

Lesson 9 ABRAHAM AND LOT

READING: GENESIS 13 AND 15

AIM: To consider the differences between Abraham and Lot and God's covenant with Abraham.

1. BACKGROUND

When Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees as part of God's great plan of separation and salvation, he took with him his nephew Lot. Lot also went with Abraham and his household into Egypt when they encountered famine in Canaan. Now at Bethel, having returned to the Land of Promise from Egypt, **Abraham and Lot prospered.** Their riches were increased and their herds grew.

But with added possessions, there developed strife and contention between their herdsmen who required larger pastures for the increasing flocks. (Gen 13:7-9). How often is this the case? Frequently men and women in adversity assist each other, but in prosperity become jealous of each other's possessions.

The dispute with Lot was unpleasant to Abraham. Although, as the elder, it was his privilege to command Lot's obedience to his directions, he did not insist on this right. The land had been promised to Abraham, not Lot, and when the dispute arose between their herdsmen, Lot should have commanded his herdsmen to stop striving.

2. LOTS CHOICE – Gen 13:1-13

Abraham invited his nephew to have first choice of the land, so that he might take what was left. Eventually, all this land would be his. Abraham's faith was that of the pilgrim who waited patiently for the Kingdom of God. (Heb 11:13).

Lot looked down on to Jordan with its rich, well-watered plains and large cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. "These men of Sodom were wicked sinners before the Lord exceedingly". Their sins were of a peculiarly gross kind. Ezekiel says the sins of Sodom were **pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness, not strengthening the hand of the poor and needy, but haughty, committing abominations before God.** (Ezek. 16:49-50)

First Lot pitched his tent near Sodom. Soon after he was attracted to city life, to the settled way of life in a town (as distinct from life in a tent) and to the comforts to be found there; he actually betrothed his daughters to native Sodomites, in fact he became quite a prominent citizen, "sitting in the gate of Sodom" (Gen. 19:11).

Lots unwise actions sound a solemn warning to us all to be wary;

He strove with Abraham (Gen: 13:5-8)
 He looked towards Sodom (Gen. 13:10)
 He chose Sodom (Gen 13:11)
 He pitched towards Sodom (Gen. 13:12)
 He dwelt in Sodom (Gen. 14:12)
 He sat in the gate of Sodom (Gen. 19:1)

3. ABRAHAM'S LAND AND SEED - Gen. 13:14-18

After Lot had separated, God appeared again to Abraham with the especial promises in Gen. 13:14-17, "**All this land which thou seest to thee I will give it and to thy seed forever**". Abraham now SAW the promised land and was commanded to WALK through it.

"The act of walking through the land was a legal formality, denoting acquisition" (Dr. J. H. Hertz – Commentary on Genesis). Abraham never received in his lifetime any of the territory promised him. Stephen makes this clear in Acts 7:2-5. At the death of Sarah, Abraham did not even have a burying place for his wife, and had to purchase the cave of Machpelah at Hebron for that purpose (Gen. 23:4-6).

Yet God promised him the land FOR AN EVERLASTING POSSESSION (Gen 13:15). How is he to receive it? The only way is by resurrection from the dead (Mark 12:26-27; Acts 26:6-8). Thus, in Gen. 13, God promised Abraham resurrection from the dead to life eternal, and a possession of the land forever.

The promise was made not only to Abraham, but to his **seed** as well Gen. 13:15). First and foremost that seed is Christ (Gal. 3:16; Matt 1:1), but God also said He would increase the seed of Abraham until it became a great number. If the seed is Christ, how can he be increased to a great number? The answer is found in Gal. 3:256-290. When we are baptized, we become Christ's and are therefore **Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise**". In this way the promises include all who are baptized into Christ and live according to his commandments.

4. THE PROMISE CONFIRMED IN A COVENANT – Gen. 15

Abraham moved from Bethel to Hebron. Time was passing and for the fulfillment of all that Abraham had been promised he must have a son. He therefore sought confirmation of God's promise "seeing I go childless". God brought him forth from his tent and reiterated His promise that Abraham's seed would be as the stars for multitude (Gen. 15:5-7). Abraham believed God (and it was counted to him for righteousness) but asked God, "Whereby shall I know....?".

He was commanded to take a heifer, a she-goat and a ram, of three years old, a turtledove and a young pigeon. After killing them, he divided them and "laid each piece one against another, but the birds divided he not". God then caused a deep sleep to come upon Abraham and He revealed to him the fortunes of his descendants in the ensuing 400 years.

Following this vision of the future, God gave Abraham a sign as confirmation of his promises. In the blackness after sunset Abraham beheld a smoking furnace and a flame of fire that passed between those pieces". In this manner God sealed the covenant that day with Abraham. (Gen. 15:17-18).

In the covenant made, **God** was the "active" party. The modern idea of a covenant is a "mutual" agreement. The Hebrew word "berith" however, is used in the great majority of cases as referring specifically to God's covenant. Although it contains the idea of mutual agreement, it mostly signifies an obligation undertaken by a single person who defines the terms, in this case the Lord Almighty Himself. The other party accepts the terms:

"For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swear by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee" (Heb 6:13-14).

5. ABRAHAM AND LOT COMPARED

The unselfish Abraham's "**godliness with contentment**"(Phil. 4:11-12; 1 Tim. 6:5-8) is displayed in this incident with Lot and because of it he received great advantages above Lot.

Abraham realized the futility of quarrelling

He showed a generous spirit.

He was compassionate, for when Lot was in trouble he went with his servants to rescue him (Gen. 14:14-16).

He avoided the attractive pleasures of the city and accepted the hardships of tent life having in mind the great promise God had made him.

Lot's choice commenced a train of circumstances that caused him great distress and loss of possessions.

Lot permitted the breach with his uncle to occur which resulted in his making an unwise choice.

He chose on selfish motives and succumbed to the attractions of Sodom.

He brought sorrow and trouble to himself.

He remained righteous and God saved him from Sodom's destruction (II Pet. 2:7-8) but he was forced to flee, having lost all his possessions and part of his family (Gen. 19:29).

6. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The promises made to Abraham are the key to an understanding of God's plan of salvation. They contain the gospel message or good news of the Kingdom of God and stretch as a chain throughout the Bible, being repeated to important servants of God who played their part in the unfolding of His plan. In the life and resurrection of Jesus Christ was the confirmation of the promises, providing a way for all to become heirs to the promises.

Abraham was required to have faith right to the end of his life. It seemed to him that the promises were delayed. He finally died without receiving them, but he believed that God would certainly fulfill what He had promised and that He would raise him from the dead (Heb. 11:13). Thus in Abraham, through trial and testing were developed godly characteristics – obedience, patience, faith, hope and godliness. From a comparison of Abraham, his life and Lot's, we can learn much to help us inherit the promises.

REFERENCE LIBRARY

"The Visible Hand of God", chapter 7.

"The Ways of Providence", chapter 3.

"Elpis Israel", part 2, chapter 2

"Christendom Astray", lecture 9,

"Abraham", chapters 5, 6 and 10

"Scriptural Coincidences", part 1, chapter 2.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Why did Lot separate from Abraham and what unwise choice did he make?
- 2 What was Abraham promised when Lot separated from him?
- 3 How are Lot's actions a warning to us?"
- 4 Compare the attitudes of Abraham and Lot when Lot chose the cities of the plain.
- 5 The promises to Abraham were confirmed by a covenant. Discuss this incident, recorded in Gen. 15.