

After spending some time in Egypt, where did Abram go next and what did he do? He went back to the Promised Land where he had first built an altar (12:8) and worshipped God there (13:4). He built another altar (13:18). No altars are recorded as being built while he was in Egypt.

Note: Abram did not know His God well—which is both normal and natural. What Abram needed was not lessons in increasing his faith, but an increase in his faith by learning the greatness of his God. Much of our problem of little faith would be solved by more intimately knowing the God we serve. Unlike Abram, we have the Bible, which is invaluable in helping us understand Him.

What is the bottom line cause of the problems between Abram and Lot? The problems were created by wealth. It is significant that this is the first place wealth is mentioned in the Bible. Notice that although both Abram and Lot were wealthy, each had a different relationship to his own wealth. Abram had the flocks, but they did not have him. Lot was possessed by his material things.

Did Abram's faithlessness/mistake in going to Egypt derail God's plan? His failure did not frustrate God's plan for his life. However, God had to intervene to get him out of there and redirect his life. The loss of Sarai to Pharaoh's harem would have eliminated Abram's ability to have descendants as God had promised. God will execute His will. We cannot alter the plan of God, either by our opposition or inattention. He is not dependent upon us to accomplish His will.

Abram gave Lot first choice of the land. What does that tell you about Abram? He was both gracious and selfless. As the older man and the leader in the entire adventure, it was his right to have first choice. But he had learned something important. When he had gone to Egypt, he had chosen for himself and had gotten into great difficulty. Now he was content to leave the choices with God and to trust God for his future provision.

Note: Couldn't Abram and Lot have divided the land in a way that would allow them both to have some of the fertile plain area? Why not Abram on one side of the Jordan and Lot on the other? Why do you suppose Abram was willing to let Lot choose?

Abram was secure in God's promise to bless him. He realized that since God would take care of him it did not matter where he lived within the land. We can almost hear Abram telling Lot, "You choose. I am perfectly comfortable with whatever is left over. I am glad to be anywhere in the land God has chosen for me." Abram has grown up since the famine.

Application: Are you secure in God's sovereign control over your life? You don't have to try and manipulate your future, and can say, "I am glad to go anywhere the Lord has chosen even if it means going to _____."

Note: There are two qualities that stand out in Abram's statement in verses 8 and 9: freedom and selflessness. Abram was announcing that he was a free man. He did not have to have what looked the best. He didn't require the financial security that lured Lot toward the well-watered valley. He did not need the soft life and luxury of the cities of the plain that Lot seemed to love so much. He did not demand anything because he was a free man. Christians who have learned to deflect and resist the lure of worldliness will always be characterized as free because they do not have to dance to the tune of the world. They do not have to have what everybody else seems to require for life. And they are delighted to see good come to others whether or not it comes to them.

On what basis did Lot make his decision? What appealed to the eye and senses. Common sense. It was a no-brainer decision.

How, or on what basis, should Lot have made his decision? Lot should have made prayerful consideration of his decision. He should have given Abram first choice since he was there solely because of Abram's goodness to him.

Note: There is no indication that Lot concerned himself with what might have benefited Abram. His decision was calculated to obtain what he wanted when he wanted it. It was selfishness in place of selflessness and bondage instead of freedom.

Lot loved what he saw, and he chose to go where he could have the things the world had to offer. Instead of caring for righteousness, instead of seeking a place where he could follow the Lord most closely, he sought a place that offered all this world could give. He was not free; he was in bondage to the love of things that would never give him life.

Abram wanted Lot to make a choice that would bring him life. He wanted Lot to choose what was best. This was a great opportunity for Lot to display his character and faith. He failed.

Application: There's probably a little bit of Lot in most of us. Made choices without consulting God based on what seems best? Made choices based on glamour or external appearances? Have you put your job ahead of your family's spiritual life? Your social life ahead of your church life?

How did God respond when Abram accepted his destiny to wander in Canaan? He reaffirmed his promises to Abram.

Why? How do you think that made Abram feel? It confirmed that God was pleased with Abram. Probably gave him confidence and assurance.

How did Abram respond to God's message? He built an altar and worshipped. Abram has grown up, but he hasn't arrived yet.

Note: It is of interest that Scripture does not record God speaking to Abram until after he separated from Lot. God's call of Abram (12:1-3), so far as we can discern, was to Abram alone. So also was the confirmation in chapter 13. God had commanded Abram to leave his relatives (12:1). Blessing could not come apart from obedience to God's revealed will, and neither would reassurance. God providentially removed Lot, and now His promise is restated.

God's final word to Abram in this visitation was to survey the land which would someday be his. For now he was not to possess it, but to inspect it with the eye of faith.

When did the occupation of the land by the Israelites actually take place? Under Joshua. See Deuteronomy 31:23.

How many years elapsed between the death of Abraham and the entry of the Jews into the Promised Land under Joshua?

About 600 years. God's promises often take time to be realized—because God has planned it that way.

Application: The decisions reached by Abram and Lot are the same as those which confront every Christian. We must decide whether to trust in the sovereignty of God or in our own schemes and devices. What is God trying to tell you?
