

## Articles and Sermons :: Reactions of a Godly Man by Zac Poonen

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In Genesis 13:7 we read that there was strife between Abraham's servants and Lot's servants. Abraham and Lot obtained vast wealth through their trip to Egypt and now that wealth causes problems. Wealth always causes problems. Lot and his wife were affected by what they saw in Egypt. They wanted to make more money. But Abraham was a man who would not fight with anybody. But his servants fought.

"There was strife between the herdsmen of Abraham's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. Now the Canaanite and the Perizzite were dwelling there." Why is that last sentence included there? Because those heathen people were watching this fight. This is very relevant to the situation in today's Christendom too. The heathen are dwelling in the land and what do they see? Christian groups fighting with each other. And in the midst of all this can we find a godly man like Abraham today who will call Lot (the worldly person who loves money) and say to him, "Let there be no strife between you and me, we are brothers" (Gen. 13:8)? They were not brothers. Abraham was the uncle, Lot was his nephew. See the graciousness of this 75 year old man to his 35 year old nephew. "We are brothers!" A godly man is a humble man. He was 75 years old, but he could look at his young nephew and say, "We are brothers. You are equal to me. I will give you first preference. Choose what you want." Jerusalem is built by such men. Christendom needs such leaders - and they are not easily found.

Today, we have many leaders who assert their authority, who would have said, "I am 75 years old, I am your uncle. I am the one whom God called, not you. You just came along with me." But Abraham did not speak like that to Lot. He said to Lot, "If you go to the right, I'll go to the left. And if you go to the left, I'll go to the right. You take what you want first." And Lot, greedy man that he was, with the spirit of Babylon, grabbed first. He looked at the lovely fields of Sodom, saw the opportunity to make money there, and the rich people who lived there, and said, "I'll move there and serve God there as well."

Many Christians and Christian leaders like to move to wealthy countries. But invariably, they lose out spiritually.

When Abraham was taking this decision, the Lord had come down (as in Babel), to see what he and Lot were doing. And the Lord saw the godly way in which Abraham conducted himself. Immediately after Lot had left him, the Lord said something very important to Abraham (Gen. 13:14). God separated him first from his father (by death), and then He separated Abraham from yet another relative (who would have been a hindrance to him through his covetousness). The Lord said, "Now you are alone and now I can get you to go where I want you to go and to be what I want you to be. I saw exactly what happened." Do you know that God watches every transaction that takes place between people? He watches our attitudes. Have you given up your right to something because you are a Christian? God says to you, "I have taken note of that."

Then God said to Abraham, “Just stand here and look north, south, east, west. All the land that you can see will one day belong to your children. I promise that. It will not belong to the descendants of Lot. God said that to Abraham 4000 years ago. Look at that land today 4000 years later and ask yourself who is living there. The descendants of Abraham, not the descendants of Lot. God keeps His word. Thousands of years may go by, but if God has said to Abraham, “I will give this land to your descendants forever,” (Gen. 13:15), then it will be exactly like that.

Then we see in Chapter 14 how Lot got into trouble. You always get into trouble when you go outside the will of God. He was captured by his enemies. Abraham could have said, “Serves him right. The fellow grabbed something from me.” But Abraham didn’t react like that. There you see another time that Abraham was tested: What would Abraham’s attitude be when he hears that this man who cheated him has got into trouble? When somebody who has cheated you gets into trouble himself, then you will discover very quickly whether you are a man of God – or not. Abraham’s reaction was, “Let me go and help Lot. It’s true that Lot cheated me. But what did he cheat me of? Some garbage of earthly wealth. That’s nothing. I’ve got heavenly riches. I feel sorry for Lot because he went after earthly things, and now he has got into trouble. Let me go and help him.” And Abraham went and delivered Lot himself. That’s the attitude of a godly man. Only such people can build Jerusalem.