

IN THE BEGINNING – Part 8

Acts 7:2 *And he said, "Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, 3 "and said to him, 'Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.' 4 "Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell.*

✓ There are a few things that I would like us to remember from our previous lesson:

- The 'God of glory' had appeared to Abram while he was still in Mesopotamia, in Ur of the Chaldeans. This was the first recorded appearance of God to an individual since Adam and Eve were sent out of the Garden. We know that God had created Adam and Eve for the purpose of rulership/dominion (**Gen.1:26-28**). But due to the fall, they lost the covering of glory (naked and ashamed after the fall), could not fulfill God's purpose for them and could not continue to eat of the tree of life. They failed the test of obedience because of Satan's deception.
- God appearing to Abram as the 'God of glory', would therefore be pointing to that which had been lost in the Garden (Glory and rulership) but now in connection with Abram. In some of our previous lessons, we have seen what is pictured for us in the 6 days of the restoration of the ruined creation, the goal being rulership on the 7th day. Rulership requires a redemptive process (**Rev 13:8.....the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world**) and this is what I would like us to see through the scriptural account of Abraham's life.
- Abraham was to 'Get out' from his country and his relatives and then to go to the land that God would show him, providing the inextricable link between faithful obedience and the rulership foreshadowed in the appearing of the 'God of glory'.
- We had also seen that although Abram left Ur of the Chaldeans and had done this by faith (**Heb.11:8**), he had not separated himself from his relatives as God had said. Terah, his father and Lot, his nephew, were with him when he left Ur. And this was done in the foreknowledge of God so that He might use these experiences in Abram's life for our benefit.

Rom 15:4 *For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*

- Consequently, they dwelt several years in Haran, a town whose name means 'parched'. And it was in Haran that Abram stayed until the death of Terah, his father. There was a delay!
- There could be no movement away from this town associated with an absence of water, picturing the Spirit and the Word, until a death occurred – a scenario giving us insight into spiritual truth surrounding our own experience.

✓ With respect to our heavenly calling, we have been commanded –

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Eph 4:22 *that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man.....*

- Our ‘old man’, that associated with our first birth ([the world](#), [Gentiles without Christ and without God](#)) pictured through Terah must be ‘put off’ and until we are prepared to do this, we can only find ourselves in a place of spiritual drought, devoid of the Word and the leading of the Spirit, pictured through Haran. And until the old man is ‘put off’ there can be no progress in our spiritual journey.

Gen 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. **2** I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; And you shall be 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." **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.*

- ✓ Once Terah had died Abram was able to continue his journey to the land of Canaan and the promises from which he had been estranged while in Haran came into view again.
- ✓ The death of Terah which pictures the death of our old man, that associated with our first birth, before we can advance towards spiritual maturity and the land of our calling, provided one facet of our own experience, Lot continuing with Abram as he left Haran provided the other.
- ✓ Although we die to self, choosing to put off our old man, we continue to live in a body of death, having a sin nature, that we have no power to eradicate. And even as we progress towards spiritual maturity, toward the land of our calling, the man of the flesh, pictured through Lot continues with us.
- ✓ But remember, Abram alone received the call, not Lot and to Abram alone were the promises given, not Lot.

Gal. 4:28 *Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. **29** But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. **30** Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." **31** So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.*

- ✓ There is nothing of our old nature that can have any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ. It is the man of the spirit alone who will be a joint heir with Christ and the spirit man alone who is able to receive the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
- ✓ So, with Terah now dead, Abram continues his journey to the land of Canaan to the ‘place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh’, and this detail of Abram’s journey is filled with significance.

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- The name Shechem has to do with a place of strength between the shoulders where burdens can be borne – trials and testing endured maybe?
 - And the name ‘Moreh’ means teaching.
- ✓ So then, Abram’s journey continued to a place of strength and a place of teaching, and he had been able to go to these places because Terah had died.
- ✓ In our own experience, dying to self, so to speak, would make it possible for the Holy Spirit to teach us, and to bring us to a place of strength with respect to patient endurance through the Word and the hope of our calling.

Ephes 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might...

- ✓ There is then a direct correlation between our willingness to die to self and our ability to receive that which the Holy Spirit would teach us through the Word as He leads us to the land of our calling.

Jam 1:21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. 22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Gen 12:7 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.

- ✓ It is then, after the death of Terah and after Abram came to a place of strength and teaching that God appeared to him again and added to the promise given to Abram recorded at the beginning of Chapter 12 - ***‘To your descendants I will give this land’***.
- ✓ Here is inheritance and the promise of one to come from Abram’s loins to be his heir. And implicit in this promise is rulership, the reason for the God of glory appearing to Abram in the first place.
- ✓ And it is at Moreh, the place of teaching, having received the promise of inheritance, that Abram ‘built an altar to the Lord who had appeared to him’.
- ✓ An altar of course being a place of sacrifice, a place where death takes place.
- ✓ And did we note from the scripture where Abram moved to next?
- ‘To the mountain east of Bethel’***. Note -THE mountain, pointing us to The Kingdom.
- ✓ Mountains are used in scripture to symbolize kingdoms.

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Isaiah 2:2 *Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That **the mountain** of the LORD'S house Shall be established on the top of **the mountains** and shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it.*

- ✓ It is on this mountain that Abram pitched his tent and built another altar to the Lord. In other words, the place where Abram chose to fix his attention. And this mountain sits between Bethel on the west and Ai on the east.
- ✓ Bethel literally means, 'the house of God' and Ai, 'ruin', from a word that means to do wickedly.
- ✓ It seems that Abram's physical location graphically pictures where our focus needs to be and the choice that faces us every day, whether to turn towards Bethel or Ai.
- ✓ So, here was Abram on the mountain between Bethel and Ai and with this in mind let's back up just a little – do we remember the promise God had just given Abram? 'To your descendants I will give this land'.
- ✓ Descendants speaks of children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, but we are told–

Gen 11:30 *But Sarai was barren; she had no child.*

- ✓ And so, an apparent dilemma. Should Abram believe the promise of God looking toward Bethel or the physical reality of Sarai's barrenness, looking towards Ai?

1Pet 1:7 *that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ...*

- ✓ Does Abram believe what God had promised him with regards to his descendants? The genuineness of his faith must be tested.

Gen 12:9 *So Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South. **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. **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."*

- ✓ Abram continued his journey when he should have stayed where he was until God moved him on. And because of this we find, 'Now there was a famine in the land' and Abram instead of turning to the God of the promises, 'went down to Egypt to dwell there'.
 - The symbolism once again is not difficult – **Egypt in scripture is always seen as a type of the world under the god of this world** and it is to the **world that Abram turns in this time of testing**. Having left Ur, which typifies the same thing as Egypt, he should not have turned back there again.

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- And with Abram's eyes now fixed on the world, having come down from the mountain, he then engineered an extraordinary, deceptive half-truth concerning Sarai.

- ✓ Perhaps James can give us insight into this - ***Jam 1:22** But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*
- ✓ God had promised the childless Abram that He would give Abram's descendants the land of Canaan, therefore neither the severity of the famine in the land nor the 'beautiful countenance' of his wife could possibly get in the way of that.
- ✓ But, at this point in Abram's process to maturity he still wanted to make things happen on his terms, under his control, in other words, walking according to the flesh, and turned to the world to try to accomplish this – with disastrous consequences.
- And in this we hopefully can find both encouragement and warning. We can be encouraged to know that we can, like Abram, learn from our mistakes-

***Heb 12:5** And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; **6** For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." **7** If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?*

- And we should take the warning that to come down from the mountain and head into Egypt will create consequences that can come back to bite us.
- ✓ It is true that Abram left Egypt significantly wealthier than when he went in, but this abundant wealth was the cause of the strife that separated Abram and Lot and it was also while in Egypt that Hagar was acquired as Sarai's maid.
- Gen 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. **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.*
- ✓ Following the events in Egypt we see Abram returning 'to the place where his tent had been at the beginning' – the mountain between Bethel and Ai. Back 'to the place of the altar which he had made there at first'. And having done this he then 'called on the name of the Lord'.
- And here is where we can find such very great encouragement. In going down into Egypt Abram walked by sight and not by faith; he trusted in his own strength and not in God, but in his return to the mountain we can see repentance-

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1John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

- And in his actions, we can also see the Lord's admonishment to the Church of Ephesus in-
Rev 2:4 *"Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works.*
- ✓ In coming down from the mountain and turning to Egypt we can see Abram leaving his 'first love', but he then remembered from where he had fallen, he repented and went back to do the first works – works seen in connection with an altar and calling on the name of the Lord.

Rev 19:13b.....and His name is called The Word of God.

Gen 13:5 *Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents. 6 Now the land was not able to support them, that they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together. 7 And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land. 8 So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren. 9 "Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left." 10 And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. 11 Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other. 12 Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom.*

- ✓ As we come to the separation between Abram and Lot, we must remember to place this within the spiritual significance of the events concerning Abram's return from Egypt.
 - It is following Abram's recognition of 'from where he had fallen' and his repentance, demonstrating his desire to walk in God's precepts that we see Abram and Lot separating one from the other.
 - From this point onwards, 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'.
 - Canaan is the land of promise, depicted by the mountain between Bethel and Ai – it is the place of Abraham's calling, the land to be received as an inheritance, and it is here that Abraham chooses to dwell.
- For ourselves, here is our admonition-

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Col 3:1 *If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*

- It is the heavenly land, the land of our calling, the Jerusalem above, that we should set our mind on, ‘not on things on the earth’. Things on the earth are where Lot chose to look, the place where he ultimately chose to dwell.
- ✓ And there are 2 things going on with the separation between Abram and Lot, that are instructive for us-
- Firstly, we can see Abram picturing the new man, the man of the spirit and Lot picturing the old man, the man of the flesh.
 - The spiritual man will remain on the mountain, focused on the things above, but at the same time the old man will continue to gravitate to the things on the earth with an ever-widening gap developing between them.

Eph 4:22 *that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.*

 - The old man growing ‘corrupt according to the deceitful lusts’ is Lot pitching his tent even as far as Sodom. And it is incumbent upon us to separate from the old man, keeping as far away from him as possible.
 - This is the same thing seen in the death of Terah, dying to self, only presented here in a slightly different way.
- Secondly, at this point in the account of Abram and Lot, Lot also becomes a type, a picture, of the carnally minded Christian attracted to that which the world has to offer.
 - And between the carnally minded Christian and the Kingdom minded Christian there will always be a separation because their spheres of interest are diametrically opposite.
 - Lot remains in the family of Abram, but from this point onwards this is all they have in common, and their lives move in completely different directions, with completely different outcomes.
 - They had journeyed together from Ur of the Chaldeans, but here is the parting of the ways. And this is exactly what we have seen in a previous type, with Ruth and Orpah; both of whom began the journey to Bethlehem with Naomi, but Orpah turned back-

Ruth 1:14 *Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. 15 And she said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." 16 But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God.*

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- ✓ With Lot on his way to Sodom and Abram on the mountain, Abram has now completed that which God wanted him to do, he is out of his land, out of his father's house and out from his family and because of this separation God can now reveal to him what He had intended all along with regards to the land that He would show him-

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

- We will continue from here God willing. Let us remain diligent!

Questions

1. Read **Gen.12:1** – How can we apply what is said in this verse to our own experience?
 - a. What is the land of our calling and which scriptures show this? [**Not in the lesson**])
 - b. With respect to going to this land what are we told to do in **Ephe.4:22**? Why is it necessary?
 - c. How is this pictured in the account of Abram?
 - d. What does Lot leaving Haran with Abram teach us?
 - e. Read **Gen.12:6** – what do we learn from this verse and what has made this possible?

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2. Read **Gen.12:7-8** – What does God add in v7 to His original promise to Abram from the beginning of Chapter 12? Why does God do this at this point in Abram’s life? And what is significant about what He tells him?
 - a. Having received this additional part of the promise where does Abram now go and what do we learn from his location about our own experience?
 - b. Going back to the additional part of the promise given to Abram – what do we know from Genesis 11:30?
 - c. What appears to be the dilemma here and what does **1 Pet.1:7** tell us about what must happen next?
 - d. Read **Gen.12:9-13** – What happens in these verses and what can we learn from them? Which scriptures did we look at connected to these verses?
- 3). Read **Gen.13:1-4** – What happens in these verses and what do we see pictured through them?
 - a. Read **Rev.2:4-5** – How can we apply what we see in these verses to **Gen.13:1-4**? And what can we learn from this for ourselves?

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- b. What takes place following Abram's repentance? Why do you think it happens when it does and what might we learn from this?
- c. What is the dual type that we see through Lot in this incident?
- d. Where have we seen this separation before from a type in another Book?
- e. What do we learn from this for ourselves?