



**Sunday January 25, 2015**  
**The Life of Abraham (Part-2) : Journeying into the promise**

We are learning how to journey with God into the promise He has for our lives, by considering the life of Abraham and how he journeyed with God.

Last week we discussed elements on Answering God's Call as God invites us to journey into His purposes for our lives.

Today, we take a look at Abram's life to discover lessons on how he journeyed with God into the promise God had for his life.

***#1, He established his altar of worship to maintain his relationship with God***

We see something very interesting in Abram's life. Everywhere he went, he set up an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord, that is, he worshipped and sought the Lord.

**Genesis 12:7-8**

**7 Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.**

**8 And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD.**

**Genesis 13:3,4**

**3 And he went on his journey from the South as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai,**

**4 to the place of the altar which he had made there at first. And there Abram called on the name of the LORD.**

**Genesis 13:18 Then Abram moved his tent, and went and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built an altar there to the LORD.**

We see him build an altar to the Lord in Genesis 15, when God established a covenant with him. In Genesis 21:33 he calls on the Lord when he settles down in Beersheba, the land of the Philistines. In Genesis 22:9 Abraham builds an altar to offer up Isaac, and in the process receives a revelation of God as Jehovah Jireh.



The altar was his place where he encountered God, his life was realigned, his faith strengthened, his vision renewed and his revelation of God kept fresh and new.

Abraham is called a 'friend of God' James 2:23

One of the key things we need to do as we continue in this journey of faith, into seeing God's promises fulfilled, is to establish our "altar" before the Lord through all seasons and through all phases of life. By "altar" we mean our time and place of encountering, communion and fellowship with God. This is how we receive the renewing, reviving and realigning as we journey in the promise.

## ***#2, He kept strife out of his life, even if he had to be disadvantaged***

Abram's nephew Lot accompanied them initially, until we see that there was strife between their servants (Genesis 13:6-12).

### **Genesis 13:8-11**

**8 So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren.**

**9 Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left."**

**10 And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar.**

**11 Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other.**

Even though he parted ways he later stepped in to rescue Lot, his nephew when he was captured by some tribal kings (Genesis 14:12-16).

As we make our journey of faith, we must make every effort to keep strife out of our lives. Strife opens the door to all kinds of evil work. Getting into strife with others robs us of our energy, breaks our focus on what God has called us to, and affects our relationship with God.

Sometimes we stay out of strife, but let our hearts be offended. An offense is an ill-feeling, a resentment, a grudge, bitterness, etc. that you carry in your heart towards someone. An offended heart, usually says and does things that offends others. Carrying an offense in your heart, hurts you.



As we make our journey of faith, lets us keep our hearts free of offense (being offended).

### **#3, He honored God so that there would be no question as to who blessed his life**

In Genesis 14, we read about 4 tribal kings who capture Sodom and Gomorrah Lot, and also take Abram's nephew Lot who lived in Sodom and take all their goods away.

Abraham arms his servants and goes after these kings, and gets Lot free and regains all the goods as well as the spoils from the enemy.

#### **Genesis 14:18-20**

**18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High.**

**19 And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;**

**20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all.**

As Abram returns from battler, Melchizedek king of Salem meets him with bread and wine. Melchizedek was king and priest.

The writer of Hebrews expands further on this in Hebrews 7:1-10. We are not getting into the details of the Melchizedek priesthood, other than to mention that he is a type of Christ, who is the eternal King and Priest.

What we do want to note here is that Abram gave a tithe of the spoils to Melchizedek, the priest of God. This was his way of honoring God for the victory and the spoils he had gained in battle.

Continuing on in that same incident, we read:

#### **Genesis 14:21-24**

**21 Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself."**

**22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth,**

**23 that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich'—**

**24 except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion."**



He refused to take the wealth that belonged to the king of Sodom, and instead declared the Lord, Most High to be His provider.

Much later when Abraham was 137 years old in Genesis 23, when Sarah died (Sarah was 127 yrs), and even when the tribes in Hebron offered land for burial at no cost, Abraham chose to buy the land from them and then use it as a burial place for Sarah.

In all this Abram demonstrated his desire to honor God, so that it was evident that God had blessed Abram.

**Genesis 24:1 Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.**

Abraham's servant made this statement:

**Genesis 24:34, 35**

**34 So he said, "I am Abraham's servant.**

**35 The LORD has blessed my master greatly, and he has become great; and He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys.**

In our journey of faith, let us live in a manner that honor's God, so that there can be no question as to who has blessed our lives.

***#4, He made mistakes but God still carried him through to seeing His purpose fulfilled***

Abram made several mistakes in his journey of faith. Some that are recorded for us:

*Lying about Sarai*

Twice Abram became fearful and lied about his wife Sarai. First time in Egypt (Genesis 12:10-13) and later another time when he met Abimelech king of Gerar (Genesis 20:1-18). Imagine the man who would later become the 'Father of faith' was fearful and cowardly.

*It is interesting to note that God had man's flaws and weaknesses recorded for us in His Word. God reveals to us His heart, that He is a God who works with us inspite of our human frailty and flaws.*

*Unbelief that led to birthing Ishmael through Hagar*

Ten years into the promise and Abram had no child. Sarai suggested that Abram have a child through her maidservant, suggesting that



maybe that was what God meant (Genesis 16:1-16). Ishmael was born when Abram was 86 years old (Genesis 16:16).

Sarai later dealt harshly with Hagar and sent her away.

In Galatians 4:22-31 Paul the apostle wrote about this. We will look at two important statements made by Paul:

**Galatians 4:23, 29**

**23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise,**

**29 But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now.**

What we birth out of the flesh becomes a hindrance to what God desires to birth of the Spirit.

In our journey of faith, we will make mistakes. But we always return to God, have Him realign us and press forward. We keep in mind that God is greater than our mistakes.

However, in our journey of faith, we must be careful not to attempt to fulfill the promise by our flesh. For what we birth of the flesh will only hinder what God desires to birth of the Spirit.

***#5, God reassured him of the promise in his moments of weakness***

Another interesting thing in Abram's life is that God repeatedly meets with Him to reassure him of the promise He has made.

***Covenant : the seal of the promise***

In Genesis 15:1-21 Abram is wondering about God's promise. At this time God establishes His covenant with Abram. Up until this time, God has given Abram the promise. But at this time he ratifies ("makes it official") the promise by establishing a covenant.

In our day, when two parties enter into some sort of agreement, they draw up a legal document or contract that has the terms of their agreement and then both parties sign it. In Old Testament times, when two parties got into any kind of agreement, e.g. an agreement to sell livestock, property, etc. they "cut a covenant" to seal the agreement. Both the parties would bring the same set of animals and cut them down the middle in two equal pieces. One person would lay his half of



the animals on one side, and the other person would lay the corresponding half of his set of animals on the other side. Birds were not cut, but each laid his bird adjacent to each other. Then the two people would stand on either ends of the line holding a torch in one hand. One would pass through the cut animals declaring his promises (side) of the agreement. After that, starting at the other end, the other person would pass through the cut animals declaring his promises (side) of the agreement. With this the covenant was sealed. In cutting an covenant in this manner both parties were essentially stating that they would lose their own life if they did not keep the covenant.

Interestingly in Genesis 15, God Himself passed through the pieces that Abram laid out and announced His promises. Abram did not pass through the pieces. Essentially, God was stating that this covenant depended solely on Him to be established.

*Covenant : A new identity, a new sign*

Later in Genesis 17, God reassures Abram of His Covenant.

He then tells them to do two things:

1, change their names, and call themselves by their new names (Genesis 17:4,5,15,16), indicating a new identity, which in the New Testament indicates our new identity in Christ, and we declare who we are in Christ.

2, circumcision, a sign of the Covenant (Genesis 17:10-11), which in the New Testament is the circumcision of the heart (Romans 2:29).

*Covenant : More than blessing*

Later in Genesis 17:17-21, still in unbelief, Abraham ask God to consider Ishmael as his heir.

**Genesis 17:17-21**

**17 Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Shall a child be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"**

**18 And Abraham said to God, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!"**

**19 Then God said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him.**

**20 And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation.**

**21 But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year."**



In essence God says, I will bless Ishmael, but my covenant is with Isaac. There is a difference between receiving God's blessing and being in covenant with God.

*In our journey of faith we must remember that we are a people in covenant with God, and God is completely committed to us. He will not fail on His side of the covenant.*

*As people in covenant with God, we walk with a new heart and a new identity. Everything we do, must be based on who we are in our inner man, new creation and our new identity of who we are in Christ. We live based on this. We speak based on this.*

*However, we must remember, that God's covenant establishes relationship and is really an invitation to intimate fellowship. God's covenant is not merely a contract for spiritual transaction, but a place of fellowship where everything is shared.*

### **#6, He grew into a place of resolute faith in God**

Finally, through all the mistakes, moments of weakness, and unbelief, God brings Abraham and Sarah to a place of faith.

#### **Romans 4:17-21**

**17 (as it is written, "I HAVE MADE YOU A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS") in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did;**

**18 who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE."**

**19 And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb.**

**20 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,**

**21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.**

**Hebrews 11:11 By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.**

*In our journey of faith, we must remember to keep our eyes on Jesus. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:1). He will perfect our faith and see us into the fulfillment of His promises.*



Wrap up:

#1, He established his altar of worship to maintain his relationship with God

#2, He kept strife out of his life, even if he had to be disadvantaged

#3, He honored God so that there would be no question as to who blessed his life

#4, He made mistakes but God still carried him through to seeing His purpose fulfilled

#5, God reassured him of the promise in his moments of weakness

#6, He grew into a place of resolute faith in God





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**YOUTUBE:** <https://youtube.com/allpeopleschurchbangalore>

**WEBSITE:** <https://apcwo.org/live>

Our other websites and free resources:

**CHURCH:** <https://apcwo.org>

**FREE SERMONS:** <https://apcwo.org/resources/sermons>

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**DAILY DEVOTIONALS:** <https://apcwo.org/resources/daily-devotional>

**JESUS CHRIST:** <https://examiningjesus.com>

**BIBLE COLLEGE:** <https://apcbiblecollege.org>

**E-LEARNING:** <https://apcbiblecollege.org/elearn>

**WEEKEND SCHOOLS:** <https://apcwo.org/ministries/weekend-schools>

**COUNSELING:** <https://chrysalislife.org>

**MUSIC:** <https://apcmusic.org>

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