

Genesis 13:1-13

- 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.
- 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.
- 5 Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents.
- 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.
- 7 And quarreling arose between Abram's herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time.
- 8 So Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers."
- 9 Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left."
- 10 Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.)
- 11 So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. 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 men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord.

GENESIS 13:1-13

YOU COULD TRUST

OF A LIFETIME

INTRODUCTION: What would you do if someone reliable offered you a deal that ~~certainly seemed too good to be true~~? What would you do? Say, a free ^{1 YEAR OLD} car or for only a fraction of the cost? Or a deal on a house that is for \$30,000 less than it appraised for and it already passed all inspections, no problems?

Or a job making 25% more with an extra week per year of vacation and only 8 minutes from your house? What would you do? What would be the process you would use to make such a decision? Today, the Lord has for us a great lesson in great deals---Genesis 13.

BACKGROUND: A & Pharaoh in Egypt; God protects and provides; A gets to go home, end of famine, and has 'lots' of stuff
Extent of wealth: livestock was the measuring stick, yet notice A also has lots of silver and gold...
Also the Hebrew word here for "very rich or very wealthy" is literally "very heavy." We would probably say, "Loaded."

READ V 2

Lot, notice verse 5 & wording, "moving about with A". What is significant about this? What is Lot's reason for also having much? A, nothing more, nothing less. ... ASSOC W/ AB -> RICHES

READ V 5

Presenting problem of this passage is verses 6-7, READ. The problem: 'too much stuff.' What a problem to have? How many of us would be willing to tackle this problem---too many cars, houses, investments?

READ

The other part of the problem is the strife & quarreling between the herdsmen. Interestingly, through famine and dangers and wanderings, nothing came between Abram and Lot, but riches are the breaking point. Any applications here?

Notice also the last part of verse 7, READ. Why is this a necessary part of the account? Why should we know this? Are you like me, do you find things like this interesting?

READ

I suspect this goes back to God's covenant and promise to A. Remember God promised to bless A and the Lord also commanded A to BE a blessing. A was to be a blessing to the Canaanites and Perizzites. By the way, how would you like to be called and known as a 'Perizzite?' Great name isn't it?

So I believe part of the presenting problem here also is that there is noticeable strife and quarreling among God's chosen people. Not only are they not being a blessing, they are being a pain. Kind of like when I tell people, please do not let anyone know you are a Christian. Ex. Guy who trimmed my trees. SHAME ISN'T IT?

So what will our spiritual father do? Let's see, READ Verses 8-9. WOW!!! Well, actually I am sure this is what you or I would do, right? No way! I probably would say, "Now let's see---how should we decide how to divide up this land?" Maybe, now let's see, how

READ

DO YOU SEE WHAT A IS SAYING - YOU GET 1ST CHOICE

did we get all this neat stuff & how did we end up here in Canaan? What do you think Lot?"

At best I might try to figure out how to divide the land so we each get part of the most lush and we each get some of the mountains and the more desolate areas. This is not what A does, *is it?*

READ

But first let's consider Lot, READ Verses 10-11. What is noticeable about how Lot responds to A's proposal? What does the passage say? Lot LOOKS up & sees some of the most beautiful land that you or I have ever seen. Did you see? "Like the garden of the Lord"---like the garden of Eden. Can you imagine how beautiful this must have been?

Examples: *BETTER THAN ROCKIES IN COLD LEAVES IN FALL IN NEW ENGLAND*

What else do you notice about Lot's response? Put ~~yourself~~ ^{you} in his shoes: ~~you~~ ^{you} have been traveling and living with the one person that the Lord God has chosen to make a new nation from. God has promised His richest blessings and His protection upon Abram.

You are now in the land that the Lord God has chosen for His special nation; furthermore you have become a very wealthy person simply because you are Abram's relative; you have, as the expression goes, ridden on his coat tails.

Now there is somewhat of a space problem and there is definitely a relationship problem. Your uncle A is offering you, what? Not just a small portion of the land; not even an equal split; what he is offering is for you to take the best. Now, how should you respond? Do you see? What should Lot have said?

"Uncle Ab, what are you saying? I have no rights. Furthermore, everything I have is because of you. How could I possibly choose any land of this promised land to live on?"

Then if anything, certainly allow Uncle Ab to make the first choice. *YOU SHOW ME WHERE TO GO - ANYTHING IS STILL TOO MUCH! ISN'T WHAT LOT DOES, IS IT?*

OK, what all are we to see here? First, let's look at the 'side' comments in this passage. The first is in verse 10, "This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah." The second 'side' comment in all of verse 13, READ. Do you think that there is something that we are supposed to see here? Why is God giving us this information?

READ

It seems that He wants us to know that S & G is a bad, bad place. How is that for Biblical discernment? It also seems that the wickedness of S & G, because it was so over the top, was well known, probably well known to Lot.

So what is Lot doing here? He is looking only at the visible world, the 'seen' world, isn't he? And what he sees is quite impressive. Perhaps one of the more remarkable sections of land anywhere. Water is very abundant. And the excitement of the city,

*PROB AT THAT TIME
PROBABLY SOURCE OF CONFLICT*

well

CUTTING EDGE

S & G must have been some place---exciting, very progressive. Large enough for his kids to get an excellent education; probably more eating places than imaginable; anything you could think of from an entertainment standpoint; and with all his wealth, more than likely, great opportunities for status for Lot and social opportunities galore for his wife.

You know the more you think about it, this choice seems like a no-brainer. Who wouldn't have chosen it? Do you really think that we would have felt any different? Now we might have handled it differently, but would we have desired any less? *I DON'T THINK SO*

For us the comparison might have been like choosing between the Hill Country, including San Antonio, and then having also in plain view, an area like West Texas and the Odessa, Midland area. Which would you choose? So can we fault Lot here?

The focus here seems to be HOW Lot made his choice. Again how did he? Verse 10 says, "He looked up and saw." Do you see the problem? Obviously, since this was before S & G was destroyed, Lot could not have known this. Because if he had known, no way would he have chosen S & G, right?

PLAIN OF THE JORDAN,

So how could he have known? He couldn't. But, and this is a very significant but, God knew. I believe this is precisely why the side comment is added in verse 10. God knew. Now we could ask, how is the fact that God knew what the future held for S & G, of benefit to Lot? What would you say?

What should Lot have done? Or, maybe we should say, what should Lot not have done? This is actually the better and easier question. How would you answer this one?

What he should not have done was to "Look up and see." Does this make any sense? Sure doesn't sound right, does it? Lot should not have looked up and saw and then made his decision. Why?

Because we cannot trust what we can see, and here we have a PERFECT example. You see S & G would be be annihilated and all around it, kind of vaporized. So what looked to be a paradise, wasn't that at all! Can you see?

The application here is enormous. House, by the golf course; school for your kids & killer or molestor; job where company is closed down due to economy or scandal or boss's son comes to work in the area you were being groomed for; marriage partner, example of high school reunions. Do you see? What we can so clearly see, is not clear, at all!!!

PLAIN OF THE JORDAN,

Here, in S & G, Lot makes the absolutely WORST decision of his life. As we study on in Genesis this will be even more clear. You know there is one more passage on Lot that really surprised me.

It is in 2 Peter 2:7-8, let me read it to you.

READ

"God rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men, (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard." Isn't this amazing? Not how we ususally think of Lot, is it? "Righteous" Lot!

A couple of things here. First, even before the destruction of S & G, do you see? Lot was absolutely miserable living in what he thought was Utopia. I see this over and over. What looks perfect to us carries no guarantees with it. *GOD'S VIEW - INSUREN OFTEN SO DIFFICULT. IDEAL COMMUNITY, JOB, PERSON BRINGS MISERY*

Second, God declares Lot righteous and yet look at the devastation that came out of Lot's decision to go by his instincts. Lot was not a selfish, spoiled, stupid man. He was a 'righteous' man who, very simply, decided to trust in himself and in what he could clearly see. How does that grab you? Aren't you glad we are not like Lot? This sure makes me uncomfortable.

The other main character in this account is Lot's uncle, Abram. What a contrast! What does this account tell us about Abram? Other than what A says to Lot, not much. But let's look at what God reveals to us---last half of Verse 3 and then 4, READ.

READ

A. returns where? Where he used to live, but more significantly, to where he had first built an altar to the Lord God. What is meaningful here? This was where Abram worshipped God and committed himself to follow God. Abram had been delivered by the Lord from all of his problems in Egypt, most of his own creating.

READ
V4

It seems he is ready to trust God and listen to Him alone. Notice also, "Abram called on the name of the Lord." Why 'name'? Why not just, 'called on the Lord?' Why?

God's name represents all that He is. This is part of the reason why God has assigned CCBC to do our praise project this fall, where we commit to praise God multiple times each day. Just like we have been doing, Abram calls upon the NAME of the Lord. He thinks deeply about who exactly our God is; He shares with the Lord the things that impress him, mean so much to him.

Maybe how the Lord God is merciful; how He is sovereign---imagine being back in the promised land and no famine and lots of tangible blessings; how God is all-sufficient.

Can you clearly see that God Himself wants to make sure that we see this time of worship and focus on the NAME of the Lord. Then we have verses 5, 6, & 7---the problem between Lot and Abram.

Then what? Verses 8-9. Do you think it is coincidental that Abram's remarkable proposal to Lot is preceded only by "Abram called on the name of the Lord."

PARISH PROJECT

Do you see? When we spend time with the Lord and grasp who He actually is, it changes the way we look at things. The unseen world truly is more powerful and more lasting ^{MORE ACCURATE} than that which we see.

As Abram remembered God's promises and as he meditated on the character of our God, then his proposal to Lot makes much more sense. "Lot, look at all this land. Can you believe this is all ours? Listen you take whatever you prefer."

I am sure Abram thought, "What difference does it make to the creator of everything. Shoot, if it becomes necessary, He can create an oasis out of nothing. Is He limited by whatever portion of land is chosen? Not a chance! So Lot, take whatever. I'll accept whatever the Lord has for me, because I trust HIM!"

Abram can see the beauty of the land Lot chooses, but he is going for the excitement of getting to see what the Lord has for Him. Kind of like the mystery door or curtain except, because Abram knows the Lord, He knows that God has something even better for him.

READ VII-12

READ

How does this part of this account end? Abram contentedly accepts the less desirable portion of land and Lot goes and pitches his tents near Sodom, worst possible place to settle in. ^{MORE NEXT WEEK}

Wouldn't it be great to have Abram's kind of faith and confidence in the Lord? How could we ever grow or mature enough to have such 'trust'? Here is the most amazing part of all we have studied this morning:

AS ABRAM, OUR SPIRITUAL FATHER

All it takes for this type of faith, ^{AS} is for us to quit fixing our eyes on what we can see and instead call on the name of the Lord and listen for His instructions; we can even ask another family member for help in hearing the Lord, if we are having problems. This is all it takes. Now, is that not amazing?

No 'super saints', no spiritual giants, just simple child-like faith and not going with our sight and our common sense. Let's do it!

LET'S BE CAUTIOUS

So if a great deal comes along OR if the bottom falls out, let's set our eyes on the unseen and upon our Lord. Let's pray.

LET'S CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD.