

Making Godly Choices...

This weeks reading is from Parashat Vayera (*Bereshit / Genesis 18:1-22:24*), we read in the opening verses וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה בְּאַלְמֵי מְרָא *“the Lord appeared to him (Abraham) by the oaks of Mamre,”* according to the Scriptures, the Lord God almighty visits Abraham along with two men (angels) traveling with Him (*18:1-3*). Abraham learns his wife Sarah is going to bear a son (*18:9-15*) and the Lord speaks to Abraham about the destruction of Sodom and Gemorah (*18:17-33*). In Parashat Lech Lecha, Lot and Abraham have a disagreement and decide to split. Lot chooses the Jordan valley and Abraham remains in Canaan. The cities of Sodom and Gemorah are so wicked, the Lord Himself comes down to see if what was reported was true and whether he should destroy the cities. The Lord has mercy on Lot and delivers him from destruction. The narrative continues, Abraham encounters Abimelech and Abimelech takes Sarah for his wife. The Lord speaks to Avimelech in a dream (*20:1-18*) telling him to send Sarah back to Abraham. The Lord tests Abraham to sacrifice his only son Isaac (*22:1-18*). The Lord God reiterates the covenant blessing to Abraham saying וְהִתְפָּרְכוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ *‘In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.’ (NASB)* This week the Lord God made Himself known to Abraham, and Abraham recognized that the Lord was speaking to him. It is interesting that we do not see Lot being mentioned until the Angels make their way to the city of Sodom.

כתבי הקודש / The Holy Scriptures	
<p style="text-align: center;">ספר בראשית פרק יג, יט</p> <p>ז וַיְהִי-רִיב בֵּין רְעֵי מִקְנֵה-אַבְרָם וּבֵין רְעֵי מִקְנֵה-לוֹט וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַפְּרִזִּי אֲזֵי יֹשֵׁב בְּאֶרֶץ: ... י וַיִּשְׂא-לוֹט אֶת-עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא אֶת-כָּל-כַּפְר הַיַּרְדֵּן כִּי כָלָה מִשְׁקָהּ לִפְנֵי שַׁחַת יְהוָה אֶת-סֹדֶם וְאֶת-עַמּוֹרָה כַּגֵּן-יְהוָה בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּאֶכָה צֹעַר: יא וַיִּבְחַר-לוֹ לֹט אֶת כָּל-כַּפְר הַיַּרְדֵּן וַיִּסַּע לֹט מִקְדָּם וַיִּפְרְדוּ אִישׁ מֵעַל אָחִיו:</p> <p>א וַיָּבֹאוּ שְׁנֵי הַמַּלְאָכִים סָדְמָה בְּעֶרְב׃ וְלוֹט יָשָׁב בְּשַׁעַר-סֹדֶם וַיֵּרָא-לוֹט וַיָּקָם לִקְרֹאתָם וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַפָּיִם אֲרָצָה:</p>	<p><i>Bereshit / Genesis 13:7-11, 19:1</i></p> <p><i>13:7 And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram’s livestock and the herdsmen of Lot’s livestock. Now the Canaanite and the Perizzite were dwelling then in the land. ... 13:10 Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere this was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar. 13:11 So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other. (NASB)</i></p> <p><i>19:1 Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground. (NASB)</i></p>

As the story goes in Parashat Lech Lecha, Abraham and Lot were both prosperous and had abundant flocks and herds. The Scriptures say that they were so prosperous that the land could not sustain them both. As a result, Abraham went to Lot with an offer saying *“Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we are kinsmen. Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left” (Bereshit / Genesis 13:8-9)*. Lot then lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, it was well watered and was good for the flocks, so Lot chose for himself the valley of the Jordan (*Bereshit / Genesis 13:10-11*). What is interesting is that in Parashat Lech Lecha, Lot chose the valley of the Jordan, however, in Parashat Vayera we find him dwelling at the gates (בְּשַׁעַר) of Sodom. א וַיָּבֹאוּ שְׁנֵי הַמַּלְאָכִים סָדְמָה בְּעֶרְב׃ וְלוֹט יָשָׁב בְּשַׁעַר-סֹדֶם וַיֵּרָא-לוֹט וַיָּקָם לִקְרֹאתָם וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַפָּיִם אֲרָצָה: *19:1 Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground. (NASB)* What is interesting is the description of Lot’s choice of the Jordan valley and how the sentence is worded. *Bereshit / Genesis 13:10* says *13:10 Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere this was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar. (NASB)* Notice how the Jordan valley was pleasing to Lot’s eyes. In addition to this, the land is described as being like *“the garden of the Lord”* and like *“the land of Egypt.”* It seems this valley of the Jordan had both the characteristics of the garden of Eden and of Egypt. *Bereshit / Genesis 13:11* states Lot chose for himself *“All of the valley of the Jordan.”* Remember that the garden of Eden is known as paradise, Heaven, blessing, peace, and righteousness, whereas Egypt is known as unrighteousness, sin, wickedness, and idolatry. It seems that Lot’s choice was to have a little of both. The question for our lives today is *“are we like Lot?” “Do we choose to have a little of both, a little sin and a little of the Lord?”* Note that Abraham remained in Canaan (*Bereshit / Genesis 13:12*), he rested in the promises of God and lived by faith. When we stop and consider the consequences of Lot’s choices, it is clear that when we make bad choices things don’t always turn out the way we expect. When making choices on what we do each day, what we watch on television or on the internet, ask yourself *“Is this God’s Will or My Will?” “Am I thinking of Others, or Only of Self?” “Will I be spiritually strengthened or weakened?” Does this Promote Godliness or Worldliness?” “If my life was written down in a book, would it be characterized like Lot’s life where I would read about God working all around me however my name is not mentioned until the Angels make their way to the city of Sodom?”* This is definitely a sobering thought don’t you think? Parashat Vayera and the story of Lot is a call to repentance before the Lord. Based on these Scriptures, our lives should be characterized by seeking the Lord to keep us strong in Yeshua His Son and practicing righteousness. Remaining strong in our faith is one thing, how do we practice righteousness, now that is the question! How do you practice righteousness?