**Origins (pt.2) - wk 3 – A Return**

**The OT is the sign to the Messiah - NT is the arrival of - JESUS.**

**Genesis to Revelation is about Jesus.**

**1st five book is The Torah (the Law) - Moses during the wilderness. The first, Genesis, means “Beginning / Origin”**

**What we quickly discover is the darkness of the human heart.**

**\*\* Sin is deep in the human heart, and we desperately need a savior**

**Genesis 11 - the beginning of the way.**

**A down and outer idol worshiper whose family is falling apart is challenged by God to leave everything and follow him**

**He is given five promises – the greatest of which is that his descendants will bless the world - the family of Jesus, the Way**

**He leaves Cannan and goes to Egypt due to a famine.**

**Rather than trust God, he leaves the land and lies about his wife.**

**Abe missteps backward - then attempts to get back on course.**

**Gen 13:1 So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, with his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him. 2 Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold.**

**The timeline later suggests Abe was in Egypt for several years. It is important to note that he did not communion with God while he was there.**

**3 From the Negev he went from place to place until he came to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had been earlier 4 and where he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of the LORD. (same place as years earlier)**

**Abe's action is simple = he returns to the Altar.**

**As time passes, we start to see maturity and devotion to the LORD develop. He begins to change.**

**5 Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. (Years ago, God told Abe to leave it all – but he brought Lot) 6 But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together.**

**So rich, they can’t stay together? They are getting in each other's way. Servants fighting and quarreling. The problem was not between Abe and Lot – but their staff.**

**BTW – this wealth is the root of prosperity false teaching.**

**They teach that Abraham's promises are ours. God’s promise to make him rich (exemplified here) is our promise, too. Everything they teach about prosperity flows from Abraham.**

**7 And quarreling arose between Abram’s herders and Lot’s. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time. (watching us act like fools)**

**What happens next is shocking. The family elder was like a king to be honored with the best of everything.**

**But look what Abe says… 8 So Abram said to Lot, “Let’s not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herders and mine, for we are close relatives. 9 Is not the whole land before you? Let’s part company. (Then shocks us with…) If you go to the left, I’ll go to the right; if you go to the right, I’ll go to the left.”**

**He did not say – I’m Abram – I’m the elder – go figure it out.**

**You take first pick – I will take what is left over. This is a great trait of Abraham – over and over – incredible generosity.**

**10 Lot looked around and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan toward Zoar was well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) (Written after the fact –they had already heard the stories of Sodom and Gomorrah passed down.) 11 So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east.**

**He intentionally picked the better land – the whole plain.**

**I get the first pick, haha– you old fool – I’ll take the best.**

**The two men parted company: 12 Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. 13 Now, the people of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord.**

**I won’t go in it – I’ll just hang around it. The readers know the story of Sodom – it was a tense narrative.**

**After Lot left - 14 The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, “Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. 15 All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. (Everything you can see will be your family’s – even Lot’s land)**

**Don’t worry about what he took – I’ve got you! Lot does not own the land – it’s mine. We need to remember this too!**

**(Abe is thinking, what family? I have no kids. Spoken to a childless man whose name means Father) 16 I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. (imagine that) 17 Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you.” (Check it out – explore it - walk the property – a walkthrough)**

**18 So Abram went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he pitched his tents. There he built an altar to the LORD.**

**No matter where he was - he prioritized a place of worship.**

**The altar was a constant awareness of the need for sacrificial atonement and covering.**

**Mamre is the name of a man – who helps Abe in Chapter 14.**

**Mamre means vision. Hebron means communion/alliance. Abe begins to walk in vision and communion with the LORD & others.**

**Growing in Faith: A Pilgrams Progress**

**Abe still stumbles – a lot. But we start to see some real growth.**

**1. We are still pitching tents**

**“he went from place to place… from there he went to… from there…”**

**The feeling of restlessness & missing home. We get glimpses of home w/ family. But, like this world, they pass away.**

**The reason is – this world is not our home.**

**1 Pet 2:11 – Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.**

**We, too, are tent-dwellers, pilgrims passing through.**

**Don’t be caught up in the sinful desires of this land.**

**OT prophets and those like Abe – knew this but couldn’t quite touch it.**

**Heb 11:13 All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. 14 People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. 15 If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 Instead, they were longing for a better country - a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.**

**We pitch tents – we live loosely tied to this world.**

**2. Paradise is not found in the riches of this life but in the riches of God’s promises**

**Gen 13:10 Lot looked around and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan toward Zoar was well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.)**

**Lot saw paradise in the land. This place - looks like paradise!**

**Interestingly Lot also adds it looks – “like the land of Egypt”**

**Place of sin & idolatry, Lot saw it and said, “It’s like heaven.”**

**It was spiritual to him – these things will bring me paradise – will bring me happiness. We do the same (explain).**

**\*\*Abe, however, had his eyes on the promises of God – and held loosely the things of this world – he saw a greater city – Eternity.**

**Hebrews 11:8 By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. 9 By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. 10 For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.**

**3. We are to walk the land of God’s promises**

**Gen 13:17 Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you.” (Check it out – explore it - walk the property – walkthrough – know it.)**

**We are called to do the same thing - the land is not ours, and Abe's promises are not ours specifically. But we are to explore the land of promises known as the word of God.**

**2 Peter 1:3 His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.**

**You have what you need – walk through and in the promises of God. It’s right here. Start walking. Explore it. Know it.**

**4. Humble generosity trumps prideful greed.**

**Abe gave preference to Lot, and Lot wanted a lot. He took the whole fertile plain.**

**Lot did not honor his father figure. He was prideful and selfish.**

**Lot was possessed by his possessions. His greed was a poison.**

* **Lot prioritized what he could see (looks like a good opportunity)**
* **Lot prioritized his self-interest (his own desires)**

**Sound familiar? A bigger house, more money, more things. I can see it. Visualize it. But – what does God say? Have you sought God about it? How will this affect your spiritual life and your family's spiritual life? The focus is not on their comfort but on their soul.**

**1 Timothy 6:9 Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.**

**Lot’s issue was not money – it was the love of money. (it eventually cost him his family)**

**Lot walked by sight - Abe’s eyes were not on the hills**

**2 Cor 5:7 – For we live by faith, not by sight.**

**Abe was starting to understand and trust God. In Egypt – he felt he had to lie to get ahead; now, he starts to understand that God is in control.**

**He held his possessions loosely and gave them freely. Rather than gimmie, gimmie, gimmie, Abe was - give, give, give!**

**We see this modeled perfectly in Jesus Christ. Phil 2:3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. 5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross!**

**9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

**Jesus models for us humble generosity and open hands. He generously gave his life!**

**5. Compromising God’s word brings chaos and strife**

**Compromise with Lot - Years before, God told Abe to leave it all, but he brought Lot with him. This was a compromise will bring continued chaos**

**Lot should have never been there – he became a thorn in Abe's life many times. Risking his own life to get him out of trouble.**

**\* Even though there is forgiveness, consequences still follow**

**Compromise in Egypt—We later find that Sari brings back an Egyptian handmaid named Hagar with her - which will cause great pain in the future.**

**He renounced Egypt, but Egypt followed him.**

**\* Compromise if often progressive**

**The seeds of Compromise with Lot - Gen 13:12 …Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. 13 Now the people of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the LORD.**

* **1 - He lives near Sodom - Gen 13 - Intentionally settled by it. I won’t go in it – I’ll just hang around it.**
* **2 – He lives in Sodom - Gen 14:12 – He was living in Sodom.**
* **3 – He is a leader in Sodom - Gen 19- His daughters are engaged to men of the city, and he sits in the city gates as one of the city judges.**

**Near Sodom – In Sodom – leader of Sodom.**

**Reminds me of - Psalm 1:1-5 – Notice the progression - 1 Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, 2 but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. 3 That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers. 4 Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.**

**God’s progression in Psalm 1:**

**Planting (established) – yielding (fruit) – lasting (seasons) – prospering**

**(unlike the wicked) Not planted – not yielding – not lasting – failing**

**6. Our choices do not lead us astray, our heart leads our choices astray**

**It was not Lot’s compromise that was the problem – it was deeper - his heart – He was selfish and prideful. His heart desired more.**

**Gen 6:5 … every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. Gen 8:21** **…every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood**

**Jeremiah 17:9 - The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?**

**Mark 7:20 “What comes out of a person is what defiles them. 21 For it is from within, out of a person’s heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, 22 adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. 23 All these evils come from inside and defile a person.”**

**The heart is wicked and deceptive, we all need a savior to intervene. We all have bad hearts and need heart surgery!**

**7. Thank God for homecoming prodigals!**

**A Prodigal is one who lives foolishly and recklessly.**

**Luke 15:11-12 - Jesus gave a parable of the kingdom – comparing it to a foolish prodigal who is welcomed home by a gracious father (explain).**

**Abe wandered off from God – sinned and led others in sin – but he came back. Abe was an OT prodigal.**

**A simple word for someone today: Prodigal, come home.**

**2 Cor 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles…**

**John 8:44 - Jesus refers to the devil as– “not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.**

**Prodigal – you have two fathers calling you.**

**The Father of lies: one more hit, night, dollar, car, etc. is all you need. But as a liar – he knows they will only leave you empty.**

**The Father of compassion – the God of comfort – come home. Return to the altar of Christ.**

**But Abe's action was simple = he returned to the Altar (the cross) and called out to God. Starting over – beginning again – NEW.**

**We are constantly reminded that Abraham was not and can never be the savior – He needed one – and so do we.**