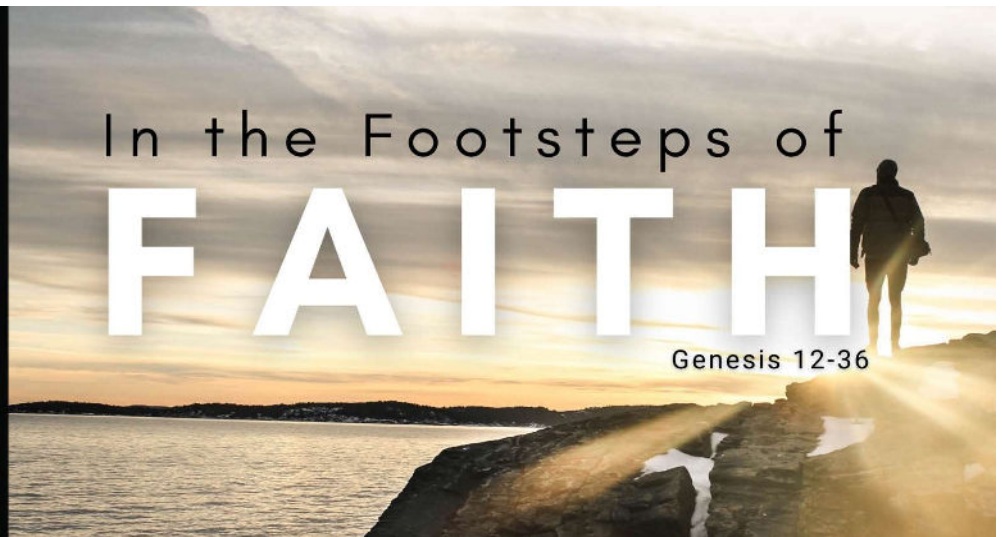




Midweek Study

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The Tests of Prosperity

(Genesis 13:1-18)

I. Abram's Return (13:1-4)

When he arrived at “the place of the altar,” there, as in earlier and happier days, “Abram called on the name of the Lord” (Genesis 13:4). Since God promises to forgive our sins when we confess them (1 John 1:9), Abram was no doubt restored there to full fellowship and joy of the Lord.¹ See Rev. 2:5.

The intentional contrast with Abram's failure in Egypt is clear from the parallel use of the Hebrew word *kābhōdh*, “heavy,” both at the beginning of the previous account about Egypt and now here at the beginning of this account. Whereas in the Negev “the famine was severe” (“heavy,” 12:10), “now Abram was very rich (“heavy”) in livestock, in silver, and in gold” (13:2). This [antithetical parallelism] indicates that we are to read the present success story keeping in mind his failure in Egypt.²

II. The Family Rivalry (13:5-7)

Wealth (mentioned in the Bible first here) is not sinful if gained by honest means and used in ways that honor God. However, the prosperity of Abram and Lot ultimately cause the rivalry and separation.

III. Abram's Resolution (13:8-10)

Abram's words were explicitly tender. Twice he says in the Hebrew, “I pray you” (please).³

Wiersbe writes, “In his latter years, General William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, was too infirm to attend the Army's world conference; but he would send the delegates a message. One year he cabled them only one word: **OTHERS**. I have been privileged to minister with the Salvation Army in different parts of the world, and I can testify that they take that word OTHERS very seriously.”⁴

Philippians 2:4 - Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

¹ Henry Morris, *The Genesis Record: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1976), 301.

² R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing, Preaching the Word* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 198.

³ Hughes, 200.

⁴ Warren Wiersbe, *Be Obedient, “Be” Commentary Series* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1991), 28.

IV. Lot's Regression (13:10-13)

1. Lot **looked** toward Sodom (Gen. 13:10)
2. Lot moved **toward** Sodom (Gen. 13:11-12)
3. Lot moved **into** Sodom (Gen. 14:12)
4. Lot **sat** as a leader at the gate of Sodom (Gen. 19:1)
5. Lot ends up in a cave, having **lost it all** (Gen. 19:30)

Psalm 1:1 - Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful.

Henry Morris writes, "As he 'lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan,' it seemed to him 'like the land of Egypt.' Though he no doubt knew something of the wickedness of these cities, just as he had observed the pagan worlds of Sumeria and Egypt, he nevertheless decided that was what he wanted. Perhaps he also, like many believers today who make similar choices, rationalized that he could be a witness for the Lord there, while at the same time enjoying the creature comforts they offered."⁵

The description of the Sodomites as "wicked, great sinners" is a rare phrase that suggests they were living at a level lower than normal sinners.⁶

Jerry Vines says, "Instead of saying, is this going to be a good place to **raise children**, he evidently raises the question, is this going to be a good place to **raise cattle**?"

V. God's Reassurance to Abram (13:14-18)

Some things won't change⁷: 1) God's call survives diversions; 2) God's promises transcend disappointments; 3) God's intentions ignore delays.

"Lift up your eyes and look" was followed by "Lift up your feet and walk" (see 13:17). Claim your inheritance by faith! (Josh. 1:1-3; Deut. 11:24)⁸

VI. The Reminders for Today

1. **When a believer's income goes up, the love of money should come down.** 1 Timothy 6:10 says the love of money should be avoided. Jesus said, "No man can serve two masters. For either he will hold to the one and despise the other, you cannot serve God and money" (Matthew 6:24).
2. **When people look at your life, can they tell that you are a believer?** Unless we had 2 Peter 2:7-8, we would not know that Lot was a righteous man. Our lives should reflect our convictions.

⁵ Morris, 303.

⁶ Hughes, 201.

⁷ Stuart Briscoe, *Expository Nuggets from Genesis & Exodus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994), 36.

⁸ Wiersbe, 29.