

Genesis 12-13 – Thursday, December 13th, 2007

- By way of introduction, chapter 11 was all about man's plans, and now chapter 12 will be all about God's plans.

12:1 Now the LORD had said to Abram: "**Get out** of your country, **From your family And from your father's house**, To a land that I will show you.

- Abram is told by the Lord to do three things:

1. Get out of your country. This he obeyed, he left Ur of the Chaldeans. Interesting that God hasn't shown him the Promised Land yet.

Hebrews 11:8 By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. NIV

2. Get out from your family. This he disobeyed and Lot caused him many problems, as we'll see later on.

3. Get out from your father's house. This he disobeyed, and his father Terah cost him by delaying God's promise by about 15 years.

The name is the nature:

- Terah's name means delay.

- Haran means parched or barren

- Abram's name means father.

- Sarai's name means contentious.

2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing.

- God makes three promises to Abram:

1. I will make you a great nation

2. I will make your name great

3. I will make you a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

- This verse right here is "the" verse that has determined the decline and or fall of many world empires.

"When the Greeks overran Palestine and desecrated the altar in the Jewish temple, they were soon conquered by Rome. When Rome killed Paul and many others, and destroyed Jerusalem under Titus, Rome soon fell. Spain was reduced to a fifth-rate nation after the Inquisition against the Jews; Poland fell after the pogroms; Hitler's Germany went down after its orgies of anti-Semitism; Britain lost her empire when she broke her faith with Israel." (Donald Barnhouse)

- I believe that the United States of America is basking in the residual blessing of God because of our blessing to Israel.

- We were one of the first modern nations to grant full citizenship and protection to Jewish people.

- However, let me hasten to say that our blessing and support of Israel is waning at best. It's very possible that the U.S. will fall as well.

- It's believed that Jesus may have been referring to this in Matthew 24 when he talked about blessing the least of these.

Matthew 25:40 "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' NIV

4 So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. 5 Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan. 6 Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land.

- Again, this is Abram's partial obedience, in that God had commanded him to leave his family.

- Why would God command Abram to leave his family behind? Because they would be a hindrance to the call God has on Abram's life.

- Abram's nephew Lot will be the source of many problems for him, and Terah Abram's dad will be the source of much delay for him.

Thoughts to ponder:

1. Lot and Terah had to be removed before God could really move in Abram's life. Sometimes God has to remove people from our lives before He can move in our lives.

2. Abram is 75 years of age when he leaves Haran. You're never really too old for God. He can still use you in His grand and glorious plan for mankind.

3. God is patient with Abram and sort of waits for him in order to finally bless him. God doesn't give up on us; He is ever so patient and gracious to us.

Isaiah 30:18a And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, KJV

7 Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. 8 And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. 9 So Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South.

- It's interesting to note that Abram built an altar to the Lord and pitched a tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east.
- One has noted that "Bethel" means house of God, and "Hai" or Ai means the heap, or the dump.

- The implication could be that Abram is a pilgrim between the house of God/heaven, and heap of a fallen world/dump.
- Notice that nowhere do we find that Abram ever built a house. He always lived in tents which evidenced his loose touch on this world.

1 John 2:15-17 15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. NIV

1 Peter 2:11 Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, NKJV

- Pilgrims are different than Nomads in the sense that they have left their home and are traveling to a specific destination.

Hebrews 11:9-10 9 By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. 10 For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. NIV

Hebrews 11:14-16 14 People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. 15 If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them. NIV

"I've learned to hold on loosely to the things of this world, for I know not when they will be required of me." Corrie Ten boom

10 Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine was severe in the land.

- Interesting that there would be a famine in the land that God is sending Abram into. He's still in God's will even though there's a famine.
- God never told Abram to go "down" to Egypt. Abram messes up again and takes matters into his own hands out of fear.
- Don't be too hard on Abram, we do the same thing; 'we find it easier to trust God in the far-off promise than for the right-now needs.'
- Notice that Abram falls in the area of his greatest strength, his faith.
- Humble Moses fell in his pride when he struck the rock. Peter fell in his courage, when he denied the Lord.
- Be careful if you think you stand lest you fall because you tend to rely on your own strength when you think you stand strong.

1 Corinthians 10:12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! NIV

11 And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "Indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance. 12 Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. 13 Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you."

- So Abram is faced with a big decision now. Sarai is so beautiful that if they find out that she's Abram's wife, they'll kill him and take her.
- Apparently in ancient Egypt adultery is forbidden but murder is not. Weird! So Abram makes one of the worst decisions of his life.

- Often bad decisions lead to more bad decisions. Abram's decision to lie about his wife will cause unspeakable problems.
- This decision would have far reaching ramifications. Sarai would be given an Egyptian hand maiden by the name of Hagar.

- Hagar and Ishmael will become a source of much pain to Abraham, Sarah, and the generations to come.
- Hagar and Ishmael were still blessed of God but the curse that came as a result could have been avoided if Abram never went to Egypt.

- At this juncture, it would be good to clarify something about blessings and curses.
- When we read of God cursing the Arab nations, that doesn't mean that all Arab's are cursed.
- When we read that Ham was cursed, that doesn't mean that all the black people from Africa are cursed.

- Abram is putting his wife in harms way to save his own neck. (By the way, he's telling a half truth, which is a whole lie.)
- Not only is he putting Sarai in jeopardy, he's also jeopardizing the family line from which the Savior of the world will come.
- Disobedience makes our lives very complicated. If Abram had obeyed God, he wouldn't be in this situation.

14 So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman, that she was very beautiful. 15 The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken to Pharaoh's house. 16 He treated Abram well for her sake. He had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels.

- It seems like Abram is getting away with this lie and he's seemingly even prospering too.
- This is true with us. We think we can get ahead in life by lying and cheating, and that we can get away with it.

- Abram is trusting in his deception to protect him and prosper him as opposed to trusting in the Lord to protect him and prosper him.
- It's been said that whenever we can't find some good reason for doing something wrong, the devil will be happy to suggest one.

17 But the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. 18 And Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? 19 Why did you say, 'She is my sister'?" I might have taken her as my wife. Now therefore, here is your wife; take her and go your way.

- The Lord plagues Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai is Abram's wife. Abram's plan is falling apart.
- Pharaoh finds out, and sends out Abram and his wife. You know you've really messed up when a pagan rebukes you for your sin.

"20 So Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they sent him away, with his wife and all that he had.

- One has noted that it would have been very tense between Abram and Sarai on their camel ride out of Egypt.
- Abram should have stayed in Canaan and never went to Egypt even if there was a famine.

- It's interesting to note that God protected Sarai and honored her for obeying and submitting to her husband.
- Actually she is held up as a picture of what a Christian wife should be in Peter's first epistle.

1 Peter 3:3-6 3 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. 4 Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. 5 For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, 6 like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear. NIV

13:1 Then Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, to the South. 2 Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold.

- Abram leaves Egypt after messing up big time. He's back to where he was at the beginning after failing miserably.
- No matter how bad we've failed, it can't change how good God is to us in the midst of those failures.

"Why does God show us the failures of these great leaders? Could it be He wants us to know that in spite of our fiascos, He can still make something glorious out of our lives? The list of names in Hebrews 11 underscores this truth. In this passage, men and women of great faith are noted – ones whom God Almighty approved. One might be shocked, however, to discover how many of them were restored spiritually following failures such as deception, drunkenness, adultery, idolatry and murder.

K.P. Yohannan When We Have Failed – What Next? God's Answer to Our Failures p 12

3 And he went on his journey from the South as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, 4 to the place of the altar which he had made there at first. And there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

- Now we see him at the altar "he had made there at first," like the church of Ephesus, remember, repent, return, and repeat.

Revelation 2:4-5a 4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. 5a Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. NIV

- So Abram returns back to Bethel, (House of God), which is the last place he heard the voice of God.
- When you don't know what to do, go back and do what the last thing you were told to do.
- Notice how that we never see him calling on the Lord before he "went down" to Egypt.

- Also worthy of noting is how Abram sinned after leaving his place of worship at Bethel.
- It would seem that Abram is a broken and humbled man at this point. He probably realizes the damage he's done.
- Notice, parenthetically; Abram is very wealthy. It's not what you have it's what has you. You can have wealth and still be in the faith.

- It's interesting that Abram would even go back to God. He doesn't think that God is through with him, and wants nothing to do with him.
- Satan is extremely crafty. He tries to deceive us into thinking that we should never go back to God, let alone to church, (Bethel).
- Satan condemns but God convicts. Condemnation alienates us from God, but conviction reunites us to God.

- So Abram is sort of reunited back to God and is right back where he started to begin with.
- I can't help but wonder how God would have miraculously provided had he stayed in put. I guess we'll never know now.

5 Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents. 6 Now the land was not able to support them, that they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together. 7 And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land.

- Lot has also become wealthy because of Abram and now is in conflict with his uncle Abram.
- Again, if Abram would have obeyed God and left Lot in Ur, this wouldn't have happened. I wonder if Lot begged Abram to go with him.
- Sometimes, people are attracted to the hand of God's blessing on our lives.

- Notice the detail recorded for us; the Canaanites and the Perizzites dwelt in the land. Perhaps they witnessed Abram and Lot fighting.
- What a bad witness this would have been. No wonder Abram is will seek to resolve this as soon as possible.

"Many people will never listen to what any believer says because of what some believers are." (Donald Barnhouse)

8 So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren. 9 Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left."

- It seems that Abram has learned from his mistake in Egypt. Now instead of looking out for himself, he generously considers Lot.

Philippians 2:4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. NIV

- Abram is not cowering in weakness to Lot; he's being gracious to Lot because God gave the land to him not Lot.

- Also, I would imagine that Abram feels responsible for Lot since he came with him, and wants to make sure he's taken care of.

- This is really quite amazing because Abram offers Lot the first choice.

- In this we can start noticing a change in Abram, now people are more important than possessions, and other's more important than self.

Philippians 2:3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. NIV

- On final thought on Abram and Lot separating. Sometimes brethren need to separate, and this can be the Lord.

- It needs to be done in a God honoring way. It's not that we do separate its how we separate.

- When we get to Acts 15 in our on Sunday morning study, we'll see Paul and Barnabas have a sharp dispute and separate.

10 And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. 11 Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other. 12 Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom. 13 But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD.

- Lot saw, chose, then he went. Lot should have given his uncle first choice. In this culture, the younger had respect for the elder.

"When there is an elder man and a younger man in the same room, the elder man should never mention it, but the younger man should never forget it."
George Washington

- Notice that prayer on Lot's part is completely absent. I wonder if he would have prayed would he still have gone to Sodom?

- This also makes me wonder if Abram would have prayed would he still have gone to Egypt?

- Lot's decision is made solely on the basis temporal material prosperity and as a result he ends up in a very sinful place.

- This doesn't mean that God doesn't send us into sinful places. If it's His will, He will, but Lot wasn't in God's will.

- One noted how that Lot saw it as a good place to raise cattle, but failed to see that it would be a horrible place to raise kids.

- It's interesting the progression. First in verse 10, Lot looked toward Sodom, then, in verse 2, he pitched his tent toward Sodom.

- When we get to chapter 19, we'll then see that Lot had become a leader in Sodom. This will be the worst decision Lot could have made.

- This decision will cost him everything. He'll lose his wife, his daughter's innocence, and his wealth. He will end up homeless in a cave.

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death. NIV

- Notice the contrast between Abram and Lot. Abram's decision was made "by faith," and Lot's decision was made "by sight."

2 Corinthians 5:7 We live by faith, not by sight. NIV

- Another contrast between Abram and Lot is that Abram loses but finds, while Lot tries to find his life in Sodom, but will lose it.

Matthew 10:39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. NIV

- One more thought regarding Lot; it wasn't his choice that led him astray. His heart was already astray. It was evidenced by his choice.

14 And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are -- northward, southward, eastward, and westward; 15 for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. 16 And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered. 17 Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you."

- Notice that it's only after Lot had separated from Abram; that God could finally do what He wanted to do for Abram.

- It doesn't matter what a Lot does to us, because it can't thwart what God does for us.

- God is sort of reminding Abram about the promise, and is repeating to Abram that He will keep the promise.

- I think it's very important to keep repeating to ourselves and reminding ourselves of the promises of God.

- Just because God's promises have been delayed, doesn't mean that God's promises have been denied.

- So what's the promise; God is giving all this land to the Hebrew's, by the way, this is pre-Palestinian.

- Also, the promise is that God is giving so many descendants to Abram that they will be innumerable.

- Why would God give them this particular land? Because this land connects three main continents.

- Now the world would pass through Israel to avoid the deadly deserts.

- One has noted that instead of Israel going out to the world, the world would come to them.
- Israel would be the revelation of God, from which would come the Word of God, from which would come the Savior of the world.
- This contrasts the great commission in the new covenant to go out to all the world.

18 Then Abram moved his tent, and went and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built an altar there to the LORD.

- Interesting that again; the name is the nature. Abram moves his tent and dwelt Mamre which is in Hebron and builds an altar there.
- **Mamre** means "vision"; **Hebron** means "communion." Abram is walking in the vision of the Lord and in communion with the Lord.