

Thought for Sunday 17th January 2021

Pastor Gordon Hamilton

Read Genesis 13:1-18 You will remember that at the beginning of chapter 12 the Lord said to Abram; *'go to the land I will show you.'* and verse 5 tells us; *'Abram set out for the land of Canaan, and arrived there.'* We also know that Abram had been told; *'Leave your country, your people and your father's household.'* But Abram had taken Lot, his nephew, with him and we are told in 13:5-6 that things weren't all they could have been, verse 2; *'Abram had become very wealthy.'* and Lot also had *'flocks and herds and tents,'* and verse 7 brings it to a head; *'quarrelling arose between the two lot of herdsmen.'* When God wants you to do something, then he can encourage you in ways that you would not have thought of. I don't believe it was chance that the two lots of herdsmen began quarrelling, god needed Abram and Lot to separate, and so he instigated a way in which they would, most probably unaware that it was God's way of getting His will done. Fortunately His will was done in an amicable way, Abram realises quarrelling is not right and so agrees that Lot can have his choice of land for his people and his herds and his tents. God made it look good to Lot, because God wanted Abram to live in the land of Canaan. I believe the lesson we can learn from this is that if we want to see God's will being done, which I pray is what we all want, then let's pray about it, and ask God to intervene. We need to be aware that, as hymn writer Arthur Campbell Ainger wrote; *'God is working His purpose out, as year succeeds to year.'* And of course I said on 27th December, you cannot thwart God's plans but he can and will thwart yours, if they are against his will. Gamaliel, a Pharisee recognised that, in Acts 5:35 he says to the Sanhedrin; *'Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about 400 men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered. Therefore, in the present case I advise you: leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God.'* Abram had only just begun his journey with the Lord, but he was beginning to recognise that God's will is best. Robin Mark wrote a lovely song, All is Well, and the words are these; *'He lowers us to raise us, so we can sing His praises, whatever is His way, all is well. He makes us rich and poor, that we might trust Him more, whatever is His way, all is well. All my changes come from Him, He who never changes, and I'm held firm in the grasp of the Rock of all the ages. All is well with my soul, He is God in control. I know not all His plans, but I know I'm in His hands.'* If we can say that last sentence, *'I know not all His plans, but I know I'm in His hands.'* Then we can really know God's peace in our hearts. I believe Abram could, because in verses 8 and 9 we see Abram letting Lot choose which way he wanted to go, knowing that God would send Lot away from where he wanted Abram to go. It's not about us pushing 'our' way forward, it is allowing God to guide us, and then walking where He leads. Psalm 23 says; *'The Lord is my shepherd,'* that means we have to allow God to guide us. We may find the way tough at times and it may be not always the way we would have chosen to have gone but God is in control, God knows what is best for us and God knew what was best for Abram. Lot chose the plain of Jordan which was well watered, while Abram lived in the land of Canaan. **Read verses 14-17...** here we see the Lord's promise to Abram, and his reward for obeying the Lord's command. V18; *'So Abram moved his tents and went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the Lord.'* Abram's journey wasn't completed yet, there was still a long way to go and a lot more lessons, in

trusting God, to be learned. By the time you read this, Donald Trump will be just days away from leaving the White House as President of the U.S.A., as I am writing this, I have just watched the siege of the White House, and finally Donald Trump has conceded that Joe Biden is the next president of the U.S.A., along side that the third vaccination against the Covid19 coronavirus has been authorised for use in the U.K., I pray that God's hand is guiding those who trust in Him, in God, and they will move in the various lands to bring about His peace, God's peace. For Abram and Lot, it may have been difficult parting, maybe Lot was not aware that Abram had been told to *'Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.'* There are times we have to be led by God into places where we had not expected to go. I know that from experience but when we walk in His ways, in God's ways, we really do know a blessing. I have no idea what 2021 holds for me, let alone for you, but , as Robin Mark says; *'I know not all His plans, but I know I'm in His hands.'* Abram is told in verse 16; *'I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted.'* at this time Abram is 75 years old and Sarai 65 and they had no children. If anyone could count every one of Abram's descendants to this day, I wonder how many it would be, but that is an impossibility. And if you were to include those who have been adopted into God's family, that would be mind blowing. Abram did as God instructed, I pray we can also and that we could also know a blessing. Amen.

Guide me O Thou great Redeemer,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but Thou art mighty,
Hold me with Thy powerful hand:
Bread of heaven, Bread of heaven,
Feed me now and ever more,
Feed me now and ever more.

Open Thou the crystal fountain
Whence the healing stream doth flow;
Let the fiery, cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through:
Strong Deliverer, strong Deliverer,
Be Thou still my strength and shield,
Be Thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death, and hell's destruction,
Land me safe on Canaan's side:
Songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever give to Thee,
I will ever give to Thee,