

ABRAHAM AND LOT

BIBLE TEXT: Genesis 13:1-18; 18:1-8, 16-19.

LESSON 9 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them. For their heart studieth destruction, and their lips talk of mischief" (Proverbs 24:1, 2).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Genesis 13:1-18;

¹ And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south.

² And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.

³ And he went on his journeys from the south even to Beth-el, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Beth-el and Hai;

⁴ Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

⁵ And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.

⁶ And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.

⁷ And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.

⁸ And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.

⁹ Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

¹⁰ And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I God First

1. Coming up out of Egypt, where he had gone because of famine in the Land of Canaan, Abraham worshiped God at Bethel, Genesis 13:1, 3, 4;

Matthew 6:33.

³³ But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

II God's Blessings

1. God had abundantly blessed Abraham in material wealth, and Lot who was with him shared in these blessings, Genesis 13:2, 5;

Numbers 10:29.

²⁹ And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses' father in law, We are journeying unto the place of which the LORD said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the LORD hath spoken good concerning Israel.

III Separation

1. Because of the increase of their cattle, there was strife between the herdsmen of Abraham and Lot, Genesis 13:6, 7.
2. Abraham suggested separation, and offered Lot first choice of the land, Genesis 13:8, 9;

Romans 12:18;

¹⁸ If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

II Timothy 2:24;

²⁴ And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

James 4:10.

¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

3. Lot showed a selfish attitude, Genesis 13:10, 11;

Philippians 2:21;

²¹ For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

I Peter 5:5.

⁵ Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

4. Lot was the loser because of his selfish choice, Genesis 13:12, 13;

II Peter 2:7, 8;

⁷ And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

⁸ (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)

Genesis 14:12;

¹² And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

Genesis 19:14, 24-26.

¹⁴ And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.

it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.

¹¹ Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.

¹² Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.

¹³ But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.

¹⁴ And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward:

¹⁵ For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

¹⁶ And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.

¹⁷ Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.

¹⁸ Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.

Genesis 18:1-8,

¹ And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;

² And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground,

³ And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not

²⁴ Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;

²⁵ And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

²⁶ ¶ But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

5. Abraham was blessed because of his unselfishness, Genesis 13:14-18.

6. Abram's name was changed to Abraham, **Genesis 17:5.**

⁵ Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

IV Abraham's Hospitality

1. Being a godly man, Abraham was hospitable, and entertained angels unawares, Genesis 18:1-8;

Hebrews 13:2.

² Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

V Abraham's Friendship with God

1. God revealed His mind to Abraham, because He knew Abraham could be trusted, Genesis 18:16-19.

NOTES:

"And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold." In patriarchal times the Lord poured out temporal blessings as pledges of spiritual things. The Lord had told Abraham that He would bless him and make of him a great nation; and the first part of this promise was being fulfilled -- but not without good reason. God has said, "Them that honour me I will honour," and Abraham honoured God; he sought "first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, so, of course, according to God's stated order, material blessings were added unto him.

Abraham was "poor in spirit" and humble in heart. He did not permit his riches to turn his head. Returning from Egypt, where he had gone because of the famine in the Land of Canaan, the first thing he did was to find the altar that he had built in Bethel when he first came into the land. He remembered the Lord his God, as God cautioned his posterity several hundred years later:

"Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgements, and his statutes, which I command thee this day:

"Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein;

"And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied;

"Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;

"Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint;

"Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end;

"And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.

"But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth" (Deuteronomy 8:11-18).

He must have felt a keen desire to worship at Bethel, for he travelled a long way to get there. Who is he who does not love to kneel on the same spot where the Lord saved or sanctified or baptised him with the Holy Ghost? Those places are sacred to every

away, I pray thee, from thy servant:

⁴ Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree:

⁵ And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said.

⁶ And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth.

⁷ And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it.

⁸ And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.

Genesis 18:16-19.

¹⁶ And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.

¹⁷ And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do;

¹⁸ Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

¹⁹ For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

child of God.

Parting of the Ways

Lot, Abraham's nephew, had accompanied Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees. They both were rich in cattle and herds -- so much so that the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together, and there was strife among their herdsmen.

Abraham, even in those early days before the Bible was written knew how to live at peace with God and man. Today we have God's Word:

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9).

"The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, . . . patient" (II Timothy 2:24).

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18).

"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Philippians 2:3).

"It is an honour for a man to cease from strife" (Proverbs 20:3).

But we, even as Abraham, must have the peace of God in our heart before we can obey these injunctions.

This strife between the herdsmen grieved Abraham for, he said, "We be brethren." We should follow the example of our spiritual father Abraham, earnestly "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," for truly "we be brethren."

It is the nature of God's true people to want others to know the beauty and greatness of God's character so that they will come to know and love and fear Him, too. The Scripture says that "the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land." Perhaps it is significant that these heathen nations -- people who were not acquainted with God -- were looking on. Abraham was jealous for the honour and glory of God. Abraham's love and reverence for God prompted him to endeavour always to show forth God's praises and virtues in his life. Even as Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).

Abraham suggested that he and Lot separate. Abraham courteously gave Lot first choice. Had Lot been as unselfish as his uncle, had he possessed the same spirit that Abraham had, he would have said, "Uncle Abraham, you take first choice. You are my senior, and the right of choice is yours." But Lot did not say that. The desire for gain caused him to look toward the rich country of the well-watered plain of Jordan.

Wealth

Many imperil their soul for the prospect of worldly advantages. A desire to have this world's goods and live at ease is a subtle temptation of the enemy, and must be carefully guarded against by every child of God.

"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

"That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

"Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (I Timothy 6:17-19).

Wealth is deceitful and many times leads to the most flagrant sins.

A life that is wholly abandoned to the will of God will be freighted with the graces that make a soul rich toward God and toward his fellow men. Love, kindness, hospitality, obedience -- all these things develop a well-rounded Christian life.

Lifting Up the Eyes

Both Abraham and Lot "lifted up" their eyes. "The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness" (Luke 11:34). Lot lifted up his eyes and saw the well-watered plain of Jordan, a place where his cattle and herds would be well pastured. But Abraham looked beyond the temporal things of this life; he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose "builder and maker is God."

Abraham might have been tempted to resentment, feeling that Lot had been unfair to him, but he felt satisfied in the care of God. "Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord" (Hebrews 10:30). The Lord rewarded Abraham for his magnanimous spirit by confirming, and giving in greater detail, the terms of His covenant with him. The Lord told Abraham to lift up his eyes and look northward, southward, eastward, and westward -- and all that he saw would be his and his seed's forever. That included the well-watered plain of Jordan that Lot had chosen. Paul in writing to the saints said, "All things are yours; . . . and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (I Corinthians 3:21, 23). Are your eyes single to the glory of God? Are you living for this world? or do you want an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Christ Jesus? The choice is yours. You make it yourself.

A New Name

Abraham was steadfast in his fidelity to God. Day after day, through all the vicissitudes of life, he was faithful in prayer, he was faithful to obey God, to respect God's desires and commands. When the call came from God to "walk before me, and be thou perfect," Abraham fell on his face, no doubt in an even deeper yielding of his life and will to God, and God revealed more fully His covenant terms by saying, "Thou shalt be a father of many nations," and changed his name Abram, which means "high father," to Abraham, which means "father of a multitude." (See Book 13, Lesson 157.)

Hospitality

Because of Abraham's trust in God, who owns the cattle on a thousand hills, and whose is all the silver and gold, he had a generous spirit himself; and when he lifted up his eyes as he sat in his tent door in the plains of Mamre, and saw three men coming toward him, he ran to meet them. He threw the door of his heart wide open and gave them a hearty welcome. He hastened to refresh them by giving them water to wash their feet, a courtesy extended to travellers because in those days they wore open sandals and travelled dusty roads. He told Sarah to quickly make ready three measures of meal and make cakes on the hearth. Then he ran to the herd and picked out a choice calf (not just anything was good enough) and gave it to a young man to dress and make ready to serve. When all was ready he went to his "cooler" and brought out butter and milk. What a luscious dinner -- and all for strangers! "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Hebrews 13:2). In another place God tells us to use hospitality one toward another without grudging.

Read what Jesus said: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, . . . Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: . . ." (Matthew 25:31-36).

There are many examples of hospitality in the Bible. Martha entertained Jesus in her home. Lydia constrained Paul and his company to abide at her house. After the Philippian Jailer was saved, he took Paul and Silas and washed their stripes, then brought them into his house and set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house. Jesus said, "Freely ye have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8).

Joy of Fellowship

Abraham rejoiced to have a visit with these heavenly visitors. Just how soon he recognised that these three were more than ordinary men, we do not know. But we do know that before they left he was aware of the real character of these visitors. Had he entertained the Lord Himself? Possibly one of the "men" was the Second Person in the Trinity who had come down to commune with Abraham.

His heart must have been "strangely warmed" with such divine company. When Jesus appeared to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, their eyes were holden at first; but when He revealed Himself to them they said, "Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way?" (Luke 24:33). Hearts really glow with divine love when Jesus manifests His presence to them.

QUESTIONS

1. To what place did Abraham go upon his return from Egypt?
2. For what reason?
3. Was it Abraham, or Abraham and Lot, who called upon the name of the Lord?
4. What was the difficulty between these two men?
5. What attitude did Abraham take toward the situation?
6. What was Lot's attitude?
7. To whom did the Lord appear, Abraham or Lot?
8. Who received the blessing?
9. What class of people today are following in the footsteps of Lot?