

On the Beginning

17. Abram's Journey

NOTE ESPECIALLY Genesis 12 and 13

A great theme of the whole Bible, and the Book of Genesis, is God's wonderful plan to redeem fallen mankind. It is introduced in Genesis 3:15, where God promises that the woman's Seed will bruise the serpent's head. This promise, given right after man sinned and just before He spelled out the consequences of that fall, spoke of a virgin-born Savior who would undo the damage that had been done through the sin of Adam and Eve. From this place on, the Old Testament traces the family line of the Promised Seed (Christ). Among those in that line that played an important role in the Plan of Redemption, no one in Genesis is more important than a man named Abram (meaning "high father"), whose story begins in Genesis 11:26. Abram was the son of Terah, and a descendent of Shem, son of Noah, through his son Arphaxad. Follow the list of his ancestors in Genesis 11:10-26. Abram's part in the Plan of Redemption involved an adventure—the journey God sent him to take and led him in. This sojourn is held up as an example of triumphant faith in Hebrews 11:8-19. Before reading Genesis 12 and 13, read this wonderful section of the "Faith Chapter." The full story takes up more than thirteen of the fifty chapters of Genesis (12:1 through 25:11).

1. Abram's Call.

Apparently, God called Abram to leave his homeland as well as his kindred while he was still living "*in Ur of the Chaldees*," near the city of Babel. Read about this period in Genesis 11:27-32. Notice that Abram did not fully obey the command he had been given. His brother Haran died back in Ur, and then Abram left, taking his father and Haran's son Lot with him. In "*the land of Canaan*," they established a town named after Haran, and there Terah died (Genesis 11:32). It was after his father died, that Abram got more serious about following the call of God. He "*departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him*," but he still took Lot with him (Genesis 12:4). This proved to be a mistake, as any alteration of God's orders always turns out to be. Of course, his wife Sarai correctly went with him, too.

2. God's Covenant.

The so-called Abrahamic Covenant is found in its first form in Genesis 12:1-3. Additions to it are found in Genesis 12:7, 13:14-17, and 17:1-14. Abram was told to leave home, and begin a journey. As he did this, the LORD committed Himself in His covenant to do these five things:

- a. Guide Abram to a special land;
- b. Make of him a special nation;
- c. Bless him and make him great;
- d. Make him a blessing to others; and
- e. Bless the whole world through him!

3. Abram's Failure.

Abram (Abraham) was a man of great faith and an example to us all, but at times he failed to believe God as he ought. He failed to trust God about leaving his father and Lot behind. When he got to the land in Canaan, his faith was strong (12:4-9) and he built altars at which to pray and worship the LORD. But when a famine came to Canaan (12:10-20), he stopped following God and fled to Egypt. During this period of backsliding, Abram found his character weakened and did several wrong things. Do you find yourself following Abram's pattern of faith and fear, belief

and doubt, faithfulness and straying, victory and defeat, following God and then disobeying him? The up-and-down Christian life leaves many scars and produces embarrassing failures. The record is never a pretty sight. The reason for the failure is always *unbelief*. If we can keep on believing God, we will keep on obeying Him and stay on the right track! Thank God, there is mercy at the altar, and Abram did come back (13:1-4), both to God and to the will of God!

4. Lot's **Departure**_____.

The time soon came when Abram and Lot his nephew had to part. Read about it in Genesis 13:5-18. Spiritual people cannot continue to walk with carnal people. The split must eventually happen, unless the carnal person yields to God and becomes spiritual or else he drags the spiritual person down to his level! Read Galatians 5:13 - 6:8 with this truth in mind. Lot chose the prospects of earthly wealth over the promises of heavenly rewards, even at the spiritual peril of his own life and that of his family. Read Genesis 13:10-13. Abram was kind to Lot, but accepted the necessary separation (vs. 8-9). As a result, he received a new vision of God's wonderful plan for his life (vs. 14-18). So it happens often today. When a spiritual man breaks with those who pull him down, he is freed to grow and prosper in the Lord!