**August 5, 2020 | A Study on Chapter 13 of the Book of Genesis**

**Abram and Lot Separate**

“I’ve never been in a situation where having money made it worse.” This is a quote attributed to Clinton Jones who was a running back for the Minnesota Vikings in the late 1960’s. I am in agreement with Mr. Jones as I cannot recall a time when having money did in fact make things worse. Conversely, I can remember numerous times when a lack of money did make matters worse. Several of those occasions involved having little cash on me before the days of widespread acceptance of credit cards, usually in the company of Michele who was incredulous that a man who worked at a bank did not carry much cash. But can you have too much money? Often people with modest wealth live a somewhat carefree existence while rich people are constantly worried about losing some of their money (see Luke 12:16-21). That reminds me of another money quote by the Greek philosopher Epicurus who said “Riches do not so much exhilarate us with their possession as they torment us in their loss”. Chapter 13 presents us with a situation where great wealth did create conflict. At the end of chapter 12, Abram and his family leave Egypt and return to Canaan after having accumulated many possessions. Abram continued his nomadic ways, moving from place to place until he returned to Bethel where he had previously built an altar to God. Lot had accompanied Abram during his travels and the Bible says that he also had livestock and herdsmen to tend to them. Their combined flocks and herds were too much to be supported by the land in the same area as evidenced by arguments between their herdsmen. Verse 7 says that Canaanites and Perizzites were living in the land and it could be that Abram thought it would be a poor witness for the family to quarrel in front of them. Today, bickering among Christians can be a stumbling block for non believers who see it and want no part of the church.

Abram’s proposed solution reveals how much he had grown in his faith since his time in Egypt. He had previously taken matters into his own hands by going to Egypt, he now trusts that God will provide for him. God had promised Abram that his family would possess Canaan but now Abram offers to split the land and gives Lot first choice. This also indicates that for all his wealth, Abram was not fixated on his possessions. Lot on the other hand saw an opportunity to expand his wealth and took advantage. David Guzik observed that Lot’s wealth possessed him. It is often the case that what is appealing to the eye will influence our choices and that was true of Lot. He saw the well watered plain along the Jordan River and took it (in arid regions throughout the world, water is prized and often fought over). While the land may have been attractive, its inhabitants were wicked. Lot may have used the excuse that he could witness to unbelievers if he lived among them, a dangerous strategy that can backfire when one is lured into a different lifestyle. Much like Cain and his family who were drawn to city life, Lot wanted to live near the cities in the region he chose and verse 12 tells us he pitched his tent near Sodom, a decision he would come to regret. Abram, on the other hand, seemed to prefer a rural existence.

God had previously told Abram to leave his family and now that he and Lot had parted, God once again speaks to Abram promising him that his offspring would inherit forever all the land he could see in any direction. God also promised Abram that his offspring would be so numerous that they could not be counted.

We can learn some lessons by the actions of Abram and Lot. 2nd Corinthians 5:7 says that we are to live by faith, not sight. Lot chose to live by sight, choosing land based on material wealth rather than the spiritual impact of his decision. Abram lived by faith and was rewarded.

Abram also shows us that someone who is truly saved can go astray but God always welcomes the wandering Christian back. Jesus illustrated this with 3 parables in Luke chapter 15; the lost sheep, lost coin and prodigal son. What these 3 parables have in common is the joy expressed by the finder of the lot coin, lost sheep and father of the prodigal son. When we repent of our sins and seek to restore our relationship with God, He receives us joyously.

Finally, this chapter is a reminder that God always keeps His promises. He had made a covenant with Abram years earlier and would fulfill it by sending His Son as a sacrifice for our sins. As Steve said in a recent message, we can find Jesus in every book of the Bible.