



Abram and Lot

Lesson Focus

Abram and Lot separated from one another. Lot chose the best land for himself and moved near the wicked city of Sodom. Abram trusted God and believed in God's promise.

Key Passages

Genesis 13:1–18, 14:12–24; 2 Samuel 18:18;
Hebrews 7:1–4

What You Will Learn

- Why Lot chose to settle near Sodom.
- How Abram's godly choices compare to Lot's worldly choices.

Memory Verse

Hebrews 11:1 & 6 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. . . . And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

Prepare to Learn

Scriptural Background

In Genesis 12:10–20, a famine led Abram to travel to Egypt. Here, Abram feared for his life because his wife Sarai was beautiful, and he thought the Egyptians would kill him to take her. Rather than trusting in God’s protection, he lied about Sarai being his wife and instead claimed she was only his sister, which was partially true because she was his half-sister (see Genesis 20:12). However, his deception backfired because Sarai was taken into Pharaoh’s household. God intervened and plagued Pharaoh’s household until the truth of Abram and Sarai’s relationship became known to Pharaoh. Pharaoh gave Sarai back to Abram and sent him away.

After Abram left Egypt, conflict arose between his servants and Lot’s servants. They both had many animals and possessions, so Abram proposed that they separate. This solution enabled them to spread out and find land that could support their animals. Abram let Lot choose his land first. Lot decided to move to the plain of Jordan because it was well-watered and looked the best. Abram remained in the land of Canaan.

Lot’s decision led him to settle in Sodom, a wicked city. His location would land him in the middle of a conflict. Four Mesopotamian kings joined together to raid the cities of the Jordan, including Sodom. In a

battle in the Valley of Siddim (Salt Sea), the king of Sodom was among the five defending kings who lost. The winning kings raided Sodom, captured all the people, including Lot and his family, and took all the wealth of the city (Genesis 14:1–12). When Abram heard what had happened to his nephew, he formed a group of trained men and pursued the plundering kings. He defeated them and recaptured everything that was taken (Genesis 14:13–16).

When Abram returned to Sodom, two men came to receive him. Melchizedek, a king and priest of God, brought bread and wine to Abram and blessed him. Abram gave him a tithe from everything he recovered (Genesis 14:18–20). The king of Sodom also came to Abram and wanted him to keep all the recaptured goods. But Abram refused the king’s offer (Genesis 14:21–24). Abram’s actions after his victory showed his allegiance to God because he gave a tithe to Melchizedek rather than aligning himself with a wicked king by keeping the spoils for himself. Abram didn’t want the king of Sodom to be able to claim that he had made him wealthy (Genesis 14:23). The difference between Abram’s and Lot’s decision-making demonstrates the importance of following God’s direction rather than relying on our own wisdom.

Historical/Apologetics Background

Valley of Siddim

Critics of the Bible have questioned how the battle of the kings could have taken place in the “Valley of Siddim,” which is the Dead Sea (Genesis 14:3). How could this area be both a valley and a sea? The Dead Sea has both a northern and a southern basin, which are currently isolated from each other. Geological evidence suggests that throughout history the southern basin’s water level has risen and fallen. If the water level of the southern basin was dried up during Abram’s day, this area would be a valley. When the water level rose and connected the two basins, this valley would again be part of the Dead Sea.

Genesis 14:10 also describes bitumen (tar) pits in the Valley of Siddim. These pits claimed the lives of some of the fleeing kings and their men. These pits could have been created in the dried-up southern basin, which would contain pools of evaporating salt water and bacteria. These conditions make the ground unstable enough to break and claim the lives of fleeing men.¹

Melchizedek

Following the battle in the Valley of Siddim and Abram’s recovery of the captured people and possessions from Sodom, a mysterious character appears in Genesis 14—the

priest-king Melchizedek. Melchizedek’s name is interpreted “king of righteousness,” and he is also called king of Salem, which means “king of peace.” Salem may also be an early name for Jerusalem. The mystery of his character stems from his sudden and brief appearance in Scripture with no background other than his name and titles.

Melchizedek’s appearance may be short, but it is significant. The New Testament uses Melchizedek as a picture of our king and priest, Jesus (Hebrews 7). Although Melchizedek is used as a type of Christ, he was just a man. However, his name and his unique royal priesthood share similarities with Jesus.

Priests were esteemed in Judaism because they connected people to God by offering sacrifices; they were mediators. But human priests were sinful. They had to offer sacrifices just like the people did to demonstrate their repentance and obedience to God. The point of Hebrews 7 is to show that Jesus is the ultimate high priest, the perfect mediator to bridge the gap between sinful man and God (Hebrews 8:1). Jesus was sinless, so He was the perfect sacrifice. Unlike the Levitical priesthood, which was just for the Jews, Melchizedek’s priesthood was universal. Jesus’ sacrifice on the Cross was also universal, for all mankind. Jesus was not subject to royalty because He is a King, just as Melchizedek was a king. The Bible indicates that Melchizedek’s

1 Kyle Pope, “The Modern Dead Sea and Genesis Fourteen,” *Biblical Insights* 2.2, February 2002, <http://ancientroadpublications.com/Studies/BiblicalStudies/GenesisFourteen.html>.

kingship was appointed rather than inherited due to the phrase “without father, without mother, without genealogy” (Hebrews 7:3). His position was honored by Abram, who gave him a tenth of the spoils (Hebrews 7:4). This is the first example of giving a tithe to the Lord’s service.

The picture of Jesus in the person of Melchizedek is evidence of God’s perfect plan of redemption, thousands of years before Jesus would come to earth. God’s plan of salvation begins in Genesis and continues through all of Scripture.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.

Studying God’s Word

What distinguished Lot’s desires from Abram’s desires?

Take notes as you study the following passage.

Genesis 13:1–18

Abram’s Example

Work in groups to answer the questions below.

As we read the Old Testament, we don’t want to lose sight of Jesus. Read the following New Testament passages and then answer the questions with respect to Genesis 13.

Mark 10:41–45; Luke 22:24–30

How do these passages relate to Abram’s interaction with Lot regarding the conflict that arose between their households?

If we aligned these scenes, who would represent Lot in the New Testament passages?

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Can you think of an example in your life where there was a conflict over property or time or resources of some sort? How did you respond to the conflict? How might your response be different in the future in light of these passages?

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Take notes as you study the following passages.

Genesis 14:12–24

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2 Samuel 18:18

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Hebrews 7:1–4



God's Word in the Real World

1. What interesting historical or geographical nugget did you learn today as we considered this text?

2. Why is it so hard for us to count other more significant than ourselves, as Abram did for Lot, especially in the midst of a conflict?
3. Why is it important for us to know how to use cross-references and other features of our Bibles as we seek to fully understand God's Word?
4. What did you learn about Jesus from this Old Testament text?
5. Have you ever faced a choice like Lot's choice of where to settle? How did you make that decision?
6. What choices are you facing in your life right now that you need counsel or prayer for?

Prayer Requests
