

ABRAHAM'S THIRD ALTAR

⁴ So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him.
Genesis 12:4

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. ...” 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.

Genesis 13:14,18

¹⁹ They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

1 John 2:19

I. Altars and tents / A season of choices

A. A subtle distinction / There are men and women who walk with God (Altar builders), and men and women who walk with people that walk with God (Tent builders).

1. David walked with God, but Joab walked with David.
2. Paul walked with God, but Demas walked with Paul.
3. Abraham walked with God, but Lot walked with Abraham.

B. Altars and tents: a study in contrasts.

1. Abraham built altars; Lot pitched his tents.

2. Abraham had his own altars; Lot borrowed Abraham's altars and never built his own.
3. Lot was more concerned about tents than altars.
4. There are deficiencies in tents not found in altars.
5. Tents are temporary, made of fragile materials that can be easily destroyed; Altars are stable and permanent.
6. Tents have to be supported by ropes, poles, and stakes--all destroyable by fire or circumstance. They have to be held up. An altar is permanent, and will hold you up.
7. A tent is where man lives; an altar is where God lives.
8. Lot gravitated toward Sodom, because there were no altars in his life.

C. Abraham's first altar of wow promise (Genesis 12:5-7) was built in Shechem, in the midst of enemies in between Mount Ebal (barrenness) and Mount Gerazim (fruitfulness) where all idols were buried. (Genesis 35:4)

[Gen 12:5-7 NIV] ⁵ *He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there. ⁶ Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷ The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him.*

[Gen 35:4 NIV] ⁴ *So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods they had and the rings in their ears, and Jacob buried them under the oak at Shechem.*

D. Abraham's second altar of deeper intimacy (Genesis 12:8) was built between Bethel (House of God) and Ai (ruins)

⁸ *From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD.*

E. Abraham returned to his second altar (Genesis 13:3-4) after having been deepened with profound life experiences.

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.*

1. A season of great disappointment

2. A season of expanded knowledge

3. A season of grievous sin

F. Abraham's third altar in Hebron / The altar of possession and fulfillment (Genesis 13:14-18)

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. 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. ¹⁷ Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving*

it to you.”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.

* The name Hebron meant league, confederacy, and alliance. Lot must leave Abraham before this blessing can become a reality.

1. Once Abraham was separated from Lot, the full will of God was allowed to begin in Abraham's life.
2. Once clutter gets out of our lives, God can establish the partnerships and blessings we crave.
3. Unequally yoked partnerships will now be divorced from us so that true fruitfulness can emerge.
4. Pruning is a blessing, not a curse. Shearing is a blessing, not a curse

II. Divine divorces and Hebron

- A. Abraham marries and divorces Egypt.
- B. Abraham marries and divorces Lot.
- C. Loss through gain / Lot marries position, public office, a wife, and material possessions.
- D. In the act of marrying these things, Lot is immediately divorced from what really matters: his spirituality, his power with Abraham, his power with the inhabitants of Sodom, his power with his wife, his power over his children, his power over his relatives, and his power with God.
- E. Lot aligns himself with something destined for destruction. (Sodom)