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**SG020108**

## **The Whole Counsel of God - Genesis 12-13**

Got questions? Email Pastor Jason at [jasonduff7@gmail.com](mailto:jasonduff7@gmail.com)

(You can download this message as a pod cast by searching Jason Duff on I-Tunes)

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### **Introduction & Overview of the Section**

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#### **Introduction**

Over the next two weeks we are going to begin to look at the life of Abraham. If you use the amount of chapters in the Bible as a standard of how important someone's life was to God and to the Kingdom of God, no one except Jesus compares with the importance of Abraham. We will spend the next two weeks unpacking the following outline.

#### **Sailing the Seven "C's" of Abraham's Life – Genesis 12-17**

##### **#1 – His Call – Genesis 12:1-9**

Abraham began his life as an idol-worshipping pagan from Ur of Chaldeans in the region of Babylon. He was nowhere with God until the call of God came upon his life. After the call of God Abraham was never the same.

##### **#2 – His Compromise – Genesis 12:10-20**

The Bible is honest about its heroes. Instead of staying in the land and trusting God or even asking God what he should do in light of the famine, Abraham took things into his own hands, headed down to Egypt and the ramifications of that would follow the rest of his life.

##### **#3 – His Consequences – Genesis 13**

Although more consequences would come later, in chapter 13 we see some initial problems due to the venture down to Egypt. First of all the wealth that was gained made it difficult for Abraham and his nephew Lot to have enough room for their flocks to eat, causing a split up. Secondly Lot chooses to go toward Sodom because it reminded him of Egypt.

##### **#4 – His Courage – Genesis 14**

##### **#5 – His Comfort – Genesis 15**

##### **#6 – His Carnality – Genesis 16**

##### **#7 – His Covenant – Genesis 17**

We will cover the last four points of our outline next week.

#### **Key Issues or Words**

**"Terebinth trees of Moreh" (12:6)** – The Terebinth trees were places of pagan worship, where sacrifices were made to false gods. Abraham goes to this dark place and builds an altar and no doubt shares about God, what a great example for you and me.

**"heavy" (12:10 & 13:2)** – The scriptures uses the same Hebrew word, that basically means in English 'heavy' to describe the severity the famine and the amount of wealth Abraham was given in Egypt. This is a Hebrew literary device used to link two ideas. The decision of Abraham to do things his own way in the 'heavy' trial brought about 'heavy' wealth that will cause problems later in the story.

## **Additional Notes**

(unless you want to stay 'til 10, we won't get to this)

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**Genesis 12:16** – “**He treated Abraham well for her sake...giving him female donkeys and camels**” – Abraham at first seems like he is being blessed by the Pharaoh of Egypt, and without the consequences that would follow, he really was. The description of the gifts Abraham received here in Genesis 12:16 is telling. Scholars shed insight that ‘female donkeys’ were easier to train and easier to ride so they were the BMWs of transportation of the day. ‘Camels’ at this time in history were just coming into prominence as modes of transportation. So these gifts were the equivalent today of Abraham receiving the nicest car and latest motor home equipped with a flat screen TV and an I-phone.

**Genesis 13:9** – “**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.**” – Abraham here in chapter 13 is once again showing great trust in the Lord after some lapses in faith in chapter 12. He is letting Lot take whatever part of the land he desires; knowing God has promised the land to him (Abraham) and to his descendants. I believe Abraham thought he could give the land away 100 times and God would still do what He had promised. What a great lesson for you and me. Has the Lord made you a promise, then trust Him to deliver! Sometimes we think we have to help the Lord out and be pushy to get our way so the Lord’s promises will come to pass. Let’s learn from Abraham, that we can trust the Lord, be mature, prefer others and guess what? We will not miss out on God’s perfect will for us. What a great truth!

## **Going Deeper**

(think it over yourself or discuss with the family)

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### **Questions to ask the younger kids....**

Read Genesis 12:1-4 – It took great faith for Abraham to obey the Lord and move, especially when God didn’t even tell him where he was going? Did God bless Abraham for obeying? What can you learn when it comes time for you to obey the Lord when you don’t understand? What ways does God call you to obey in your life right now?

### **Questions for the rest of us...**

What do you think motivated Lot to choose to live near Sodom? Did it work out well for him? What advantages were there for Lot to move to Sodom? What disadvantages were there for Lot to move to Sodom? What can you learn from Lot decision?

### **Further study...**

What lessons can we learn from Abraham about being a man or a father from these chapters? What lessons can we learn from Sarah about being a woman or a wife from these chapters?

## **Homework 4 Next Week – Genesis 14-17**

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Read Genesis 14-17 – Notice the highs and lows of Abraham’s life. What can learn from the highs? What can we learn from the lows?

W020107 – 10/17/12

## Genesis 12-13

### “Sailing the Seven ‘C’s’ of Abraham’s life”

#### Introduction

- Tonight we are going to continue our study in the foundational book of the Old Testament and really all of the Bible
  - Remember the content is not hard to remember, because the title says it all

#### The word Genesis means “beginnings”

- And truly so many things in scripture have their beginning in the book of Genesis
  - The universe
  - Life in general
  - Man, marriage
  - Sin and evil
  - Language, government, nations
  - Specifically we will see the nation of Israel
- In fact understanding that this book means and is about beginnings really is a good way to divide up our look at this book as you can see in your book intro sheet

#### Outline for the Book of Genesis

##### Chapters 1-11 – The Beginning of all nations

- Chapters 1-2 – The Creation
- Chapter 3 - 5 – The Fall
- Chapter 6-9 – The Flood
- Chapters 10-11 – The Tables of Nations

##### Chapters 12-50 – The Beginning of the Jewish nation

- Chapters 12-23 – Abraham
- Chapters 24-27 – Isaac
- Chapters 28-36 – Jacob
- Chapters 37-50 – Joseph

#### Tonight we begin that second section of the book of Genesis as God tells us the story of the Beginning of the Jewish Nation

- This story of the beginning of the Jewish nation has even great ramification
  - Because it is not just the story of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – but its leading us to Jesus

#### Now for you note takers as we start to take on the Life of Abraham this week and next we are going to be looking at 7 “C’s” of Abraham Life

- you have heard about sailing the seven seas
  - well in Abraham life we are going to sail the 7 “C’s” not sea as in Ocean, but “C’s”

#### Sailing the 7 “C’s of Abraham’s Life

#1 – His Call – Genesis 12:1-9

#2 – His Compromise – Genesis 12:10-20

### **#3 – His Consequences – Genesis 13**

### **#4 – His Courage – Genesis 14**

### **#5 – His Comfort – Genesis 15**

### **#6 – His Carnality – Genesis 16**

### **#7 – His Covenant – Genesis 17**

- We will work our way through about half of these tonight and then pick the rest up as we continue the study of Abraham's

### **Sailing the 7 “C’s of Abraham’s Life**

#### **#1 – His Call – Genesis 12:1-9**

#### **As Genesis is unfolding you have God beginning with two people, two people who sin in the garden**

- those two people multiplied and so did their sin
  - until the time of Noah when everyone's, other than Noah, thoughts were evil continually
  - So God destroyed the world with a flood and really started over with Noah and his family

#### **As time went on and nations began to form again, still the people were in rebellion to the Lord**

- and so God started dealing with one man, one man he would make into one nation
  - A nation he would bless, and eventually bring the Messiah from
  - But in hopes that the world would see how blessed the children of Israel were and want to know their God

#### **But that Nation began by God calling one man**

- one man who would become known as Abraham
  - The friend of God
  - The Father of the Faith
- But Abraham's story didn't start out that way
  - When we meet him, his name is Abram and he is living in a country known as the Ur of the Chaldeans
  - A nation known for its wickedness and worship of the moon god Nanna – that is what my kids call my Mom, so I am a little concerned but it was more than concern for Abraham's family – they were absolutely pagan

#### **We can see it in their names**

- Terah – (Abraham's dad) is a combination of the words, “moon” and “year” – Meaning “the year of the moon” – paganistic phrase
- Sari is “princess”
  - and don't you just know this must have been tough in the early day of Abraham's marriage – if you meet a girl single guys who parents call princess, you are in trouble, if they actually name her that – you have no chance
  - but understand they were not just calling her spoiled
  - it is the same name of the moon gods wife
- “Milcah” – (Abraham's sister in law) is the title of Ishtar the daughter of the moon god

## **Out of this idol worshipping wickedness of a nation, God calls one man**

- Shapes and molds his life
  - And uses him and those that come from his children to bless the entire world
  - We get more commentary on the call of Abraham from the book of Acts

## **In says in Acts 7:2 that the God of Glory appeared to Abraham**

**“The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said to him, ‘Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.’ Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell.” – Acts 7:2-4**

- God was speaking to Abraham in UR, this dark pagan place
  - But it is amazing to consider how God aligned events in world history to get a hold of Abraham’s heart
- In the seminary course I am currently taking we are examining the historical and literary events that were taking while the Bible was happening and being written
  - And it is interesting to note that the UR of the Chaldeans or UR 3 as it is known to scholars, because it was the third Dynasty of the city of UR, the culture in which Abraham lived, fell right around the time of Abraham’s call
  - So the way I see it, God calls him and then begins to shut down his homeland just so Abraham and his family knows he is serious

## **God tells him to leave his family, to leave everything he knew and was comfortable with, and to go**

- And even then God didn’t tell Him where to go
  - He only said, I will show you

## **In others words God was calling Abram, like he did so many others in the Bible to simply follow Him**

- And when you think about it, it really didn’t make any sense
  - Why would Abram do this, why would he leave all that he knew, to go somewhere he wasn’t even told at first at such an age
  - Why would he do this?

## **Because of the Call of God!!!!**

- The God of glory appeared to Abraham, this idol worshipping fool
  - And Abraham was never the same
- All Abraham knew was dead idolatry, all Abraham knew was the emptiness of sin and rebellion
  - And into his life came light, glory
  - And for Abram once he had tasted of the glory of God, once He knew Him – there was no going back

## **We can see the effects of the call of God on Abraham’s life in the text, in verse 5 of chapter 12...**

**“Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother’s son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan.” – Genesis 12:5**

- “The people they had acquired in Haran” – it sounds like Abraham has purchased slaves, but one of the foremost scholars on the Old Testament, a man by the name of Cassuto, translates the phrase, “the souls they had won in Haran” – meaning Abraham was an evangelistic for the true and living God

**He was so blown away of the reality of God and the reality of His call that not only was he willing to follow God to a place had even showed him**

- but he was preaching, telling others about this great God that had appeared to Him
  - we see evidence of a changed man when he gets into the land as the text tells us
  - he, verse 6-7 when right to the Terebinth tree of Moreh in the land of Shechem and he builds an alter to God right there
- Now we miss it because we are not from the region and the time, but Shechem was a wicked city and the Terebinth trees of Moreh were where the idol worshipping pagans went to pray and sacrifice to their gods
  - What is Abraham doing there
  - Again – he is preaching, he is building an alter saying, this place is now for the one true God

**You want to Biblical Evidence for being a believer who is on mission infiltrating the culture – you don’t have to wait until the New Testament of the life of Hudson Taylor or the latest Mark Driscoll book**

- this was Abraham
  - so impacted by the call of God, the reality of God in his life
  - He left his homeland, not knowing where he was going
  - He shared with people in Haran that joined him
  - He went to the first dark corner of the promise land, to the darkest part of that city and Abraham said, we are claiming this for the Kingdom of God

**This is stuff that gets me all excited, I know its hard to tell the difference because I always seem excited, someone whispered to one of our regulars last week, I hope that young man doesn’t have a heart attack**

- Listen I hope I do, I hope when God calls me home it is right in the middle of me being so excited about heaven and encouraging you folks about the soonest of Jesus’ return and I get worked up that I just, go there myself
  - I don’t apologize for being excited, I think it is crime to be boring when you teach God’s word, the most powerful and alive book that has ever been written
- But back to my point – I know I always seem excited but Abraham – he goes to the darkest part of his culture and he says, I’m building an alter

**Sometimes we get so wrapped up in our little huddles as Christians here on Wednesday Nights and Sunday mornings and we think – this is it, this is what being a Christian is all about**

- and you are partial right – the church excites to build you up and to equip you to do the work of the ministry
  - but that is just it – so we would go out and do the work of the ministry – to go into the dark places God has put us in and say – no more – I’m building alter right here in Shechem, right here at the terebinth tree – this place is now for Jesus
  - that is the best way to respond to the Call of God of God in our lives

**I hope the call of God in your life has affected you like it affected Abraham**

- that you are willing to trust Him, even when it doesn’t make much sense

**That you want to share with those around you, how amazing He is**

- and that you desire to go into the darkest parts of enemy territory and say, I am building an alter, right here, this place is now for Jesus

**If the call of God hasn’t affected you in that way, or if it has been a while, then I think it is time to hit the refresh button**

- you know sometimes we get so familiar with the truths of how good God has been to us
  - about how wonderful it is that He has called me, an idol worshipping pagan out of the darkness and gave me a reality like I have never known
- And if it has been a while since you have cried over how wonderful it is that you are saved, that Jesus loves you
  - Again – time to hit refresh and think that through a little bit tonight
  - Because God’s call to us is as wonderful as it was for Abraham
  - Whether we known that or not is another matter

**Sailing the 7 “C’s of Abraham’s Life**

**#1 – His Call – Genesis 12:1-9**

**#2 – His Compromise – Genesis 12:10-20**

- As we saw with Noah last week, one of the things I appreciate about the Word of God is it is honest about its heroes
  - If I was writing the Bible and Abraham was my man, the father of the faithful, the father of the Jewish people and eventually Jesus Christ
  - Well I would say to the authors makes Abraham’s life look good
- But the Bible is not written by man

**It includes the faults, the compromises of its hero’s, and I am encouraged by that because I have faults as well**

- and I see that these guys fall and then repent, and God still love them, God still uses them and I think well there is hope for Pastor Rob, Eddie and Steve
  - oh I mean me
  - there is hope for me and for you by the way

**But what was Abraham’s compromise?**

- well we see here in the end of chapter 12 Abraham the man of faith by the way, not having much faith
  - we read there was a famine in the Land
  - and no doubt Abraham saw the caravans leaving the area and heading down to Egypt where the land was fertile and Abraham begins to think I am going to do that –

**Now there is nothing wrong on the surface heading to Egypt for food – the Nile valley was known to have it in abundance**

- it was the natural thing to do
  - but in there lies the problem
  - there is no mention of seeking God, not mention of asking His will
- So often we do the most obvious thing – and it is so obvious we don't even think to pray – and we need to be on guard for that
  - God can move through the natural, the obvious
  - But He often wants to move through the supernatural, the unobvious

**He doesn't pray**

- He doesn't ask God – Lord what do you think I should do
  - Or Lord you would you take care of me – no – Abraham just takes matters into his own hands

**And friends I probably don't have to tell you that things don't work out so well when we operate that way**

- They didn't for Abraham
  - and they won't for you

**Now Abraham has another problem and that is the Egyptians were known to really love the look of Semitic women of which Sari was**

- they were known to kill the husbands of Semitic women and take their wives as there own
  - you see they had morals, you couldn't just take the wife of another man, he had to be dead first, so they just killed him

**So with the knowledge, the man of faith looks at his pretty wife and says...“You are so beautiful”**

- Now ladies, I am going to tell you something you that hopefully you have figured out by now, most times a guys starts a conversation that way, watch out – you know what I'm saying
  - You are so beautiful is the butter up for what something...
- Abraham says, you are beautiful and I need you to lie for me, tell them you are my brother

**Now commentators coming to Abraham's defense mention that in that culture if no Father was present, a brother could stand in and negotiate a wedding**

- so it could be that Abraham was just trying to be sly buying time, knowing he would never agree to a price for his “sister” and that would give him time to escape with his wife and his life
  - it was all such a wonderful plan, except Abraham forgot one thing – Pharaoh
  - most men would negotiate, the Pharaoh was in a very different place

**But that brings up something we need to address, lets be real, why would Pharaoh be interested in Sari**

- Now understand Sari is about 65 at this point
  - why would an Egyptian Pharaoh, who could have any woman no doubt he wanted, be interested in Abraham's 65 year old wife – no offense 65



year old women, but I mean, never mind, I can do nothing but get in trouble right now

- some have criticized the Bible on this point, but there is great response, so listen close

### **The first thing to understand is they lived longer back then**

- Life spans went down drastically after the flood, because as we have studied before that water canopy was gone, the UV rays came in, and the aging process speed up and people died younger
  - But all that said, they still lived longer than today for a few generations
- Abraham lived to be 175
  - So taking today's life span – 65 was the new 30
  - And let me tell you – people in their 30 can still have their looks!!! – not me but others

### **Another thing to consider is we have discovered from sources outside the Bible that Sarah was not just a normal beautiful gal**

- in the Dead Sea Scroll that have been so famous because they have proven the Bible we have in our laps is super accurate to the Bible years and year before Christ
  - well also in the Dead Sea Scrolls was a document talking about Abraham and Sarah
  - and when it describes Sarah, it describes her as a women of unparalleled beauty

**So again for skeptics of the Bible who say – why is Abraham worried about his wife that is in her mid sixties – well again – mid sixties was the new late twenties, early 30 – and when you consider that, think supermodel in her late twenties and early 30's and now you are seeing why Abraham was worried**

### **So Abraham the man of faith, compromises**

- He doesn't trust God to provide for him in the famine in Canaan, where God told him to be
  - And he doesn't trust God to protect him and his supermodel wife

**Now as I said before I am encouraged to read about the lapses of faith in Abraham's life, because I have them in my life too – (I am always worried about my supermodel wife)**

- but we better be warned by them as well
  - for just as it is true, that God protect Abraham and Sarah, there would be many consequences to this sin in his life as we will see later as the chapters unfold
- And that is true in our lives as well
  - We sin – We repent
  - And God forgives and restores
  - But never forget even though God still loves you and wants to work still in your life
  - There will always be consequences because of sin
  - And we read of the first one Abraham has to face in the next chapter

## **Sailing the 7 “C’s of Abraham’s Life**

**#1 – His Call – Genesis 12:1-9**

**#2 – His Compromise – Genesis 12:10-20**

**#3 – His Consequences – Genesis 13**

**After His compromise – Abraham goes back to the last place he heard the Lord, he goes back to Bethel**

- There is such wisdom in this
  - Church of Ephesus – they were so busy in there working for the Lord, they left their love relationship with the Lord
  - And God encourages them, remember from where you have fallen and repeat those works again
- Good word for some tonight – I have already talked about hitting the reset button
  - What does that mean – I don’t have a reset button
  - Well – it means go back to that place where you last were hearing God, radically in love with Him, and starts doing those things again
  - We need to go back to Bethel and reconnect at various times in our lives
- Abraham does

**But as the rest of the chapter unfolds, we start to think**

- Well that didn’t sound so bad, where was the Consequences
  - I mean God promises to bless him and give him all of this land – that doesn’t seem so bad
  - What is really the results of his sin and compromise in the previous chapter

**Well the Bible uses the same word, basically “heavy’ in Genesis 12:10 and 13:2 – one describes the famine, one describes the wealth Abraham received**

- and when that style of Hebrew writing is used, it is done on purpose so you will keep in mind where Abraham got the riches, not from obeying God, but by not trust – and we will now see the results
  - some will come later, some we see in chap 13

**First of all the wealth fueled the problem between Abraham and Lot**

- they are living in the hills near modern day Jerusalem, and if you have ever seen pictures of that area or been lucky enough to go there then you know, it is a rocky landscape
  - lots of land, but not a lot of room from huge herds of animals
  - and fights began to break out as a consequence for the wealth Abraham received in Egypt

**And so Abraham realizes the two of them must split up, but this leads to the second consequence of Abraham’s sin and that will be the loss of his nephew Lot**

- As we have said before the consequences from his compromise for Abraham personally will come later – a gal by the name of Hagar was received in Egypt and she will play into the story later
  - But in this chapter we see the consequence of losing his nephew

**You see sin will not just affect you, it will**

- but it will also affect those around you

- that is why when the enemy lies and says – go ahead and do it – you can handle the effects, you can handle the consequences
- well as dumb as that is because who wants to handle the consequences
- it is really double dumb because it is not just you who is affected
  - your sin will affect others
  - and we see in this chapter it is affecting Lot, Abraham's nephew

### **If you were paying close attention back in chapter 12 Lot's Dad died early in Lot's life**

- and Abraham has really taken him on as more than a nephew, really a son
  - and as they have traveled together for 20 plus years, no doubt they had grown close
  - but a problem arose in with many life stock
- And they were living in a area near Bethel, which is North of Jerusalem today and it is a beautiful area
  - But it is mountainous and the land is not able to support a lot

### **So Abraham says – Lot, the land can not support us, it is time to part company**

- you decide which way to go and I will go in the opposite direction
  - Abraham is being very kind as he could have as the elder just told Lot what to do
  - But Abraham gives Lot the choice

### **And Lot's choice reveals a lot about him**

- He looks toward the direction of Sodom and Gomorrah and he chooses to go that direction
  - Now why did Lot make this choice?

### **Well we are told in the scripture why he did...**

**“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.” – Genesis 13:10**

- He looked, and even though Lot knew it was a wicked place
  - He knew that area was filled with temptation and compromise
  - He saw that plain and what – it reminded him of Egypt

### **You see here is the consequence**

- Abraham takes the tribe down to Egypt
  - And God protect him and get him out of there
  - But the damage has been done
  - In giving them possessions that caused this problem and consequences in the heart someone Abraham no doubt considers a son – the damage has been done in Lot
- He got a taste for Egypt, which in the Bible is always a picture of the world
  - He gets a taste of the world because of Abraham's compromise, and his love for the world will be his downfall

**This is difficult but important lesson for us who are parents to learn that our sin affects others, but as parents we can also learn an important truth from Lot's decision as well**

- Lot wanted to go to Sodom because it reminded him of Egypt
  - But there was another reason – it seemed easy
  - The land was lush, fruitful
  - It was a great place to raise cattle
- The problem – it wasn't a great place to raise kids

**And I point out because often time we are faced with parents decisions – decisions about where to live, decisions about job changes**

- and often time the only thing we consider is – what is the most fruitful choice
  - where will I make the most money
  - where will the work be easiest
- and though I understand those feelings
  - We really need to be asking – Lord what do you want me to do
  - And what will be the best thing for my family spiritually

**You see we can justify that making more money is the best thing for the kids because think of the all the things I can provide for them**

- but all of us know that doesn't really hold any water
  - money is not the guarantee that kids will grow up to love God
  - in fact often it can be a stumbling block
- Lot may have chosen Sodom because it reminded him of Egypt, of the world
  - He may have chosen Sodom because it seemed like an easy place to raise cattle
- But he did not inquire of the Lord and it was not a great place to raise kids and as we will see in the chapters ahead, it will cost Lot his entire family
  - His wife was killed, his married girls never made it out, oh but he had the younger ones, they weren't hurt
  - "It didn't cost him his girls" – yeah, you are not reading your Bible carefully – we will get to that in a few weeks – shutter...
- But I really believe that is just a word for someone here tonight

**You have a decision to make – nothing wrong with more money, and a better job – but have you asked the Lord, have you considered what is best spiritually for your family**

- because if not, then like Abraham and Lot we are going to find ourselves in compromising situations
  - that will affect us and they will affect our family
  - so the best thing – is to stay where Abraham started tonight – just blessed by the call of God in His life and willing to do anything because of it
- if we are not there, it is time to hit reset and get back there again