

# Genesis 13 - Abram Separates from Lot; Abrahamic Covenant

## II. Epilogue: Patriarchal history (Gen 11:10—50:26)

- (1) Life of Abraham (Gen 11:10—25:11)
- (B) Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 12:1—25:11)
  - (a) Establishment of the covenant (Gen 12:1—17:27)
  - (ii) Preparation for the covenant (Gen 13:1—14:24)
    - (a) Abram's separation from Lot (13:1-13)
    - (b) Promise reaffirmed (13:14-18)

## Genesis 13

- (ii) Preparation for the covenant (Gen 13:1—14:24)
  - (a) Abram's separation from Lot (13:1-13)

1 So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, he and his wife and all that belonged to him, and Lot with him.

1 So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, he and his wife and all that belonged to him, and Lot with him.

1 Abram traveled from Egypt, along with his wife and everyone who belonged to his household—including Lot—to the Negev.

1 And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south.

- Lot indeed went with Abram and Sarai to Egypt, but was not mentioned in the account in Gen 12

2 Now Abram was very **rich in livestock**, silver, and gold.

2 Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver and in gold.

2 Now Abram had become quite wealthy in livestock, silver, and gold.

2 And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.

- They returned to the Negev, the place from which they departed for Egypt (12:9)

- "...rich" - the first mention of wealth in Scripture

— Abram began to experience the material wealth promised to him in the Abrahamic Covenant

- "...livestock" - much of this was gained while in Egypt, as the bride price from Pharaoh for Sarai

3 And he went on his journeys from the Negev as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai,

3 He went on his journeys from the Negev as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai,

3 He journeyed by stages from the Negev to Bethel, the place where his tent had formerly been, between Bethel and Ai,

3 And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai;

- Abram returned to where he sojourned previously (12:8), which was a less dry, more productive area for his increased number of cattle

4 to the place of the altar which he had made there previously; and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

4 to the place of the altar which he had made there formerly; and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

4 where he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of the LORD.

4 Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

- Abram made a return to the geographic location he had resided previously, but it was also a spiritual return, to a place of commitment or re-commitment

— This was the location in which Abram began public worship, and now public worship is resumed. Thus, Abram renewed his commitment to the Lord after his failure in Egypt.

### **Results of Abram's Backsliding**

- He picked up Hagar in Egypt
- Ishmael, mocking Isaac (Gen 21:9)
- Abram was rich in earthly possessions, but had strife and many sorrows (1 Tim 6:10)

5 Now Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks, herds, and **tents**.

5 Now Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents.

5 Lot, who was traveling with Abram, also had flocks of sheep, herds, and tents.

5 And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.

- "...tents" - indicates that both Abram and Lot a large group of servants, since the numerous tents would have accommodated more than just his immediate family

6 And the land could not support *both of* them while living together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together.

6 And the land could not sustain them while dwelling together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together.

6 But the land could not support them living together, because they had so many livestock that they could not stay together.

6 And 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.

- There was insufficient pasture to accommodate both Abram's and Lot's herds

— This refers to open territory around them, which wasn't already owned or controlled by the various city-states of the Canaanites

- Here is another example of the outworking of the Abrahamic Covenant, in that Lot was being blessed because of his relationship to Abram

7 And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. Now the **Canaanites** and the **Perizzites** were living in the land at that time.

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.

7 There was strife between the herdsmen in charge of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen in charge of Lot's livestock. Also, at that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were living in the land.

7 And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.

- The lack of open pasture available to Abram and Lot caused a conflict between the servants of Lot and the servants of Abram

— The conflict was not between Abram and Lot, but between their herdsmen while watching out for their master's welfare

- "...Canaanites" - a general term for the inhabitants of the Land

- "...Perizzites" - one of several tribes usually listed with the Canaanites (Cf. 34:30; Deut 7:1; Judges 1:4; 3:5)

8 So Abram said to Lot, "Please **let there be no strife** between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are relatives!

8 So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers.

8 So Abram told Lot, "Please, let's not have strife between you and me, or between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, since we are relatives.

8 And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.

- Abram made it clear that he didn't want this episode to hurt the relationship between him and his nephew...it was simply a logistical issue, not a personal one
- "...let there be no strife" - Abram's cautionary note—Let's not have any quarreling (*meribah*, related to the word for "rib") (Cf. *meribah*, Ex 17:1-7).
- In that wilderness there was no water to drink and the people strove with *Yahweh* so that Moses smote the rock
- Thereafter, *Massa* ("testing") and *Meribah* ("quarreling") became ominous names because the people out of unbelief provoked YHWH and were sent to wander in the wilderness until they died (Ps 95:8-10)
- Their selfishness exhibited unbelief (Ps 95:10) so that they did not enter the land (Ps 95:11)

9 Is the entire land not **before you**? Please separate from me; if *you choose* the left, then I will go to the right; or if *you choose* the right, then I will go to the left."

9 Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me; if *to* the left, then I will go to the right; or if *to* the right, then I will go to the left."

9 Isn't the whole land available to you? Let's separate: If you go to the left, then I will go to the right; if you go to the right, then I will go to the left; if you go to the right, then I will go to the left."

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.

- "...before you" - Abram was giving Lot first choice

— Abram could be generous because he knew the prophetic outcome!

— Abram had wealth, but wealth did not have Abram; Lot also had wealth, but wealth also had Lot

— There was a significant difference in outlook between the two men: Abram had wealth, but was not controlled by it and didn't need to maintain it at any cost; Lot also had wealth, but he was more materialistic-minded than Abram.

10 Lot **raised his eyes** and saw all the vicinity 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 going toward Zoar.

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.

10 Lot looked around and noticed that the whole Jordan plain as far as Zoar was well-watered like the garden of the LORD or like the land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD

destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.)

**10** And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.

- "...raised his eyes" - to get a good look; to see which way was better for him

— The reason it looked so good to Lot, compared to today, is because God at the time had not yet destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. At the time, it looked as lush as the Garden of Eden.

— Lot was walking by sight rather than by faith. The eyes are Satan's portals (Gen 3:6; Joshua 7:21; 1 John 2:16; et al.) [Ears are the portals of the Lord (Rom 10:17); "He that hath an ear..." etc.]

**11** So Lot chose for himself all the vicinity of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. So they separated from each other.

**11** So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other.

**11** So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan plain. Then Lot traveled eastward, and they separated from each other.

**11** Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.

- Lot made the choice only thinking about himself, not giving Abram any consideration; Abram allowed Lot first choice because he was thinking about Lot, not about himself

- Cf. Matt 13:21-22

**12** Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the **cities of the vicinity** of the *Jordan*, and moved his tents as far as Sodom.

**12** Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom.

**12** So Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the plain, setting up his tent in the vicinity of Sodom.

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

- The result of the separation was that Abram stayed where he was, in the center of Canaanite territory, where he had to make use of limited neutral grazing territory

— Lot was still a nomadic tent dweller, living at the edge of the city-state of Sodom

- "...cities of the vicinity" - including Sodom and Gomorrah, were outside (east) of the territory God originally promised Abram (Gen 12:7)

— Later, God revealed that He would give Abram's descendants even more land, including the Jordan Valley (Gen 13:14-15; 15:18)

13 Now the men of Sodom were exceedingly **wicked sinners** against the LORD.  
13 Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the LORD.  
13 Now the men of Sodom were particularly evil and sinful in their defiance of the LORD.  
13 But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.

- The section closes giving God's evaluation of Sodom...
- "...wicked" - describes external wickedness
- "...sinners" - the Hebrew means "very sinners," meaning they were sinners "against God," meaning God was offended at their sinfulness
- At this point, there is no evidence that Lot is aware of the sinfulness of Sodom; however, he was aware at some point in the future
- "Righteous Lot" was "oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked" and it "tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing their lawless deeds" (Cf. 2 Peter 2:7-8)
- Lot's move to Sodom sets the stage for the events of Gen 14:18-19

There is also a parallel here with the account of Noah. In both cases there is a concern of extreme wickedness (6:5, 8:21), and this corruption had to be wiped out (6:12-13; 19:13). In both accounts, it was one person and family that was spared.

### **Lot's Path to Compromise**

- Gen 13:10 - "...lifted up his eyes": he looked toward Sodom and could see what good territory it was
- Gen 13:11 - "...chose for himself" all the plain of Jordan
- Gen 13:12 - "...separated himself" from Abraham; he pitched his tent toward Sodom, home of "exceedingly wicked" sinners (13:13)
- Gen 13:12 - "...dwelt in the cities of the plain" - he lived near Sodom
- Gen 14:12 - "...he was living in Sodom" - he moved from outside the city into the city
- Gen 19:1 - "...sat in the gate"; Lot is the "mayor" of Sodom
- Gen 19:4-6 - Lot offers his virgin daughters to the sodomites wanting to sodomize the angels
- Gen 19:14 - He lost his testimony completely; Lot's family thought he was joking when he tried to get his family to leave the city prior to it being destroyed
- Gen 19:30-38 - Lot committed incest with his two daughters while in a drunken stupor (Moabites/Ammonites)

However, Lot was called "righteous" [3x], but was vexed daily (2 Peter 2:7-8)

## Abram vs. Lot

- Abram walked by faith – Lot walked by sight
- Abram: generous and magnanimous – Lot: greedy and worldly
- Abram: looked for God's city – Lot: home in a city destroyed by God
- Abram: "Father of all who believe" – Lot: perpetual infamy
- Abram: "Heir of the world" (Rom 4:30) – Lot: dwelt in a cave (Gen 19:30); all possessions destroyed in Sodom

### (b) Promise reaffirmed (13:14-18)

**14** The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Now raise your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward, and eastward and westward;

**14** The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward;

**14** After Lot had separated from Abram, the LORD told Abram, "Look off to the north, south, east, and west from where you're living,

**14** And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward:

- Here is reaffirmation of the Abrahamic Covenant...this is the third time the Word of God came to Abram, the third time he received direct revelation from God

- God instructed Abram to take a good look at the Land, shortly after Lot took a good look at the Land

- Lot did it for his own self-interest; Abram was told to do so by God

- Abram was instructed by God to look over the Land, which he did from the same place that Lot looked over the Land (v10)

**15** for all the land which you **seel will give to you and to your descendants forever.**

15 for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever.

15 because I'm going to give you and your descendants all of the land that you see—forever!

15 For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

- "...see" - no exact boundaries are given here, but are given later in Gen 15:15-21

- Everything that Abram saw, in all four directions, as well as the very area that Lot chose to go, now became Abram's by divine grant

- "...I will give it to you" - the Land is now also promised to Abram individually, not just to Abram's descendants

- Abraham himself will someday own this Land

- In the case of Abram, he waited for God to give it; Lot took it for himself

- "...to your descendants" - reaffirming the promise already made earlier; it will not be given to Lot's seed, but to Abram's seed
- "...forever" - *ad olam*, literally "for an age" because it is during the Messianic Age that Abram and Abram's seed will enjoy all of the Promised Land
- The word denotes everlasting, eternal; same word used to describe the Noahic Covenant (Gen 9:12,16)
- This statement specifically identifies the land portion of the Abrahamic Covenant, and deems it as God's unconditional gift to Abraham "forever"
- In Gen 12:1-3, God promised Abram to show him a land
- In Gen 12:7, God promised that Abram's seed would possess the land (he was childless at the time)
- In Gen 13:14-17, God promised that Abram would also possess the land, along with his seed. However, Abraham died never having possessed any part of the Land except for a few wells and a burial cave, which he had to purchase with good money.
- In order for God to fulfill His promise to Abram, two things must occur:
  - (1) Abraham must be resurrected
  - (2) The Land must be restored to Israel; same requirement for Isaac (Gen 26:2)
- The Lord did not talk to Abram until Lot left

Covenant theologians and others believe that this land promise to Israel was fulfilled during the time of Joshua (Joshua 10:39-43; 13:1-7; 21:43-45), David (2 Sam 8:17) and/or Solomon (xxx). See the associated Scripture references and notes that refute this belief.

16 I will make your descendants as *plentiful* as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can count the dust of the earth, then your descendants could also be counted.

16 I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered.

16 I'll make your descendants as plentiful as the specks of dust of the earth, so that if one could count the specks of dust of the earth, then your descendants could also be counted.

16 And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.

- God's promise further expands on Abram's seed; a promise that the descendants of Abram will become innumerable

17 Arise, walk about in the land through its length and width; for I will give it to you."

17 Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you."

17 Get up! Walk throughout the length and breadth of the land, because I'm going to give it to you."

17 Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.

- The promise to give Abraham the Land is restated
- Abraham was instructed to walk through the land in order to get to know it very well, because someday in the future he will possess it. This was the first tour of the Holy Land.
- As he walked the Land, he took possession of it, prophetically speaking, since he did not get to own the Land in his lifetime. However, he will own the Land in the Messianic Kingdom.

It is verses like this that become totally meaningless in the amillennial view of the end times, which interprets the Land promise as nothing more than a symbol of Heaven. Such a view, which denies that a literal 1,000-year reign of Messiah on the earth is prophesied by the Bible, renders verses such as 13:17 totally nonsensical. Is God asking Abram here to come up to Heaven and take a look around to see if he likes it because someday he is going to get to possess Heaven? This is hardly the meaning of the text. The text is obviously talking about a piece of real estate upon which he was living at that time. He was told to walk around with his feet all over the Land, because someday he was going to possess it. A view like this cannot just be spiritualized away in order to make it fit a preconceived theology. No doubt, the New Testament teaches Abram also looked for a city, a heavenly one; but one aspect does not contradict the other or cancel out the other. It is not "either/or" but "both/and." Abram was promised both a physical inheritance on earth as well as a spiritual one in Heaven.

18 Then Abram moved his tent and came and lived by the oaks of **Mamre**, which are in **Hebron**; and there he built an altar to the LORD.

18 Then Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to the LORD.

18 So Abram moved his tent and settled beside the oaks of Mamre that are by Hebron, where he built an altar to the LORD.

**18** Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.

- Abram continued to live a nomadic lifestyle, even though God promised him actual ownership of the Land
- "...Mamre" - the original owner, Mamre the Amorite (14:13)
- It will be from here that Abram will later plead for the sparing of Sodom (18:1)
- "...Hebron" - "joined together; communion"; a place of separation becomes a place of vision (2 Peter 2:6-7,9; Luke 17:26)
- This time near the great trees of Mamre (Cf. 14:13, at Hebron)

- An ancient city in southern Judah, Hebron was 19 miles southwest of Jerusalem, at the junction of all the principal highways of the region
- It stood out prominently on the landscape, 3,040 feet above sea level
- Josephus speaks of it as being more ancient than the city of Memphis in Egypt
- The cave of Machpelah, later bought by Abraham for a tomb for Sarah, was very near
- It became the burial place not only of Sarah, but of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Rebekah, and Leah
- Again, Abram built a true altar to God in a pagan worship place
- By walking through the Land, Abram was, in effect, taking possession of the Land; by building these altars in pagan places, Abram was also taking spiritual possession of the Land.