

Abram's Choice



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Genesis 13:1-13

Abram and Sarai took everything they owned and went to the Southern Desert. Lot went with them.

Abram was very rich. He owned many cattle, sheep, and goats, and had a lot of silver and gold. Abram moved from place to place in the Southern Desert. And finally, he went north and set up his tents between Bethel and Ai, where he had earlier camped and built an altar. There he worshiped the Lord.

Lot, who was traveling with him, also had sheep, goats, and cattle, as well as his own family and slaves. At this time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were living in the same area, and so there wasn't enough pastureland left for Abram and Lot with all of their animals. Besides this, the men who took care of Abram's animals and the ones who took care of Lot's animals started quarreling.

Abram said to Lot, "We are close relatives. We shouldn't argue, and our men shouldn't be fighting one another. There is plenty of land for you to choose from. Let's separate. If you go north, I'll go south; if you go south, I'll go north."

This happened before the Lord had destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. And when Lot looked around, he saw there was plenty of water in the Jordan Valley. All the way to Zoar the valley was as green as the garden of the Lord or the land of Egypt. So Lot chose the whole Jordan Valley for himself, and as he started toward the east, he and Abram separated. Abram stayed in the land of Canaan. But Lot settled near the cities of the valley and put up his tents not far from Sodom, where the people were evil and sinned terribly against the Lord.

Commentary

The ability to make choices in life is a precious freedom recognised by people everywhere. The trouble is that we never make choices in isolation. What we do affects others, and choosing what may be best for us could possibly upset or even damage other people. God gave human beings the gift of 'free will', and it was a risk. Already in the book of Genesis bad choices have meant that people have hurt themselves and others.

In this story, Abram graciously allows his nephew Lot to choose which part of the land he wants, even though God had promised it all to Abram. He does this to put an end to a growing quarrel between the two family groups and, like God, takes a risk. Lot chooses the land that looks most attractive. It is the choice in the Garden of Eden all over again! Lot's choice leads to disaster for his family, played out in the next chapter; but, again just like God, Abram comes to his rescue. God longs for us to make good choices each day, but even when we don't he never gives up on us because he loves us so much.

Questions

- ▶ What are the most important choices you make each day?
- ▶ What helps you decide how to choose?
- ▶ Is it easy to let someone else have first choice in order to avoid an argument?
- ▶ How can we involve God in the choices we make?



Visual aid

From the Highway Code, find a picture of a traffic sign with a lot of exit choices (see www.gov.uk/highway-code). Use this as a way to talk about the choices you face on your journey through each day.



Activity idea

Make up a story together in which each person adds a new line. The hero of the story should have lots of choices to make, but each time things should go badly wrong and there has to be a way out.

For example: Kate decides to take a short cut to school...

But down one street she meets an angry, barking dog...

Then its owner comes out and drags the dog away...

Then she decides to delay her journey by visiting a sweet shop...

But she drops her money and it rolls under the counter...



Prayer idea

Find a picture of some traffic lights where all three colours are clearly visible. Use this as a pattern for prayer when making choices about the way ahead. Use the red 'stop' signal to be quiet before God for a moment; use the amber 'get ready' signal to talk through possible ways forward; then 'go green' with your prayer to God, asking him to show you the way to go. Work this through with some big choices facing you and your family.

Key verse

'We are close relatives. We shouldn't argue... There is plenty of land for you to choose from' (Genesis 13:8-9).

New Testament story link

Matthew 7:7-14: Jesus promises that God is like the best father ever, always ready to help us make good choices.



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