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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A2049 ~ Abram and Lot Divide Land.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

Conflict sometimes seems inevitable between people. Those with differing viewpoints can quickly produce tension by not being willing to respectfully listen and look for common ground with others. Each person involved in such conflicts tends to demand to be right and thus the victor over the other people's viewpoints, not because they always need to be superior but rather, to maintain control.

Does this sort of thing happen between pastors, Christian workers and missionaries too? We tend to think that those in outreach ministry are more spiritual and less likely to have conflict. But unfortunately, conflict does happen from time to time.

In today's *Bible Adventure*, Abram defused a growing problem of conflict between his workers and those of his nephew Lot's.

DRAMA - [The Bible In Living Sound](#).

Abram, Sarai and Lot returned to Canaan after a shameful stay in Egypt where Abram had lied to Pharaoh that Sarai was just his half-sister, when really she was his wife. By not trusting God to look after them, Abram and Sarai embarrassed themselves and caused much trouble on Pharaoh's household.

Abram and Sarai arrived back at Bethel some 15 kilometres north of Jerusalem. This was the last place Abram had built an altar and called on the name of the Lord. It was there that Abram had last been in sweet fellowship with God. No doubt he felt that was the best place to confess his sins and seek full forgiveness of his failures. Since God promises to forgive our sins when we confess them, Abram was restored to full fellowship and joy in the favour of the Lord when he did so.

Abram and Sarai had been restored to fellowship with God, but the scars remained on Lot and their servants. These people no longer felt the reverent admiration that they once had for Abram and they began to seek after their own interests instead. The people had split into two groups and so either worked for Abram or Lot, without any interest in the needs of the other group. But this arrangement caused disagreements between the two groups, and these lead to fights.

Such arguments gave a bad testimony to the Canaanites living around them. Material possessions gained by God's people through worldly methods often lead to such problems. As there was still plenty of open land in Canaan, there was no need for them to fight over the same area. Abram suggested to Lot that they divide the herds and flocks between themselves and take their animals to different locations.

Abram had learnt that God would take care of him and his needs no matter where he was, so he offered Lot the choice of the land. As the older person and leader of the clan, by all rights Abram should have had priority to decide first where he wanted to go. And out of respect for his uncle, Lot should have declined such an offer, leaving it to Abram to choose first. The choices we make can often be broken down into whether the decision will be made in self-interest or for a right reason?

Lot seized the opportunity to go first, thinking that he could gain his own advantage. He no longer wished to be a pilgrim passing through the land with Abram. So he chose the well-watered plain of the Jordan River where it flowed into the salty Dead Sea. Close by were five prosperous cities and Lot wanted to live in one of those and enjoy city life!

No doubt Lot knew something of the famed wickedness of these cities, just as he had seen the paganism of Ur, Haran and Egypt. Like Lot, we too can put ourselves into spiritual danger by the decisions that we make. Many believers who make similar choices as Lot, justify that they can be a witness for the Lord wherever they go while at the same time, continue to enjoy the comforts that their surroundings provide.

Abram was also looking for a city to live in, as Hebrews, Chapter 11, says: "Abraham was waiting for the city which God has designed and built, the city with permanent foundations." Lot didn't move into the city of Sodom immediately, but he lived close enough to enjoy city advantages while still in his tent. In Genesis, Chapter 14, Lot is recorded as finally living in Sodom and by Chapter 19 he was one of its business leaders. This led to the tragedy which eventually destroyed him and his family.

There's an important lesson in this for us: we need convictions or principles for living out our lives. We practise them until when a major temptation like Lot's comes along, but then our life convictions hold us on the godly path. Honouring God must be the point of everything we do and say. We can't do this in our own strength. It is only as we give ourselves to Christ as our Saviour and Lord that by His Holy Spirit, can we serve Him and others around us.

This is God's way and it's the only one that works properly. We function better physically when we are more concerned about others than we are about ourselves. If we don't know what it means to sacrifice self-interest in our lives day-by-day, then in reality, we aren't living for God's glory. We need to ask ourselves: "Whose concerns major in what I'm doing and the way I'm living – mine or God's?" Instead, there's a tendency to look at everything from a viewpoint of: "What's in this for me?" This attitude isn't God-honouring but self-honouring.

The opposite way to living in God's way of righteousness is self-centredness, and this soon leads to a conflict with others. Are there ways we can avoid conflicts or keep them to a minimum? Yes there is. One way is to talk through people's differences so that everyone will be satisfied with the outcome and relationships are preserved. Another is for all parties involved to compromise to gain agreement, as long as important values aren't being bent and changed. Yet another way is to put off having a discussion until there is better time or place to talk about the issue on hand.

How many problems in our society are brought about by people's selfishness? Name a problem and for the most part, you'll find selfishness rearing its ugly head. We want our own way!

Paul urged the believers at Philippi, "Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves." Let none of us be controlled by selfishness in the Name and power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In Luke, Chapter 12, it mentions a man in a crowd who asked the Lord Jesus to use His authority to make his brother divide the property their father had left them. Jesus declined to do so, as He hadn't come to earth appointed by God to be a judge over people. Instead, He had come to do His Heavenly Father's will to bring a new covenant relationship between sinful people and God, to be accomplished through His own death and resurrection. Jesus knew that following His Father's will was far more important than sorting out people's money matters.

Jesus then turned to the crowd and He told them to guard themselves against an excessive desire for wealth and the greedy longing to have more. He said that a man's life is not made up of the things he owns or anything that is over and above his needs.

Lot certainly had an abundance and his move into the plain beside the Jordan River was actually a good move for Abram. Once again, Abram could devote his attention to serving God and in time, God again spoke to him. Abram had learnt a hard lesson in Egypt and he'd learnt it well; now in God's grace once again, God confirmed His covenant or agreement with Abram to give him the land of Canaan.

When He did this, God invited Abram to look north, south, east and west, before promising it all would be for him and his descendants forever. Looking at world circumstances today, could Israel be taken out of the land God promised to Abram so long ago? In Amos, Chapter 9, the Lord says: "I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; They shall build the waste cities and inhabit them ... I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them." This prophecy may be fulfilled in a future time when the Lord Jesus will rule the world from Jerusalem, as there are predictions in the Bible that a number of wars are yet to be fulfilled before Christ's return to rule the earth.

God also promised Abram would be the father of a nation that would bless other nations. The New Testament makes it clear that Abram's 'seed' was actually Jesus Christ. But Abram also had a spiritual seed, as it says in Romans, Chapter 4, that he was the father of all those who believe in the Lord Jesus.

Following this encounter with God, Abram pulled up his tent and he moved down the mountain to the plain of Mamre, which was around 35 kilometres south of Jerusalem. There he built another altar to God and he stayed there for quite some time, as he wanted a place where his family and servants could meet for formal worship of God.

Egypt during the time of Abram was a great empire and had been for a long time. The greatest pyramids were believed to have been built in the 4th dynasty of rulers and Abram is considered to have been there in the 12th dynasty, which equates to hundreds of years after the pyramids were built.

A hundred years ago today, it was common for sceptics to say that the Bible was just a book of myths. But in the past 200 years, archaeology has dug up the remains of many of the cities listed in this first part of the book of Genesis. Although hidden under the sand for thousands of years, such remains show advanced civilisations with large cities that were obviously prosperous. None of the archaeologists' work had disproved the Bible. This has given Christians a further sense of confidence in the Bible and what it says. Few people now claim that Abram was just a legendary hero of the Jews.

Let us not forget what the Apostle Paul said in Ephesians, Chapter 4, Verse 26: "If you become angry, do not let your anger lead you into sin, and do not stay angry all day." We are to give no opportunities to the devil when conflicts arise but let our peacemaking be guided by God.

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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