

Building on Biblical Foundations

“Choose Ye”

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Genesis 12:9-20

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We continue our story in Genesis Chapter 13

SLIDES:

1 And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south.

2 And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.

3 And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai;

4 Unto the place of the altar, which he had make there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the Lord.

5 And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.

6 And 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.

7 And 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.

8 And 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.

10 And 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.

11 Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.

12 Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.

13 But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.

14 And 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:

15 For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

16 And 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.

17 Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.

18 Then 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.

Our story picks up with Abram journeying put of Egypt. We see that the Lord has blessed Abram and he is now “very rich in cattle, silver and gold.” So much in fact that there is not enough space to graze his animals and those of his nephew Lot. In humility Abram – the elder – asks Lot to choose where he will go. By right Abram could have told Lot where to go, and taken the best land for himself. But he allows Lot to choose.

What can we learn from both Lot and Abram?

First our choice is a reflection of our present self. . . our character, our fears, our trust, our comfort, our relationship with the Lord.

Next our choice directs our path whether for good or evil, for righteousness or corruption, for weakening or strengthening.

LOT's CHOICE:

1. The Easy Way.

- a. Lot looks out over the land and sees that the plain of Jordan is well watered.
- b. So he went to the cities of the plain and pitched his tent near Sodom.
- c. By making his “home” in the cities of the plain, he will not have to work as hard and he will be able to reap where others have sown. This is an established place. No wilderness here. It offers comfort, a measure of security. That would seem like a wise choice right?
- d. Except that the men of Sodom were “wicked and sinners before the Lord”
- e. Lot chooses a way that seems easy, but is it? If it is filled with wickedness? What does this say about the character of Lot?
- f. What does the word say about company we keep? Does it matter who we choose to spend our time with?

Psalm 1:1

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;”

1 Corinthians 15:33

Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.”

What does this mean? Have you ever heard the expression “birds of a feather, flock together?”

People are known by those they choose to be surrounded by. We will find ourselves in the company of others who are similar, those who have similar morality, similar values. A wise man will surround himself with wise people. A fool will seek company among fools. Those who revere God will not seek company with those who blaspheme the Lord. Those who seek to do harm, will attract others who are also like minded.

And a man will more easily be brought down, than lifted up. Why? Sinning is easier than keeping oneself pure.

So what can we deduce about Lot? He chose to make his dwelling place among sinners. He sought out those he would be comfortable living near.

THE RESULT:

Fast forward a few chapters – in Chapter 19 – what do we find? Not only has Lot made himself a home in the city of Sodom, but he sits at its gates. Sitting at the gate in biblical times held much meaning.

The gates were often considered the central hub of city life, where people would gather to conduct business, trade goods, socialize. One who was seen at the gates could be an elder, or one who was a part of that community.

Let's jump ahead and read how Lot fared in choosing a place to live. . . .

Genesis 19:1 -

And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground;

2 And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.

3 And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.

4 But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter:

5 And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them.

6 And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him,

7 And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly.

8 Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof.

9 And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door.

10 But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door.

11 And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.

12 And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place:

13 For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it.

14 And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.

15 And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

We see that Lot was surrounded by wickedness in this place. So much so that the Lord sent angels to destroy the city with fire.

ABRAM'S CHOICE:

But what of Abram? He chose to give Lot first choice. What does that say of his character?

HUMILITY: First we see humility – even thou he was the elder and could have chosen his land first, he did not.

TRUST: Next we see how he Trusts the Lord: He trusted that the Lord would be with him, wherever he went. So does it really matter where he pitches his tent?

FAITH: Abram doesn't just believe in his heart or with his mind . . . Abram puts his faith in action. He relies on what the Lord has told him. He allows Lot to choose knowing that whatever Lot chooses will NOT alter his choice. He knows he will be blessed regardless of what Lot does because he believes that the Lord has told him.

OBEDIENCE: The Lord told him to go to Canaan. Abram chooses to stay in Canaan. As the Lord directed him.

But here is a question? After what we just read. . . would Abram have chosen to move into Sodom? To pitch his tent near Sodom? No. He would not live among the wicked. He would have nothing in common with the men of that city.

RESULT:

Abram chooses to honor the Lord and we will see how the Lord continues to indeed bless Abram.

1. Our Choices Matter: They reveal our hearts. They reveal our relationship to the Lord. They reveal our character. They direct our course. When we come to the moment of decision. . . do we choose the easy way? Or do we choose to trust the Lord?
2. Humility says the Lord will establish me. It does not seek to have its way above all others. It is good to remember that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.
3. It is good to stop and build an altar to the Lord – Abram was in the habit of worshiping God, honoring God, recognizing the Lord’s hand on his life.