

THE LIFE OF ABARAHAM

4. Abraham's Attitude to Possessions

(Leader's Notes)



Introduction

In our previous study we have seen how Abraham gave Lot the opportunity to choose which part of the land he would like. Lot chose the fertile plains near the city of Sodom. Gradually he moved with his family into that wicked city. After some years there was a war between four kings, and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. During the fighting Lot and his family were captured.

Scripture Reading: Genesis 14:11 – 15:1

A. ABRAHAM'S ATTITUDE TO POSSESSIONS

- ✧ When Abraham heard the report that Lot had been captured, what did he do? V14-16
(He called all his trained men to go and chase the enemy. After overtaking them he recovered all the goods and the people who had been captured.)



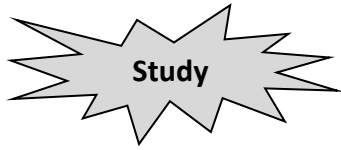
What does this show us about Abraham's attitude towards Lot, even after he had taken the best land?
(Obviously Abraham did not hold a grudge against Lot or feel glad when he faced difficulties. We need to guard our attitudes towards those who have taken advantage of us in any way, just as Abraham did.)

- ✧ When the King of Sodom offered to let Abraham keep the goods how did he respond? V21-24. Why did he not want to take the goods?
(He did not accept any goods as he had already promised God that he would not do so. Also he did not want the King of Sodom to say that he was the one who had made Abraham rich. If he had taken the goods it may have made him obligated to this heathen king and given him power over his life.)
- ✧ What can we learn from Abraham's attitude to material possessions?
(We need to make sure that material possessions don't control our lives and our decisions, but like Abraham, trust in God's promises. If we profit in ways that are not right then the enemy can say he made us rich, and it can give him the right to reign over our lives.)

B. ABRAHAM'S ATTITUDE TO GIVING

- ✧ Who was Melchizedek? V18-19, Hebrews 6:20, 7:1-3, 17
(He was the King of Salem and also a priest. His name means 'King of Righteousness, and Salem means 'King of Peace.' He is a picture of the Lord Jesus.)
- ✧ Why do you think Abraham gave one tenth of everything to Melchizedek? Also see Hebrews 7:6
(Melchizedek had given Abraham a blessing from God and in return Abraham gave him a tenth.)

Some people say that giving one tenth was only for the Jewish people under the law. However the law had not been given at the time of Abraham. Remember, Abraham is called the 'father of all who believe'. As our spiritual father he sets us an example in giving.



Spend some time checking out what the Bible says about tithes, or giving one tenth to the Lord. Look up the following verses: Leviticus 27:30, Deuteronomy 12:11, Numbers 18:21, 14, Malachi 3:8-10

- (i. *A tithe is from everything we have and it belongs to the Lord and is holy to him.*
- (ii. *We are to bring the tithe into God's House, along with our offerings. For us today this would be the church.*
- (iii. *The tithe was given to the Levites, who did the work in the Tabernacle. In the same way our giving helps support those who serve in the church.*
- (iv. *When God's people were obedient and gave the tithe, God promised that he would provide for them. The same is true in our lives.)*

Conclusion

How easily Abraham could have taken all the goods the King of Sodom offered him! Instead he refuses to, saying that God had promised to bless him and he did not want anyone else to get the credit. Not only that, he gives one tenth to Melchizedek, as he represented the Most High God. Abraham trusted God's promise and God was faithful to him. Perhaps you have been afraid to tithe as it seems so much to give, but God will be faithful to you, just as he was to Abraham. And God's promise to us is, "My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."