



## “Two Believers on Different Paths” (Genesis 12:10-14:24)

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Intro: God called a man named Abram out of an idolatrous lifestyle in Ur of the Chaldeans. See Joshua 24:2. His nephew Lot went with him. God did not give specific details for their journey - it was a journey of faith. Their faith would be repeatedly challenged on this journey, and where they ended up all depended on how they responded to those challenges. Pick up the story with me in Genesis 12:10.

### CHAPTER 12

v.10a This is Abram’s first real test on his journey of faith. A famine is a dry time. Anybody ever have a “dry time” on your journey of faith? Amos 8:11 prophesies a time of famine, not of food or thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord. I must say, that’s the worst kind of famine you can experience!

v.10b There is no record of Abraham asking the Lord for direction, he just heads to Egypt “because the famine was severe.” I must admit, it’s the natural thing anyone would do. It seems logical; the only problem is it does not seem like it was God’s will. Egypt is a type of “the world” (Rev.11:8), so in essence the move Abram makes is toward the world, and anytime we move in that direction other mistakes are likely to follow.

vv.11-13 Wow! Abram asks his wife to lie for him. The motive is obvious – to save his own skin! You see, part of the status for kings in this culture was tied to the size of their harem. So what Abram is afraid of is that a pagan king will kill him in order to add Sarai to his harem.

vv.14-15 What Abram feared is exactly what happens!

v.16 Abram gets rich off this deal! But spiritually he is headed toward bankruptcy!

v.17 The Lord has a way of bringing a believer’s dishonesty into the light, and that’s what He does here.

vv.18-20 This is the grace and mercy of God. Pharaoh could have just killed Abram, but God does not allow this to happen. He leaves Egypt, and enters once again on his faith journey.

## CHAPTER 13

Note v.4b Good move Abe! No doubt he has in his mind that he never wants to make the same mistakes he had just made, going to Egypt out of the will of God, lying to save his own skin! I hate to tell you, but when we get to Genesis chapter 20, an older Abraham will make the exact same mistake again! (Read Genesis 20). Anybody ever make the same mistake years later? Thank God for grace, mercy, and forgiveness!

vv.5-7 Abram had blown any opportunity for a positive testimony for the Lord in Egypt, and now he wants things to be different before the Canaanites and Perizzites.

vv.8-9 This is called humility. This is called faith. Abram is growing.

vv.10-13 This is called carnality. Lot, unlike Abram, did not learn from the mistakes made by going to Egypt.

vv.14-17 What irony! Abram humbled himself, trusted the Lord, and God promises ALL of the land to him and his descendants, including the land Lot chose “for himself.”

v.18 Good move Abram! Once again Abram is worshipping and seeking the Lord.

## CHAPTER 14

vv.1-4

- Amraphel = “sayer of darkness,” Bera = “son of evil,” Birsha = “with iniquity.” These are pagan kings.

vv.5-12, noting v.12b. Gen.13:12b said that Lot, when he chose for himself and separated from Abram, “pitched his tents *near Sodom*.” By this time Lot has said goodbye to tent life and is living in a home in Sodom. This is very telling about Lot’s spiritual condition. See Hebrews 11:8-10. Lot made the mistake of leaving a life of faith, dwelling in Sodom, and now he is taken captive by the enemy.

vv.13-16 Please do not miss something very important – this is a supernatural victory. Abram, with only 318 men, defeats four kings and their entire armies! Point: When any of our fellow believers are taken captive, we need to go after them. But when we do, we must realize that the victory will come and their escape made possible only through supernatural means. That is why prayer must be essential in our efforts (note Eph.6, spiritual battle and spiritual armor).

- Do you know of another Christian who has been taken captive because they walked away from the life of faith and got too close to the world? Prayer is the number one weapon to help them escape.

v.17 This is very interesting to me. The first one to meet Abram after the victory is the king of Sodom. I wonder what he wants?

vv.18-20a He is king of Salem (peace), and priest of God Most High. Now remember, under the Law of Moses, one could not be a king and a priest. That's why God judged Uzziah when he tried to offer incense in the temple (II Chron.26). This act was reserved for the priests only. Melchizedek, this king priest, blesses Abram, and assures him that the victory over the enemy was by God's hand.

And Melchizedek brings out bread and wine. He desires fellowship with Abram, and Abram with him.

Who is this wonderfully mysterious king/priest? Some say a type of Christ. I say, he is a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ. No matter what your opinion, there is no doubt that Christ is the one personified for us here. See Psalm 110: 1, 4. Hebrews 6 and 7 tells us that Jesus Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek, "without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life." In other words, eternal.

v.20b This is one of the verses to support my belief that the tithe is the standard offering to the Lord for any financial/material increase He blesses us with. Melchizedek did not ask for nor demand this tithe, it was offered willingly.

One more note before we move on in our text - the bread and wine, the fellowship elements between Melchizedek and Abram. Now that we have the New Testament, we know exactly what they represent. Jesus, on that final Passover meal before the cross, took bread, saying it represented His body. Then he took the cup (of wine), saying it represented His blood. And the message is clear and complete. Our victory over our enemies, and our fellowship with God, are made possible only through the sacrifice of our priest/king – the Lord Jesus Christ.

Melchizedek came to fellowship with Abram, and the elements of that fellowship were bread and wine (the sacrifice of Jesus). He came to bless Abram, and to remind him that the victory over the enemy was secured by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. But he is not the final figure mentioned at the end of our study this evening.

v.21 We know who Melchizedek represents. Who is the king of Sodom? If we look at God's description of the people he ruled over, and consider the offer he makes here to Abram, it becomes pretty clear. Ezekiel 16:49 tells us that the people of Sodom were "arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy." II Peter 2:6 says that God made the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly. And Jude 7 says that Sodom and the towns around her "gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire." What is it that the king of Sodom wants? He wants the people, and for Abram to keep the loot. It's pretty apparent to me who he represents. He is the king of this present world. He is Lucifer, the devil.

And he wants you and me. And he offers great worldly gain in order to have us. He offered Jesus the kingdoms of this world and their splendor, if only Jesus would bow down and worship him. We know what Jesus did. What would Abram do?

vv.22-24 Way to go Abe!

- If the king of Sodom can get our focus on the things of this world rather than seeing those taken captive by the enemy set free, he has indeed won a great victory. Let's not let him do so!

## ADDENDUM

Let's not forget who is among the people the king of Sodom wants – Lot. Lot had been taken captive because he was living in Sodom. Now that he is free from captivity, a captivity that came as a direct result of him living in Sodom, what would he do? I think the godly advice would be to move from his home in Sodom and go back to the tent life, the life of faith. Is that what he did? See Gen.19:1a, 12-14. Lot's warning has no influence on their lives, and I believe it is at least partly because his own life lacks a complete commitment to the Lord. As we read on, this to me becomes very apparent.

Gen.19:15-16 Lot's hesitation is another evidence of his spiritual state.

Gen.19:17-20 I really believe Lot was physically out of shape. The culture of Sodom was a people who were "overfed." Lot was living the easy life in Sodom.

Gen.19:21-26 A final evidence of Lot's spiritual condition. We are not told where Lot met his wife, but it very well could have been in Sodom. It could have been that relationship that initially lured him to Sodom, and the relationship that ultimately kept him in Sodom. But whether he met her in Sodom or not, her looking back reveals not only direct disobedience to God's command through the angels (v.17), but also a heart that loved the things of this present world more than the things of God. See Luke 17:26-32.

## CONCLUSION

- All of us are going to make some mistakes on this journey of faith. But we must understand that some mistakes are more costly than others. And we must do our best to learn from our mistakes, making every effort to not repeat them.
- Don't make a move, even in times of famine, without clear Divine direction.
- Don't compromise standards of righteousness in order to "save your skin."
- Don't get so close to the world that it becomes your home (II Cor.6:14-18).