

# The Father of Nations:

A Study of Abraham

Lesson Three: The Character of the Father of Nations

June 7, 2020

*“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.”*

**Jim Elliot**

**Opening Illustration:** It has been 3 months since our last session of our study of Abraham. It has been an odd, amazing and educational 3 months to say the least. Many of us have come to realize things that we could give up things we probably never thought we could. We survived. Sometimes you need to lose in order to gain. Sometimes you need to give up in order to get.

## I. Introduction/Review

### A. Where we have been

1. The Commissioning of the Father of Nations (Chapter 12:1-9)
2. The Compromise of the Father of Nations (Chapter 12:10-20; 20)

### B. To our topic for tonight—Abram’s integrity

1. Abram believes peace is more important than profit. Chapter 13
2. Abram believes integrity is more important than increase. Chapter 14:17-24

## II. The Character of the Father of Nations (Genesis 13 & Genesis 14:17-24)

### A. Abram’s Integrity in the face of splitter heirs (Chapter 13)

1. *The Blessing* (vv. 1-7)—God grants success and wealth to Abram and Lot.
  - a) Abram was traveling from Egypt into the land of Canaan.
  - b) Abram was very rich (v. 2)
  - c) Abram returned to the a place of former fellowship with God. (vv. 3-4). See Genesis 12:8
  - d) Lot was also very wealthy (v. 5)
  - e) The fact that they were both so very blessed led to practical issues:
    - (1) There was not enough land to support the size of both flocks. Not to mention that there were other people in this area (see v. 7) who were all vying for the same land.
    - (2) This scarcity led to conflict between Abram’s shepherds and Lot’s shepherds.
2. *The Break-up* (vv. 8-13)—God’s goodness separates Abram and Lot.
  - a) Abram approaches Lot as a peacemaker (v. 8).
  - b) Abram allows Lot to pick what land he took (v. 9).
  - c) Lot chose the most financially lucrative prospect.
    - (1) It is interesting, though, that this choice would ultimately lead to:
      - (a) Lot’s loss of integrity—See 19:30-35
      - (b) Lot’s progeny becoming the enemies of Israel—See 19:36-38
    - (2) It is also interesting that we are told about Sodom (v. 13).
      - (a) This is a foreshadowing that we will come back to in chapter 19
3. *The Bonus* (vv. 14-18)—God’s grace will supply Abram, not only with wealth, but with descendants.
  - a) It is important to note that God said this to Abram AFTER Lot left.
    - (1) Remember, at this point it is assumed that Lot would be the heir.
    - (2) God had promised Abram all these descendants. Will He deliver on this?
  - b) It is important to remember what God promised Abram (vv. 14-17):
    - (1) God promised Abram the land of Canaan (vv. 14b-15)
    - (2) God promised Abram descendants too numerous to count (v. 16).
  - c) It is important to note how Abram responded
    - (1) At God’s command, Abram to take a tour of his land (v. 17)

(2) Abram made a second altar to the LORD (v. 18)

**B. Abram's integrity when faced with a king's ransom (Chapter 14:17-24)**

1. Abram meets with 2 kings (v. 17)
  - a) The king of Sodom
  - b) Melchizedek, the king of Salem
  
2. Melchizedek
  - a) His name means, "My king of righteousness."
  - b) He is the king of Salem
    - (1) This is later Jerusalem.
    - (2) This word "Salem" means peace. (Compare Hebrews 7:2)
  - c) He brings bread and wine with him.
    - (1) Coincidence? Maybe, but I doubt it.
  - d) He blesses God and Abram
  
3. The king of Sodom
  - a) This must be a new king, after the former king died in v. 14:10
  
4. How are the king of Sodom and the king of Salem (Melchizedek) different?
  - a) The king of Sodom tells Abram to take all the spoil for himself. Melchizedek receives a tithe from Abram.
  - b) The king of Sodom wants to buy praise for Abram's victory. Melchizedek simply praises God.
  - c) The king of Sodom gets a definitive rejection. Melchizedek does not.

**C. What is Melchizedek doing in this passage? Why is he here?**

1. Is Melchizedek and Old Testament appearance of Jesus?
  - a) No, but he is a type, a symbolic precursor to Jesus.
  - b) Hebrews 7:3 seems to make this point clearly.
    - (1) Melchizedek was "made like the Son of God."
  
2. Melchizedek is here to embody Abram's choice here.
  - a) Abram could accept the offering of the king of Sodom.  
**Or,**
  - b) Abraham could make an offering to the king of peace.
  - c) It doesn't seem that Abraham even paused to consider it. His integrity remained intact.
  - d) When you put it this way, it sounds easy, but is it?

**III. The Conclusions—What do we learn from this?**

**A. We learn that Abram was a man of integrity, free from the love of money.**

1. **1 Timothy 6:10** For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.
  
2. **Hebrews 13:5** *Make sure that* your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"

**B. We learn that sometimes you have to give up to get.**

1. The call to follow God is a call to sacrifice.
  - a) <sup>NAU</sup> **Matthew 13:44** "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid *again*; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.