

POWER HOUR

9/01/2024

Lesson Text:
Genesis 13:8-18

Background Scripture:
Genesis 12-13

Devotional Reading:
Philippians 4:10-19

“ABRAM BUILDS AN ALTAR”

NLT TRANSLATION

Learning Facts: To outline the events that led to Abram's building an altar.

Biblical Principle: [To explain the significance of Abram's actions.](#)

Daily Application: To create a physical reminder of a time when God worked in your life.

Genesis 13:8-18 NLT

8 Finally Abram said to Lot, “Let’s not allow this conflict to come between us or our herdsmen. After all, we are close relatives! **9** The whole countryside is open to you. Take your choice of any section of the land you want, and we will separate. If you want the land to the left, then I’ll take the land on the right. If you prefer the land on the right, then I’ll go to the left.” **10** Lot took a long look at the fertile plains of the Jordan Valley in the direction of Zoar. The whole area was well watered everywhere, like the garden of the Lord or the beautiful land of Egypt. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) **11** Lot chose for himself the whole Jordan Valley to the east of them. He went there with his flocks and servants and parted company with his uncle Abram. **12** So Abram settled in the land of Canaan, and Lot moved his tents to a place near Sodom and settled among the cities of the plain. **13** But the people of this area were extremely wicked and constantly sinned against the Lord. **14** After Lot had gone, the Lord said to Abram, “Look as far as you can see in every direction—north and south, east and west. **15** I am giving all this land, as far as you can see, to you and your descendants[a] as a permanent possession. **16** And I will give you so many descendants that, like the dust of the earth, they cannot be counted! **17** Go and walk through the land in every direction, for I am giving it to you.” **18** So Abram moved his camp to Hebron and settled near the oak grove belonging to Mamre. There he built another altar to the Lord.

INTRODUCTION

Sacred Spaces

With our signatures on the contract and an offer accepted, the deal was done. We had sold our house. It was only a small condo on a quiet cul-de-sac, but we had been there for over ten years. While saying goodbye, we realized how the space had become more than four walls and a roof to our family; it had become our home.

Sure, the place had its problems when we arrived. My spouse and I had primed and painted over the worn trim; we had fixed the ceiling crack in the kitchen, and—the proudest project of all—we spent a summer tiling a bathroom. That was one of those projects we would never have started had we known the time and effort required. But when we stepped back and looked around the place, every corner held some special significance and a memory to replay. We thought of our kids who learned to crawl across the carpet. We thought of the family parties, as well as our friends who shared griefs and joys around our table. If the walls could talk, they had a decade of stories to tell.

In the narrative of Genesis 13, Abram begins to call a new land his home. He probably had projects on his mind and things he wanted to improve. But he took the time to thank God and claim a space as sacred, meaning set apart for God's purpose. For generation after generation, the descendants of Abram (renamed Abraham in Genesis 17:5) would tell his stories and would refer to this place.

LESSON CONTEXT

Since the day Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden, the fact of humanity's sinfulness has been nothing new in any era. It was and is a persistent problem. Thus, it was left up to God to restore creation.

The divine restoration plan started in Genesis through a series of covenants and promises made to 75-year-old Abram and his wife (Genesis 12). Their descendants—the nation of Israel—would be the instrument through which God would send the Messiah into the world to inaugurate the new creation. Jesus fulfilled God's cosmic design. Through Jesus, a person can become a child of Abraham, joining the family of God by faith rather than physical birth (Galatians 3:7; Romans 4:16).

Abraham—known as Abram in today's lesson—is a hero of faith (Hebrews 11:8–12). He is described that way not because he was perfect or sinless, but because by faith, he left his home when called to do so by God (Genesis 12:1). God's covenant with Abram

included promises of land, progeny, and blessing. It took centuries for all this to become a reality. The conversations between God and Abram that begin in (Genesis 12) are instrumental in revealing the development of a personal relationship between the two. But the text under consideration for today deals with a distraction detailed in (Genesis 13:1–7). Abram had decided to take his nephew Lot on the journey to Canaan (Genesis 12:5), a decision that resulted in problem after problem. One such problem is the immediate context of today's lesson:

"Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, so they might dwell together: for their substance was great.... And there was a strife between the herd-men of Abram's cattle and the herd-men of Lot's cattle" (Genesis 13:5–7).

information regarding the nature and depravity of the people of Sodom is found in (Genesis 19:4–5 and Ezekiel 16:49–50). In (Genesis 14:12–14), Lot had to be rescued by Abram.

CONCLUSION

That Was Then

God's first words to Abraham (as Abram) were a directive to leave home (Genesis 12:1). He left his extended family behind as he journeyed toward and within the land God had designated. God deliberately separated him from his past to create a new nation from him—a nation to usher in the Messiah. We may wonder how homesick Abraham became from time to time. We may also wonder if Abraham ever wished he hadn't taken Lot along (Genesis 14:12–16)! Nevertheless, the importance of Abraham (lived about 2000 B.C.) in salvation-history should not be overlooked. His names "Abram" and "Abraham" appear on the pages of the Old and New Testament nearly 300 times, with about 28 percent of those occurring in the New Testament. In (Hebrews 11), Abraham is enshrined in "Faith's Hall of Fame." His example has much to teach us even today.

This Is Now

In a sense, Abraham's story is ours as well. God wants us to know the Messiah He has sent. But for that to happen, sometimes God has to separate us from relationships, events, jobs, etc., that stand in the way (Mark 10:28–31; Luke 5:27–28). Those separations may come either in order that we may know Jesus, or as a result of knowing Him. Those who have experienced such severances may have an inkling of Abraham's faith.

His willingness to place faith in God before all else makes him stand apart, a hero of faith (Hebrews 11:8–10; Galatians 3:9). God expects similar faith even today. When we believe we are called to a different situation, God may not reveal all the details of how to do so and why. If He did, then there would be no room for faith!

We should not be surprised if our journey involves taking a "Lot" along. In the Genesis narrative he brought trouble for his uncle. However, most importantly, we must be peacemakers and live by faith!

QUESTION(S)

- How should believers deal with conflict and quarrels that arise with family members?
- How can believers safeguard themselves from sinful behavior while living or working in an environment hostile to God and righteousness?
- How might you use non-material blessings (such as wisdom, time, or expertise) to serve God and others?

PRAYER

Father God, send us into the troubled world as Your ambassadors so that we may make disciples as we remind others of what You have done for us. Give us eyes like Abraham to perceive the nature of faith. May we not be a short-sighted "Lot"! We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

THOUGHT TO REMEMBER

1. Be ready to exercise a faith like Abraham's.
2. God will abundantly make up in spiritual peace, what we lose for preserving neighborly peace.

ANTICIPATING THE NEXT LESSON

Next week's lesson is "*Solomon Dedicates the Temple*," where we will analyze the structure and movement of Solomon's prayer at the temple dedication.

Study 1 Kings 8:22–53.