

Pitch Your Tent

Genesis 13:12

Rock Hill Baptist Church
605 Rock Hill Road
Lexington, Tennessee 38351

Pastor David Buffaloe
731-845-6104
online at bibleteacher.org



FOCAL Read Responsively Genesis 13:12 Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.

Matthew 5:13 Matthew 5:13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

During a visit to the mental asylum, a visitor asked the Director "How do you determine whether or not a patient should be institutionalized"

"Well," said the Director, "we fill up a bathtub, then we offer a teaspoon, a teacup and a bucket to the patient and ask him or her to empty the bathtub."

"Oh, I understand," said the visitor. "A normal person would use the bucket because it's bigger than the spoon or the teacup."

"No." said the Director, "A normal person would pull the plug. Do you want a bed near the window?"

Humans are easily deceived, and easily distracted. I have to admit when I first read the above piece I – along with most of you – thought “Yeah, I'd use a bucket”. We can be tricked. We make mistakes and we have to live with those mistakes. The life you have right now is a result of the decisions you have made up to this point.

I've often thought that I certainly wouldn't want to be God, for God never gets a fair shake. God gives us free

will, and then is blamed when we misuse our free will. He gave us great forefathers who fought for our freedoms. We live in the most free country in the world, but we have used our freedom for licentiousness. Sin abounds in every means possible. Sexual sin is rampant. Abortion – legalized murder – is prolific. Our country is gasping and struggling economically because of bad decisions we have made.

We need to get back to God.

Our Heavenly Father loves us so much that He sent His Only Begotten Son to die for us – yet few choose to receive Him. How sad that is! Christ willingly came to this earth, trading in the street of gold for the dusty roads of ancient Israel. He put aside the adoration of the angels and, in its place, took upon Himself the spiteful hatred of the self righteous Scribes and Pharisees. Jesus went from the adoration of the Father to the hiss of the crowd and the hammer of the nail. He gave His all so that God can call out a people unto Himself. The Scripture says:

Titus 2:14 [Jesus] gave himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Here is the goal of God. It is His intent to **redeem us from all iniquity**, to make believers to be like unto Himself. God's people are to be holy, a **peculiar people, zealous – driven to do good works**. God's people are to be God focused, but are to do God honoring good in this world. We are to be world changers, not as the Pharisees were world changers, but those who change the world by

living and loving as God works through us.

We who are saved by faith in Christ are to be the **salt of the earth**. When Jesus said to His disciples:

Matthew 5:13-16 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

Jesus was emphasizing a great truth. Today we look at salt as if it's nothing. Salt is common, one of the easiest found and cheapest commodities on the market. Yet in Jesus' day salt was more precious than gold. Wars were fought over salt deposits. Soldiers were paid for their services with salt. Salt was used as coin in areas where coins were not used. God gave salt value when He decreed in the Law that **“with all thy offerings thou shalt offer salt” (Leviticus 2:13)**. Salt has value, as long as it has not lost its savor. When salt loses its saltiness its only value in society is to be used on the roadways.

Does your faith have value? It does if it is centered on the Lord Jesus Christ. If your faith is on circumstances, people, your pastor, your church, or anything outside of God, then your faith is of little value. If you are surrendered to the Lordship of Christ then it will be shown in how you live – and succeed – in your life.

1. God Saves The Surrendered

FOCAL Genesis 13:12 Abram dwelled in the land of

Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.

The Bible tells us about two men. Both were from the same area, Ur of the Chaldees or Ancient Babylon. The man named **Abram** – I'll call him **Abraham** – was physically older than **Lot**. Abraham was Lot's uncle. Both of these men were believers, saved by faith in God.

Both Abraham and Lot were Old Testament Saints,
saved by faith in God

We're going to look at two men today, **Abram** – I'll call him **Abraham** – and **Lot**. Both of these men were Old Testament saints. Abraham is the **father of faith**. The Bible tells us that Abraham was saved by faith in Christ. Our Lord Jesus told the Pharisees:

John 8:56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

Abraham **believed in the Lord, and God counted that belief to Him for righteousness (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3)**. Though the Bible doesn't record the conversion of **Lot** we do know that he was righteous. When God was going to destroy Sodom for its wickedness Abraham pleaded with God that the righteous be spared. The Lord spared Lot and his family from destruction (**2 Peter 2:7**). Both Abraham and Lot were believers, and both made mistakes.

The name **Abraham** means **father of many**.

The names of both of these Old Testament Saints are very interesting. **Abram** (אֲבְרָם Pronounced *ab-rawm*) means “**exalted father**”. This name would eventually be changed to **Abraham** (אֲבְרָהָם Pronounced: *ab-raw-hawm*) meaning “**the father of a multitude**”. At this time in his life Abraham – though his name meant “father” and way you look at it – was *not* a father. The Lord had promised him that He would bless Abraham just one chapter before this. The Bible says:

Genesis 12:1-3 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: {2} And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: {3} And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Oh Beloved, God is so faithful to His promises! The Bible says:

FAITHFUL IN CALLING **1 Corinthians 1:9 God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.**

God is faithful to His people. What He says He will do. He calls us to salvation *to fellowship* with Him. **When we are tried, God is faithful**. The Bible tells us that:

FAITHFUL THROUGH TRIALS 1 Corinthians

10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but **God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape,** that ye may be able to bear it.

God is faithful in salvation. If He promises to **preserve us spirit, soul and body unto the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ** then He is faithful to do this. The Bible says:

FAITHFUL TO KEEP US 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray **God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. {24} Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.**

It is the faithful God Who saves the believer. He has said that salvation comes to those who *confess* and *believe*. The Bible says:

Romans 10:5-11 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. {6} But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, {9} That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. {10} For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made

unto salvation. {11} For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Salvation comes when an unbeliever surrenders his life to the **Lord Jesus Christ**. We surrender our sins, our efforts, our abilities, our talents, our gods, our intellect, and our all!

We must **confess with THY mouth the LORD Jesus**. He is Lord – He is Lord! There is no other, He is Lord. My efforts to salvation are not Lord. My goodness is not Lord. My abilities are not Lord. My talents are not Lord. My sins are not Lord. All other Lords are rejected, all other Gods are spurned. He is Lord! I surrender my life to Him as Lord, and I surrender *my intellect* to Him as Lord. Look at Romans once more. **IF thou shalt CONFESS with thy mouth the LORD Jesus, and shalt BELIEVE in thine heart that GOD hath raised Him from the dead, THOU SHALT be saved.**

The “thou shalt” of the Law said “thou shalt live within this Law”. The “thou shalt” of Christianity says that “thou shalt give all to Him as Lord”. What is it we sing?

**He is Lord.
He is Lord.
He is risen from the dead,
And He is Lord.
Every knee shall bow,
And every tongue confess,
That Jesus Christ is Lord!**

When you surrender to God the Lord Who loves you so does as He has promised. He sends His Holy Spirit into the lives of all who believe. It is the Spirit Who changes us.

John the Baptist preached:

Matthew 3:11 ... He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

When a person turns away from the gods and goddesses that the world follows and comes to Christ and Christ alone for salvation that saving faith causes God to act.

You can't believe *half on Jesus* and *half* on yourselves for salvation. You can't enter the family of God clutching sin to your breast. Just like the preacher can't baptize you in water while you're fighting him, you must relax in the Lordship of Christ to be saved.

You can't be *born again* unless God acts on your behalf. You can't force God to make you born again. Salvation requires *new birth*. It requires a *quickenning*, an *empowerment* from God the Holy Spirit. Just as God promised to bless Abraham when he obeyed, God has promised to bless every person who *stops believing in everything else and starts believing in Christ*. The Bible says:

John 7:37-39 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst,

let him come unto me, and drink. {38} He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. {39} (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Abraham believed God. Paul said:

Romans 4:3 For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

Abraham believed God. He didn't work his way to God. He wasn't good enough for God. He didn't clean up his act and come to God. What did Abraham do? He repented. He turned from all other Lordships and came solely to the Lordship of God. He said, **“I will have no other gods before You, O Lord. I believe You are the only God”**. Abraham believed God. The Scripture says:

Galatians 3:6-7 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. {7} Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

He believed God, so he moved. **Abraham dwelled in the land of Canaan** because he believed God. He trusted God. He followed God. His faith was more than lip service. The Bible says:

James 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

When God comes into the life of the believer that believer changes. We are **new creatures in Christ**. The new creature **obeys the Lord**.

Our family has changed from the **family of Adam to the family of God**. Our loyalty and allegiance now lies with **Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior**. Dear friends, if Abraham and Lot heard the call of God and did not respond to it they would not have been saved. Saving faith surrenders. Saving faith changes. Saving faith moves. Saving faith recognizes but one Savior. Saving faith loves and lives with the Savior.

2. It Matters Where You Pitch Your Tent

FOCAL Genesis 13:12 Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and **pitched his tent toward Sodom**.

I mentioned before that “**Abram**” and “**Abraham**” at heart means “**father**”. But what about the name “**Lot**”? The name “**Lot**” (לוט Pronounced : *lote*) means “**a covering**”. I believe that both of the names – **Abraham and Lot** – are very prophetic. Christians – just like Abraham – should both **bleed as well as be a blessing**. Christians should effect the world they live in.

The name **Lot** means a covering – and Christians should cover and change the areas where they go. Why don't we?

Perhaps its because we forget that it matters where we pitch our tents. We see that **Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, but Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom**. I don't believe there is a word in the Scripture that was written down without a purpose.

Abraham lived in the Promised Land before there ever was an Israel. He gained the Promised Land because he trusted the Lord. He was saved by surrendering his life to the Lord Jesus, and once saved he continued to live a life of obedient surrender to the Lord Jesus.

Listen to me, dear friends. **Both Abraham and Lot were richly blessed**. Both of these men were rich according to the standard of their days. The Bible says:

Genesis 13:2, 5 And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. {5} And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.

Both men had riches. Both men were saved out of Ur of the Chaldees, saved by faith in God. But when their herdsmen began to fight with one another ... listen to this ... because their herds were so large **the land could not sustain them**, Abraham showed his heart. Though Abraham was the elder he offered Lot a choice:

Genesis 13:9 Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the

left.

Here is the successful Christian. Abraham was focused on the Promise of God. God had made promises, precious promises to Abraham and Lot. To Abraham it didn't matter where he went as long as God was by his side. Abraham's eyes were on God. Where were Lot's eyes? Look at the text:

Genesis 13:10a And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where...

Lot's eyes were not on his brother in the faith to bless him. He cared not at all for Abraham and Abraham's needs. Lot's eyes were not on God, nor on the promises of God. Lot – the Covering – looked at the land, and chose the richest way in his eyes for himself.

Our Genesis text goes on to say:

Genesis 13:10b it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah ...

It looked good to the eyes – but was not good to the Lord. Sodom was an exceedingly wicked place, but Lot didn't care. **Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom**, and this became the pathway to his destruction.

When God's people fail to live surrendered to the Lord they pitch their tent toward Sodom – and they open the door to loss of blessing and *maybe* of life.

Dear friends, the Bible says:

1 John 5:19 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

If you are born again by faith in Christ you have no business pitching your tent toward Sodom. The Christian is someone who is *in the world, but not of the world*. The Lord calls us to Himself out of the world, but leaves us in the world so that we can lead others out of the world. God has given unto His Children precious promises:

2 Peter 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

and we **escape the corruption that is in this world through lust** by being obedient to our Lord. We are to obey our God's command and His Word implicitly while keeping our eyes on Him. God's first generation Israel lost the Promised Land because they moved when they wanted, murmured and complained when they were tried, and obeyed the commands of God at the wrong time. When God said “go” they said “no”, and when God said “no” they said “go”. As a result they died in the wilderness while their children watched.

To live you must have food, rest, and exercise.

ILLUSTRATE Mordecai Hamm, the evangelist who led

Billy Graham to the Lord, told his father that he wanted a bicycle when he was young. He later said this was the worst mistake he ever made. When he got home from school that day he saw two hoes laying up against the door of the shed – here was his means of exercise!¹

For the Christian to live as God wants him to live he must have food – the WORD OF GOD, THE DOCTRINES of our Lord. He must have rest – the DISCIPLINE to be still, trusting and obeying the leading of the Spirit. The Christian must have exercise, a DYNAMIC faith that does what the Lord says when he says it.

ILLUSTRATE When an automobile gets out of timing it will sputter and pop and eventually poop out. We need to heed God's Word as God said it and to do it as God has said to do it. We need to stop being ALMOST RIGHT. Almost right is partly wrong.

What did Abraham receive from dwelling in Canaan? The Bible says that God came to him and said:

Genesis 13:14-15 ... Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: {15} For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever.

Because Abraham kept his eyes on the Lord and not on the Land he *received the land*. Isn't this the promise of

Jesus? Did Jesus say:

Matthew 19:29 And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

You get more – much more – by being obedient to the Lord. What did Lot get for his greed? He was captured! Listen Beloved, *Absolutely nothing good happened to Lot while he was in Sodom*. In **Genesis 14** we see that Sodom is overrun by five kingdoms. What happened to Lot?

Genesis 14:12 And [these armies] took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

Lot's riches were taken from him. Abraham, the rich but *obedient* believer kept all his goods, but Lot, the rich but *disobedient* believer lost it all.

When Abraham heard that Lot was taken by the world he did as every obedient Christian should do. He went after his brother to reclaim him.

If Churches and their members would love one another, encourage one another, and instead of gossiping *go to the fallen brothers and sisters* we would be much more powerful. We need to be busy in our love one for another. Abraham and 318 trained servants went and

¹ From an illustration by Vance Havner

overthrew the world that had taken Lot. The Bible says:

Genesis 14:16 [Abraham] brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

Abraham fought for “**his brother Lot**”. How was Lot his “brother”? It was his brother in the Lord. The Lord blessed Abraham by sending Melchizedek the Priest of the Most High God to bless him. **And Abraham gave tithes of all he possessed.** He gave a ten percent portion to God's priest. Abraham did not worship money, but he worshiped the Lord.

Did this end it for Lot? Did Lot head back to Canaan, a land which could have richly supported both him and Abraham? No. **Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom.** He went back to Sodom, but Lot never became a covering for that city. Though Lot prospered in Sodom and eventually began to have influence in the city (**for Lot sat in the gate of Sodom – Genesis 19:1**), Lot did not obey the Lord.

God decided to destroy Sodom for its evil, but for Abraham's sake promised to save Lot – if he would come out of that terrible place. The Angel of God went to Sodom. You know the story. Sexual sin was so rampant that people were accosted in the streets. Men came after the Angels of God to sexually accost them, but the angels struck them blind. The Angels told Lot to gather his household together, and to come out of that city or else be destroyed with it. **The son in laws refused to come, believing that Lot was joking (Genesis 19:14).**

Lot left that city with his wife and his two daughters – **but his wife looked back at Sodom as God destroyed it, and became a pillar of salt.**

Genesis 19:24 Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;

Where did Lot end up? The Bible says **he ended up in a cave with two incestuous daughters (Genesis 19:30 ff)**. The offspring of this terrible union between father and daughters was the **Moabites and the Ammonites.**

The Moabites would worship Chemosh (כִּמּוֹשׁ, *kemōsh*), whereas the Ammonites would worship the false god Molech (מֹלֶךְ, *mo'-lek*). Both groups would practice child sacrifice to these false gods, and both groups would attack God's Israel when they later entered that Promised Land. The legacy of Lot - righteous Lot – saved Lot leaves much to be desired.

Lot's legacy was incest, child sacrifice, false gods, and a people who would infest and ensnare Israel.
Abraham's legacy was to be a blessing to the whole world!

And what of Abraham's legacy?

Though Abraham made mistakes, he kept his eyes on the Lord. Because of that he is the father of faith for all who believe. Abraham is honored by the Jews, honored by Christians, and most importantly, honored by God.

He was was obedient to the Lord.

If you are a born again Child of God you will be blessed only as long as you walk in obedience to your Lord. He is Lord. An old timey preacher was preaching the text of:

Mark 4:36 And when [the disciples] had sent away the multitude, they took Jesus just as He was in the ship. And there were also with Him other little ships.

ILLUSTRATE The old timey preacher said – and I paraphrase - **“The Lord was in that big ship, but following behind were other little ships. The main ship in the Christian way of life is LORDSHIP. If that ship leads, all the other little ships – Church membership, Worship, Stewardship, Discipleship, Fellowship, and every other ship, will fall in line.”** I say AMEN to this. He is Lord. Every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

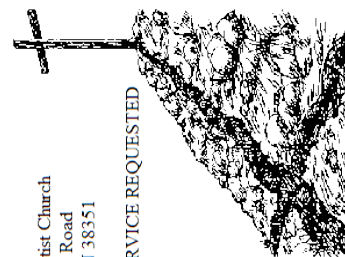
You cannot have two Lords. You cannot serve two Masters. **Choose you this day who you will serve.**

Follow the Lord. Forsake the world. Fight Satan!

Christians, choose! Unbelievers, choose! Who will be your Lord. How you answer this question will determine whether you are blessed or cursed.

The choice is yours.

May God lead you to choose Jesus Christ!



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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1. God Saves The Surrendered

John 8:56; Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3; 2 Peter 2:7; Genesis 12:1-3; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; Romans 10:5-11; Matthew 3:11; John 7:37-39; Romans 4:3; Galatians 3:6-7; James 2:26

- The name **Abraham** means _____
- Salvation comes when an unbeliever surrenders his life to the _____
- When you surrender to God the Lord Who loves you so does as He has promised. _____
- You can't believe _____ and *half* on yourselves for salvation. You can't enter the family of God clutching _____. The preacher can't baptize you in water while you're fighting him, _____

- When God comes into the life of the believer that believer _____. We are **new creatures in Christ**. The new creature **obeys the Lord**.

2. It Matters Where You Pitch Your Tent

Genesis 13:12; Genesis 13:2, 5; Genesis 13:9; Genesis 13:10; 1 John 5:19; 2 Peter 1:4; Genesis 13:14-15; Matthew 19:29; Genesis 14:12; Genesis 14:16; Genesis 19:1; Genesis 19:14; Genesis 19:24; Genesis 19:30; Mark 4:36

- The name "Lot" means a _____ – and Christians should _____
- Lot's _____ were not on his brother in the faith to bless him. He cared not at all for Abraham and Abraham's needs.
- When God's people fail to live surrendered to the Lord they _____
- To live you must have _____
- For the Christian to live as God wants him to live he must have _____
- Lot's riches were taken from him. Abraham, the rich but _____ believer kept his goods, but Lot, the rich but _____ believer lost it all.
- _____ the Lord. _____ the world. _____ Satan!