

The Lord Saw Abram Separate from Lot

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn from the example of Abram that when we lie, it will have a negative effect on others, on ourselves, and on our children. Abram had to learn that lesson the hard way by being expelled from Egypt with everything he had. In this topic, we will see that Abram learned the benefits of letting God guide him to make wise choices.

In Genesis 13:1-7, we read, “Then Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, to the South. Abram *was* very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. And he went on his journey from the South as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, to the place of the altar which he had made there at first. And there Abram called on the name of the Lord. Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents. Now the land was not able to support them, that they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together. And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram’s livestock and the herdsmen of Lot’s livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land.” Here, we see what happened when Abram returned from Egypt.

When Abram and Sarai, along with everyone and everything they had, returned from Egypt, they went to the area toward the south part of Canaan, also known as the Negev. The Lord had been blessing Abram as He had promised Abram when He made the covenant with him. As a result, Abram had become very rich in livestock, silver, and gold. As Abram continued to move with his cattle and flocks, they moved from the south as far north as Bethel. This was the place where Abram had first gone when he came into the land of Canaan and the Lord had appeared to him. Genesis 12:7-8 says, “Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, ‘To your descendants I will give this land.’ And there he built an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he 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.” At that time, Abram had built an altar to the Lord.

Here, we see that Abram returned to the place where he had built that altar. This showed his desire to fully restore his fellowship with the Lord. Meanwhile, Lot, the nephew of Abram, was traveling with him. Abram had been told to leave his family, but he had brought Lot with him because the father of Lot had died before they left Ur. Now, that was beginning to cause conflict. The wealth of Lot had also increased, and he also had flocks, herds, and tents. The fact that both men had large flocks and herds created this conflict. The land could not grow grass fast enough to feed both of their herds and flocks. The herdsmen of Abram’s livestock and the herdsmen of Lot’s livestock began to have conflict between them because they both needed more grass for their flocks. In addition, there were also Canaanites and Perizzites that lived in that area.

As a result, Abram let God show him a way to avoid conflict with Lot. Genesis 13:8-13 says, “So Abram said to Lot, ‘Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we *are* brethren. *Is* not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If *you take* the left, then I will go to the right; or, if *you go* to the right, then I will go to the

left.’ And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered everywhere (before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other. Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched *his* tent even as far as Sodom. But the men of Sodom *were* exceedingly wicked and sinful against the Lord.” Abram was the leader, but we see that he gave Lot the opportunity to make the choice about the land that he wanted.

These verses teach two key lessons about resolving conflict. First, Abram took the leadership to discuss the problem with Lot. He reminded Lot that they were brethren and made it clear that they needed to resolve conflicts. He told Lot that they needed to separate so there would not be conflict between their herdsman. Second, Abram showed servant leadership by giving Lot the opportunity to choose which part of the land he wanted. Abram was learning he could trust God to lead him instead of trying to make sure he got what he wanted. 2 Corinthians 5:7 says, “For we walk by faith, not by sight.” Then, Hebrews 11:9-10 speaks about the faith of Abraham when those verses say, “By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.” Abram was learning not to focus on what he saw but to focus on the city whose builder is God.

However, we see that Lot was walking by sight instead of walking by faith. Abram gave Lot the choice to choose the right or the left and said that he would go the opposite way. Lot looked carefully in both directions. Since they were on the mountain ridge, he could see all of the plain of Jordan. He saw that the plain of Jordan was well-watered everywhere. Even from a distance, he could see that the whole plain was green. This was before the Lord destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. In fact, we see that this plain was compared to the garden of the Lord. Genesis 2:10 says, “Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads.” Here, we see that the Garden of Eden had been well-watered, which made it very beautiful. Abram and Lot had just come from Egypt, so Lot saw that the area was similar to the land along the Nile River.

Sodom and Gomorrah were close to the city of Zoar, which was near the southeast end of the Dead Sea. Lot would later flee to the city of Zoar when Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed. Lot chose the Jordan plain on the east because it was such a beautiful green area due to the fact that it was well-watered. That meant that he left the land to the west of the mountains as the place for Abram to live. However, we see that Lot also made a second choice. He set up his tent close to the city of Sodom. We read that the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the Lord. Genesis 19:4-5 says, “Now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. And they called to Lot and said to him, ‘Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them *carnally*.’” Jude 7 adds, “As Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” Here, we see that God judged these cities because they were exceedingly evil.

In contrast, we see that the Lord blessed Abram after he separated from Lot. Genesis 13:14-18 says, “And the Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: ‘Lift your eyes now and

look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, *then* your descendants also could be numbered. Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you.’ Then Abram moved *his* tent, and went and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which *are* in Hebron, and built an altar there to the Lord.” Abram had let Lot choose because Abram was learning to walk by faith. Here, we see that God honored that faith by speaking to Abram after Lot had separated from him and moved toward the city of Sodom.

Abram was still on the mountain where he could see all four directions. God told Abram to carefully look all four directions. Then, God reminded Abram of the promise He had given to Abram in Genesis 12:1: “Now the Lord had said to Abram: ‘Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you.’” Abram had separated from the last family member, with Lot leaving and moving toward Sodom. God immediately reminded him of the promise that God had given to him by telling Abram to look in all four directions. God said, “All the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever.” Here, we see that God reminded Abram of the fact that this was the land He had promised would belong to the descendants of Abram forever. This promise is still in effect because God said it was forever. This promise means that the day will come, in the future, when the descendants of Abram will again occupy all of the land God promised to him.

In addition, God reminded Abram about the promise He had made to Abram about his descendants. This promise in Genesis 13:16 says, “‘And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, *then* your descendants also could be numbered.’” Here, we see that God reminded Abram that the number of his descendants would become so great, they could not be counted. God also kept this promise about the number of descendants that Abram would have. Then, God told Abram to walk through the land so he could personally see the land God had promised to his descendants. One of the places to which Abram moved his tent and went was to the area called Hebron. There, Abram built another altar to the Lord. Here, we see the growing faith of Abram as he made certain that the first thing he did when he got to this place was to build an altar. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain how the faith of Abram grew as he was learning to walk by faith. This will help our children in this learning process as they learn to walk by faith in their own lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children by your own life what it means to walk by faith.