers and sisters in Christ: there may be times when we side step the Lord and His Word in our lives. But, when God in His mercy deals with you about it, do not hesitate to respond. Do not hold back from Him; fall on your face before Him, repent and **“walk before him, and be thou perfect.” (Genesis 17:1)**. If you do err from the will and word of God, it may be a long time before he sees fit to break the silence and deal with you again.

Praise the Lord for the words of: **“if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)** That is a promise from God.

Believer, trust God completely; He promises you His direction for your life.

Proverbs 3:5-6

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

ABRAHAM - FRIEND OF GOD AND FATHER OF FAITH
CHAPTER 8 - ABRAHAM'S SURPRISE VISITORS
GENESIS 18:1-15

We come to Abraham at a very peaceful, and relaxed time. It is the middle of the day. The sun is high in the sky. Everyone in the camp has found a place to relax and escape the midday heat. It was the Middle-Eastern "Siesta time." But something happens to break up the relaxed scene, out of nowhere some visitors arrive in the camp.

I. THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF THE LORD. Verses 1-5.

A. THE SURPRISE GUESTS AT ABRAHAM'S CAMP. Verses 1-3.

There is no question as to whom the primary visitor is. Verse one makes it very clear. It is the LORD. This is a pre-incarnate appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. THE VISITOR'S SUDDEN ARRIVAL AT ABRAM'S CAMP.

Three men suddenly appear out of the wilderness.

2. THE VISIT FROM OUT OF NOWHERE.

This was a very unusual time for anyone to be traveling. It was not normal for anyone to be traveling in the heat of the day, especially walking. They probably appeared at the edge of Abraham's encampment directly from heaven. These men received Abraham's immediate interest.

3. THE HOST AND HIS HOSPITALITY.

Abraham jumps up and runs out to the men. I do not think this was the normal reaction for this one hundred-year old man. It is doubtful that he did this every time someone approached the camp. As Abraham looks at these three, something seems to make him realize that these were no normal men, but that he had visitors from heaven in the camp. Note that he **"bowed himself toward the ground."**

He confesses: **"my Lord, if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant."** (Genesis 18:3).

Abraham seeks the privilege of serving the Lord, "if I have found favor (or acceptance) in thy sight allow me to be your servant." (Paraphrase is the author's invention)

B. THE KIND GESTURES OF ABRAHAM'S HOSPITALITY. Verses 4-8.

To some extent these are the actions of a good oriental host. He provides water to refresh, cool and wash their feet. But there seems to be some extra attention and care given by Abraham to these guests. What a pleasant scene is developing here. We can imagine the picture in our mind's eye. The three visitors are led to the shade of a tree and water is brought to them to wash the dust from their feet cooling and refreshing them. As the guests make themselves comfortable in the shade, Abraham goes on to offer the blessings of his home to them and desires to provide them some food to sustain them on their journey. He receives permission from the leader to serve them: **"so do, as**

thou hast said.” (Genesis 18:5b)

1. ABRAHAM’S EXCITEMENT.

The mood of these verses tells us that Abraham is very excited, almost giddy. He hurries to the tent, he runs to the herd, and personally hurries the preparations along.

I can imagine how one of us would react if the Lord Jesus suddenly appeared at our door. I would hope that excitement would fill the entire household. Abraham is obviously honored that the Lord has seen fit to bless him in this way.

There is an interesting thought to consider at this point. Abraham is quick to entertain these strangers and by that he is blessed to have the Lord grant His presence at his home. It is possible that we could miss out on such blessings for ourselves and our homes. It is very important that we be sensitive to the leadership of the Lord. F. B. Meyer makes a very good application:

May it not be that Christ comes to us often in the guise of a stranger? - But we are too busy, or too tired, or too much afraid of making a mistake; and therefore, we either refuse Him altogether, or we treat Him so badly that He passes unobserved away, to carry to some one else the blessing which He would have left with us had we only shown ourselves worthy. ^(15c)

2. ABRAHAM’S PROVISION.

a. THE PREPARATIONS. Verses 5-7. “I will fetch bread” (Genesis 18:5a).

The bread that had been baked that morning was not good enough, there must be fresh for the Lord. Please remember it is now the heat of the day. He informs Sarah that he wants her to take **“three measures of fine flour”** and prepare cakes upon the hearth. The amount that Abraham is asking for is about three times as much bread as three average men would eat in an entire day. He desires to take very good care of his guests.

The main course was to be veal cutlets, from the herd, which Abraham has one of his young men dress out. Milk to drink and butter for the fresh bread is provided. It sounds like a fine meal.

b. THE PARTICIPATION. Verse eight.

This situation could be likened to the husband that calls from work and says to his wife, “honey I’m bringing the boss home for dinner. And by the way, we will be there in thirty minutes.” That would normally produce some hysteria in the average household. But we do not find that here. No, Abraham enters in and helps with the preparations. He does not just give orders from the shade of the tree. Not at all, rather because of his willingness to participate, the household responds to the emergency in full cooperation. That is a very important lesson to the Christian husband. Do not expect anything more from your household than you are willing to do yourself.

That goes for the physical but also for spiritual things. Generally, our children will only grow in the Lord as far as we take them. It is a rare young person that will out grow his parent’s example. What example are we giving our children and grandchildren concerning the priority we give to the things of God?

3. ABRAHAM'S ATTITUDE. "And he stood by them under the tree." (Genesis 18:8b). Abraham serves the guests himself. He does not sit while his servants take care of the visitors. He cares for them himself. This speaks to Abraham's recognition of the dignity of his guests. As they eat, he stands by to get anything they might need. He is there to refill their cups or get them more meat.

A totally secondary thought comes to mind. It has been said by some in our politically correct era that Jesus never ate meat. They are attempting to support the "vegans" or vegetarian fad. Well, we find here that the Lord sets down to a nice meal of beef fresh from the heard.

But of far greater importance, we find that Abraham is growing in the Lord. We see his desire is to serve the Lord, he is not content to sit by while others do the work.

We are of course always very thankful for those who faithfully labor for the Lord through the local church. But, there are many Christians that are just along for the ride.

- a.) That applies to our families.
- b.) That applies to our churches.

Some do all they can to avoid commitment. What would the Lord think if He were present in the ongoing work of the church? Oh, that's right, He is present! There are many that have been hurt in Christian service. "Join the club." Most all at some time or another have been treated less than what we thought was right. I do not mean to be crude but, "so what?" We need to get over ourselves. We need to remember the sufferings and mistreatment of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have to get beyond the past and remember that we are in God's work for the honor and glory of our Savior not our own. We must choose to serve our wonderful Lord and keep our eyes fixed upon Him. We will answer to Him one day in the end.

C. THE LORD'S WORDS CONCERNING ABRAHAM'S WIFE. Verses 9-15.

1. THE LORD'S QUESTION ABOUT SARAH. "Where is Sarah thy wife?" (Genesis 18:9).

I do not think the Lord needed to be told where Sarah was. This was His way of turning the conversation to the subject for which He came. There is no question that at the mention of her name, the Lord got Sarah's attention.

Abraham tells the Lord, "**she is in the tent.**" Actually, (reading between the lines here) it seems Sarah was pressed up against the tent wall trying to hear every word that was being said. She was probably trying to figure out who this man was that Abraham is making such a fuss over.

2. THE LORD'S PROMISE CONCERNING SARA. Verse 10.

Sara is going to have a son. Now this was not big news to Abraham, (Genesis 17:21) but evidently he had not let his 90-year old wife know what the Lord had in store for her.

3. THE SMIRKING OF SARAH CONCERNING THE LORD'S WORDS. Verses 11-12.

Sarah about comes through the side of the tent when she hears this. She realizes that this is humanly impossible. She knows she has already gone through the change of life. Verse 11 tells us **“It ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.”** As she considers the words of this strange man, she silently laughs at the possibility of having a child.

4. THE LORD'S INTERROGATION OF SARAH. Verses 13-14.

The Lord is well aware that Sarah hears all that is being said so this conversation is for Sara's benefit.

a. WHY DID SARAH SCORN? Verse 13.

This is the same word in the Hebrew that we had in Chapter 17 when Abraham laughed for joy with the promise of Isaac. And it is the same word for laughter that is used in Chapter 21 when Sara laughs for joy at the birth of Isaac. But in this case it is the laughter of scorn and unbelief. When we hear someone laugh it is not hard to figure out the motive of their laughter. And it is certainly no problem for the Lord to discern the spirit of Sarah's laugh.

This question is directed to Abraham, **“wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?’” (Genesis 18:13).**

The LORD, Jehovah holds this husband accountable for his wife. Permit me to paraphrase, “what is this, Abraham, why have you not prepared Sarah for this? Why is she surprised, why does she doubt? Why have you not been teaching your family My Word?” Yes, even the best believers can fail in the most fundamental responsibilities. The Lord had earlier in chapter 17:19 given Abraham the assurance that his wife, Sarah, would have a son and even given him his name. But, evidently, Abraham had not been informing his wife of God's intentions.

b. WHY DOES SARAH DOUBT? Verse 13b.

Again, paraphrased, “I, the Lord, have given you my word on this, why do you doubt?” We say, “Oh my, isn't it terrible that Sarah doubted the Lord?” But how many of us are doubting the Word of God in our lives?

(1) MAYBE YOU DOUBT YOUR SALVATION.

Has God not promised to save all those who call upon His name in repentance from sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? Our salvation is a matter of trusting that God will do what he says He will do. The integrity of God guarantees that His word is certain and trustworthy. **“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Romans 10:13).**

(2) MAYBE YOU DOUBT THAT GOD HEARS YOUR PRAYERS.

Yet God has promised to hear the prayer of the righteous. Our faith is often faulty. What are we basing our faith on, God or ourselves?

1 Peter 3:12

“For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers ...”

(3) MAYBE YOU DOUBT THAT GOD IS ABLE TO TAKE CARE OF YOU.

Yet God says clearly in His inspired word to us:

Philippians 4:19

“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

(4) MAYBE AS A CHURCH WE DOUBT THAT GOD IS ABLE TO DO GREAT THINGS FOR US.

Yet God has said, **“I will build my church and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:18).**

c. IS GOD NOT ABLE TO DO WHAT HE SAYS?

Brothers and Sisters, the question to Sarah and to all of us is, “is anything too hard for the LORD?” There is nothing (other than sin) that God is not able to do.

Jeremiah 32:17

“Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for Thee.”

To make things absolutely clear, the Lord repeats what He intends to do, in spite of the human obstacles. **“And Sarah shall have a son.” (Genesis 18:14b).**

5. THE DENIAL OF SARAH. Verse 15a.

Out of fear Sarah realizes she blew it and now tries to deny what she had thought and said within her heart. Denial is a common defense mechanism to try to escape sin’s guilt in our life. Surely, we have all seen this in our children. “I didn’t do it.” But we are often also guilty of this, as the Lord puts His finger on something in our lives through the reading or the preaching of the Word of God we seek to rationalize, “that is not my sin, I don’t have a problem with that.” “I didn’t do that.”

6. THE FIRM CONVINCING OF THE LORD. “Nay; but thou didst laugh.” (Genesis 18:15b).

Period, end of the subject. Nothing more is said, and Sara holds her peace before the Lord. There will come the day that we will all stand before the Lord God and hold our tongues. Believers, we will stand before Him and account for what we have done with our lives for (or not for) Him. There will be a reckoning concerning our rewards or in many cases the loss of rewards we could have had.

The lost will stand before him in judgment for sin. With the question before them, “what did you do with my Son? Why did you not receive Him as the payment for your sin?” And the denial will come, “Me! I’m not a sinner.” God will say “Nay; but thou hast sinned.” And that will be the end of it, and the beginning of an eternity under wrath in hell’s judgment.

What does the Bible say about the unbeliever? **“For all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God.” (Romans 3:23).** We have all broken the commands of God and are guilty before Him without excuse or exception. The Bible tells us, **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,” (Acts 16:31).** Receive His mercy.

Note: The way the Lord handles this, there is a firm but gentle control of the whole situation. This episode changed Sarah’s life. It may well be that she was saved at this very time.

Hebrews 11:11

“Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.”

This is God’s testimony concerning this lady! She must have, just like Abraham, believed. We serve a tremendous God. He is a God who knows His children personally and intimately. A God who comes and visits them, and fellowships with them. He is a God who accomplishes His promises to them. Cast away all your doubts. Believe that He is able to do as He promises.

ABRAHAM - FRIEND OF GOD AND FATHER OF FAITH
CHAPTER 9 - ABRAHAM THE INTERCESSOR
GENESIS 18:16-33

We continue looking at this unusual visit that the Lord, Jehovah made to Abraham. He came to Abraham to talk to him about His promise to him concerning his family, and now He is leaving for a far more sobering task. He is going to share with Abraham what He is intending to do about a very serious situation in Sodom and Gomorrah.

This passage is a tremendous testimony concerning the power and impact of one man's intercessory prayer on the actions of God. We have just seen how God dealt with Sara in her sin. He confronted her with it and she repented and believed in the promise of God to her. We know that because of God's testimony concerning her in Hebrews 11.

Hebrews 11:11

"Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised."

Now we witness the influence that one solitary man can have with God. This is the kind of influence that only a friend can have upon his friend. Abraham had such a relationship with God.

James 2:23

"And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto Him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God."

I. THE REVELATION OF THE LORD. Verses 16-22.

Remember that Abraham has just provided a beautiful meal for the Lord and the two angels.

A. THE LORD LOOKS TOWARD SODOM. Verse 16.

Dinner is now over and the three men stand and turn their gaze toward Sodom. As they look toward Sodom the reality of the business that lies ahead returns. The three begin to walk toward the plain of Jordan and Abraham walks with them to see them on their way.

B. THE LORD'S REVELATION TO ABRAHAM. Verses 17-22.

At some point as they walk the Lord again speaks with His friend, Abraham. The plain of Mamre is a high plateau and as you draw near to where you would go down to the plain of Jordan there is a ravine that gives a view over the dead sea and the ancient location of the cities of the plain. Is it not possible that as the Lord reaches this place and takes in the view of the cities below He decides to reveal what He purposes to do to His friend, Abraham?

We see in these verses the distinct contrast in the relationship of the believer with his Lord and the lost sinner with the Lord.

1. THE BELIEVER'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE LORD. Verses 17-19.

a. IT IS A RELATIONSHIP OF OPENNESS. Verse 17.

As they reach the point in the path that would lead down to Sodom the Lord makes this gripping statement. **“Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?” (Genesis 18:17).** The Lord knew the future that was represented in Abraham. In less than a year Isaac would be born, then in the future Jacob and the twelve patriarchs of Israel. He saw the kings that would come from Abraham. He also saw how He would one day in the future take upon Himself a flesh and blood body and enter the human race through the lineage of this man, His friend, Abraham.

What amazing potential relationship God’s children have with Him. God will reveal Himself to those who are saved and walk in fellowship with Him. Lost people do not have that privilege.

b. IT IS A RELATIONSHIP OF BLESSING. Verse 18.

All that would be accomplished in Abraham’s life and in his children’s would be by the blessing of God. There would be great achievements, amazing exploits, his seed would become a great nation, but most importantly all the nations of the earth would be blessed in Abraham.

The believer lives a life of blessing that the lost world cannot understand unless the Christian lives it to the fullest before them and testifies to them of it. May the Lord, help us to do His abundant blessing to us justice?

c. IT IS A RELATIONSHIP OF OBEDIENCE. “He will command his children . . . and they shall keep the way of the LORD.” (Genesis 18:19)

The Lord knew that Abraham would obey and teach His family **“the way of the LORD.”** Abraham had learned earlier that He was responsible for teaching his wife what God had taught him. The believer’s obedience to the Word of His God is his testimony that he loves God. **“He that hath my commandment, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.” (John 14:21).**

Do you love the Lord? You can prove your love for Him to the entire world by obeying His word.

2. THE SINNER’S RELATIONSHIP TO THE LORD. Verses 20-22a.

God’s relationship to the lost is not as Friend nor as Savior, but as judge.

a. IT IS SORROWFUL. Verse 20a. “Their cry is great.”

This is not a cry for mercy, nor is it a cry for salvation from sin. Nor is it the cry of joy. It is the cry of the wicked in their unrestrained pursuit of sin.

b. IT IS SINFUL. Verse 20b. “Their sin is grievous”

Do we understand that our sin grieves God? Do we realize that sin repulses our God? Oh that God would give us eyes to be able to see sin in the same way that He sees sin.

c. IT IS SECRET. Verse 21.

Man tries to hide his sin, but it is a foolish and wasted effort. What will we hide from the Lord?

Sodom's example to us is - as the Bible says,

Numbers 32:23

“But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.”

d. IT IS SERIOUS. Verse 22a.

We sense the sober, serious tenor of these verses. God takes no pleasure in pouring out His judgment upon the wicked.

Ezekiel 33:11

“Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?”

But be assured, He is a just God, and He will do right. All sinners who refuse to turn from their sin to Jesus Christ will receive the reward of their sin. **“It is appointed unto man, once to die, but after this the judgement.”** (Hebrews 9:27).

II. ABRAHAM INTERCEDES TO THE LORD. Verses 22b-33.

We see then at this point the angels turn to go toward Sodom, but in a dramatic step Abraham steps in between Sodom and God.

A. ABRAHAM'S INTERVENTION. “But Abraham stood yet before the LORD.” (Genesis 18:22b).

Abraham steps into the gap. He becomes an intermediary between God and man. He will seek to intercede for the cities of the plain not because they did not deserve the wrath of God but on the basis of the integrity of God to do as He promises.

B. ABRAHAM'S INTERCESSION. Verses 23-26.

1. ABRAHAM'S POSITION. “And Abraham drew near . . .” (Genesis 18:23a)

Thank the God of glory for those who have such a relationship with Him that they can draw near to Him. Abraham had the awesome privilege to draw near to the Lord on behalf of others. The book of Hebrews speaks of those who can draw near with a true heart of assurance.

Hebrews 10:19-22

”Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”

The child of God has a great privilege to “draw near” and intercede for others. It is a dreadful shame

and it saddens our God when there is no one to intercede for sinners.

Ezekiel 22:30

“And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.”

2. ABRAHAM’S PLEA. Verses 23-26.

Abraham has learned some things about his God. He has come to know the tender mercies of God. He has experienced God’s longsuffering and he approaches the Lord on the basis of His righteousness.

a. WOULD GOD DESTROY THE RIGHTEOUS WITH THE WICKED? Verses 23-24.

Abraham’s thoughts go to Lot and his family living in Sodom. He prays that God would spare them. And if the Lord were willing to spare the righteous might He not spare the wicked for the sake of the righteous?

b. WOULD GOD ACT AGAINST HIS OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS? “Shall not the judge of the all the earth do right?” (Genesis 18:25)

Abraham is concerned with the honor and glory of the Lord. What would the world say if you destroyed the righteous along with the wicked in the city?

3. ABRAHAM’S PROPOSAL. Verse 24-26.

Genesis 18:24

“Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?”

And in verse 26 God consents. God’s abundant grace is manifested here.

a. GOD DESIRES TO GRANT THE PRAYER OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

What an encouraging word to the heart of the believer! God desires to grant the prayer of His children.

b. WE SEE GRACE TO THE WICKED ON ACCOUNT OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

Do you ever wonder why God does not just destroy this wicked world right now? The Almighty God of glory does not destroy this sin-consumed world because of those who have been made righteous in His Son. God has an investment in this world. God’s longsuffering is great with this world. His mercy is super abundant in that He will give this world opportunity to repent of its sinful ways right up to that moment that He removes His own blood bought children. Then the fulness of the wrath of God will be poured out.

4. ABRAHAM’S PERSEVERANCE. Verses 27-32.

a. HIS SPIRIT. Verse 27.

There is no arrogance on the part of Abraham, but there is tremendous boldness and perseverance. Those who have real power with God are those who realize what they are in God's presence.

b. HIS PERSISTENCE. Verses 28-32.

It is amazing how daring Abraham is with God. Yet there is a dignity and honor given. This bartering goes on until the Lord concedes to preserve the city if there are but ten righteous persons found in it.

It all stops at ten. Abraham pursues the issue no farther. Why? We do not know for sure but at this point Abraham felt sure that there would be ten righteous in the city. Sadly, even if he had asked for only five it would have been too many. There were only four that would be initially spared from the destruction of the city and only three of them would live.

We assume that Abraham is thinking of his nephew and his family when he is satisfied to stop his intercession. It is very likely that there were ten people in Lot's own household. As we find in Chapter 19 there would have been Lot and his wife, his sons (meaning at least two) his two unmarried daughters who lived with him, and other married daughters and their husbands. The plural here means more than two. So counting all of these there would have been at least ten.

Abraham was counting on the supposition that Lot had led his family in righteousness. We will see in Chapter 19 how wrong Abraham was.

5. ABRAHAM'S PEACE. Verse 33.

At this the two friends part; the Lord went His way and Abraham returned to his tent. Abraham had done all that he could. He had stood in the gap for a wicked and sinful people. He had interceded on their behalf. And now he was resolved to rest in the will of God. He rested in the fact that **“the judge of all the earth will do right.”** (Genesis 18:25).

Folks, everyone that is saved has the privilege of interceding for others. We have full access to the throne of God on behalf of others.

1 John 5:14

“And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us.”

The believer has God's ear. With that understanding, we must be ready to stand in the gap. We live in the midst of a lost and dying world. It is a world that is condemned to an eternal hell. Will we not pray for them? God has promised that He will save every person that comes to Him in repentance and faith. Every Christian is a testimony that God is good for His promises.

It is also true that we live in days that are extremely troubling. Will we not stand in the gap for those who remain under the condemnation of God? Be sure the **“Judge of all the earth will do right.”** (Genesis 18:25).

ABRAHAM: FRIEND OF GOD AND FATHER OF FAITH
CHAPTER 10 - DESTRUCTION OF SODOM
GENESIS 19

Is there such a thing as sin? If sin does exist how do we know what sin is? The Bible tells us exactly what sin is.

1 John 3:4

“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”

The Webster’s 1828 Dictionary defined what is moral as: “. . . **actions that are good or evil, virtuous or vicious, and has reference to the law of God as the standard by which their character is to be determined.**” ^(21a)

As a preacher of the Word of God, it is perplexing in how our society now defines what is moral and immoral. Today we are being told that it is immoral to force murderers and terrorists to reveal their dastardly plans and yet killing babies is fine.

Isaiah 5:20

“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”

The city of Sodom was a very wicked place. The cities of the plain of Jordan were steeped in sin. Hopefully, we who claim to believe the Bible understand that what was going on there was indeed sin and not simply a sexual preference. But we are living in a society that is growing more and more like that of Sodom. A society where God’s intended design for men and women is being discarded and those who would dare to stand for true morality are mocked and disparaged. Those who speak out against the ungodliness and sin of sodomy are portrayed as trouble makers and hate mongers.

Of course, we are talking about the sin of homosexuality. Should we accept man’s perverted view about sin or should we adhere to what God says? Be mindful that sin is sin whether it is lying, cheating, stealing, bitterness, anger, or homosexuality. Sin is sin and the determination of what sin is must come from the only true unwavering standard that has ever been given to men, the Word of God. Also we must be clear that it is the sin of homosexuality that we hate not the homosexual. To hate anyone is indeed sin as well.

Today we are seeing homosexual behavior promoted and accepted in all areas of society. The so called “Gay and Lesbian” groups are doing their best to legitimize their lifestyle. And they are accomplishing their goal. Even in the so-called church, many liberal denominations are defending and even ordaining homosexuals into their clergy. It is more and more the Bible believers that are being promoted as the odd balls and hate mongers.

Be aware and be careful of those who would try to normalize that which God has condemned. Be

warned about those who seek to call evil good and good evil.

III. LOT'S POSITION OF PROMINENCE IN SODOM. Verses 1-3.

A. THE ANGELS ARRIVE IN THE CITY. Verse 1.

The angels, God's messengers arrive at Sodom at even, or near sunset.

B. LOT HAS A SEAT AT THE GATE.

Where did the angels find Abraham in the previous chapter? He was sitting in the door of his tent. Abraham remained separate from the wickedness of the cities of the plain. But, Lot was lured by its promise of prosperity and prominence.

Be reminded of how Lot got to this place. (**Genesis 13:10**) tells that **"Lot lifted up his eyes and beheld all the cities of the plain of Jordan."** In (**Genesis 13:12**) it says that Lot **"pitched his tent toward Sodom."** Now we find that Lot is not only living in Sodom but he is one who sat in the gate. This terminology "to sit in the gate" speaks of a place of leadership and authority. Lot had risen to a place of prominence in the city, he sat on what we might call the town counsel. More than likely, Lot received this position on the heroic reputation of his uncle Abraham who rescued Sodom and Gomorrah some time before this.

C. LOT'S URGENT APPEAL TO THE ANGELS. Verse 2-3.

Lot urges these two men to enter into his house out of fear of what would happen to them if they remained on in the streets of the city.

IV. THE PERVERSION OF SODOM COMES TO LOT'S DOOR. Verses 4-11.

As darkness fell the wickedness of the city was manifested.

A. THE EXTENT OF THE PERVERSION IN SODOM. Verse 4.

We see that it was not just a few who in secrecy practiced their sin. The sin that takes its name from this depraved city permeated the society of Sodom. The Bible makes it clear that all the men of Sodom were involved; young and old and from all backgrounds participated.

B. THE EXTREME OF THE PERVERSION IN SODOM. Verse 5.

Those who desire to explain away what is going on in Sodom say that the men of the city just wanted to meet these two newcomers. If that were so why would Lot be so fearful for them? The crowd wanted these new men that they might have their wicked way with them.

C. THE PERSISTENCE OF THE PERVERSION IN SODOM. Verses 6-9a.

1. LOT'S FUTILE APPEAL. Verses 6-7.

Lot slips out of the door to his house and begs the men to **"do not so wickedly."**

2. LOT'S DESPICABLE OFFER. Verse 8.

How low can a person go in sin? How despicable to offer your own virgin daughters to this vile

mob! And yet this foul crowd would be satisfied with nothing but these two unknown men.

3. LOT'S VIOLENT TREATMENT. Verse 9.

These wicked depraved men would have killed Lot to get at the men. This shows us how far sin can drive a person. We see the manifestation of the madness of sin.

D. THE BLINDNESS OF THE PERVERSION IN SODOM. Verses 10-11.

1. THE RESCUE PLAN FOR LOT. Verse 10.

The two angels must rescue Lot from the mob. They pull him back into the temporary safety of the house.

2. THE BLINDING OF THE MEN OF SODOM. Verse 11.

The angels cause blindness to come upon all those who were at the door of Lot's house. This physical blindness was an outward manifestation of their inward spiritual condition.

a. THE JUDICIAL BLINDNESS. Verse 11a.

Wickedness and sin can only go on so long before God will act in judgment. In preparation for judgment, God blinds the men.

Read Romans 1:21-28 to see the progression of a society that has rejected God. Understanding all of this; when do we quit reaching out to the lost? NEVER - I don't decide what only rests in the wisdom of God.

The judicial blindness is in view of what?

b. IMPENDING JUDGMENT FOR SODOM.

Notice these men continue to pursue their sin. They do not flee, they do not care, their sin drives them on, they are unfazed that they are experiencing the judgment of God. They still continue to try to find the door in their mad pursuit to satisfy their lust. This blindness is imposed in view of the judgment that was pronounced upon the city.

My plea to any living in sin today, "turn from your sin, lest God turns you over to it. Unless He close your eyes and ears to the truth, and leave you alone in your sin - until the day of judgment."

V. THE ANGELS' REMOVAL OF LOT FROM SODOM. Verses 12-22.

A. GOD SEEKS TO SHOW MERCY TO LOT'S FAMILY. Verses 12-14.

The angels had seen enough. It is time to act and deal with this vile city.

1. THE MERCY OF GOD. Verse 12.

We find God still extending His divine mercy to this compromising believer. Lot is instructed to gather his family together and to leave the city.

2. THE JUDGMENT OF GOD. Verse 13.

Because of the blindness of men's hearts, there are those who think that God will not judge sin. That He really does not care. But, God must judge sin or else He is not worthy to be God.

3. THE MOCKING OF GOD. Verse 14.

Lot's sons in law mock his plea for them to leave Sodom with him. How important is it to marry in the Lord? Lot's sons in law had grown up in Sodom. Who knows they may well have been amongst those who were at the door of Lot's house. Be sure of this; wrong associations will always pull you down. The strongest amongst us, let alone the spiritually weak will be impacted by not obeying the Lord and remaining separated from the world and its sin. Lot's daughters along with their husbands and possibly even his grandchildren perished in Sodom.

B. THE ANGELS' DELIVERING OF LOT'S FAMILY. Verses 15-16.

1. THE URGENCY OF THE ANGELS. Verse 15.

Get out now before judgment falls.

2. THE RELUCTANCE OF LOT. Verse 16a. "He lingered"

Lot and his family had allowed their lives to be entwined in this wicked place. Be careful of what you hold dear. God is going to call us out, we must not linger over what we leave behind.

The angels had to literally drag them out of the city. Be sure of this, Christian, God will separate you from your sin, but it may not be a pleasant experience. It is much better to willingly flee anything that has the potential to cause compromise in our lives than to try to tolerate it.

C. THE EXHORTATION OF THE ANGELS. Verses 17-22.

1. "ESCAPE FOR YOUR LIFE." Verse 17.

Simple, get away or you will die.

The instruction was "Look not behind thee . . ." How attached are we to this world? What will be our reaction if we are privileged to hear that trump of God? Are we going to be tempted to look back or will our gaze be focused toward the mountain of the Lord?

2. LOT'S PITIFUL PROTESTS. Verses 18-20.

This gets too pitiful. "Please let me go to this little town." (Paraphrased). Lot could not stand to live in the mountains.

3. THE ANGEL'S CONCESSION. Verses 21-22.

a. THEY GAVE LOT PERMISSION TO FLEE TO A CITY.

b. THE RESTRAINING OF THE ANGELS.

God had determined to save Lot. Not one fiery hailstone would fall upon Sodom until Lot was safely away.

VI. GOD'S OUTPOURING OF JUDGMENT UPON SODOM. Verses 23-25.

A. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CITY.

The destruction of Sodom, Gomorrah and the cities of the plain was so thorough that there is debate to this day as to their location.

B. THE DESTRUCTION OF ALL THE INHABITANTS.

An entire population is destroyed. This is a vivid testimony as to the heart of God toward sin. God hates sin. Sin destroyed man's relationship with God in the garden and it is still that which separates God from His highest creation. God's judgment upon sin is certain and all those who have not received God's remedy for sin in the blood of Christ will endure eternal destruction.

VII. THE FOOLISHNESS OF LOT'S WIFE. Verse 26.

She looked back. She longingly looked back to the home she was leaving. She yearned for the world she was leaving behind. She risked disobeying the angel's warning, and paid the price for it. When God delivers us from the world, we must not look back.

The return of the Lord Jesus Christ is certain. Will we look back when that day comes and our Lord comes take us from this world to glory? What is the Lord's warning referring to that question? **(Luke 17:32) "Remember Lot's wife."**

Do not be foolish, the things of this world are so insignificant, and one day they will all go up in smoke. Keep your eyes on the eastern sky, and the LORD of glory.

VIII. A LOOK AT ABRAHAM ABIDING WITH THE LORD. Verses. 27-29.

Where is Abraham during all of this? Verse 27 tells us that he is standing before the Lord. The believer that commits himself to live out his life under the direction of God and His word will be spared the ravages of decisions made in the flesh.

A. THERE IS SAFETY WITH SEPARATION. Verse 27.

Abraham is not involved with what is transpiring in the plain. He interceded and begged God to show mercy upon the wicked cities of the plain but having done that he must rest in the solemn but trustworthy truth that God will do right.

B. THE SAFE VIEW FROM SEPARATION. Verse 28.

God had once used Abraham to rescue these cities. It was a message of God's willingness to show mercy and grace to them but they did not hear it.

C. THE ADVANTAGE OF SEPARATION. Verse 29.

Why was Lot spared? Lot was spared because of his uncle, Abraham's intercession.

Believer, a life of compromise and fellowship with the world will only bring heartache and despair. Lot lost everything, even his family except for two daughters who were so steeped in the wickedness of Sodom that they deceived their father into drunken incest.

How do we remember Lot? If the Genesis account were all we had, it would be of a shamed, drunken failure. It is hard to imagine that this is a saved man but we do have a further word in Second Peter.

2 Peter 2:7-8

"Speaking of the angels of God, "And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)." "

My lost friend - my words to you are the words of the angels. "Escape for your life," and flee to the Lord Jesus Christ.

You might not be in such hideous sin as this but God's word says, **"all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."** (Romans 3:23)

Romans 6:23

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Acts 16:31

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

He loves you and will remove you from the destruction that is to come upon everyone that is without Christ.

ABRAHAM: FRIEND OF GOD AND FATHER OF FAITH
CHAPTER 11 - A RETURN TO THE OLD WAYS
GENESIS 20

We witness in this chapter in Abraham's walk with God a testimony to the fact that even tried and true servants of the Lord can have times that they return to their old ways. Because they are still men of flesh and blood there will be times (hopefully they will be few) when they backslide from the Word of God and the godliness that should characterize the life of a child of God. Abraham had walked twenty-five years with the Lord at this point and yet we find him stumbling and falling back to one of his old ways.

There are some valuable lessons here for us to take heed to which exhort us to faithfulness with the Lord. We also find in this passage the encouragement that when we do sin and wander from God we can find forgiveness and restoration with the Lord we love.

I. THE DEPARTURE OF GOD'S MAN. Verses 1-2.

A. THE PHYSICAL DEPARTURE FROM GOD'S PRESENCE. Verse 1.

Abraham leaves the plain of Mamre, a place where he has had God's blessing and fellowship. No reason is given for the move, maybe he did not want to be where he could see the ruins of Sodom and Gomorrah. The smoke and stench from the destroyed cities of the plain must have been horrific. In any case Abraham moves South down the same road he traveled once before when he got in trouble in Egypt. Abraham moves and sets up camp in Gerar.

B. THE SPIRITUAL DEPARTURE FROM GOD'S PRESENCE. Verse two.

Abraham had experienced a wonderful time of growth and blessing from the Lord while he had camped on the highlands of Mamre. But now the wandering spirit had again raised its head in Abraham. Maybe he was in despair over what had just happened in the wicked cities of the plain. Maybe, he found himself questioning the sovereignty of God's wisdom in that outpouring of wrath upon the infamous sin of Sodom. Whatever his reasoning, Abraham's spiritual vision is blurred and he makes some bad decisions for himself and for his family.

C. THE DECEITFUL MOVE

Abraham dug up the old lie he had once used on Pharaoh down in Egypt. If you remember it did not work there and it is not going to work here in Gerar either. He told everyone that Sarah was his sister. Take note that the biblical record does not try to play down this action. The Bible tells the truth about its heroes, good and bad. Abraham's deceitful words are preceded in the biblical record by, "**Abraham said of Sarah his wife.**" Regardless of what Abraham says next, the fact is, Sarah is his wife. We can try and rationalize or justify our sin, but sin is still sin.

This whole situation is compounded by the fact that this is the second time Abraham has traveled down this same road of deception.

II. GOD'S MERCIFUL DEALING WITH THE ABIMELECH. Verses 2b-8.

Something amazing, even supernatural has happened. Abimelech sees Sarah and wants her for one of his wives. Think about that for a moment, remember, we are talking about a ninety-year old woman. Remember the words of

Genesis 18:11-12

“Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?”

It seems obvious that God has been working a miracle in Sarah to restore her youth in order to enable her to give birth to Isaac. When God does something, He does not do a half way job. Obviously, Sarah’s beauty is also restored to her.

Thank God for His abundant mercy. He steps in again in the life of Abraham and bails him out. The Lord comes to Abimelech in a dream.

A. THE INTERVENTION OF GOD IN ABRAHAM’S SITUATION. Verses 3-4a.

1. THE INTERVENING HAND OF GOD.

God keeps Abimelech from committing a grievous sin. A sin that would have brought serious judgment upon Abimelech’s household. It would also have destroyed God’s plan for Abraham to be used as a blessing to all mankind.

2. THE JUDGMENT HAND OF GOD.

Abimelech is a lost man. He is an idolater on his way to hell. Amazingly, in his dream he comes face to face with God and God declares to him, **“behold, thou art but a dead man.”** WHOA! That might wake you up in a hurry. (Talk about a dead sleep.) God warns this lost man that he has taken another man’s wife into his own harem of wives.

B. ABIMELECH MAKES HIS COMPLAINT.

1. THE MAN’S PROTEST.

Basically, Abimelech protests that he did not do anything wrong. The natural man always wants to shift the blame. Abimelech already had a wife. He probably had many wives but seeing Sarah he wanted her and so he took her. He had no regard to his own family or of Sarah’s wishes. Abraham had acted deplorable but that does not excuse Abimelech’s own sin.

God’s standards do not change over time and they do not change as to place or the laws of the land. This action was legal for Abimelech to do in his own country. He could legally take any woman he wanted as his wife. But because something is legal that does not make it right.

Examples for today would be things like: drinking alcohol, abortion, homosexual behavior, sex outside of marriage, and adultery. Lost and depraved society may rewrite the laws of the land but that does not change things in the eye’s of God. The Apostle Paul instructs in **(Romans 12:2)** **“be**

not conformed to this world . . .” The Christian must not allow the world to set his standard. The Bible is to be his guide in every area of what he believes and how he lives.

2. THE MAN’S PROSPECT.

Fortunately for Abraham, God intervened in these events and kept Abimelech from physically violating Sarah.

C. GOD’S CLEAR DECLARATION. Verses 6-7.

1. GOD’S MERCY.

Abimelech said, and this is a paraphrase, “I have not touched her!” But God tells us what really happened, **“I withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.” (Genesis 20:6).** Abimelech fully intended to have Sarah as his wife in every way but God had intervened and kept Abimelech from fulfilling his plans. It was true that Abimelech did not know the truth about Abraham and Sarah but it is never right to do wrong. May every believer covenant with God that we would always do what we know to be right regardless of foreseen or unforeseen consequences.

2. GOD’S DECLARATION. Verse 7.

a. THIS MAN “IS A PROPHET.”

It is very sad that Abimelech had no indication from Abraham in word or deed of his relationship with God. The believer’s life is to be a continual declaration of his faith in Christ. The Christian should be a living walking billboard for the glory of God.

b. “HE SHALL PRAY FOR YOU.”

God lays it on the line with Abimelech. If he returns Sarah to Abraham He will spare him. If he did not restore Sarah to Abraham, he and all of his household would die. Abimelech wisely decides that the right thing to do is to return Sarah to her husband.

D. THE FEAR OF ABIMELECH. Verse 8.

There was no sleeping for Abimelech the rest of this night. He was up early to deal with these matters. Abimelech wakes up with the realization that he had been face to face with the living and true God.

III. THE SINNER’S DERISION OF THE BACKSLIDING SAINT. Verses 9-16.

A. THE SAINT IS REBUKED BY THE SINNER. Verses 9-10.

Abimelech calls Abraham on the proverbial carpet. This lost man was just living his life as always and Abraham comes into his life and causes all this havoc. Abimelech wants an explanation as to why Abraham has done this.

B. THE SAINT’S RATIONALIZING OF HIS SIN. Verses 11-13.

Abraham begins to list his lame excuses for his behavior.

1. THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD HERE. Verse 11a.

Where there is no knowledge of God there will be lawlessness. Morality will be defined by the social norms and not by a healthy fear of the holiness of God. Man will do what he determines is right and wrong, moral and immoral by his own wisdom.

2. YOU WILL KILL ME TO HAVE MY WIFE. Verse 11b.

Abraham was afraid of what would happen to him because of his wife. This gives us a rather tarnished view of the man who once led a great rescue mission against the most powerful army that existed in that part of the world. But fear can be a very powerful and paralyzing instigator.

3. IT IS NOT REALLY A LIE. Verse 12.

It was a fact that Sarah was Abraham's half sister. They had the same father but not the same mother.

4. IT IS ALL GOD'S FAULT. Verse 13. "God caused me . . ."

Now Abraham is putting the blame on God. It was God that caused me to leave my father's house for this journey into all of these strange and dangerous places. It was then that Abraham cooked up this lie with his wife. Basically, as the old saying goes, Abraham lied and Sarah swore to it.

C. THE SINNER'S RESTORING OF THE SAINT. Verses 14-16.

It is sad when a believer has to take spiritual rebuke from a lost person. How unfortunate that Abimelech, who is a lost man, is found to have a higher moral plain than Abraham the believer.

1. THE SHAME OF THE SAINT. Verses 14-15.

Lost Abimelech treats Abraham a whole lot better than Abraham had treated him. Abimelech may have been trying to buy off God's wrath by treating the man of God so good. It often happens that someone lives for the devil in one way or another and then tries to sooth his conscience by giving money to the church. Only the Lord knows, but it is still sad that Abraham has to be shamed as a lost man is more generous and gracious than he has been.

2. THE SLUR UPON THE SAINT. Verse 16.

Abimelech gives Sarah back to Abraham. We need to take note of exactly how he does it. In addressing Sarah he speaks of Abraham as her brother. Ouch, what a slam. Abimelech has no respect for Abraham. It is like saying, "it's a shame that you do not have a husband that will stand up for you and protect you as he should." John Phillips comments, "'It is too bad, princess, that you do not have a husband, or I would have given it to him.'" And with that parting thrust Abraham was made to know just exactly how low an estimate Abimelech had formed of him - a prophet, indeed!"
(17g)

The words of Abimelech concerning Abraham are said in sarcasm but they are the words that should have described Abraham's care and protection of his wife. Verse 16 ends with the comment from the Holy Spirit, "**thus was she reproved.**"

3. THE SHAM OF THE SINNER.

Abimelech is not doing all of this because he has found the Lord. Nor is it because he has repented and wants to do right. He is simply trying to get out of God's woodshed. He conjectures if he is good to this pitiful prophet maybe God will indeed not kill him.

God does not tell him to do this extra. He does it trying to buy God's favor.

IV. THE SAINT'S DEED FOR THE SINNER. Verses 17-18.

A. THE LONG OVERDUE MINISTRY OF THE SAINT. Verse 17.

Finally, Abraham does something spiritual, he prays for Abimelech and God is pleased to heal him and all his household.

B. THE MAJESTY OF GOD IS GREAT. Verse 18.

It is very important to note that the Lord remains in complete control of this situation. He allowed Abraham to do down to Gerar and allowed him to lie to Abimelech. But God stopped the progress of these events short of what would have destroyed God's future plans for Abraham.

If God had permitted Abimelech to defile Sarah, it would have tarnished and cast doubt on Isaac's birth. In fact God had shut up all of the wombs of Abimelech's household, during this time. There was no way anyone would be able to say that Isaac could have been Abimelech's son.

God is on His throne. He is in absolute control. He may allow man to go on in his sin but He is not about to let mere man overrule His plan for eternity.

God at times may permit us to get in messes. In His permissive will God may allow us to depart from where He would want us to be. Christian, we are flesh and blood, with a free will and still capable of sin. We do have the tendency to return to our old ways. As the old hymn says, "prone to wander, Lord I feel it." What are we to do when we find ourselves in such a place? Should we allow it to shipwreck us and give up on living for the Lord? Absolutely not!

When we sin, we pray and seek God's face and forgiveness. Repent of our sin; regardless of what it was and go on rejoicing in the gracious forgiveness of God. Abraham did not have to get saved all over again. He was not rejected and cast out by God. Instead, God stepped into the life of his child and restored him.

Dear friend, where ever you are spiritually. God will work with you. Maybe you have never been saved; you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior. Right now, turn from your sin and put your faith in Him as the One who died for you. Trust the One who laid down His sinless life for you in order that you could have God's forgiveness.

Maybe you are saved but you need to deal with something in your life. God is faithful to meet your need and to deliver you from what ever pit you find yourself in. He is a great and gracious God who does not throw away His children. Rather, His promise is **"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."** (Hebrews 13:5).

1 John 1:9

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

The Lord is merciful and gracious to forgive and cleanse the repentant heart of His blood bought children in Jesus Christ.

**ABRAHAM: FRIEND OF GOD AND FATHER OF FAITH
CHAPTER 12 - THE FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISE
GENESIS 21**

We have heard over and over in our study that God had promised that Abraham would one day father a son by Sarah his wife. The promise had been given, repeated, explained and expanded.

Now, twenty five years after God had first promised, Isaac is born. You can imagine the scene, Abraham, is now one hundred years old, but is probably as giddy and excited as any expectant father could be. He is anticipating the birth of his firstborn of Sarah.

He and Sarah had spent a childless lifetime together. Now, the day had come. Sarah was in labor. A midwife and her servants would be attending to her and Abraham is waiting.

I. THE ARRIVAL OF THE PROMISED SON. Verses 1-8.

God's word is vindicated. The questions, the doubts, the concerns, are all vanquished by the cries of a new born child from Sarah's tent.

A. THE PROMISE WAS FULFILLED AS GIVEN. Verse 1-2.

We must not fail to take special note of the affirmation of God's word.

(Verse 1) **“And the Lord visited Sarah as he had said, and He did unto Sarah as he had spoken.”** Emphasis is the author's.

And again:

(Verse 2) **“At the set time of which God had spoken to him.”** When was the child born? **Exactly when God said he would be born**. Emphasis the author's.

God did exactly as He had previously said He would.

Genesis 17:19

“And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.”

Genesis 17:21

“But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.”

We can rest our entire trust upon the promise of one word from God. He commits His entire integrity upon every jot and tittle of His word. Our great issue is will we wait upon His time. F. B. Meyer share some rich words of wisdom on this:

God has His set times. It is not for us to know them; indeed, we cannot know them; we must wait for them. If God had told Abraham in Haran that he must wait for thirty years until he pressed the promised child to his bosom, his heart would have failed him. So, in gracious love, the length of the weary years was hidden, and only as they were nearly spent, and there were only a few more months to wait, God told him that, “according to the time of life, Sarah shall have a son.” (18:4).^(15d)

Side note: we see that the covenant that God established with Isaac was an everlasting covenant. This covenant was to be an eternal covenant and it is essential to take note that it was not only made with Abraham but with **“his seed after him.” (Genesis 17:19)**. That means that the promises that God made to Abraham were made to his posterity for ever. Those promises were to the children of Israel (Jacob) which included making them a great nation and to give them the promised land as an inheritance for ever. The nations of the world need to take care that they do not bring the ire of God upon them for ignoring His promised intentions for Israel. The land of Canaan belongs to the Jews as an everlasting possession. It was deeded to them by the God who created it. No president, world organization has the right to tell them to give it to anyone.

B. THE PROMISE WAS FULFILLED IN GRACE. Verses 3-5.

1. GOD’S COMMAND REMEMBERED. Verses 3-4.

Abraham did not forget the instructions that the Lord had given him. He was obedient to the Lord with his new born son. He gives his son the name told him of the Lord and circumcises him. At times of abundance and ease it is easy to forget promises made at critical times in our lives.

2. BIRTH BEYOND NATURAL ABILITY. Verse 5.

Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90. There are a couple of very important principles to get here. Isaac was born after all natural hope of Abraham and Sarah having a child was gone. Do you think that might be important? Of course it is. God purposed to hold off fulfilling his promise to Abraham and Sarah until all, absolutely all, hope of it being fulfilled by the natural ability of the flesh.

The birth of Isaac is the supernatural, miraculous fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham as a testimony of God’s grace to them. Isaac was the child of God’s promise and there was question that God gave Abraham this son.

Only God can prophecy. There are countless soothsayers, seers, and astrologers emerging in our day. They are interviewed, consulted on popular radio and television talk shows, and they make plenty of noise. But only God can prophesy. Outside of Holy Writ all prognostications regarding the future are riddled with ambiguity, error, and fraud, not to mention outright satanic deception. But God can rip aside the veil from the future and read tomorrow’s happenings as though they had happened yesterday. Nine months before, God had told Abraham and Sarah they would have a son “at the set time.” And so it was. Nine months later the child was born in defiance of natural law.^(17h)

C. THE PROMISE IS FULFILLED IN GREAT JOY. Verses 6-8.

1. SARAH'S JOYFUL CONFESSION. Verses 6-7.

Sarah's faith is soaring. She now had firsthand experience of God working in her life. **"All that hear will laugh with me."** (Genesis 21:6). When our heart rejoices over God's working in our lives, it is a testimony to others and they are blessed as well.

Where Sarah once laughed in scorn of God's promise, she now laughs with joy over God's faithfulness. In verse seven she essentially confesses, **"who would ever have thought that I would give birth to a child?"**

There is now the passing of time taking place between verse seven and verse eight.

2. THE COUPLE'S JOYFUL CELEBRATION. Verse 8.

The child grows and it is now time to wean him. We cannot be certain of Isaac's age at this time as it would depend upon that time when he was now fully able to deal with solid food his daily sustenance. Taking in the cultural norms of the time of Abraham, Isaac was probably between two and three years old. At any rate a celebration is held in Abraham's camp to mark the weaning of Isaac. Young Isaac is graduating from mother's milk to solid food. His miracle birth is followed by growth.

II. THE CASTING OUT OF THE SON OF THE FLESH. Verses 9-11.

A. ISHMAEL'S RIDICULE. Verse 9.

Ishmael is not impressed over all this attention that is being showered upon Isaac. Ishmael is probably about 15-16 years old now and has enjoyed all the privileges of being Abraham's only son, now he has had to share that attention with Isaac, and I am sure he understands that Isaac will be preferred over him. We find him, mocking Isaac.

1. HIS TRUE NATURE IS REVEALED.

Ishmael's behavior is a testimony to us that grace is not inherited. Our children inherit our fallen human nature by their first birth but they must be born again to have their own relationship of faith with God. Even a child born to the most godly of parents must deal with his own sin, he has no spiritual life unless he himself experiences the new birth.

John 1:12-13

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

2. HIS TRUE NEED REMAINS.

Ishmael had all the advantages of Abraham's household. He had witnessed God's hand at work in his father's life. He had even seen the Angel of the Lord visit the camp. He had been circumcised just a few years earlier, but that outward religious ceremony, even though it was ordained of God,

did nothing to change his rebellious heart. Religion does not change a man, only God can.

Titus 3:5

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost”

3. HIS TRUE REBELLION.

Remember that Ishmael is not just mocking Isaac. He is mocking God, Isaac was the Son that God gave to Abraham.

B. ISHMAEL’S REJECTION. Verse 10.

Unfortunately for Ishmael Sarah sees him mocking her son.

1. SARAH’S HEART.

Sarah remembers all the years of watching her husband doting over Ishmael, another woman’s son. She remembers Hagar’s haughty spirit when she, not Sarah, had given Abraham the great desire of his heart for a seed. Seeing Ishmael mock her son was more than the human heart of Sarah could tolerate.

2. SARAH’S HARSH DEMAND. “Cast out this bondwoman and her son.” (Genesis 21:10)

This all seems very harsh and cruel but little did Sarah know she was giving us one of the most important spiritual lessons we can ever learn.

III. THE BROKEN HEART OF THE MAN OF GOD. Verses 11-13.

A. THE SADNESS OF ABRAHAM. Verse 11.

All of this hits Abraham hard. He loved Ishmael, this boy was his son. We must not forget the sad fact that he had been the referee between these two women for 16 years of bitterness and envy. Now the issue had come to a head.

B. THE SANCTIONING OF THE LORD. Verses 12-13.

God enters in here and assures Abraham that he need not fear for Ishmael and Hagar.

God tells Abraham to do what Sarah has requested. Once before he had hastily listened to Sarah but this time he hesitates until he has heard from God. God reminds him that His blessing will be passed on through Isaac. But, the Lord assures him that He will also bless Ishmael **“for your sake.”** Why did God promise to also make a nation of Ishmael? He did it because of His love for Abraham. Because of God’s relationship to Abraham he promises to bless Ishmael even though he is the product of the flesh. What is the lesson for the Christian in this?

C. THE SEVERING OF THE FLESH. Galatians 4:23-31.

There is a tremendous spiritual lesson for every believer found in this. There are five people involved here. Ishmael, Isaac, Hagar and Sarah; all of whom are closely involved with Abraham.

Ishmael and Isaac represent the two natures of the believer. Ishmael represents the old nature of the flesh and Isaac the new nature in the spirit. Ishmael was produced by the flesh, but Isaac was the child of God's promise through faith.

Hagar represents the principles of works and law. In her, trying to earn God's approval through the keeping of the law through effort of the flesh is pictured. Sarah speaks of grace received through faith.

When the new nature is born, the old, that which is of the flesh must be put out. That was Abraham's responsibility. Only Abraham could do that. God told him what was right, but Abraham had to move upon it.

Ishmael and Hagar, the old nature and the works of the flesh had to be cast out. No matter how painful it might be there was no place for middle ground, no room for compromise, there must be a complete break with the old nature for the new nature to have place to grow and possess our heart.

There is no possibility for the work of the flesh to please God. He wants us to completely trust Him. Our salvation, our new life in Christ is God's gift according to His promise. What is that promise? It is that all who will trust Christ as their Lord and Savior will be delivered from their bondage to sin and death. They will be saved from the wrath of God and receive eternal life in Christ. That is something that can only be received by grace. The flesh cannot, must not have anything to do with it. Salvation is not church membership. Salvation is not doing good works. Salvation is not baptism. Salvation is the gift of God by grace through faith in His only begotten Son.

ABRAHAM: FRIEND OF GOD AND FATHER OF FAITH
CHAPTER 13 - FAITH'S TEST, GOD PROVIDES AT MORIAH
GENESIS 22; JAMES 2:21-23

We have now been following Abraham for about forty years of growth and experience with the Lord. Four decades earlier the Lord called him out of Ur of the Chaldees, out of idolatry and into a life of faith and trust in God.

He is a picture to us of the spiritual life of the believer. When we look at Abraham, we see to a very great extent how God works with us. We learn how He begins with us when we trust Christ as Savior and, as a child, begin to grow in the things of the Lord. Our faith is birthed with the simple trust that Jesus Christ will save us, but it does not stop there; our experience with God matures and expands enabling us to trust the Lord more and more.

Along the way there are experiences that test and try our faith. It is through those tests that our faith is strengthened and proven. But I doubt that any of us have experienced anything like Abraham had to face as is recorded in this passage of Holy Scripture.

From the very first verse there is an undeniable tension. God is going to ask this man who, in James 2:23, is called the **“friend of God”** to do something that is beyond comprehension.

I. THE TEST OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH. Verses 1-2.

We would never try to correct the King James Bible but we could paraphrase this verse to say, “God did put Abraham to the test.” It is very important to understand that Satan tempts us to cause us to fail and fall back into the ways of the lost man. But our all wise God tests us in order that He might bring out of us what He has been working in our hearts. It is not God's purpose to defeat us but to reveal to us and to those around us the impact of His grace in our lives.

Abraham is about to face the greatest test of his life. It is a test that will reveal to all what God has accomplished through His great grace in the life of His friend.

A. ABRAHAM'S GROWTH IN THE LORD. “It came to pass after these things” (Genesis 22:1).

The natural question is, after what things? After a forty-year relationship with God and after forty years where there were times of victory and times of failure there is notable growth in Abraham. In chapter 21 we saw that Abraham was finally and completely cut off from the old life and the works of the flesh. And from there on he had unprecedented growth in his walk with the Lord. On this day when God calls his name he simply answers, **“Behold, here I am.”**

Many professing Christians have never got to the place in their walk with the Lord where they have obeyed the biblical call to leave the world behind, let alone the call to service and ultimately the call to sacrifice. This test of Abraham's faith should stir every believer to a closer, deeper walk with his Savior.

B. ABRAHAM'S TEST FROM THE LORD. Verse 2.

Little did Abraham know what the Lord was about to ask of him.

1. THE DECLARATION OF THE TEST. "Abraham, take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest." (Genesis 2:2a)

God delivers an awesome statement here. It is a declaration reminding Abraham of previous failure in resorting to the flesh and producing Ishmael through the Egyptian slave, Hagar. It is a reminder that Isaac, the child of promise, was the son through which God would bless. This statement is also an acknowledgment from God of Abraham's love for Isaac.

2. THE COMMAND OF THE TEST. "... and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering ..." (Genesis 2:2b)

God commands Abraham to take his son, Isaac to Mount Moriah and there sacrifice him as a burnt offering. Please understand what this meant! He is told to take his son and walk with him for the three-day journey to Moriah, climb the mount, bind and lay him upon an altar, slit his throat so that his boy's blood can completely pour out and then set him on fire to be consumed by the flames.

We protest that is a horrible thing, and so it is. We need to grasp what God was expecting of Abraham.

II. THE PROOF OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH. Verses 3-14.

What would Abraham do? What would you or I do? What are we willing to sacrifice for the cause of Jesus Christ? Would you sacrifice your children in obedience to the command of God and for the glory of God? But, the real and vital question is, "how much do you trust God?"

William Carey, whom we know as the father of the modern missionary movement, went from England to Serampore, India 1793 where he buried two wives and at least two children for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the destiny of lost souls. The question for Carey was, "do you trust God with the eternity of your family?"

A. THE SINCERITY OF HIS FAITH. Verses 3-5.

1. THE OUTWARD OBEDIENCE.

Abraham, obediently and silently goes through all of the preparations for the trip. He got the animal ready. He split the wood for the fire that would consume his own son. He packed the knife that he would use to cut his son's throat.

2. THE INWARD EMOTION.

We can only imagine what was going on in the heart of this father. There had to be an unbelievable battle going on between the love of a father and the obedience of the servant of God? After the three-day journey they arrive at the foot of Mount Moriah.

(Genesis 22:5) may be one of the greatest statements of faith in the Bible.

“And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.”

We will explain later why this is such a tremendous statement of faith.

B. THE SON AND HIS FAITH. Verses 6-8.

1. THE SUBMISSION OF THE SON. Verse 6.

The word “lad” in verse five could be anyone from a youth to a young man. Isaac does exactly as his father directs him. He and his father had possibly made similar trips as this. They may well have shared some times of retreat and worship with their God.

2. THE QUESTION OF THE SON. Verse 7. “where is the lamb for a burnt offering?”

Isaac questions his father as to where the usual sacrifice is. This is different from other times; normally there would be a lamb or a kid of a goat.

3. THE QUIETING OF THE SON. Verse 8.

Abraham does not explain to his son what his intentions are. He simply says, **“God will provide himself a lamb.”** Isaac was given to Abraham by the miraculous work of God in the birth of a son from two old folk far beyond child bearing.

Surely all of this reminds us of another scene. The garden of Gethsemane, when our Lord, the only begotten and beloved Son of God asked his Father concerning the sacrifice that was before Him. Yes, God would indeed provide himself a lamb. God would on day provide the Lamb that would take away the sin of the world.

The complete submission of Isaac to his father’s will is a beautiful picture of the submission of the Son of God. Jesus made no protest and in the greatest act of obedience in all history submitted to His Father’s will.

C. THE SACRIFICE OF HIS FAITH. Verses 9-14.

There is no way to adequately describe what is going on here? Abraham goes to work, carefully laying together the stones upon which he would sacrifice his son. Then this father laid the wood in order in preparation for the burnt sacrifice. He binds his beloved son and lays him upon the altar.

1. THE COMPLETENESS OF THE SACRIFICE.

There was no apparent hesitation in Abraham’s actions. His deliberate labor reveals the fact that there was no hesitation in his faith. How could Abraham do this? How could he raise a knife over his own son? There is one and only one answer: because he believed God, he trusted the promise of God.

Hebrews 11:17-19

“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the

promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.”

Abraham believed God’s promise to him. He believed that even if he plunged that knife into his son and watched the flames consume his body that God would be true to His word and if necessary raise Isaac up out of the ashes in order to fulfill His promises to him.

Here was a proof of how much mortal man will do for the love of God. Here was an evidence of childlike faith which must have thrilled the heart of the Eternal God, and moved Him in the very depths of His being. Do you and I love God like this? Is He more to us than our nearest and dearest? ^(15e)

2. THE COMMUTING OF THE SACRIFICE. Verse 11.

At that critical moment, with the knife clasped in Abraham’s hand over Isaac’s throat, God intervened and stayed the hand of His obedient servant. God was satisfied that now there was nothing in Abraham’s life that did not belong to Him.

3. THE CONSUMMATION OF THE SACRIFICE. Verse 13.

a. THE LORD’S OFFERING.

Not by coincidence but by the providence of God, there is a ram nearby to take the place of Isaac. God had provided a substitute for Isaac.

b. THE LORD WHO PROVIDES.

Abraham makes a very sweet confession. He called that place, “Jehovah-Jireh,” which means the Lord will provide. God saw Abraham’s faith and provided the ram as a substitute.

It is very important that we take special note here that God did not do the same for His own Son, His only begotten Son whom He loved. In fact, the unbelievable truth is that His sinless Son became the Lamb of Sacrifice that was provided for our need.

Jesus carried the wood of His own cross. He was bound hand and foot and there was to be no reprieve for Him. There would be no last moment substitute for Him. No, beloved, He was the substitute for us. There are many that believe (and I among them) that this is the exact location of Mount Calvary where Jesus became our substitute for sin. It may well be that on this very spot the Lamb of God shed His blood for man’s sin.

III. THE REWARD OF ABRAHAM’S FAITH. Verses 15-19.

A. GOD’S RECOGNITION OF ABRAHAM’S FAITH. Verses 15-16.

Very simply, very bluntly, the God of glory swears an oath to Abraham because he did not hold back his beloved son from Him.

Genesis 22:16

“... By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son.”

God swears upon Himself, upon His own integrity that because Abraham withheld nothing from His Lord, He would do for him.

B. GOD’S REWARD OF FAITH. Verses 17-19.**1. GOD’S REWARD TO ABRAHAM FOR HIS FAITH. Verse 17.**

The LORD God Jehovah promises Abraham that He is going to multiply his blessing upon him abundantly. The illustrations of the stars in the heavens and the sand on the sea shore are to punctuate the magnitude of how God would bless Abraham.

2. GOD’S REWARD TO MANKIND BECAUSE OF ABRAHAM’S FAITH. Verses 18-19.

Because of this one man’s faithful obedience to the Word of God all the nations of the earth, all mankind, would be blessed. We are reminded of the promise of God from the beginning of his relationship with Jehovah:

Genesis 12:3

“And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

The greatest, the most important blessing that mankind received from God in the seed of Abraham is the Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, all that call upon that lovely name receive the blessing of God.

Believer: How does this account impact you this morning? Are you withholding anything from the Lord? Do you belong to Him? Does your heart belong to Him? Is He your everything? Does your family belong to the Lord? Remember that the real question is, do you trust God?

Proverbs 3:5-6

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

Dear lost friend: How does this account affect you this morning? Have you ever entered into the life of faith? Have you ever put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ to save you from your sin? Have you received Jesus Christ as your Savior? You may confess, “I don’t understand how this faith thing works.”

There is a story of woman struggling with salvation and the preacher sought to help her and asked. “How long have you been Mrs. _____?” “Why since I was married” was her answer. “How did you get married?” She was asked further. “When the preacher asked, ‘will you take this man to be your husband,’ I said, ‘yes’”

“You mean you didn’t say you’ll try to, or I hope to.” No, said the woman, “I just said, ‘yes, I will.’”

The preacher then pointed her to the word of God and said, “God is asking you if you will have His Son to be your Savior. What do you say to that?”

My lost friend, will you have Jesus to be your Savior? You either will or you will not.

What is your answer to Him? The Bible says: **“whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Acts 2:21).**

ABRAHAM: FRIEND OF GOD AND FATHER OF FAITH
CHAPTER 14 - SARAH GOES HOME & THE INTEGRITY OF GRACE
GENESIS 23

Approximately twenty-five years has elapsed since the scene on Mt. Moriah and that amazing test of Abraham's faith. There is nothing recorded in the biblical record about those years. We can only assume that after Abraham's great expression of faith that they were sweet years of fellowship with the Lord.

I think we have testimony to this in the second verse. We find that Abraham is back in Hebron, which, we are reminded, means fellowship.

In this passage we are informed of the death of Abraham's wife, Sarah, and the burial that followed. Abraham and Sarah had shared a very long life together. Their life together was much like ours: a life of ups and downs and of trials and temptations. They shared a life together that saw some tremendous victories and also some failures. Again, these two companions shared a life together much like our own.

I. ABRAHAM'S GRIEVING HEART. Verses 1-2.

A. THE AGE OF SARAH.

It is not usually appreciated when a woman's age is mentioned. But in the case of Sarah her age was a very important testimony to God's grace at work in their lives. It is interesting that this is the only time in the Bible that a woman's age is mentioned. At the age of ninety, Sarah gave birth to Isaac, now some thirty-seven years later her death is recorded. She lived to the ripe old age of 127. She was probably a strikingly beautiful woman in her day. Remember that in her late eighties God had done a supernatural "face lift" on her.

B. THE DEATH OF SARAH.

The Scripture accounts constantly remind us of the reality of death. It comes to all of us without discrimination. Regardless of the worst sinner or the godliest saint, death is our certain and unavoidable inheritance from Adam. **"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement."** (Hebrews 9:27).

The Bible makes it very clear what brought death into God's creation. One verse in Paul's letter to the Romans sums it up.

Romans 5:12

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned"

There is no explaining it away; Adam sinned and his sin brought death to all men. But, we also must realize that not only was death introduced to the human race through Adam's sin, but all men are sinners and Paul tells us that their sin has earned them death. (Romans 6:23a) **"For the wages of**

sin is death . . .”

Cemeteries around the world are a testimony that Satan was lying when he said to Eve, **“thou shalt not surely die.” (Genesis 3:4).**

When we turn the pages of God’s infallible word to Genesis 5, we hear the chorus of verses recording again and again, **“and he died.”** Believe the word of God. Sin and death are a reality, but we praise God that the reality of life in Christ is equally true. **“... but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 6:23b).**

C. THE FAMILY’S GRIEF OVER SARAH. “Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.” (Genesis 23:2b).

1. THE SCENE OF MOURNING.

There is no question about the sincerity of Abraham’s grief. He goes to her tent and falls before the body of his wife. One thing for certain about their relationship, Abraham’s love and devotion to Sarah have never been in doubt. They had spent 70, 80, maybe even 90 years together as husband and wife. Think of that, what do you get someone on their 90th wedding anniversary?

He openly mourns over the death of his wife. He weeps at the loss of his lifelong companion. There is nothing unmanly here. There is no wrong in this.

2. THE SANCTITY OF MOURNING.

Mourning over tragedy or the loss of a loved one is natural and right. In fact it is needed to release all the emotion and pain.

We find examples in the Bible of God’s approval of grief.

a. JESUS WEPT AT THE TOMB OF LAZARUS.

b. PAUL EXPRESSES HOW HE WOULD HAVE SORROWED IF EPAPHRODITUS DIED.

Philippians 2:27

“For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.”

POINT TO REMEMBER: there is a tremendous difference in Abraham’s grief for this saved loved one; and the hopeless grief for the lost. When Paul wrote to encourage the believers in the local church at Thessalonica concerning those, who had died in Christ he revealed to them that their sorrow was different from the sorrow of the lost. **“ye sorrow not as others who have no hope.” (1 Thessalonians 4:13).**

Friends, we grieve over the home-going of a saved loved one, but we have the blessed hope that we will have a wonderful reunion day ahead in glory.

II. ABRAHAM'S GRACIOUS CHARACTER. Verses 3-16.

We sense a note of sober responsibility in verse three:

Genesis 23:3

“And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying,”

Regardless of his grief, in spite of his sorrow, Abraham must deal with the realities of the situation. Preparations had to be made; he needed a place to bury his dead. He went into the city of Hebron to purchase a suitable place to bury his wife.

A. HIS CONFESSION TO HIS NEIGHBORS. Verses 4-6.

This exchange between Abraham and his neighbors is a window into how business was done in the Canaan during this time in history. We see these men extending great gracious respect to each other in an outward way. But, there is no question as to what was really going on. A deal was being made for Abraham to buy a piece of real estate for him to bury his wife.

1. ABRAHAM'S HONEST CONFESSION. Verse 4.

Abraham confesses his status as a **“stranger and a sojourner.”** This is a bit amazing for us to understand that even though he had lived in Canaan for more than fifty years Abraham did not have the deed to a square inch of the land. He did not come to Canaan to buy great portions of land for his family. He did not come trying to conquer his neighbors. God did not instruct him to do such things. In reality, He had no need to do that. This is going to sound like double talk but God gave him the land for an eternal possession and he knew it. Even the ground his neighbors were sitting on as he spoke to them was his. God had given it to him for an eternal possession.

Abraham was satisfied to live as a bedouin, putting up his tents wherever he could find a suitable place for himself and his flocks and herds to have food and water. He was content to allow God to work on his behalf.

But now present circumstances force him to go to his neighbors to purchase a place to bury his dear wife. He needed a tomb for Sarah.

2. HIS NEIGHBOR'S DECLARATION. Verses 5-6.

They say, **“hear us my lord, thou art a mighty prince among us.”** (Genesis 23:6a).

Abraham was not one of those troublesome neighbors that you wish would move away. The neighbor that never cuts his grass and has two or three old cars sitting in the yard.

In fact, he had proved in the past that he was a very valuable ally to have when needed. He did not gain this respect by running for office and being involved in political activity. Neither did he threaten these very men that he now stood before with his God given inheritance.

His integrity as a separated believer in his God made him stand out as a man of respect and honor.

B. HIS COURTESY TO HIS NEIGHBORS. Verses 7-9.

1. ABRAHAM'S GRACIOUS BEHAVIOR. "He bowed himself to the people of the land." (Genesis 23:7)

He does not act superior to these lost men. He behaves courteously and politely before them. He does not demand anything. He is not rude. He manifests the character of grace that he has learned in his relationship with his God.

This is an example of our Lord Jesus Christ who was gracious and kind. The only time we see the Lord lashing out was when there were those disgracing the house of God. He repudiated those who made a mockery of His Father's house. Our Lord had little use for religious hypocrisy.

2. ABRAHAM'S REQUEST OF HIS NEIGHBORS. Verse 8.

Genesis 23:8-9

"And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight; hear me, and intreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar, That he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which is in the end of his field; for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me for a possession of a buryingplace amongst you."

C. HIS COMPENSATION TO HIS NEIGHBORS.

1. ORIENTAL POSITIONING. Verses 10-15.

Ephron's game. He offers the land as a gift but in reality he has no intention of it being a gift. This is the custom of the culture to handle a purchase in this way. Ephron was aware that Abraham was able to pay and to pay well for the property in question. He would have been angry if Abraham had actually tried to get the land for nothing. Albert Barnes comments on this.

He offers the field as a gift, with the Eastern understanding that the receiver would make an ample recompense. This mode of dealing had its origin in a genuine good-will, that was prepared to gratify the wish of another as soon as it was made known, and as far as it was reasonable or practicable. The feeling seems to have been still somewhat fresh and unaffected in the time of Abraham, though it has degenerated into a mere form of courtesy. "If thou wilt, hear me." The language is abrupt, being spoken in the haste of excitement. "I give silver." "I have given" in the original; that is, I have determined to pay the full price. If the Eastern giver was liberal, the receiver was penetrated with an equal sense of the obligation conferred, and a like determination to make an equivalent return. ^(1b)

2. ABRAHAM'S CASH PAYMENT. Verse 16.

Abraham does not haggle over the price and Ephron knew he wouldn't. Is Abraham going to dicker over price while his dead wife needs a grave?

Abraham was a man of his word. He said at the beginning of verse nine that he would pay whatever

the land was worth. Ephron named his price, four hundred shekels of silver, and Abraham paid up, cash on the barrel head.

III. ABRAHAM'S GRAVEYARD POSSESSION. Verses 17-20.

A. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE PARCEL. Verses 17-18.

What was to be included in the deal is designated and verified. The sale was attested to and witnessed by all those who were present that day at the gate of the Hebron.

B. THE DESIGNATION OF THE PARCEL. Verse 19.

It was to be Sarah's grave. This would become the family burying place.

C. THE DIGNITY OF THE PARCEL. Verse 20.

This cave and field became the burial tomb of the patriarchs. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were all laid to rest there. Obviously Sarah was buried there but, Rebekah and Leah were also entombed there.

By the time of his death, Abraham had lived in Canaan, the land of promise, about 100 years. As far as men were concerned all he ever owned was a cemetery plot. Why was this not a problem for this man of faith? To understand we must look at Hebrews chapter 11.

Hebrews 11:8-10

"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

Abraham had his eyes on a city that was nothing like the cities that then existed in Canaan. No, he was looking for a city that was not built with human hands at all. And even though he was old and still did not physically realize the fulfillment of God's promises concerning the land his faith was such that he could see on past the present reality that he was just sojourning on the ground where he pitched his tent.

Hebrews 11:13

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob possessed the promises concerning the land but never saw them fulfilled in themselves. That was fine with them because they could see them far off. They believed that God's promise to them was just as real and sure as if fulfilled in them. They could live content with the life of pilgrims and strangers on earth because they knew they had something so much better waiting for them.

Hebrews 11:16

"But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."

Their eyes were not focused on what they could get out of this life: their eyes were on heaven. Because of that, there is this testimony not from them but from God. **"God is not ashamed to be called their God."**

BELIEVER:

What is the testimony of your life? What are your eyes on? Is it on what this old world that will one day pass away, or is it on what God has promised to you?

Hebrews 12:2

"Let us lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus."

LOST FRIEND:

Do you want to know that you have an inheritance with the Lord? That you are part of His promises? Would you not want to know that you will be with Him forever? Would you like to know for sure that after this life is over hell is not your end?

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. And in Him there is no more fear of death. You will be able to cry out with the Apostle Paul: **"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:55)**. You can know that you have eternal life in Jesus Christ.

ABRAHAM: FRIEND OF GOD AND FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL
CHAPTER 15 - A BRIDE FOR ISAAC
JAMES 2:23; GENESIS 24

This chapter is a beautiful and charming story in and of itself but it is also a wonderful spiritual picture. God the Father is portrayed by the now aged and wise father, Abraham. We see the Lord Jesus Christ pictured in Isaac, Abraham's son, (as God saw him, "**his only son**"). Abraham's faithful servant travels to a far country to seek a bride for Isaac. This servant pictures the ministry of the Holy Spirit who was sent into this world to seek a bride for the only begotten Son of God. Obviously, Rebekah represents the bride of Christ, the church.

We know from the fifth chapter of Paul's letter to the Ephesians that marriage is intended to mirror that divine union between Christ and His church. As we look at this lovely story there are also some biblical principles concerning the Holy Spirit's ministry in seeking a bride for the Son of God but also some important guidelines for believers who are seeking the companion that they desire to share their life with.

I. THE WISDOM OF A CAUTIOUS FATHER. Verses 1-9.

What a simple but wonderful word concerning the relationship between these two friends. Abraham was satisfied to allow God to own him lock, stock and barrel as the old saying goes. James records, as we read a moment ago, that Abraham was the friend of God. Those who have come into such a relationship with God will have His blessing. Verse one records: "**and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.**" (Genesis 24:1b)

A. THE COMMAND OF THE FATHER. Verses 2-4.

Abraham is now "**old, and well stricken in age.**" He is approximately one hundred and forty years old, and that would make Isaac about forty.

Abraham determines that it is now time to find a wife for his beloved son. Imagine it, being forty years old and content to wait until your father decided you were ready to marry. (I was half Isaac's age, only twenty when I married my dear wife.)

Father Abraham was appalled at the spiritual condition of the daughters of the Canaanites and did not want his son to marry a girl from amongst them. Abraham calls for his senior and most trusted servant to go back to his native land to find Isaac a wife. He gives his servant strict instructions concerning where and from who he was to find that wife.

B. THE BIBLICAL PRINCIPLE.

The Bible clearly teaches some things concerning the marriage of believers. There is to be no marriage between the believer and the unbeliever. "**can two walk together except the be agreed?**" (Amos 3:3). Paul explains to the church at Corinth saying: "**be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.**" (2 Corinthians 6:14).

Such a union would be like yoking a horse along with an ox. They are not equally yoked. They

cannot pull in unity. One will be pulling against the other. When a believer marries an unbeliever and seeks to live for God there will, without exception be a problem. Some may argue and say well my unsaved spouse has no problems with me going to church and serving the Lord. Is there not a problem even with that statement. Are not husband and wife to be one. How can that be when you are not one in the most important facet of your life, your relationship with God?

C. A EXCEPTIONAL BRIDE.

Not just any girl would not do for Isaac. He would have a specially sought out and prepared bride. So too, just any old bride will not do for the Son of God. He would have a specially sought out and prepared bride.

Ephesians 5:25-27

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”

God’s design is for His Son’s bride is that she be glorious, holy, and without blemish. We need to take note of another point concerning a rather simple statement in verse 8.

“And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath . . .” (Genesis 24:8).

We see here that Abraham realized that there was a specific lady that God had for Isaac. This is evidenced by the statement that when the servant found **“the woman”** and if she would not return to Canaan with him to become Isaac’s wife he would be free from the oath that he made to Abraham. The instruction was not to hunt for a woman until you find one that is willing to marry Isaac. No verse seven makes it clear that Abraham was convinced that God would direct the servant to the right woman for his son.

“he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.” (Genesis 24:7).

Every Christian young person and for that matter every Christian of any age that would like to get married needs to understand that God does have the exact right person for you. It is essential that you trust God the Holy Spirit to bring that person to you. What should you be doing in the mean time? You need to be praying for that one. I do not mean be praying that God would find someone for you. If it is God’s will for you to be married He already has someone for you. You need to be praying for that person. Pray that God would be preparing that one and yourself for your lives together.

II. THE WONDER OF THE COMMITTED SERVANT. Verses 10-28.

This man is Abraham’s top servant. He had charge of Abraham’s entire household. This servant was his right-hand man, so to speak.

There is no name given for this servant. Possibly it is Eleazar of Damascus who is mentioned in Genesis 15:2. But it is **no accident** that his name is missing in this narrative. At times in the Bible an unnamed person is set forth to be type or picture to teach a spiritual truth. Here, this servant is a special type or picture of the Holy Spirit. This is evident as this servant beautifully pictures the ministry of the Holy Spirit as he embarks on his mission to seek a wife for his master's son.

He loads ten of his master's camels with finery and gifts and travels Northward and around the fertile crescent toward the East to Mesopotamia.

A. GOD'S CARE FOR ISAAC'S BRIDE.

1. THE SERVANT'S PRACTICAL PRAYER TO FIND GOD'S WILL. Verses 12-14. Abraham's servant prays for God's special and specific direction upon the work his master has sent him to do. He prays that the Lord would, **"send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham."** (Genesis 24:12). Are we mindful to seek God's help with every issue of our lives? We may think some things are too trivial to bother the Lord with but that is absolutely wrong because it does not acknowledge God's Lordship in all areas. If God is Lord then He is to have direction of every thing we involve ourselves with.

2. THE PROVIDENTIAL PROVISION OF GOD'S WILL. Verses 15-28. What was the servant's response as he witnessed God work all these things out before his eyes? **"the man wondering at her held his peace . . ."** (Genesis 24:21). The servant sits stunned at how God has fulfilled his prayer completely. Before he even says amen to his prayer God has Rebekah on the scene.

B. GOD'S CARE FOR CHRIST'S BRIDE.

God sent the Holy Spirit into this world to seek and to woo souls to His Son. Without coercion, without pressure He works in the heart of the sinner to create a desire for the Lord Jesus. He does not seek glory or attention for himself but magnifies and gives glory to the Son and tells of the gracious ways of the Father. He lavishes the gifts of the Father's love on them and lovingly loves them to the Father's beloved Son.

III. THE WANTS OF A COVETOUS BROTHER. Verses 29-33.

Just a short comment here before we move on about Rebekah's brother, Laban. Note what catches Laban's attention in verse 30a: the goodies that the servant gave to Rebekah. He heard the whole wondrous account and was told of the loving father and the miraculous son but there is no evidence that Laban ever changed from anything more than a covetous schemer.

Verse 50 gives some indication that he was willing to give lip service to God but we have no evidence that he ever truly gives himself to the Lord. In fact, several decades later and after butting heads with Jacob for twenty years Rachel stole Laban's household idols. So it is obvious that Laban never truly put his faith in the God of his uncle Abraham.

IV. THE WILLINGNESS OF THE CAPTIVATED BRIDE. Verses 34-61.

A. REBEKAH'S OPEN HEART.

It was much different with Rebekah. She heard of Abraham and how Jehovah God had blessed him and made him great. She listened about how God had miraculously given Abraham and Sarah a child in their own age when all hope of such things was far over.

Though it is not mentioned, it is quite possible the servant relates the story of Mt. Moriah in that how Abraham was willing to offer Isaac as a sacrifice to the God of Heaven and Earth and had in a sense been raised as from the dead.

She was no doubt amazed at how God had providentially arranged the meeting with Abraham's servant at the well earlier that day. Her heart probably fluttered at all that had so suddenly and quickly transpired in her life.

B. REBEKAH'S WILLING HEART. Verse 58.

1. REBEKAH'S CIRCUMSTANCES.

The family consents to have their daughter and sister become Isaac's wife but the final decision is left with her. **"Wilt thou go with this man?" and she said, "I will go." (Genesis 24:58).**

Think about this a moment. All she knew about Isaac was the little that she was told by the servant of Abraham. She did not know if he was good looking or if he resembled a toad. She had no idea of his personality. She did not know if he was intelligent or if he was dumb as a box of rocks. None the less something in her heart convinced her to trust the servant and commit her life to the Son of Abraham.

2. THE BELIEVER'S CIRCUMSTANCES.

When you consider it, most often the person who first puts his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ really knows very little about Him. He may well have heard of the greatness of His Heavenly Father. He may be told something of His miraculous birth and sinless life. He is surely told of the great sacrifice that He made at Mt. Calvary and that He had indeed risen from the dead in victory over sin and death. But beyond those none the less tremendous truths, he knows little else about this One that he is asked to intrust his life and eternity to. The invitation to every one of us is, **"wilt thou go with this man?" (Genesis 24:58).** Will you give yourself to Him?

There is something within the heart that woos them to Him. They know they must go with His servant (the Holy Spirit) and give themselves to the Son of God. They recognize from within their heart of hearts that they can indeed trust themselves to Him. And they respond, **"I will go."**

V. THE WAITING OF THE COMMENDABLE SON. Verses 62-67.

A. THE ANXIOUS TRIP OF THE BRIDE.

Can you imagine what that trip was like as the servant and Rebekah make their way back to Canaan, back to the household of Father Abraham? Surely, Rebekah would have asked questions along the

500-mile trip. She would want her curiosity satisfied concerning her prospective husband. What is he like? How tall is he? Is he kind? Is he loving? Is he compassionate?

With every passing day and every passing mile her anticipation would grow and intensify? Finally they draw near to the Camp of Abraham and Isaac is out walking and meditating and she asks after who that man is and the Servant replies **“it is my Master.”**

B. THE ANXIOUS WAITING OF THE SON.

On the other hand, could you imagine the anxious waiting of Isaac. His father has sent the servant to find him a wife. What is he going to bring me? Will she be beautiful? Will she like him? What will their life be like together?

Think of what was going on in Isaac’s heart as he saw those very familiar camels approaching. He knew he was about to meet his wife. Surely there was a lump swelling up in his throat along with an increase in the pounding of his heart.

In verse 66 we are told that the faithful servant fills Isaac in on all that had transpired on his long journey. And what a story it was! God had indeed prospered his way.

The introductions are made and Isaac brought Rebekah into the tent of Sarah and she becomes his wife. Here we see the son now receiving his bride to himself. She becomes his wife. There is a tremendous testimony to the amazing grace of God in the very simple words, **“and he loved her.”**

So too, the Lord Jesus Christ loves His bride, the church. He loves her so much that he was willing to lay down His life for her.

Ephesians 5:25

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.”

ABRAHAM: FRIEND OF GOD AND FATHER OF FAITH
CHAPTER 16 - GOD'S FRIEND COMES HOME - GENESIS 25:1-10

We come to the last chapter in our study of the life of Abraham. It is a tremendous statement when a man that has been dead for four thousand years is still studied by thousands of people every year. That in itself is an encouragement and a challenge to us that regardless, of how tough times get in our lives we need live in such a manner as to magnify the Lord so that we might be known as Abraham was, **“the friend of God.” (James 2:23).**

We have said this time and again in this study but it still stands true; we have learned many invaluable lessons from this man's life and relationship with God. But there are things for us to learn even in how this man died. We are not concerned with the physical cause of his death, for that was obviously old age, but in the manner in which he leaves this temporal world and enters eternity. Christian, please remember that it is one thing to start well in your walk with God but a much greater thing to finish well. John Phillips makes this comment from personal experience. **“When my own grandfather was dying, my father asked him how it was with him. He said, “Len, there's nothing to dying– it's the living that counts! If you live right you'll die right.”** ⁽¹⁷ⁱ⁾

Let us take a look at the way Abraham finishes his pilgrimage on this earth.

I. ABRAHAM REMARRIES IN HIS OLD AGE. GENESIS 25:1-4.

The last verse of chapter 24 reveals to us that Sarah was greatly missed when she died. Her son, Isaac, obviously grieved his mother's death and he was greatly comforted when Rebekah was brought to him and she became his wife.

Surely, we can understand that Abraham also would have been very lonely with the death of his wife and life's companion, Sarah. Isaac has now established his own home and Abraham witnessed the joy of his son's household and decided to take another wife for himself.

A. THE WIFE OF HIS OLD AGE. Verse 1.

The name of the lady Abraham married was Keturah. Her name means incense or perfumed. Such a name reveals to us that she was a blessing to Abraham in his old age. The basic idea of incense is to give a pleasant aroma. They are intended to be pleasing to the sense of smell. We are left with the impression that this lady was pleasing and a comfort to Abraham.

B. THE CHILDREN OF HIS OLD AGE. Verse 2

1. THE SIX SONS OF KETURAH.

After all of these years Abraham now has six more sons born to him of Keturah. The passage actually lists those six sons, the seven grandsons that were born of them and three great grandsons.

The Scriptures say very little about them. The names of all but the first born have a negative note about them, Zimran which means “singer” or “song.” Such a name would put us in mind to think that this man was a pleasant person. The rest leave something to be desired. In fact, Midian, is the

father of the Midianites who hated the children of Israel. They were bitter enemies and in the days of the judges the Lord gave them into the hands of Israel under the leadership of Gideon.

2. THE NECESSITY OF GOD'S GRACE.

This is a real testimony to the fact that salvation is a matter of God's grace and not hereditary. Just because a child's parents love God is not a guarantee that they will. A father can lead his house rightly and teach his children the things of the Lord but he cannot force righteousness into their heart. We find this explained to us in the Gospel of John.

John 1:12-13

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

We must give our children to the Lord and trust Him with their eternal care. Then live godly lives before them. Witness to them of God's grace and mercy. Share with them what the Lord has done for you and them through the Lord Jesus Christ. But still it is a matter of God working in their hearts and their receiving God's great saving grace through Jesus Christ for themselves.

II. ABRAHAM'S PREPARATION FOR GLORY. GENESIS 25:5-10.

Abraham realizes that the days of his earthly walk are drawing to a close but he does not leave his eight sons to fight over his great wealth after he dies. Rather he diligently takes care of those issues before he dies.

A. ABRAHAM GETS HIS AFFAIRS IN ORDER. Verses 5-6.

As the word of God say, he basically gave everything to Isaac. He had sent Ishmael away decades earlier and whatever Abraham had given to Hagar and her son was settled. He gave set portions to each of the six sons of Keturah and then sent them far away into the east, probably into Arabia. Abraham did not want any issues to arise later with Isaac, the son of God's promise.

B. ABRAHAM GOES HOME TO HIS PEOPLE. Verses 7-10.

Abraham lived one hundred and seventy-five years. God had called him out of Ur of the Chaldees to begin his walk with Him at the age of seventy-five. That means he enjoyed one hundred years of fellowship with his God. He outlived Sarah by thirty-eight years and the marriage of Isaac by approximately thirty-five years.

1. TESTIMONY OF ABRAHAM'S LIFE. Verses 7-8.

Genesis 25:8

“Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people.”

By all estimations, Abraham lived a good life and a full life. As he reached old age, he could testify of God's goodness to him in all things and that the Lord had filled his life with blessing. Remember

the words of

Genesis 24:1

“And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.”

In assessing the life of Abraham there is no question that God had richly blessed him. The Lord had laded him with untold earthly riches. There were great victories in warfare. He had given him a long physical life and all of that is nice but the greatest blessing that God was pleased to give Abraham was to become his friend. God blessed Abraham with a relationship that few other men have experienced in their earthly life.

2. ABRAHAM’S ETERNAL DESTINY. Verses 8b-10.

They buried Abraham in the “Cave of Machpelah.” They placed his body in that tomb where Sarah’s remains were but note how the Holy Spirit describes where he, that is Abraham, went. “. . . he was gathered to his people.” (Genesis 25:8b). He went home to be with his people. What people is that? That is all of the faithful that had gone on before him. That would include his dear wife Sarah, Adam, Seth, Enoch, Noah and all those who had died in faith before him. Gordon Lindsey comments as follows: **“Abraham lived till a good old age. But finally there must come the time of departing. He had lived life to the full, and when death beckoned, he was ready to go. There was no reluctance on his part when the angels came to welcome him home.”** ^(13a)

On the day of his death Abraham simply changed addresses. They placed his body in the tomb but Abraham went on to paradise. Remember this dear Christian, you are not your body you just live in your body. Your body is your temporary, earthly dwelling place. But because of your faith in Jesus Christ you have eternal life. Because of what Jesus did at Mount Calvary, you have an eternal place with your people, the people of God which includes Father Abraham.

When the beggar Lazarus was ushered into paradise by the angels at his death in Luke 16 who was there? Was he not taken to Abraham’s bosom?

Luke 16:22

“And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom . . .”

III. ABRAHAM’S HERITAGE TO ALL BELIEVERS.

Obviously, Abraham is one of the key figures in the Bible. Fourteen chapters of Genesis deal with his life; beginning when God called him out of Ur of the Chaldees until his death, covering a one hundred year time period.

It is noteworthy that we find Abraham’s name mentioned 70 times in the New Testament. This man Abraham has the distinction of being called God’s friend. Three times the Word of God reminds us of his special relationship to our God.

2 Chronicles 20:7

“Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?”

Isaiah 41:8

“But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.”

James 2:23

“And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.”

What a glorious testimony this is to a man's life that he when he is gone he would be remembered as the friend of God. We see Abraham's life as it is honestly recorded for us by the Holy Spirit into the Word of God. We might wonder how this man who made some great blunders along the way would be regarded by God so highly? This is a great testimony to the amazing grace of God. God never gave up on Abraham. He continued to deal with his friend and developed him and taught him until the day he was ready for the greatest revelation of his faith and trust in God on Mount Moriah. God is a god of the common man. Abraham's relationship and walk with God are a shining testimony to all believers that they too can serve God faithfully.

A. ABRAHAM'S EXAMPLE OF SALVATION THROUGH FAITH. Galatians 3.

The Apostle Paul uses Abraham's relationship with God to teach how God saves. How does Paul tell us that Abraham was saved? He was saved by faith that is he believed God.

Galatians 3:6

“Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”

Anyone that has ever been saved has been saved the same way Abraham was and that is by faith. Paul wrote to the Ephesians and told them, **“by grace are ye saved through faith . . .”** (Ephesians 2:8). Verse seven of Galatians 3 tells us something very amazing and beautiful.

Galatians 3:7

“Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.”

Who are the children of Abraham? All those who are of faith. We will look at this again below but for now soak in the truth that when you by faith receive Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord you become spiritual children of Abraham. The Jews are the physical children of Abraham, but all saved Jews and gentiles are the spiritual children of Abraham.

B. THE COMMON BLESSING OF THE SPIRIT.**Galatians 3:13-14.**

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is

written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Paul wants his readers in the local churches of Galatia to know that even though they were for the most part gentiles they too could have the same blessing of God as Abraham did.

C. THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM'S SEED.

Galatians 3:16

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

What a tremendous statement! The Seed of Abraham had inherited the promises that God made to Abraham. Whom do we find out that Paul is ultimately referring to? He is talking about none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, Israel is included in those promises in that they will one day receive all the implications of the promises made to Abraham concerning the land. And yes, all who receive Christ as Savior, Jew and Gentile receive eternal blessings in Him. But, ultimately the promises made to Abraham are fulfilled and committed to God's only begotten and beloved Son, Jesus. They are made to God's eternal King, His own Son.

D. THE BELIEVER'S INHERITANCE WITH ABRAHAM.

Galatians 3:26-29.d

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Are you saved? Have you placed your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior from sin and death? Verse 27 is not talking about water baptism but about being baptized or immersed into Jesus Christ. Are you in Christ? If you are, you are a child of God.

Verse 29 makes the glorious declaration that those who belong to Christ are the seed of Abraham and as his seed receive all the blessings of the promises that God made to Abraham. If you are a child of Abraham, you have an inheritance in him. You have inherited a land, and Jesus Christ has prepared a place for you in the kingdom of God. You have inherited to privilege of being a blessing to all those around you through the gospel of your Savior, Jesus Christ.

How do we close the book on the life of Abraham? How do we sum up what we have learned from Abraham? His life must be summed up as the Scriptures sum it up. The Bible emphasizes that he was a man of faith. The Bible tells us repeatedly that Abraham believed God. What does that mean? It means he believed what God told him. He believed the Word of God. Could we not learn that lesson first and foremost dear ones, believe God, trust Him for what He says to us through His word?

Might we learn from Abraham to trust God in all areas of our lives. It will revolutionize every moment that we live. It will remove the anxieties of what is going to happen in the future. It will wash away the anguish over the past. Look to Jesus who is the author and finisher of our faith. Learn that trusting God is the beginning and end of our lives in Christ. When there is true and complete trust in the Lord there is beautiful victory for every moment. Where there is complete trust in God no sacrifice He asks of you will seem too great and no triumph beyond reach. The truth of one of the most precious and oft quoted verses in the Bible will become a reality.

Isaiah 26:3

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.”

The life of Abraham brings life to those tremendous words. That peace is available to every believer that is abiding and trusting in Jesus Christ. Thank you Lord for the record of Abraham’s life and his walk with You.

CONCLUSION/SUMMARY

Great men who achieve great things receive attention for their deeds amongst their peers at the time of their achievements. A few are remembered for a short time following their achievement. Even fewer have their achievements recorded for history. Then there are a few rare individuals that are remembered for generations and posterity. Abraham is marked in Holy Scripture as one of its true heroes. Not so much, as we have so vividly seen, because his greatness in and of himself but for his relationship with his God. Abraham is a testimony for all believers that believing God is indeed a good and a wise philosophy for time and for eternity.

God is trustworthy. In a world of confusion and instability it is wonderful to know that the Word of God is absolutely reliable. Abraham's relationship with God is a testimony to saved and lost alike, that what God promises He will do. Every promise that God made to Abraham was kept both during the life of Abraham but also to Abraham's posterity with more to come.

With the Holy Scripture as a backdrop we watch with anticipation as to when and how God will bring to fulfillment those aspects of His promises to Abraham that are yet to be fulfilled. We watch the Middle East wondering what will happen next on God's timetable. We do not watch wondering if but when and how God will accomplish His promise to His friend, Abraham.

It is our prayer that we have challenged some to place their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. It is our prayer that believers have been encouraged to trust God absolutely with no reserve. It is our great and ultimate prayer that Jesus Christ has been exalted.

May God bless you in your walk of faith in God!

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