

Abram's Return and Lot's Departure

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[0 : 00] And if you would, I'd like you to open up your Bibles to Genesis chapter 13.

! Genesis chapter 13. Since we return to the book of Genesis, we have been following Abram, who will later be known as Abraham. We have been following him on his travels, on his journeys, which is probably appropriate because it's summertime.

We're traveling and we have a lot of people who are out today and others will be out next week.

And so we're traveling along with Abraham while other folks are out traveling all over the place. But we have followed Abraham, or Abram as he's known at this point in time.

We have followed him from his original homeland of Ur of the Chaldeans to Haran, which is in northern Mesopotamia. Down into the land of Canaan.

And then last week we followed him down into Egypt. And then now this week he is back in the land of Canaan. Back in the promised land. And so as we read this morning, we're going to look in a few moments at a map so that we can orient ourselves and understand where Abram is, where these various places are that he stops off.

[1 : 19] But as we read this morning, I want your attention to be focused upon the vast differences between the Abram that we see in chapter 13 and the Abram that we saw last week in the second half of chapter 12.

So if you would, stand to your feet and let's focus beginning in verse 2 and we'll read all the way to the end of chapter 13. Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver and in gold.

And he journeyed on from the Negev as far as Bethel to the place where his tent had been at the beginning between Bethel and Ai to the place where he had made an altar at the first. And there Abram called upon the name of the Lord.

And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together.

And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. At that time, the Canaanites and the Perizzites were dwelling in the land. Then Abram said to Lot, Let there be no strife between you and me and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we are kinsmen.

[2 : 33] It's not the whole land before you. Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right. Or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left. And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw that the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt in the direction of Zoar.

This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed east. Thus they separated from each other.

Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the Lord.

The Lord said to Abram after Lot had separated from him, Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever.

I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted. Arise, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I will give it to you.

[3 : 42] So Abram moved his tent and came, and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron. And there he built an altar to the Lord. Father, thank you for inspiring Moses to write down this account from the life of Abraham.

We ask that your spirit this morning would teach us through Abram's example and would point us to Christ as our ultimate hope. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen. You guys take a seat. As we've seen, Abram was called by God while he was living in Mesopotamia.

Mesopotamia literally means the land between the rivers. The rivers there would be the Tigris River and the Euphrates River. They still run today through Iraq and through some of the other nations that are over there.

Those rivers are still present. We know what that area is. We know in general where Abraham lived and dwelt and where he grew up. And God called Abram as he lived in Ur of the Chaldeans to leave that place.

[4 : 44] And he left with his father and went to Haran. And then he further left and obeyed God's call more fully and left his father's household there in Haran and traveled to the land of Canaan, to a land that he did not even know yet would be his to possess.

God said to go to a land that I will show you. And Abram went. The most remarkable thing about the story is that God calls Abram and Abram actually responds to that call.

We see that in the first half of chapter 12. And we said as we walked through there that God is doing something. God is initiating a new era in human history.

God is creating a new people. And he's giving them a place that will be consecrated and set aside for the praise of his name. So these are a people that exist to praise God's name.

This is a place that will be given to them so that they might in that place praise the name of God.

And what we see Abram doing as he enters into the land of Canaan is doing just that.

[5 : 53] He engages in worship as he's in that land. Take a look back up in chapter 12. I want you to see this. I want you to be reminded. So we see there in verse 8.

And there he, Abram, built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord. Abram's initial response to the call of God is to obey, to go into this land.

And as God promises this land, Abram bends the knee and offers up to God worship. He worships God. That's what he's doing in the land of Canaan.

But surprisingly, as he moved down into Egypt because of famine, we see no worship in the second half of Genesis chapter 12.

It's a stunning silence. We see no worship from Abram directed toward God. And we don't see God speak to Abram in any sort of way at all while he's in the land of Egypt.

[6 : 58] And I didn't mention that last week because I wanted your attention to be focused upon that fact this week. Because what we're finding as we look in this passage is that as Abram returns to the land of promise, he begins to worship again.

So that when he's in the place where God has called him to be, Abram praises the name of God. But when he's out of that place, he does not praise the name of God. When he returns to the place, he begins to praise God again.

In fact, I want you to notice how things are worded in verse 3. And he journeyed on from the Negev. That's the south. That's the southernmost part of the promised land.

It's not far from Egypt, which is southwest of the promised land. He's journeying into the Negev, which literally means south. He's in the Negev. And it says that he travels from the Negev as far as Bethel to the place where his tent had been at the beginning.

Now mark that down. He's returning to where he had initially set up camp in the land of promise. He's returned now to Bethel, to the place where he had made an altar at the first.

[8 : 11] And there, we are told, Abram called upon the name of the Lord. Abram is, in a sense, he's making a return not only to the place where God has called him to go, but he's making a return to the purpose for which God had called him in the first place, and that was to praise the name of God.

And it's significant, I think, that Abram has to go through this process because he's not perfect. Yes, he has obeyed the call of God.

Yes, he has done something amazing in leaving the lands that were familiar to him, leaving his father's household and striking out on his own, which would have been a fearful and terrifying thing to do.

He's done something incredible. He's gone into the land. He has worshipped the God who has called him, but he's not perfect. As he leaves the land, we saw last week, he acted foolishly.

He acted like one who had not been given those great promises by God. He acted as one who didn't really know God at all. His behavior was strange in the land of Egypt.

[9 : 18] Sinful behavior. The behavior of a man who needs to repent, who needs to return back to the ways of worshiping God. And that's exactly what we see him doing at the very beginning now of chapter 13.

His return is not really a return to a specific location. His return is a repentance. It's a turning away from the foolishness that he had embraced before. Now, we're going to see later on that his repentance is not perfect, that he will then again return back to some of those old ways.

But for the next few chapters at least, we get to see Abram operating in a way that we would like to see the heroes of the faith operating. We get to see him behaving in a way that we will find to be admirable and good.

We'll arrive at chapter 16 and Abram will again begin to do things that we read and we think, what are you doing, Abraham? Why are you doing that? Why would you act that way?

Why would you do that? We'll move on and get to chapter 20 and we'll be amazed again. You're doing these things all over again, Abraham. What are you thinking? He's not perfect. He's not going to be perfect at any time throughout the story of Abram.

[10 : 29] But at least now, we're seeing him having repented and returned back to the land of promise to do that which he was called to do in the first place. And in that, I think that we need to be imitators of Abram.

Because we, like him, are going to do foolish things. We, like him, we're going to go through seasons of life, sometimes days, sometimes weeks, sometimes months. But we're going to go through periods of time in which we make decisions and we choose paths that are not based upon God's Word, that are not done from the wisdom that we receive from God's Word, so that we're going to do some things and make some choices that are just sinful and wrong.

And how we respond after the fact will demonstrate whether or not our faith is genuine. Abram responds in repentance. And we need to respond in repentance as well.

Whatever it is, maybe you're in the midst of one of those seasons now. Maybe you've been going through a time of hidden disobedience to the Lord that no one else knows about, that no one else sees.

Abram's disobedience was public, was it not? I mean, everybody knew about Abram's disobedience, so much so that he had to leave the entire country of Egypt. I mean, he got kicked out of the country. I mean, that's pretty bad.

[11 : 44] Joe's been kicked out of some places, but he's never been kicked out of the country, right? I mean, this is, right, this is bad stuff. This is public. Maybe you have some private secret sin that no one knows about.

And you need to repent. You've acted foolishly. You've done things that you ought not to do. You've spoken in ways you ought not to speak. Perhaps you've treated people in ways you ought not to treat them.

And the call of this text is immediately at the very beginning to repent and return back to the things that God has called us to do, to the ways in which He has called us to live.

But having repented does not mean that Abram is now without problems. Yes, the famine is apparently over. Moses makes no comment about that, but we have to assume that the famine is over because Abram returns to the land of Canaan with all of this livestock that he has now acquired in his time in Egypt.

And he has so much livestock, and Lot has so much livestock that they're not able to both be supported by the land. But that implies that they are able to be supported by the land by themselves. So the land is fruitful and producing again.

[12 : 51] And Lot doesn't have to travel down to Egypt to find a place for his cattle to graze, for his sheep to graze. He merely needs to stand on the mountaintop and look out, and he can see fertile lands.

So the famine at this point in time is over, though Moses doesn't specifically mention it. But the problems and the difficulties that Abram has to face are not over. They have not disappeared. Our obedience does not guarantee our protection from the problems that may come against us and surround us. That's true for Abram. That's true for us.

So let's take a look briefly at the problem that Abram actually is dealing with here. Take a look in verse 5. We are told, And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. Now this is the first time throughout the story of Abram that we've been given very much detail about Lot. We know that Lot is the son of Abram's brother. We know that Abram's brother died beforehand.

[13 : 49] But other than that, the only thing that we know about Lot is that he keeps following Abram. In fact, we're given these little tidbits. Little tidbits. And Lot was with him. And Lot went with him.

We're given those a few times in chapter 12. And even at the beginning of chapter 13, Lot went with him into the Negev in verse 1. Just over and over we're told, Lot was with him. Lot was with him. But we don't know much about Lot. We don't know what Lot's role was. You might even assume at the very beginning that Lot was perhaps a young boy. And maybe Abram had taken him under his wing.

And that's why Lot is with him. But we find out that's not the case at all. In fact, Lot has his own possessions. Lot is his own man. He's with Abram.

He's following Abram. He's a part of Abram's entourage, a part of Abram's troop, a part of Abram's broader household. But he has his own possessions. He has his own things.

[14 : 44] And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together.

And we're told there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. There was strife. There was contention. There was disagreement between them because there simply was not enough room for both of them.

What are we to make of that? What does the text mean when it says there wasn't enough room for them? Are we to believe that there's literally not enough grazing land for Abram's and Lot's livestock?

That there's just not possibly enough ground for them to eat the grass? I don't think that's the point at all. I don't think that's the point because we're given a bit of information that seems at first sight almost out of place.

Take a look at the end of verse 7. At that time, the Canaanites and the Perizzites were dwelling in the land. In other words, there are other people dwelling in the land. Abram doesn't seem to have a problem with the others who are dwelling in the land.

[15 : 52] Everyone else seems to be okay. But for whatever reason, Lot's herdsmen and Abram's herdsmen, they have strife between them. They cannot seem to get along and occupy the same basic area.

I don't think it's a matter of space. I think it's a matter of the fact that these people, over time, have grown frustrated and irritated with one another.

And they want their own space. They want to be separated out. Notice, though, the problem is not necessarily between Abram and Lot himself. It's between their herdsmen.

I don't think there's any reason for us to conclude right here that there's some great discord between Abram and his nephew Lot. But nevertheless, there's a problem that needs to be solved. Abram has to deal with this. What is he going to do if these two groups come to blows? What will happen? He cannot. He cannot let it take that course.

[16 : 53] But he's not without issues. He's not without problems. He's dealing with these things. He's got to face these sorts of things head on. We've seen him face problems already in the past and he's not dealt well with them in the land of Egypt.

Here, though, he will deal well with them. But I want us to just think for a moment on the fact that even though Abram returns to the land of promise, even though Abram repents and he goes back to the ways of worship and praise offered up to God, even though that's the case, he still has to deal with issues and problems.

He still has to deal with strife and arguments and difficulties. This shouldn't surprise us at all. I mean, from the very beginning of Abram's call, it was made clear that things could be difficult for him.

He's got to go to a land initially that he knows nothing about. That's difficult. That's hard. He's got to leave his father's household. That's difficult. That's a trial in and of itself.

Abram's entire journey is filled with trials. What changes is not the fact that Abram faces problems. What changes is how Abram responds to the problems. And you and I are going to have issues. [18:06] We're going to have trials. We're not simply because we've repented of our sin and we're walking with the Lord. Everything is not going to be smooth sailing. In fact, I want you to listen to Peter's words to us as he speaks about this exact thing in 1 Peter 4.

He says, Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you. Not if it comes upon you, but when it comes upon you to test you.

Don't be surprised as though something strange were happening to you. Trials are not a strange thing for the people of God. Difficulties are not a strange thing for the people of God.

They are a normal part of our life in a fallen world. The question is not whether or not we will face trials. The question is how we will respond in the midst of those trials.

And Abram's response here is the exact opposite of his response at the end of chapter 12. At the end of chapter 12, he responds foolishly.

[19:10] And here he responds with great wisdom. Notice what he says, verse 8. Then Abram said to Lot, Let there be no strife between you and me. He doesn't want this to reach the level where it creates a problem between the two of them.

Let it get to that point, Lot, between your herdsmen and my herdsmen. For we are kinsmen. Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me.

If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right. Or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left. This is a strange response from Abram.

It's strange in the culture in which he lives. Because he's the head of the family, at least the portion of the family that has moved to the land of Canaan. He's the oldest.

He's the head. He's the one who should be able to say, You go over here and I'll take this spot. He should have the right to make all of those decisions. It would have been expected of him in that culture.

[20:06] And yet, he doesn't make use of that right. His response is strange because he defers to Lot. Lot, I don't want there to be strife between us.

Pick any portion of the land that you want. If you go that way, I will go in the opposite direction. This is the response of wisdom. Last week was the response of foolishness, but this is the response of wisdom.

Listen to what we read in Proverbs 15. A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. Suppose that Abram had come with a harsh word for Lot.

You need to get your herdsmen under control. They need to get out of my herdsmen's space. You need to deal with these people. Are you a man or not, Lot? Can you handle your people or not? He could have come with that kind of harsh word.

In that culture, he had every right to do that. He does not. He comes humbly. He comes even meekly. And he says, you choose first, and I will come and choose afterwards.

[21:08] This is a model for us. If last week was a model of how not to deal with adversity, then this is a model of how to deal with adversity. We're going to face problems in the family of faith as well.

We're going to have strife sometimes between us. Or there might be strife between other members of the body, and that could very easily spill over to you and me. And there could be strife between us.

How are we supposed to deal with those things? I think we're supposed to follow the example of Abram. Defer to others. It's better to be wrongly treated than to insist on your own way.

In fact, I want you to hold your place in Genesis and turn all the way to the New Testament, to the book of Colossians. In Colossians chapter 3, the Apostle Paul says in verse 1, if you have been raised with Christ, here's what we're supposed to do if we belong to Christ.

Seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on the earth.

[22:18] In other words, don't be obsessed with what's immediately in front of you. Do not insist on getting what's yours and securing your own. Set your minds on things above, not on the things of this earth.

And there are practical ramifications of that kind of mindset. Verse 12, Put on then as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness and patience, bearing

with one another, and if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other.

As the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. We want to have harmony within the body of Christ. If we want to be able to live together and walk this problem-filled journey of life together as fellow members of the body of Christ, then we're going to have to follow the example of Abraham.

We're going to have to bear with one another. He has to bear with Lot and Lot's herdsmen. He has to not insist on his own way and his own rights. He has to step back.

[23 : 25] He has to take the path that love takes and insist that the other person be considered first rather than himself. That's what Abram does, and that's what we ought to do. Abram is in the right.

Abram has done nothing wrong. Abram ought to be able to choose what he wants. And sometimes you will be in the right. You will be right in certain circumstances when there's strife between you and someone else in the body of Christ.

You'll be right. And yet, the correct way to respond is to take a step back and not insist that you get your way or that things turn out for your betterment simply because you're in the right.

Because being in the right also means that you've got to pursue the right path when problems arise. And to pursue the right path when strife arises within the body of Christ is to step back and with a heart of compassion and forgiveness be willing to let others sometimes have their way.

Be willing to sometimes let things go in that direction rather than in this direction. Obviously, we're not talking about major doctrinal issues or major moral issues. We don't step back on that.

[24 : 43] We handle those sorts of things. But just issues of strife like we see here in the story of Abram and Lot when there's just contentious things that come up. We don't have to insist upon our own way. We can follow the example of Christ.

We can follow the example of Abram. We can take a step back. We can follow the way of wisdom that doesn't come with harsh words but provides instead a soft answer that will turn away wrath and anger rather than cause it to build up.

We can be like Abram. Or on the other hand, we can be like Lot. What should have been Lot's response in this situation?

His response probably should have been, Oh no, Abram. You're the head of this clan. Far be it from me to choose.

You choose. And I will go where you say you want me to go. That, of course, is not Lot's response. Take a look at verse 10. And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw that the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt in the direction of Zoor.

[25 : 55] And he makes a comment. This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley and Lot journeyed east. Thus they separated from each other.

Now I want you to take a look. We're going to put a map up here on the screen because I want you to be able to sort of mentally, visually orient yourselves to where we are in this particular story. So I've put Jerusalem on the map, which wasn't even known as Jerusalem at this point in time.

It's simply known as Salem. And that's going to be important in chapter 14 of Genesis. We're going to come across the king of Salem who's a mysterious figure but an important figure in the book of Genesis and the rest of Scripture.

So I put that up there simply for reference so that you'll know where Jerusalem is. That's a central point that you need to know. The large body of water over to the west is of course the Mediterranean Sea.

That's the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. And then in the middle of the bodily water there is the Dead Sea or the Salt Sea. And running into the Dead Sea is the Jordan River coming from, which is not on the map, the Sea of Galilee.

[26 : 59] And so we can see now here where things are happening. They've journeyed north from the Negev, which would be below on the south of this map. They've journeyed up north and they've stopped at Bethel, the place where Abraham stopped at the first.

And they set up an altar there. And you can sort of see on this map that that's along the central ridge of the mountains that run through the land of Canaan. So they're in a high spot.

In fact, as they look down towards the Jordan Valley, which is represented by the green there, as they look down there, they're looking down upon one of the lowest places on the face of the earth. Its elevation is incredibly low.

By the time you get to the Dead Sea, you're at the lowest point. So they're looking out as Lot stands, elevated and high up, probably upon a mountaintop, probably on a high hill. They look out and he's able to see the Jordan Valley, rich and fertile because of the river that runs through it and because it's in a valley and it receives all the other rainfall that slopes down into the valley.

[27 : 59] And so it's much more fertile than the more arid mountainous regions that they've been in. He looks to that area and he says, that's the area that I want. I will take that region.

Now, you can look and see in a moment, Abram's going to journey on and he's going to move down to Hebron. But at this point in time, he's in Bethel. Lot is going to go east.

Now, we don't know precisely where Lot settled. This area in green is, in fact, the Jordan Valley, the valley of the Jordan. That's that area.

But the location of the place where Lot will eventually set up his tent near the city of Sodom is unknown. We don't know exactly where these famous cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are that are mentioned here and they become much more prominent and important later on in Genesis.

But these two blue ovals, circles, represent the most probable locations of the city of Sodom. So it may be that Lot stayed right up in that area, in that very fertile area or it may be that he traveled down along the coast of the Dead Sea and wound up down there where there once was not the Dead Sea.

[29 : 08] You can see that oval down is in the bottom of the Dead Sea. Some scholars believe that the sea didn't extend to that point in Abram's lifetime. And then, in fact, Sodom and Gomorrah are now buried beneath the Dead Sea and that's why we can't find them.

We don't actually know the exact location of these cities. But Lot ends up in one of these two places. This is where he goes. But what his eyes see are a better land, a more fertile land.

And so he chooses the easy path. But notice where the easy path takes him. It takes him away from his uncle. It takes him away from Abram.

This in itself is not a good thing. Abram is not simply the head of their clan. Abram is the one to whom the promises have been given. Abram is the covenant head of the new people that God is in the process of creating.

And Lot journeys away from Abram. And, in fact, he crosses the Jordan River to get to the furthest edges of the promised land. In fact, at this point in time, we're going to see that it's not entirely clear whether or not the area to the east of the Jordan River is even included in the promised land.

[30 : 18] So for all Lot knows, he's traveled outside of the area of promise to Abram. And he's moved away from the one through whom all of the promises come. What Lot does is wise on the surface.

People at that time would have thought, that's wise, Lot. You've done the right thing. You've chosen fertile land. If you want your family to prosper, if you want your goods to multiply, that's where you need to be.

But it's foolish ultimately. Because he leaves the place and he leaves the one from whom the people will come. And he distances himself from the place of covenant blessing.

And, in fact, I think Moses wants us to notice that. I think Moses wants us to notice that as Lot moves away from Abram, he's moving toward wickedness.

Notice that little note in verse 13. Just after saying he moved his tent as far as Sodom, we are told, now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the Lord.

[31 : 19] He's moving away from the place of covenant promises and covenant blessing, and he's moving closer to the place of sin and wickedness. Now, we are never told that Lot participated in the wickedness and the sin of the city of Sodom.

We know that he does some foolish, sinful things later on as Sodom is destroyed, but we are not told that he actually participated in those things.

Lot's not a model character at any point in time, but we need to reckon with the fact, and we will as we come to consider Lot later on in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, we need to reckon with the fact that Peter refers to Lot as righteous Lot.

So I don't think we should conceive of Lot moving away from Abraham as a sign that Lot is altogether lost and without hope. That's not who he is. Lot does not represent, I think, so much a non-believer who's just outside the covenant promises in every way.

So much as he does is he represents a believer or someone who has been attached to and known the blessings of the covenant who yet then begins to waver and to float toward dangerous paths and dangerous places.

[32 : 34] things will not get better for Lot. He will need to be rescued by Abram in the next chapter. He will need to be rescued miraculously a few chapters from now by some angels.

There's some protection that comes in. Abram intercedes for Lot much in the same way that Christ intercedes for us and there is protection for him but he does not have the legacy of a person who lived their lives fully for the Lord.

In fact, what we will see is that his descendants become some of the greatest thorns in the side of the people of Israel. Not because Lot was altogether wicked and evil himself.

He's not. But because he moved away from the place of covenant blessing and covenant promises and he moved near and he lived too close to wickedness and sin.

And we do that. We have a tendency to think that we can live closely to sin and not be affected by it. That we can be right there next to it and it will have no impact upon us at all.

[33 : 50] But that's not true. There's all the difference in the world between Jesus eating with sinners and calling them to repentance and Lot living next to sinners in silence.

And so often what we do in our interaction with a fallen and sinful world is we dwell next to them in silence rather than call them to repentance.

Lot here is an example of foolish behavior. Of leaving behind the place of covenant blessing. Because blessing can only be had in and through the one to whom the promises have been given. Only in and through Abram can blessing be had. That's not just true in Genesis by the way. That's true today as well.

Hold your place. I want you to turn to the New Testament to the book of Galatians. And I want you to see how Paul talks about and defends the doctrine of justification his understanding of what it means to be saved by God Himself.

[35 : 01] In Galatians chapter 3 beginning in verse 7 here's what Paul says. Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.

So in Paul's mind you need to be a son of Abraham. You have to be. You must be connected with this one through whom covenant blessings come.

You must. And the good news of the gospel is that that happens through faith. That that doesn't happen merely by being related to Abraham or being a descendant of Abraham.

Oh no! That happens through faith in the promises that were given to Abraham and by trusting in those promises and the one through whom those promises are made sure and come into their full realization.

We become sons of Abraham. Notice verse 14. So that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles so that we might receive the promised spirit through faith.

[36 : 02] Through faith in Jesus the true seed and descendant and offspring of Abraham we become children of Abraham and therefore have access to the covenant promises given to Abraham which are ultimately fulfilled in people from every tribe, tongue, and people from every nation worshipping and praising God in the new heavens and new earth.

The promised land expands to the entire world recreated and purged of sin and wickedness and the people of God expands to include people from every tribe and tongue and people and nation but not until after it first contracts and becomes concentrated in the one man Christ Jesus who is himself the offspring of Abraham and who becomes himself the place where God's people meet their God.

There is a continual contraction as you go through the Old Testament of where God specifically meets with His people. in general in broad terms He gives them the promised land as the place of blessing.

But as the temple is built and the tabernacle no longer is movable that place where they actually meet with God contracts down to only Jerusalem and not only only Jerusalem but only in the temple courts and only in the specific holy of holies in the temple.

That's where the glory of God comes and dwells. It's contracting it's contracting it's becoming smaller until finally you have one come along who says that He is the temple of God.

[37 : 46] Destroy this temple and John tells us by that He meant His body and in three days I will rebuild it. The blessings contract down to a single individual in a single place in Christ so that they

might expand to the entire world and all the peoples on the face of the earth.

But in all of that we are being connected to Abram and the most foolish thing a person can do is to distance themselves from the one in whom blessings come through whom blessings come.

For Lot that was Abram for us it's Christ Himself. And in fact we could take a step further and say that because Christ is uniquely present where His people gather where two or more are gathered together there I will be in their midst we could expand that and say that when we distance ourselves from the body of Christ we begin to distance ourselves from the place and the people through whom God is pouring out blessings even now.

And it may be that some people remove themselves from the body of Christ because as John says they were never really of us or it may be that we become wayward at times and distance ourselves from the body of Christ because we're like Lot and we're foolish whatever the case may be we must never do like Lot and distance ourselves from the only place where we can find the fullness of God's blessings it's a foolish thing that Lot does Abram acts wisely because he's repented of his sin and he's returned back to praising God Lot acts foolishly and distances himself from the place of blessing and that will have major ramifications not only for him but for all of human history and all of his descendants but Abram's repentance and Abram's devotion to the praise of God brings him back to the place of blessing himself verse 14 the Lord said to Abram after Lot had separated from him lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are northward southward and eastward and westward now pause for a moment

Lot only looked eastward right he looked to one small place God directs Abram look in every direction because it's all going to be yours for all the land that you see verse 15 I will give to you and to your offspring forever and I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth so that if one can count the dust of the earth your offspring also can be counted arise walk through the length and breadth of the land for I will give it to you and we're told so Abram moved his tent and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre which are at Hebron and there here we are again and there he built an altar to the Lord you see you see the pattern that Abram is following here first repentance returning and then worshiping and praising

[41 : 17] God and then the confirmation from God of the promises of blessing that God has given to him and what is Abram's response it's once again worship why because God is at work as he has been from the beginning to create a people and give them a place for the sake of the praise of his name and every time that Abram pursues the praise of God God reminds him through you will come a people and to you I have given a place and every time that we turn and repent of our sins every time that we come and devote ourselves more purely and more fully to the worship of God God comes and he confirms the promises that he has given to us the great and vast promises that he has given to us that will be finally and ultimately fulfilled as we stand before

Christ and give him praise along with everyone from every along with people from every tribe and tongue and people and nation let's pray