

GENESIS

Chapter 13

Abram and Lot Separate

So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negeb. 2 Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. 3 And he journeyed on from the Negeb as far as Bethel to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, 4 to the place where he had made an altar at the first. And there Abram called upon the name of the LORD. 5 And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, 6 so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together, 7 and there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were dwelling in the land. 8 Then Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we are kinsmen. 9 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." 10 And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw that the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) 11 So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed east. Thus they separated from each other. 12 Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom. 13 Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the LORD. 14 The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, 15 for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. 16 I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted. 17 Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you." 18 So Abram moved his tent and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron, and there he built an altar to the LORD.

13:2 *was very rich.* Abram left Egypt with greater wealth than he had before—even as Israel would later leave Egypt laden with wealth from the Egyptians (Ex 3:22; 12:36). (CSB)

Abram came to Canaan with apparent wealth (12:5), which increased during his sojourn in Egypt (12:16). (TLSB)

13:4 *Abram called on the name of the LORD.* As he had done earlier at the same place (see 12:8). (CSB)

13:6 *the land could not support them.* Livestock made up the greater part of their possessions, and the region around Bethel and Ai did not have enough water or pasture for such large flocks and herds (see v. 10; 26:17–22, 32; 36:7). (CSB)

As in other nomadic cultures, the wealth of Abram and Lot was in their herds. More and more pasture was needed. (TLSB)

13:7 *Perizzites.* May refer to rural inhabitants in contrast to city dwellers. (CSB)

Reminder of perils Abram and Lot faced. (TLSB)

13:8-9 Abram showed that he was a man of peace, yielding his right to his younger nephew. Abram permitted himself to be disadvantaged for the sake of good relations (cf 21:22-34; 23). (TLSB)

13:8 *kinsmen*. Relatives (as often in the Bible). (CSB)

13:9 Abram, always generous, gave his young nephew the opportunity to choose the land he wanted. He would not obtain wealth except by the Lord's blessing (see 14:22-24). (CSB)

13:10 *Jordan Valley*. The Hebrew for this word picturesquely describes this section of the Jordan Valley as oval in shape. (CSB)

like the land of Egypt. Because of its abundant and dependable water supply (see note on 12:10), Egypt came the closest to matching Eden's ideal conditions (see 2:10). (CSB)

Lush, verdant, amply supplied with water. Cf 2:8-14. (TLSB)

the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. See especially 18:16-19:29. The names of Sodom and Gomorrah became proverbial for vile wickedness and for divine judgment on sin. Archaeology has confirmed that, prior to this catastrophe, the now dry area east and southeast of the Dead Sea (see note on 10:19) had ample water and was well populated. (CSB)

Implies that readers know the story. Moses provides a clarifying reference for the benefit of readers and hearers who would know the southern end of the Sal Sea, the region of Zoar, as anything but a paradise (cf 19:18-26). (TLSB)

13:12 *Lot settled...as far as Sodom*. Since the men of Sodom were known to be wicked (see v. 13), Lot was flirting with temptation by choosing to live near them. Contrast the actions of Abram (v. 18). (CSB)

13:14-17 After Lot departed to live among wicked men, the Lord reminded Abram of His promise. The Lord repeats and further expounds what He has told Abram (12:7), which was a great comfort to the patriarch after he had given the choice to Lot, who seemingly now had the better part. God is also teaching Abram that he will sojourn in the Promised Land as in a foreign land (Heb. 11:9-10). (TLSB)

13:14 *Lift up your eyes ... and look*. See Dt 34:1-4. Lot and Abram are a study in contrasts. The former looked selfishly and coveted (v. 10); the latter looked as God commanded and was blessed. (CSB)

13:16 *as the dust of the earth*. A simile (common in the ancient Near East) for the large number of Abram's offspring (see 28:14; 2Ch 1:9; see also Nu 23:10). Similar phrases are: "as numerous as the stars in the sky" and "as the sand on the seashore" (22:17). (CSB)

13:17 *walk through ... the land*. Either to inspect it or to exercise authority over it, demonstrating the promised ownership. (CSB)

13:18 *Mamre*. A town named after one of Abram's allies (see 14:13). (CSB)

altar. Abram had already built an altar at Shechem, where the Lord had appeared to him (12:7). He had also built an altar by the oaks of Mamre. He, who would sojourn all his days as a foreigner, made sure that the land in which he dwelt always had a witness to God's Word and promises, through the worship of God's people. (TLSB)

Ch 13 Conflict arises between Abram's and Lot's herdsmen. Abram—for the sake of peace within the clan—decides they need to part and relinquishes to Lot the right of first choice. What an example Abram sets for true, godly living, an example Christ Himself shows. Though Christ was God, He counted humanity better than Himself, taking the form of a servant that we might be treated like kings and queens! By His self-sacrificing, humble service in our place, we are reconciled with God. • Lord God, teach us, by Abram's example, how to love as we have been loved and how to serve as we have been served. Amen. (TLSB)