

# Lot's Choice and Abraham's Blessing

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*[Genesis 13:7-15 NKJV] 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. 8 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. 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." 10 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.*

Abraham, Sarah, and Lot had left their homeland of Ur of the Chaldeans in today's southern Iraq with their father Terah toward the promised land of Canaan. They ended up staying, however, in Haran in today's southern Turkey for some years and Terah died there. Having been called by God, Abraham, Sarah, and Lot resumed their journey toward Canaan and stayed in various places, and their possessions grew much during their sojourn. Then, certain troubles arose between the shepherds of Abraham and Lot, perhaps over the feeding grounds or wells. The two groups' contentions made them difficult to live together any longer.

As a family or a church grows, interest groups are formed and troubles arise that cause it difficult for them to cohabit together. However, they must never let these difficulties turn each other into enemies. Based on Abraham's proposition, Lot chose the plains of southern Jordan, which showed favorable natural conditions, where Sodom and Gomorrah were chief cities. The people of those cities, however, were very wicked in God's sight. They engaged in extreme sexual perversion including homosexuality, incest, and bestiality. Abraham and Lot must have been aware of their low moral reputation. Lot, however, chose to journey toward the wicked city Sodom [v. 12]. Lot thought perhaps that his faith in God would keep him and his family pure from the evil influence of these cities. And he folded his animal husbandry business and settled down in Sodom. Yet, according to the apostle Peter, he found it a hard struggle to keep his faith living in this morally decadent city watching daily the wicked deeds of the people.

*[2 Peter 2:4-9] For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to [b]hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; 5 and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; 6 and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; 7 and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked 8 (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)— 9 then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,*

Today we also live observing and hearing about extreme moral decadence in many countries, particularly in the U.S., China, South Korea, and some parts of western Europe. As Abraham and Lot stood at a decision point, we also have the freedom to choose where to live, what occupations to engage in, and what elements we allow to penetrate our lives daily. Lot chose to go toward Sodom of his free will and consequently drove himself and his family into an environment of extreme moral decadence. He might have been able to keep his own faith but not of his family. Abraham was concerned about the welfare of Lot and his family when the Lord Jesus, who appeared to him in the form of an angel and told him about God's plan to destroy the wicked cities. So he negotiated with the Lord on the minimum condition of their destruction and ended up securing a concession from the Lord that He would not destroy the cities if there were ten or more godly people in them. Unfortunately, however, only four persons including Lot, his wife, and two unmarried daughters were led by the two angels before God destroyed the

cities in the plains. During their escape, Lot's wife turned back in a mother's natural concern for their two married daughters, and their spouses left in Sodom and became a pillar of salt.

The world we live in will continue to slide down toward increasing moral decadence. During the past few decades, this trend has accelerated. On June 26, 2015, during Obama's presidency, the U.S. Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriages. This milestone verdict prompted worldwide spreading and prompting of homosexuality and sexual freedom movement into an open, aggressive manner. Many true Christians are hurting in their hearts to see this trend of moral decadence along with the political and social forces of evil in action. While Lot was journeying toward the wicked city of Sodom, Abraham remained in a place of God's blessing and heard the promise of future blessing from the Lord:

*[Genesis 13: 14-15] 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.*

Abraham's choice, in contrast to Lot's choice, was to remain in the place God had given him the promise of blessing before their journey from their homeland. There he heard the wonderful word of promise again from God for the blessing to come in the distant future. And Abraham believed in the word of God. Canaan, the land that would be his inheritance from God in the future, was inhabited by numerous gentile peoples. There must have been plenty of moral decadence in the land. However, there was a certain fear of Jehovah God among these peoples. Abimelech, who was a chief leader among these people heeded God's warning and stopped short of taking Sarah as his wife [Genesis 20]. He saw God was with Abraham and wanted to establish a non-aggression treaty with him [Genesis 21]. In the land of God's promised blessing, Abraham sojourned as a stranger while looking toward the future blessing:

*[Hebrews 11: 8-10] By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 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; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

Today we stand on a place of decision as Abraham and Lot stood thousands of years ago. We can willfully walk into the middle of moral decadence for the sake of present financial, social, or political interests, thus placing ourselves and our families to face the reality of decadent influences and pressures daily. The other choice, which Abraham made, is to continue where God has commanded us to live and to journey on as sojourners in the land while keeping alive the true hope for the coming of our Lord Jesus and the Millennial Kingdom where He will rule as the King of kings. During the year 2022, it is my prayer that each of you are warned of the danger of choosing the evil camp and rather choose to remain in a place of God's blessing, where He will continue to safeguard you and bless you with heavenly blessings in days to come. May the Lord God be honored and glorified by our choices. Amen.