

GENESIS

12:10-13:18

Genesis 12:10-13:18

Taught by Simeon Forder on Sunday morning, 8th October 2023 @ Deal Christian Fellowship

Reading: Psalm 121:1-8

Introduction

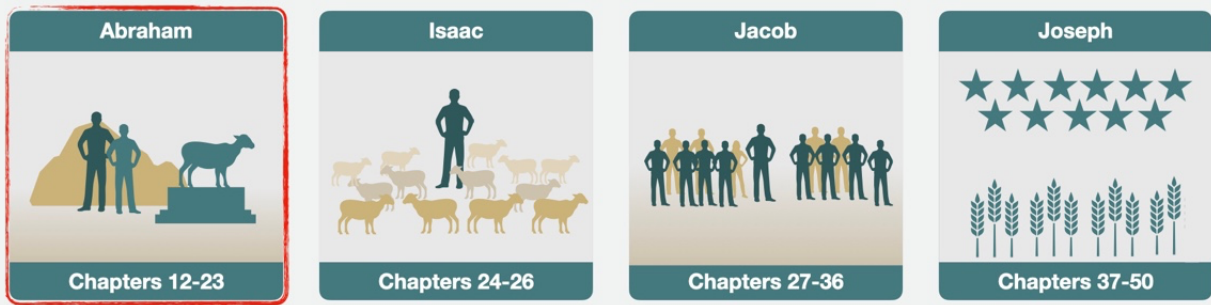
Last Sunday morning, in our ongoing study of Genesis, we began looking at the life of Abraham — a man of remarkable character and faith, who was originally known as Abram. And we saw how he had obeyed the call of God to leave his home in Ur (in modern day Iraq) to head for the land of Canaan (which is modern day Israel and beyond).

However, en route his father (Terah), along with Abram and his wife Sarai, and their nephew (Lot), settled in Haran — which means *delay*. And delay he did, remaining there for 25 years until his father died. But following that, he continued his journey and reached Canaan, the land God had called him to. And we saw God's clear promise, saying "To your descendants I will give this land."

Now, you might think that having arrived in Canaan after all this time, he would remain there. But as we'll read today, he ventured into Egypt — a decision that would have both immediate and subsequent impacts on his life, and those around him. And indeed, as we look at his life we'll find much example to follow, but see things to avoid in own lives.

Overview of chapters twelve & thirteen

The patriarchs of Genesis



Now, we'll spend a couple of months looking at Abraham (still known as Abram at this point), for the book of Genesis devotes over 10 chapters to his life. But this morning we'll look at around one-and-a-half chapters, picking up where we left off in chapter 12, and then studying all of chapter 13.

Overview of chapter twelve

- **v1-3** — God's promise to Abram
- **v4-9** — Abram moves to Canaan
- **v10-20** — Abraham goes to Egypt

Last week then, we saw God's promise to Abram in the opening 3 verses, and Abram's move to the land of Canaan in verses 4-9. And this morning we'll *first* read the record of his move to Egypt (and motivation for it) in the final 11 verses of chapter 12.

Overview of chapter thirteen

- **v1-4** — Abram's return from Egypt
- **v5-13** — Abram and Lot part ways
- **v14-18** — God gives the land to Abram

Then, in *chapter 13*, we'll see Abram return from Egypt (in verses 1-4), his parting of ways with his nephew (Lot) in verses 5-13, and then in verses 14-18 we'll see God reiterate his promise and give additional detail and instruction in his giving of the land to Abram.

Someone once said, coincidence isn't kosher word — that is, what we see as coincidence is often when God chooses to work anonymously. And I can't help but think that God is having us look at these chapters precisely at a time when Israel is so very much in the news, following the abhorrent attack on them by Hamas in this last week. We should have open hearts as to *why* God may have arranged things just so, considering what He would have *us* learn from His Word.

Chapter twelve

So then, as we pick up our study in verse 10 of chapter 12, we read of the first of 13 famines recorded in the Bible. Moses writes:

Genesis 12:10

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.

Previously, at the start of this chapter, God had said to Abram, *get out from your country... to a land I will show you, and I will bless you*. But as Abram looked at his surroundings and his situation, perhaps even listening to others in the land, he seemingly forgot that his help came from the Lord, maker of heaven and earth, for he moves down to Egypt — and significantly, away from *Bethel* (which means *house of God*). Rather than trust God who had called him there in the first place, he took matters into his own hands. And oh how we can easily do the same.

We move to a town, or enter a marriage, or have children, or start a job. Or even leave a *wrong* relationship, part ways with ungodly friends, or turn down opportunities that would pull us away from the Lord — but then find that the place we're in as a result of listening to the Lord is not as easy as we had anticipated. There's frustration. There's trials. There's loneliness. There's financial difficulty. There's famine so to speak. And in that moment we have a choice. Call on our God who led us there; trusting that where God guides He provides. Or take matters into our own hands.

Here, Abram chose the latter. And we learn from chapter 13 that Lot went with him too. Not only would this have implications in their lifetime, but would be copied in the generations that followed on from Abram, for Israel would often look back to Egypt, symbolic of the world, looking *there* for help. This is something that Isaiah (among others) would rebuke them about:

Isaiah 30:1-3

"Woe to the rebellious children," says the LORD, "Who take counsel, but not of Me, And who devise plans, but not of My Spirit, That they may add sin to sin; Who walk to go down to Egypt, And have not asked My advice, To strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, And to trust in the shadow of Egypt! Therefore the strength of Pharaoh Shall be your shame, And trust in the shadow of Egypt Shall be your humiliation.

Again, in the following chapter, we read:

Isaiah 31:1

Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, And rely on horses, Who trust in chariots because they are many, And in horsemen because they are very strong, But who do not look to the Holy One of Israel, Nor seek the LORD!

May we consider this when it comes to where to look for help in *our* time of need — for our children will be watching. Others in our church family will be watching. May our example be one to follow; an example of trust in the Lord, rather than one to avoid; of taking matters into our own hands.

Reading on we find:

Genesis 12:11

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.

Well, that's a nice complement, right? But there was more to follow, for Abram says:

Genesis 12:12

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.

So this is more than a compliment, or even a statement of fact — for Abram is worried for his own life, and so he asks Sarai:

Genesis 12:13

Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you."

First, husbands, we should be noting that we ought not only compliment our wives when there's something in it for us! But second, we should all note what Abraham is doing here. You may remember from our study last week that Sarai was indeed Abraham's half-sister, sharing the same father, but having different mothers. So in one sense, Abram is telling the truth. But he is doing so with intent to deceive, withholding crucial information for his own benefit, putting not only Sarai at risk, but also risking someone else sinning as a result. And so a half-truth becomes a full blown lie.

What's an even bigger deal here, is that God had *already* promised that He would bless Abram with descendants — and thus if Abram had been killed by the Egyptians at this point (prior to him having children) then that would have made God a liar, or incapable of protecting Abram.

And so on one hand we see Abram as a tremendous example of faith. But on the other hand, a man who was able to fail in his faith — both that God would provide (hence going to Egypt), and that God would be able to fulfil what He had promised (hence this half-truth, or lie). The warning to us is that it can be the area we think we are strongest, or appear to others we are strong, in which we fall.

Paul warned the Corinthians:

1 Corinthians 10:12-13

Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

We now see how this plays out:

Genesis 12:14-15

So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman, that she was very beautiful. The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken to Pharaoh's house.

Abram's compliment wasn't merely a good line. He was telling the truth in that she *was* beautiful. And just as Esther was taken into the king's household for a period of purification before she was brought to him, so Sarai was taken into Pharaoh's household. And we read that:

Genesis 12:16

He treated Abram well for her sake. He had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels.

I wonder what Abram was thinking as this went on — first his wife was being prepared for another man. And second, this man was giving him all sorts of gifts as a result of it. How was he ever going to get out of this situation? Thankfully, God intervened, for we read in verse 17:

Genesis 12:17

But the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.

Imagine if God had **not** done this... there would have been no children to Abraham (through Sarai) nor would Sarai have suggested Hagar to him. And there would have been no line through to Christ. Look at what one man's actions can do when he is more interested in his own self preservation than trusting God!

Genesis 12:18-20

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

So Abram gets sent away, with Sarai, Lot, and all he had. Pharaoh had a close call. But so had Abram, really as a consequence of his own choices. And while God intervened, we read of no communication with Abram the whole time he was in Egypt. In a similar way, God may be gracious with us when we are not walking where He wants us to walk, and He may bring us out of that situation. But as with Abram, our walk with Him will be compromised until we come back to His feet in repentance and faith.

Chapter thirteen

Continuing into chapter 13 we read:

Genesis 13:1

Then Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, to the South.

That is, they didn't go south, but *to* the south. To the land south of what would become Judah, where many Biblical events would take place. Abraham himself would come back here in chapter 20, and his son, Isaac, would come here in chapter 24 of Genesis. It's also the area where Mary would come to visit her cousin, Elizabeth, and her husband, Zacharias (as noted in Luke chapter 1).

And we read:

Genesis 13:2

Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold.

This wealth no doubt was in part through his inheritance from his father, some maybe in part from his own endeavours, but he had been given much by the hand of Pharaoh while in Egypt. And we start to get a picture of how much *God* had blessed him with, *and* what he had acquired through his own doing. Indeed, in the very next chapter we find that he had 318 trained servants that had been born in his own house — that's just the fighting men mentioned, not to mention their wives, children and parents. And presumably, this did not include any additional men or women that came with him from Egypt, for we read that those 318 men were born in his own household.

Genesis 13:3-4

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, to the place of the altar which he had made there at first. And there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

Having returned from Egypt, where there is no record of him building an altar or calling on the name of the Lord, Abram now goes north of Jerusalem, to *Bethel* — which again, means *house of God*. And returns to where he started before he went to Egypt, symbolic of the world. And he comes to the altar, where he had worshipped God before. And now worships Him again.

No doubt realising the error of his ways, Abram returns not only to the land, but to the Lord.

And that's exactly what we should do any time we come to our senses and realise that our walk with the Lord is not what it used to be, which always like Abram, will be because we moved (not because God did). And I think it's significant that it's to the house of God that he returns, for you can trace the falling away of many people from the Lord today, all because they neglected the things of Him, and very often, the importance of commitment to a local church. And take note — this seldom happens overnight. It's typically more insidious, more subtle than any sudden change of heart.

First it's harder to get to mid-week meetings because you're busy, and it's winter, and it's dark. And you've got ironing or work to do. Or it's the only night you can do your hobby. Then you miss the odd Sunday, because, you know, it's the only date you can get tickets for that concert or event, or you had a super late night before. Or because it's hard getting out the door with kids, or because it's hard work being at church with little ones. What starts here and there, ends up everywhere. What seems reasonable one week, will soon seem reasonable every week.

Let me tell you — you need to be present. Of course, there are some jobs that truly need to be done on a Sunday — we need police, we need prisons, we need hospitals, and a fire service, and coastguard, and military, and so on. We can't hope people won't be ill, or there won't be a fire on a Sunday. However, if you're in such roles, do all you *can* to get to *all* that you *can*. Mid-weeks, evenings, and so on — but, if you are not doing an essential job, then you should be here. Not just most of the time, but all of the time. I'm not talking about not taking the occasional holiday or not visiting family away. I'm talking about all the other things we so easily prioritise.

"But it's double pay on Sunday's" some state. Or "It's the only job I can get". Sure, but you think God won't honour you for choosing to be here?! Look, I was made redundant about 15 years ago, and had a month's notice and 2 months out of work. At the time, I didn't know it would only be 2 months. I had no job in front of me, but definitely had bills. But I refused to accept a job that required work on Sunday's — in fact, I didn't even apply for them. And I found so much blessing in the job God provided for me — beyond what I ever expected.

That is to say, don't prioritise career over being here. Or family get-togethers, kids birthday parties, sleepovers, shopping trips, sports, or anything trivial. "Oh, but I can catch up on the sermons online". Sure, but will you? And is that all that you come here for? You can't praise God alongside your church family when you're at home. You can't fellowship after the service at home, you can't talk about the sermon while having coffee afterwards, or pour out your heart to others (or be there for others to do the same). Neither can you be accountable in the same way.

Now, it should be said, you also need to be present when you're present. If you're not doing these things when you are here, what are you doing?! Sunday morning isn't a chance to sing some songs, catch-up on Facebook during the sermon, then talk about sport or work or hobbies and holidays before heading home. If that's all you're doing then you are close to wasting your time.

We each need to come to the house of God, and to the place where it all started, and worship Him. We need to come with open hearts, and willing hands.

In case you think I'm going off on one here, note that when commenting on this passage, and how Egypt is symbolic of the world, J Vernon McGee said:

It's amazing how the world draws Christians today. So many of them rationalize. They'll say, "You know, brother McGee, we're not able to come to church on Sunday night because we have to get up and go to work Monday morning." Well, almost everybody has to do that. And it's amazing that those same people can go to a banquet on a week night and sit through a long-winded program with lots of music and lots of talk and not worry about getting up for work the next morning. It's amazing how the world draws Christians today and how they can rationalize.

J Vernon McGee

Let us not rationalize. For Abram had plenty of reason to go to Egypt, and leave behind the *house of God* — there was a famine, and he had family to take care of — but he failed to trust that God would provide in the place He had called him to. And in doing so ended up in Egypt, where not only did he not hear from God, but we read no record of him building an altar, or worshipping God there either. Let us consider Jesus words to the church of Ephesus in Revelation chapter 2:

Revelation 2:4-5

Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.

Let us not forget our first love. Let us not forget for a moment that God loved us, called us, saved us, and gave us an inheritance too! One that far surpasses the earthly inheritance Abram received.

Now, as Abram returns from Egypt he certainly seems to have had a change of heart. But you and I may wonder whether he had learned a lesson too. And I think in part he had, for he never went down to Egypt again. However, we'll see in subsequent chapters that not only does he repeat the mistake of trying to pass off Sarai as his sister, but his son, Isaac, does the exact same thing with his wife, Rebekah. He's a man of faith. But flawed, like we are.

Reading on, we learn in verse 5:

Genesis 13:5

Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents.

And we'll find out in a moment that he had servants too. For we read:

Genesis 13:6

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.

After all, there was only so much grass to feed their flocks and herds on. And now with all Abram had acquired in Egypt in addition to what he *already* had, we find his possessions cause problems:

Genesis 13:7

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.

No doubt, the herdsmen each wanted what was best for their herd. They wanted them to be well fed. But the land wouldn't support that, and so there arose this tussle between Abram and Lot's servants. And then we have this note that the Canaanites and Perizzites were in the land — why this detail? Well, there's two options I see. First, the herdsmen had bigger problems to worry about with these giant tribes living nearby. But secondly, it could be that these tussles were outwardly visible to these tribes, who as a result — instead of seeing men who feared God and loved others — simply saw inward fighting, which of course would be a poor example.

May that thought be a warning for us, that as individuals within *this* church, and in our contact with Christians in *other* churches, there must not be animosity or bickering or strife. That doesn't mean we don't call out false doctrine, or unrighteousness, but it does mean we don't get in petty squabbles. There are already enough people who want nothing to do with Christ because their (often incorrect) assumption is that *all* Christians do is fight. Let us not reinforce that opinion, but rather be peacemakers as far as is possible, such as Abram was. For we read:

Genesis 13:8

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.

That is, there should be no family feuds — whether in our earthly family, or our church family. And our responsibility is not only to refrain from starting problems, but dealing with them, indeed ending them too. How do we do that? By bearing with one another, and putting each other first. We read in Paul' letter to the church in Ephesus:

Ephesians 4:1-3

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Then to the Philippian church he writes:

Philippians 2:1-4

Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Here in Genesis, Abram dealt with this effectively. First, he went direct to Lot — as indeed we should go directly to the person we have any kind of grievance with, rather than complain about them, or worse, gossip about them — and second, he didn't blame Lot, saying *"this is what your herdsman have done!"*. But rather he appealed to what bonded them, for they were family. And so as Christians we should remember what unites us, which is the blood of Christ that He shed for each one of us for our sin. There shouldn't be fights and wars among us.

Abram continues:

Genesis 13:9

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."

Abram truly put the interests of Lot ahead of his own, and let him have the choice of where to settle. What an example!

Genesis 13:10-11

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. Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other.

So Lot is motivated by what his eyes see. And as we'll find out, that would not turn out to be a wise choice - we'll see that in the next chapter. And the example of Lot, though he was ultimately called a righteous man in 2 Peter, is one that should give sharp warning to us. For how often are we motivated by what our eyes see?

Maybe we can't blame Lot, for his uncle Abram had done the same thing — he had looked around at his situation, and thought I better do something about this, and took matters into his own hands rather than calling on the Lord. But whereas it seemed Abram had learned from that experience, it seems Lot had not. And he makes his decision of where to live based on practicalities and comforts — rather than asking where the Lord would have him be.

"Oh, but this area we're looking at has the best job opportunities, the best schools, the best parks, the best weather, the best food, the best cafes, the best social life, the best sports teams, the best hospitals, the best social care, the best roads, the best houses." Maybe it does. But there's one question you should ask — *is that where God wants you?* Lot skipped that, and instead was led by his eyes, by his flesh. We read:

Genesis 13:12-13

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. But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD.

So first, Lot looked toward Sodom. Second, he moved with in touching distance of Sodom. And we'll later read that he moved into Sodom. Small steps, but ones that would ultimately lead to heartache.

Small children are like this, right? We set a boundary for them, and they see how close they can get to it without getting in trouble. Whether it's touching something they shouldn't, standing on something they shouldn't, or going somewhere they shouldn't. And too often, they end up crossing the boundary in the process. But aren't we the same? AW Tozer said well:

One compromise here, another there, and soon enough the so-called Christian and the man in the world look the same.

AW Tozer

It's not like we set out to do this, but rather small steps lead to a place we should never have gone. Psalm 1 sets out this progression. We read there:

Psalm 1:1-2

Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.

First there is this *walking* in the counsel of the ungodly. Next there is *standing* in the the path of sinners. Until finally there is the *sitting* in the seat of the scornful. Walking, standing, sitting. Don't let your walk with the Lord grind to a halt through compromise! Here in Genesis chapter 13, we're seeing Lot take those first small steps. In future weeks we'll see the results of those choices.

As this chapter concludes then, with Lot having made *his* choice, we see what happens to Abram, having diffused this situation. We read in verse 14:

Genesis 13:14-15

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; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever.

Let's look at this simply:

- **What was this land?** It was the land of Canaan, that would become known as Israel (and not only those parts that the nation Israel controls today).
- **To whom was it given?** To Abram and his descendants. And this was further qualified by the promise being extended by God through Isaac in chapter 26 (and not Ishmael, or his descendants), and to Jacob in chapter 35 (and not Esau, or his descendants).
- **For how long was it given?** We read here in verse 15 — *forever*.

And that leaves us with a few logical conclusions. **First**, it was God's land to give. Not surprising, given that God created all we see. But we should be clear on that point.

Second, the church has not replaced Israel — for we have not inherited that land! Rather, Israel will forever have a special place in God's plan. God wasn't exaggerating. He didn't specify conditions. When He said forever, He meant it.

Third, Israel has a God-given right to exist as a nation in the land that God gave them. Though God would use other nations to judge them for their unbelief and hard hearts, at times taking them out of the land, this promise was never thrown out. For there was no condition upon it.

And given those things, if we do not support Israel's right to exist — *we are going against God*.

Now, that does not mean we approve of or endorse every decision or action made by the Israeli government. Especially since it is a secular government at this time. But it does help us frame up what is going on in the world right now. For God declared that He has given the land to Israel.

As mentioned last week, Satan did all he could to prevent Jesus coming in the first place. And to that end, he tried to destroy the nation of Israel. And now, Satan will do all he can to prevent Jesus' second coming — and once again that means his desire is to destroy the very reason for Jesus return, which is the nation of Israel itself.

As such, we should not be *surprised* by the events unfolding on our TV screens this week. Even though we should be shocked, upset, and indeed horrified by the brutality of the Hamas terrorists that murdered innocent Israeli's in cold blood, including babies.

The intent of these terrorists wasn't to gain land, or destroy military targets. Their ongoing intent is to destroy Israel as a nation, and eradicate Jews from the face of the earth. And they will not stop until they reach that goal. This same line of thought is sadly seen in protests in our own country this week, where protesters have called for the destruction of Israel, screaming "let there be bloodshed". It is seen in the 4-fold increase in anti-semitic behaviour in the UK since the attacks in Israel. And it's seen in online posts from individuals and organisations around the world, masquerading their hatred of Jews as support of Palestinian people. It's seen in the public support of such attacks by nations such as Iran.

The memories of the holocaust are fading from living memory, and now is indeed an opportunity for some to try and continue what Hitler had so much success in. And they will not want to stop.

What we should understand is that these atrocities, though perpetuated by man, are initiated by Satan. And understanding that background, as Christians we should fundamentally support Israel's right to defend itself. Again, not justifying each and every decision of their government, for they can and will make wrong choices, just as much as ours does. But we must not be drawn into the propaganda of those that would have us believe Israel is the oppressor.

So, let's be clear on this — the concept of a Palestinian people is an engineered one. You see, the very name Palestine originated from the Roman empire after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD70, with the Roman authorities naming the land such to spite the Jews, after their historical arch-enemy, the Philistines (who we read of a few weeks ago). And that name stuck with the area, not a people.

Indeed, anyone born in the land of Israel before it was re-established as a nation in 1948 had Palestinian on their birth certificate, including Jews. The Palestinian Post was a Jewish newspaper, the Palestinian Orchestra was a Jewish orchestra.

At the time Israel was re-established as a nation, the small number of people that were in what was a very barren land were rejected by the surrounding nations, forcing them into the areas we call Gaza and the West Bank. This wasn't a matter of being unable to accommodate them, but an unwillingness to. And in doing so they generated the animosity against Israel, leading to the modern conflict we see playing out today where innocent people of both sides, and many nations, are needlessly killed.

We could dig deeper, but that's a topic not only for another time. What is important for us to take from this, is that God clearly gave the land of Israel, to the *nation* of Israel, forever. That is His sovereign right. It His sovereign call. And we should not go against that.

Verse 16 records God's continued promise:

Genesis 13:16-17

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. Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you."

God's promise is reiterated by Him, and in it we see His blessing on Abram — a man who had left his home and his family to follow the call of God. Of course, the blessing sounds great! But the obeying the call is hard. It requires sacrifice. It requires you and I to make choices. But choices that are worth making. We read in Mark's gospel:

Mark 10:28-30

Then Peter began to say to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You." So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life.

Verse 18 closes this chapter out. We read:

Genesis 13:18

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.

Each time this man of God moved, with the exception of going down to Egypt, he built an altar and worshipped God in response to all that He had done for him. So should *our* lives be filled with worship to God for all He has done for *us*.

And note where he settled — near the trees of Mamre (Mamre meaning *richness, strength or fatness*) in a place called Hebron (which means *communion or association*). That is, he dwelt in the place where he enjoyed the richness of communion with God. A far better place than Egypt, symbolic of the world, where he had ended up at the end of the last chapter.

Conclusion

What we read here in Genesis are not mere stories and legends. They are real events that are recorded for us to learn from. And we know they are real events, not only from the Bible, but from other manuscripts such as the *Dead Sea Scrolls* that were found in the caves in Qumran in the West Bank, in the 1940's and 50's. These scrolls not only note the events of chapters 12-15, but also a first person account by Abram of his journey that followed God's instruction in verse 17 of this chapter, to walk in the land through its length and its width.

What we have written here in our Bibles is an absolute treasure. But will we treasure it? Will it become dear to us? Not because of historical value, but because of its value when applied to our lives. That's a decision you need to make right now as you walk out into the hall for coffee after the service. Will you consider your life, and your walk with the Lord in light of these things we've looked at today? Or will you be pleased that you don't have to endure another sermon until next week?

I or any preacher can only deliver God's word to you, taking care do to that faithfully. What you do with it is *entirely* in your hands.

Application questions

This week, I urge you to consider these three questions:

- **How will you avoid Abram's example of going to Egypt?** Not about booking holidays, but about whether you are drawn to the world instead of trusting God.
- **How will you follow Abram's example in drawing close to God?** Will you worship Him wherever you go?
- **Are you absent in your support for Israel?** Agreeing with God is one thing. Standing up for what you believe is another. We must raise our voices when those around us cheer on those who are willing to murder Jews, and to treat them shamefully.

For the audio recording of this Bible study, and for additional studies, please see the DCF web site:

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