

Genesis 12 Abraham in Egypt

9/21/2001 10:12 AM

Overview

Once again we enter a new *toledot* section of Genesis.

- 2:4-4:26, “the generations of the heavens and of the earth,” details the creation and sin of humans.
- 5:1-6:8, “the generations of Adam,” shows rebellion even in Seth’s line.
- 6:9-9:29, “the generations of Noah” covers the flood.
- 10:1-11:9, “the generations of the sons of Noah,” describes the dispersion of the nations of the earth.
- 11:10-26, “the generations of Shem,” is very short and serves only to fill in the genealogy to get us to Abram. It is the only one not dominated either by sin or by judgment, or both. Cf. 25:12-18 (Ishmael), 36:1-8, 9-37:1 (Esau).

Now at 11:27 we enter “the generations of Terah,” which focuses on Terah’s best-known son Abram. It extends to 25:11; at 25:12 we begin the Generations of Ishmael. It falls into two parts, each introduced by a genealogy (as is the following section at 25:12).

- 11:27-32, genealogy of Abram, and Lot, and introduction of Sarai; see Gen 15:7; Josh 24:2,3; Neh 9:7 on timing of original call.
- 12:1-22:19 the generation that left Ur (includes Sarah and Lot); chiastically structured
 - 12:1-9, a testing journey with a promise (1-3)(choose God over ancestors)
 - 12:10-20, Abram compromises Sarah in a strange land (Egypt)
 - 13-14, Abram and Lot
 - 15, God’s covenant with Abram
 - 16, birth of Ishmael (surprisingly, at the center!)
 - 17:1-18:15, God’s covenant with Abraham
 - 18:16-19:38, Abraham and Lot
 - 20-21, Abram compromises Sarah in a strange land (Gerar);
 - 20, Abraham and Abimelech
 - 21:1-21, Birth of Isaac and rejection of Ishmael
 - 21:22-34, Abraham and Abimelech
 - 22:1-19, a testing journey with a promise (15-18) (choose God over descendants)
- 22:20-24, genealogy of Rebecca
- 23:1-25:11 Preparation of the Next Generation (no Sarah or Lot)
 - 23:1-20, death of Sarah and burial at Machpelah (token of the Land?)

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- 24:1-66, a wife for Isaac (token of the Seed?)
- 25:1-11, passing the torch to Isaac; death of Abraham

11:27-32 Introductory Genealogy

This section introduces the key actors and the first step in their migration.

Characters:

- Abram and Haran's son Lot, together with Abram's wife Sarah, are the main actors in 12:1-22:19. Notice that Sarai's barrenness is highlighted already at this early point. Also, in the migration in v.31, only Abram, Lot, and Sarai are mentioned with Terah's move to Haran, although we know that Nahor and his family moved there as well (27:43, Laban is there, and he is found, 24:29, in the city of Nahor, 24:10).
- Nahor becomes important in 23-25, as the grandfather of Rebecca, the future wife of Isaac. We pick him up again in 22:20-24.

Movement:

- they start in Ur of the Chaldees, located in Shinar, near the mouth of the Euphrates.
- V.31, they set out for Canaan, following the fertile crescent, but only get as far as Haran (Charan, different from the name of Abram's brother), a mountainous area in northern Mesopotamia.
- Note carefully the language of v.31, "Terah took ... and they went forth with them" We expect, "They went forth with him" (i.e., with Terah). But in fact the lead is being taken by "them," that is, Abram, Sarah, and Lot. While Terah as head of the household must direct the move ("Terah took ..."), Moses is hinting that the real impetus comes from Abram and his associates, with whom Terah's household (including Nahor) makes the move. Compare
 - Gen 15:7 and Neh 9:7, which report that God brought Abram out of Ur, not out of Haran.
 - Acts 7:2-4 makes this explicit, and says Abram received the command of 12:1-3, or one very like it, in Ur.
- Then the pause in Haran is explicit. For some reason the family as a whole is not willing to make the entire journey, but stops short in Haran, and there waits for Terah to die. It may be because both Haran and Ur were temple-centers to the Moon God. Josh 24:2, 15. Terah had good intentions, but could not make the break from worshipping other gods.
- At that point, only Abram, Sarah, and Lot make the rest of the journey; Nahor remains behind.

Application:

- Beware of partial obedience that stops short of the Lord's full command. How many believers set out for Canaan and only make it as far as Haran. Cf. Luke 9:61,62, turning back after one sets one's hand to the plow.

- At the same time, God causes the wrath of men to praise him; Nahor's colony in Haran is a source of brides for Isaac and Jacob, and a refuge for Jacob from his brother Esau.

12:1-9 A Testing Journey with a Promise

This is an "execution paragraph." First we have the Lord's command to Abram in 1-3, then his obedience in 4-9. The timing of this command is unclear. AV's perfect "had said" reflects Acts 7:2-4, which situates the command in Ur, but the Hebrew does not require this, and the series of *waw*-consecutive verbs in 11:32, 12:1,4 would ordinarily suggest strict sequence. Likely we have here an instance of that patience of God by which he sometimes gently reminds his people a second time when their initial obedience is faulty; compare Elihu's comment in Job 33:14, "For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not."

- The two creations with their commands (1:28-30; 9:1-7), giving the entire earth the opportunity to be the people of God.
- Jonah (Jon 1:2; 3:2)
- The double calling of the disciples: John 1:37, and Matt 4:19. (Three times in the case of Peter, John 21:19).
- The repeated sending of the apostles to the temple and to the Sanhedrin, Acts 3; 5:12, 21.

Application: These examples are no excuse to reject or defer the promptings of God's Spirit. His longsuffering does not continue for ever. Prov 1:20-33. In fact, Abraham is an example of this; we shall see that the elective promises in 12:1-3 represent an abandoning of the general blessings on all mankind in 1:28-30; 9:1-7. But they are an encouragement for us if we feel that somewhere we missed the boat. If the HS is prompting you about something you once felt strongly but did not carry through, be tender toward him. This time, go all the way to Canaan.

1-3, *Commands and Promises*

The structure here is obscured by the English translation. In Hebrew, there are eight parallel verbs:

1b **Get thee out** of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

2 And I will **make** of thee a great nation,
and I will **bless** thee,
and **make** thy name great;

and **be thou** a blessing:

3 And I will **bless** them that bless thee,
and **curse** him that curseth thee:
and in thee shall all families of the earth **be blessed**.

In Hebrew, the first and fourth of these are commands, while the others are predictions. Thus the promises fall into two groups:

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- Abram is to abandon his previous source of security, casting himself on the Lord, to receive the Lord's blessing on himself.
- From this standpoint of blessing, he is charged to be a blessing to others, so that God might use him as a channel for blessing all families of the earth.

Each of these embodies a critical principle for us. Also, throughout this section, we see the repair of the breaches experienced in ch. 1-11.

The general principle in both sections is that we cannot expect God's blessings if we do not obey his commands. If only our nation would realize this when its mouths are open, "God bless America."

1-2, We must abandon our security blanket to enjoy God's blessings

Consider first the command, then the promises.

The **command** proceeds through five stages.

1. "Get thee out." The construction literally means, "Go by yourself." It emphasizes the independence and isolation of the one who goes. Abram is not being invited to follow a general westward migration. He is commanded to stand apart, to "come out and be separate," 2 Cor 6:17; Isa 52:11; Heb 13:10-14. God's saints are the separated ones. To follow him is to be different, distinct.
2. "of thy country." First, he directs Abram's attention to the familiar surroundings that he will be leaving. (From 24:4, we see that Abram considered Haran "his country.") We are creatures of habit; we become attached to the vegetation, the landscape, our familiar surroundings. Abram is to leave these behind.
3. "from thy kindred." The word refers to his clan, his broader family, those who share the same culture. He is to leave not only landscape but also kinfolk.
4. "from thy father's house." This is the most wrenching of all. He is to leave his immediate family unit, the group that lives and works together. Compare our Lord's requirement: Luke 14:25,26. This demand is not new to the NT, but common to the life of saints in every age.
5. "unto a land that I will shew thee." The striking thing is that the final destination is left unspecified, cf. Heb 11:8. Israel leaving Egypt was promised a "land flowing with milk and honey." Abram is told that he will have a land (confirmed as an explicit promise in v.7), but he knows nothing about it in advance; no glossy real estate brochures or virtual web tours of the lake and golf course. "Leave what you have; trust me to provide what you need."

Note the contrast (the first of many that we shall see) with 1-11. There, because of sin, God kept moving people *away* from desirable land:

- Adam and Eve from Eden, 3:24
- Cain from the earth, 4:11,14
- Destruction of people off of the earth in the flood
- Scattering from Babel

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Now he offers to bring Abram *to* a special land. Humanity in general is excluded from the blessing, but God focuses it on Abram.

The command is not without motivation. God makes three explicit **promises**, and we may relate them to the three lusts with which Satan would lead us astray.

1. “I will make of thee a great nation.” “Nation” here is Hebrew *goy*, which refers to a political unit (as opposed to a family one). The word appears first in Genesis, and very densely (6x, more than elsewhere; ch. 17 is second at 5x), in ch. 10:5, 20, 31, 32. It embodies two themes that will later be distinguished, a population (numerous seed) and a territory (the land). This must seem incredible to him, since his wife has already been proven barren (11:30). Thus God blesses those who abandon the lust of the eyes.

Compare with Nimrod, who sought in his own strength to set up a great nation, 10:8-12, reflected in the effort of 11:1-9. God judges Nimrod’s fleshly effort, but offers this very thing to Abram. Compare also the nations in ch. 10. Those were set up by human strength; here God establishes Abram as a divinely instituted nation. This distinction is reflected at the other end of the OT period chronologically, in the distinction between Michael’s protection of Israel and the demonic protection of the other nations (Dan 10).

2. “I will bless thee.” Here God undertakes responsibility for everything that Abram will need. Worldlings say, “I was lucky,” or “How fortunate.” The Bible sees every good and every perfect gift as coming down from above, from the Father of lights (James). This one word supercedes all the others, and from it they all flow: “I will bless thee.” Let our soul once grasp this promise, and all will be well. This is the heart of the blessing given by the Levites to the people (Num 6:24), and the daily greeting of Israelites to one another (Ruth 2:4). Thus God cares for those who are not controlled by the lust of the flesh.

This is the first time that God promises to bless someone, and the word dominates this entire promise. Up to now he has blessed (1:22, 28; 5:2; 9:1), but the blessing was always general, for all people. Now it is focused on Abram, and the rest of humanity does not enjoy it.

3. “I will ... make thy name great.” Here is the answer to the pride of life. We seek in vain to advance our own fame, but God is able to lift up and to bring low.

Once again, we hear echoes of ch. 1-11: the “mighty men of renown” of 6:4 earn only God’s judgment, but God freely offers fame to Abram.

Application: We see here the OT equivalent of our Lord’s command, “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you,” Matt 6:33; and Mark 10:28,29.

3, We must recognize our role a channels to bring blessing to others

God’s blessing to Abram is not just for his own enrichment, but that he might be the channel for restoring God’s blessing to the rest of humanity. Cf. 2 Cor 5:15; God’s redeemed are not to live unto themselves, but as servants of the one who has redeemed them.

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The **command**, translated in AV as an indicative, is “be thou a blessing.” The previous promise of God’s provision for him is to motivate him not only to abandon his carnal security in Haran, but also to change the focus of his life and become God’s channel for blessing others.

As he obeys this command, he will enjoy three further **promises**. The first two form a reciprocal pair, but the third is distinct.

1. “I will bless them that bless thee.” Since God has sovereignly resolved to bless Abram, anyone who blesses Abram aligns themselves with God’s purposes, and thus receives his blessing as well. Thus Abram and his descendants are to function as a signpost, pointing the way toward God and his blessings. Cf. our role as salt and light in the world (Matt 5:13).
2. “I will ... curse him that curseth thee:.” Similarly, anyone who sets himself against Abram is opposing God. Note the singular here in contrast with the plural in the previous clause. God delights in mercy (Mic 7:18), and anticipates that more will bless Abram than curse him.

Three times so far, God has cursed in Genesis (3:14, 17; 4:11), but no more; now the curse is mediated through Abram and his seed.

3. “In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” This blessing goes beyond the symmetrical provisions of the previous two. It reaches back into the primeval history, and makes Abram the means of reversing the judgments there.
 - “all families of the earth” recalls the division described in the generations of the sons of Noah (10:1-11:9, cf. 10:5, 20, 31, 32). Though that division reflects divine judgment, yet blessing is available to them. No group should think itself beyond the reach of God’s blessing.
 - “Families of the earth” is more accurately, “families of the ground,” an unusual phrase, no doubt selected to recall the curse on the ground in 3:17. In Abram, the original curse will be replaced with blessing. “Be blessed” answers the multiple judgments that God has poured out, at Eden, to Cain, in the flood, and at Babel. In spite of this history, blessing is available.

In fact, this verse (like 3:15) reaches forward to the coming of the Messiah.

- Rom 4:13 refers to a promise to Abraham “that he should be the heir of the world,” by way of explaining how the blessing of forgiveness can come not only on the circumcision but also on the uncircumcision (4:6-9). The only place in the promises to Abraham that combines the universality of 4:13 with “blessing” is Gen 12:3. So the Rabbis understood it: “the world is a garden, which the Lord gave to Abraham, as it is said, “in you shall be blessed...” (Bemidbar Rabb. xiv 202.3, citation in Alford on Rom 4:13). Cf. Calvin on Gen 17:4: “Abram therefore was not called the father of many nations, because his seed was to be divided into many nations; but rather, because many nations were to be gathered together unto him.” (*Digression: in 4:17, Paul links this promise to Gen 17:4,5, the promise that he should be “a father of many nations,” but as an afterthought. Strictly, this might be understood to refer just to his physical descendants: Ishmaelites from Hagar, Edomites and Israel through Sarah, and six other lines through Keturan, 25:1. But consider the progression: Sarah is to*

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be the mother of nations (17:16; two, Edom and Israel). 17:4,5 makes Abraham the father of many nations. But Rom 4:13 makes him the heir of the entire world.)

- Gal 3:8-16 is even more direct. 3:8,14 directly apply 12:3 to the justification of the heathen through faith, while 3:16 traces the “seed” through whom the promises are made to the Lord Jesus.

Application: We have not been saved for our own sake alone, but to be a channel for God’s blessing to others. We are to follow our Savior’s example, who “came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.” Cf. his exhortation to the disciples in Matt. 20:24-28.

Three general themes

This remarkable promise to Abram is the foundation for the rest of the Pentateuch, and in fact for the rest of the Bible. The promises address three things: **land**, **seed**, and a divine relationship that yields **blessing**. We will see these three surfacing over and over again.

- They have already been the focus of much in ch. 1-11, though usually phrased as command instead of promise. Cf. 1:28ff,

And God **blessed** them, and God said unto them, **Be fruitful, and multiply**, and **replenish the earth, and subdue it**: and **have dominion** over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, **Behold, I have given you** every herb bearing seed, **which is upon the face of all the earth**, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

- They will be repeated throughout the life of Abram and his descendants. In Abram,
 - **Seed**: 15:1-6
 - **Land**: 15:7-21
 - **Blessing** to the world: 17:4-6, 16, contrast v.20 (Ishmael begets only “a nation,” not “many nations.”)
- In fact, they form the backbone of the Pentateuch:
 - Genesis tells the story of the **seed**
 - Exodus and Leviticus establish the relationship between God and the seed that leads to **blessing**.
 - Numbers and Deuteronomy are occupied with the journey to the **land**.

4-9, Obedience

Sometimes the covenant with Abram is represented as unconditional, in contrast to the conditional covenant at Sinai. This distinction may be overly facile. This initial promise is predicated on two commands to Abram, “Get thee out” and “be thou a blessing.” Every male descendant must be circumcised to participate in the blessings (17:14), and 22, 15-18 emphasize that the promises of 12:1-3 are sure to Abraham “because thou has done this thing,” “because thou hast obeyed my voice.” So in 12:4-9, we see Abram’s obedience to God’s command.

Verses 4-5 show the group of three packing up their belongings and leaving Haran. They did not leave through economic necessity, for they had prospered there, amassing both goods and

“persons” (servants). But they had not yet reached the place that God promised in 12:1, so the spirit of God urges them on.

How can they beheading for Canaan (v.5; cf. 11:31) when they did not know their goal (Heb. 11:8)? Answer: God directed them each step of the way. They knew that Canaan was on their route, but they did not know it would be their destination.

Application: This is characteristic of the Lord’s leading. He almost never gives us the whole itinerary at the outset. Compare Isa 30:21. As we take each step, the Lord reveals the next to us. The flesh wants to see the whole plan set forth at the beginning, but the Lord’s way is to lead us step by step. It is an evidence of Abram’s faith that he is willing to proceed on this basis.

Verses 6-9 record three stages in his journeys through the land.

His first stop is at *Shechem*, between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim, a major crossroads in the heart of the hill country. Of this camp, Moses makes three observations:

1. The Canaanite occupied the land at that time. Abram was not traveling through an empty country, but was surrounded by those already in possession of it. Shechem would be a likely place to encounter them, since it became a major center in later times. The sense of the text is probably, “He arrived at Shechem, and found lots of Canaanites there.”
2. The Lord appeared to him and promised to give the land to his seed. At this point Abram learns that Canaan is not simply a way-station, but in fact his destination. Yet he also learns, if he is listening carefully, that full possession awaits his seed, while he is still barren.
3. Abram responds in worship, following the example of his ancestor Noah by building an altar. This is counterintuitive. Given the first two points, we might have expected Abram to respond by saying, “What do you mean, Lord? How can this land be mine when someone is already living here?” But he does not protest; instead, in faith, he worships.

Next (8) he encamps between *Bethel and Ai*, further south, later the border between the southern and northern kingdoms. Here also he builds an altar, and in addition, “call[s] upon the name of the Lord.” In our study in 4:26, we saw that this phrase combines worship and witness. He is open about his faith, bearing witness to the Canaanites around him.

Finally (9) we are told that he continues to travel southward. The verbs emphasize the repeated, ongoing nature of his movement. Why does he travel if the Lord has already indicated that he has arrived? The answer is found in the instruction in 13:17. Walking through the land is a way of claiming it, of taking possession of it, of asserting one’s right to be there. By moving through it he is acting as though it were his; contrast the opposition that Moses and Israel received from Edom (Num 20:14-21), Moab (Judg 11:17), and the Amorites (Num 21:21-23). (*NB: reintroduction of subject shows a break between vv.8,9, and 9 has strong affinities with the next section, as we shall see.*)

12:9-13:4, Abram Compromises Sarai in a Strange Land

The Setting

This episode is framed chiastically. In particular, its ending (13:3,4) forms an external inclusio with 12:8,9, suggesting that we should view this episode as set apart in some way. In fact, it presents a very different view of Abram from the one we have seen so far. Up to now he is

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faithful and obedient. Here we see him as fleshly and deceptive. Moses wants to remind us that God's blessings to Abram are in spite of his frailty, not because of his merit.

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|------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Worshipping the Lord at Bethel | 12:8 | 13:3b-4 |
| Enters, then leaves the Negev | 12:9 | 13:3a |
| Going down to, then up from, Egypt | 12:10 | 12:1,2 |
| Commands | Abram to Sarah, 12:11-13 | Pharaoh to his men, 12:20 |
| Abram and Pharaoh | 12:14-16 | 12:18-19 |
| The Lord Intervenes | 12:17 | |

9-10, Going Down to Egypt

Repetition of the subject in v.9 suggests that this is really the beginning of the next episode.

The occasion is “a famine in the land,” the very “land” that God has promised him in v.7. How greatly his faith is tried. Not only does he not possess it yet, but from his initial experience, it isn't clear that he really would want to.

- Mesopotamia was not immune to famine, but (like Egypt) has a regular water supply in the form of the rivers, and developed an elaborate system of irrigation.
- Canaan depended on rainfall, which could be irregular; it was better suited to grazing than farming. Particularly in the Negev (the region around Beersheba, translated “the south” in 12:9; 13:3), rainfall is very sparse at the best of times.

The severity of the famine requires him to move, but there is still evidence of his faith.

- he had left fertile Chaldea, and Haran where he became rich, but does not return there. That is a much more distant journey; he will stay as close as he can to the land of promise.
- He views his journey to Egypt as of short duration: “sojourn” implies a temporary journey.

11-13, Abram's Command to Sarai

The lie about Sarah: Abram is culpable, but perhaps not as much as one might think.

- His eagerness to preserve his own life may reflect his faith in the promises of God: “If God has made me a link in the blessings of others, it is critical that I remain alive.”
- The scheme about being his brother does not mean that he intends to give her up. If one wants a man's wife, the man must die. But if one wants a man's sister, there are negotiations to go through; cf. the role of Laban, brother of Rebekah, in 24:29ff. He may have hoped to set up a situation where he could, through his shrewdness and deceptiveness, put off any suitors until the famine subsided and they could get back to Canaan. He may simply think that he will be better at bargaining than at fighting off attackers, and thus that this is the best way to protect her, as well as himself.
- Yet he is wrong to justify deception on the grounds of a “greater good.”
- Contrast the situation in ch. 22, a chapter with many parallels to this one. By the time he gets to that chapter, his faith has grown to the point that he knows God can achieve his promises

under impossible circumstances. So there he is even willing to sacrifice the son through whom God had promised the seed would come.

Application: We must condemn Abram's actions here. But as we do, let us reflect how often we think that the end justifies the means. It never does, even if the end is in line with divine revelation. Our task is to obey God at each point along the way, and let him worry about the outcome.

14-16, The Failure before Pharaoh

Their experience in Egypt begins to unfold as Abram had expected. The Egyptians do indeed recognize the beauty of Sarai. So far, so good: any commoner who wishes to take Sarai must negotiate with Abram, and he expects to be able to hold them off.

But then something unexpected happens: the interest of the royal house is aroused. Pharaoh is Egypt's god. He negotiates with no one. What he wants, he takes. He wants Sarai, so he takes her, and Abram's careful plan crumbles into dust.

"Entreat well" does not mean that he negotiated with Abram; we would say, "he treated Abram well," giving ample gifts to enrich the wealth that Abram already had (12:5). What heartbreak these gifts must have brought Abram! He did not want a bride-price for Sarai; he only wanted to be in a position to stall any threats for the duration of the famine. Now his wife is taken from him, and in her place he has only things.

Application: This is always the outcome when we compromise our principles for the sake of a greater end. Unbelievers can sometimes get away with it, but if we are the Lord's, he will teach us to trust in him by pulling the rug out from under our feet, as he does here with Abram.

17, The Climax

In spite of Abram's fleshly efforts and failure, the Lord is true to his promises. He would have protected Sarai if Abram had been honest; he will protect her in spite of Abram's prevarication. His judgment falls not only on Pharaoh, but also on his house, the princes of v.15 who had brought her to Pharaoh's attention.

18-19, Pharaoh and Abram

Now we work our way back out from the climax. Apparently, as a result of the plague, Pharaoh makes inquiry, and discovers that Sarai is actually married. He calls for Abram and rebukes him. This is surely the most painful rebuke, when an unbeliever calls us to account for our sin.

The rebuke recalls God's words to Eve in 3:13: "What is this that thou has done?" The similarity is intentional. We are probably supposed to recall this and realize that God is really rebuking Abram through Pharaoh.

- God can speak to the righteous through the wicked: to Abram through Pharaoh; to Israel through Assyria; to the US through Bin Laden.
- This is the point of Rom 2:14-24.

- Simple example: getting a traffic ticket for disobeying the law. If it ever happens to you (as it has to me), do not be proud and resistant. Take the lesson humbly, learn from it, and move on.

20, Pharaoh's Command to his Men

Compare Abram's command in 11-13, which was motivated by a failure to trust in God.

Pharaoh, by contrast, has learned (from the plague of v.17) of the power of Abram's god, and he wants as much space as possible between himself and the servant of such a God. It is fear of God that leads him to expel Abram, and to guarantee his safe passage by an armed guard.

Thus Pharaoh actually shows more trust in the Lord than did Abram!

13:1-2, Coming Up from Egypt

Here we see the mirror of 12:10. He returns from Egypt, his wealth augmented by Pharaoh's gifts. Yet surely he returns chastened, his return timed by Pharaoh's wrath, not the end of the famine. He has prospered in Haran and in Egypt, but God's place for him is Canaan, where so far all he has known is famine.

13:3-4, Return to Bethel

Now we are back where we started.

- The move from the Negev to Bethel in 3a corresponds to the move from Bethel to the Negev in 12:9.
- Back at Bethel, he picks up where he left off. Using the old altar, he once again makes proclamation in the name of the Lord, acknowledging his trust in the Lord rather than in himself. The expulsion from Egypt was at Pharaoh's instigation, but this worship shows that he is acting now volitionally. He has humbled himself under the mighty hand of God, and now waits for him to exalt him in due time (1 Pet 5:6).

What a comfort this episode is to us. We have all had episodes of failure. We must never say, "I cannot recover." Here Abram recovers, the same way we must: by returning to the way he knows is right.