

## Abraham - Part Five

*by Charles E. Wigg*

### **The injury to Lot:**

Though Abraham and Sarah were recovered, Lot never was. He saw things in Egypt that he learned to love, and these things became a snare to him, and brought about his fall.

Though he is called "Righteous Lot", by Peter, yet Lot was never a godly or a spiritual man. He was one whom Paul would describe as weak in the faith, Rom. 14; 1. This too should be a warning to us, because though we may be stronger spiritually than others, and may be restored after a failure; yet our lapse may do a lifelong injury to others who are weaker than ourselves.

We have an example of this in John's Gospel. John was known to the High priest, and he had access to the court of the palace where Jesus was being humiliated. Peter had no right of entrance there, but John spoke to the servant and brought Peter in. Though John was able to stand in that environment, yet Peter was not, and he denied his Lord three times: Let us be careful!

Abraham learned the lesson well, because he did not merely return to the Negev, but did not stop until he reached that mountaintop, where he had his tent and altar at the beginning. This is a picture of true recovery; he went right back to the place where he went wrong.

I have known believers to backslide, to go into the world, to become involved in sin, and then later want to come back into fellowship, even to start preaching as if they had never done anything wrong. Others have said, that the point of departure, is the point of recovery.

But as we have seen, though Abraham was recovered, Lot never was. He had tasted the easy life, and was no longer willing to face trials and difficulties. He was motivated by greed, he instructed his servants to grab the best of everything; the result was strife and dissension.

Abraham had been made humble by his experience; and though he might have righteously done so, he did not stand up for his own rights. He might have rebuked his ungrateful brother, to whom he had shown such kindness, but instead he took the lowly place.

Let us not quarrel he entreated, we are brothers. Is not all the land before you, separate yourself, from me: If you take the left hand, I will go to the right, if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left. What an example of true humility and of grace! After all God had given the land to him, not to Lot, but he gave up his own rights rather than cause a quarrel. Here is an example that we could well follow. How many quarrels could be avoided if we did follow? There are many shameful things that happen amongst our Assemblies in India. In some cases, halls are locked up for years, because two parties are claiming to be the Assembly, and are claiming the property. Sometimes there are shameful court cases, where brother disputes with brother, in the presence of unbelievers.

### **Lot's choice:**

Lot did not look up; he looked down, and saw the well-watered plains of the Jordan. It seemed to him to be like a well-watered garden, it reminded him of what he had seen in **Egypt**.

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It was true that the people were wicked, and that judgment would fall on them and their cities in time, but that was of no concern to him, he wanted the easy life. Perhaps he never intended to ever become like the wicked people of the plain, but he pitched his tents as far as Sodom.

He was unable to maintain his testimony in that environment; and he soon gave up his pilgrim character. Next we see him dwelling in Sodom, and having a house there. He had given up the life of a pilgrim, he was no longer a citizen of heaven, but now a citizen of Sodom.

### **God's promises renewed and expanded:**

Separation is always a sad thing, but sometimes it becomes necessary, in order to gain, or maintain peace. In this case it was not Abraham who separated, but Lot. But now it seems that God has greater liberty to commune with Abraham than before. We hear Him speaking to Abraham, "after that Lot was separated from him". With the departure of Lot, the friction had also gone, and Abraham is restored to his rightful place of leadership. Now God tells Abraham to lift up his eyes. Trouble and strife are always discouraging and disturbing things; they cause us to look down. Now God is telling Abraham to take his eyes off the trouble, to look up, to look **from the place where he was, (Bethel)**, northward, southward, eastward and westward: Saying that all that he saw God would give to him and to his seed forever. Promising to give him a family more numerous than the dust of the earth; this is Abraham's **earthly family**, (He promised other families later).

### **Bethel, the place where he was:**

We remarked earlier on the importance of Bethel, in the plan of God. We saw that it means the "house of God", (El meaning the Mighty God). It shows that God's house is central to all His ways, and His activities in grace and blessing.

I have observed over many years, that there are numerous organizations that are dedicated to one thing or another in the Christian testimony. So many Para-Church agencies, which have doubtless begun with good ideas: But the Church is central in all of God's thoughts and activities. Anything that does not have the Church, (the local Assembly), and its establishment, and prosperity as its focal point, is sure to fail; or at least come short of God's ideal.

Abraham was not only told to look, but to put his feet on the promised inheritance. To possess (in spirit, not legally), and enjoy by faith what God had given him. He is free, now that Lot had separated from him, he is free to exercise his leadership, and does not have to consider the whims of his complaining brother.

We are in a similar situation. Our inheritance is not a land as such, but our inheritance is in a person, Christ, in whom we have an inheritance. Not only this; we have received the earnest of that inheritance, "The Holy Spirit of promise", with whom we have been sealed, until we enter into the full possession and enjoyment of it. (Eph. 1; 11 to 14). Let us explore that inheritance, let us enjoy it in the fullest way possible now!

### **Abraham's new dwelling place:**

After this experience, Abraham removed his tent to Mamre, and dwelt beneath the oaks there. The name Mamre, means fatness, showing to us the richness of Abraham's life and experience now. The oaks again

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remind us of the unchanging nature of God, and His enduring faithfulness. What cool shade they would afford from the fierce summer heat.

It was in Hebron, and that name means "Association", or "communion", or "fellowship". It was said to have been built 7 years before Zoan in Egypt. This reminds us that we have been chosen in Christ, (for fellowship with God), before the foundation of the world, (Eph. 1; 3 & 4).

### **He built there an altar to the Lord:**

This is now the third altar that Abraham has built. It tells us how that his relationship with God is maturing, deepening. The challenge to you and I is that we too should "dwell at Mamre". This follows the sorrow of separation from the brother whom he loved. God does not want that we should live a dry, a barren, and a fruitless life. He wants that we should live a rich life of sweet communion with Him. I am reminded of some choice quotations in the Psalms,

Psalms 36; 8, "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. My soul desires such an experience for you my dear reader, and for myself. Psalm 63; 5; gives us the individual experience; "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips:" Here we have the altar, and the sacrifice of praise offered thereon. Psalm 65; 11; here we have the beautiful result of walking in the path of the will of God: "Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness":

### **Lot's trouble, demise, and sad end:**

No doubt Lot thought that his troubles were over, when he chose the well-watered plains of the Jordan. He would no longer have to be restrained by the example and wishes of his godly Uncle, or stepfather. He was free; he did not have to account to any one. However things did not turn out, as he would have wished, he became embroiled in the political wars of the area that he had chosen.

### **Lot's Demise:**

We might have thought that Lot would surely wake up to the danger of his situation, and have come out, to extricate himself from that wrong position, but not so. He went back into the city, and submitted himself to rule of the "on of evil" Let this be a warning to us. We are told in 2Tim.2; 24 to 26, what is to be the attitude of the 'servant of the Lord' to such people?

The next time we see Lot, he is sitting in the gate; he had become a part of the administration of that wicked city; a Member of Parliament. Perhaps he thought that he would be able to improve the place; to enact laws to restrain the awful spread of evil in that place. However he could not improve anything, but in fact lost everything; his wife, his sons in law, his daughters, even his own testimony.

The last we see of him, is as a fallen, drunken man, who while in a drunken state, has incestuous relationships with his own daughters; thus becoming the father of two nations, who became the enemies of Abraham's descendants. How sad is all this! what a solemn warning to us!