

A Lesson for Abram to Learn (Part 2)

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Date: 10 September 2025

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[0 : 00] We're in Genesis chapter 12 looking at the life of Abraham and God's dealings with him and God's manifestation of himself to Abraham.

! He's begun to enter into Canaan after his father died and now we see that he has not been there very long.

God has put him there, can't possess it to begin with because the Canaanites are still there.

Remember the promise was to Abraham that this land would be that for his seed, alright?

Make of him a great nation. So, Abraham did not immediately possess the land. So, he did as God just told him to do. Go to the place and sojourn through the land as God led him and God directed him.

And so, Abraham goes from the north down to the southern region of Canaan. And that's where we pick up in verse number 10 and following. Now, always remember here again, when you look at the work of God in the life of biblical characters, always realize there are things that seem to be mistakes that are taken by those he deals with.

[1 : 34] But always remember, nothing takes God by surprise. Amen? He knows what's going to happen. And so, he deals with this through his knowledge of what's going to take place.

It's always a learning experience. So, keep that in mind. Is anybody here that's already learned everything there was to learn about the Lord? Oh, I'm glad you're honest people.

Yeah. Alright. So, read with me verses 10 through 14 of Genesis chapter 12. And there was a famine in the land.

And Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there. For the famine was grievous in the land. And it came to pass, when he was come near into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon.

Therefore, it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall see this is his wife. And they will kill me, but they will save thee alive.

[2 : 43] Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister, that it may be well with me for thy sake, and my soul shall live because of thee. And it came to pass, that when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman, that she was very fair.

Now, Abram has not been in Canaan very long. When a famine breaks out. Some scholars picture this as, at one time, the most fertile area of Canaan.

But now, it's become a drought area. A famine has come. And that God has permitted that to take place because of the behavior of the Canaanites that lived there.

So, you already see the hand of God at work here, even in the famine. We'd have to believe that it even extends in the heart and mind of God, extends to the idea of Abram being in that place.

Because notice what happens here. Abram begins to do something here. And there's two lessons here, basically, that Abram is going to learn and needs to learn.

[3 : 52] First of all, that even in this land of promise, the land of, if you will, Abram's inheritance, or the inheritance for his descendants, that everything they are to have has to come from the Lord, that God is the provider of his food, of his clothing, as well as the blessings that he's promised to give him.

Now, secondly, he was discovered that while he goes into Egypt, that he's got to continue to depend upon God, that these earthy ideas, schemes, if you will, that he and Sarah have developed, is no match for the power of God.

And so you begin to see Abram here taking upon himself some things that he thought was all right to do and that would preserve his life while he's in Egypt.

But he has to realize something, that no matter the circumstance, God is always the one that we need to depend upon and have confidence in because our help and deliverance comes from and through him.

Now, it's the idea of having confidence, total confidence, not only in the Lord, but confidence in the promises and provisions that he's made.

[5 : 37] Turn with me to the book of Hebrews, chapter 6. Let's remember this. Our confidence in God, most of the time, stems from the promises he's made that we find in Scripture.

And so I think it always is good for us to take a look back. All right? Not necessarily for nostalgia's sake, but just to look back and see again what God has done in our life.

What he has been to us through various circumstances and what the provisions have been from him for us through those circumstances.

Having confidence in him and his promises that he has given to us. Now, I'm going to read Hebrews 6, verses 10 through 20 out of the amplified rendering of it.

For God is not unrighteous to forget or overlook your labor and the love which you have shown for his name's sake in ministering to the needs of his saints, as you still do.

[6 : 46] But we do strongly and earnestly desire for each of you to show the same diligence and sincerity all the way through in realizing and enjoying the full assurance and development of your hope until the end.

Now, stop there just a moment now. Realize that the writer of the Hebrews here is saying that he's desiring that they just continue that journey in that diligence and sincerity they've shown up to this point.

And the reason being there is so that they have the ability then to realize and enjoy the full assurance and development of the hope until the end.

Now, remember something here. Again, a working definition for hope is not the balance of probabilities. Maybe it'll work. Maybe it won't work.

Maybe it'll happen. Maybe it won't happen. It's not what the word hope means here in the scriptures. Hope in scriptures is an assured, confident expectation in what God has said and promised.

[8 : 04] Always keep that in mind. That's the hope. So let me ask you, what is it that God has assured us of and promised us that we can be confident in and expectant in?

What are some of those promises? All right. I'll never leave you nor forsake you once we're His. What else? Eternal life.

Eternal life. All right. What else? All right. Provisions. So, there's multitudes of other ones.

This week, go through some scripture. Go through the word of God and pick out some promises that God has given that pertain to us as believers in the day of grace.

And write those down. And let those be your confident expectation. It's not just the idea of getting to heaven. But there's many of the things that He's promised that should be our confident, assured expectation.

[9 : 15] We can expect those to happen and be confident and assured of that because God has promised that. The full assurance and development of your hope until the end.

In order that. And here's the reason for that. In order that you may not grow disinterested and become spiritual sluggards.

But imitators having as do those who through faith and by practice of patience and endurance are waiting now to inherit the promise.

All right. So, always a purpose. And what He desires for us. Doesn't want us to be disinterested and become spiritual sluggards. So, in other words, that our spiritual life grows cold.

All right. But He wants us to be those that practice patience and endurance until the day comes that we actually inherit the promises.

[10 : 18] For when God... Now, look at this. And here's what He bases all that on. For when God made His promise to Abraham, He swore by Himself since He had no one greater by whom to swear, saying, Blessing, I will certainly bless you, and multiplying, I will multiply you.

And so, it was that Abraham, having waited long and endured patiently... Now, notice that. Waited a long time and endured patiently, realized and obtained what God had promised him.

Now, we've said before, Abraham doesn't actually obtain possession of the land. So, what is it the writer here of the Hebrews is talking about when he said that he realized and obtained those

promises he waited long and endured patiently for?

What was that promise? The birth of the son, Isaac. When God made that promise, because, remember, Abraham knew that for all these promises to be fulfilled as far as becoming a great nation through which Messiah would come, he's going to have to have a son.

Going to have to have that. And they were getting old up in years, past the normal age of bearing children. And so, what did Abraham say?

[11 : 52] What will you give me? See, and I go childish. And this one servant in my house, Eliezer, maybe he'll be the one. God said, no.

He said, your wife, Sarai, will give birth to a son this time next year. Caused Sarai to laugh when she heard that.

All right? But that's the promise that he made. So, Abraham waited patiently. Well, semi-patiently. All right?

For that to take place. But that was the promise of God. But he realized that promise when that boy was born. When Isaac was born. All right?

So, having waited long and endured patiently, realized and obtained what God had promised him. men indeed swear by a greater than themselves.

[12 : 49] And with them in all disputes, the oath taken for confirmation is final. So, that ends the strife here. Accordingly, God also, now catch this, God also, in his desire to show more convincingly and beyond doubt to those who were to inherit the promise, the unchangeableness of his purpose and plan, intervened or mediated with an oath.

this was so that by two unchangeable things, and those two unchangeable things were the promise and the oath given in which it is impossible for God ever to prove false or deceive us.

We who have fled to him for refuge, now that includes us, we that have fled to him for refuge, he's done all of this so that we might have mighty and dwelling strength and strong encouragement to grasp, hold fast the hope appointed for us and set before us.

All we've got to do is look back and see in Scripture what God promised Abram and the fact that we see in Scripture God fulfilled that promise and he made that promise back in the book of Genesis and when he did that, he swore by himself as an oath.

So, since he did that, everything in Scripture that we see that we can lay claim on as his promise to us will all find their fulfillment because of what he did with Abram.

[14 : 45] Alright? Making promise to him concerning Isaac in particular and swearing by himself an oath in that promise. Alright?

So, anybody ask you how do you know you're going to heaven? Just tell them this. because God made promise to Abraham and it came true.

That would throw him for a loop. Amen? And if they ask you about that you say go to the Scripture and look for it. So, we might have indwelling strength and strong encouragement to grasp and hold fast the hope appointed for us and set for us.

Now, we have this hope as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul. Alright? As that anchor it cannot slip it can't break down under whatever might come against it.

It's a hope that reaches farther and enters into the very presence of God. Now, that's where Jesus has entered in for us.

[15 : 59] A forerunner having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Alright? So, that's our hope. And that's where you and I can maintain our confidence in Him.

Now, if some of you, if not all of you, are like my wife and I. Now, some of you are younger so you won't get to this point yet. one day you will or you forget.

Amen? In fact, if I were to ask you to write down on a piece of paper and think for a little bit of things that God has done in your life, it'd be interesting to see how many things you can remember.

Amen? That is our promise. That's what He's promised us. that even though we may not be able to remember some of those things, we can always remember God's promise to Abram and the fact that He swore by an oath, swore by Himself, making those promises and they came true.

And just as certain as those came true, whatever the promises of God to us are, they will come true likewise. Alright? But now, Abram's in the land, a famine has come.

[17 : 24] Now, He journeys into Egypt. He takes things into His own hands because He fears for His life in Egypt. If they see Sarah, which, by the way, is considered a beautiful woman, He's afraid that they'll kill Him because she's His wife and take Sarah.

So, the scheme they cooked up together before they ever left Haran was that if this situation comes to pass, you tell them you're my sister.

Now, if you look in the genealogies, it's a half-truth because she's a half-sister of Abram. Alright?

So, it's not a total lie.

But it's sure stretching the truth, isn't it? Yeah. Now, she's got the ring on her finger. I don't know if she's got bells on her toes or not. She might pick those up in Egypt.

But nonetheless, they cooked up this scheme so that Abram would not be put to death so that they could take Sarai to be theirs.

[18 : 37] Now, the conduct of the Sodomites that we see later on as well as the customs and traditions of the Egyptians make this more plausible as far as what Abraham did because it could be ruthless times there.

No strict accordance to law can be depended upon. And so, it wasn't out of the realm of being normal for Abram to think about these things.

How Abram decided this was all going to work out and he was going to be able to keep Sarah alive and well as his wife and himself as well. Doesn't figure. But anyway, we'll see what happens here.

But think about this. Here's Abram of Ur of the Chaldees. God calls him out. I want you to go leave your father's house, your country, go to a land that I show thee.

Now, we've already dealt with the idea that dad went with him to Haran and then he died. But recognize that at that point, from that point on through until this time, Abraham journeyed on, conducted himself, following what God said with total peace and confidence.

[20 : 01] Alright? Now, what changed that peace and confidence in God's direction and leadership? Things got hard.

A famine came into the land. Alright? Oh, wow. What do I do? Right? I've got a family here.

I've got to feed. I've got to go someplace where there's food. Amen? Now, how many of you men would have done the same thing?

Of course you would. The rest of you don't be so sanctimonious. Alright? Now, so, he takes it upon himself to go.

that confidence, that freedom of movement without apprehension now comes to a halt.

[21 : 11] He now takes it upon himself to go into Egypt with this pre-planned notion of how to conduct things. And we find out what happens.

Alright? Take note. He's pursuing his own course. And here's the problem. He gets up, tells Sarah, come on, we need to go find some food.

Goes into Egypt. What was the number one mistake that Abraham made? not waiting upon God's direction here.

That's his first mistake here. This is brand new for Abraham. We can't really point a finger at him because it's brand new to him.

He's a pagan. Or he was a pagan. moon worshiper family, sun god family. But God calls him out.

[22 : 17] And now he begins to learn. He's learning about Jehovah. He's learning to follow him. But learning that there are some things he's got to learn and understand as he begins to follow him, as he begins to follow God.

One of those things, and we've seen this time and time again, but I'm going to remind us, is that we all need to die to self. Amen? Yeah.

Think about this. How many of us can put ourselves in the very position and situation that Abraham was in? Following God confident in God's leadership, as I stroll through Canaan and view the place, come to the place of being able to settle for a little bit and graze my cattle, then all of a sudden the famine hits?

So I just take things upon myself and go do what I think is best. Amen? How many have ever done that?

Yeah. Yeah. I'm going to do what I think is best in this situation. I know some people, boy, they, it's a hard lesson for us all to learn, but harder for others, some others.

[23 : 41] Known people that were just so adamant, but there's their self confidence that there's no situation that they can't figure out the best way to get through it.

Amen? Yeah. God just lets them go ahead and do that. Yeah. and let them learn the lesson. It's the idea of dying to ourselves so that we are so fully surrendered to God we don't dare move a muscle until we hear from him.

Again, remind you, Matthew chapter 16 verses 24 through 25, I'm going to read it again out of Amplified. Then Jesus said to his disciples, if anyone desires to be my disciple, let him deny himself.

Now, Amplified speaks of denial here as being disregard, lose sight of, and forget himself as his own interests.

So deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me, that is cleave steadfastly to me, conform wholly to my example in living, and if need be, in dying also.

[24 : 56] For whosoever is bent on saving his temporal life, his comfort and security here, shall lose it, that is, lose eternal life, and whosoever loses his life, his comfort and security here, for my sake, shall find it, that is, find that everlasting life.

And then, Philippians chapter 2, verses 5 through 11, again, out of Amplified, let the same attitude and purpose and humble mind be in you which is in or which was in Christ Jesus.

Let him be your example in humility, who, although being essentially one with God and in the form of God, possessing the fullness of the attributes which make God God, did not think this equality with God was a thing to be eagerly grasped or retained, but stripped himself of all privileges and rightful dignity, so as to assume the guise of a servant or a slave, in that he became like men and was born a human being.

And after he had appeared in human form, he abased and humbled himself still further, and carried his obedience to the extreme of death, even the death of the cross.

Therefore, because he stooped so low, God has highly exalted him and has freely bestowed on him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should or must bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue frankly and openly confess and acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

[26 : 49] Now catch the degree of that again. When he humbled himself and became a man, the idea is here, Jesus as God in the flesh, prior to his coming in the body of the babe, he was in the presence of the Father, equal with the Father, possessing all the outward form of deity.

when he came down to put on the body of flesh, he stripped himself of that outward form of deity.

Now, I'm not saying he stripped himself of deity, that's impossible.

He removed the outward form of deity, and then put on that outward form of a man, so that when you see him, you don't say this is deity just because you saw him, without knowing who he was.

he put on that simple body of flesh. Now, the literal idea is Jesus, when he came, emptied himself of himself.

And that's what we need to do. Empty ourselves of ourselves. Now, how do we do that? we have to go to the Father and say, Lord, enable me.

[28 : 24] It's not the idea of helping me, but enable me, by your spirit, to empty myself of myself today, and be so in tune with your spirit, that I know what you're showing me, and then give me the grace of surrender to make that happen.

All right? Yeah. It's a conscientious effort on our part to let that happen in our lives.

Let's pray. Father, again, we thank you for your loving kindness, for your goodness and grace to us tonight, and for the opportunity you've given us to just come again together, together, and to open your word and to show and see what you have for us to see.

And so, Father, I pray you'll implant that within our heart, the reality of dying to ourselves that only you can make happen in our lives as we submit and surrender to you.

So enable us to see that and understand that and to apply it to our lives, and we'll thank you for what you do. So we pray that you'll bring us back next week and open our hearts and minds again to what you show us.

[29 : 43] And we'll thank you for it now in Jesus' name. Amen.