GENESIS

Chapter 13

*Abram and Lot Separate*

**So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, with his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him. 2 Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold. 3 From the Negev he went from place to place until he came to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had been earlier 4 and where he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of the Lord. 5 Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. 6 But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together. 7 And quarreling arose between Abram’s herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time. 8 So Abram said to Lot, “Let’s not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers. 9 Is not the whole land before you? Let’s part company. If you go to the left, I’ll go to the right; if you go to the right, I’ll go to the left.” 10 Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) 11 So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company: 12 Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. 13 Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord. 14 The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, “Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. 15 All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. 16 I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. 17 Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you.” 18 So Abram moved his tents and went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the Lord.**

**13:2** *had become very wealthy.* 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** *brothers.* 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 himself would not obtain wealth except by the Lord’s blessing (see 14:22–24). (CSB)

**13:10** *plain.* 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 … pitched his tents near 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 cofort 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** *like 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** *great trees.* See note on 12:6. (CSB)

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

*Hebron.* Kiriath Arba (see note on 23:2). (CSB)

*altar.* See note on 12:7.

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)