

Genesis 13 – Abram and Lot: Wise Choices

Looks, Logic and True Wisdom

Section 1: 13:1-4 – Worship: Our Hearts Theme

Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev—he, his wife, and all he had, and Lot with him. ²Abram was very rich in livestock, silver, and gold. ³He went by stages from the Negev to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had formerly been, ⁴to the site where he had built the altar. And Abram called on the name of the Lord there.

Abram went back to the altar and called upon the name of the Lord.

Abram had a place he personally communed with God. A place where personal worship happened.

What is worship? In the OT the word for worship literally means: to prostrate oneself before another in order to do him honor and reverence (Unger's Bible Dictionary). The word picture we are given for worship is: a man who is down on his knees and face before the Lord. Why? It's an acknowledgement that God is higher than us. God is perfection and we are not. God is worthy and we are not. The idea of reverence is directly tied to worship. Even in the NT the word for worship means: to revere; to kiss the ring; to prostrate before.

We are starting to see a theme with the life of Abram: worship. Now, is Abram perfect in all he does? No. Last week we get a glimpse of Abram repenting and this week we see him worshipping. Repentance and worship are very present in the life of Abram. And these two concepts should be a theme of every believer's life.

Discussion Questions

- ❖ What are different aspects of worship?
- ❖ Why is worship important?
- ❖ What does the word picture of worship (on your knees and face) teach us about worship?

Section 2: 13:5-13 – Man's Wisdom versus God's Wisdom

⁵Now Lot, who was traveling with Abram, also had flocks, herds, and tents. ⁶But the land was unable to support them as long as they stayed together, for they had so many possessions that they could not stay together, ⁷and there was quarreling between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. (At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were living in the land.)

⁸So Abram said to Lot, "Please, let's not have quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, since we are relatives. ⁹Isn't the whole land before you? Separate from me: if you go to the left, I will go to the right; if you go to the right, I will go to the left."

¹⁰Lot looked out and saw that the entire plain of the Jordan as far as Zoar was well watered everywhere like the Lord's garden and the land of Egypt. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) ¹¹So Lot chose the entire plain of the Jordan for himself. Then Lot journeyed eastward, and they separated from each other. ¹²Abram lived in the land of Canaan, but Lot lived in the cities on the plain and set up his tent near Sodom. ¹³(Now the men of Sodom were evil, sinning immensely against the Lord.)

A major life decision occurs in these verses. This is literally a crossroads for Abram and Lot. Abram and Lot make very different choices at this point. Remember, they have been experiencing the same things...(1) promise of God to Abram, (2) trouble in Egypt and (3) wealth. Yet they make very different choices because they had very different approaches.

Abram had been spending his time calling upon the name of the Lord. Lot made his choice using the same criteria as Eve: man's logic. Lot looked at the fields, valleys and cities and thought they looked awesome and off he went. Eve did the same thing by looking at the fruit and thinking it looked good. Time and time again, man makes decisions based upon our own logic regardless of what God says. Our feelings, experiences, logic, and man's wisdom shouldn't be what we base our choices upon. We are to make decisions based upon the truth revealed to us in the Word of God. Lot should have tested his feelings, experiences, logic and wisdom against the Word of God. Who was the man of promise? Abram. Where is the promise land? Canaan. Lot should have considered the Word of God and had followed Abram and settled where he directed and worked out the dispute between their herdsmen. But Lot took what is considered "the easy way out".

Proverbs 14:12 (CSB)

There is a way that seems right to a person, but its end is the way to death.

Discussion Questions

- ❖ Why is the process of making a decision in life important?
- ❖ What should be the process of decision making for the believer?
- ❖ Why is it important to rely upon God's Word and not our feelings?

Section 3: 13:14-18 – Stories of Redemption

¹⁴After Lot had separated from him, the Lord said to Abram, "Look from the place where you are. Look north and south, east and west, ¹⁵for I will give you and your offspring forever all the land that you see. ¹⁶I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust of the earth, then your offspring could be counted. ¹⁷Get up and walk around the land, through its length and width, for I will give it to you."

¹⁸So Abram moved his tent and went to live near the oaks of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the Lord.

God reaffirms His promise to Abram after his split with Lot. And in response Abram builds an altar and worships the Lord. Up to this point we never see an instance where Lot built an altar or called upon the name of the Lord. Although, we know from 2 Peter 2:7 that Lot was a righteous man. So, what does that mean? That means you can have a season of life where you are not walking with the Lord as you should and still have hope of redemption.

Abram and Lot's stories seem very different. Abram's will seem like a story of grace and Lot's will seem like a story of judgement...yet they are both called righteous. How? Because our righteousness is not based upon our goodness but upon the grace and mercy of God. We will see that the stories of Abram and Lot are stories of redemption.

Abram's response to God at this moment? Worship. He builds another altar and worships the Lord. When we consider all of who God is...we should worship. And remember the word picture we are given for worship...to fall on your knees and face before God...proclaiming He is worthy and higher than anyone or anything.

Discussion Questions

- ❖ How does re-reading God's Word strengthen our faith?
- ❖ Why is it important to remember that our righteousness is just God's righteousness on our account and not a righteousness of our own?
- ❖ Do you respond to all of life with worship? Why or why not?