Abram Gives Lot First Choice

Scripture Reference: Genesis 13:2-18

Suggested Theme: God's plans are best, even if we don't understand them. We can trust God.

Memory Verse: "Be careful what you do. Always do what is right." Proverbs 4:26, ICB

Español

Story Overview:

Abram and his nephew, Lot, both prospered while living in the land of Canaan. Their servants began to argue over whose flocks and herds should have the small amount of grass that was available. To solve the problem, Abram told Lot to choose an area for himself. Abram would take what was left. Lot chose the more fertile land and moved near a place where very bad people lived. Abram began living in a less fertile area, but God blessed him and told him that all that land would someday belong to his descendants.

Background Study:

In the years since God had called Abram to leave his home and begin living a nomadic life in the promised land of Canaan, both Abram and his nephew, Lot, had accumulated wealth, possessions and a large amount of livestock.

Part of this prosperity was due to a sojourn in Egypt (Genesis 12:10-13:1). The time in Egypt is a good reminder that Abram had great faith but was not perfect. Abram lied to Pharaoh and allowed Sarai to be taken into Pharaoh's harem for his own protection. Despite Abram's behaviour, God kept his promise and protected and blessed him. Because of God's blessings, Abram and Lot's wealth and entourage seem to have significantly increased by the time they returned to Canaan after the famine.

This was not Abram's first time in Bethel, which is northwest of the Dead Sea. Shechem and Bethel had been early stops years before when Abram began his journey (Genesis 12:8). He had previously set up camp near Bethel and worshipped there by building an altar to God.

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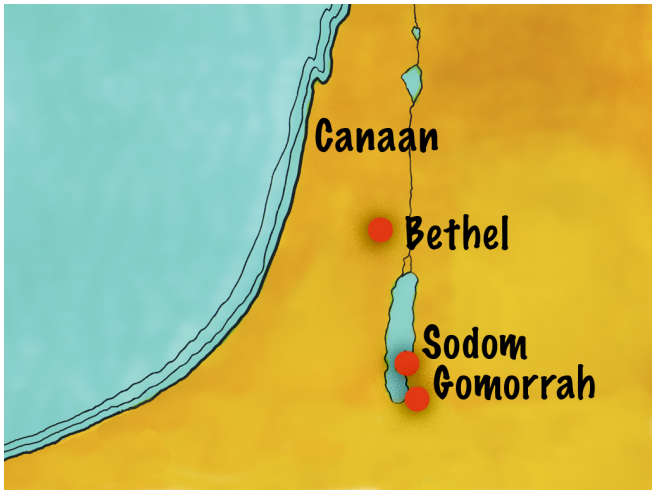
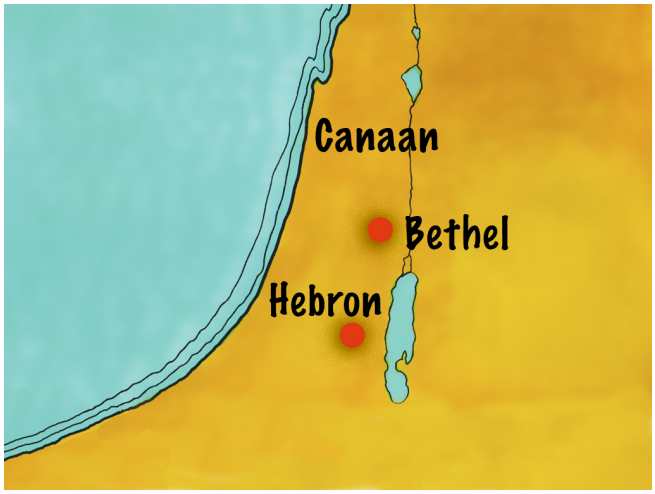


But now, this story opens with Abram, Lot and all of their possessions and livestock near Bethel. Besides Abram and Lot, others lived in the area (Canaanites and Perizzites). Hence, it soon became apparent that this area was not fertile enough to support all of the flocks and livestock. Those watching Abram's and Lot's flocks and herds began to quarrel over the resources, so Abram decided it was best to divide the groups and move to different places.

Lot looked up and saw what seemed the obvious choice to him. It was the fertile land along the Jordan River valley. He moved all of his possessions and family to live in tents near the city of Sodom. Choosing to live in tents near this Godless city proved to have disastrous consequences later on. In Genesis 14:8-16, we find that Lot ended up actually having settled in the city of Sodom. His family was carried off from there during a war, and Abram ended up rescuing him. But Lot eventually returned to that city, and his family was brought low in the Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.



Lot looked up and saw immediate value (Genesis 13:10), while Abram, in direct contrast, looked at the land through the vision of faith. He settled in the land of Canaan in the less fertile area near Hebron. Abram chose where to live based on his faith in God keeping his promises. Much later, again in contrast to Lot, Abram refused gifts from the King of Sodom because he knew all of his financial blessings came from God alone (Genesis 14:21-24).

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“After Lot left, the Lord said to Abram, ‘Look all around you. Look north and south and east and west. All this land that you see I will give to you and your descendants forever. I will make your descendants as many as the dust of the earth. If anyone could count the dust on the earth, he could count your people. Get up! Walk through all this land. I am now giving it to you.’” Genesis 13:14-17, ICB

The following are verses about making choices:

- Proverbs 3:5-6
- Proverbs 19:21
- Matthew 6:33
- James 1:5

Way to Introduce the Story:

Provide biscuits (cookies) for the children today. Make sure that some biscuits are crushed or broken. They should be obviously worse than the rest of the biscuits. Pass the plate to each child to choose one. Then discuss why they chose the biscuit they decided on. Why didn’t they choose the crushed ones? “In today’s lesson, Abram and Lot had to make a choice. One got to choose first, and he chose the “best” thing. Let’s see what happens.”

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The Story:

Abram, his wife Sarai and his nephew, Lot, lived in tents and moved from place to place in the Land of Canaan. God had a special plan for Abram and his family to bless the people of the world. Abram had faith in God and went wherever God told him to go.

The family set up tents in the area near the city of Hebron. Abram and his nephew, Lot, were very wealthy. They each had large flocks and herds, many herdsmen, household servants, and tents. Every day, the men in charge of the sheep, goats, cattle and donkeys would lead the flocks and herds to places where they could eat grass and drink water.

But there was a problem. There was not enough grass and water for all of the animals. It was just too crowded. Abram’s herdsmen thought that Abram should have the best grassland. Lot’s herdsmen thought that Lot should have the best grassland. The herdsmen began to quarrel with one another. And, as if that wasn’t enough, other people were also living in the area. Everyone wanted the best.

Abram became worried that all of the quarrellings might lead to fighting. He decided that there was only one thing to do. He and Lot would have to live in separate places. Someone was going to have to choose another place to live. Abram was the older man and was the one who had led them out of their home country. It would have been all right for him to have whichever land he wanted. He could have chosen first and let Lot have whatever was left. But Abram did not choose first. Instead, Abram decided to let Lot choose first.

When Lot looked around, he saw that the Jordan Valley was lush and green. Surely, this would be the best place to live! So Lot took his family and all of his flocks and moved away from Abram. Lot made his home in the valley. There were a lot of bad people in the valley. Lot had to live near a city called Sodom. The people of Sodom were very wicked. Lot must have been sorry that he chose this valley and had to have such bad

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neighbours who did not want to obey God.

Abram stayed in the dry land of Canaan. When he looked around after Lot left, he saw that the land did not look as lush and green as the Jordan Valley. But Abram did not just think about the green grass. He had faith in God. He thought about how God would keep his promises.

> “After Lot left, the Lord said to Abram, ‘“Look all around you. Look north and south and east and west. All this land that you see I will give to you and your descendants forever. I will make your descendants as many as the dust of the earth. If anyone could count the dust on the earth, he could count your people. Get up! Walk through all this land. I am now giving it to you.’” Genesis 13:14-17, ICB

God continued to bless Abram. Abram must have been happy that he let Lot have his first choice.

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using various methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection or other group participation.

Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Click here for visual aids and more storytelling methods.

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Review and Reflection Questions:

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story. Reflection questions encourage them to internalise the meaning and implications for their lives. Asking at least one of each type of question can help strengthen a child’s spiritual development and help them connect to God. Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.

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Review:

- Why were Abram’s and Lot’s herdsmen quarrelling? (Each group wanted the best pastureland for their own master’s flocks)
- Who chose the land first? (Lot)
- Did Lot make the best choice? Why? (No, because he chose to live near a town with people who didn’t follow God)
- What is the name of the area Abram chose to live in? (Canaan)
- Lot chose his land because it was a fertile area and would be good for his animals, but it was near many people who did not believe in God. Why could this be a problem for Lot?

Reflection:

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- If you were Lot and got to choose your land first, would you have chosen the fertile land by the people who didn't follow God or the less fertile land?
- Why do you think Abram let Lot choose the land first?
- How do you think Abram felt when Lot chose the most fertile land, and Abram was left with the less fertile land?
- What part of this story do you find the most interesting?
- What is something you wonder about in this story?

Prayer:

It is important to guide children in learning how to pray. In prayer, children can connect with God and learn that He hears and answers them. God can become a life-long friend who is with them every moment of their lives. Try using a variety of prayer methods from time to time so that the children can learn to connect with God in different ways. Note that you can pray at any time throughout your lesson. A variety of prayer methods are found here.

Song Suggestions:

- Goodbye World Song
- He's Still Working on Me Song
- Love is Something If You Give It Away Song
- Father Abraham Song
- Refer to the Song Page on this website for more song options.

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Activities and Crafts:

- How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation.
- Visit the activities and songs pages for additional activities and crafts.

Activities:

- Act out the story.
- Play a game to review the memory verse from last week.
- Pass out index cards to the children. Some of the cards should say "choose God's way", some "choose my way", and some "consequence." Begin sentences and let the children take turns finishing them according to the card they have. Example sentence: "I didn't have any money, but I saw my favourite kind of lolly in the shop and no one was looking. I put my hand out and . . ." Ask for a "choose God's way" response and then a consequence. Then, ask for a "choose my way" response and consequence. There can be numerous answers. You might want to collect and pass out the cards between every sentence.
- Invite a child or young adult who is older than the children in your group to visit your room today. Let the visitor share a choice they were faced with and their choice. Be sure that they share the consequences. This will only work if the older child is responsible. Do not leave this one to chance. You will have to

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review with the visitor what they will be discussing. You do not want them talking about a choice they made about a subject beyond the maturity level of the children you are teaching.

- Draw a line down the centre of a paper or whiteboard/chalkboard. On one side, write the heading: “Choose God’s Way”; on the other, write “Choose My Way.” Brainstorm the choices that the children make.

Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable “God’s Story” printable reflection page. Free printables for this story.

Crafts:

- Choices Signpost: Give each child a piece of flat wood or a cardboard tube for the signpost. On separate craft sticks or strips of cardboard, have children write examples of good and bad choices. Add an arrow to each sign, pointing right for good choices and left for bad choices. Glue the signs onto the main post.
- Print this worksheet that allows children an opportunity to write down some of the choices they are faced with. Print in A4 size OR print in letter size.

Print and use these free bookmarks, trading cards or timelines. Free printables for this story.

The maps above are by Sweet Publishing and can be accessed through Free Bible Images. You can download these and many other illustrations for free if you agree to their generous Creative Commons terms, explained on their website.

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Other Online Resources:

- Colouring page and puzzle worksheets (Calvary Curriculum)
- Other: How to help children make wise decisions (Good Christian perspective)
- Game: Preteen choices game

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