



TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

Talk Genesis 13:10-18: Lot to Moves Toward Sodom; The Lord Confirms His Promises to Abraham

Lesson 29

"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. 11 Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other. 12 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. 13 But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD. 14 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; 15 for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. 16 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. 17 Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you." 18 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."

Background Notes

Even today, if you stand on the high ground near ancient Bethel in Israel and look southeast, you will see the well-watered plains of the Jordan. It's green and lush in the Jordan valley, compared to the adjacent Judean wilderness. This lush valley is what Lot saw when he lifted up his eyes and looked down on the plain of Jordan (v10). When Abram, the man of faith, in that magnanimous gesture gave Lot the first choice, Lot couldn't resist. It seems that Lot didn't even consider the implications of what it meant to move towards Sodom in reference to his own faith and the future of his family. Verse 11 says, *"Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other."* By the way, don't get the idea that if Lot had made the right choice then Abram would have been forced to move down towards Sodom. Both of them could have stayed in the hill country -- there was plenty of land there.

After Lot made his choice, the Lord reconfirmed the Abrahamic covenant with Abram as to the Land (v15&17) and as to his descendants (v16): *"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."* In other words, the descendants of Abraham would be innumerable. This promise has come true, and will continue to be true down through human history, because God has never revoked or changed this unconditional promise or covenant. Any attempt to do away with the descendants of Abraham has met with failure.

Then Abram moved his tent, and went and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre,^[b] which are in Hebron, and built an altar there to the LORD"(v18). Abraham moved to the high ground of Hebron, and continued to walk in fellowship with the Lord. In fact, the name Hebron means "association," or "alliance," or even "fellowship. "

Doctrinal Points

1. The spiritual believer makes choices on the basis of faith.

Look again at verse 9: *"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."*

Abram was able to be generous because he was a man of faith and he believed the promises of God. God had promised the whole land to the descendants of Abram back in chapter 12. Abram believed this promise, and let Lot make his choice. Abram didn't have to worry. He knew that God was in control, no matter what Lot's choice was. Everything was in God's hands. Therefore Abram was able to make choices on the basis of his faith in God. Listen to what Hebrews 11:9-10 says about him: *"By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: 10For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."*

So you see, it didn't matter what Lot's choice was. Abram was walking by faith and resting in the promises of God. That's the way it should be in our lives. The spiritual believer makes choices on the basis of faith.

Here's an illustration: At the present time our older son and his wife are considering a job change. It would involve a major move. They have prayed about this and they have used their God-given common sense. They have done all the paperwork, and now they're waiting. But they're not anxious! They're not afraid that someone else will get the job -- and they'll be content to stay with the present job. Why are they not anxious? Because by faith, they believe the promise of God, that He will guide them and direct them.

God has promised guidance to us as believers. Where? Well, plenty of places! How about Proverbs 3: 5-6: *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."* Do you believe what that verse says? The spiritual believer makes choices on the basis of faith..

2.The carnal believer makes choices on the basis of "sight."

In Scripture, Lot is a picture of a carnal or worldly believer. Look there at verse 5: *"Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents."* What is obviously missing? No altar, right? Abram had an altar -- he had come back to the place of the altar. But now it adds *"Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents"* -- but not altar!

We know Lot was a believer -- 2 Peter 2 tells us that Lot was definitely a believer. But Lot was not a spiritual believer who was walking by faith -- he was a carnal believer who was walking by "sight." *"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. 11 Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other."

Lot should have given Abraham the first choice. After all, Abraham had the right to choose first. He was the older of the two, and he was the patriarch of the family. But greedy and selfish Lot lifted up his eyes and saw the well watered plain of Jordan. Lot did not choose on the basis of faith. He didn't think ahead about the possibilities of the bad fall out from living near Sodom. What about his family? Certainly the wickedness of Sodom was bound to affect his family if he moved in that direction.

Lot did not move into Sodom as a missionary, he moved into Sodom for his own selfish reasons. His decision was not based on faith, but on sight. Notice by the way, that Abraham didn't lift up his eyes until the Lord told him to, in verse 14. Definitely a contrast here!

What about our choices? Do we "lift up our eyes" like Lot, and make our choices based on what looks good for us at the moment? Or do we, by faith, make decisions based on the promises of the Word of God and the guidance and commands of the Word of God? Do we really believe 1 John 2:17 which says, "*the world is passing away*"? 2 Corinthians 5:7 teaches us that "*we walk by faith, not by sight.*" The spiritual believer makes choices on the basis of faith, but the carnal believer makes choices on the basis of sight.

Practical Application: Don't travel the road to failure!

As we follow the life story of Lot, it is not a pleasant story. Step by step he traveled the road to failure. In this chapter, he moved down to the Jordan Valley, and lived near the cities of the plain, and then moved his tents towards Sodom. In chapter 14 we read that Lot moved into Sodom. Perhaps he married a woman of Sodom. He raised his family in Sodom. In chapter 19 we see that Lot lost everything, including his wife, in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. By the end of chapter 19, we see Lot drunk and committing incest with his two daughters. What a sorry and sad state of affairs. Lot traveled the road to failure.

I am sure if we could have warned Lot that it wouldn't be long before he would move into Sodom, and as a result, he would lose his family and he would end up in this terrible state of affairs -- I'm sure Lot would have said to us, "No way! Never will I move into wicked Sodom! I'm only going down there to those lush plains of Jordan for my flocks and herds. Maybe I will even be a testimony to the Lord there!" Lot might even have said, "Look down there, it looks like the garden of the Lord. I'm sure this must be God's will!"

But it was not God's will. It was the road to failure. Before long, Lot was desensitized to the sin of Sodom, then he moved into Sodom. You see, not only is the life of faith a step-by-step process -- the road to failure is a step-by-step process as well. "*Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere* (v10). The first step in his travel on the road to failure was a look.

A "look" was the first step on the road to failure in King David's life. Look at 2 Samuel 11:2: "*One evening David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to*

behold." He **looked**, he saw a beautiful woman -- and he stepped out on the road to failure.

Let's be careful to walk by **faith** and not by **sight**! Seeing can be misleading. Watch out for things that look like "the garden of the Lord"! Are we flirting with temptation? Are we moving away from Bethel, the house of God, and pitching our tents toward Sodom and the wickedness of this world, because we're **looking** at the wealth of this world?

Watch out for the entanglements of "the good life"! How do we make our choices – selfishly, for what we can gain? In our decisions on jobs and location we must take our children into consideration. What kind of education will they be getting? What kind of relationships are we encouraging for them? A Christian couple we know encouraged their daughter to continue in a relationship with a non-Christian young man because he was very successful in this world, and it looked like a "good" marriage for her. Sadly, they now regret that decision. Watch out! Don't travel the road to failure!