

## **Genesis 12-15**

### ***An Overview of Chapter 12***

The Lord speaks with Abram and instructs him to leave his family and go to a land that will be shown to him. In addition, the Lord makes Abram a few promises:

1. make Abram a great nation
2. bless Abram
3. make a great name for Abram
4. bless those who bless Abram
5. curse those who curse Abram
6. bless all the families of the earth from Abram

Abram goes on this journey and his nephew Lot tags along. Abram leaves from Haran and goes to Shechem where the Lord appears to him and Abram builds an altar. Then Abram goes to a mountain between Bethel and Ai where he builds another altar. From there Abram travels to the Negev and discovers there is a famine in the land.

To avoid the famine Abram travels to Egypt. Abram fears that he will be killed when the Egyptians realize his wife is drop dead gorgeous. He instructs her to lie and say she is his sister. She does this, and Pharaoh decides he wants Abram's beautiful "sister" to be his wife. The pharaoh gives Abram many gifts as a dowry of sorts and Abram decides to let this charade continue.

The Lord does not like this game and causes great plagues to strike the house of Pharaoh. The pharaoh realizes this is because of Abram and tells him to get his wife and get out of town.

### ***An Overview of Chapter 13***

Abram, richer now, goes back through the Negev onto the mountain between Bethel and the Negev. At the altar that Abram had previously made there, he calls on the name of the Lord.

The wealth of Abram and Lot is great, and their herds were too great to live in the same land, so much so that their herdsmen begin to fight. Abram offers a compromise - Lot can choose where he wants to live and Abram will go away. Lot chooses the well watered valley of the Jordan to the east and settles in Sodom which is inhabited by very wicked men. Abram goes west to Canaan.

The Lord repeats his promise to Abram that this will be his land, and tells Abram to go for a walk and see all the land that has been given to him. Abram settles in Hebron and builds another altar to the Lord.

### ***An Overview of Chapter 14***

A war of king's breaks out, four kings versus five, fighting for dominance. The kings of Sodom and Gomorrah tell their armies to run away and many of them fall in tar pits as they flee. The kings and those who survived hide in the mountains.

The winning kings take all the food and possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah; and Lot who becomes a prisoner of war.

When Abram found out his nephew was taken captive he gathers a small army and defeats the four kings and drives them to the north. He brings back all the goods and people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

As the king of Sodom leaves his hiding place to thank Abram, he is cut off by a mysterious king named Melchizedek who is also a priest. This priest brings bread and wine and blesses Abram. He also reminds Abram that God “*delivered your enemies into your hands.*” After hearing this Abram gives this kingly priest a tenth of all the spoils of war.

Sodom tells Abram that he can keep all the money for himself, but he needs his people back so he can keep his job as king. Abram refuses these financial gifts because he does not want anyone to say his blessed life is a result of anyone other than the Lord providing for him.

### ***An Overview of Chapter 15***

God appears to Abram in a vision and again promises him many offspring. Abram reminds God that his wife is barren and they have no children. God tells Abram not to worry about, he will take care of it.

A key turning point happens in the life of Abram at this point, he believed in the Lord and it was credited to him as righteousness.

To ease Abram’s fears, God makes a covenant with Abram. He has Abram cut some sacrificial animals in half, and then the Lord gives Abram a bit of prophecy. God tells Abram that his descendants will be enslaved for 400 years, and then they will return to this land. This promise can only be fulfilled if God makes good on his promise to give Abram a child.

As darkness sets in a smoking oven and a flaming torch appears and passes between the pieces of the sacrificial animals.

God then tells Abram specifically which lands his descendants will be given as a fulfillment of this covenant.

### ***Reflection***

What promises has God given to Christians? What promises has God given to you? Do you go where God leads you? Do you ever try to justify lying by saying the results that the lie brings are better for you? Are you willing to allow others to have their way so that peace may be maintained? When you have great financial gains in your life do you give a portion back to God? What promised land awaits believers today?

### ***For Further Study***

Promised Land: Deuteronomy 6:3, Joshua 23:5, Hebrews 11:9-10

Melchizedek: Psalm 110:1-4, Hebrews 5, Hebrews 7

Faith and Righteousness: Habakkuk 2:4, Romans 4, Hebrews 11, James 2:22-23