

Lesson 9 – 28 March 2010

Abram and Lot — a Separation of Faith

Lesson Scope: [Genesis Chapters 13 and 14](#)

Lesson Focus

When God called Abram to leave Haran, Lot chose to go along. Apparently Lot enjoyed a good relationship with Abram and benefited from his good example. Perhaps Lot benefited materially as well. Both of them were now quite wealthy (Gen. 13:2 and 5).

It seems that, as long as Lot was with Abram, he moved in the right direction; but when he separated from Abram his choices led him closer to the world. The New Testament describes Lot as righteous (2 Peter 2:8), but he was deeply involved with the affairs of this world. His family failed to embrace the faith of their father. In contrast Abram maintained his dependence on God and his separation from the heathen Canaanites.

Men determine their course of life and their destiny in their daily choices. Choosing by sight incurs spiritual jeopardy and eventual loss, but choosing by faith secures God's blessing and ultimate gain.

This lesson begins by introducing Abram and Lot's relationship. It shows that, even though Lot made good choices when he was with Abram, the time came when he needed to make his own decisions. Those decisions affected his future. Although he apparently remained faithful to God, his family did not. Abram likewise made choices that affected him and his family. May we make practical applications for our lives from this lesson and let it be a challenge to us to make godly choices.

Lesson Aim: To present contrasts between earthly vision and spiritual vision.

Theme Verses: [Colossians 3:1-2](#).

“If ye then be raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”

Lesson Text

The Choice

Genesis 13:5-11

And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. ⁶And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. ⁷And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land. ⁸And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we *be* brethren. ⁹*Is* not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if *thou wilt take* the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if *thou depart* to the right hand, then I will go to the left. ¹⁰And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, *even* as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. ¹¹Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.

The Course

Genesis 13:13-18

But the men of Sodom *were* wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly. ¹⁴And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: ¹⁵For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. ¹⁶And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, *then* shall thy seed also be numbered. ¹⁷Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee. ¹⁸Then Abram removed *his* tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which *is* in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.

The Consequences

Genesis 14:14-24

And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained *servants*, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued *them* unto Dan. ¹⁵And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which *is* on the left hand of Damascus. ¹⁶And he brought back all the goods, and

also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people. ¹⁷And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that *were* with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which *is* the king's dale. ¹⁸And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he *was* the priest of the most high God. ¹⁹And he blessed him, and said, Blessed *be* Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: ²⁰And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all. ²¹And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. ²²And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, ²³That I will not *take* from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that *is* thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich: ²⁴Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.

Questions for Study

The Choice

1. How did Abram express faith in resolving this conflict?
2. What apparently influenced Lot to make the choice he did?

The Course

3. What were some involvements of Lot's pitching his tent toward Sodom? How might one do this today?
4. What did Abram gain by walking through the land?
5. What lesson can we learn from Gen.13:18?

The Consequences

6. How did the choices of Abram and Lot in chapter 13 contribute to the events in chapter 14?
7. What are some important lines of separation we must draw today? What problems will we hereby avoid?

Analyzing the Passage

The fact that the Canaanite and the Perizzite were in the land (Gen.13:7) may have contributed to the fact that the land was not able to bear them.

"Let there be no strife. I pray thee, between me and thee" (Gen.13:8) indicates that Abram took personal responsibility for the strife of his herdsmen.

He realized that it was no more right for him to allow his servants to strive than to strive himself.

Lot "lifted up his eyes" (Gen.13:10) to evaluate his options and make a choice to his own advantage. Later, God told Abram to "lift up now thine (Gen.13:14) to see the far greater blessings give that God chose to give him.

Abram gives his view of God in Gen.14:22 "The LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth." These words explained Abram's victory, his allegiance, and his refusal to take any of the spoils for himself.

Principles and Applications

The Choice

1. A person with spiritual vision seeks a peaceful solution to relationship difficulties (Gen.13:8). Abram could have chosen to let the controversy between the herdsmen continue until Lot addressed the issue. He could have insisted that God had given the land to him; therefore he had a right to first choice.

The child of God chooses to make peace even if it costs him material things. The spiritual man is motivated to solve relationship problems because of his love for others. The souls of men are too valuable to lose because of carnal strife. Our peace with God is too precious to lose over an argument.

2. Spiritual vision contributes to humility and unselfishness (Gen.13:9). Abram loved Lot. He also trusted that God could provide for his own needs. Therefore, he offered Lot the choice (see Romans 12:10). The Spiritual man unselfishly loves and gives because God loves and provides for him. He looks out for the good of his brother. He desires peace and is willing to sacrifice to achieve it.

The Course

3. Earthly vision pursues earthly gains regardless of immediate spiritual dangers (Gen.13:12-13). The Bible does not give us Lot's rationale for choosing the plains of Sodom. The mention that the plains were well watered and that Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom may indicate that Lot chose earthly security rather than trusting God to supply his needs. The spiritual man would have considered the character of the Sodomites in his choice, but men with earthly vision see only the well-watered plains.

4. Spiritual vision grasps the of God's promised future blessings

(Gen.13:14-17). God had much more for Abram than he had given Lot. God came to him and assured him of His presence. He told him to look around and see how well He was providing for him. The man with spiritual vision knows that the best rewards come after this life. They are worth waiting for.

5. The man of spiritual vision responds to God with obedience and worship (Gen.13:18). Abram built an altar and worshiped God in the hours of deepest disappointment, God always provides for His people. We always have reason to worship God for His goodness.

The Consequences

6. Living by earthly vision leads to suffering with the earthly-minded (Gen.14:14). Lot's choice to pitch his tent toward Sodom led him to move into Sodom. Finally, most of his family was lost in Sodom.

We cannot always avoid suffering with the world when they reap for their sin. But we can avoid much of it as we refrain from being entangled in their activities and programs. The more we are part of the ungodly, the more their problems will be our problems.

7. The man of faith is willing to help others in need (Gen.14:14). Abram could have excused himself with the reasoning that Lot's own choices got him into this trouble. Abram's compassion for Lot moved him to come to his rescue. Jesus calls us to love our fellow men as He loves us (John 15:12).

8. God openly blesses His faithful saints (Gen.14:19-20). Abram sought no earthly reward, but God saw his kindness and rewarded him openly. God sees each kind word and deed even when other people do not, and He will reward them in due time. But if we do a kind deed for the praise of men, we already have our reward.

9. Men of spiritual vision give God the glory for His work in their lives (Gen.14:20). A gift from the king of Sodom may have left the impression that Abram, by his own power, had delivered the people from their enemy. Abram wanted God to receive all the glory. The child of God seeks to exalt God instead of himself. Kindness speaks for God when men will not listen to a verbal testimony.

10. Spiritual vision clearly perceives appropriate lines of separation (Gen.14:21-24). Abram chose to remain a pilgrim and stranger in the land because he looked for a better country. Lot, on the other hand, seems to have sought earthly security and returned again to Sodom. Abram became

the father of the faithful, but Lot experienced great loss.

Important Teachings

1. A person with spiritual vision seeks a peaceful solution to relationship difficulties (Gen.13:8).
2. Spiritual vision contributes to humility and unselfishness (Gen.13:9).
3. Earthly vision pursues earthly goals regardless of spiritual dangers (Gen.13:12-13).
4. Spiritual vision grasps the significance of God's promised future blessings (Gen.13:14-17).
5. The man of spiritual vision responds to God with obedience and worship (Gen.13:18).
6. Living by earthly vision leads to suffering with the earthly-minded (Gen.14:14).
7. The man of faith is willing to help others in need (Gen.14:14).
8. God openly blesses His faithful saints (Gen.14:19-20).
9. Men of spiritual vision give God the glory for His work in their lives (Gen.14:20).
10. Spiritual vision clearly perceives appropriate lines of separation (Gen.14:21-24).
11. A person with earthly vision quickly seizes opportunities for personal gain (Gen.13:11).

Answers to Questions

1. How did Abram express faith in resolving this conflict?

Abram valued peace above material gain. Knowing Lot well, Abram perhaps anticipated his selfish choice. Nevertheless, he offered Lot first choice, confident that the Lord would amply provide for his own needs.

2. What apparently influenced Lot to make the choice he did?

The plain of Jordan was well watered, providing good grazing land. In self-interest, he chose all the plain. Lot's choice may have been a good business decision, but it was not spiritually safe for his family.

3. What were some involvements of Lot's pitching his tent toward Sodom? How might one do this today?

This shows Lot's interest in Sodom. No doubt he moved closer until, finally, he was in Sodom. His actions were such that he could not credibly rebuke the evil that he found there (Gen.19:9, 14) or prevent his family

from adopting heathen ways.

Our work might expose us or our family to ungodly influences that would lead our children to choose the ungodly in marriage. Business or work situations that place us alone for long periods of time with someone of the opposite gender are unsafe. Jobs might require extensive training by ungodly teachers.

4. What did Abram gain by walking through the land?

Abram could see the vastness of God's provision. God provides a way for those who walk by faith.

5. What lesson can we learn from Genesis 13:18?

Abram's example teaches us the importance of keeping God first in our affection. Worship and obedience are normal responses of true faith.

6. How did the choices of Abram and Lot in chapter 13 contribute to the events in chapter 14?

Because Lot chose material prosperity, he ended up living in Sodom. Consequently, he was in Sodom when the king rebelled; so he was taken captive. Abram continued to follow God and to live as a stranger in the world. God enabled him to rescue Lot and the people of Sodom.

7. What are some important lines of separation we must draw today? What problems will we thereby avoid?

We cannot help being affected by the world's economic troubles, but by helping each other and living frugally, we can escape the bondage. By having our own schools, we can shield our children from the evil allowed and promoted in the public schools. By not accepting government handouts, we avoid entanglements that violate Christian principles. When we refrain from joining worldly organizations, we avoid some influences that could lead our family or us astray.

Summarizing the Lesson

“And he said to them all; If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?” (Luke 9:23-25).

It is better to make decisions based on God's standard and be poor or despised here on this earth than to make a name in time and face eternal death in the world to come.

Research Guide

1. Read the New Testament references to Lot (Luke 17:28-29 and 32; 2 Peter 2:7-8).
2. Read Hebrews 7:1-21 in relation to the typology of Abram's encounter with Melchizedek.