

This was very unpleasant. Probably Abram's men came out at 4:30 the next day, and when Lot's men came out at 5:00 they, in their turn, found that the good pasture was already taken and that it was necessary for them to go a very long distance away from the camping place. The next day they probably went out at 4:00. Such a process could not continue very long before it would reach the point of real trouble. Strife began between the herdmen of Lot and the herdmen of Abram.

In this situation Abram went to Lot's tent and suggested that they seek an amicable way out of the difficulty. Let us picture them as they walked along on the hill country between Bethel and Ai. Abram said, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. 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." Verse 10 continues: "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar." The next verse states that "Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other."

This is a very fine story to illustrate the selfishness of Lot and the unselfishness of Abram, so long as it is told in a region that is far removed from Palestine. Unfortunately, if you go to Palestine as I did, and stand on the hill country between Bethel and Ai, and try to imagine the scene that is described here, the story just does not fit the circumstances. You look at the hill country around you. You may see shepherds walking along, blowing on their little pipes, and their sheep or goats following behind them. It presents an attractive pastoral scene. Then you look off to the east and there, far below, you see the Jordan Valley, desolate and brown, seemingly devoid of vegetation. As you look at that desert region, and think of Lot's selection,