

## January 13-Genesis 13

Appearances can be deceiving. All of us have had the experience of seeing something that looks good to eat or appears to be made of the finest quality only to realize that things are not what they appear. From the very beginning of time man has had a propensity to evaluate the worth of items based on their appearance alone. This is part of the story of the deception and fall of man as found in Genesis 3. The Bible tells us in that passage that Eve looked upon the forbidden tree and “saw that the tree was good for food and was a *delight to the eyes*” (Genesis 3:6, emphasis added). Unfortunately for man, the forbidden tree did not deliver on its promising appearance and, consequently, man has suffered the curse of sin ever since.

In today’s passage we read another account of deception. In this passage, Lot and Abram are reaching a point in their shared travels in which they can no longer find enough room for their families and possessions to coexist. The Scriptures share with us that Abram recognizes this and therefore makes a proposal that the two men go their separate ways. Abram gives Lot the decision as to which way he would like to go and Lot makes what results in a fatal decision. The Scriptures tell us in verses 10-11 “And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw that the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed east.”

Scripture hints to us in this passage that Lot’s decision was not wise as it shares with us that Lot chose to move into the region of Sodom and Gomorrah. Of course we know that Sodom and Gomorrah are now infamous cities that are exclusively associated with the sinful lifestyle that so permeated their culture. However, at the time we must believe that Lot knew none of these things. In fact, we can surmise from the text that Lot simply chose based on outward appearances that which seemed most appealing.

There is a lesson in this text for us today and it is simply this, we must be discerning in making our judgments and decisions. Proverbs 14:12 tells us “there is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.” Discernment requires that we go deeper than mere appearance. We must ask ourselves the difficult questions, investigate underneath the surface, and ultimately decide based on the authority and leadership of the Word of God. One important note should be made regarding Lot. As Abram gives Lot the opportunity to decide where he will ultimately lead his family, we find no mention whatsoever of Lot consulting God in making his choice. Lot’s decision was made independent of God’s leadership and it led to the destruction of at least part of his own family (Genesis 19:26).

Today, Jesus has already given us instruction not to evaluate based on appearance or illusions of ease when making decisions even about our own soul. He says in Matthew 7:13-14 “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.” Brother and sister, if we simply make decisions based on ease or earthly appeal we will choose to follow a path that leads to destruction. This was the case for Lot’s family as we will read in the coming verses, and it is a story that has been repeated over and over again throughout history. Our responsibility as believers is to follow the one, namely Jesus Christ, who shared with us that He was “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). While this is not appealing to those who seek to gain everything out of this life, may we be reminded that whoever loses his life for the sake of Christ will save it for eternity, while those who attempt to hang onto their life, filling their time here on earth with trinkets and toys that do not eternally satisfy, will lose their lives for all eternity (Matthew 16:25).