

# MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE

## **TEXT: GENESIS 13**

### **Introduction:**

1. Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees to go into Haran, and from Haran he went to Canaan.
2. After he had arrived in the Promised Land, a famine arose, and Abraham, accompanied by his nephew Lot, sought refuge in Egypt.
3. Lot had been traveling with Abraham everywhere he went (cf. Gen. 11:31; 12:4, 5; 13:5).
4. The characters of Abram and Lot present a sharp contrast. AW Pink said, “Throughout the biographical portions of Scripture we find the Holy Spirit frequently brings together two men of widely different character and placing them in juxtaposition so that we might the better learn the salutary lessons He would teach us. Abel and Cain, Moses and Aaron, Samuel and Saul, David and Solomon, are well known examples of this principle. In almost every respect Lot compares unfavorably with Abram. Abram walked by faith, Lot by sight. Abram was generous and magnanimous; Lot greedy and worldly. Abram looked for a city whose builder and maker was God; Lot made his home in a city that was built by man and destroyed by God. Abram was the father of all who believe; Lot was father of those whose name is a perpetual infamy. Abram was made ‘heir of the world’ (Rom. 4:3), while the curtain falls upon Lot with all his possessions destroyed in Sodom, and himself dwelling in a ‘cave’ (Gen. 19:30)” (*Gleanings in Genesis*).
5. In Genesis 13:6 we read, “And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together...”
6. Why couldn’t they “dwell together”? Why was there “strife” (13:7) between them? Because of all their earthly possessions and wealth!
7. “For their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together” (Gen. 13:6b).
8. “And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdmen; for we are brethren. 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” (13:8, 9).

9. Abraham was concerned that the strife that had begun with the servants could easily end with him and his nephew Lot. So in order to avoid any friction between them, Abraham proposed that they should split up and go their separate ways.
10. Abraham could see that there might come a falling out between himself and his nephew and he wanted to avoid that.
11. Furthermore, it was not a good testimony for believers to quarrel before the heathen inhabitants of the land – “and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land” (13:7b).
12. So it was time for Abraham and Lot to separate. Second Thessalonians 3:6 says, “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly.”
13. Lot was a “brother” (nephew), and a fellow believer (cf. II Peter 2:7, 8), but he walked disorderly so Abraham had to separate from him.

#### **I. ABRAHAM LET LOT CHOOSE FIRST (13:9).**

1. Abraham graciously let Lot make the first choice (Gen. 13:8, 9).
2. Romans 12:18 says, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”
3. On several occasions, our Lord said, “But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first” (Matt. 19:30).
4. The apostle Paul said, “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Phil. 2:4).
5. It was with this gracious spirit that Abraham said to Lot, “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” (Gen. 13:9).

#### **II. LOT MADE THE WRONG CHOICE (13:10, 11).**

1. As Abraham and Lot stood together on the heights of Bethel, the Promised Land was spread out before them. The proposal made by Abram to his nephew was exceedingly generous, and in his greed, Lot took full advantage of it.
2. The Scofield Study Bible refers to this as “Lot’s first step in backsliding.”
3. Second step: pitching his tent toward Sodom (13:12, 13).
4. Third step: sitting in the gate of Sodom (19:1).
5. Last step: getting drunk with his wicked daughters (19:33-38).

6. The Scofield Bible says, “Lot ‘pitched toward Sodom’ (Gen. 13:12) for worldly advantage; then became a great man in Sodom (Gen. 19:1) at the cost of his daughter’s accepting the morals of Sodom.”
7. Sadly, Lot got his daughters out of Sodom, but he couldn’t get Sodom out of his daughters.
8. Bob Jones Sr. said, “Sodom was a good place to raise cattle, but a terrible place to raise children.”
9. If Lot were wise and godly, he would have said to Abraham, “Uncle Abraham, you are older and wiser and more experienced in these matters. I know the Lord is leading you so I will defer to your judgment.”
10. But instead of praying and seeking the Lord’s guidance, and instead of leaving the choice to Abraham, “Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east, and they separated themselves the one from the other” (13:10, 11).
11. Lot “Lifted up his eyes and beheld.” Lot should have lifted up his eyes to heaven, instead of the plain of Jordan.
12. Abraham walked by faith, but Lot preferred to walk by sight, rather than by faith. This shows the difference in their character.
13. Hebrews 11:8 says, “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.”
14. Hebrews 11:9 says, “By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country...”
15. Amos 3:3 says, “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?”
16. It was impossible for Lot to remain with Abram because they were not agreed. Genesis 13:6 says, “they could not dwell together.”
17. Lot “lifted up his eyes” (13:10). This was the beginning of his decline, which eventually ended in sin and shame.

18. First John 2:16 says, “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”
19. Our youngsters sing in Sunday School and Children’s Church, “Oh, be careful little eyes what you see!”
20. Walking by sight always leads to sin and disgrace. “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof” (Gen. 3:6).
21. Remember Achan. He confessed, “When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them and took them” (Joshua 7:21).
22. Remember King David. “And from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon” (II Sam. 11:2).
23. The order is always the same – “I saw, I coveted, and I took.”
24. And so it was with Lot: first he lifted up his eyes and beheld, and then he made his choice.
25. The words in Genesis 13:10 are significant – “like the land of Egypt” – signifying that Lot still had Egypt in his heart. In addition to his “flocks and herds and tents” (13:5), Lot had brought with him the worldly spirit of Egypt.
26. To the worldly eye of Lot all the plain appeared “well watered and as the garden of the Lord,” but from God’s perspective, the men who lived there were “wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly” (13:13).
27. Lot made a foolish choice. Soon his property was destroyed in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, his wife was turned into a pillar of salt, and he wound up in a miserable cave with his two wicked daughters – stripped of everything, and face to face with the results of his own shameful sin.

### **III. ABRAHAM MADE THE CORRECT CHOICE (13:14-18).**

1. The subsequent conduct of Lot and the Lord’s rewarding of Abraham indicate plainly that Abraham made the right choice, and Lot made the wrong choice.
2. FB Meyer said Lot “had little sympathy with the pilgrim spirit...Lot did nothing more than is done by scores of professing Christians every day.”

3. And then FB Meyer gives an illustration to drive his point: “A Christian man asks you to go over and see the place which he is about to take in the country. It is certainly a charming place: the house is spacious and well situated; the air balmy; the garden and paddock large; the views enchanting. When you have gone over it, you ask how he will fare on Sunday. You put the question not from feelings of curiosity, but because you know that he needs strong religious influences to counteract the effect of absorbing business cares, from Monday morning till Saturday night; and because you know that his children are beginning to evince a deepening interest in the things of God. "Well," says he, 'I really have never thought of it,' Or perhaps he answers, 'I believe there is nothing here like we have been accustomed to; but one cannot have everything: and they say that the society here is extremely good.' Is not this the spirit of Lot, who bartered the altar of Abraham's camp for the plains of Sodom, because the grass looks green and plentiful?”
4. Lot “lifted up his eyes” and made the wrong choice (13:10). But Abraham lifted up his eyes and made the right choice (13:14) – because it was the LORD's choice.
5. What an interesting contrast! Lot lifted up his eyes, to seek his own advantage. But Abraham lifted up his eyes, not to seek out what would be best for him, but to see what God had prepared for him.
6. How much better it is to wait on the Lord till He says to us, “Lift up now thine eyes” (13:14).
7. God honors those who walk by faith. Psalm 84:11 says, “No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.”
8. That Scripture brought great comfort to George Muller.
9. FB Meyer said, “If only we will go on doing what is right, giving up the best to our neighbor to avoid dispute, considering God's interests first, and our own last, expending ourselves for the coming and glory of the kingdom of heaven, we shall find that God will charge Himself with our interests. And He will do infinitely better for us than we could.”
10. The LORD told Abraham, “Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it.” The LORD wanted

Abraham to feel as free walking through the land as if the title deeds were actually in his hands.

11. By faith he was to act towards it as if he were already in absolute possession.
12. There are many practical lessons here for us (cf. Mark 11:24).

**CONCLUSION:**

1. Genesis 13 concludes with Abraham building an altar in Hebron “unto the LORD” (13:18).
2. Let us turn this platform into an old-fashioned altar and ask the Lord to guide us and to help us to make the right choices in life.

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