

Genesis Chapter 12 and 13 – John Karmelich

1. How many people reading this never have doubts about their faith toward God?
 - a) Assuming no one reading this is lying, everyone should still be paying attention! ☺
 - b) Beginning with this lesson, we are going to read the story of Abraham (a.k.a. “Abram” at this point in Genesis), who is called the “Father of the Faithful” (based on Romans 4:12).
 - c) One of the most important things to learn about Abraham is that he made mistakes.
 - i) Take comfort in that. God is not expecting perfection. God is expecting trust. When we have those bad moments and bad days, confess it and move on. Our salvation is not dependant upon our promises but God’s promises.
 - ii) In this chapter God makes unconditional promises to Abraham. God knew well in advance of all the mistakes Abraham was going to make. Despite that, he told Abraham of all the wonderful blessings he had for him.
 - iii) God makes wonderful unconditional promises for us. Our salvation depends upon our trust in Jesus. If we have our momentary doubts or our “bad days”, as long as we are still trusting in Jesus (and I’ll add confession of sin), it is not possible to lose your salvation, because our salvation is not dependant upon our actions but God’s actions. The key word is “unconditional”.
 - d) As we read these chapters, my emphasis is going to be on the patterns we can learn from Abraham and how they apply to our lives.
 - i) These studies are designed to focus on the “why” questions of the bible. I always like to ponder: “Why did God do it this way? Why does God want us to know that Abraham did this-or-that at this particular moment? The most important reason to study your bible is not to learn historical facts, but to learn how these stories apply to our lives today.
 - ii) These stories on Abraham are full of faults and mistakes as well as blessings and great triumphs. Abraham gets called the “Father of the Faithful” as he eventually accomplishes all that God asks of him. Abraham procrastinates at points, as we do with God’s commands for our lives. Abraham makes mistakes, as we do. In the end, Abraham “knew the right thing to do”. We will read of Abraham trusting God more and more as his faith grew.
 - a) That is the idea behind the Christian life. We watch God work in our lives despite our faults, our mistakes and our procrastinations. Despite that, God still works with us, maturing us in our faith toward him. Ultimately God gets glorified through our lives as it did through Abraham.
 - iii) OK, Two chapters to go, and lots to say! Let’s get moving.
2. Chapter 12, Verse 1: The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.
 - a) First, notice the past tense of the word “had”: “The LORD had said to Abram”.
 - i) To keep it simple, God called Abraham when he was still with his father in what-is-today Southern Iraq (“Ur of the Chaldeans”). We learn this from Stephen’s sermon in Acts 7:2.
 - a) Abraham, with his father, and siblings then move “up river” to what-is-today Northern Iraq (“Haran”). Haran was a major city at that time.
 - b) After Abraham’s father died (Acts 7:4), Abraham left Ur to go to what-is-today Israel.
 - ii) So if this verse is past tense, why is it mentioned in this specific location of the bible? If God did give these promises to Abraham earlier in the story, why doesn’t the bible state it that way?

- iii) My answer is that this is the point in the story where Abraham obeyed God.
 - a) This is the point where Abraham actually left his father's household and went to what-is-now Israel.
 - b) God loves obedience. I believe that is why it is mentioned here.
 - b) There is a concept in Judaism and Christianity called "leave and cleave".
 - i) This comes from the King James Bible where it says, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." (Genesis 2:24 KJV), also quoted by Jesus in Matthew 19:5 and Mark 10:7.
 - ii) The concept of "leave and cleave" is not just for marriage. It also applies to our relationship with God.
 - a) God is calling Abraham to leave 1) his country 2) his "people" and 3) his family, and to go to a land where God will show him.
 - b) God calls us to leave our former life and "cleave" to God. To "cleave" means to "stick close". The idea is one of obedience and servanthood.
 - c) Does this mean when we are born again to never again listen to our parents and move far away? Of course not! One of the Ten Commandments has to do with obeying your mother and father. Our new life begins when we understand God is in charge of our life and not ourselves, nor our parents, nor the territory in which we live. God's laws come first. After that, we are obedient to our parents' wishes, the law of the land, etc.
 - d) Moreover, there is the idea of leaving the lifestyle of our former life and starting a new life doing what God asks us to do.
 - iii) Notice when God called Abraham to leave, the command is from the "general to the specific".
 - a) First God asked Abraham to leave his country, that is, where he was living.
 - b) Then God asked Abraham to leave his people. That would refer to his greater family and those he called his people there in Haran.
 - c) Finally, God asked Abraham to leave his family.
 - d) The reason I make a big deal about this is God often works that way in our life as well. God demands a lot of us. He doesn't do that to punish us, but because he wants the best for us. There is often a progression in our faith and our obedience to what God calls us to do.
 - e) It may be easy to leave your country, but it is usually more difficult to leave your family. Remember "leave" does not mean never see them again. It simply means that God is now a priority over your family. Your loyalty is to God first and the family second. It is through the power of God you can serve and support your family far better than you could through your own strength.
 - f) Jesus himself talked about this idea. "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:26-27, NIV). The idea here is not about avoiding and hating your family, the idea is about your loyalty to God over your family. That is what Abraham is being called to do back in here in Genesis.
3. Verse 2: "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.
- a) Remember I said in the introduction that there are unconditional promises made to Abraham. Yet in Verse 1, God asks Abraham to leave his country and his family.
 - b) Also remember that Verse 1 is past tense. Abraham has fulfilled those promises.
 - c) Now in Verse 2, comes God's part. The blessings of Verse 2 are up to God, not Abraham.

- d) These verses are unconditional in the sense that Abraham has already done all that God has asked him to do. The rest is up to God.
- i) Notice that God did not ask Abraham to be perfect. We will read of lots of mistakes made by Abraham over the next few chapters.
 - ii) Abraham is “saved” as he believed in God. He is trusting in God for his salvation and he is living his life based on obedience. That is what God asks of us. It is not about being perfect; it is about being “God-focused” in our lives.
- e) Now let’s talk about the specific blessings: Why did God tell Abraham, “I will make you a great nation”?
- i) First of all, this is about the beginning of the nation of Israel. Abraham is considered the father of the nation of Israel. He is the “first Jew” in that sense.
 - ii) This verse needs to be read in perspective of the previous few chapters.
 - iii) Remember we had the whole “Tower of Babel” incident in Genesis 11. People willfully disobeyed God’s order to “multiply and fill the earth” (Genesis 9:1).
 - iv) Also during this time era, God made a promise to Noah that he would never again flood the earth. Given that, what is the purpose of these promises to Abraham?
 - a) God still cared about the people who were willfully disobeying him. God’s “long term plan” was to send a Messiah to pay the price for sins and teach people that there is forgiveness despite their willful disobedience.
 - b) God’s “next step” in this plan is to have a particular group of people be God’s “ambassador’s” or “witnesses” to the world. God wanted a group of people to be get the world’s attention and say, “this is the way to God. This is what the true God, the only God of the universe, expects of you.”
 - c) To start a specific group to be God’s witnesses to the world, you have to start with one man. God choose Abraham to be “the first Jew”. Abraham was by no means perfect, but he is an example of one who trusted in God through good and bad times and despite his own shortcomings.
 - d) So that the world would know that this group of people is “special”, God did all sorts of miracles through their history. It would be evident to the world that the only reason this group existed is because of divine miracles. This group needed a beginning. This is the story here with Abraham. God told Abraham in advance of his plans so that he, and more importantly the world would know this plan.
 - e) We will learn later that Abraham’s wife Sarah was barren for about 100 years prior to their son being born. This is another example of divine intervention into the history of Israel to show the world that God is involved with this plan.
- f) Let’s move on to God’s next promise: Why did God say, “I will bless you”?
- i) We will read of Abraham having all sorts of great financial blessings as well as spiritual blessings.
 - ii) Being a religious Jew or a Christian does not guarantee financial wealth. There is no biblical promise of wealth and those who teach that are false teachers, period.
 - iii) God specifically chose to financially bless Abraham as to get the everyone’s attention on Abraham. The world is drawn to people with financial success. God often uses that so that those who are his witnesses can use it for his glory.
 - iv) Just remember Jesus said, “From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.” (Luke 12:48b, NIV). If God blesses you in some way, then God expects you to use that blessing for His glory.

- g) The next promise is “I will make your name great”.
 - i) Notice it is not Abraham’s great accomplishments that made him famous. It is not Abraham’s financial wizardry that made him famous. It is God himself that made him famous. That is something for us to remember when God blesses our lives.
 - ii) Abraham is respected as a patriarch in Judaism, Christianity and among Muslims.
 - h) Last promise of Verse 2 is, “You will be a blessing”.
 - i) This means that people who trust in Abraham, and who “associate” with Abraham will also be blessed. This promise is expanded in Verse 3.
 - ii) Remember that God calls us to be witness to others. As we are witnesses, we also become “blessings” to others.
4. Verse 3: I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."
- a) Here is your memorization verse of the week. ☺
 - b) First of all, God wanted to use Abraham to be a witness for God. Because Abraham was just “one person” at this point in history, God was making a specific unconditional promise to Abraham that those who help him will be blessed and those who try to harm Abraham will be harmed. God was trying to get people to focus upon Abraham as those people would then focus upon God.
 - c) This verse has far broader implications. It will also be expanded in Genesis 15.
 - d) The idea is that those who bless the specific “called” offspring of Abraham (The Jews) will be blessed and those who curse them will be cursed.
 - i) I cannot underemphasize the importance of this verse to our life today.
 - ii) God is making promises to the nation of Israel. They are called to be God’s witnesses to the world. In exchange, God promises to bless them forever.
 - iii) Notice that God does not say to Abraham, “If you are a found worthy, then I will bless you”. Abraham’s only part is done, which was to move to the land where God showed him. There are no further requirements on Abraham’s part. The rest is up to God.
 - iv) It is helpful for Christians here to read and understand Paul’s Letter to the Romans, Chapters 9-11. Paul spends 3 chapters dealing with Jews and Christians.
 - a) Chapter 9 is about Israel “past tense”, before Jesus. Paul talks about why God started the Jewish nation and what were their purposes. The most important was to be God’s witnesses to the world bring in the Messiah and preserve the Word of God.
 - b) Chapter 10 is about Israel “present”. This covers the entire “Christian era”. The key phrase in Romans 10 is that during this time, there is “no difference between Jew and Gentile” (Romans 10:12). That means there are only those who are saved and believe in Jesus and those who are not.
 - c) Chapter 11 is about Israel “future”. This is a day, during the great tribulation (final 7 year period spoken of in Revelation) where God once again turns his attention toward the Jewish people. The key verse says that “Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved (Romans 11:25b-26a, NIV). In Chapter 10 there is no distinction between Jews and Gentiles (10:12) and in Chapter 11 there is a distinction between Jews and Gentiles (11:25-26). Therefore, each chapter is talking about a different time era.
 - d) What’s my point? My point is that God’s promises to Abraham, and his descendants (Jewish people) are not conditional upon the church.
 - (1) I think during the tribulation period, it will become “obvious” to the religious Jews that Jesus is the Messiah. I need a whole lesson to support that one. This is why I believe the rapture happens prior

to the tribulation. Most religious Jews today are aware of the Christian concept of the rapture. When they see it happen, it will become more obvious of the Christian view of the Messiah.)

- e) History has proven that those who curse the Jews have suffered. Study every great empire over the European continent. You can trace their downfall based on how they treated the Jewish people.
- i) The Greek Empire never rose again after they mistreated the Jews prior to the Rise of the Roman Empire.
 - ii) The Roman Empire began its decline after they destroyed Israel in 70AD. Its decline over the next few centuries was only maintained as a religious empire, and not a Rome-city based empire.
 - iii) The Spanish Empire of the 15th-16th centuries saw its decline at the time of the “Spanish Inquisition”. This was a group who killed Jews just for being Jewish. Spain never again rose to being a great empire.
 - iv) In the late 18th Century, the “sun never set on the British Empire”. In the early 1920’s, Britain was against the formation of a new state of Israel. Their empire declined and they have not been a top-power since then.
 - v) Germany’s fall in WWII is often related to the Holocaust. I will predict now that Germany will never rise to another great power again.
 - vi) The Great Soviet Empire (USSR) is broken up. They have a terrible history of how they treated the Jewish people. I will predict right now that Russia will never be a great empire again.
 - vii) The only reason God allows the USA to remain a great power is because 1) we are his witnesses 2) we support Israel. If either one ever dies out, America will no longer be a world superpower.
 - viii) “This promise has also affected the church. The times when the church took upon itself the persecution of the Jewish people were dark times not only for the Jews, but also for the church.” David Guzik’s Commentary on Genesis 12”.
 - ix) This is why I spent so much time on Verse 3. History has shown it to be true. Please memorize and comprehend Verse 3: “I (God) will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”
- f) Let’s look at the last phrase of Verse 3: “All peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”
- i) This includes those who were not direct descendants of Abraham.
 - ii) This includes people of that day who never heard of Abraham.
 - iii) How can “all” people be blessed through Abraham?
 - iv) The simple answer is that Abraham is part of the direct line of the Messiah.
 - a) This is the promise that all of the world would be blessed through a coming Messiah.
 - v) The opening sentence of the New Testament is “A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham:” (Matthew 1:1, NIV).
 - a) Folks, you can’t get more Jewish than that. ☺
 - b) It was to Abraham, and his descendant David that specific promises about the Messiah were made. That is why Jesus is called the “Son of Abraham”. It ties to this promise here in Verse 3 of Genesis that all people would be blessed through you (Abraham).
5. Verse 4: So Abram left, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran.
- a) One of the classical debate questions in Judaism and Christianity was about Abram taking his nephew Lot with him. Should Abram (Abraham) have done this?
 - i) Some argue “no” as Lot became nothing but trouble in the next few verses.

- a) They argue that God told Abraham to “get from his family” and that would have included Lot.
 - b) The argument here is that Abraham was not fully obedient to God by taking Lot along.
 - c) If you look at the next few chapters, Lot caused more trouble than good.
 - ii) Some argue “yes” as they see Abraham being responsible for raising Lot. Lot’s father died in Chapter 11. Abraham took Lot “under his wings”.
 - a) They also argue that Lot choose to go with Abraham and it is not a matter of Abraham taking Lot.
 - b) We will read of Lot being blessed later in the chapter. It is the first example of God “blessing those” who trust in Abraham.
 - c) Peter calls Lot a “righteous man” in 2nd Peter 2:7. This is despite the fact that Lot was a leader in Sodom before God destroyed it. Lot was righteous because he trusted in the God of Abraham, not because of his actions.
 - b) Why does it mention here how old Abram was (75 years) in this verse?
 - i) The text doesn’t say, so it is time for one of John’s theories. ☺
 - ii) I believe everyone should remember the exact day, or at least the year they became born-again. There should be a specific time in your life when you gave your life to serve God and become born again. For some it is childhood and it is difficult to remember an exact date. For most of us, it is some point in our adulthood. I think this time frame (75 years) is recorded as God wanted us to remember the exact time Abraham was obedient to what God called him to do.
6. Verse 5: He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.
- a) In this verse Abraham started traveling to the “land of Canaan”. The Canaanites were the main tribe that occupied Israel prior to the conquest at the time of Joshua.
 - b) Abraham took “all his stuff” with him. ☺
 - i) Besides taking his wife Sarai (later renamed Sarah) and Lot, Abraham took all his possessions.
 - ii) Remember that God told Abraham that He would “bless him”. Personally, I think that if Abraham left the house with no possessions, he would still be a very rich man. God made him a promise of material blessings. Taking his “stuff” along may have been a sign of lack of trust in God.
 - iii) This to me is the first of many examples of God working on building Abraham’s faith. When we are first called as Christians, God does not expect tremendous faith on “Day One”. God works with us on whatever level we start at. God then wants to mature us in our faith toward Him. I see Abraham here as starting on his spiritual journey, but still having some trust in “his stuff”.
 - iv) I should add that being a Christian does not mean you have to immediately go out and sell all you have. God may bless you tremendously or He may take away everything. As a Christian, you are “God’s problem” to worry about. He is in charge of your life and not you. During the rough times in life, we have to remember that God is in charge, and God is often testing us to see if our faith is strong even when we don’t have a lot of material blessings at that moment.
7. Verse 6: Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land.
- a) If God told me I was going to inherit a big chunk of real estate, the first thing I would do is go exploring and check out the territory. That is what Abraham is doing here.
 - b) In a sense, God is building Abraham’s faith. Abraham will learn later that it won’t be until 400 years later that his descendants get this land (Genesis 15:13).

8. Verse 7: The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him.
- a) Imagine walking through a foreign country. You see fortresses, cities, towns, fields and you remember that God said in effect, "One day all of this is going to be yours". You would have to wonder how all of this would be possible. How can "one guy" (Abraham) or one family conquer and take over a large territory?
 - b) Luckily God was there to give Abraham the answer. ☺
 - c) That is why I believe God spoke again to Abraham here in Verse 7. It is about reassurance of God's promises. God is working on building Abraham's faith. Abraham was busy looking around the place, and got his focus off of God.
 - d) This verse has God appearing to Abraham. In the previous promises of Verse 3, God spoke to Abraham. Just how he appeared is unknown.
 - i) Many Christians, including myself, believe that such appearances are Jesus himself prior to his coming in a human state. I believe that this passage along with the "burning bush" passage in Exodus refer to Jesus himself coming to earth.
 - ii) Again, the main point is God reassuring Abraham of his promise. The appearance helps to reassure Abraham.
 - e) You might be thinking, "W doesn't God appear to me? I have my lack of faith moments some time. Why doesn't God speak to me like he did to Abraham and Moses?"
 - i) First of all, God is in charge, and we are not. We have no right to tell God whom He can and cannot speak to.
 - ii) Second, we have God's Word for our study. Abraham didn't have a printed bible that explained the whole game plan. ☺
 - iii) Third, God keeps silent most often to test our faith and watch our reaction.
 - f) Back to Verse 7. Notice what Abraham did after God appeared to him. He built an altar.
 - i) This is about gratitude. Abraham is grateful for what God did for him and the promises made to Him. Based on those promises, Abraham showed his gratitude to God by building an altar.
 - ii) You can see where I'm going with this! ☺ The application for us is that we need to show the same type of gratitude. The main reason we have the privilege (not a requirement, a privilege) to go to church every week is to show gratitude to God for what he has done for us.
 - iii) Paul said, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.
 - a) As a Christian, we get to inherit everything. We are blessed with every spiritual blessing one can imagine and then some. Out of gratitude for our salvation and our rewards, we go to church to show our gratitude. Abraham didn't have any churches around, so he built altars. ☺
9. Verse 8: From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and 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 Then Abram set out and continued toward the Negev.
- a) The specific places Abraham went to (mentioned here) are in the Northern portion of what-is-today Israel (between Bethel & Ai) and in the Southern portion (The Negev).
 - b) One thing you don't read about with Abraham is his ever building a home. He lived in tents. He never said, "Excuse me Mr. Canaanite, God said this land is mine. Now please move your stuff out of the way and let me start excavating my basement. ☺
 - c) Abraham was known for living in tents and building altars to God. The word-picture for us as Christians as we are to treat this world as a place for us to be a witness. This life is not our "true home". This body we live in is "tents". We are passing through, being witnesses for Jesus, waiting for his 2nd coming and our eternal presence with him.

- d) If you think I'm out in "left field" with this idea, notice what Paul and Peter say:
- i) Paul said, "Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands." (2nd Corinthians 5:1, NIV)
 - ii) Peter said, "I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me." (2nd Peter 1:13-14, NIV).
10. Verse 10: Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe. ¹¹ As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "I know what a beautiful woman you are. ¹² When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me but will let you live. ¹³ Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you."
- a) The most important thing to notice about the remainder of the chapter is what is not said. There is no Scripture where God says, "Get ye down into Egypt during the famine". ☺ (Why do we always assume that when God wants to talk to us, He is going to speak in King James English? ☺)
 - i) By the end of Chapter 13, Abraham is back in "Israel". Everything in-between this section is "nothing but trouble".
 - ii) So what was Abraham supposed to do? Here was this famine in the local land. I suspect (but cannot prove) the correct answer was for Abraham to live on his "supplies" until the famine was over. We'll read in Verse 16 of all the animals Abraham took with him to Egypt. God told Abraham he was going to bless him and never gave him instructions to leave.
 - iii) You can argue that Abraham did the "logical thing" about the famine and got out of the area. I don't like to read into the text what is not there. God told Abraham in Verse 1 to go to the land (Israel) and that God would bless him. By going to Egypt at this point, we will see nothing but problems, and no good things get accomplished during this time span. We don't read of God speaking to Abraham again until he is back in the Land (Israel).
 - b) This is the first mention of "Egypt" in the bible.
 - i) Egypt was and is a literal place. It is also a "word-picture" of the "world" in the sense of it offers anything you want, except of course the true God. Like Babylon in its word-picture, it becomes a "type" of trusting in resources, materialism and any other false-god one can imagine.
 - c) The main thing we read about in this paragraph is Abraham telling a "half-truth" about Sarai (Sarah) his wife. In Chapter 20, we learn that Abraham and Sarai are half-sisters. He tells Sarai to tell this half-truth in order to spare his life.
11. Verse 14: When Abram came to Egypt, the Egyptians saw that she was a very beautiful woman. ¹⁵ And when Pharaoh's officials saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh, and she was taken into his palace. ¹⁶ He treated Abram well for her sake, and Abram acquired sheep and cattle, male and female donkeys, menservants and maidservants, and camels.
- a) In summary, the Egyptians saw that Sarai was a hot-babe ☺ and offered Abraham lots of stuff in exchange for her.
 - b) I suspect that Abraham was fairly wealthy entering into Egypt. If Abraham went by himself, I suspect, Pharaoh's guards would have just taken her away. For whatever reason, they wanted to "pay" to have Sarai. Maybe they figured if Pharaoh was going to marry Sarai, Abraham would now be "kin" and they have to treat him well.
 - c) Remember that God promised Abraham that he would make him a "great nation". That means lots of descendants. That means Abraham needed Sari to get started. ☺ Making this "deal" with the Egyptians shows a mistake made by Abraham at this point.

- i) Personally, I see a demonic side to this. Satan now knows the Messiah would come through Abraham. Thus he is the force behind the trade to take away Sarai.
 - d) I also have to admit I spent too much time pondering Verse 16. It lists all of these material possessions that Abraham had. In the middle of that list are human slaves. The slaves are listed between the male and female donkeys (in the Hebrew). Why aren't slaves listed first? I don't have an answer for this one. I'm just admitting I spent too much time pondering why the animals and slaves are listed in this particular order.
 - e) This is also the time where Abraham acquired Hagar. She was the maidservant who bore him his son, Ishmael. More on that in Chapter 16.
12. Verse 17: But the LORD inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household because of Abram's wife Sarai. ¹⁸ So Pharaoh summoned Abram. "What have you done to me?" he said. "Why didn't you tell me she was your wife? ¹⁹ Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her to be my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and go!" ²⁰ Then Pharaoh gave orders about Abram to his men, and they sent him on his way, with his wife and everything he had.
- a) The rest of the chapter can be summed up with the following lesson: God's plans will go through despite man's best efforts to mess them up! ☺
 - i) God's intention was to build a great nation through the descendants of Abraham. God intended to get Abraham's wife Sarai involved in the process.
 - ii) Despite the fact that Abraham was agreeing to let Sarai go and be with the Pharaoh, God was intervening. God was punishing the Pharaoh with "diseases".
 - b) One can't help but see a parallel between this section and the Exodus via Moses.
 - i) God likes to work in patterns. Many predictions of the bible are word-pictures based on earlier events. Here, the Pharaoh was suffering diseases because he didn't let Sarai go. Over 400 years later, Exodus tells the story of another Pharaoh suffering diseases and plagues because he wouldn't let the Israelites go.
 - ii) I'm sure this story of Abraham was passed on to the Israelites who were in bondage waiting for redemption. That story of Abraham had "hints" of how God was going to work again in their life in the Exodus redemption. This story here in Genesis ends with Abraham, along with his family and his possessions all leaving Egypt after the Pharaoh tells them to get out. You can see the parallel to Exodus.
13. Genesis 13, Verse 1: So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, with his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him. ² Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold. From the Negev he went from place to place until he came to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had been earlier ⁴ and where he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of the LORD.
- a) The last we read of Abraham in Israel, he was between Ai and Bethel where he built an altar, and then traveled down to the Negev. Now that he left Egypt, he travels back through the Negev, and back to his original location where he built an altar.
 - b) You don't read of anything good accomplished by Abraham in this trip, except he learned a lesson about trusting God and how God intervenes despite the sins of Abraham. In summary, it was a bad vacation. ☺
 - c) What does Abraham do when he got back to his altar? Verse 4 says, "There Abram called on the name of the LORD."
 - i) This is about confession. God knew in advance Abraham was going to go down to Egypt. This is about our maturity. This is about us realizing, "OK God, you win. I have sinned for disobeying you. Forgive me and help me get back on the right track and obey what you command me to obey."
 - ii) We don't read of God responding verbally to this confession, but we do read in the next set of verses of Abraham having tremendous blessings.

- d) Notice Verse 2 says Abraham became wealthy in livestock and silver and gold.
- i) Despite Abraham's "shortcomings" in Egypt, God still blessed him. God said he was going to bless him and God meant it. ☺ It wasn't predicated on Abraham being obedient.
 - ii) God works the same way in our lives. Not necessarily about material blessings, but in the sense that God wants to mature us and "bless us" and provide our needs despite our shortcomings and sinful nature. It's not about us being "good enough" for God, it's about trusting God no matter what.
14. Verse 5: Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. ⁶ But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together. ⁷ And quarreling arose between Abram's herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time. ⁸ So Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers. ⁹ Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left."
- a) God was blessing Abraham materially. God was also blessing Lot materially. God had a purpose here in that God wanted to separate the two for a while.
 - b) Notice in Verse 7 there is this reference to "The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time." The text wants to make it clear that it wasn't just Abraham and Lot wandering around with staff support in no-man's-land. ☺ There were other people in site as well.
 - i) There are a number of reasons why Abraham would have wanted to separate himself from Lot at this point. Most of those reasons are about the Canaanites and the Perizzites.
 - a) The most likely reason is that if Abraham and Lot were fighting, the other people could have seen it as a sign of weakness and then wanted to raid their possessions.
 - b) Another reason is about "being a good witness". Remember that Abraham is "God's ambassador" to the world. If others see you fighting and quarrelling, the reaction becomes "Why would I want to be like those people, they are always fighting one another".
 - (1) Jesus says that people will know we are his disciples by our love for one another. (John 13:35). Jesus did not say people would know we are Christians by our great bible knowledge or persuasive speech. It is how we act that is far more important than what we say.
 - c) A third possibility to consider with Abraham is one of humility. Most people hate strife. As a God-fearing person, it is better it is often better to "give in" and have peace than to claim, "I am right" and have strife. The book of Proverbs is full of statements to that effect. Here's an example:
 - (1) "The beginning of strife is like releasing water;
Therefore stop contention before a quarrel starts. (Prov. 17:14 NIV)
 - c) Notice in Verse 8, Abraham calls Lot his "brother".
 - i) This is no longer "Uncle Abraham" who took Lot under his wing.
 - ii) This is now Abraham, who sees Lot as an equal, as a brother, who believes in the same Lord and God and Abraham.
 - d) Finally, think about Verse 9 in context of God's promises to Abraham:
 - i) In Verse 9, Abraham says in effect, "Lot, you get first pick. Look around the land, if you want to go right, I'll go left, if you go left, I'll go right.
 - ii) Yet, in the last chapter, God promised all of the land to Abraham.

- iii) Abraham never said, “Look Lot, God gave this land to me. Now buzz off and go find your own real estate!” ☺
- iv) One wonders if Abraham had that promise from God in mind when he made this deal with Lot.
 - a) Possibly, Abraham thought, “You know, God gave this land to me and my descendants. Maybe that includes Lot, maybe it doesn’t. Since God gave this land to my descendants, it is God’s problem to work out and not mine. I love Lot and want the best for him. Hey Lot, you pick first”.
- v) The other possibility to think about is when God first spoke to Abraham, one of the requests was to “Get away from your people” (Genesis 12:2). Could that include Lot as well? Although Abraham loved Lot, that is a possibility as well.
- vi) My point of all this is we don’t see Abraham being greedy and telling Lot to get lost. Abraham trusted in God’s promises and that God would work “all of this out somehow”. In the meantime, Abraham knew God was going to bless him no matter what. With that trust in mind, Abraham said to Lot, “Go ahead, pick the best land for yourself. It doesn’t matter, because God is going to bless me no matter what happens!”
 - a) That is a great example of faith. It is about trusting in the promises of God over and above “what looks good from the eye”.
 - b) The lesson to apply from this has to do with our dealings with others. It is for us to say, “You pick first, and I’ll take the rest. I’m not trying to trick you, I just trust in God’s promises for my life”
 - c) “Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.” (Mark 9:35 NIV)

15. Verse 10: Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.)¹¹ So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company:¹² Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom.¹³ Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the LORD.

- a) In order to comprehend this paragraph, it is best to read something from the next set of verses (Verse 14-15) and compare it to Verse 10:
 - i) Verse 10: “Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the LORD
 - ii) Verse 14: “The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, “Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west.”¹⁵ All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.”
 - iii) These verses (10-13) are about what Lot saw and then decided.
 - iv) The next set of Verses (14-17) are about what God told Abraham to see.
- b) This paragraph is about the great mistake made by Lot, which will grow into great sins the next set chapters. He trusted “his eyes” as opposed to God.
 - i) To understand Lot’s mistake, all you have to remember is “Lot looked up” and then notice Verse 13 where it says, “the men of Sodom were wicked”.
 - ii) Let me see if I can rationalize Lot in modern business terms, “You know, the business opportunities and take home pay look pretty good in Sodom. I can make lots of money in Sodom. It is not the most God-friendly place on the planet, but I can make a lot of money to give to give to God and pay for private schools. Besides I’m a godly person and the influence of Sodom won’t rub off on me”. ☺
 - a) By Genesis 19, Lot was “sitting at the gateway of the city”. That means he was an official in charge of the city”.

- b) There are many American stories of good Christians taking great paying jobs in places where the kids aren't happy and there are not any great Christian-based schools nearby. There is always a danger of compromising your commitment to God in exchange for money.
- 16. Verse 14: The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. ¹⁵ All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. ¹⁶ I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. ¹⁷ Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you."
 - a) Let's read this in context of the previous paragraph: Lot choose to go "to the east". This would be the east-of-Israel. That means Abraham got the territory known today as Israel.
 - i) In this set of verses, God told Abraham to "Look around in every direction, as all of this belongs to you".
 - ii) Suppose Lot picked "Israel". Would God then bless Abraham with other territory? The point is God knows all things in advance, and God knew Lot would pick the land to the East. It does not excuse the mistakes Lot made and will make, but it shows how God uses our life decisions for his glory.
 - iii) There is an old Jewish expression that says, "Coincidence is not a kosher word". A similar one is "Coincidence is God working in the background". It is no "coincidence" that Lot just "happened" to pick the land to the east and that Abraham was "stuck" with the land that became Israel.
 - b) This leads us back to God's request to tell Abraham to separate himself from his family.
 - i) Verse 14 makes it a point to tell us that it was after Lot departed, that God made this promise to him. God was waiting for Abraham to be fully obedient to the commands He gave to Abraham back in the beginning of Chapter 12.
 - a) God waited patiently through the whole "Egypt fiasco". ☺
 - b) God waited patiently through the strife between Abraham and Lot.
 - c) Now that Abraham has fully separated himself from Lot, now comes the blessings that God has promised to us.
 - d) One can see the lesson for us. God gives us instructions through His Word. God is patiently waiting for us to be fully obedient in what God has called us to do before more instructions.
 - e) Ever get that sense that God isn't "talking" to me right now? Maybe it is because He is still waiting for you to be obedient to the last set of instructions He gave you before moving on to the next set.
 - c) Remember that Abraham had no children at this point. Here is God promising that his descendants would be as numerous as "dust".
 - i) If you ever want proof of the Bible as the Word of God, study the history of the Jewish people. No other nation has survived as a nation like them. In the history of civilization, no other nation has been conquered/separated and then came back to be a nation again. Israel has had that twice in their history. No other nation has been scattered, and then came back with their original language. All of this is predicted in the bible. History has validated the bible as true.
 - d) Which leads us back to God telling Abraham to "look". He tells Abraham to go hop on his camel and explore the territory! ☺
 - i) Notice there is no lack of condition to this promise. It never says, "If you are good, I'll give you this land." It never says, "You get this land, unless of course, you reject the Messiah." This is an unconditional promise to Abraham!

17. Verse 18: So Abram moved his tents and went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the LORD
- a) So what does Abram (Abraham) do in response to this promise? He's back in the altar construction business! ☺
 - b) Abraham believed God. Abraham trusted in the promises of God. Abraham showed his gratitude in advance for what God was going to do and built an altar!
 - c) On that note, let's build our own altar and close in prayer.
18. Let's pray. Like Abraham, we too our grateful for all the things in our life you are going to do in the future. We thank you in advance for the blessings you are going to give us, the rich spiritual life you have promised us and our eternal salvation that we are going to receive. May this simple altar of prayer be a reminder to us that you are there and desire the best for our lives. Be with us now, and we go about in our "tents", being your witnesses and living to serve you. For we ask this in Jesus name, Amen.