

Verses 10–26

Here is a genealogy, or list of names, ending in Abram, the friend of God, and thus leading towards Christ, the promised Seed, who was the son of Abram. Nothing is left upon record but their names and ages; the Holy Ghost seeming to hasten through them to the history of Abram. How little do we know of those that are gone before us in this world, even of those that lived in the same places where we live, as we likewise know little of those who now live in distant places! We have enough to do to mind our own work. When the earth began to be peopled, men's lives began to shorten; this was the wise disposal of Providence.

Verses 27–32

Here begins the story of Abram, whose name is famous in both Testaments. Even the children of Eber had become worshippers of false gods. Those who are through grace, heirs of the land of promise, ought to remember what was the land of their birth; what was their corrupt and sinful state by nature. Abram's brethren were, Nahor, out of whose family both Isaac and Jacob had their wives; and Haran, the father of Lot, who died before his father. Children cannot be sure that they shall outlive their parents. Haran died in Ur, before the happy removal of the family out of that idolatrous country. It concerns us to hasten out of our natural state, lest death surprise us in it. We here read of Abram's departure out of Ur of the Chaldees, with his father Terah, his nephew Lot, and the rest of his family, in obedience to the call of God. This chapter leaves them about mid-way between Ur and Canaan, where they dwelt till Terah's death. Many reach to Charran, and yet fall short of Canaan; they are not far from the kingdom of God, and yet never come thither.

Chapter 12

Chapter Outline

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| God calls Abram, and blesses him with a promise of Christ. | (1–3) |
| Abram departs from Haran. | (4, 5) |
| He journeys through Canaan, and worships God in that land. | (6–9) |
| Abram is driven by a famine into Egypt, He feigns his wife to be his sister. | (10–20) |

Verses 1–3

God made choice of Abram, and singled him out from among his fellow-idolaters, that he might reserve a people for himself, among whom his true worship might be maintained till the coming

of Christ. From henceforward Abram and his seed are almost the only subject of the history in the Bible. Abram was tried whether he loved God better than all, and whether he could willingly leave all to go with God. His kindred and his father's house were a constant temptation to him, he could not continue among them without danger of being infected by them. Those who leave their sins, and turn to God, will be unspeakable gainers by the change. The command God gave to Abram, is much the same with the gospel call, for natural affection must give way to Divine grace. Sin, and all the occasions of it, must be forsaken; particularly bad company. Here are many great and precious promises. All God's precepts are attended with promises to the obedient. 1. I will make of thee a great nation. When God took Abram from his own people, he promised to make him the head of another people. 2. I will bless thee. Obedient believers shall be sure to inherit the blessing. 3. I will make thy name great. The name of obedient believers shall certainly be made great. 4. Thou shalt be a blessing. Good men are the blessings of their country. 5. I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee. God will take care that none are losers, by any service done for his people. 6. In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Jesus Christ is the great blessing of the world, the greatest that ever the world possessed. All the true blessedness the world is now, or ever shall be possessed of, is owing to Abram and his posterity. Through them we have a Bible, a Saviour, and a gospel. They are the stock on which the Christian church is grafted.

Verses 4, 5

Abram believed that the blessing of the Almighty would make up for all he could lose or leave behind, supply all his wants, and answer and exceed all his desires; and he knew that nothing but misery would follow disobedience. Such believers, being justified by faith in Christ, have peace with God. They hold on their way to Canaan. They are not discouraged by the difficulties in their way, nor drawn aside by the delights they meet with. Those who set out for heaven must persevere to the end. What we undertake, in obedience to God's command, and in humble attendance on his providence, will certainly succeed, and end with comfort at last. Canaan was not, as other lands, a mere outward possession, but a type of heaven, and in this respect the patriarchs so earnestly prized it.

Verses 6–9

Abram found the country peopled by Canaanites, who were bad neighbours. He journeyed, going on still. Sometimes it is the lot of good men to be unsettled, and often to remove into various states. Believers must look on themselves as strangers and sojourners in this world, Heb 11:8, 13, 14. But observe how much comfort Abram had in God. When he could have little satisfaction in converse with the Canaanites whom he found there, he had abundance of pleasure in communion with that God, who brought him thither, and did not leave him. Communion with God is kept up by the word and by prayer. God reveals himself and his favours to his people by degrees; before, he had promised to show Abram this land, now, to give it to him: as grace is growing, so is comfort. It should seem, Abram understood it also as a grant of a better land, of which this was a type; for he looked for a heavenly country, Heb 11:16. As soon as Abram was got to Canaan, though he was but a stranger and sojourner there, yet he set up, and kept up, the worship of God in his family. He not only minded the ceremonial part of religion, the offering of sacrifice; but he made conscience

of seeking his God, and calling on his name; that spiritual sacrifice with which God is well pleased. He preached concerning the name of the Lord; he taught his family and neighbours the knowledge of the true God, and his holy religion. The way of family worship is a good old way, no new thing, but the ancient usage of the saints. Abram was rich, and had a numerous family, was now unsettled, and in the midst of enemies; yet, wherever he pitched his tent, he built an altar: wherever we go, let us not fail to take our religion along with us.

Verses 10–20

There is no state on earth free from trials, nor any character free from blemishes. There was famine in Canaan, the glory of all lands, and unbelief, with the evils it ever brings, in Abram the father of the faithful. Perfect happiness and perfect purity dwell only in heaven. Abram, when he must for a time quit Canaan, goes to Egypt, that he might not seem to look back, and meaning to tarry there no longer than needful. There Abram dissembled his relation to Sarai, equivocated, and taught his wife and his attendants to do so too. He concealed a truth, so as in effect to deny it, and exposed thereby both his wife and the Egyptians to sin. The grace Abram was most noted for, was faith; yet he thus fell through unbelief and distrust of the Divine providence, even after God had appeared to him twice. Alas, what will become of weak faith, when strong faith is thus shaken! If God did not deliver us, many a time, out of straits and distresses which we bring ourselves into, by our own sin and folly, we should be ruined. He deals not with us according to our deserts. Those are happy chastisements that hinder us in a sinful way, and bring us to our duty, particularly to the duty of restoring what we have wrongfully taken or kept. Pharaoh's reproof of Abram was very just: What is this that thou hast done? How unbecoming a wise and good man! If those who profess religion, do that which is unfair and deceptive, especially if they say that which borders upon a lie, they must expect to hear of it; and they have reason to thank those who will tell them of it. The sending away was kind. Pharaoh was so far from any design to kill Abram, as he feared, that he took particular care of him. We often perplex ourselves with fears which are altogether groundless. Many a time we fear where no fear is. Pharaoh charged his men not to hurt Abram in any thing. It is not enough for those in authority, that they do not hurt themselves; they must keep their servants and those about them from doing hurt.

Chapter 13

Chapter Outline

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| Abram returns out of Egypt with great riches. | (1–4) |
| Strife between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot. Abram gives Lot his choice of the country. | (5–9) |
| Lot chooses to dwell at Sodom. | (10–13) |

God renews his promise to Abram, who removes to Hebron.

(14–18)

Verses 1–4

Abram was very rich: he was very heavy, so the Hebrew word is; for riches are a burden; and they that will be rich, do but load themselves with thick clay, Hab 2:6. There is a burden of care in getting riches, fear in keeping them, temptation in using them, guilt in abusing them, sorrow in losing them, and a burden of account at last to be given up about them. Yet God in his providence sometimes makes good men rich men, and thus God's blessing made Abram rich without sorrow, Pr 10:22. Though it is hard for a rich man to get to heaven, yet in some cases it may be, Mr 10:23, 24. Nay, outward prosperity, if well managed, is an ornament to piety, and an opportunity for doing more good. Abram removed to Bethel. His altar was gone, so that he could not offer sacrifice; but he called on the name of the Lord. You may as soon find a living man without breath as one of God's people without prayer.

Verses 5–9

Riches not only afford matter for strife, and are the things most commonly striven about; but they also stir up a spirit of contention, by making people proud and covetous. Mine and thine are the great make-bates of the world. Poverty and labour, wants and wanderings, could not separate Abram and Lot; but riches did so. Bad servants often make a great deal of mischief in families and among neighbours, by their pride and passion, lying, slandering, and talebearing. What made the quarrel worse was, that the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt then in the land. The quarrels of professors are the reproach of religion, and give occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. It is best to keep the peace, that it be not broken; but the next best is, if differences do happen, with all speed to quench the fire that is broken out. The attempt to stay this strife was made by Abram, although he was the elder and the greater man. Abram shows himself to be a man of cool spirit, that had the command of his passion, and knew how to turn away wrath by a soft answer. Those that would keep the peace, must never render railing for railing. And of a condescending spirit; he was willing to beseech even his inferior to be at peace. Whatever others are for, the people of God must be for peace. Abram's plea for peace was very powerful. Let the people of the land contend about trifles; but let not us fall out, who know better things, and look for a better country. Professors of religion should be most careful to avoid contention. Many profess to be for peace who will do nothing towards it: not so Abram. When God condescends to beseech us to be reconciled, we may well beseech one another. Though God had promised Abram to give this land to his seed, yet he offered an equal or better share to Lot, who had not an equal right; and he will not, under the protection of God's promise, act hardly to his kinsman. It is noble to be willing to yield for peace' sake.

Verses 10–13

Abram having offered Lot the choice, he at once accepted it. Passion and selfishness make men rude. Lot looked to the goodness of the land; therefore he doubted not that in such a fruitful soil

he should certainly thrive. But what came of it? Those who, in choosing relations, callings, dwellings, or settlements, are guided and governed by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, or the pride of life, cannot expect God's presence or blessing. They are commonly disappointed even in that which they principally aim at. In all our choices this principle should rule, That is best for us, which is best for our souls. Lot little considered the badness of the inhabitants. The men of Sodom were impudent, daring sinners. This was the iniquity of Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness, Eze 16:49. God often gives great plenty to great sinners. It has often been the vexatious lot of good men to live among wicked neighbours; and it must be the more grievous, if, as Lot here, they have brought it upon themselves by a wrong choice.

Verses 14–18

Those are best prepared for the visits of Divine grace, whose spirits are calm, and not ruffled with passion. God will abundantly make up in spiritual peace, what we lose for preserving neighbourly peace. When our relations are separated from us, yet God is not. Observe also the promises with which God now comforted and enriched Abram. Of two things he assures him; a good land, and a numerous issue to enjoy it. The prospects seen by faith are more rich and beautiful than those we see around us. God bade him walk through the land, not to think of fixing in it, but expect to be always unsettled, and walking through it to a better Canaan. He built an altar, in token of his thankfulness to God. When God meets us with gracious promises, he expects that we should attend him with humble praises. In outward difficulties, it is very profitable for the true believer to mediate on the glorious inheritance which the Lord has for him at the last.

Chapter 14

Chapter Outline

The battle of the kings, Lot is taken prisoner.	(1–12)
Abram rescues Lot.	(13–16)
Melchizedek blesses Abram.	(17–20)
Abram restores the spoil.	(21–24)

Verses 1–12

The wars of nations make great figure in history, but we should not have had the record of this war if Abram and Lot had not been concerned. Out of covetousness, Lot had settled in fruitful, but wicked Sodom. Its inhabitants were the most ripe for vengeance of all the descendants of Canaan. The invaders were from Chaldea and Persia, then only small kingdoms. They took Lot among the rest, and his goods. Though he was righteous, and Abram's brother's son, yet he was with the rest in this trouble. Neither our own piety, nor our relation to the favourites of Heaven, will be our security when God's judgments are abroad. Many an honest man fares the worse for his wicked

neighbours: it is our wisdom to separate, or at least to distinguish ourselves from them, 2Co 6:17. So near a relation of Abram should have been a companion and a disciple of Abram. If he chose to dwell in Sodom, he must thank himself if he share in Sodom's losses. When we go out of the way of our duty, we put ourselves from under God's protection, and cannot expect that the choice made by our lusts, should end to our comfort. They took Lot's goods; it is just with God to deprive us of enjoyments, by which we suffer ourselves to be deprived of the enjoyment of him.

Verses 13–16

Abram takes this opportunity to give a real proof of his being truly friendly to Lot. We ought to be ready to succour those in distress, especially relations and friends. And though others may have been wanting in their duty to us, yet we must not neglect our duty to them. Abram rescued the captives. As we have opportunity, we must do good to all.

Verses 17–20

Melchizedek is spoken of as a king of Salem, supposed to be the place afterwards called Jerusalem, and it is generally thought that he was only a man. The words of the apostle, Heb 7:3, state only, that the sacred history has said nothing of his ancestors. The silence of the Scriptures on this, is to raise our thoughts to Him, whose generation cannot be declared. Bread and wine were suitable refreshment for the weary followers of Abram; and it is remarkable that Christ appointed the same as the memorials of his body and blood, which are meat and drink indeed to the soul. Melchizedek blessed Abram from God. He blessed God from Abram. We ought to give thanks for other's mercies as for our own. Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, is the Mediator both of our prayers and praises, and not only offers up ours, but his own for us. Abram gave him the tenth of the spoils, Heb 7:4. When we have received some great mercy from God, it is very fit we should express our thankfulness by some special act of pious charity. Jesus Christ, our great Melchisedek, is to have homage done him, and to be humbly acknowledged as our King and Priest; not only the tithe of all, but all we have, must be given up to him.

Verses 21–24

Observe the king of Sodom's grateful offer to Abram, Give me the souls, and take thou the substance. Gratitude teaches us to recompense to the utmost of our power, those that have undergone fatigues, run hazards, and been at expense for our service and benefit. Abram generously refused this offer. He accompanies his refusal with a good reason, Lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich: which would reflect upon the promise and covenant of God, as if He would not have enriched Abraham without the spoils of Sodom. The people of God must, for their credit's sake, take heed of doing any thing that looks mean or mercenary, or that savors of covetousness and self-seeking. Abraham can trust the Possessor of Heaven and earth to provide for him.