

JESUS IN GENESIS

SEASON 2

JESUS IN GENESIS - SEASON 2: GENESIS 13:1-18

COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY GUIDE - WEEK OF APRIL 18, 2021

Introduction:

In Gen. 13 there are two people making choices, Abram (blessed) and Lot (cursed). As we look at the text, we should remember that the more gravity a choice has the more intentionality needed in making that choice. When a person makes a choice, how and why they make a choice reveals who they really are and what they really worship. In our text, we see how the worship and values of Abram and Lot lead them to make choices on the same matters and how those choices lead to drastically different outcomes and ministries.

1. Choose Repentance & Worship

- v1: "Abram went up from Egypt"- not just language about physical movement, but of spiritual movement. God is lifting him up from his position of faithlessness that led him to go down to Egypt; God gives him the gift of repentance, Sarai forgives him and he returns to Egypt with his wife (who he called his "sister" on the way down). Repentance is not just about feeling bad about what you did, but about making a directional change with your actions in life, grounded in your faith in God and his faithfulness to you.
- v2: Though Abram sinned in going to Egypt, he returned with great wealth. This contradicts a works-righteousness and legalistic approach to scripture with regard to God's blessing and salvation. The economy of scripture teaches, instead, of God's grace and mercy toward His people despite their sin.
- v3: "at the beginning" - Abram returns to the place where his spiritual journey started and where he first worshipped God while he is refocusing his life around his faith. His spiritual sight has returned.
- When the OT brings up altars, we should think of them as places where people worship God and receive restoration and reconciliation before Him. The NT parallel to the altar is the church. When God saves his people, He calls them to a covenant body of believers. The "altar" should be a priority in our lives. We should plan decisions and our lives around the altar.

2. Choose to Resolve Conflict

- v4-7: As Abram is worshipping at the altar, he realizes that he has sin with his nephew, Lot, that he has not addressed. As nomads with huge flocks in limited space, there is strife between his men and Lot's men.
- v8-11: Contextually, Lot should have given the good land to Abram, his elder, but Abram graciously gives Lot the opportunity to choose between the two lands. Abram knows Lot's character and knew that Lot would choose the good land, but trusted that God would provide for him and fulfill His promises to bless him despite less opportunity to build earthly security. When we place God's plans and our neighbor's good before our own plans and good, we position ourselves to depend on God to provide. Sometimes we might not prosper because we might not be ready to handle prosperity and God is mercifully showing us that.
- Christians need to avoid the mistake of saying that we need to love God and love neighbor EXCEPT when it comes to business and money. In delicate matters we need to be especially careful to show love to God and our neighbor.

3. Choose God over Prosperity

- v10-13: Lot makes his decision based on what he can see instead of from making it from a position of faith, and it leads him to a bad place. He knew about Abram's call and the promises given to him from God, but chose to live away from him. In leaving Abram, Lot distances himself from the place God's promises, the altars and covenant community. He didn't take any time to scope out the land for a place of worship, community for his family, etc., and lands in a truly wicked and place (where his daughters and wife are influenced toward sin and that God destroys soon after).
- Lot's comparison of the land to the garden of the Lord reveals his lustful desire to profit from the land. He wants to recreate paradise, Eden, but he wants to do so without God. Anything without God, however, turns into hell.
- Unlike Lot, when we make decisions, we should choose the option that will make us more spiritually fruitful, not materially fruitful.
- Lot prioritized money and comfort over God, and it eventually led to the loss of all that he had. Abram chose to trust God and it led to his prosperity.

4. Choose to Walk with the Lord

- v14-17: Abram's lifting up of his eyes is done in faith instead of lust. Despite the appearance of a lot of dust physically before him, Abram sees that God will bless him and give Abram more of Himself.
- Abram walks through the Promised Land with God. This is reminiscent of Adam and Eve, Enoch and Noah

DISCUSSION GOALS

Head

To think about whether we make decisions with faith and repentance or lusts at the forefront of our minds.

Heart

To trust that we will be completely satisfied when God fulfills His eternal promises to us.

Hands

To cling to our eternal treasure in Christ instead of the earthly treasure that we have access to today.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We will hold **9:30** and **11:30 services** this coming Sunday, April 25.

Please go to <https://brookline.mosaicboston.com/serve> to **sign up for a service team**.

The next **Members' Meeting** will held on **May 2 at 3PM** in the Temple sanctuary.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

walking with God before him.

- Did Lot walk with God? Scarcely. 2 Peter 2:7-8 calls him "righteous." Lot is saved by grace. He, like all sinners, is granted righteousness and access to the garden in the new heavens and new earth, the land to which Abram was called, because Christ went to the Garden of Gethsemane for him (and us).
- Jesus Christ himself is the garden for us. He himself is Eden, is paradise. When we're in Him, we have access to all of the promises of God. Like Abram, we must place our faith in Him. Practicing faith and repentance daily is what gives us more access to Him.
- v18: Abram goes and plants a church, very close to Machpelah, the only piece of the Promised Land that he ever acquired. After this life, he gained access to his full inheritance. Many are still being drawn into his family. All those in Christ are within that number.
- Conclusion: Will I follow Jesus, take up my cross and sacrifice treasure today in order to cling to my eternal treasure in Christ? Look to Abram who walked with God and got God, and look to Lot who left God and only received destruction in this life.

Read Genesis 13:1-18.

1. In verse 1, Abram travels up from Egypt to Bethel? Why did he travel to that location and what did he do when he arrived there?
2. Are there any places that you consider to be your "Bethel"?
3. Why do you live where you are? Is God a factor in your decision?
4. Abram and Lot both looked out at the lands that they would eventually occupy. Compare their perspectives and the things that they valued most when they made their decisions.
5. Compare the eventual outcomes of the decisions made by Abram and Lot in this chapter.
6. Lot and his family fell into deeper forms of idolatry and wickedness as they moved closer and closer to Sodom. How can you do a better job at guarding your heart from being tempted to fall into the idolatry and wickedness that is widespread where you live? (Note, this is not the week to dig into the specific forms of wickedness for which Sodom is notorious. We will deal with that in the coming chapters.)
7. What did Lot cut himself and his family off from when he went East?
8. How can you incorporate your altar/church community better when you make decisions about work, finances, moves, relationships, and struggles with sin?
9. **Read 2 Peter 2:7-8 and 1 Corinthians 3:15.** Did Lot walk with God? Explain.
10. What does it mean that Jesus Christ is the true garden of the Lord/paradise/Eden?