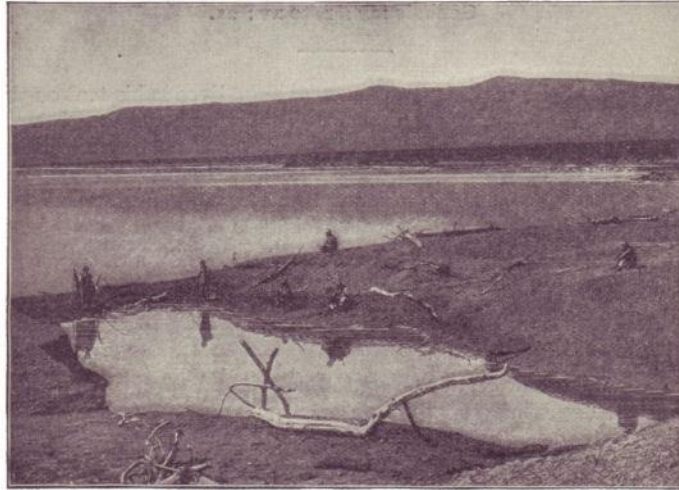


Abram and Lot



Dead Sea Near Sodom

The writing of Deuteronomy begins its narration, thusly: “And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month on the first day of the month, that Moses spake unto the children of Israel according unto all that Jehovah had given him in commandment unto them,” (Deuteronomy 1:3), “Beyond the Jordan, in the land of Moab, began Moses to declare this law, (Deuteronomy 1:5). Following the declaration of the law, “Moses the servant of Jehovah died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of Jehovah. And he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day. And Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days: so the days of weeping in the mourning for Moses were ended” (Deuteronomy 34:5–8).

Following the end of the days of mourning, Jehovah said to Joshua, “Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel” (Joshua 1:2), thus, “the people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, on the east border of Jericho” (Joshua 4:19).

Moses had declared the law to Israel in the thirty days prior to his death. Israel mourned Moses for thirty days prior to their entry into the land of Canaan. Thus, the book of Deuteronomy covers a period of approximately eight weeks.

The importance of this time, and declaration of the law, is seen in Moses' statement, "Jehovah commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear Jehovah our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as at this day. And it shall be righteousness unto us, if we observe to do all this commandment before Jehovah our God, as he hath commanded us" (Deuteronomy 6:24-25).

In considering this text, as it applies to Conflict Resolution, the reader comes to the understanding that law preserves. Law preserves life. When Moses delivered the commandments unto Israel, he said, "Honor thy father and thy mother, as Jehovah thy God commanded thee; that thy days may be long, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee" (Deuteronomy 5:16). The apostle Paul affirmed this, saying, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (Ephesians 6:1-3). Conflict arises when two or more individuals, and/or entities have "competitive or opposing actions of incompatibles: antagonistic state or action (as of divergent ideas, interests, or persons)," or a "mental struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, drives, wishes, or external or internal demands" (Webster's Dictionary). When Conflicts arise there is a need for a Resolution, i.e., "the act of finding an answer or solution to a conflict...and answer or solution to something" in order to establish peace among those involved.

In order to secure an acceptable Resolution, to both parties, there must be a recognition of a standard, a pattern of law by which both parties can agree. The prophet Amos affirms this truth, saying, "Shall two walk together, except they have agreed?" (Amos 3:3). In order to agree, and successfully render a Resolution, there is of necessity a need to establish a standard concerning what is right, just, and lawful.

As we consider the society within which we live the diversity of opinions are enormous! How “shall two walk together, except they have agreed?” The road to a Resolution is accomplished objectively, not subjectively, i.e., there has to be a standard, outside of one’s self. Solomon said, “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Proverbs 14:12). Thus, as the prophet Jeremiah affirmed, “O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jeremiah 10:23). Doctrine and practice is what separates man, i.e., what we believe, and what we do: when our belief structure is faulty, then our actions will be faulty, and when actions are faulty additional conflicts arise. Nevertheless, Conflicts arise, and when they do, the Resolution, even when it’s amicable may have devastating results.

The scenario: “Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him” (Genesis 13:1). Lot was a nephew to Abram. Their relationship appeared to be amicable. As it was with Abram, “Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents” (Genesis 13:5). However, “the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram’s cattle and the herdsmen of Lot’s cattle” (Genesis 13:6–7).

In an effort to find a peaceful Resolution, “Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we are brethren” (Genesis 13:8). David recognized this, saying, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Psalms 133:1). Thus, a Resolution was proposed.

Abram said to Lot, “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 take the right hand, then I will go to the left.” How could Lot have obtained a fairer deal than that? “ Lot surveyed the offer, “and Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the Plain of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before Jehovah destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, like the garden of Jehovah, like the

land of Egypt, as thou goest unto Zoar. So Lot chose him all the Plain of the Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other” (Genesis 13:9–10). Conflict Resolved! But what were the consequences of the Resolution? “Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the Plain, and moved his tent as far as Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners against Jehovah exceedingly” (Genesis 13:12–13). How wicked? The prophet Jude puts it this way, “Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire. Yet in like manner, these also in their dreamings defile the flesh, and set at nought dominion, and rail at dignities” (Jude 7–8). The inhabitants of Sodom, through their unbridled pursuit of gratifying the flesh in illicit acts, not only in action, but in their dreams they defiled the flesh, and “set at nought” any authority that might deter them from pursuing their life of debauchery.

In this record we can see where a Conflict arose, an amicable Resolution was accomplished, but Lot’s departure from Abram, and his righteous influence eventually led to a great loss by Lot, not only physically, but as the apostle Peter wrote concerning Lot, saying, “turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, having made them an example unto those that should live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, sore distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their lawless deeds” (2 Peter 2:6–8).

When Conflicts arise, and they surely will, and a Resolution, even an amicable one is offered, look beyond the immediate.