

Lesson 31
Separation To The Covenant

Genesis 13:1-18

I. INTRODUCTION

A. God called Abram to Himself and made a covenant with him. This covenant promises personal blessing to Abraham, a land forever, a seed, which would develop into a great nation, and universal blessings for mankind through Messiah who would come through the physical seed of Abraham.

NOTE. This covenant is the basis for understanding of all salvation and future prophecy.

B. In this chapter, Abraham believes God and the blessings of the covenant became a reality to him. He separates himself to God's promise and God does a mighty work.

II. ABRAHAM'S DETACHMENT FROM LOT (13:1-13)

A. 13:1-4. Abram, who had been out of fellowship with God and out of God's geographical place of blessing when he went to Egypt, rebounds by confessing his sin and moves back to Bethel (house of God). This is the place where he first worshipped God and committed his life to God. NOTE. Abram had to get back into fellowship with his Lord and go back to the original place of his commitment to God. This alone is the place of blessing. For the Christian who has been lured by the world, the only place of blessing is to go back to the original commitment to Christ and begin to believe God (cf. Rom. 12:1-2). NOTE. Abram was a rich man (13:2), and God had made him rich. There is nothing wrong with being wealthy provided the riches have been honorably obtained, are regarded as belonging to God, and are being constantly used to the glory of God. NOTE. While God forgives, sin always takes its toll on a person. In Egypt, Abram acquired Hagar who would later cause him much trouble.

B. 13:5-7. Abram was in fellowship with God and the Devil goes to work to cause division and strife. There causes the problem of space, protection and testimony, for the herdsmen of Lot were disputing with the herdsmen of Abram. The major aspect of the problem is testimony. Abram desires to avoid bickering that will become a scandal and a poor testimony among the surrounding peoples. NOTE. Nothing causes non-believers to mock the true God more than to see real believers fighting with one another. NOTE. It is not surprising, however, that this division arose, for Abram had been commanded by God to leave all of his kinsmen but he was still hanging on to Lot. Abram brought much of the trouble on himself, for failing to be completely obedient.

C. 13:8-9. Abram, a spiritual man, seeks to solve the problem. He sees that they are brethren and should not fight one another. Abram permits Lot to take any portion of the land he wants and Abram would take what was left. Abram made a magnanimous offer to Lot, showing that he was in fellowship with his God. Although Abram was older than Lot and chief of the tribe or clan, and although the land had been promised by God to him, he allows his nephew the first choice. Abram had a divine viewpoint and knew that God would provide for him and keep his promise. Abram had learned that the servant of God must not strive (2 Tim. 2:24). NOTE. True Christians do have personality conflicts and problems at times, which often lead to strife and trouble. It is only with a spirit of submission, like Abram's, that the problem will be resolved. (Cf. Eph. 5:21; 1 Pet. 5:5). Abram could have a magnanimous spirit because he believed God. By faith, he could set his own selfish interests aside and let God take care of him and the situation.

D. 13:10-13. Lot makes a carnal, fleshy, selfish choice, for he chooses the most plush land. He was interested in getting only what he wanted. Except from 2 Peter 2:7-8, we would never think that Lot was a true believer, but he is called "just Lot." Lot is what is commonly called a carnal believer. He

exercised faith in God for salvation but his walk in faith was weak and erratic. He was self-centered rather than God-centered. He had a human viewpoint towards life, and the reason that Sodom (a place of sin) looked good to Lot was because he had no spiritual discernment. The statement in 13:13 seems to intimate danger not only in Lot's geographical direction but his spiritual direction as well. Certainly the rest of Lot's life is an extension of a spiritual declension that seems evident here. NOTE. Lot, when he separated himself from Abram, who was spiritual, went progressively downhill spiritually. Fellowship among true Christians is essential for spiritual growth. NOTE. The city of Sodom and the plain of Jordan, which looked so attractive and appealing to Lot, would in a short while be destroyed and become desert. The human viewpoint always ends up in disaster. NOTE: The contrast between these two men is very interesting. Abram was (1) a spiritual believer, (2) walking by faith, (3) gracious and seeking to glorify God, (4) looking for a city maintained by God, (5) possessing the land, and (5) happy. Lot, however, was (1) a carnal believer, (2) walking by sight, (3) selfish and glorifying self, (4) going to a city that God destroyed, (5) possessing a cave, and (6) miserable.

III. THE DECLARATION OF THE LORD 13:14-18

A. 13:14-17. Abram made his offer and Lot jumped to take advantage of it, and for the first time Lot is truly separated from Abram. The Lord now appears to reassure the man of faith. Abram must have had some anxious moments when he made the decision to let Lot take whatever part of the land he wanted. But now in full obedience, Abram is again blessed by God, and the promise of the land and the seed is reaffirmed to him. NOTE. Abram did not loose but was blessed. He lost Sodom but he gained the whole land. When a man acts by faith in obedience to God in some matter, God manifests Himself to that man to emphasize what He will be to him and what He will do for him (John 14:21). NOTE. Spiritual separation unto God and away from the world system brings God's blessing (Gal. 6:14).

B. 13:18. Abram removed his tent and dwelt in the plain of Namre (fatness, prosperity), which is in Hebron (fellowship). Perhaps the "tent" speaks of the fact that Abram was a sojourner or pilgrim. NOTE. True believers are pilgrims and strangers to this earth and we can never permanently pitch our tent until we reach the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem. But, while on this earth, we can stay in fellowship with God and receive His spiritual and perhaps material blessings for us (1 Pet. 1:11; Heb. 11:9-10).

IV. CONCLUSION

"The results in the lives of Lot and Abraham were vastly different. Lot obtained what he wanted, earthly prosperity, but spiritually it may be questioned whether he was ever happy after making that choice. There was no witness for God, no real blessing on his home, and in the end came spiritual and social disaster. Abraham's experience was very different; God became an increasing reality to him, there was a glory and power in his life, and we are sure that he never regretted his action in putting God first. God's children always experience His Divine favor and blessing in proportion to their faithfulness, and if we are inclined to question and seek for the reason of difference in the spiritual experience of the children of God we may find them in the difference of response to God on the part of His followers" (W.H. Griffith Thomas, *Genesis*).