
Day 5 - January 5

Period of the Patriarchs (2100 -1525 BCE)

The Call of Abram

Abram Dishonors Himself in Egypt

Separation of Abram and Lot

Defeat of the Kings

Readings: *Genesis 12:1-14:20*

Reflections:

- The true beginning of God's redemption starts with a story that makes the main guy look certifiably insane. He is a nomadic nobody who God tells to leave everything he has ever known because God wants to do something through him. At 75 years old, he claims God has spoken to him and in his old age with his elderly wife, he is going to have a son and through him and his descendents, they will become a great nation and bless the entire world. Does this sound like delusional thinking or what? Well, that is what God says and it also says that Abram left as the Lord told him.
- He goes to Canaan with his two families and the Lord tells him he is going to give him this land. Now remember, there are people living there. It isn't like this is unclaimed territory. So again, what God says seems to look ridiculous to any average person.
- Abram does worship the Lord and call out to him and so his friendship with God begins with his willingness to believe God and do what God asks him to do.
- Now, immediately following some big steps of faith, Abram blows it in Egypt. Sarai, at 65 years old, is beautiful and so we have the whole "she's my sister" failure of Abram. It is interesting how this story parallels Israel's bondage in Egypt and their later deliverance under Moses. This certainly is meant to be a parallel experience. Again, this shows God's incredible grace in the face of human failure.
- Abram returns to the Negev a wealthy man with much blessing. He calls on the name of the Lord again and renews his friendship with God.
- Tension arises between Lot's people and Abram's people. They decide to part ways.
- Here we see a comparison between doing things God's way or our way. Lot, when given the choice, looks at the plain of the Jordan and sees it is "well-watered like the garden

of the Lord.” The problem is that it is beside Sodom and Gomorrah who were “wicked and greatly sinning against the Lord.” So Lot chooses what appears to be earthly blessing and to do so, must compromise who he lives beside. This will prove disastrous.

- God then gives Abram his promised land. He reminds Abram of his calling and all that God is going to do through him. He encourages him to walk the entire land. In other words, get to know the full range of your calling and blessing. Scope out all God wants to give you.
- Defeat of the Kings: Abram now becomes a warrior. Lot ends up in massive trouble because of being mixed up with Sodom and Gomorrah and Abram has to rescue him. We should notice that when the king of Sodom offers Abram blessing that Abram refuses it. Where Lot wanted earthly wealth, Abram was set on only receiving the blessing God would give. This is another important lesson on understanding where true blessing lies. Not what the world offers but only what God offers lasts.
- Melchizedek appears. He is a mysterious figure. He is called the king of peace (Salem). Jerusalem means city of peace. Was he the king of the area that would one day be called Jerusalem? He is called the priest of God. He seems to be some form of foreshadowing of the Messiah. Abram is blessed by this priest and then he gives him a tithe of all he has, a foreshadowing of giving God the first fruits of all you have. In all of this Abram again looks like a fool. He gives so much away to someone he barely knows. Yet obviously, this is what God wants him to do. We learn more about Melchizedek in Psalm 110 and Hebrews 5-7 as this mysterious figure foreshadows the coming rescuer, the Messiah.
- The story of God using nobodies and asking them to do crazy things continues.