

MZFABC Bible Study

Abraham:

The Father of the Jews

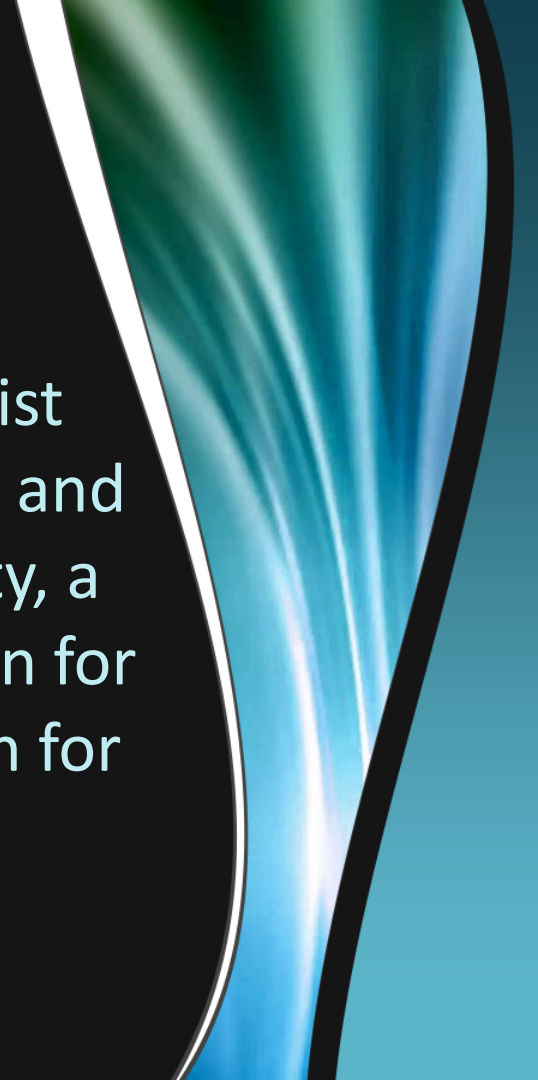
Genesis Chapter 11 v. 27 –Chapter 25 v. 10

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VISION

The vision of the Mt. Zion First African Baptist Church of Charlottesville, Virginia will reach and reproduce within its surrounding community, a people inspired and equipped with a passion for the truth of God's Word and His compassion for others who will be enablers of change.



Moving Forward as a Growing Church:

Believing For It

The background features two prominent, wavy, white lines that sweep across the frame from left to right. The upper line is positioned above the text, and the lower line is positioned below it, creating a sense of movement and flow. The bottom portion of the image is a solid teal color, which transitions into the black background above the lower wavy line.

Abraham: **The Father of the Jews**

May 15, 2024

Genesis Chapter 11 v. 27 –Chapter 25 v. 10

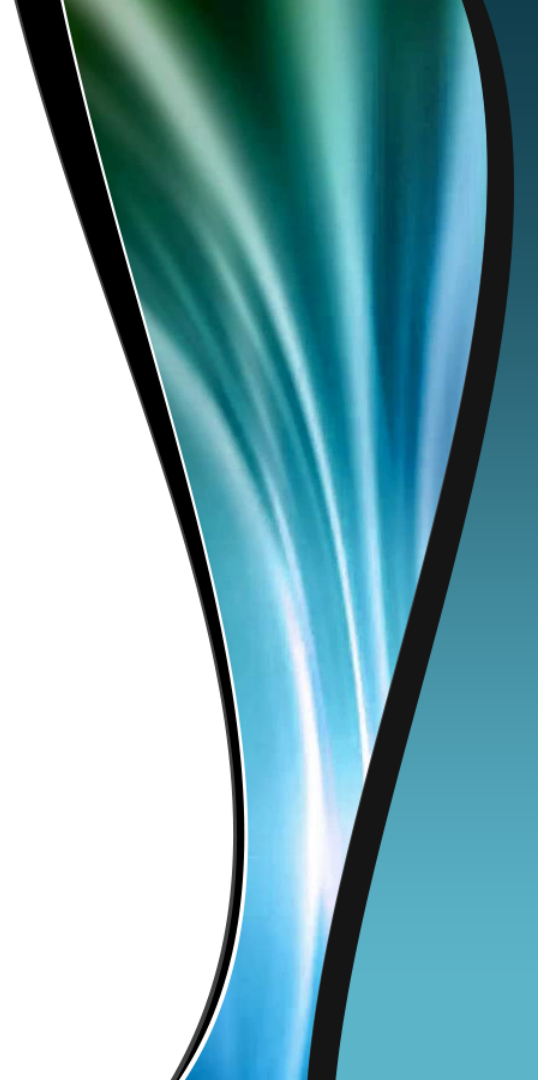
Separation From Lot

GENESIS 13:5-8



In examining this experience in Abraham's life of separating from Lot, we will consider:

- ***The Contending by Herdsmen (vv. 5–7)***
- ***The Counseling by Abraham (vv. 8, 9)***
- ***The Choosing by Lot (vv. 10–13)***
- ***The Confirming by God (vv. 14–18)***



THE CHOOSING BY LOT (vv.10-13)

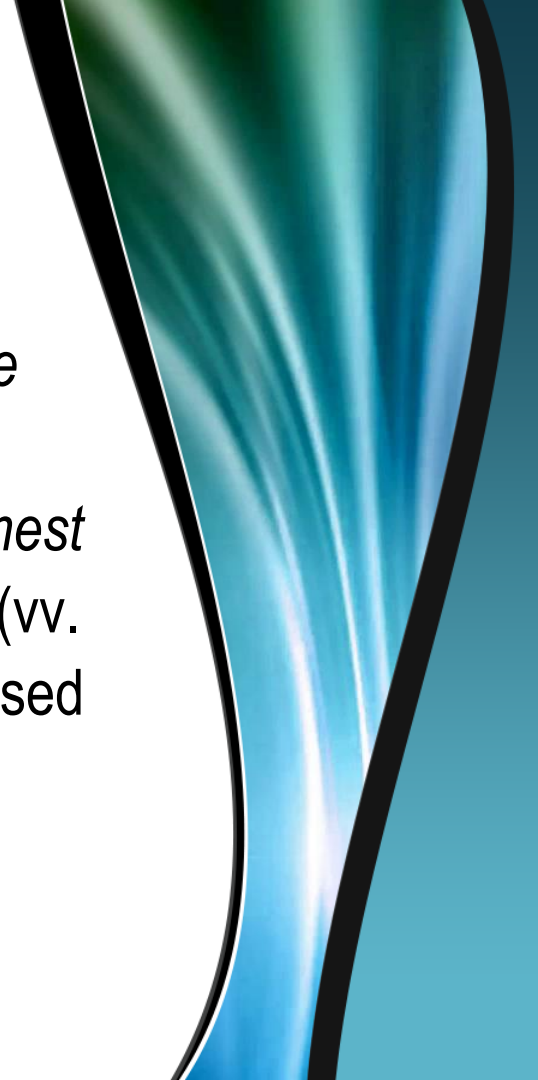
Now we begin to learn about the character of Lot; and what we learn about the character of Abraham's nephew is not good. The poor character of Lot is really evidenced in our text in the choice he made of which land he would take in moving from Abraham.

We will note three things about his choice: ***the guide in his choosing, the gracelessness in his choosing, and the guile in his choice.*** All three show his poor character.

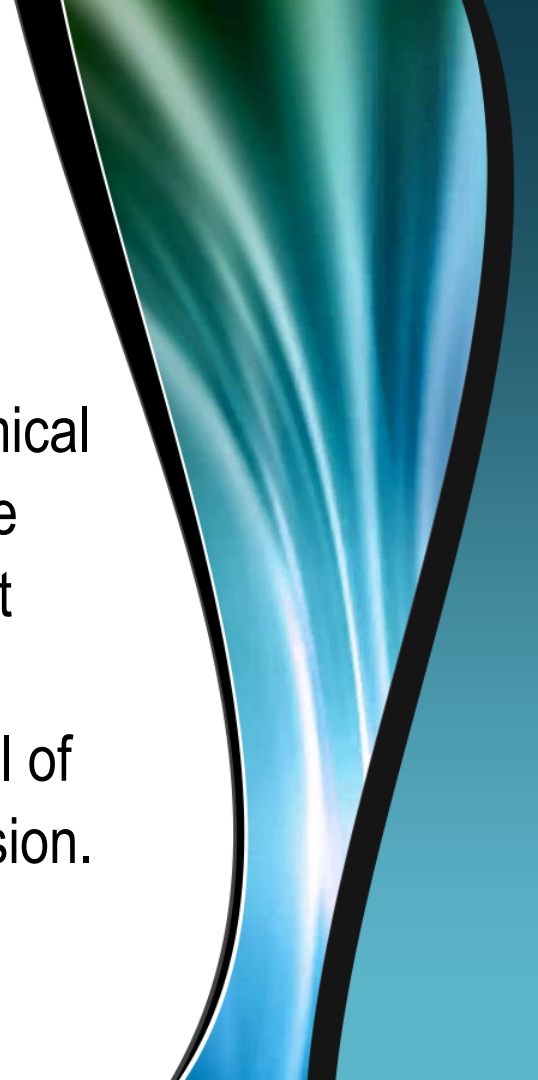


The Guide in His Choosing

“And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan” (vv. 10, 11). Material prosperity **was the guide** which Lot used to determine his choice of land.



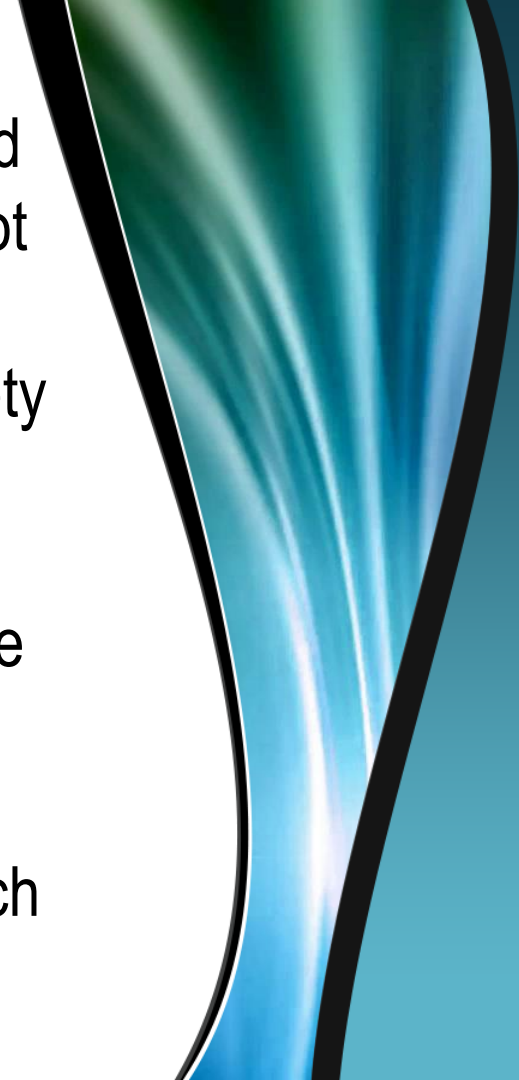
Now it is not necessarily wrong to buy your gas or groceries where the price is the lowest. It is not necessarily wrong to buy farm land which is the most fertile. Choosing something because it is more economical is not necessarily evil. That is not the condemnation we make here of Lot. The condemnation of Lot here is that material advantage was all that guided him. He never considered anything else. He never sought the counsel of God, he never prayed for wisdom to make a right decision.



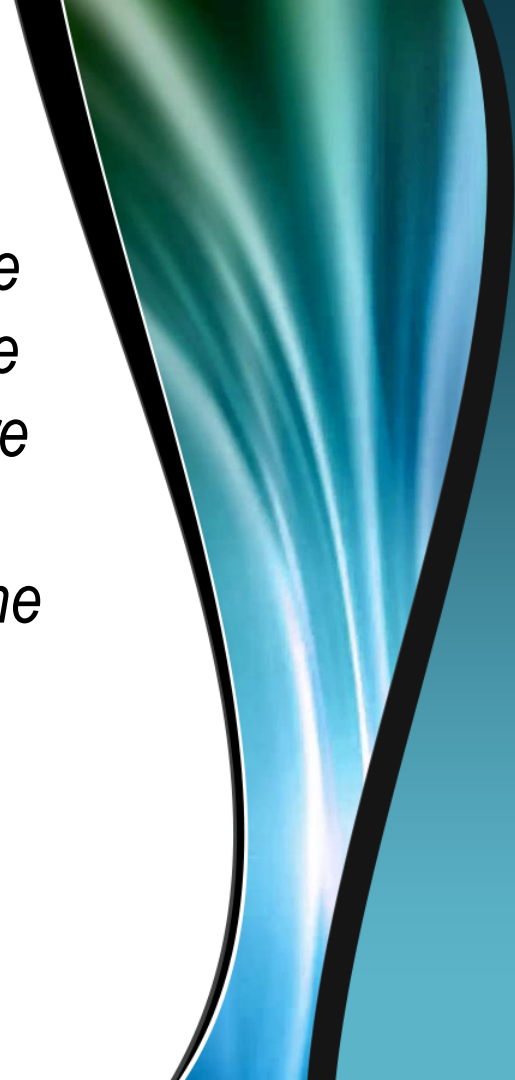
Character was not a factor in his choice, spiritual opportunities and blessings were not in his choice, and family values never entered his choice. It was not food for the soul that guided his choice, but food for the sheep and cattle. It was not fellowship with the saints that guided his choice, but fortune in his pocket.



Many down through the ages have been like Lot, and the end result is not pretty. The young ruler would not give up his fortune to follow Jesus, and it brought sorrow to him (Luke 18:23). There are those in society that choose jobs, schools, friends, marriages, and housing mostly on the basis of material gain, advantage, and prestige. They care not if their choice brings them into a place where there are not solid Bible believing, Bible teaching churches; or where spiritual health is jeopardized. It is material gain which motivates their choice.

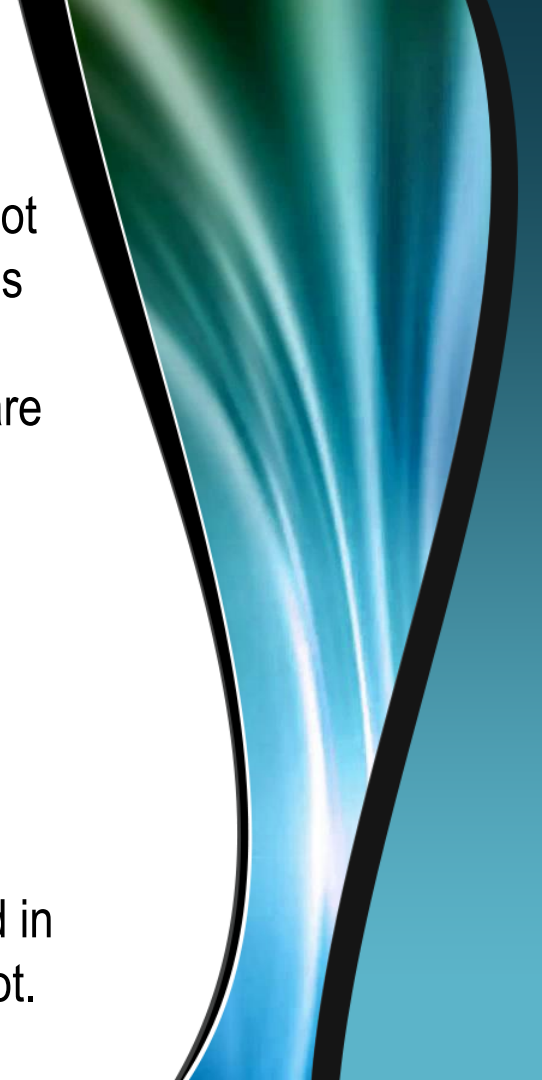


Joseph Parker said, *“Men do not care how poor the Church is, if the farm be good. They will give up the most inspiring ministry in the world for ten feet more garden, or a paddock to feed [a donkey] in... They will take away six children into a moral desert for the sake of a garden to play in; they will leave Paul or Apollos for six feet of greenhouse.”*

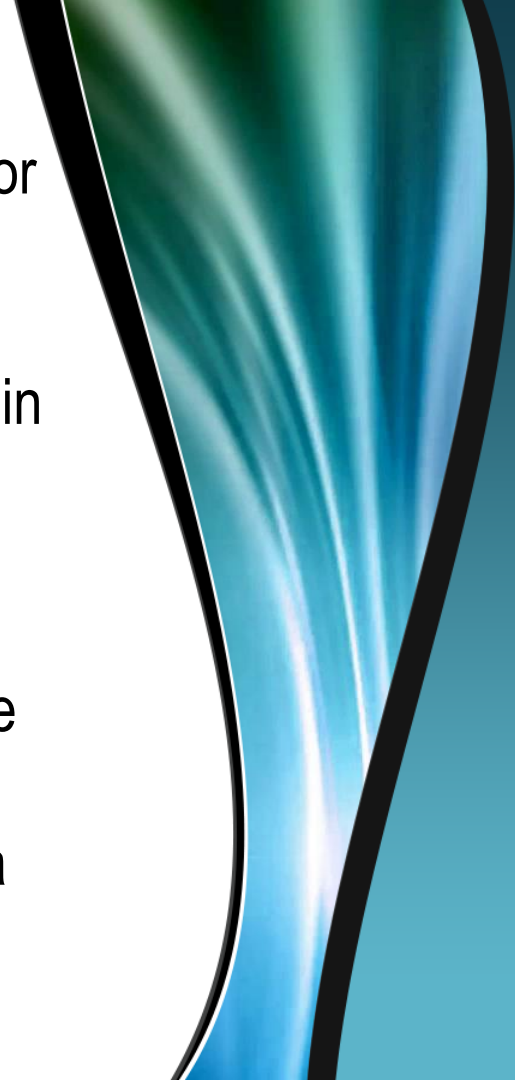


The Gracelessness in His Choosing

When Abraham gave Lot first choice in selecting the land, Lot did not hesitate to immediately start choosing. With gracelessness (which is encouraged by greed) he quickly grabbed the opportunity of first choice and chose what he thought was the best land. He did not care if his good uncle Abraham had good land. Lot only cared about himself. Lot did not back away from taking the first choice by graciously telling Abraham that he was the elder. Nor did Lot back away from considering that Abraham had cared for him and had helped him get a good start in life. Lot sought only to take the first choice. Lot made no speech of being grateful. Instead, he without hesitation, he seized the opportunity he thought he had to make material gain. Lot made the choice of what looked like the best land in sight. Abraham's benevolence inspired no reciprocal kindness in Lot.

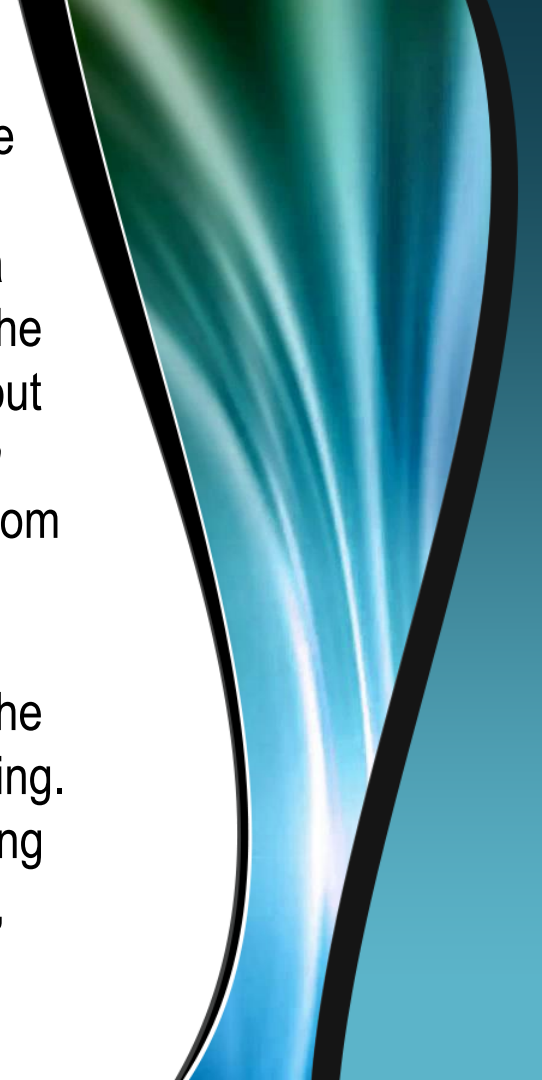


A person too eager for material gain will not be known for grace. People like this will run roughshod over anyone who gets in their way. They will push and shove without caring who they hurt so long as it puts more green stuff in their pockets. They will try to find a way to use every situation in their lives for material gain. Friendships, church relationships, family, the benevolence of others, and even the hardship of others will all be studied to see how they can be used to obtain extra gain. It is an ugly character, but one day it will meet up with the anathema (abomination) of the Almighty.



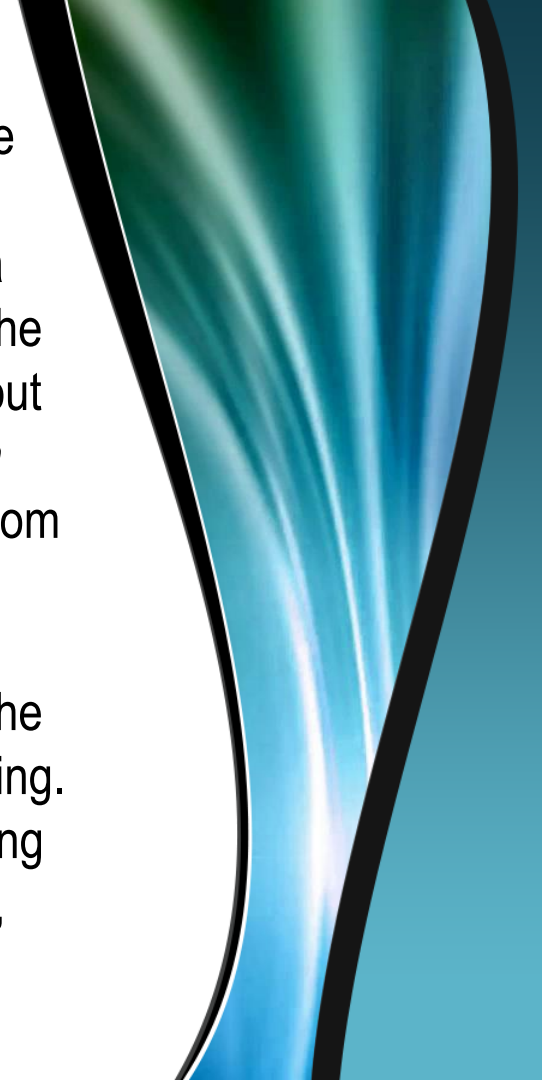
The Guile in His Choice

Lot thought he was really getting a great possession when he chose “*the plain of Jordan*” (v. 10). No other land looked so nice. To the outward eye, and to the man thinking only of material gain, the area looked exceedingly good. However, Lot was fooled and tricked by the devil. The attractiveness of the land only deceived the onlooker about the evil in the land. In the land was Sodom, and “*the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly*” (v. 13). Sodom was a terrible moral cesspool. The sin of homosexuality abounded. But the world, of course, would not speak disparagingly of Sodom. They would talk about the wealth, celebrities, food, entertainment, the night spots, etc. that Sodom had. To the world, Sodom had everything. But Sodom did not have everything. It lacked righteousness, the thing they needed the most. Lacking righteousness, they were, therefore, filled with wickedness.

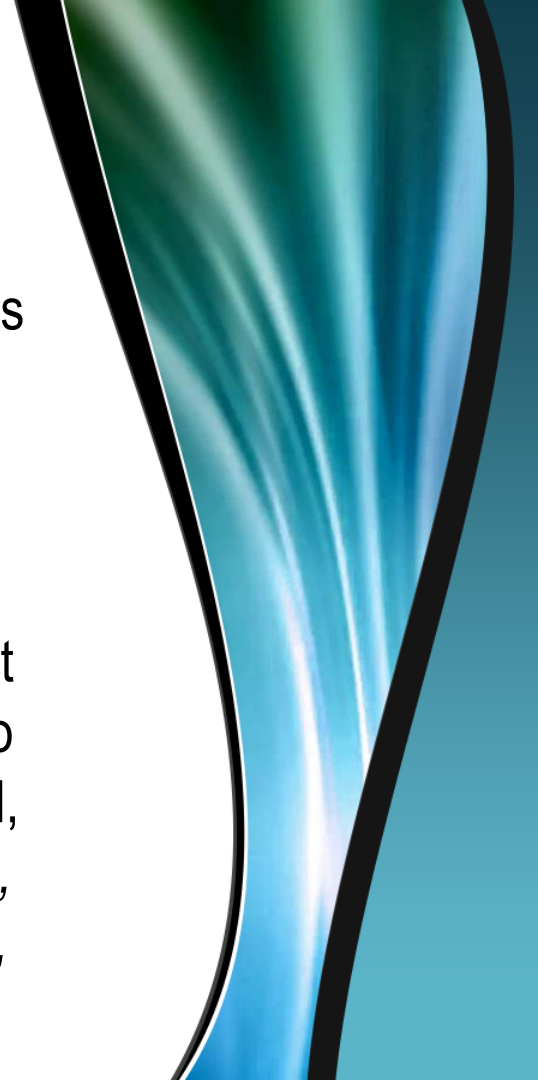


The Guile in His Choice

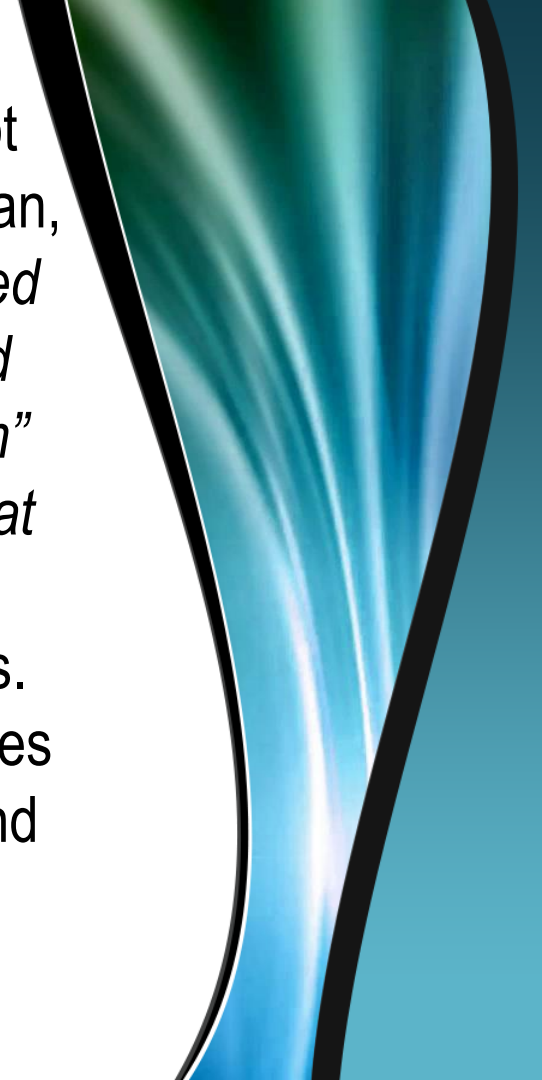
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So Lot was not getting the great place to live in that he thought he was getting. This would cost him dearly—for as a result of the character of the people in the land he chose, he did not get to enjoy his gains very long. Soon he lost it all plus what character he had left. The losses started when Sodom was plundered by a foreign power (Genesis 14). They continued when Sodom was destroyed in fire and brimstone (Genesis 19) for their great wickedness. Then, with material gains gone, Lot, in drunkenness and incestuous conduct, lost what remained of his character and respectability. Lot, like so many people, was beguiled by the glitter of material gain and, as a result, ended up barren of everything: *cash, conscience, character, and companions—**companions of the best kind, such as his Uncle Abraham.***



It is instructive to note the increasing involvement of Lot with Sodom. When Lot moved to the plains of the Jordan, he did not move into Sodom right away. He first “*dwelled in the [other] cities of the plain*” (v. 12); then he “*pitched his tent toward Sodom*” (v.12); later he “*dwelt in Sodom*” (Genesis 14:12); and then later still we read that “*Lot sat in the gate of Sodom*” (Genesis 19:1), which means he was so involved in Sodom that he was one of the rulers. We do not apostatize (backslide) all at once. It is a series of steps that continually weaken us in our ability to stand against temptation.



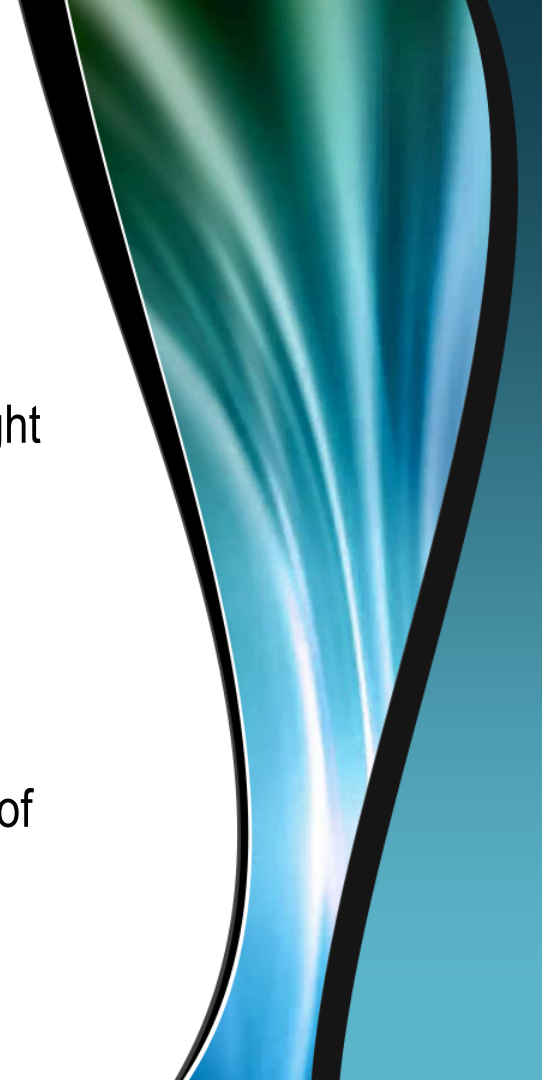
Someone has said that that which is repulsive if seen too often is first tolerated, then pitied, then embraced. How true this was in the case of Lot and Sodom. It is also true in the case of many professing saints today. One area you can readily observe this is in the various media platforms—television, electronics/digital media, FB, IM, Twitter, Tik Tok, etc. We see much evil, adverse, and ungodly behaviors. Note its tolerance, the pitifulness, and the embracing. Perhaps this explains the demise of the character of even professing believers.



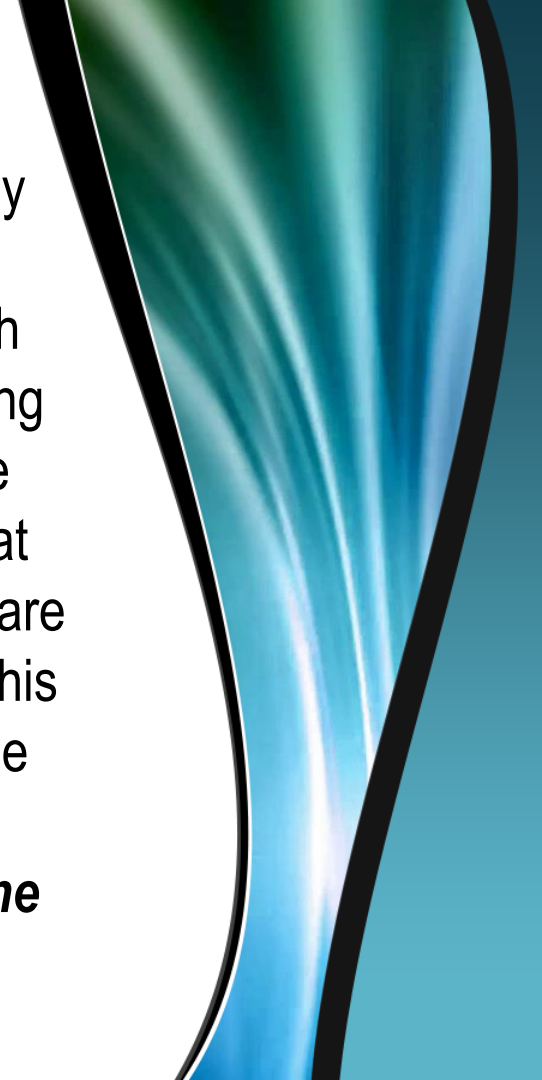
THE CONFIRMING BY GOD (vv. 14–18)

With Lot gaining the best land according to the perception of the human eye, the thinking of natural man would be to question the wisdom of Abraham's action of giving Lot first choice. It looks like Abraham got "ripped off" because of his giving Lot first choice. But nothing could be farther from the truth. Abraham was absolutely right in what he did; and shortly after Lot had separated himself from Abraham, God came to Abraham and confirmed the wisdom of Abraham's action.

Sometimes when a person does the will of God, it does not look at first like he did the right thing. The blessed results of doing the will of God do not always come quickly. The good seeds that have been planted do not always spring up as speedily as other seeds oftentimes do.



This frequently discourages the faithful soul, and there are plenty of critics around who will add to the discouragement by pointing out the apparent lack of success in the life of the obedient one compared to the worldling. But be patient! Truth will be vindicated; righteousness will be exonerated; and doing the will of God will be confirmed in due season. Let everyone who dares to follow God's way be encouraged by the fact that sooner or later God will confirm in substantial ways that you are on the right path. We noted this encouraging truth earlier in this study and we will note it here again—for Scripture repeats the lesson. In looking at this confirming by God of Abraham's action, we will consider ***the nature of the confirming*** and ***the response to the confirming***.



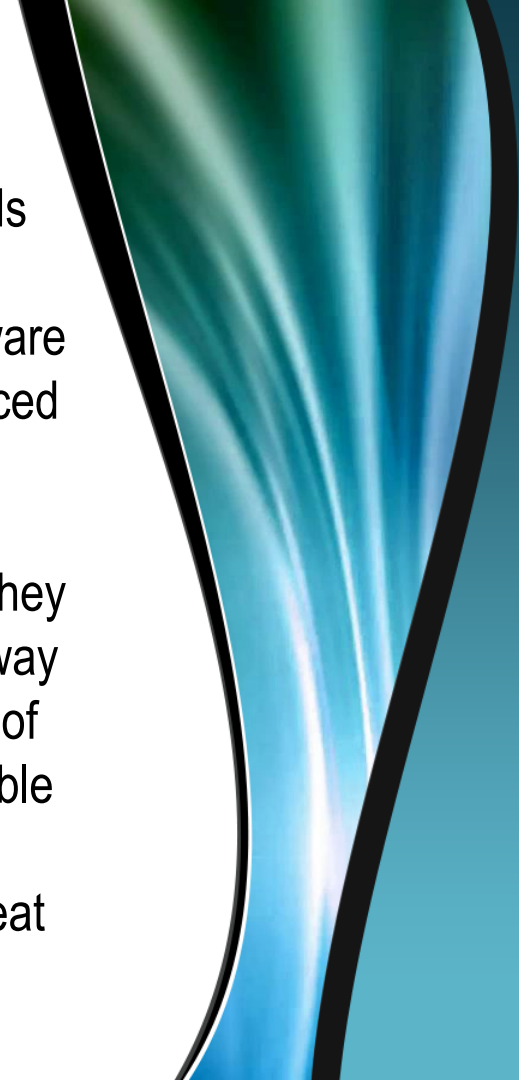
The Nature of the Confirming

God confirms the rightness of our path in a number of ways. Two of the most frequent, encouraging, and blessed ways are in ***the presence of God*** and ***the promises of God***.

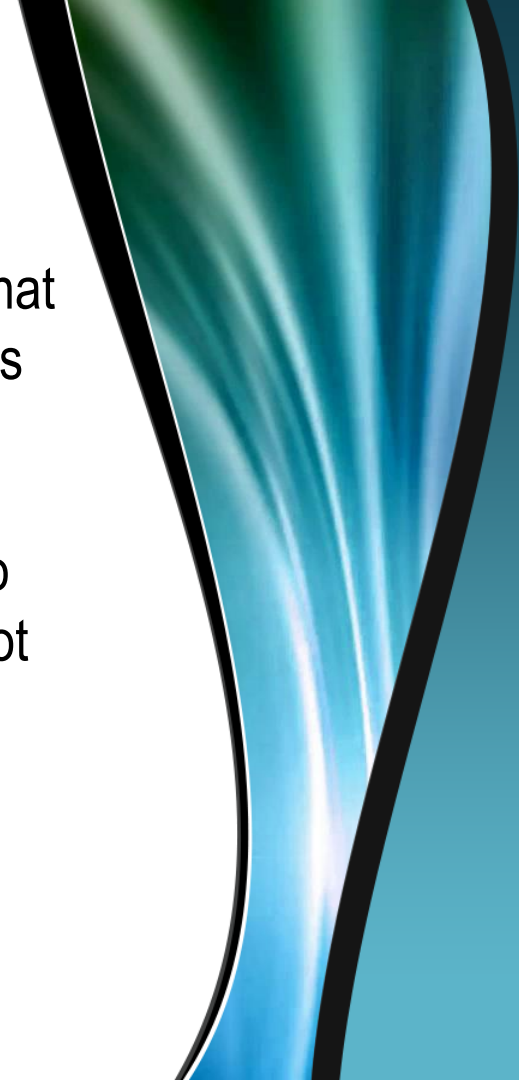
These are blessings which those outside the will of God do not have. Lot did not experience them, but Abraham did. Abraham was rich where it counted.



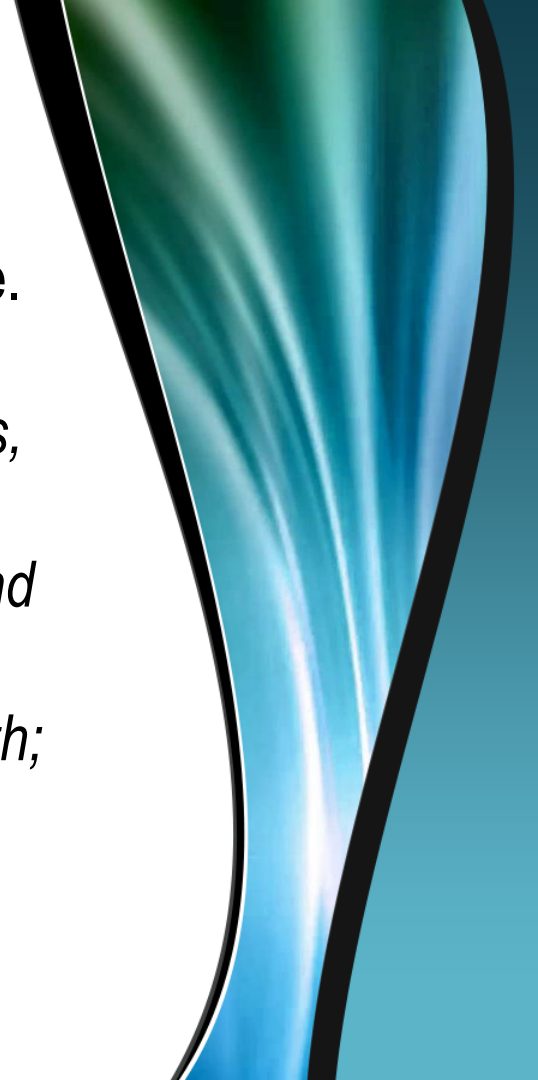
The presence of God: The statement “*And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him*” (v. 14) not only leads into the promises, but it also tells us of the presence of God. God came to Abraham to speak with him. Thus Abraham was made aware of the blessed presence of God in his life—a blessing he experienced previously after moving to Canaan from Haran. Of course to the worldling, this blessing is of little value. The only value they are interested in is that which can be computed in dollars and cents. They are not interested in the presence of God. For some, the farther away from God they can get, the better they feel. But that is the thinking of the foolish. The wise know that the presence of God is more valuable than anything we can gain from this old world. “*In thy presence is fulness of joy*” (Psalms 16:11) surely says something about the great blessing of God’s presence.



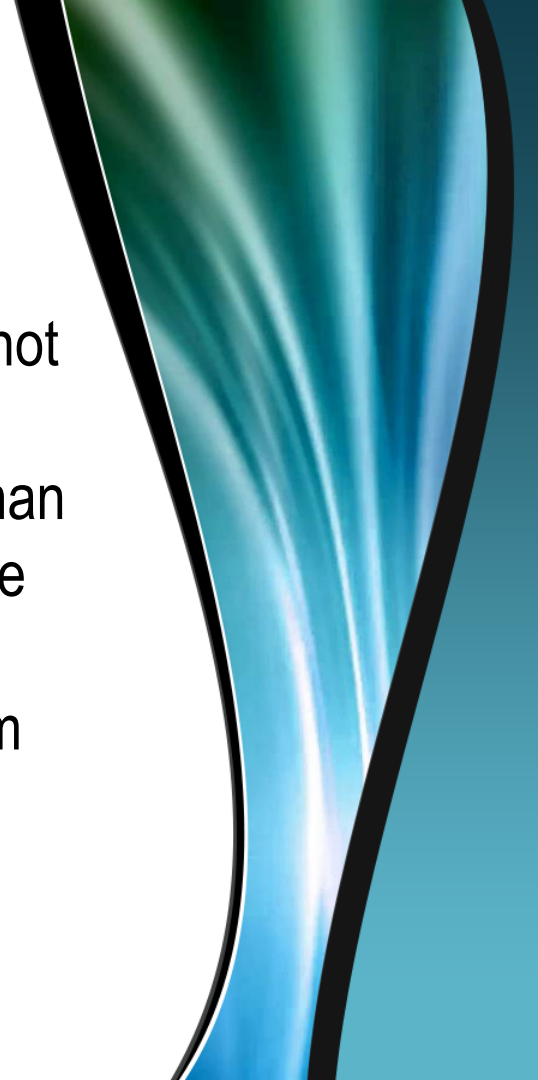
Lot did not enjoy the presence of God. He did not feel God near to him. No, when you walk in the world, you will feel distant from God. The backslidden Christian may complain that God seems so far off from them. But their disobedient life has resulted in that consequence. The Word says, *“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you”* (James 4:8). It works the other way, too. Disobedience to God is not drawing nearer to God but getting farther and farther away from Him. Lot did not seem to care about being in the presence of God’s people which reflected a greater problem; namely, he did not care about being in the presence of God—and God obliged. Abraham, however, was a decidedly different situation.



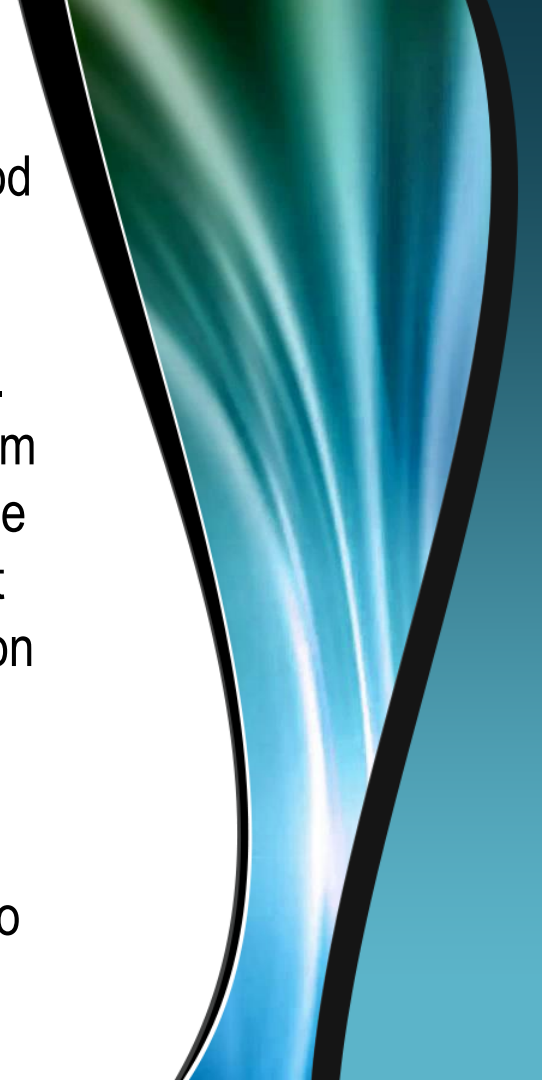
The promises of God. The obedient life is always a recipient of blessed promises. Therefore, wonderful promises came from God to Abraham for his obedience. And they served as a strong confirmation of his doing God's will. *“And the LORD said ... Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered”* (vv. 14–16). Lots of land and lots of offspring were promised to Abraham.



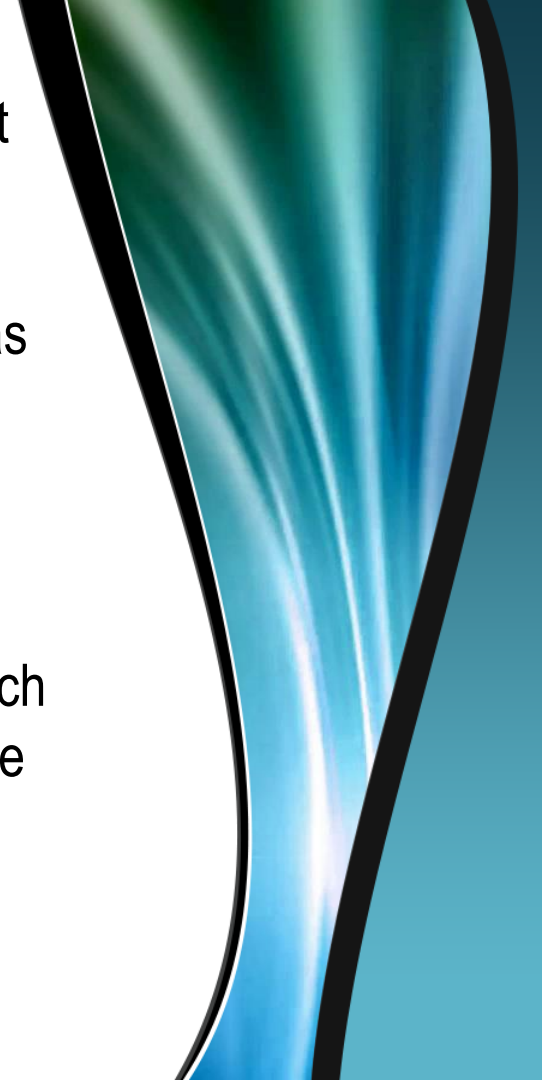
No one gets shortchanged who follows the Lord. Abraham did not get “ripped off” after all. Lot may have thought he was really getting a good deal, but there is not a person alive today who would want to trade it for the deal Abraham got from God. Abraham got more land than Lot, and a promise of offspring Lot could not match. The descendants of Lot were small in number compared to Abraham’s. Worse yet, Lot’s descendants all came from an incestuous relationship with his daughters.



This promise-filled revelation of God regarding the seed and land for Abraham was an amplification of previous promises God had given Abraham when he had first come into the land of Canaan (note Genesis 12:2 for the first promise regarding his seed and Genesis 12:7 for the first promise regarding the land). There will be more enlightenment of these promises for Abraham in the coming years of his life. All of this gives us a lesson on the progress of Divine illumination. The lesson is that God does not tell us everything all at once. It is line upon line and precept upon precept (Isaiah 28:10). And progress in illumination will be inseparably associated with progress in obedience. This association of illumination with obedience explains why many folk do not get much from the Word and why they never seem to grow in wisdom and understanding of the Scripture.



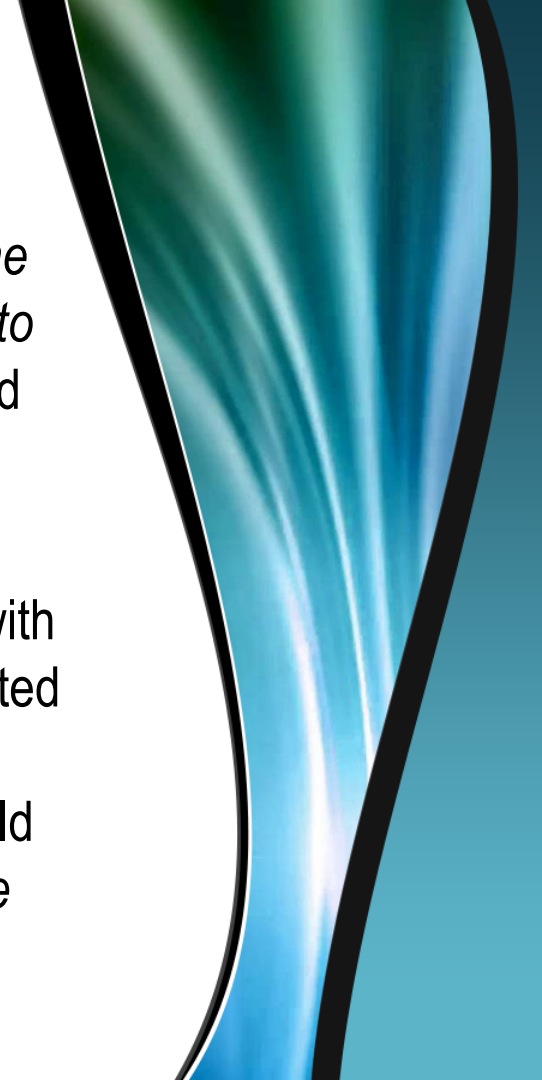
God does not give things of great value to those who do not appreciate their value. If we do not appreciate the value of something, we will not respect it, or care for it, or use it properly. This is so true regarding spiritual blessings such as illumination from the Word of God. God does not cast His pearls of great price before hogs (Matthew 7:6). And illumination of the Word of God is a pearl of extreme price. Therefore, you will never be illuminated much in the Word unless you walk faithfully before God. You will not learn much of the Scriptures unless you are willing to demonstrate in the decisions you make, in the stands you take, and in the priorities you embrace that you value the spiritual over the material as Abraham did in the case of Lot.



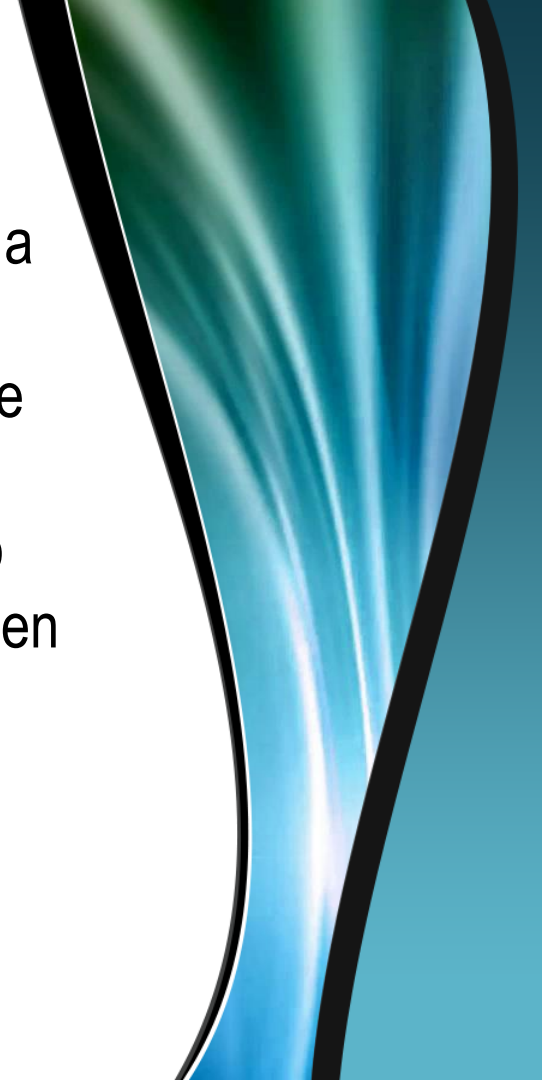
The Response to the Confirming

Abraham's response to the confirmation of God was a noble one. *"Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD"* (v. 18). In his walk and worship, Abraham evidenced his excellent response to the confirmation from God.

Walk: God confirmed the rightness of Abraham's action with some wonderful promises. But He also gave a precept to go with the promises; for promises are not without precepts, as we noted earlier in this study. They are inseparably connected; and to realize the promises, you must obey the precepts. God had told Abraham to *"walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it"* (v. 17), and Abraham began to do just that.



The command to walk through the land was obviously not one that Abraham had to do all at once; but it was a command for Abraham to become acquainted with his possessions. Thus, to learn what the dimensions of the promise were so he could appreciate what God was giving him. When God gives us blessings, we ought to respond in obedience to the duties He assigns us. When God tells us what He is going to do for us, we need to get busy with what we are supposed to do for God. Otherwise, we will not become acquainted with the blessings God has for us.



Worship: God's presence and promises ought to inspire our worship. They certainly inspired Abraham to worship, for Scripture says he *"built there an altar unto the LORD"* (v. 18). The altar honored God; it praised God. As Matthew Henry said, *"When God meets us with gracious promises, he expects that we should attend him with our humble praises."* Yet, today it seems that in order to get people in church to worship, we have to bring in some entertainment, or offer something spectacular and different!



Unfortunately, ***the presence and promises of God*** seem not enough to inspire many in our congregations today. It is a sad but true commentary on the spirituality of our churches. Not much true praise and honor come to God from those who have to be moved by carnal inducements to show up at church. Abraham was a different sort, however. When he heard the promises of God, he was moved to build ***an altar of praise and honor to God!***

