

# Abraham and the Life of Faith

## “Location, Location, Location”

*“Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom.”*

Genesis 13:12

Sunday, May 17, 2020

Major Gerald (Gary) Reilly  
The Salvation Army  
Mississippi-Rideau Lakes Corps

You may have likely found, or will find as you read the Bible that there are some characters to whom one can more readily identify than others. This may arise from their personality, the quality of their relationship with the Lord, or from life experiences. For instance, the immigration of Abram – first from Ur and then to Haran and to Canaan and to Egypt, causes me to identify in many ways with Abram. Abram is a man on the move. As both a Salvation Army Officer and an immigrant to Canada, I know what it is like to be on the move.

Way back in 1967 my family boarded a ship in Belfast and sailed to Liverpool, then boarded the Empress of England, another ship, that carried us across the Atlantic Ocean to a whole new country, away from our country, our people and our family. Making that journey has had quite an impact on the makeup on the Reilly family. My younger brother would be born and raised in Canada – never having to worry about becoming a Canadian Citizen. Each of my parents four children would marry Canadians, and they would see the birth of 9 Canadian grandsons, 2 Canadian granddaughters – a Canadian great grand-daughter and three Canadian great grandsons – with another great grandchild coming soon (but not as near as my Irish sister and her Canadian husband and Canadian sister would like). The move to Canada has changed our family dynamics seemingly forever – it has even changed the way some of us talk. I no longer say ‘eight’, I say ‘ate’. I no longer say zebra crossing, I say ‘crosswalk’.

Perhaps your family has a similar story, where at sometime in the past a family member picked up their roots and moved to a different country, or province or city – forever altering the dynamic of the family. Genesis chapter 13 is a chapter that divides neatly into three distinct scenes, and details the immigration of Abram out of Egypt back to Canaan, and the change wrought during his travels. The Abram that comes out of Egypt is not the same Abram that journeyed down to Egypt. This chapter is a chapter of choices and perspectives, which we will see in coming weeks, leads to two outcomes. The lesson I hope we take from this chapter is that the life of faith chooses to rely upon God. As our call to worship stated: *“He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.”<sup>a</sup>*

## Scene One: Out of Egypt, Into Canaan

<sup>1</sup> So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, with his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him. <sup>2</sup> Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold.

<sup>3</sup> From the Negev he went from place to place until he came to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had been earlier <sup>4</sup> and where he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of the LORD.

The trip to Egypt, though revealing somewhat a lack of faith on Abrams part, has not been without benefit. By all appearances, Abram has come out smelling like a rose, becoming very wealthy – literally, very heavy – with livestock, silver and gold. Abram is loaded. His story in many ways foreshadows Israel coming out of Egypt many years in the future. In fact, those Israelites would likely derive great comfort in knowing that they, like their great ancestor, had both survived and profited from their Egyptian sojourn.

However, the important change for Abram was in his faith. Abram had learned in Egypt that even in a foreign country, and even when he displayed a lack of faith, God was still very much present and faithful to him. Abram makes his way back from Egypt and eventually returns to the place where he had built an altar to the Lord. That the altar to God is still standing is perhaps a reassurance to Abram that the offer from the Lord is also still standing. And there, at the place where he had called upon the Lord, once again Abram worships – likely in thanksgiving for God enabling him to return safely despite his foolish lack of faith.

---

<sup>a</sup> Psalm 91:1

Abram is not the first person, nor will he be the last, who has lapses in their faith. However, there is an awesome heritage of saints who have learned that the prodigal is always welcomed home when he or she repents and turns back to God. All through the period of the Judges into the period of the kings, though Israel wandered, the Lord was always ready to extend grace to those who sought Him. Through Isaiah the Lord declares, "...I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you," says the LORD your Redeemer."<sup>b</sup> Though Peter denied the Lord three times, it was to him the women at the tomb were instructed—"tell his disciples and Peter."<sup>c</sup>

There yet appears to have been another change in Abram, a change which becomes apparent in Scene 2. You see, when first called by God, sometime before the departure from Ur years passed, Abram had been told to leave everything and every one behind. But he hadn't. Abram had brought his father and his nephew along as far as Haran, and then Lot had tagged along on the journey from Haran to Canaan, and apparently, though not mentioned, had also rode Abram's toga trails down into and out of Egypt. This caused a lot of problems.

## Scene Two: Out of Egypt into Conflict

<sup>5</sup> Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. <sup>6</sup> But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together. <sup>7</sup> And quarreling arose between Abram's herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time.

The first act of scene two describes the tension that arises between Abram's herdsmen and Lot's. Not only has Abram benefitted from Egypt, but Lot too has become wealthy, with flocks herds and notably—tents. Lot has surrounded himself with people. Now, in the region where they came to dwell there was always the fear of scarcity—and both had already experienced famine in this neck of the woods. A concern arose that there just wasn't enough water and grazing space for two such wealthy men. The squabbling between their servants was in danger of escalating to the point of being both an embarrassment for the two men, and possibly having them become embroiled in a family feud.

Act two begins with a speech and proposal by Abram—a speech that demonstrates the change which has taken place in Abram. Here is the man who had been so unnerved by scarcity before that he had picked up and fled to Egypt instead of choosing to rely upon God. And now, even though well within his rights as the benefactor and head of Abram Enterprises, he makes an incredibly gracious offer.

<sup>8</sup> So Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers. <sup>9</sup> Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left."

Setting aside all convention, Abram gives Lot first pick. Now, everything Lot has he owes the allegiance and family ties to the uncle standing before him. This is the uncle who cared for him and took him in after the death of his father, Haran. The uncle who has watched over him from the day they left Ur and who had brought about his present state of wealth and prosperity. One would think there would be some gratitude, some grace, some humility on the part of Lot. We learn a great deal about Lot's character in the scene that follows. Thomas Carlyle is credited with writing: "Adversity is sometimes hard upon a man; but for one man who can stand prosperity, there are a hundred that will stand adversity."<sup>1</sup> Abram says, whichever way you go my brother, I will go the opposite. While some might think Abram is acting foolishly, what he is

---

<sup>b</sup> Isaiah 54:8

<sup>c</sup> Mark 16:7

really doing is relying on God. Not necessarily that he thinks God will direct Lot's choice, but that whatever choice is made, God will look after him. The Lord has proven in the past, and He will prove it again in the present and the future that he can be trusted and relied upon. "You make the choice nephew," says Abram, "and I will not argue."

<sup>10</sup> Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) <sup>11</sup> So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company: <sup>12</sup> Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. <sup>13</sup> Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the LORD.

While Abrams approach is unlike the approach many in the world today would take, Lot is only too eager to grab what he can for his own betterment. The language used here is eerily similar to that used of events in the garden, where our first parents saw, and took and tasted. Lot looked up and seeing how bountiful and luscious the whole plain of the Jordan appeared, without any thought of the welfare of the man who had helped to make him, Lot chose to head east. That direction has some sinister connotations. When expelled from the garden, it was to the east Adam took his wife. When cast out after murdering his brother, it was to the east Cain fled. When spreading over the face of the earth, it was in an eastward direction the builders of Babel had moved. Moving to the east seems to be code for moving away from God.

The writer of Proverbs notes: *"There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death."*<sup>d</sup> Lot chooses the way of greed, of selfishness, of relying upon the things of the world for safety, for comfort, for his future. Likely he can't believe his luck, nor his uncle's gullibility. Lot grabs for the brass ring; for the shiny object. Near Sodom he will have easy access to a thriving market. Near Sodom he will find safety in numbers. Near Sodom life will be good for the wealthy rancher. Or so he thinks; or so it appears. The final act of scene two closes with an ominous note: Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord."

Real estate agents will often extol the attractiveness of certain neighborhoods. Lot fell for the glowing listing for Jordan plains, perhaps aware of just how bad his new neighbors were going to be—but the text makes it quite clear. This is how Lots neighbors are described in some of the major translations of the Bible:

NASB = "Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the LORD.";

NKJV = "But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the Lord.";

The Voice = "quite wicked—utterly defiant toward God."

You have to wonder how bad sin is when it is described as 'exceedingly wicked'. These weren't men who refused to cough into their elbows, or practice good social distancing—these guys were bad...real bad. We'll touch on this in a few weeks, but suffice to say for now, this seemingly good choice is not so good. As Oswald Chambers notes: *"The greatest enemy of the life of faith in God is not sin, but good choices which are not quite good enough. The good is always the enemy of the best."*<sup>2</sup> There was nothing inherently wrong with Lot's choice of where to live, but it certainly wouldn't be for the best.

Let me pause for a moment here just to reflect on living near Sodom. Let me ask you. If given the same choice given Lot, in what direction would you head? Would you place your trust in God and say to Abram, "No Uncle, you should choose for that is only right?" Or, would you have followed the same course of the ungrateful nephew? You know, if God chooses for us to

---

<sup>d</sup> Proverbs 14:12

live near Sodom, He is perfectly capable of keeping us. Though living in pagan Babylon, the Lord was able to keep Daniel from hungry lions, and keep the three amigos from getting burned. If God leads you to a suspect neighborhood, you can be sure of His protection and faithfulness. However, you are in for a lot of problems if it is your choice to live near Sodom is simply because it seems appealing and more secure than reliance on the Lord.

To tell you the truth, I would like to think I would have chosen to rely on God—but often I choose to dwell near Sodom. I perhaps allow myself to watch something filled with coarse language or inappropriate content because the story is just so good. Isn't it amazing that what now called content for a 'mature audience' is what used to be called 'pornography'? Sometimes I will choose to spend time playing a video game that has no real value add to my life, instead of opening my Bible. I will play, or putter around with myriad of distractions, and neglect prayer. Sodom comes in many forms, yet each form is just as deadly as the other. Sodom is a place where faith is found to wane; and lives are slowly twisted and turned away from reliance upon the Lord.

And like Sodom, they can appear attractive, prosperous and pleasurable. There is a way which seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death. Taste and filled with pleasure Sodom tempts; and the naïve forget that man does not live on bread alone. Experience fame and fortune cries Sodom, and the fool fails to remember the altars he has built or the worship that belongs only to the Lord; be exalted and prove yourself worthy urges Sodom, and one falls and stumbles due to pride and lack of humility. Lot has a choice to make and he chose to rely upon smoke; upon a bent reed; upon a mirage. He pitched his tents near Sodom.

Where scene two ends on an ominous note, the final scene opens to a renewed walk in faith for Abram.

### Scene Three: Out of Egypt and into Covenant

<sup>14</sup> The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. <sup>15</sup> All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. <sup>16</sup> I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. <sup>17</sup> Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you." <sup>18</sup> So Abram moved his tents and went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the LORD.

Notice that it is after the separation from Lot that the Lord once more appears to Abram. Several commentators speculate on the possible influence Lot may have exerted upon Abram. Be aware of those who may cause you a lot of problems due to their negative influence in your life. Those that hang around to bask in any blessings your faith might bring, but who bolt at the sight of Sodom. It is possible that the age difference between the two was not as great as we think, given that Abraham is the youngest of Terah's sons and the father of Lot had been the eldest of those sons. Regardless, free now from the weight of Lot, and fresh into a new leg of his journey of faith, God invites Abram to lift up his eyes. Here's the thing, were Lot looked upon the vista before him from his perspective, here Abram is invited to see from God's perspective. The language used here is one of invitation rather than command. Hamilton suggests that God says, "Please lift your eyes"<sup>3</sup>

The promise given earlier is now given in greater detail, and Abram becomes more aware of just how big the country and the promise is that God will gift him. Let me just say, Israel is no accident. Don't make the mistake of listening to those who make Israel into some geopolitical entity to be bargained over or for which we need come up with a solution for. God already has the solution for Israel—it is the promise of God, given to the father of the Jewish people, and

gifted through the son of promise – Isaac. And the borders given Israel is measured in the ancient practice of whatever land you can see is that which you can claim. Abram’s real estate agent is none other than the Lord Himself, and he tells Abram, “Walk through the land for I am giving it to you.”

Abram has now grown in his faith to a point where God can grant him a greater insight into His plan and will for Abram and the nation that will come from Abram. Jesus would have the master commend the faithful servant by saying: **“Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things.”**<sup>e</sup> You see, as one grows in their faith and reliance upon God, God is able to reveal much more to them, and trust them with so much more. Just as the priests carrying the Ark had to place their feet in the Jordan River before it would dry up; or the widow would need to collect many jars for the outpouring oil; it is when we demonstrate trust and reliance upon God that we become witnesses to the trustworthiness of the Father. If you never dare for God, He will simply not do for you.

Abram’s response is that of one who recognizes the grace that has been given him, and he moves his tents to a new place, Hebron, which means “colleague, unite, friend”, a place where he will live out the better part of his life. The contrast between the two men and the two choices will become even more pronounced as we follow their lives. One who chose to pitch his tents near Sodom, and the other who built an altar to the Lord. One who placed his trust in the alluring, the other in the Almighty.

Max Lucado writes:

I have something against the lying voices that noise our world. You’ve heard them. They tell you to swap your integrity for a new sale. To barter your convictions for an easy deal. To exchange your devotion for a quick thrill. They whisper. They woo. They taunt. They tantalize. They flirt. They flatter...the world rams at your door; Jesus taps at your door. The voices scream for your allegiance; Jesus softly and tenderly requests it. The world promises flashy pleasure; Jesus promises a quiet dinner...Which voice do you hear?<sup>4</sup>

Could it be that this morning God is once again inviting you to lift your eyes and see the future that He has in mind for you—if only you will rely upon Him? If there was ever a time to do so, is it not today, in the midst of a great time of confusion and uncertainty? To which voice will you listen, the one that tempts or the one that invites? The one that urges you to take or grab, or the one that offers a gift?

In Luke’s gospel, Jesus asks us to rely on God rather than worrying about what and how we will get. That is the way of Sodom. Instead, He invites us into a new way of life—the way of faith. **“Seek his kingdom, and all these things will be given you as well.”**<sup>f</sup> Lot settled for life near a doomed city, while God offered Abram wherever he chose to roam. That is the life of faith, the life that relies upon God; a life that is free and without bounds. The one who is sure of God can afford to hold lightly the things of this world.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps today is the day for you to pull up your stakes and move your tent away from Sodom, and seek after the one upon who offers you the gift of life. Someone has said the manufacture of saints is no child’s play.<sup>6</sup> Jesus would frame the process as taking up one’s cross and following after him. There is a journey that God wants you to take. Leave your country, your people and your family, and immigrate to the land I will show you. Place your trust in Me, for “He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.”

---

<sup>e</sup> Matthew 25:23

<sup>f</sup> Luke 12:31

I heard His voice unto me saying:  
"Take up thy cross and follow me."  
My heart is Thine, now Thee obeying,  
Speak all Thy will, dear Lord, to me.  
Make weakness strength, Thy power now give me,  
And from this hour I'll follow Thee.

Lord we hear your invitation this morning to follow after You, and Lord we pray that Your Holy Spirit will guide us into making the right choice or were we might dwell. Help us to clearly see Your will for our lives, and to trust in the plans You have made for us. Give us the courage to pull up our tent pegs and begin with a new urgency to embark on the journey of faith recognizing that this world is not our home.

Be with those who find themselves struggling with the uncertainty of our times; with fear and illness—we think especially of those deemed essential workers—in hospitals, in emergency services, in the market place or the construction site. Give wisdom to those given positions of power and of authority, and may they lead from knowing the truth, that they may make the right decisions concerning the reopening of society.

Grant us the grace we need as we patiently await being able to fellowship with one another once more, and may you keep watch over our families, friends and all others from whom we are mandated to distance ourselves.

Lord we confidently declare with all the saints: You are our refuge and fortress, our God in whom we trust.

May you receive the glory and honor due Your name, amen.

If you would like the full text of today's message, please visit our website at: [samississippiideaulakes.com](http://samississippiideaulakes.com) under the sermon tab. There is also a link there to the video version of the message.

Email us: [samississippiideaulakes@gmail.com](mailto:samississippiideaulakes@gmail.com)

Thanks again for listening – and next week we look at "A Lot of Problems Part Two: War of the Worlds," as we reflect on Genesis 14. God be with you this week.

## Study Notes

- Has profited greatly from his stay in Egypt, has become very wealthy in livestock, silver and gold. The term here for 'wealthy' means "to be heavy"
- Returns to where his journey to Egypt had begun, and he calls once again on the name of the Lord (first time since Gen 12:8)
- Lot, though not mentioned in Genesis 12:10-20, has been with him the entire time. It is quite possible that the age difference between the two is not as large as often thought.
- Tensions arise because both men have become prosperous
- "quarreling" = strife, controversy. In later texts the same term often denotes legal disputes
- Though they are "close relatives" they decide to part company
- Interesting that neither thought that perhaps the possessions were the issue and another solution was to have less. Would rather lose their 'closeness' than their 'heaviness'
- Abram defers to Lot, who chooses that which appears more fruitful – it is a place like the Egypt he has just left, and like the paradise of Eden
- Lot sets out towards the east, a direction with ominous overtones (see Gen 3:24; 4:16; 11:2)
- Lot as a 'type' in Scripture
- Pitched his tent near Sodom. Abram settled in the land; Lot settled among the cities. Cities are convenient, provide everything one needs, safety in numbers
- Ready market for meat, wool, milk. We may think, if we didn't know the rest of the story that Abram has been duped, and Lot shrewd
- This decision of Lot would have consequences felt by his descendants throughout their future
- What seemingly 'good' choice might we make today that will be felt by our families down through the ages. (see Oswald Chambers)
- V13 gives a hint that all is not well with Sodom. 'wicked' and 'sinners' arranged such that the actual meaning is 'wicked sinners'. Sin is sin – For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it." (James 2:10) and "Everyone who sins breaks the law" (1 John 3:4)
- NASB = "Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the LORD."; NKJV = "But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the Lord."; The Voice = "quite wicked—utterly defiant toward God."
- Same term used in v2 to describe the blessing on Abram. He was 'very' wealthy, they were 'very' wickedly sinful
- V14, after Lot departs, the Lord appears (connection?)
- Give a more expansive view and promise, for the first time just how much land promises is revealed
- Modern day Israel far more than just a political entity, it is the fulfillment of the promise of God. We should always keep in mind that to argue with Israel is to argue against the promise and the One behind the promise
- Man's solutions often do not recognize nor take this into account – thankfully many American Presidents have been more than aware of this connection and made decisions that reflected the reality of the promise
- V18 he moves to Hebron

### Max Lucado

I have something against the lying voices that noise our world. You've heard them. They tell you to swap your integrity for a new sale. To barter your convictions for an easy deal. To exchange your devotion for a quick thrill. They whisper. They woo. They taunt. They tantalize. They flirt. They flatter...the world rams at your door; Jesus taps at your door. The voices

scream for your allegiance; Jesus softly and tenderly requests it. The world promises flashy pleasure; Jesus promises a quiet dinner...Which voice do you hear?<sup>7</sup>

### **Oswald Chambers**

The greatest enemy of the life of faith in God is not sin, but good choices which are not quite good enough. The good is always the enemy of the best."<sup>8</sup>

Hebron = place of joining, alliance<sup>9</sup>

### **Thomas Mann**

- Notes that Lot's journeying "east" is going in the wrong direction
- That the land "to the north and south, to the east and the west" is promised to his future offspring stands contrary to the instant gratification of Lot

### **Hamilton**

- Return to Canaan given without much background: ie. has the famine that led to the Egyptian escapade ended?
- Lot listed even after Abram's possessions
- "A fortune has been amassed, but an opportunity for trust has been missed." (390)
- Scripture silent on both conversations between Abram and Sarai, Abram and God
- Noted that no monuments built to God in Egypt
- We are not told how Lot amassed his wealth, though can be deduced it came from being with Abram
- Same word used to describe degree of famine, now describes degree of Abram's wealth
- The Abram of Canaan is not the Abram of Egypt. Does not seek here to manipulate or connive, but 'magnanimous'. "One wonders if Abram's return to the altar and meeting with God (v4) had anything to do with his change of disposition." (391)
- Westermann sees Abram's decision to leave the choice to Lot as a way of avoiding any future strife, and not from altruistic concerns.
- Just as Eve 'saw' the fruit, and the sons of God 'saw' the daughters of men, Lot 'saw' the lush Jordan
- "It is clear from v. 12 that the territory chosen by Lot lies outside the borders of Canaan." (393). He thus eliminates himself from any potential of being an heir to Abram
- The sovereignty of God extends beyond the borders of the Promised Land into Egypt and Sodom.
- The Hebrew particle *na* is often ignored by translators, but it is present in v14; 15:5; 22:2 and Ex 11:2. Though used over sixty times in the OT, only four times is it used when God is addressing a person. In this passage Yahweh asks Abram to exercise faith that the land, as far as he can see in any direction, will one day be his." (394)

### **Barker**

- Separation seems to bring a response from God on multiple occasions
- Abram places the promise in jeopardy by offering Lot first choice. "thanks to Abraham the promise teeters on the whim of the father of the Moabites" (22) who will later be, along with the Ammonites, a constant thorn in the side of Israel
- Lot's choice of a land "toward the east" forebodes disaster (22)

### **Edersheim**

- Decision was reached through faith that God would determine the bounds of his land
- the whole cleft of the Jordan valley was rich with the most luxuriant tropical vegetation, the sweetest spot of all being around the Lake of Sodom, at that time probably a sweetwater lake, the "circuit" of the plain resembling in appearance, but far exceeding in fertility and beauty, the district around the Sea of Galilee.<sup>10</sup>

## Meyers

- God does not hold Egypt against Abram. A reminder that our sinfulness does not undo God's faithfulness (Psalm 103:10-11)
- On Lot:
  - Son of Abrams dead older brother, would have received any inheritance
  - Seems to prosper only as long as attached to someone 'better'
  - "He was the Pliable of the earliest Pilgrims Progress" (41)
  - Compares Lot to those who cast their lot (pun not intended) with Christians but ultimately they cannot survive the life of separation to God—the allure of the world and its empty promises become too great (they can be an encumbrance to those of faith; a dead weight that drags one down. Their hearts always drawn towards an Egypt or a Sodom
  - Wonders how much Lot's influence lead to the disastrous Egyptian venture
  - "It is not enough to leave Ur, Haran, and Egypt. We must rid ourselves of Lot also." (42)
  - "The manufacture of saints is no child's play" (42) The block must be separated from the mountain bed in order to be chiseled into form
  - Abram watching and waiting for an opportunity to divest himself of Lot
  - "There was no fear...that Lot could ever rob him of that which was guaranteed him by the faithfulness of God." (44)
  - "the man who is sure of God can afford to hold very lightly the things of the world." (44)
  - Compare Gen 3:6 / 13:10 – looked, chose, separate
  - How many people are lured by temptation of that which appears to be so pleasurable and advantageous. Perhaps they mistakingly think they can handle it; emerge from it; not be stained by its influence and mark
  - Only when God sends us to Babylon can we escape without being burned or eaten by the lions (Daniel and three friends)
  - When Lot departed, God appeared
  - Directed Abram to lift his eyes to what He would have him see, to look where He would bless, where He would guide
  - For too long we look upon what man offers and miss what God holds before us
  - Immense freedom given Abram to walk through the entire length and breadth of the gift. NO need to settle by a city when the while land is yours to enjoy

## Bruggemann

- Older uncle would have first right
- Parting of ways "reflects the legal practice of coming into possession of the land by the capacity to own whatever could be seen." (130) see also Dt 3:27; Lk 4:5; Isa 39:1-4; Mk 11:11
- "Whereas his inability to trust the promise had made him fearful...here his trust of the promise makes him gracious and generous." (131)
- See Luke 12:13-21
- "Jesus asserts that the alternative to covetousness is reliance on the good gifts of the Father." (131)
  - Associates covetousness (v15), anxiety (v22), and little faith (v28)
- See Gal 3-4; the good gifts are not to be "sieved, grasped, or possessed" lest their nature as gift be perverted
- "the family of Abraham is called to be heirs, not predators, purchasers, or thieves." (132)
- Discusses the ideology of scarcity and the fear which arises
- Difference in Abram due to trust in the promise
- Concern in 12:10-20 is about self and own survival putting others at risk
- The reward is a new visitation from God and an further expansion of the promise

- “Like Abraham, we are strange mixtures of prudence and trust.” (134)

### Wenham

- V3, notes that “place to place” from a term used only elsewhere to of Israel in the wilderness (Ex 17:1; Nu 10:12)
- Abrams departure as foreshadow of the exodus (like Israel, comes out wealthy)
- That the altar still stands (v4) perhaps suggests “that the promises still stand too.” (296)
- The verb ‘dwell’ found in four verses (6, 7, 12, 18)
- Paradoxical that the tension and the need to separate arises because of the blessing
- Perrizites mentioned 23X in OT; etymology is uncertain though has a connection with the term for ‘village’; likely an ethnic group (296)
- “men and brothers” (v8)
- Lot appears to select an area either on the fringes of the Promised Land, or even beyond it (297) Thus he may in fact be “depicted turning his back on it.” (297)
- Eastward an echo of Adam, Eve, Cain and the men of Babel
- “deliberate contrast between the choices of Abram of living in the land of Canaan and Lot’s living near the cities
- “The rare phraseology implies the extreme seriousness of Sodom’s sins.” (298)

### Swindoll

- Though separated by culture, time and language “These men and women wanted the same things we want today: close family ties, good health, financial security, fulfilling relationships, physical safety, and comfortable surroundings.” (27)
- Faith not just believing God exists, it is a trusting God with our daily lives
- Cites Thomas Carlyle: “Adversity is sometimes hard upon a man; but for one man who can stand prosperity, there are a hundred that will stand adversity.” (28)
- Abram’s response to the growing tension displays his growing faith in God
- Lot’s choice reveals much about his character. He owes much to Abram, but chooses what he thinks will be the best location, guaranteeing his continued prosperity at the expense of his uncle
- “Lot chose greed over gratitude.” (32)
- Richard Foster in Money, Sex and Power writes:

Without question, money has taken on a sacred character in our world, and it would do us good to find ways to defame it, defile it, and trample it under our feet. So step on it. Yell at it. Laugh at it. List it way down on the scale of values—certainly far below friendship and cheerful surroundings. And engage in the most profane act of all—give it away. (32)

- Abram relocates to Hebron where “the soil is relatively fertile, and a variety of fruits (apples, plums, figs, pomegranates, apricots), nuts, and vegetables are grown easily.” (34)
- Lot’s thinking two dimensional, there was no up
- Abram becomes more adept at leaning on God
- “Our biggest problem isn’t that we don’t see and hear God; it’s that we struggle with doing what He has commanded.” (37)
- Lots of examples in Scripture of people who heard from God, saw God at work, even spoke to God, and yet when push came to shove they went their own way
- Jeremiah 33:31-33
- Four words to guide your decision-making process: (38-39)
  - **Always** look beyond the immediate
  - **Never** underestimate negative impacts

- **Forget** about pleasing only yourself
- **Remember** with great freedom comes the need for greater discipline

Kylie Busutti had achieved her life's ambition, winning the 2009 Victoria 's Secret Model competition, beating out 10,000 other contestants, and then she quit. Kylie told Good Morning America that a defining moment came when her young cousin remarked to her, "I think I want to stop eating so I can look like you. Kylie came "...to the conclusion that her body was for her husband to see, and not for millions of voyeurs on the internet. She also realized she cared deeply about the legions of young Christian girls who looked up to her."<sup>11</sup> Kylie made the decision to turn away from the well watered plains of the Jordan and the city of Sodom, to place her future in the hands of the Promiser.

## Endnotes

---

<sup>1</sup> Charles R. Swindoll, Abraham (Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest: An Updated Edition in Modern Language*, edited by James Reimann (Grand Rapids: Discovery House Publishers, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 394.

<sup>4</sup> Max Lucado, *God's Inspirational Promise Book* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1996), 115.

<sup>5</sup> F.B. Meyer, *Abraham: The Obedience of Faith* (Edinburgh: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1960), 44.

<sup>6</sup> F.B. Meyer, *Abraham: The Obedience of Faith* (Edinburgh: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1960), 42.

<sup>7</sup> Max Lucado, *God's Inspirational Promise Book* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1996), 115.

<sup>8</sup> Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest: An Updated Edition in Modern Language*, edited by James Reimann (Grand Rapids: Discovery House Publishers, 1992).

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Hebron.html#.Xrl9pGhKiUk>

<sup>10</sup> Edersheim, Alfred . Bible History: Old Testament . Genteel Books. Kindle Edition.

<sup>11</sup> Idleman, Kyle. Gods at War (p. 57). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.