

Genesis 13 Commentary

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| Summary Chart of The Book of Genesis | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Focus | Foundation Events (Four Events) (Events Predominant) | | | | Foundation People (Four People) (People Predominant) | | | |
| Divisions | Creation (Ge 1-2) | Fall (Ge 3-5) | Flood (Ge 6-9) | Nations (Ge 10-12) | Abraham's Faith (Ge 12-24) | Isaac's Family (Ge 25-26) | Jacob's Conflicts (Ge 27-36) | Joseph's Calamity (Ge 37-50) |
| Topics | Beginning of the Human Race (Race As A Whole) | | | | Beginning of the Hebrew Race (Family of Abraham) | | | |
| | Faithfulness of Mankind (Noah) | | | | Faithfulness of One Man's Family (Abraham) | | | |
| | Historical | | | | Biographical | | | |
| Place | Eastward From Eden to Ur | | | | Westward From Canaan to Egypt | | | |
| Time | ~2000+ Years (20% of Genesis) (~4004-2090BC) | | | | About 300 Years 193 Yr in Canaan, 93 Yr in Egypt (80% of Genesis) (2090-1804BC) | | | |
| | Primeval History of Humanity | | | | Patriarchal History of Israel | | | |
| Author | Moses | | | | | | | |

BEGINNINGS

- Ge 1:1-25 - The Universe (Everything)
- Ge 1:26-2:25 - The Human Race
- Ge 3:1-7 - Sin Enters the World
- Ge 3:8-24- God Promises Redemption from Bondage to Sin
- Ge 4:1-15 - Family Life
- Ge 4:16ff - Civilization
- Ge 10:1-11:32 - The Nations of the World
- Ge 12-50 The Story of Israel and the Jews



Abraham believed God (Gal 3:6[±], Ge 15:5,6[±])

John Phillips Outline - [Borrow Exploring Genesis](#)

The Progenitor: Abraham Ge 12:1–25:18

The Price of Faith (Ge 13:1–18)

1. The Marks of a Spiritual Man (Ge 13:1–4)
 1. Separation (Ge 13:1)
 2. Sanctification (Ge 13:2–3)
 3. Sacrifice (Ge 13:4)
2. The Mind of a Spiritual Man (Ge 13:5–9)
 1. Worrying Circumstances (Ge 13:5–6)
 2. Wicked Neighbors (Ge 13:7)
 3. Weaker Brethren (Ge 13:8–9)
 1. Spiritual Directness (Ge 13:8a)
 2. Spiritual Discernment (Ge 13:8b)
 3. Spiritual Dignity (Ge 13:9)
3. The Moves of a Spiritual Man (Ge 13:10–18)
 1. Restrained by God (Ge 13:10–13)
 1. Lot's Weak Devotions
 2. Lot's Worldly Desires (Ge 13:10)
 3. Lot's Wrong Decisions (Ge 13:11–13)
 2. Reassured by God (Ge 13:14–16)
 1. As to His Possessions (Ge 13:14–15)
 2. As to His Posterity (Ge 13:16)
 3. Regulated by God (Ge 13:17–18)

Genesis 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.

- the south: The south of Canaan; as in leaving Egypt, it is said he "came from the south," (ver. 3,) and the southern part of the promised land lay north-east of Egypt. Ge 12:9-20 20:1 21:33 Jos 10:40 18:5 1Sa 27:10 2Sa 24:7
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

GENESIS 13 OVERVIEW

- Genesis 13:1, Abram and Lot return with great riches out of Egypt;
- Genesis 13:6, Strife arises between Abram's herdsmen and those of Lot;
- Genesis 13:8, Abram meekly refers it to Lot to choose his part of the country,
- Genesis 13:10, and Lot goes to Sodom;
- Genesis 13:14, God renews the promise to Abram;
- Genesis 13:18, He removes to Hebron, and there builds an altar.

Related Passages:

Genesis 24:62 (**ISAAC AT THE NEGEV**) Now Isaac had come from going to Beer-lahai-roi; for **he was living in the Negev**.

The Negev (red),
Judean Mts (salmon), Judean Desert (pink)

ABRAM GOES UP AFTER "GOING DOWN"

So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev ([negeb](#) - "the South [country]) - **Went up** is of course referring to literal returning to the Negev, but one could see this in a spiritual sense. That is, when he went to Egypt, that was going downward spiritually speaking, but now he is returning home physically and spiritually, going "up" rather than "down." Abram returns to the **Negev** where he had been in Ge 12:9 ("Abram journeyed on, continuing toward the Negev.") Abram will return again toward **Negev** in Ge 20:1, and begin a new beginning! We all fall like Abram and so we need to imitate him (Heb 6:12+) and return to where we began. Does Jesus describe your walk in Rev 2:4+? Have you begun to take some side-trips to "Egypt?" Jesus gives us the answer for backsliding and losing our first love in the form of 3 "R's" - Remember, Repent, Re-do! If not there is one other "R" word - Remove! (Rev 2:5+). So heed the last "R" and repent!

The Christian life is basically a series of new beginnings

--Alexander Whyte

Negev ([negeb](#)) is translated in the Septuagint with [eremos](#) which means an empty or uninhabited place, a desert, a wilderness. It is the desert like region of southern Canaan, but for Abram it was the beginning of the way back.

He and his wife and all that belonged to him, and Lot with him - Abram returned with more than he had left with, including a handmaid named Hagar, a handmaid that turned out to be a handful!

[Warren Wiersbe](#) - Abraham learned his lesson, repented, and "went up" out of Egypt (Ge 13:1). When you disobey the will of God, the only right thing to do is to go back to the place where you left Him and make a new beginning (1 John 1:9). No failure is permanent in "the school of faith." Abraham went back to his tent and altar and the life of a "pilgrim and stranger." A casual observer of this episode might conclude, "What happened to Abraham wasn't all bad. Pharaoh gave Abraham a lot of wealth (Gen. 12:16; 13:2), and Sarah was given her own maid, Hagar (Ge 16:1). God forgave Abraham's sin, and he started over again. So, what's the big problem?" The "big problem" is that everything Abraham received in Egypt later caused trouble. Because of their great wealth, Abraham and Lot could not live together and had to separate (Ge 13:5-6). Hagar, the Egyptian maidservant, brought division and sorrow into the home (Gen. 16). Having had a taste of Egypt (the world), Lot started measuring everything by what he saw there (Ge 13:10-11), and this led to his downfall and the ruin of his family. There are no benefits from disobedience. The practical lesson from all of this is simply never abandon your altar. Stay in fellowship with the Lord no matter what the circumstances may be. If you have disobeyed and God is disciplining you, go back to the place where you left Him and make things right. Remember: "The victorious Christian life is a series of new beginnings." That is not an excuse for sin, but it is an encouragement for repentance.

Negev ([05045](#)) ([negeb](#)) is a masculine noun meaning the South, south. Negev often (36x) refers to the area around Beersheba and south of it (Ge 12:9; 13:1; 20:1). Negev also refers to the southern district of Judah and more specifically to indicate the area south of Judah (Jer. 13:19; 17:26), but these areas are not always precisely defined. It may indicate land south of Babylon or southern Palestine (Isa. 21:1).

Gilbrant - The noun negev has a number of meanings. Its primary meaning is a geographic region. Because this region lay to the south of the rest of the Promised Land, the word became a synonym for *dārôm*, "south." The meaning "south" is easily understood as "toward the Negeb." That it can simply mean the cardinal

direction "south" is attested in Dan. 8:9. Indeed, in Daniel the notion of south is extended to include Egypt (Dan. 11:15, 29). The noun also means "arid land" (cf. Middle Hebrew usage), a designation which denotes a number of regions, all of which happen to be in the south (perhaps begging the question of whether the noun does have this nuance at all, or are the authors simply referring to the Negeb; see Josh. 12:8).

The region of the Negeb extends roughly from a line drawn from Gaza through the modern political boundary of the southern West Bank, extending south to the mountain ranges of the Sinai and through the Arabah to the Red Sea. Beer-Sheba and Arad, the two most significant sites in the region, are in the northern region. Agriculture is possible now, and archaeological research has established that the region currently suitable for agriculture was even more suitable in the past, as the rainfall patterns in the region did not become sparse until the Early Bronze period. As one progresses southward, rainfall lessens, until one reaches the desert regions bounding the Sinai and the Red Sea. Pastoralism played a major role throughout the region (e.g., the migrations of Abraham were centered in the northern reaches of this region).

The southern part of the Negeb was long prized by Egypt on account of its copper mines. The area around Timna is renowned, and was not only the seat of Egyptian military outposts, but was in the cultural heartland of the Midianites as the Israelites entered the Promised Land. The Egyptians maintained waystations throughout the region. The Israelites, once in control of the region, likewise exploited the resource. The construction of the ports of Ezion-Geber and Elath (1 Ki. 9:26) was a direct infrastructural response to the mines. The area became a region for religious pilgrims, with the tradition of the mountain of Yahweh (Sinai/Horeb/Teman) in the vicinity. The remains of the village of Deir Alla and its shrine shed light on popular religion of the day (ninth century b.c.).

The region was divided among the tribes of Simeon and Judah, though Judah came to dominate the entirety of the land (Josh. 15:20-62; 19:1-7). The area was mainly home to military outposts and forts during the monarchy. Forts were built in the eleventh and tenth centuries b.c. Villages thinned in the ninth and eighth centuries. The Assyrian kings Sargon II (720 b.c.) and Sennacherib (701 b.c.) destroyed most of the villages as well as the military installations. They were rebuilt in the seventh century b.c., as protection against the Edomites and, later, the Babylonians.

A number of significant events transpired in the Negeb. Many of the Patriarchal narratives were set in this region. Moses (Num. 14:44), Saul (1 Sam. 14) and David (1 Sam. 30) all fought wars here against the Amalekites. Jeremiah prophesied restoration, that both agricultural land (32:44) and flocks (33:13) would again be in the hands of their rightful Israelite owners throughout Judah, including in the Negeb.

Negeb - Negev(36), South(11), south(45), south side(2), south*(3), southeast*(1), southern(2), southward(9). Gen. 12:9; Gen. 13:1; Gen. 13:3; Gen. 13:14; Gen. 20:1; Gen. 24:62; Gen. 28:14; Exod. 27:9; Exod. 36:23; Exod. 38:9; Exod. 40:24; Num. 13:17; Num. 13:22; Num. 13:29; Num. 21:1; Num. 33:40; Num. 34:3; Num. 34:4; Num. 35:5; Deut. 1:7; Deut. 34:3; Jos. 10:40; Jos. 11:2; Jos. 11:16; Jos. 12:8; Jos. 15:1; Jos. 15:2; Jos. 15:3; Jos. 15:4; Jos. 15:7; Jos. 15:8; Jos. 15:19; Jos. 15:21; Jos. 17:9; Jos. 17:10; Jos. 18:5; Jos. 18:13; Jos. 18:14; Jos. 18:15; Jos. 18:16; Jos. 18:19; Jos. 19:34; Jdg. 1:9; Jdg. 1:15; Jdg. 1:16; Jdg. 21:19; 1 Sam. 14:5; 1 Sam. 20:41; 1 Sam. 27:10; 1 Sam. 30:1; 1 Sam. 30:14; 2 Sam. 24:7; 1 Ki. 7:25; 1 Ki. 7:39; 1 Chr. 9:24; 1 Chr. 26:15; 1 Chr. 26:17; 2 Chr. 4:4; 2 Chr. 4:10; 2 Chr. 28:18; Ps. 126:4; Isa. 21:1; Isa. 30:6; Jer. 13:19; Jer. 17:26; Jer. 32:44; Jer. 33:13; Ezek. 20:46; Ezek. 20:47; Ezek. 21:4; Ezek. 40:2; Ezek. 46:9; Ezek. 47:1; Ezek. 47:19; Ezek. 48:10; Ezek. 48:16; Ezek. 48:17; Ezek. 48:28; Ezek. 48:33; Dan. 8:4; Dan. 8:9; Dan. 11:5; Dan. 11:6; Dan. 11:9; Dan. 11:11; Dan. 11:14; Dan. 11:15; Dan. 11:25; Dan. 11:29; Dan. 11:40; Obad. 1:19; Obad. 1:20; Zech. 7:7; Zech. 14:4; Zech. 14:10

John Phillips - Abram had skirted the world once. Now he put distance between himself and Egypt by getting back to Bethel, the house of God, and re-establishing his pilgrim character. He pitched his tent at Bethel and restored fellowship with God....Years ago a woman wanted a new coachman. She advertised and before long had three applicants, to each of whom she put the same question. "You know that steep hill just outside town and that narrow spot where the road drops away to a gully? How close could you drive my coach to the edge without losing your nerve?" The first man said, "Madam, if the wheels of the coach came within six inches of the edge I would feel quite safe." The second coachman said, "Madam, I reckon even if one of the wheels went clean over the edge I could hold those horses and recover the coach without harm." It was the third coachman who secured the job. "Madam," he said, "I would keep that coach as far away from that gully as I possibly could." That is what sanctification is all about. It is not trying to get as close to the world as possible without losing one's testimony, it is keeping as far away from it as we can by keeping close to Christ. (BORROW [Exploring Genesis](#))

John Henry Jowett - THE PERILS OF POSSESSIONS Genesis 13:1-9.

THERE is nothing more divisive than wealth. As families grow rich their members frequently become alienated. It is rarely, indeed, that love increases with the increase of riches. Luxurious possessions appear to be a forcing-bed in which the seeds of sleeping vices waken into strength. For one thing, selfishness is often quickened with success. Plenty, as well as penury, can "freeze the genial currents of the soul." And with selfishness comes a whole brood of mean and petty dispositions. Envy comes with it, and jealousy, and a morbid sensitiveness which readily leaps into strife.

So do our possessions multiply our temptations. So does the bright day "bring forth the adder." So do we need extra defences when "fortune smiles upon us." But our God can make us proof against "the fiery darts" of success. Abram remained unscathed in "the garish day." The Lord delivered him from "the destruction that wasteth at noonday." His wealth increased, but it was not allowed to force itself between his soul and God. In the midst of all his prosperity, he dwelt in "the secret place of the Most High," and he abode in "the shadow of the Almighty."

Adrian Rogers - The Cure for Faltering Faith (from his sermon on [What to do When Your Faith Falters](#) on page 550)

Now, let me go, finally, to the third and final point of this message very quickly. What was the cure for his faltering faith? What did God do? Now, remember that God was patient with Abram. Abram was an old man physically, but was a young man in the faith. And so God didn't flunk him out of the school of faith; God just re-enrolled him. God seems to keep giving the lessons so we can pass. So look in Genesis chapter 13, if you will. Three very quick things:

A. Repentance

First of all, there was repentance. Look in Genesis 13:1: "And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south." (Genesis 13:1) First of all, repentance. He got out of where he was and should not have been; he forsook Egypt. He could not have remained in Egypt and gotten right with God at the same time. And I'm glad he did forsake Egypt. I've told you perhaps a hundred times: The most miserable man in the world is not an unsaved man. The most miserable man in the world is a saved man out of fellowship with God. He forsook Egypt. That's repentance.

B. Remembrance

But not only repentance; there was remembrance. Look, if you will, in Genesis 13:2-3: "And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. 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." (Genesis 13:2-3) Hai means "a heap of ruins." Bethel means "the house of God." He pitched his tent there before the house of God, with a heap of ruins reminding him that this old world is a heap of ruins, but this is the house of God. And Abram had an altar and a tent reminding him one more time of his pilgrim character. And he goes back to Bethel, back to the house of God, back to where he was in the beginning.

Now, my dear friend, if you've gotten away from God, I want to tell you where you are going to find Him. Are you listening? You're going to find Him right where you left Him.

About two or three weeks ago, Joyce and I—maybe a little longer than that now—had the joy of teaching the Bible on a Bible study cruise. We do that in January. You ought to come and go with us. We'd love to have you. We went on that Bible study cruise. We flew into Orlando, and took a bus over to Cape Canaveral to get on that ship. And we got on the ship, started to unpack, and I said, "Joyce, I left my suit bag. I must have left it there in the airport." She said, "Well, honey, what are we going to do?" I said, "Well, there is nothing we can do now. We're already on board, and the ship's going out. I'll just have to get along, and you'll just have to get used to seeing me and smelling me like I am, and that's just the way I'll be."

So on that whole cruise, when we got off on the shore, I bought a few things. But I said, "Well, I'll get my suit bag when I go back to Orlando." So I went to Orlando, and I went there to the Delta office. I said, "I left my suit bag here. Can I have it?" They looked, and they said, "Mister, we have no record of it." I said, "Well, I left it here." They said, "I'm sorry. We have no record whatsoever."

I said, "Oh boy, well, maybe I didn't put it on the plane when I left Memphis." So I went back to Memphis. I walked right in and told the man, I said, "Look, I lost a suit bag. You fellows, you know, you all mishandled it some way. You didn't get it on here," told him all about that. He said, "Well, Mr. Rogers, we'll sure look for it. Give us all that information." I thought, Oh boy, I just lost it all. Well, we went home, walked in the bedroom—there it was on the bed, right where I left it, hadn't moved an inch, exactly right where I left it. I'm blaming everybody else about how they mishandled my bags.

Now, my friend, I want to tell you something: You're going to find God right where you left Him, and nobody else you're going to blame. You can blame everybody else; you can blame circumstances and everything else. But you are going to find Him right where you left Him.

Abram went right back there where he was in the beginning. Look at it. It's so beautiful. And the Bible says, in verse 3, that he went "unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning"—"at the beginning." (Genesis 13:3) That's where God's going to bring you, friend.

C. Restoration

Now, listen. If there was ever a time that you loved God more than you love Him right now, to that degree, you're a backslider—you're a backslider. Not only repentance and remembrance but also restoration. Look in Genesis 13, verse 4, and look at it here: "unto the place of the altar." (Genesis 13:4) You know what the altar stands for? The Lord Jesus Christ. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7) Restoration: He'll restore you when your faith falters.

Conclusion Heads are bowed; eyes are closed. Father God, thank you so much for your Word today. Lord God, I just thank you that there is a cure for faltering faith. Lord God, help us that we'll forsake Egypt, and Lord, that we'll come clean out of Ur. Lord God, that we will obey you in spite of circumstances and in spite of consequences. Lord God, teach us. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Genesis 13:1-18 A String Of Bad Choices

As righteousness leads to life, so he who pursues evil pursues it to his own death. —Proverbs 11:19

The teenager expressed the view of many. Speaking of the wild parties he attended, the 16-year-old declared, "Without these parties, my life wouldn't have any purpose."

Attitudes like this result from a string of bad choices that multiply until life loses its meaning. Examples of this "bad-choice string" can be seen all around us.

Take the couple whose first bad choice is to be sexually active without being married. They soon follow that practice with other poor decisions that lead to spiritual, economic, and social problems. Or consider the business person who takes money from petty cash to line his pockets, only to follow that bad choice with many others just to cover it up.

In Genesis 13 we read about the bad decisions Lot made when he and Abram decided to part ways. Given the pick of the land, Lot chose the best ground for himself, and then settled near a city known for its wickedness. Genesis 20 records the tragic result of one bad choice that led to others.

Learn from Lot's mistake. If you have made a decision that violates God's principles, don't let one mistake turn into a string of bad choices. Stop right now and ask the Lord's forgiveness and help. — by Dave Branon (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

The grip of habit can be so strong,
You find it easy to choose the wrong;
But let God's Spirit control within,
And He will free you from binding sin.
—Kasper

True repentance rejects the wrong and returns to the right.

James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose -

The Restoration. "Abraham went up out of Egypt, and came unto the place of the altar which he had made at the first" (Ge 13:1-4). It has been said that "the man of God makes but a poor worldling." Abraham built no altar in Egypt. There is no fellowship with God while we walk by sight and not by faith. The only remedy for backsliding is to come again to the place of the altar, the Cross of Christ. This is the place of sacrifice, forgiveness communion, and consecration. There was no happiness nor restoration for the prodigal until he came back to the place from whence he had wandered away (Luke 15). "Ye have forsaken ME," saith the Lord. "Return unto ME, and I will heal your backslidings."

W H Griffith Thomas - The Restoration (Ge 13:1-4) [Genesis 12:10-13:4 The Testing \(If you are experiencing testing, read the Scriptures & the comment!\)](#) We can imagine Abraham's feelings as the caravan slowly wended its way out of Egypt, and as he came back to the land of Canaan. Note the phrase 'at the beginning' (Ge 13:3), and 'unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first' (Ge 13:4), and 'called on the name of the Lord' (Ge 13:4). We read of no such altar or prayer in Egypt. Abraham seems to have been out of communion there. Now, however, he does the only possible thing—he returns to where he had been at the commencement; he came back to the true surrender and simple worship of his earliest days in Canaan. Whenever we backslide

there is nothing else to do but to come back by the old gateway of genuine repentance and simple faith (Ps 23:3+; 1 John 1:9+).

A Believer's false step.—Abraham went aside out of the path of God's will; he was occupied with circumstances instead of with God. He only saw the famine, not the Divine faithfulness. 'He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool' (Pr 28:26). 'A crust with God is better than a feast without Him.'

2. A Believer's definite backsliding.—The possibilities of a true child of God wandering into sin and unfaithfulness are very clear from Scripture. This is one of the saddest and most mysterious facts of spiritual experience. In Abraham's case it manifested itself first in fear due to forgetfulness of God, then in selfishness, and lastly in hypocrisy and deceit. There is nothing more solemn than the well-known fact that through sin a believer can be out of touch with God for a long time. (See discussion of Backsliding)

3. A Believers sad experience.—One part of this was the knowledge that his wrongdoing had brought ill effects on others. Both Sarai and Pharaoh's house suffered through Abraham's sin. Another element in his bitter cup was the plain rebuke from the heathen Pharaoh. We have truly touched the depths of spiritual unfaithfulness when a believer has to be openly rebuked by the ungodly.

4. A Believer's only safeguard.—This preservative is twofold—trust and truth every moment.

Abraham was taught three lessons about God in relation to trust:

- (1) That God was essential to his every step, and that nothing can be done apart from Him (John 15:5+);
- (2) that God was able—notwithstanding the famine God could have provided for Abraham;
- (3) that God was faithful: He had not forgotten His promise to His servant (Ge 12:1-3+). Thus Abraham came back with a deepened idea of God and a louder call for simple, absolute, continual trust.

He was also taught the lesson of truth. The child of God is to be straightforward in all his attitude, and to go straight forward in all his actions. The end does not justify the means, whatever men may say. Even though our objects may be perfectly right, our means to attain those objects must be without blemish. This has special application to methods of Church work, ideas of social status, aspects of family life, and objects of personal ambition. Not only must the end we seek be true, the means we use must also be true.

Rod Mattoon - Outlines That Teach Genesis Chapter 13

1. The Return Back Home Ge 13:1 Abram leaves Egypt and heads homeward.
2. The Riches of Abram Ge 13:2 He had cattle, silver, and gold.
3. The Rededication of Abram Ge 13:3, 4 Abram returns to the place where he spiritually left the Lord and calls upon the Lord.
4. The Relative of Abram Ge 13:5 His nephew, Lot, had great wealth.
5. The Resentment in the Clan Ge 13:6, 7 The huge size of the flocks caused strife as they competed for water and grazing area.
6. The Reasoning of Abram Ge 13:8, 9 Abram provides a solution and suggests that they separate their families. He gives Lot first choice of the land he desires. Abram considered their love for one another more important than their investments.
7. The Resolution of Lot. Ge 13:10, 11 Lot chooses all the plain of Jordan for his home.
8. The Residence of Abram Ge 13:12 Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan.
9. The Reproach of the Men of Sodom Ge 13:13 The men of Sodom were wicked sinners before the Lord.
10. The Requirements for Blessing Ge 13:14-17 Lift up your eyes. Land was to be explored.
11. The Reverence for God Ge 13:18 Abram goes to Hebron and builds an altar unto the Lord. (Mattoon's Treasures from Genesis - [hardbound copies are scarce](#) - [here is the very affordable digital version](#) - this is an excellent resource for lay readers, Sunday School teachers, etc)

Oswald Chambers - Not Knowing Where - Unperplexed Genesis 13

Yea, this in him was the peculiar grace
(Hearten our chorus!)
That before living he'd learn how to live—
No end to learning:
Earn the means first—God surely will contrive
Use for our earning.
Others mistrust and say, "But time escapes:
Live now or never!"
He said, "What's time? Leave Now for dogs and apes!
Man has Forever."

. . . unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first. Genesis 13:4

When we come to study the lives of the saints, the confusing thing is that from one standpoint they are a jumble of inconsistencies, whilst from another standpoint they are an exhibition of the boundless consistency of God. This needs to be heeded, because if we study the life of a saint in order to find out what God is like, we shall finish up in the dumps and say—It is enough; whereas if we study God Himself, we shall find that He manifests His amazing consistency in the weakest and feeblest saint. At one time we find Abraham in a blank and sordid muddle; at another, we find him unperplexed and noble. The point is that God remains the same whether Abraham is unperplexed or muddled.

1. The Tryst of Sacramental Identification (Genesis 13:1-4)

Abraham went with God, and Lot “went with Abraham.” Lot went down to Egypt with Abraham, and came back with Abraham, and the abundance of their possessions nearly brought about strife. A life of faithfulness is devotion to a servant or handmaid of God; a life of faith is devotion to God. Lot continually went to pieces; Abraham never did.

The Way. We have to keep tryst with God in contact with the peculiar ways of everyone, and this can only be done by sacramental identification. The one thing Our Lord heeded was His tryst with God in connection with everyone, whether it was Judas or Peter or John; He took no account of the evil. We get huffed in no time—“No, they did not treat me rightly”;—they did not consider that I ought to have been considered.” Will I keep my tryst with God in contact with the blackguard or the traitor or the saint? Whoever it is, is nothing to do with me. I have not to fit other people into my ideas, but to keep tryst with God in relation to them. I am not to ignore them, but to refuse to look at them from my idea of what they ought to be, and to look at them only as facts in relation to my tryst with God.

The Wealth. Abraham came back exceedingly wealthy, but he kept tryst with God over his possessions. Beware of not keeping tryst with God over your possessions, whether they be material or not. It is perilously possible not to, but to make your spiritual life depend on the abundance of things you possess. If God has given you the wealth of Divine healing for your body, keep tryst with Him over it. When you are learning to trust God, He gives you at first certain things you lean on; then He withdraws, and you say it is the devil. No, it is the chastening of the Lord because He sees that you are possessing those things. You can only possess your possessions by being detached from them to God Who is the Source. If you are drawing your life from God and begin to take a wrong line, God will withdraw His life. This is also true with regard to money. We have only one Source, and that is God. One of the biggest snares is the idea that God is sure to lead us to success.

The Worship. All commentators notice one interesting point in Abraham’s life, viz. the times he erected an altar and the times he did not; whenever he neglected to erect an altar, he went astray. This fact is one of great significance because worship is the tryst of sacramental identification. In worship I deliberately give back to God the best He has given me that I may be identified with Him in it. If Abraham had erected an altar, he would not have gone down to Egypt, but would have identified himself with God over the famine in the land of promise. Selfishness in spiritual matters produces delusion rapidly. If in every case of blank astonishment, we go back to the place where we first built an altar to God, we will be delivered from the delusion of obtuse independent certainty. Worship is the sacramental element in the saint’s life.

2. The Test of Self Interest (Genesis 13:5-13)

As surely as we begin our life of faith with God, fascinating, luxurious and rich prospects will open to us, which are ours by right, but if we are living the life of faith we will exercise the right to waive our rights and give them away, letting God choose for us. It is the discipline of transforming the natural into the spiritual by obedience to God’s voice. In the life of faith God allows us to get into a place of testing where the consideration of our own welfare would be the right and proper thing if we were not living the life of faith; but if we are living the life of faith, we will heartily waive our own rights in favour of those whose right it is not, and leave God to choose for us. Whenever we make “right” our guidance, we blunt our spiritual insight. The greatest enemy of the life with God is not sin, but the good that is not good enough. It would seem the wisest thing in the world for Abraham to choose, it was his right, and the people round him would consider him a fool for not choosing. Many of us do not go on in our spiritual life because we prefer to choose what is our right instead of relying upon God to choose for us. We have to learn to walk according to the standard that has its eye on God.

The Tax of Riches (vv. 5-7). Abraham’s riches were in a great measure a tax to him. Every possession is tainted with a want; in this case the want was for sufficient pasturage. When Jesus Christ came He possessed nothing; the only symbol for our Lord is the symbol of poverty (Luke 9:58; 2 Corinthians 8:9) and this is true of the saint—“having nothing, and yet possessing all things.” Every possession produces an appetite that clings.

The Touch of Rectitude. Lot forgot the place of communion, he thought only of the world. But Abraham, unperplexed, instantly

exhibited forbearance as the result of his trust with God, he walked in the moral atmosphere of the Sermon on the Mount. Abraham's rectitude was not the rectitude of honour, but of holiness. This rectitude is exhibited in the life of Jesus Christ, of Whom it is recorded that He "pleased not Himself." This gives the deathblow to subjectivity, that is, to the subjective experiences based on what is pleasing to my holy self; of the holiest Being Who ever trod this earth it is recorded that He pleased not Himself.

The Tarnish of Reasonableness (vv. 10-13). Lot chose what he considered the best for his possessions. This is the tarnish of reasonableness of a mind that has neglected its trust with God.

3. The Type of Supreme Integrity (Genesis 13:14-18)

We must distinguish between the times when God revealed Himself to Abraham and the times when He concealed Himself. In the former, Abraham's faith is elevated; in the latter it sinks.

The Manifestation of God (v. 14). The first manifestation of God to Abraham was in his migration to Canaan; the first concealing when he went down to Egypt. Abraham did not have another manifestation of God until after his noble act of faith toward Lot.

The Message of God (vv. 15-16). The promises of God correspond to the acts and conduct of faith in Abraham. Only when Abraham acts in accordance with his real faith in God, does God speak to him. There is a connection throughout between the providence of God and the conduct of Abraham.

The Man of God (v. 18). Paul takes Abraham as a type of the life of faith, not as the type of a saint, but of a tried faith built on a real God. The sanctification of our faith, as distinct from the sanctification of our heart, is the unfathomable, supernatural blessing from God.

Genesis 13:2 Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver and in gold.

- Ge 24:35 26:12,13 De 8:18 1Sa 2:7 Job 1:3,10 22:21-25 Ps 112:1-3 Pr 3:9,10 10:22 Mt 6:33 1Ti 4:8
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Related Passages:

Genesis 12:5 Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan; thus they came to the land of Canaan.

Genesis 12:16 Therefore he treated Abram well for her sake; and gave him sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants and female donkeys and camels.

A PARENTHETICAL EXPLANATION

Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver and in gold - Moses adds this parenthetical statement to help us understand the subsequent strife which would arise with Lot, who also has a lot of livestock. Note how God has blessed Abram not only with livestock but precious metals. Abram's wealth was from his time in Haran (Ge 12:5) and was also from the Pharaoh's gifts in Ge 12:15-16.

THOUGHT - In the Old Testament obedience would often result in material blessing. In the New Testament obedience most significantly results in spiritual blessings. To be rich spiritually (cf Eph 1:3+) is far more precious than to be rich materially (cf Eph 3:20+). The former endures forever, while the latter only lasts a lifetime. May God's Spirit enable each of us to obey Jesus' command to "**seek** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." (Mt 6:33+)

Bob Utley - In the Ancient Near East there were several ways of accumulating and retaining wealth - precious metals, jewels, clothing, food stuffs, livestock

U. Cassuto sees a parallel with Ge 12:10 and the statement "Now Abram was very **RICH** [כָּבֵד kābhēd] in cattle, in silver, and in gold. The word כָּבֵד kābhēd [literally, 'heavy'] is in antithetic parallelism to what is narrated at the commencement of the section (Ge 12:10: for the famine was **SEVERE** [כָּבֵד kābhēd]): then Abram suffered because the famine was כָּבֵד kābhēd ['heavy', 'severe'] now he is very כָּבֵד kābhēd ['heavy', 'laden', 'rich'] with possessions. (BORROW [A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, Vol. 2](#))

Genesis 13:3 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,

- from: Ge 12:6,8,9
- Bethel and Ai: i.e., The place which was afterwards called Bethel by Jacob, and so called when Moses wrote; for its first name was Luz. (Ge 28:19.)
- Reciprocal: Genesis 13:1 - the south Genesis 35:1 - Bethel Leviticus 13:3 - deeper Hebrews 11:9 - dwelling
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Related Passage:

Genesis 28:19 He (JACOB) called the name of that place **Bethel**; however, previously the name of the **city had been Luz**.

Genesis 35:1 Then God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to **Bethel** and live there, and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau."

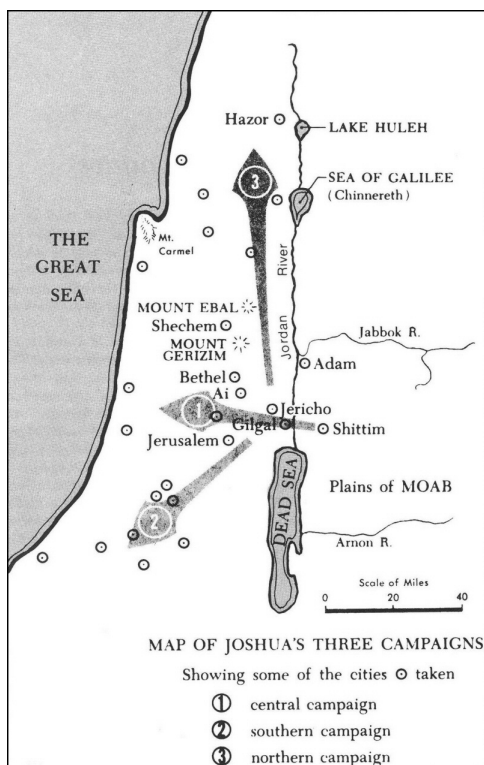
Judges 1:23 The house of Joseph spied out **Bethel** (now the name of the city was **formerly Luz**).

Hebrews 11:9+ By faith he (ABRAHAM) lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise;

ABRAM RETRACES STEPS TO NEGEV - Click to enlarge - Holman Bible Atlas ([digital book](#); [Hardcover](#))
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ABRAM'S JOURNEY TAKES HIM BACK TO BETHEL

He went on his journeys ([massa](#)) from the Negev ([negeb](#); Lxx = [eremos](#)) as far as [Bethel](#) ("house of God") - NLT = "Then they continued traveling by stages toward Bethel." The verb **journeys** ([massa](#) = pulling up, breaking up camp) describes Abram as picking up his tents and moving from camp to camp. Note that **Bethel** was originally called Luz, but here Moses uses the name **Bethel** which Jacob gave to Luz in Ge 28:19.



BETHEL AND AI
[Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission

To the place where his tent - Remember that Abram's **tent** was a picture of a man who was a pilgrim and a stranger, because "by faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in **tents**...for he was looking ([ekdechomai](#) picturesque progressive imperfect, his steady and patient waiting in spite of disappointment) for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God." (Heb 11:9,10+). He could have afforded a fortress but he was satisfied with a tent. Am I? Are you?

THOUGHT - Abraham's theme song was "[This World is Not My Home](#) (play - or play '[Not Home Yet](#)')." Is this your "theme song" dear disciple of Christ? Can you sing it with sincerity and [gusto](#)? If not, you need to learn the words, so that you too can live (and sing) like Abraham, as alien, as in a foreign land, for we are to be **IN** the world but not **OF** the world, beloved (Jn 17:14, 15, 16, cf Col 3:2-4+). I am a retired physician in my 70's and have 2 close physician friends also in their 70's who are retired and both are building new, expensive vacation homes far away from their hometown of Austin, Texas. One is a non-believer with whom I have shared Christ (but we have not seen the end of his story yet I pray), so this just might be the best home away from home he will ever experience. The other is a believer, perhaps a little like Lot, but a righteous man by faith (cf 2Pe 2:7+). Sadly, he is storing up for himself treasure on earth and not in heaven, for at age 77 he does not have that long to enjoy his new vacation home. I do not mean to be critical, but mention these two men to illustrate how tempting it is for all of us to store up for ourselves treasures on earth and forget that we are aliens and strangers (1Pe 1:1+, 1Pe 2:11+) who have the inestimably precious privilege of storing up for ourselves eternal treasure in heaven (Mt 6:20+, cf 1Pe 1:4-5+, 1Ti 4:8+). Where is your heart beloved? Is your treasure on earth or is it in heaven because that is the test? (see Mt 6:21+) Are you content with a "tent" now, knowing Jesus is preparing for you a "mansion" in heaven in the future (Jn 14:3+)? See also Vertical Vision.

To the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between [Bethel](#) and Ai - Back to the beginning is the best place to go when you have disobeyed God. This reminds me of Jesus' words to the church at Ephesus when He declared "But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 'Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.'" (Rev 2:4-5+) Abram remembered **Bethel** ("house of God") and returned and in the following passages did the deeds we would expect from a man of faith. Far from removing Abram's lampstand, God lit it brightly and blessed him mightily. Abram is revered by 3 world religions - Christianity, Judaism and Muslims.

THOUGHT - Dearly beloved saint, have you disobeyed God's good and acceptable and perfect will for your life and willfully made a costly "trip to Egypt" (so to speak) like Abram did in Genesis 12? Most of us have at one time or another. But we too like Abram can return to where we departed from the highway of holiness. John assures us that "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9+) Confess, repent (do a 180!), and return, for your Father is waiting to welcome you with open arms (cf prodigal - read Lk 15:20+) and will not turn you away.

Back to Bethel

William MacDonald add "Underlying Abram's return to Bethel ... from Egypt was a return to fellowship with God. "Back to Bethel" is the rallying cry for all who have wandered from the Lord." (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

Journeys (stages) ([04550](#)) [massa](#) from **nasa** = to pull out tent pegs, break camp) breaking camp, a pulling up, setting out, a journey. The main idea of *massa* is that of a group of people gathering up movable property (perhaps with the picture of pulling out tent stakes) and setting out for a new geographical location. This is a permanent move of the household and property, as opposed to travel in general. It can denote the seasonal cyclic travel of pastoral nomads or the movement of a more sedentary population.

Massa - 12x in 11v - journey(1), journeys(7), order of march(1), set(2), stages(1). Gen. 13:3; Ex 17:1; Ex 40:36; Ex. 40:38; Nu 10:2; Nu 10:6; Nu 10:12; Nu 10:28; Nu 33:1; Nu 33:2; Dt. 10:11

QUESTION - [What is the significance of Bethel in the Bible?](#)

ANSWER - Two towns named Bethel appear in the Bible. The Bethel of lesser significance, a village in the [Negev](#), is mentioned as one of the places where David sent spoils to his friends, the elders of Judah (1 Samuel 30:26–27). Another Bethel, a city of foremost importance in the Bible, was located about 11 miles north of Jerusalem near Ai. A major trading center, Bethel stood at a crossroads, with its north-south road passing through the central hill country from Hebron in the south to Shechem in the north, and its main east-west route leading from Jericho to the Mediterranean Sea. Only Jerusalem is mentioned more frequently than Bethel in the Old Testament.

The Hebrew name *Bethel* means "house of God" and refers to both the city and the site of a major sanctuary that was established

there for the northern kingdom of Israel. Bethel sat at the boundary between the tribes of Ephraim and Benjamin and eventually delineated the border between the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Although Bethel was in the dry hill country, several natural springs supplied water in abundance for its residents.

Bethel is first mentioned in the Bible in connection with [Abram](#), who built an altar to God there:

“From there [Abram] went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD” (Genesis 12:8).

After visiting Egypt, Abraham returned to Bethel and offered a sacrifice to God (Genesis 13:3–4).

Originally named **Luz** (Genesis 28:19; Judges 1:23), the city was renamed Bethel by [Jacob](#) after the patriarch experienced a remarkable dream there. While traveling from [Beersheba](#) to Haran to escape his brother Esau, Jacob stopped for the night in Luz. As he slept, he dreamed of a [stairway or ladder](#) that stretched up from earth to heaven. The angels of God were climbing up and down the ladder as God stood at the top (Genesis 28:10–13). The Lord spoke and revealed Himself to Jacob as the God of his fathers. When Jacob awoke, he declared, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven” (Genesis 28:17). Then Jacob set up a sacred pillar, named the place Bethel (Ge 28:18–19), and consecrated the site as a place to worship God (Ge 28:21).

Many years later, Jacob returned to Bethel, built an altar to God there, and called the place El-Bethel, which means “God of Bethel.” Bethel remained one of the main worship centers of Israel. The ark of the covenant was kept at Bethel for a time, and the people often went there to seek God during times of trouble (Judges 20:18–28). The Bible says Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse, was buried under an oak tree near Bethel (Genesis 35:8), and the better-known [Deborah](#), judge of Israel, held court at a site between [Ramah](#) and Bethel (Judges 4:5). During the time of the divided kingdoms, [King Jeroboam](#) of Israel established two temples for the northern kingdom, one at Bethel and the other at Dan. In these temples, he set up golden calves (1 Kings 12:26–33). God often sent prophets to preach at Bethel (1 Kings 13:1–10). Many of these prophets pronounced judgment and condemnation on Bethel as a center of idolatry (Amos 3:14; 5:5–6; Hosea 10:15).

On Elijah’s last day of ministry on earth, [he and Elisha](#) encountered a company of prophets at Bethel. These prophets confirmed Elijah’s soon departure: “Elijah said to Elisha, ‘Stay here; the LORD has sent me to Bethel.’ But Elisha said, ‘As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you.’ So they went down to Bethel. The company of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha and asked, ‘Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?’ ‘Yes, I know,’ Elisha replied, ‘so be quiet!’” (2 Kings 2:2–3). Elisha refused to leave Elijah. He was fiercely committed to assuming the older prophet’s mantle and did not want to miss out on the opportunity.

After the northern kingdom of Israel fell to the [Assyrians](#), Bethel remained a home for priests (2 Kings 17:28–41). In the seventh century BC, the high places of Bethel were destroyed by [King Josiah](#) of Judah as part of his religious reforms (2 Kings 23:4, 13–19). Eventually, by the time of Ezra, the city of Bethel had been burned down and reduced to a small village (Ezra 2:28). Bethel is not referred to in the New Testament. [GotQuestions.org](#)

Genesis 13:4 to the place of the altar which he had made there formerly; and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

- **to:** Ge 13:18 Ge 12:7-8 Ge 35:1-3 Ps 26:8 42:1,2 84:1,2,10
- **called:** Genesis 4:26, Psalm 65:1, Psalm 65:2, Psalm 107:1, Psalm 107:8, Psalm 107:15, Psalm 116:2, Psalm 116:17, Psalm 145:18, Isaiah 58:9, Jeremiah 29:12, Zephaniah 3:9, 1 Corinthians 1:2, Ephesians 6:18, Ephesians 6:19
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Related Passages:

Genesis 4:26+ To Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. **Then men began to call upon the name of the LORD.**

Genesis 12:7-8 The LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your descendants I will give this land.” So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him 8 Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD.

Genesis 21:33 Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba, and there **he called on the name of the LORD, El Olam: Everlasting God**

Genesis 26:25 So he built an altar there and **called upon the name of the LORD**, and pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well.



ABRAM CALLED ON THE NAME OF JEHOVAH

To the place of the altar which he had made there formerly- This **altar** refers back to Genesis 12:7-8+ when "The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him. Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and **there he built an altar to the LORD** and called upon the name of the LORD." Abram has put the sin of Egypt behind him and is seeking a fresh start.

THOUGHT - Beloved, Abram's pattern is a great pattern to imitate (read Heb 6:12). We all need a "fresh start" from time to time. God grant each of us the attitude of Paul who wrote "Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: **forgetting what lies behind** and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Php 3:13-14+) Dear Father, please grant us the empowerment we must have from the Holy Spirit so that we are enabled to press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. In His Mighty Name. Amen.

And there Abram called on the Name of the LORD([Jehovah/ Yahweh](#); Lxx = [kurios](#)) - NLT = "there he again worshiped the LORD." **The Name** speaks of all the attributes of God, everything God is, everything that characterizes Him as the Self-existent "I Am."

Wenham - "**To call on the name of the LORD**" is used elsewhere in Genesis of the patriarchs Ge 12:8; Ge 13:4; Ge 21:33; Ge 26:25, and it seems to be an umbrella phrase for worship, most obviously prayer and sacrifice. (BORROW [Genesis Commentary](#))

R Kent Hughes writes that "Abram worshiped at Bethel's altar. Here again he would offer whole burnt offerings like those of Noah (cf. Ge 8:20), declaring, as the smoke rose upward, that all of his life was God's. It is very important that we take careful notice that the account will end with Abram's building a third altar at Hebron (Ge 13:18), so that the whole story here is clothed in authentic worship. All of Abram's dealings with Lot were an act of worship. Abram's knee remained bent to God. By faith he saw the unseen and acted accordingly. He believed God's word." (BORROW [Genesis: Beginning and Blessing](#) page 198)

LORD ([03068](#)) [Jehovah/ Yahweh](#) The Tetragrammaton YHWH, the Lord, or Yahweh is the personal name of God and the most frequent designation of God in Scripture, occurring 6823 times in the OT. **Jehovah** is God's redemptive, covenant-keeping name, called *the Name* (Lev 24:11,16) and "this glorious and awesome name" (Dt. 28:58). In seven passages the name is particularly stressed (Ex 6:3; Ps 83:18; Isa 12:2; Isa 26:4) or combined with other elements, such as Jehovah Jireh [Genesis 22:14; cf. Exodus 17:15; Judges 6:24; ASV, consistently Jehovah]). To Moses, God revealed the meaning of His personal name "**Yahweh**" by connecting it with the Hebrew phrase *ehyeh*, usually translated "I am," though it is better translated "I will be." In Exodus 3:12 God said, "I will be (*ehyeh*) with you." Then in verse 14 God went on to say, *Ehyeh asher ehyeh*, which can be translated "I am who I am," or, "I will be what I will be." However, *ehyeh* is a Hebrew imperfect which indicates action going on. Thus, it has the meaning: "I will show you who and what I am by who and what I will be to you, for I will be with you." The frequent appearance of this name in relation to God's redemptive work underscores its tremendous importance (Lev. 26:45; Ps. 19:14). Also, it is sometimes compounded with another word to describe the character of the Lord in greater detail (see Gen. 22:14; Ex. 17:15; Jdg. 6:24).

Jehovah/Yahweh in Genesis - Gen. 2:4; Gen. 2:5; Gen. 2:7; Gen. 2:8; Gen. 2:9; Gen. 2:15; Gen. 2:16; Gen. 2:18; Gen. 2:19; Gen. 2:21; Gen. 2:22; Gen. 3:1; Gen. 3:8; Gen. 3:9; Gen. 3:13; Gen. 3:14; Gen. 3:21; Gen. 3:22; Gen. 3:23; Gen. 4:1; Gen. 4:3; Gen. 4:4; Gen. 4:6; Gen. 4:9; Gen. 4:13; Gen. 4:15; Gen. 4:16; Gen.

4:26; Gen. 5:29; Gen. 6:3; Gen. 6:5; Gen. 6:6; Gen. 6:7; Gen. 6:8; Gen. 7:1; Gen. 7:5; Gen. 7:16; Gen. 8:20; Gen. 8:21; Gen. 9:26; Gen. 10:9; Gen. 11:5; Gen. 11:6; Gen. 11:8; Gen. 11:9; Gen. 12:1; Gen. 12:4; Gen. 12:7; Gen. 12:8; Gen. 12:17; Gen. 13:4; Gen. 13:10; Gen. 13:13; Gen. 13:14; Gen. 13:18; Gen. 14:22; Gen. 15:1; Gen. 15:2; Gen. 15:4; Gen. 15:6; Gen. 15:7; Gen. 15:8; Gen. 15:18; Gen. 16:2; Gen. 16:5; Gen. 16:7; Gen. 16:9; Gen. 16:10; Gen. 16:11; Gen. 16:13; Gen. 17:1; Gen. 18:1; Gen. 18:13; Gen. 18:14; Gen. 18:17; Gen. 18:19; Gen. 18:20; Gen. 18:22; Gen. 18:26; Gen. 18:33; Gen. 19:13; Gen. 19:14; Gen. 19:16; Gen. 19:24; Gen. 19:27; Gen. 20:18; Gen. 21:1; Gen. 21:33; Gen. 22:11; Gen. 22:14; Gen. 22:15; Gen. 22:16; Gen. 24:1; Gen. 24:3; Gen. 24:7; Gen. 24:12; Gen. 24:21; Gen. 24:26; Gen. 24:27; Gen. 24:31; Gen. 24:35; Gen. 24:40; Gen. 24:42; Gen. 24:44; Gen. 24:48; Gen. 24:50; Gen. 24:51; Gen. 24:52; Gen. 24:56; Gen. 25:21; Gen. 25:22; Gen. 25:23; Gen. 26:2; Gen. 26:12; Gen. 26:22; Gen. 26:24; Gen. 26:25; Gen. 26:28; Gen. 26:29; Gen. 27:7; Gen. 27:20; Gen. 27:27; Gen. 28:13; Gen. 28:16; Gen. 28:21; Gen. 29:31; Gen. 29:32; Gen. 29:33; Gen. 29:35; Gen. 30:24; Gen. 30:27; Gen. 30:30; Gen. 31:3; Gen. 31:49; Gen. 32:9; Gen. 38:7; Gen. 38:10; Gen. 39:2; Gen. 39:3; Gen. 39:5; Gen. 39:21; Gen. 39:23; Gen. 49:18

CALL ON THE NAME - This phrase implies participation in a worship setting (cf. Gen. 4:26; 12:8; 21:33; 26:25; Exod. 34:5; Isa. 12:4; Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21; 7:59; 22:16; Rom. 10:9-13; also note Ps. 50:15; Isa. 55:6; Jer. 33:3). The **name** would represent His person, His character! By calling on Him we acknowledge our need for Him and our desire to be like Him and pleasing to Him. This phrase denotes a desire for fellowship (cf. Isa. 43:1; 45:3,4)!

The NIDOTTE, vol. 4, p. 150, has a good list related to YHWH's name.

1. 1. it can be praised, Joel 2:26
2. 2. it can be loved, Ps. 5:11
3. 3. it can be declared, Ps. 22:22
4. 4. it can be feared, Mal. 4:2
5. 5. it can be waited on, Ps. 52:9
6. 6. it can be proclaimed, Isa. 12:4
7. 7. it can be walked on, Mic. 4:5
8. 8. it can be blasphemed, Isa. 52:5
9. 9. it can be polluted, Jer. 34:16
10. 10. it can be profaned, Ezek. 36:21-23

God's people can reflect Him positively or negatively, but we do reflect Him (cf. Matt. 5:13-16)!

Genesis 13:5 Now Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents.

- tents: Ge 4:20 25:27 Jer 49:29
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

MOSES NOTE ON LOT'S LOT

Now - This is a time phrase. In this context we do well to see that it immediately follows Abram worshipping the LORD. This mindset prepared Abram for his next "test." He had failed the "famine test" but watch how he does with the "Lot test" after worshipping the LORD!

THOUGHT - Is there not a great pattern to seek to pursue (Rhetorical of course)? Abram is about to face another test, but his heart has been prepared and prepped by worship, by focusing on the things above and not the things of the earth (Col 3:1,2+). So how do we imitate his pattern? Do we go in our backyard and build an altar? Of course not, we simply crawl out of our comfortable bed, get on our knees and offer to Him the sacrifice of praise He is due. That's the the uplook that then (at least potentially) will guide our outlook for the remainder of the day. How's your quiet time? Is it "too quiet?" See related resources - [QUIET TIME](#) or longer version [Quiet Time: 7 Minutes With God](#)

Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents - NLT = "Lot, who was traveling with Abram, had also become very wealthy with flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, and many tents." Moses gives another parenthetical note similar to Ge

13:2, which sets the scene for the strife that arises in the following passages. Notice what Lot does not have -- an altar! As a consequence, he did not espouse God's best, but as we soon see, he was looking at what he thought was the "world's best" toward Sodom!

[Wiersbe](#) has an interesting analysis of Lot's mindset - Lot had a tent but no altar (Gen. 13:5), which meant he did not call on the Lord for wisdom in making decisions (James 1:5). Instead of lifting up his eyes to heaven, Lot lifted up his eyes to the plain of Jordan (Gen. 13:10) and stopped there. The eyes see what the heart loves. Abraham had taken Lot out of Egypt, but he could not take Egypt out of Lot. Outlook helps to determine outcome. Abraham's eyes were on the Holy City of God (Heb. 11:13–16), and he went on to walk with the Lord and inherit blessing. Lot's eyes were on the sinful cities of men, and he went on to worldly success, spiritual failure, and a shameful end.

W H Griffith Thomas - A Serious Problem (Ge 13:5, 6). [Genesis 13:5-18 The Separation](#) —Abraham and Lot were rich. The accessions which came to them in Egypt had increased their flocks and herds. This is the first instance of riches in the Bible (Ge 13:2), and we also have here the interesting problem of wealth connected with the believer's life. What is the teaching of Scripture about wealth as possessed by a child of God? A careful study of the entire Bible seems to show that there is no sin in being wealthy provided the riches have been honourably obtained, are regarded as belonging to God, and are being constantly used as in the sight of God. At the same time, wealth very seriously increases the responsibility of a believer, and his riches will soon become a sin if they are not used properly and with a sense of stewardship, not of ownership. Another experience of human life is seen in this story—the danger of quarrels between relatives on account of wealth. How often this deplorable fact has been experienced since Abraham's day! The possession of such flocks and herds prevented the uncle and nephew from continuing to dwell together. The need of increasing pasturage, together with the need of water, must have been very acute, and the problem was intensified by the presence of the Canaanites with their pastoral requirements.

James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - ABRAHAM, THE SEPARATED ONE Genesis 13:5–18

Abraham and Lot are types of two classes of Christians. Lot was a righteous man, but, living by sight and sense, he sought only his own pleasure and profit. He is the type of an unconsecrated Christian. Abraham lives by faith on the promise of God. He may fail, but not like Lot, who never could do anything to help Abraham. Lot builded no altar. The unconsecrated life can live without worship. The well-watered plains have more attraction for the worldly believer. The "higher Christian life" just means higher motives in living.

I. The Impossible Relationship.

"The land was not able to bear them" (Ge 13:6). The conditions of the country would not permit of Abram and Lot dwelling together. Even the Land of Promise is not able to sustain such an unequal yoke as the life of faith in God and the life of sense and worldly wisdom. This is a strife that often takes place in the heart of the believer, a conflict between the fleshly life and the spiritual. As long as the strife goes on the Land of Promise seems to yield no blessing (see Rom. 7). Worldly Christians, like Lot, set no value on the promises of God.

II. The Generosity of Faith.

"Abram said to Lot, The whole land is before thee; separate thyself" (Ge 13:8,9). The friend of God can easily afford to let others have the first choice. Either hand will do for the man of God. The servant of God must not strive. We can show our trust in God by standing back from the strife of tongues, and by allowing others to occupy the chief seats. Let us stand up for God, and God will stand up for our rights. All our rights are in Him.

III. The Selfishness of the Worldly-Minded.

"Lot lifted up his eyes" (Ge 13:10–13). He looked for the best, and chose it, and never said "Thank you." He separated himself from the man of faith with a light heart. Worldly Christians do not set much value on the fellowship of a holy man. His mind was set on earthly prosperity, not on heavenly things. How much did he gam by it? He pitched his tent (no altar) toward Sodom, and was burned out of it himself, saved as by fire.

IV. The Privilege of the Separated.

"The Lord said unto Abram, after Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes" (Ge 13:14). After the separation comes the message of comfort, "Come out from among them, ... and I will receive you" (2 Cor. 6:17). Greed and covetousness constrained Lot to lift up his eyes. Abram lifted up his eyes at the invitation of the Lord. Herein lies the great distinction between the worldly Christian and the faithful one. The one is moved by self-interest, the other by the Word of God. "Looking up" is the abiding attitude of every separated one. Lot goes leaning on his own understanding. Abram goes leaning on the promise of God (see Gal. 2:20).

V. The Altar of Testimony.

"Abram came to the plain of Mamre and built there an altar unto the Lord" (Ge 13:18). Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom; Abram pitched his toward God. The self-seeking Christian bears no testimony for God. When he does attempt it, it looks like mockery (Gen. 19:14). The just shall live by faith. Live to the will of God (1 Peter 4:1, 2).

Genesis 13:6 And the land could not sustain them while dwelling together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together.

- Ge 36:6,7 Ec 5:10,11 Lu 12:17,18 1Ti 6:9
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

ABRAM AND LOT RUN OUT OF ROOM

And the land could not sustain them while dwelling together ("living side by side"), **for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together** - There is simply not a lot of room for Lot's possessions and Abram's possessions. Who would have caused them both to be so blessed? That's rhetorical of course, for clearly God had blessed both of them. It would seem that God's goal was to produce a situation in which Abram had to separate from Lot which is of course what transpired.

Bob Utley on **the land could not sustain them** - The land in southern Canaan did not get enough annual rainfall to allow the native grasses to flourish. It took many acres to support a flock. Usually April through September was wet enough for grasses to grow, but in October through March the herds had to be moved to higher pastures.

John Phillips - Some number of years ago my father was greatly exercised about selling his business and going into full-time service for the Lord. There were some worrying circumstances connected with the proposed change. He asked Stephen Olford for advice. Having listened to the story and weighed the issues, Stephen said: "Len, my advice is simply this—if you don't know what to do, don't do it!" Abram, confronted with worrying circumstances, circumstances that seemed to be clamoring for immediate action, simply waited. He was assured that God would soon make his way clear. So, he did nothing. (BORROW [Exploring Genesis](#))

Genesis 13:7 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.

- a strife: Ge 21:25 26:20 Ex 2:17 1Co 3:3 Ga 5:20 Tit 3:3 Jas 3:16 4:1
- Canaanite: Ge 10:19 12:6 15:18-21 34:30 Ne 5:9 Php 2:14,15 Col 4:5 1Th 4:12 1Pe 2:12
- dwelled: i.e., They were there when Abram and Lot came to pitch their tents in the land.
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

STRIFE BETWEEN ABRAM AND LOT'S MEN

And there was strife ([riyb](#)) **between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock** - Strife is translated in the [Lxx](#) with [mache](#) which can refer to physical combat but in the present context probably is more figuratively, describing "word battles!"

Now the Canaanite and the Perizzite were dwelling then in the land - Here is another parenthetical statement by Moses. Why would the Spirit inspire this fact in the present context? Clearly these pagan groups had possessions (including flocks), so that would add even more stress to the competition for the land. Another point to make is that these were pagans watching the strife between believers! What kind of witness did these pagans receive? That's rhetorical of course.

THOUGHT - Beloved, are you currently experiencing strife with a brother or sister in the Lord? Are the pagans aware of it and watching how you handle the strife? You can rest assured if they know about it, they are watching you like a hawk! They are often looking for any chink in your spiritual armor so that they can be critical of Christianity! What kind of impression will you leave with the watching lost souls who desperately need Jesus Christ to save them from eternal "strife" (so to speak) in hell? Paul gives us our *modus operandi* to practice before the watching world in this "simple" command "**Do** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) all things without grumbling or disputing; so that (TERM OF PURPOSE) you will

prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,." (Php 2:14-15+) In context, obeying this command to "do all (not some) things" is one way we obey the command to "Work out ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) your salvation in fear and trembling." (Php 2:12+). Fortunately, Paul follows that command with a "term of explanation" **for** (explaining how it is **even possible** to continually work out our salvation! The answer is by depending continually on the Holy Spirit, Paul explaining "**FOR** God (His Spirit) is (continually) working in you, (continually) giving you the **desire** to obey Him and the **power** to do what pleases Him." (Php 2:13NLT+). There is simply no other way to "Do all things without grumbling or **disputing** (which is what was at play with the men of Abram and Lot)!"

[Wiersbe](#) adds "When Christians have disputes, it hurts the testimony of the Lord. In my pastoral ministry, I frequently visited the unsaved relatives and friends of church members, seeking to interest them in spiritual things, only to discover that they knew about every "church fight" in town. No wonder our Lord prayed that His people might be one, that the world might believe (John 17:20–23). Christian unity is fragrant and fruitful (Ps. 133), but disunity turns that fragrance into a stench and the garden into a desert."

NET NOTE on **the Canaanite and the Perizzite were dwelling** - This parenthetical clause, introduced with the vav (ו) disjunctive (translated "now"), again provides critical information. It tells in part why the land cannot sustain these two bedouins, and it also hints of the danger of weakening the family by inner strife.

[Warren Wiersbe](#) - Abraham may have failed the first two tests, but he passed this third test with great success. The test was not an easy one, for it involved land and wealth, but Abraham is the example of what every believer should do when there are disputes about material things. Abraham determined to be a peacemaker and not a troublemaker. The problem between Abraham and Lot was not caused by the land, the famine, their wealth (both of them were rich), or even their herdsmen (Ge 13:7). The heart of every problem is the problem in the heart. Lot's heart was centered on wealth and worldly achievement, while Abraham wanted only to please the Lord. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3).

W H Griffith Thomas - A Deplorable Strife (Ge 13:7) [Genesis 13:5-18 The Separation](#) —The quarrel originated with the servants, and was limited to them. Doubtless each herdman endeavoured to gain the best locality for his own flocks.

Very significantly we read that 'The Canaanite and Perizzite dwelled then in the land.' This statement suggests not only the circumstance that accentuated the difficulty of obtaining pasturage, but also the fact that the heathen around must have seen and overheard this quarrel between the servants of God's children. Herein lay one of the saddest elements of the matter.

Strife ([07379](#) [riyb](#) from [riyb](#) = to strive or contend) is a masculine noun which means a strife, contention or dispute and in other contexts refers to lawsuits. When [riyb/rib](#) is used with in the context of a legal-judicial setting, usually with God as subject (the "Attorney"). [Riyb](#) is used of conflicts among men (Ge 13:7, Dt 19:17, 21:5, 25:1, Pr 20:3). David uses it of attacks directed at him Ps 55:9).

Riyb - 61 verses - Gen. 13:7; Exod. 17:7; Exod. 23:2; Exod. 23:3; Exod. 23:6; Deut. 1:12; Deut. 17:8; Deut. 19:17; Deut. 21:5; Deut. 25:1; Jdg. 12:2; 1 Sam. 24:15; 1 Sam. 25:39; 2 Sam. 15:2; 2 Sam. 15:4; 2 Sam. 22:44; 2 Chr. 19:8; 2 Chr. 19:10; Job 13:6; Job 29:16; Job 31:13; Job 31:35; Job 33:19; Ps. 18:43; Ps. 31:20; Ps. 35:23; Ps. 43:1; Ps. 55:9; Ps. 74:22; Ps. 119:154; Prov. 15:18; Prov. 17:1; Prov. 17:14; Prov. 18:6; Prov. 18:17; Prov. 20:3; Prov. 22:23; Prov. 23:11; Prov. 25:9; Prov. 26:17; Prov. 26:21; Prov. 30:33; Isa. 1:23; Isa. 34:8; Isa. 41:11; Isa. 41:21; Isa. 58:4; Jer. 11:20; Jer. 15:10; Jer. 20:12; Jer. 25:31; Jer. 50:34; Jer. 51:36; Lam. 3:36; Lam. 3:58; Ezek. 44:24; Hos. 4:1; Hos. 12:2; Mic. 6:2; Mic. 7:9; Hab. 1:3

Genesis 13:8 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.

- **Let:** Pr 15:1 Mt 5:9 1Co 6:6,7 Php 2:14 Heb 12:14 Jas 3:17,18
- **brethren:** Ge 11:27-31 45:24 Ex 2:13 Ps 133:1 Ac 7:26 Ro 12:10 Eph 4:2,3 1Th 4:9 Heb 13:1 1Pe 1:22 2:17 3:8 4:8 2Pe 1:7 1Jn 2:9-11 1Jn 3:14-19 4:7,20,21
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Related Passages:

Proverbs 15:1+ A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.

ABRAM THE PEACEMAKER

So - A term of conclusion. Based on the eruption of strife between their herdsmen due to the size of the flocks of Abram and Lot, Abram intervenes.

Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife([meribah](#); Lxx - [mache](#) - fighting, quarrels, disputes)(Qal [JUSSIVE](#) ~ like a command) **between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen** - Abram pursues peace which reminds me of Hebrews 12:14 "**Pursue** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) peace with all men, and the sanctification (**HOLINESS**) without which no one will see the Lord."

For - Term of explanation. Abram is explaining why there should be no strife and instead pursue peace. As Jesus said "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." (Mt 5:9+) Indeed, Abram was a "son of God!"

We are brothers - **NET** renders it "we are close relatives," for Abram was Lot's uncle. But even more important, they were spiritual brothers. Spiritual brothers should be united in oneness because they worship the same LORD.

THOUGHT - Are you currently at strife with a spiritual brother? Then follow the pattern of Abram, and enabled by the Holy Spirit, be willing to lay down your rights for the greater good of the greatest God!

W H Griffith Thomas - A Generous Proposal (Ge 13:8, 9). [Genesis 13:5-18 The Separation](#) —Abraham takes the initiative, and begs that there shall be no strife. The quarrel might easily rise above the servants to the masters, and Abraham speaks in time to prevent this, urging as the great reason, 'We are brethren.' Notice his large-hearted suggestion. Although he is older than Lot and chief of the tribe or clan, and although the land had been promised by God to him, he allows his nephew the first choice. 'The servant of God must not strive' (2 Tim. 2:24). How beautifully Abraham had recovered from his fall in Egypt! While there he had learned the great lesson that no one needs to descend to deceit in order to obtain his 160 desires. The true child of God can afford to be magnanimous, simply because he is a child of God.

Strife ([04808](#))([meribah](#) from [rib](#) = to strive) feminine noun indicating strife, contention. It is used of a state of quarreling or wrangling over something, a condition of hostility (Gen. 13:8; Num. 27:14). [The name Meribah](#) means striving, strife (Num. 27:14; Ps. 95:8; 106:32; Ezek. 47:19; 48:28). This word [meribah](#) is found only in Ge 13:8 and Nu 27:14.

H A Ironside - Gen. 13:8, 9.

Abraham could afford to be generous with his earthly-minded nephew because his heart was set on that "city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). Toward this he looked, and all earthly inheritance or temporal possessions seemed very insignificant in comparison with it.

Only as we see a better world above our heads, can we put this world beneath our feet. It was this which enabled Abraham to preserve the pilgrim character to the end and so to relinquish to Lot that which the younger man desired. Nothing so frees the soul from the bondage of covetousness as the knowledge of God and the appreciation of what He has prepared for those who love Him (1 Cor. 2:9). Abraham had a very real understanding of eternal verities and values, and so could appraise aright the passing things of time and sense.

" 'Tis the treasure I've found in His love
That has made me a pilgrim below;
And 'tis there, when I reach Him above,
As I'm known, all His fulness I'll know.

And Saviour, 'tis Thee from on high
I await till the time Thou shalt come
To take him Thou hast led by Thine eye,
To Thyself in Thy heavenly Home."—J. N. Darby.

EVEN AS THE GARDEN OF THE LORD - John Bennett - Genesis 1-13

Many see this first day of the year as a time for decision and choice, an appropriate occasion for a fresh start with new objectives for life. It was not the New Year in Genesis 13, but for Lot, decision day had arrived. The combined flocks of Abraham and Lot overstretched the available pasture, v. 6, and this shortfall led to strife among the workforce. The discord threatened to sour the

relationship between uncle and nephew, v. 8. Something had to be done, and Abraham took the initiative. Although he was the older man, and clearly the senior partner, he allowed Lot to stake out his territory, v. 9. He would have the leftovers. What a lesson in what Paul calls 'moderation' (yieldingness, reasonableness, forbearance), Phil. 4:5. His outlook is in sharp contrast to the aggressive grasping attitude of those who 'look on (their) own things', Phil. 2:4.

What kind of considerations influenced Lot? The plain of Jordan had much to commend it. It was well irrigated and, in this respect, it resembled the garden of the Lord with its river that parted into four heads, Gen. 2:10. Approximately two thousand years had passed since Adam and Eve had been expelled from that delightful environment, and yet evidently they had conveyed to posterity details of the beauty and bounty of Eden. 'The garden of the Lord'! It conjures up thoughts of tranquility and prosperity. Everything about Eden was aesthetically perfect, Gen. 2:9. Lot had a strong religious reason for turning eastward! And yet there were danger signals. It was also like the land of Egypt, v. 10. With his uncle he had recently visited Egypt, an expedition that had been a spiritual disaster for Abraham. It seems as if there was something about Egypt that appealed to Lot, and now he craves that kind of environment. The proximity to Sodom should have been a deterrent, for 'the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly', v. 13. Lot made a wretched choice; trying to save his life, he lost it. After a promising start there, he lost his wife, he lost his possessions and he lost his integrity. When choosing, be like Moses rather than Lot; 'he had respect unto the recompense of the reward', Heb. 11:26.

Genesis 13:9 "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."**

- **Is not:** Ge 20:15 Ge 34:10
- **if** Ps 120:7 Ro 12:18 1Co 6:7 Heb 12:14 Jas 3:13-18 1Pe 3:8-12
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Related Passages:

Hebrews 12:14+ (ABRAHAM OBEYED THIS NT PRINCIPLE) **Pursue** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.

Romans 12:18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

ABRAM PROPOSES A SEPARATION FROM LOT

Is not the whole land before you? Please **separate (a command) 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."** - Recall that Abram had just recently bowed in worship at the altar, which is another way of saying he surrendered himself to the Lord. In such a mindset, Abram was now prepared to lay down his rights to a weaker brother! What a pattern to imitate! (cf 1Co 11:1+, see [Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#))

Abram's proposal is that they would partition the land, but Lot's eyes began to wander (Ge 13:10)! Abram could have justifiably said "The first call is mine." But he practiced Ro 12:10+ and deferred in a spirit of humility and conciliation. And so this righteous man allowed his nephew to decide which area of land he wished to shepherd his flocks.

*It takes more grace than I can tell,
to play the second fiddle well.*

-- C H Spurgeon

THOUGHT - Abram as the elder had rights but did not insist on them. Do you insist on your rights or do you chose do you take the Jesus approach and "Instead of being motivated by selfish ambition or vanity, each of you should, in humility, be moved to treat one another as more important than yourself." (Php 2:3NET+) The only way you can accomplish this is by [depending on the Holy Spirit!](#)

[Wiersbe](#) speaks to this point writing "In his latter years, General William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, was too infirm to attend the Army's world conference, but he would send the delegates a message. One year he cabled them only one word: OTHERS. I have been privileged to minister with the Salvation Army in different parts of the world, and I can testify that they take that word OTHERS very seriously. "Each of you should look

not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil. 2:4+).

Wiersbe - While in Egypt, Abraham thought first about himself (Gen. 12:12–13), but when he returned to his altar in Canaan, he put God first and others next....When God is first in your life, it makes no difference who is second or last.

Constable - when Abram offered Lot what was on his left he was referring to northern Canaan, the area around Shechem (cf. 12:6; 33:18-34:31; 37:12-17) as far south as Bethel and Ai. The other choice was what was on their right: southern Canaan including Hebron and the Negev (cf. 13:6, 9; 13:1, 18; 20:1; et al.). Both men had previously lived in both regions.

ILLUSTRATION OF STRIFE - Two Christian ladies had to share the same office. One always wanted the window open; the other wanted it closed. "I feel I am going to suffocate in here!" said the one. "I'm going to catch my death of cold!" retorted the other. Someone came up with a suggestion. "Why don't you keep the window closed until one of you dies of suffocation and then keep it open until the other dies of pneumonia," he said. "Then we'll have some peace around here!"

C H McIntosh - The man of faith can easily afford to allow the man of sight to take his choice. He can say, "If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou wilt depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." What beautiful disinterestedness and moral elevation we have here! and yet what security! It is certain that let nature range where it will, let it take its most comprehensive grasp, its boldest and highest flight there is never the slightest danger of its laying its hand upon faith's treasure. It will seek its portion in quite an opposite direction. Faith lays up its treasure in a place which nature would never dream of examining, and, as to its approaching thereto, it could not if it would; and it would not if it could. Hence, therefore, faith is perfectly safe, as well as beautifully disinterested, in allowing nature to take its choice.

Oswald Chambers - The test of self-interest

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. Genesis 13:9.

As soon as you begin to live the life of faith in God, fascinating and luxurious prospects will open up before you, and these things are yours by right; but if you are living the life of faith you will exercise your right to waive your rights, and let God choose for you. God sometimes allows you to get into a place of testing where your own welfare would be the right and proper thing to consider if you were not living a life of faith; but if you are, you will joyfully waive your right and leave God to choose for you. This is the discipline by means of which the natural is transformed into the spiritual by obedience to the voice of God.

Whenever right is made the guidance in the life, it will blunt the spiritual insight. The great enemy of the life of faith in God is not sin, but the good which is not good enough. The good is always the enemy of the best. It would seem the wisest thing in the world for Abraham to choose, it was his right, and the people around would consider him a fool for not choosing. Many of us do not go on spiritually because we prefer to choose what is right instead of relying on God to choose for us. We have to learn to walk according to the standard which has its eye on God. "Walk before Me."

COMMENT - Background - As 1915 got underway and Britain prepared for the second year of World War I, Oswald Chambers began a four-month series on the life of Abraham. By the end of this series, Chambers decided to leave London's comforts to serve with soldiers (see March 28, Companion). In today's study, Abraham makes a similar choice by giving up his rights to the well-watered land. Chambers says that when we give up our rights to good things, we grow spiritually.

A young boy went to the store with his mother. The shop owner, a kind man, passed him a large jar of suckers and invited him to help himself to a handful. Uncharacteristically, the boy held back. So the shop owner pulled out a handful for him.

When outside, the boy's mother asked why he wouldn't take a handful of suckers when offered.

"Because his hand is much bigger than mine!" said the boy.—Brian Harris, Mount Roskill, Auckland, New Zealand

Abraham And Canaan's Ecology

A sophisticated sensitivity to ecological balance in the Bible is found in Genesis 13:1–13. Abraham and Lot both owned large herds of goats and sheep and "the land could not support them ... together; for their possessions were so great that they could not remain together."

A grassy, fertile area can quickly turn into a barren wasteland if large numbers of cattle are allowed to graze in it. Goats and sheep especially, bite off grass close to the roots. The result can be "overgrazing." Plants (grass, shrubs, weeds of all kinds, etc.) whose roots hold down and bind the topsoil, are eaten away, leaving the earth unprotected, without vegetation and exposed to erosion by

rain and wind. These, in turn wash and blow away the soil until only barren, rocky wilderness is left.

Abraham, the Bible tells us, was aware of this danger, saying to Lot: “Let us separate: if you go north, I will go south; and if you go south, I will go north” (Genesis 13:9). And so, Lot chose the Plain of Jordan settling the opposite direction to the hills of Hebron, where once again Abraham prevented potential ecological damage by coming “to dwell at the oaks of Mamre.” (Genesis 13:18) —
Nogah Hareuveni

“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!”—Gen. 13:9

An instance of the practical effectiveness of Mr. Sherman’s preaching is narrated thus. In one of his Monday evening lectures to teachers, the subject was the parting of Abraham and Lot: in the course of which he spoke of the magnanimity of Abraham, and, as a contrast to it, said that he had just visited a family belonging to the congregation that was rent by discord about the ownership of an old bedstead. It happened that amongst his hearers was a man who had not been in Surrey Chapel for years. He was greatly amused by the illustration. As he left the chapel, he called on an old friend, and told him that he was at the very time arranging the distribution of some property left by a relative, amongst which there was an old bedstead, which had been matter of dispute: but the effect of the address upon him was such that the bedstead difficulty was soon amicably settled.

After You

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. Genesis 13:9

Read: Genesis 13:1–18

In some cultures a younger person is expected to permit his elder to enter a room first. In others, the most important or highest ranking individual enters first. No matter what our traditions, there are times when we find it difficult to allow someone to choose first on important matters, especially when that privilege rightfully belongs to us.

Abram (later called Abraham) and his nephew Lot had so many flocks, herds, and tents that the land could not support both of them as they traveled together. To avoid conflict, Abram suggested they part company and generously gave Lot first choice of the land. His nephew took the fertile Jordan Valley, leaving Abram with the less desirable land.

Abram did not insist on his rights as the elder in this situation but trusted his future to God. “So Abram said to Lot, ‘Let’s not have any quarreling between you and me . . . 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’” (Genesis 13:8–9). Lot’s choice eventually led to dire consequences for his entire family (see Genesis 19).

Today, as we face choices of many kinds, we can trust our Father to guide us in His way. He has promised to care for us. He will always give us what we need. —David McCasland (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Father, Your unfailing love and faithfulness guide us in every choice we make. May our lives speak well of You and honor You today.

*God always gives His best to those
who leave the choice with Him.*

—Jim Elliot

Genesis 13:9-13 Letting God Choose

Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan. —Genesis 13:11

We may have secret longings too deep to utter to others—perhaps a desire for marriage, or a work or ministry we’d like to perform, or a special place to serve. We must put each desire in God’s hands and pray, “Lord, You must choose for me. I will not choose for myself.”

Genesis 13:10-11 tells us that Lot made his own choice about a desire he had. He “lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere . . . like the garden of the Lord . . . Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan.”

The plain of Jordan, with its rich soil and copious water supply, looked best to Lot. But the land was polluted with wickedness (v.13). Pastor Ray Stedman wrote that “Lot, presuming to run his own life, ‘chose for himself,’ and, deceived by what he saw, stumbled blindly into heartache and judgment. Abram, on the other hand, was content to let God choose for him. . . . Abram saw it in its true

light." Lot chose for himself and lost everything—his family, his fortune, his favor with man.

It is always the best course for us to let God choose and to follow His direction, knowing as we do that all our heavenly Father's choices are prompted by infinite wisdom and love. — by David H. Roper (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Long ago I made my life's decision
To serve the Lord and have Him choose my way;
And when I've felt uncertain at a crossroad,
He's never failed to lead me day by day.
—Hess

Contentment comes when we want God's will more than our own way
(See discussion of Christian Contentment and Contentment-Devotional)

ABRAHAM AN EXAMPLE OF Php 2:4

Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Php 2:4

A young artist submitted one of his works to be hung in a prestigious art exhibit, but the selection committee rejected it. One of its members, however, the renowned landscape painter Joseph Turner, insisted that they include the young man's work. The others denied his plea, saying that there was simply no room for it. Turner said no more but quietly removed one of his own pictures, replacing it with that of the budding young artist.

Life takes on new interest when we invest in the lives of others.

When it became necessary for Abram and Lot to go their separate ways, Abram graciously let his nephew choose whatever land he preferred. Abram said, "If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left" (Gen. 13:9).

Let us live unselfishly today, so that as we close our eyes in sleep tonight we can do so with the satisfaction that comes from looking out for others. —R. W D. (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

JESUS AND **O**THERS AND **Y**OU.
THAT'S THE WAY TO SPELL JOY!

Genesis 13:10 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.

- **and saw** : Ge 3:6 6:2 Nu 32:1-42 1Jn 2:15-16
- **all the valley of the Jordan**: Ge 19:17,24,25 De 34:3 1Ki 7:46 Ps 107:34 1Jn 2:15
- **well watered everywhere**: Ge 2:9,10 Isa 51:3 Eze 28:13 31:8 Joe 2:3
- **Zoar**: Ge 14:2,8 19:20,22-30 De 34:3 Isa 15:5 Jer 48:34 Instead of "Zoar," which was situated at the extremity of the plain of Jordan.
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Related Passages:

1 John 2:15-16 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

LOT LIFTS EYES BUT NOT HIGH ENOUGH!

Lot lifted up his eyes Lifting up his eyes would have been good if had continued lifting them upward looking past the earthly to the heavenly (from the temporal to the eternal, the seen to the unseen, from passing pleasures to permanent paradise) (cp Col 3:1-2 Ro 8:25 1Pe 1:13 Heb 11:25,27). There's a lot of Lot in a lot of modern day believers in America! (and Lot was a legitimate OT believer ~ righteous 2Pe 2:7-8).

NET NOTE on **lifted...saw** - The expression draws attention to the act of looking, indicating that Lot took a good look. It also calls attention to the importance of what was seen.

and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere—Lot thought the pagan land looked better than the Promised Land! Lot's lust to inhabit the lush Jordan valley exposed him to the lascivious wickedness of Sodom (Ge 19:1-25). Looks can be deceiving especially with the fallen flesh is causing the tempting look (as it clearly was in Lot)!

At least as early as the time of Joshua, most of the Jordan valley was desolate, utterly unlike the description in this verse. Yet the destructive critics have thought that this story originated in the time of the later Israelite kingdom. Archaeological research has now proved that the Jordan valley was filled with populous cities for many centuries, but that most of these had disappeared by the time of Joshua. The spade of the archaeologist has served again and again to confirm the Scriptures, not to deny them.

Warren Wiersbe - Covetousness—an insatiable appetite for more things—leads to all kinds of evil (1 Tim. 6:10). In order to get more money, people will lie (Prov. 21:6), mistreat people (Pr 22:16), cheat (Pr 28:8), and even trouble their own families (Pr 15:27). "Covetousness is both the beginning and the end of the devil's alphabet," wrote Robert South, "the first vice in corrupt nature that moves, and the last which dies." His (LOT'S) heart was really in Egypt (Gen. 13:10).

Bob Utley - Rashi (a rabbi of the Middle Ages) says the land had trees like Eden and vegetables like Egypt. The irony is that as Eden was a place of judgment, so too, the Jordan Valley!

This was before the LORD (Jehovah/ Yahweh; Lxx = [theos](#)) destroyed ([shachath](#)) Sodom and Gomorrah – NET, NIV and ESV put this phrase in parenthesis. Moses gives us a preview of "coming attractions," and the fate of Lot's bad choice! The Septuagint translates **destroyed** ([shachath](#)) with the verb katastrepho which means to completely overturn which is what God did to Sodom and Gomorrah. It is no surprise that the same Hebrew verb describes the pre-flood world as **corrupt** ([shachath](#) - Ge 6:11, 12+) which caused God to **destroy** the world (also [shachath](#) Ge 6:17; Ge 9:11,15+) with a flood. It is notable that both the flood and Sodom were obliterated by a divine catastrophe and only one family survived in each situation (Noah and Lot)!

Like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar - The Valley of the Jordan was verdant and fertile and caught Job's eye, when he should have been looking toward God with the eyes of his heart. He had gone to Egypt with Abram in Genesis 12 and experienced a taste of the "good life," which colored his thinking and directed his choice of land!

John Phillips is correct when he says "A man who is weak in his devotions and worldly in his desires will inevitably be wrong in his decisions."

NET NOTE makes a great point commenting that "The narrative places emphasis on what Lot saw so that the reader can appreciate how it aroused his desire for the best land. It makes allusion to the garden of the LORD and to the land of Egypt for comparison. Just as the tree in the garden of Eden had awakened Eve's desire, so the fertile valley attracted Lot. And just as certain memories of Egypt would cause the Israelites to want to turn back and abandon the trek to the promised land, so Lot headed for the good life.

Bob Utley - Zoar is one city located in the Jordan Valley (cf. Ge 13:10), just south of the Dead Sea. The account of its name is found in Gen. 19:20-22, which is a word play on "small". It was an oasis (cf. Josephus, Jewish Wars 4.8.4). There are several cities located in this area: (1) Sodom; (2) Gomorrah; (3) Admah; (4) Zeboiim; and (5) Zoar/Bela. They were collectively called "the cities of the plain." All but Zoar were destroyed by God (cf. Deut. 29:23).

Like the land of Egypt would prove to be a significant temptation to Israel even after they had been liberated from harsh Egyptian bondage (Oh, how easily and quickly they/we forget!)

Exodus 16:3 The sons of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the LORD'S hand **in the land of Egypt**, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Numbers 11:5 "We remember the fish which **we used to eat free in Egypt**, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic,

Numbers 14:2-3 All the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died **in the land of Egypt!** Or would that we had died in this wilderness! 3 "Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; **would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"**

THOUGHT - Do we lift our eyes and see sites "**like the land of Egypt**," which tempt us to return to the former bondage to sin, from which we have been liberated by crucifixion with Christ. Romans 6:6+ says "knowing this, that our old self (man) was crucified with Him (Christ), in order that our body of sin might be done away

with (made ineffective), so that we would no longer be slaves to sin." Why would we ever want to go back to this harsh taskmaster which gives only corrupt wages?

Destroyed (07843) **shachath** means to decay, to go to ruin, to corrupt, to destroy (Sodom and Gomorrah = Ge 13:10, Ge 18:28, 31-32), to lay waste (Egypt from swarms of flies - Ex 8:24). **Shachath** is used of Israelites who worshiped the golden calf (Ex 32:7; Dt 9:12; 32:5, Hos 9:9). God warned He would **destroy** Israel if they were turned away from following Him (Nu 32:15). **Shachath** describes Israel's behavior as more corrupt after a judge died (Jdg 2:19).

Shachath in the **Pentateuch** - Gen. 6:11; Gen. 6:12; Gen. 6:13; Gen. 6:17; Gen. 9:11; Gen. 9:15; Gen. 13:10; Gen. 18:28; Gen. 18:31; Gen. 18:32; Gen. 19:13; Gen. 19:14; Gen. 19:29; Gen. 38:9; Exod. 8:24; Exod. 12:13; Exod. 12:23; Exod. 21:26; Exod. 32:7; Lev. 19:27; Num. 32:15; Deut. 4:16; Deut. 4:25; Deut. 4:31; Deut. 9:12; Deut. 9:26; Deut. 10:10; Deut. 20:19; Deut. 20:20; Deut. 31:29; Deut. 32:5

Katastrepho (2690)(3x in NT - Mt 21:12, Mk 11:15, Acts 15:16) means to cause to be overturned, turn upside down, upset, overturn something like the money-changers' tables (Mt 21:12; Mk 11:15). It means to cause something to be in total disarray and so to destroy or ruin (Acts 15:16). To turn over, turn under: the soil with a plow. Used in Septuagint of Sodom and Gomorrah - Ge 13:10, Ge 19:21, Ge 25:29, Ge 29:22.

Rod Mattoon - Like salt on ice, greed ate away at the character of Lot. It became a consuming passion in his life and led to his decision in the choosing the plains of Jordan. Greed says, "I can satisfy you and make you happy!" Later, we only find disappointment with greed's promises. Greed's icy fingers clutch like vulture claws at the hearts of others throughout Genesis.

- Greed in Wealth—Lot wanted the best land and Jacob wanted the birthright. Ge 13:10; 25:31
- Greed for Wells—Gerar's herdsmen are greedy for the wells of Isaac. Ge 26:20
- Greed in Wages—Laban removes all sheep of Jacob's description which were to be his wages. Ge 30:35
- Greed in Worship—Rachel steals Laban's images. Ge 31:19
- Greed for Wares—The men of Shechem are greedy for the wares of Jacob's people. Ge 34:23
- Greed for Winnings or profits—Judah suggests selling Joseph as a slave. Ge 37:27 (Mattoon's Treasures from Genesis - [hardbound copies are scarce](#) - [here is the very affordable digital version](#) - this is an excellent resource for lay readers, Sunday School teachers, etc)

W H Griffith Thomas - A Selfish Choice (Ge 13:10-13). [Genesis 13:5-18 The Separation](#) —

Lot thereupon took the generous Abraham at his word, and, seeing that the plain of Jordan was 'well watered everywhere,' he chose that region, and departed thither. This was the sole reason that prompted his choice. He saw the great advantage to him and his possessions in that most fertile of regions.

The land was indeed fertile, but as he 'moved his tent as far as Sodom' (Ge 13:12, R.V.) it soon became evident what danger he was in. The material blessing was accompanied by moral blight. There are many modern counterparts to Lot's action; even professedly Christian people often choose their home in a locality simply for its scenery, or its society, or its other material advantages without once inquiring what Church privileges are there. The souls of their children may starve amid worldliness and polite indifference. The same disastrous choice is often made in connection with public schools, to which boys are sent simply for the position and reputation of the school, regardless of the moral and spiritual atmosphere of the institution. This was the great mistake of Lot's life, from which he ever afterwards suffered.

Genesis 13:11 So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other.

- **chose:** Ge 19:17
- **they:** Ge 13:9,14 Ps 16:3 119:63 Pr 27:10 Heb 10:25 1Pe 2:17
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

LOT CHOOSES AND SEPARATES

So - Term of conclusion. Based on what Lot's eyes saw, he made his decision, one that would radically change his life. What should

he have done? Given that we know men like Abram called on the Name of the LORD, it would have been wise for Lot to have done likewise. There is no evidence that this righteous man (2Pe 2:7+) sought the Righteous One (Isaiah 53:11+) in this crucial decision.

THOUGHT - Dear brother or sister in Christ, are you looking longingly (even lustfully) at some "lush valley" (so to speak), a new job, a new wife, a new husband, etc, etc? Dearly beloved, before you make the mistake Lot made by moving forward based on what his eyes saw, you would be wise to consult with the One Who knows the Beginning from the End (and everything in between)! You might just save yourself from some "brimstone and fire" (so to speak) in your life (cf Ge 19:24)!

*In any given situation, what you are determines what you see,
and what you see determines what you do.*

-- Haddon Robinson

Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward- Instead of staying in the promised land moving either to the north or south, effectively splitting the territory with Abram, Lot fell prey to the lust of his flesh and journeyed eastward toward the region of the Dead Sea.

Wiersbe - Lot looked toward Sodom (Gen. 13:10); then he moved toward Sodom (Ge 13:11–12); and finally, he moved into Sodom (Ge 14:12). Instead of being a pilgrim who made progress, Lot regressed into the world and away from God's blessing (Ps. 1:1). He "journeyed east" (Ge 13:11) and turned his back on Bethel ("house of God") and toward Ai ("ruins"; see Ge 12:8).

Thus they separated from each other - This final physical separation from Abram would have spiritual consequences in the life of Lot.

THOUGHT- Separation from a godly influence (a godly leader, a godly church, etc) will invariably reap a harvest of negative consequences, if we refuse to repent and return.

Rod Mattoon - Lot reveals his selfish nature as he fails to honor Abram by going ahead and taking first pick of the land. His decision to go to the plains of Jordan reveals his desire for satisfaction instead of the safety of his family. How fooled we are in thinking if we get our own way we will be happy. Some of the most miserable people I have met are selfish people who have gotten their own way. They are miserable because what they thought would make them happy did not. They are left empty and miserable. (Mattoon's Treasures from Genesis - [hardbound copies are scarce](#) - [here is the very affordable digital version](#) - this is an excellent resource for lay readers, Sunday School teachers, etc)

Genesis 13:12 Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom.

- **Lot dwelled:** Ge 19:29
- **moved his tents:** Ge 14:12 19:1 Ps 26:5 1Co 15:33 2Pe 2:7,8
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

SETTLEMENTS CONTRASTED

Abram settled in the land of Canaan- Indeed was this not exactly where God had called him to settle when He called him out of Ur of the Chaldees (cf Ge 11:31+)? The answer is "yes."

while Lot settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom- The verb **settled** (yashab, Lxx = katoikeo = to settle down) sit, to dwell, to inhabit, to endure, to stay and can convey the thought of remaining (a permanent settler, not a sojourner). Lot moved his whole family into the land of the cesspool called Sodom and eventually became a citizen.

MacDonald on Lot's lot - Though a true believer (2 Pet. 2:7, 8+), Lot was a world-borderer. As someone has said, "he got grass for his cattle while Abram got grace for his children" (Ge 13:15, 16+). (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

MAKING WISE CHOICES [Embracing Eternity: Living Each Day with a Heart Toward Heaven](#)

Lot ... pitched his tents near Sodom. Genesis 13:12, NIV

LOT HAD A HISTORY of making poor choices, and God was continually bailing him out of crises. He was a good man, but his foolish decisions got him into a lot of trouble.

Lot was the nephew of Abram who traveled with him from Egypt through the land of Negev and Bethel and Ai. The two had many flocks and herds, and the trip was a grueling and slow one. Their herdsmen were getting in each other's way and getting on each other's nerves, so Abram and Lot decided to separate. Abram gave Lot his choice of parcels in the region. "If you want that area over there, then I'll stay here. If you want to stay in this area, then I'll move on to another place," he told Lot (Genesis 13:9). As usual, Abram took the high road and let God work out the details. But Lot saw it as an opportunity to get the choice property. He looked out over the plains of the Jordan Valley and saw the plush and fertile ground. Water was in abundance, just as he remembered from the beautiful gardens of Egypt. It was the perfect place to live. Except for one big problem. It was right next to Sodom.

Everyone knew about Sodom. It was the city that had forgotten God. It was brimming with evil men doing unspeakable things. A detestable place to live. But what beautiful land, he thought. Think of the fortune I can make.

So Lot pitched his tents near Sodom. He chose good soil over good sense. He moved his family next to the most wicked city in the region and put down roots. Sodom was a great place to live if you could just overlook the evil. Get past the constant temptation to sin and turn away from God, and you'd have yourself a perfect place to raise a family. That was Sodom. Did I mention how good the soil was?

You and I make similar choices every day. We decide where we want to live, whom we want as neighbors, where we want our kids to attend school. We choose our careers and the best places to pursue them. We pick our friends, and watch which friends our children pick. We decide where we want our family to go to church. All of these decisions have a bearing on our future. Our choices matter. It makes a difference where we choose to pitch our tents. My criteria is simple: I want life-giving friends and a God-centered church. A place where my faith and family will not only survive but thrive.

REFLECTION

What choices have you made when it comes to your friends and your family's spiritual climate? Is your faith thriving where you've planted it?

P G Matthew - We read in Genesis 13 that Abraham had generously given his nephew Lot the first choice of land. Abraham was called by God and therefore lived by faith in God; he let God choose for him. Lot, however, was a person who lived by sight and not by faith. What he desired was independence from Abraham and Abraham's God. He was not seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness; his choice was based on what was good for his animals, not what was good for his soul.

And so Lot chose and pitched his tent near Sodom. He knew Sodom's people were extremely wicked, known for their homosexuality. But he ignored the dangers. It was not the God of Abraham who formed his value system; it was the pagan world. Soon he moved into the city itself and began to enjoy great success. No more tents. No more moving from here to there. Now he lived in a large house in the highly cultured city of Sodom. Not only that, he had climbed the social ladder and was now a judge, a figure of great prominence.

What a terrible choice Lot had made. "Lot chose for himself" (Gen. 13:11). He did not look to God to direct him. He did not ask his uncle to help him. He was independent and self-sufficient. But in relying on his own wisdom, Lot chose what the Lord would eventually completely destroy. At the height of his success, Lot lost everything to God's fiery judgment—his property, his security, his wife, his Sodomite sons-in-law, and the spiritual blessings he could have enjoyed had he stayed with Abraham. What tragedy!

Lot went away from God's prophet, God's people, and God's presence, to a city that was destined to be destroyed. And all along he thought he had made the right decision. He went away to seek worldly success, and he achieved it all, only to lose it all. You and I can make the same mistake if we are not careful. We can move towards and settle in something that God has determined to judge by fire. We can fall in love with a doomed world. How we play the fool if we choose for ourselves and ignore the plan of God!

Alexander Whyte - Think, Fathers, Think; think, mothers, think; think, young men, so much is at stake—think what the temptations and the dangers and the almost sure issues of this and that choice in life must be. All our trades, professions, occupations in life have, each one, its own perils and temptations and snares to the soul; as well as its own opportunities of gain and honour, and praise, and service. The ministry, teaching, law, medicine, the army, political life, newspaper life, trades of all kinds, the money-market of all kinds, and so on. Open your eyes. Count the cost. Are you able? Will you venture? Take that line of life which you are just about to choose. Take time over it. Look all around it. Imagine yourself done with it. Look at this man and that man who are done with it. Would you like to be like them? Study well the successes and the failures in that line of life. Read the 13th and the 19th chapters of Genesis, and then take those two chapters with you to your knees, and so make your choice.

Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. Genesis 13:12

In a recent study, it was found that the average American between the ages of 25 and 54 spends 27–30 hours a week watching television. More than one day of the week and ¾ of the average work week is devoted to the “tube.”

That might explain why 32% of children today live in a single-parent home. The tremendous amount of television viewing might also be a reason that 32% of children born today are illegitimate.

These statistics remind me of the Old Testament story of Lot. Lot mistakenly believed he could withstand the temptation of Sodom and Gomorrah. Genesis 13:12 says that he “dwelled in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent toward Sodom.” Every morning, when he rose, he would have a full view of the tantalizing temptations of Sodom. It wasn’t long before he packed up his belongings and moved there.

Many people today believe the lie that Lot believed. They think they can view anything on television or in the movie theatre and not be affected by the continual onslaught of violence, sex, foul-language, and crude behavior. They have pitched their tent toward Sodom. Pretty soon, they will be living there. The truth is, no Christian is strong enough to withstand the devil’s temptations himself. We cannot look at sin and not be affected.

God wants each of us to separate from the world so we don’t fall prey. Learn from the tragic story of Lot. Don’t pitch your tent toward Sodom.

*Sin is not a monster to be mused,
but an impotence to be gotten rid of.*
Martin Luther

Genesis 13:13 Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the LORD.

- But the: Ge 15:16 18:20 19:4-11 1Sa 15:18 Isa 1:9 3:9 Eze 16:46-50 Mt 9:10,13 11:23,24 Joh 9:24,31 Ro 1:27 2Pe 2:6-8,10 Jude 1:7
- before: Ge 6:11 10:9 38:7 2Ki 21:6 Isa 3:8 Jer 23:24 Heb 4:13
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

LOT DOES NOT DEFER DWELLING IN THE DESPICABLE DEPRAVITY OF SODOMITES

Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the LORD ([Jehovah/ Yahweh](#); Lxx = [theos](#)) - Oh, if only Lot could have read this passage before he made his choice! Moses gives us another parenthetical fact which will help understand the events that unfold in Genesis 19. Here we see a vivid description of Sodom's exceeding wickedness which is exemplified in Genesis 19:4-14 when the men even sought the angels (the Sodomites thought the angels were men) that visited Lot so that they might "have relations with them!" (Ge 19:5). Ge 19:1 even suggests Lot because a local official in Sodom! Now that's a picture of despicable depravity! Clearly they had rejected natural revelation of God and He had given them "over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them," for "the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error." (Ro 1:27+)

Note the phrase **against the LORD**. All sin is **against the LORD** (contrast Joseph's mindset with Lot's mindset - Ge 39:9), but these men went above and beyond the call of normal sin and took their heinous acts of sin to a new level (or better stated "a new depth") of depravity!

NET NOTE on Hebrew “**wicked and sinners against the LORD exceedingly.**” The description of the sinfulness of the Sodomites is very emphatic. First, two nouns are used to form a hendiadys: “wicked and sinners” means “wicked sinners,” the first word becoming adjectival. The text is saying these were no ordinary sinners; they were wicked sinners, the type that cause pain for others. Then to this phrase is added “**against the LORD,**” stressing their violation of the laws of heaven and their culpability. Finally, to this is added מְאֹד (mé’od, “exceedingly,” translated here as “extremely”).

John Phillips - Sainly old George Mueller used to say that the stops as well as the steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord. Abram was wonderfully restrained by God from choosing the Jordan valley. God was about to destroy the cities of the plain in fire and brimstone in one dreadful night of fear and flame. We say, “But Lot did not know that!” That is the very point, for neither did

Abram. But God did, and because Abram kept in touch with God he was divinely restrained from making the wrong choice. (BORROW [Exploring Genesis](#))

Genesis 13:13 A Good Reason to Scream

".the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the Lord." Gen. 13:13

There's an old story about a man who tried to save the city of Sodom from destruction by warning the citizens. But the people ignored him. One day someone asked, "Why bother everyone? You can't change them." "Maybe I can't," the man replied, "but I still shout and scream to prevent them from changing me!"

Lot was a righteous man (2 Peter 2:7) who should have done some screaming. The record of his life reminds us of how our sense of moral indignation can be dulled by the world. Lot chose to dwell in cities where there was great wickedness (Gen. 13:12, 13). When Sodom was invaded by hostile kings, he was captured. Even after Abraham rescued Lot, he was still drawn back to that wicked city (Gen. 19:1). And the last chapter of his story is an account of heartache and shame (Gen. 19). What a contrast—this nephew and his uncle! Abraham trusted God, prayed for the righteous, and lived a moral life. But Lot was "oppressed with the filthy conduct of the wicked" (2 Peter 2:7). Although the sin of his day bothered him, he apparently said little about it.

There's much immorality in today's world—sex before marriage, homosexual behavior, taking the life of the unborn, and pornography. Out of our love for people and a deep concern about the influence of sin on society, we protest! Even if our screaming does little to change society, we do it anyway because we don't want society to change us—and we just may help others. (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

If we would love what's good and right,
We must be pure within;
But if we compromise the truth,
We lose our sense of sin.
- D. J. De Haan

The man who cannot be angry at evil lacks enthusiasm for good.

Genesis 13:14 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;**

- **had separated from:** Ge 13:11
- **Lift:** Ge 13:10 Isa 49:18 60:4
- **northward:** Ge 28:14 De 3:27
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

LORD COMMANDS ABRAM TO LOOK ALL DIRECTIONS

In Genesis 13:14-18 God confirms His promise to Abram. In short, Abram's faith was rewarded.

The LORD ([Jehovah/ Yahweh](#); Lxx = [theos](#)) 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** - Notice that God does not come on the scene until Lot has separated. In Ge 13:10 Lot had lifted his eyes and chosen, but now God in essence tells Abram to lift his eyes and see what God had chosen for him! Here we see God reassure Abram regarding the covenant He had made with him in Genesis 12:1-3+ and Ge 12:7+. And it was exceeding abundantly beyond all Abram could ask or think! (cf Eph 3:20+). Why do I say that? Think about where God tells Abram to look. This would include the verdant well watered valley of the Jordan! That is the land **eastward** where Lot had settled! And yet it had been promised by God to Abram (Ge 12:7+). Lot had selfishly sought it, but here God clearly says He will overrule Lot's willful choice in favor of Abram, ultimately because His covenant with Abram was immutable and everlasting (Ge 13:15).

One is reminded of the words of Jesus to those who chose to follow her (and lose their life - Mk 8:34,35) Who promised that "everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life." (Mt 19:29).

Lot's descendants would not inherit land in the promised land but his sons Moab and Ben-ammi (Ge 19:37-38) would become the founders of Moab and Ammon, nations east of the promised land.

Wenstrom writes that "The phrase *"Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward"* reflected a legal practice in the days of Abram of transferring property rights by sight and intention. The Lord invited Moses to do the same in Deuteronomy 34:1-4 before he died and Joshua led Israel into the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In both instances, with Moses in Deuteronomy 34:1-4 and Abram in Genesis 13:14-17, the divine invitation to view the land is given to confirm the promise even though they both did not participate in the dispossessing of the Canaanites. Both Abram and Moses did "not" receive the promise but they will receive it in their resurrection bodies during the millennial reign of Christ." ([Genesis Verse by Verse](#))

In Ge 13:10 it was Lot who lifted up his eyes to look, but here it is Jehovah telling Abram to lift up his eyes and look. Lot's look was motivated by flesh and not in the will of God, while Abram's is motivated by a desire to do the will of God and please Him with obedience.

*Lot was living for the possible,
but Abraham was trusting God for the impossible.*
--Warren Wiersbe

Bob Utley - Abram moved by revelation ("lift up your eyes," *Qa/ IMPERATIVE*; "look," , *Qa/ IMPERATIVE*); Lot by self-interest (cf. Gen. 13:10).

NET NOTE The repetition of the expression (Heb "lift up the eyes") here underscores how the LORD will have the last word and actually do for Abram what Abram did for Lot—give him the land. It seems to be one of the ways that God rewards faith.

Adrian Rogers - Go back to Genesis 13 and look at something significant. The Bible says, in Genesis 13, verse 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." (Genesis 13:14)

Now you say, "Pastor, what's exciting about that verse?" The Bible says that God spoke to Abram after Lot had departed from him. That is, Lot wasn't there when God was doing the speaking—after Lot departed. Every step that Lot took toward Sodom, he took a step away from God. Here is God speaking with Abram and Lot. And then Lot begins to move away, and God now is speaking with Abram.

Have you ever wondered why God doesn't speak to you? Have you ever wondered why God is not real to you? Have you ever wondered why you don't have any revelation from God, why your prayers fall to the ground, why your worship is juiceless? "Whosoever is a friend of the world is an enemy of God" (James 4:4+)--that's why. (See full sermon on page 565 - [Your Friendly Enemy Ge 13:5-12](#))

G Campbell Morgan - Gen. 13.14. These words were spoken to Abram when he was in a place of peculiar difficulty. He was now in the land to which he had been sent by God. Moreover he was there after a deflection from the pathway of faith, in which deflection he had gone down into Egypt. An hour had come when domestic difficulties had arisen between him and his kinsman, Lot. It had become necessary for them to separate from each other. With the magnanimity of a great soul, Abram had given to Lot the right to choose the place where he would dwell in the land, and Lot had chosen. The result was that Abram, on that level of human arrangement, was excluded from the best of the country. It was at this juncture that God communed with him, and gave him this command. The words are seen in their true suggestiveness when they are put into contrast with those found in the tenth verse, "Lot lifted up his eyes." In doing so, Lot had chosen upon the ground of personal advantage. When he had gone, God said to the man who had chosen not to choose, "Lift up now thine eyes," and directed him to look "northward and southward and eastward and westward"; that- was to every point of the compass and consequently over all the land, including that which Lot had chosen for himself. All he thus looked upon was then secured to him by the covenant of God. The teaching of the story is patent. Man has no final rights in any possessions other than those which are his by the gift of God. The man who, by faith, leaves the choices of his life to God, is the man who finds his way into possessions of which he cannot be robbed.

F B Meyer - Genesis 13:14 The Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him.

Abram's life was one of an ever-perfecting separation. But out of these experiences sprang his rarest joys. The separate and obedient soul may reckon on:—

Fresh Revelation. — Whenever Abram dared to step out in obedience, the Lord spake freshly to him. But in Egypt we find no trace

of the Divine voice. If God spake there, it would be in warning and rebuke. Has the voice of God long been silent to thee — no fresh command, no deeper insight into truth? See to it that thou art not in Egypt. Separate thyself, not only from Haran, but from Lot; not only from what is clearly wrong, but from all that is questionable; and the Lord will speak to thee things it is not possible for man to utter.

Further Vision. — Lot lifted up his eyes to espy what would make for his advantage and well-being, and beheld only the plain of Sodom, which indeed was well-watered, but the seat of exceeding sin. But when Abram lifted up his eyes, not to search out aught for himself, but to see what God had prepared, he looked northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward — words which remind us of the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of the love of Christ. The single eye is full of light; the far climber gets the widest horizon; if thou wilt do his will, thou shalt know.

Hundredfold Compensation. — Whatever Abram renounced, when he left his home, or gave Lot the right to choose, he received back in the usual measure of God, with an overflowing over plus. God gave him the entire land, including Lot's portion. We can never give up for God, without receiving in this life more than we gave.

W H Griffith Thomas - A Divine Revelation (Ge 13:14-17).. [Genesis 13:5-18 The Separation](#) —'After that Lot was separated from him.' Abraham was now alone, and perhaps in his solitude he began to wonder whether he had done right, or whether his offer to Lot was due to weakness and the lack of true assertion of rights. There is often a temptation to reaction after a great moral decision has been made. Just at this time, then, and when he was alone, God came to him with Divine assurances and blessed compensation.

The revelation of the Divine purposes was fuller than any that preceded it (cf. Ge 12:1, 7). Notice its three aspects:—

- (a) The prospect afforded (Ge 13:14). Lot had 'lifted up his eyes' (Ge 13:10), and with remarkable force and significant emphasis God says to Abraham, 'Lift up now thine eyes.' How different the action is in each case! Abraham's prospect was not only wider, but infinitely more glorious, because of the Word of God behind it.
- (b) The promise given (Ge 13:15, 16). For the first time God promises the land to Abraham himself. 'To thee will I give it'; hitherto the land had only been promised to his seed (Ge 12:7). Let us ponder these wonderful promises. They are to be interpreted literally and spiritually. They are already having their primary fulfilment in the Church of Christ as Abraham's spiritual seed (Gal. 3:7-9, 16), but there will surely be a literal fulfilment in the future to the Jewish nation (Ro 11:26-29).
- (c) The possession enjoined (Ge 13:17). Abraham is to 'walk up and down,' and, as it were, appropriate and claim for himself in detail that which God gives (cf. Josh. 1:3). The promises of God are to be appropriated by faith, and it is thus the purpose of God becomes realised in individual experience.

'Then Abraham moved his tent.' Immediately he responded to God and pitched his tent 'at Mamre, which is in Hebron.' Hebron means 'fellowship,' and we may spiritualise the thought by saying that prompt whole-hearted obedience always leads to fellowship with God.

'Built there an altar.' Again we see the real man in this simple, whole-hearted testimony to the Divine presence and promises. His tent and his altar indicate the pilgrim and devout life of the true child of God.

1. Differences in Believers.—What a contrast between Lot and Abraham! Except for 2 Peter 2:7, 8, we should have hardly credited Lot with any vital religion. Although 'righteous,' he is yet living by sight, seeking only his own advantages and pleasure; worldliness is his dominant characteristic, his one thought is the well-watered plains. He is a type and illustration of the Christian who is not fully consecrated—one who is trying to make the best of both worlds, endeavouring to stand well with God, while pushing to the full his own earthly interests. Yet one part of his life must necessarily suffer; so it was with Lot, so it is always. Contrast Abraham with his large-heartedness of spirit, his simple acceptance of God's promises, his wholehearted obedience to God's will, and his courageous testimony in the altar of worship. He is a type and illustration of the consecrated believer, the one who puts God first, and to whom God's presence, God's will, God's way are everything. These differences in believers are as striking and as puzzling to-day as ever, yet they ought not to exist in the Church of Christ.

2. Differences between Believers.—Even the children of God from time to time have their differences of opinion, which often lead to trouble and strife. If only they are met with magnanimity like Abraham's, they will soon be resolved. Note the New Testament emphasis on mutual submission (Eph. 5:21; 1 Peter 5:5). The Christian paradox of everybody submitting to everybody else would soon heal all dissensions between believers. Magnanimity in Abraham was the result of his faith in God. He could afford to be large-hearted because God was so real to him. Those who put God first will never be bereft of their just rights. God is pledged on their behalf (Prov. 3:5, 6).

3. Differences for Believers.—The results in the lives of Lot and Abraham were vastly different. Lot obtained what he wanted, earthly prosperity, but spiritually it may be questioned whether he was ever happy after making that choice. There was no witness for God, no real blessing on his home, and in the end came spiritual and social disaster. Abraham's experience was very different; God became an increasing reality to him, there was a glory and power in his life, and we are sure that he never regretted his action in putting God first. God's children always experience His Divine favour and blessing in proportion to their faithfulness, and if we are inclined to question and seek for the reason of differences in the spiritual experiences of the children of God we may find them in the difference of response to God on the part of His followers.

| CONTRAST BETWEEN ABRAM AND LOT | |
|---|--|
| ABRAM | LOT |
| Walked by faith | Walked by sight |
| Generous | Greedy |
| Spiritual desires | Worldly desires |
| Looked for a city built by God | Looked for a city built by man and destroyed by God. |
| Heir to the world | Lost everything |
| Man of aspiration | Man of ambition |
| Covets righteousness | Covets success |
| Source: Rod Mattoon - (Mattoon's Treasures from Genesis - hardbound copies are scarce - here is the very affordable digital version - this is an excellent resource for lay readers, Sunday School teachers, etc) | |

THOUGHT - The chart is a nice contrast of two men, but it begs a question or response from each of us**In which column would you place yourself?**

Genesis 13:15 for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever.

- Ge 12:7 15:18 17:7,8 18:18 24:7 26:3,4 28:4,13 35:12 48:4 Ex 33:1 Nu 34:2,12-29 De 26:2-4 34:4 2Ch 20:7 Ne 9:7,8 Ps 37:22,29 Ps 105:9-12 112:1,2 Isa 63:18 Mt 5:5 Ac 7:5
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Related Passages:

Genesis 12:2 And **I will make you a great nation**, And **I will bless you**, And **make your name great**; And so you shall be a blessing;

Genesis 12:7 The LORD appeared to Abram and said, “**To your descendants I will give this land.**” So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.

JEHOVAH'S GIFT OF LAND TO ABRAM'S SEED FOREVER

for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants([zera](#); Lxx = [sperma](#)) **forever** (NLT = as a permanent possession) - This was the LORD's third appearance to Abram (Ge 12:2, Ge 12:7) and the second time Yahweh makes the promise of the land but now adds "**forever**." So not only would Abram receive the promised land but all his offspring would receive it forever.

Wenstrom on **all the land which you see** - The phrase “all the land which you see” is a reference to the land of Canaan, which is tract of land, which covers all Palestine west of the Jordan (Num 34:2-12) and whose western border is the Mediterranean Sea. The

natural boundaries of Canaan as expressed in the Bible extend from the Negev in the South to the northern reaches of the Lebanon Range in Syria and the land west of the range and of the Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea. “**Your descendants**” refers to regenerate Israel and does “not” refer to the Arabs nor the church since only regenerate Israel was promised the land of Canaan. The land grant was a gift and could not be purchased since the Lord is the Creator and Possessor heaven and earth (cf Ps 115:15-16, Ge 14:19) ([Genesis Verse by Verse](#)) Wenstrom repeats that “**Your descendants**” refers to Abram’s “national” posterity (Gen. 18:18), which is regenerate (born again) Israel that would originate from Abram and Sarah’s son Isaac and Isaac’s son Jacob and does “not” refer to the Arabs nor the church since only regenerate Israel (**ED: NOT EVERYONE WOULD AGREE WITH THIS INTERPRETATION WHICH HE MENTIONS TWICE**) was promised the land of Canaan.”

[Wiersbe](#) - Lot had lifted up his eyes and seen what the world had to offer; now God invited Abraham to lift up his eyes and see what heaven had to offer. Lot chose a piece of land which he finally lost, but God gave Abraham the whole land which still belongs to him and his descendants. Lot had said, “I will take.” God said to Abraham, “I will give.” What a contrast! Lot lost his family, but Abraham was promised a family so large it could not be counted. (Remember, Abraham and Sarah were old and had no children.) Lot was living for the possible, but Abraham was trusting God for the impossible.

QUESTION - [What is the land that God promised to Israel?](#)

ANSWER - There is probably no more disputed real estate on earth than the land of Israel. Even calling it “Israel” will raise objections from some quarters. The Jewish people lay claim to the land because they first held possession of it millennia ago and because God directly gave them the land, as recorded in the Bible.

In Genesis 12:7, God promises Abram, who had just arrived in Canaan, “To your offspring I will give this land.” Later, in Genesis 15:18, God expands on that unconditional promise: “To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates” (NASB). Then, in Genesis 17:8, God reiterates the promise to Abraham, adding that the land gift is irrevocable: “The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you.” God later repeats the promise to Abraham’s son Isaac (Genesis 26:3–4) and Isaac’s son Jacob (Genesis 28:13), whose name God later changed to Israel.

In the [Abrahamic Covenant](#), then, God laid out the extent of the land that would belong to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—a territory including all of Canaan and stretching from Egypt to modern-day Iraq. Several centuries later, when it came time for the Israelites actually take possession of the [Promised Land](#), God again spoke of a vast area “from the Negev wilderness in the south to the Lebanon mountains in the north, from the Euphrates River in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west, including all the land of the Hittites” (Joshua 1:4, NLT).

The promise of land belonging to the children of Israel is [permanent](#). Even when Israel was expelled from their land, which has happened twice in history, God promised they would return:

“Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the LORD your God will gather you and bring you back. He will bring you to the land that belonged to your ancestors, and you will take possession of it” (Deuteronomy 30:4–5+).

This promise is part of what is today sometimes called the [Palestinian Covenant](#) or the Land Covenant (Deuteronomy 29:1-30:10+).

In foretelling the removal of Israel from their land, the Palestinian Covenant anticipated the [Babylonian Captivity](#) (586 BC) and the Roman destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70). In both cases, the promise of the covenant held true: the Jews regained their land and their nation in 537 BC and again in AD 1948. Israel is still in their land, despite the fact that their conquerors, Babylon and Rome, are long gone. **All of this reinforces the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that God would establish Israel in their land as His chosen people** (Deuteronomy 29:13). The Land Covenant also contains some special promises to Israel that many believe will not be completely fulfilled until the millennial reign of Christ.

According to Genesis 15:18 and Joshua 1:4, the land God gave to Israel included everything from the Nile River in Egypt to Lebanon (south to north) and everything from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates River (west to east). On today’s map, the land God has stated belongs to Israel includes everything modern-day Israel possesses, plus all of the territory occupied by the Palestinians (the West Bank and Gaza), plus some of Egypt and Syria, plus all of Jordan, plus some of Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Thus, Israel currently possesses only a fraction of the land God has promised; the rest of their inheritance likely awaits the return of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. God has given His word that the nation of Israel will never cease as long as the sun still shines by day and the moon and stars still shine by night (Jeremiah 31:35–37). [GotQuestions.org](#)

QUESTION - [Did God give Israel the Promised Land for all time \(Deuteronomy 4:40\)?](#)

ANSWER - In Deuteronomy 4:40 the Lord gave the Israelites this command: "Keep his decrees and commands, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land the Lord your God gives you for all time." Does this mean God gave Israel the [Promised Land](#) in perpetuity?

This passage contains a conditional offer. Israel would have the Promised Land as they kept God's "decrees and commands." The Israelites had to obey God's statutes in order to remain in the land. History reveals that the Israelites often disobeyed, resulting in temporary times of exile from their land.

However, the end of this passage notes that God is giving Israel the Promised Land "for all time." The Hebrew phrase translated "for all time" is a general statement, likely in reference to God's original promise of a land to Abraham in Genesis 12.

There are both a conditional and unconditional aspect to God's promise. God offered blessings within the Promised Land *conditionally*, related to the Israelites' obedience. Yet God also made an *unconditional* vow that Israel would have the Promised Land "for all time."

How long is "for all time"? In the book of Revelation, we see Israel as a central focus. In the end times, Israel faces many difficulties, yet that tribulation concludes with the Messiah reigning from His throne in Jerusalem, the capital of Israel. The book concludes with a new heaven, new earth, and [new Jerusalem](#). The promise of Deuteronomy 4:40 is a far-seeing promise, extending to the end of this world's existence and even into the time of the new earth.

Many other passages of Scripture support the fact that Israel will possess the Promised Land forever. For example, God spoke to Isaac in Genesis 26:3, saying, "Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham." The Lord also spoke to Jacob in Genesis 28:13–14 with similar words: "There above it stood the Lord, and he said: 'I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.'" See also Psalm 132:14; Isaiah 14:1; and Zechariah 2:3–5, 10–13.

Some have suggested that, because of God's promises to Israel concerning the Promised Land, Christians should support the modern nation of Israel without reservation. Christians have many reasons to support the people of Israel, but this does not mean Christians must agree with every political decision made by the modern Israeli government. Instead, the focus is on God's spiritual restoration of Israel (Romans 11:26) and the enduring promise to His chosen people. [GotQuestions.org](#)

Genesis 13:16 "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."

- Ge 12:2,3 15:5 17:6,16,20 18:18 21:13 22:17 25:1-34 26:4 28:3,14 Ge 32:12 35:11 36:1-43 46:3 Ex 1:7 32:13 Nu 23:10 De 1:10 Judges 6:3,5 1Ki 3:8 4:20 1Ch 21:5 27:23 2Ch 17:14-18 Isa 48:18 Isa 48:19 Jer 33:22 Ro 4:16-18 Heb 11:12 Rev 7:9
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

YAHWEH'S PROMISE OF UNCOUNTABLE DESCENDANTS

I will make your descendants ([zera](#); Lxx = [sperma](#)) **as the dust of the earth** - Note the two divine promises were (1) land and (2) descendants. Abram means "exalted father," but at the time of this promise he had no offspring. Note that the Hebrew descendants (in both uses in this verse) is masculine singular and is translated in the Septuagint (Lxx) with [sperma](#) in the singular. **Dust** is one of three similes God uses to describe Abram's descendants as innumerable, the other two terms of comparison being the **stars** in Ge 15:5 and the **sand** of the seashore in Ge 22:17.

[Bob Utley](#) - Here again is the metaphorical promise (cf. Gen. 15:5; 22:17; 26:4; 28:14; Exod. 32:13; Num. 23:10) of a son, a family, a tribe, and a great nation (YHWH also promises to bless Ishmael, cf. Gen. 16:10; 17:20). The promise is not to be through Lot; he is gone! Abram believes this promise (cf. Gen. 15:6) and Paul uses this as the basis for his justification by grace through faith in Rom. 4:3 and Gal. 3:6.

So that (purpose clause) **if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants** ([zera](#); Lxx = [sperma](#)) **can also be numbered** 0 The point is that they could not be numbered. Put yourself in Abram's sandals for just a moment. How many children does he have at this time? Zero! From zero to innumerable with a barren wife (Ge 11:30) is utterly impossible! Unless the One making the promise is the "non-lying" God! Note that Abram does not say "I'm too old (he was more than 75 at the time - I am 77 and

would have said "I'm too old!")" OR "But God, Sarai is barren." OR "But God, I am childless." There is no record of Abram disputing or questioning God. In fact, in Ge 13:17-18 Abram obeys God's commands indicating that he clearly believed God was able to accomplish the impossible!

[Henry Morris](#) - It would be as impossible now to count Abraham's descendants as to count the dust of the earth. He was the progenitor of all the Israelites, of course, but also of all the Arab nations, as well as the peoples of many now-extinct nations—Edomites, Midianites, etc.

John Phillips gives an illustration of what happens when God blesses a man like He did Abram - Reading the book of Romans changed the life of Martin Luther. Reading Luther's preface to his commentary on Romans transformed the life of John Wesley. Attending a chapel of the Primitive Methodists, one of the groups following the teachings of John Wesley, led to the conversion of C. H. Spurgeon. Spurgeon touched the life of young Henry Morehouse, who in turn transformed the ministry of D. L. Moody. Attending one of Moody's meetings transformed the life of C. T. Studd and six others who became known as the Cambridge Seven. They in turn swept across the universities of England and Scotland, stirring students everywhere to lives of devotion and service for God overseas. That is spiritual posterity. That is the kind of spiritual chain reaction that results when God blesses a man. ([BORROW Exploring Genesis](#))

Descendants (seed, offspring) ([02233](#)) **zera** from **zara** = to sow, scatter seed) means a sowing, seed, offspring. A masculine noun meaning sowing, seed, descendants, offspring, children, and posterity. The literal use of the word indicates seed of the field (i.e., seed planted in the field). The first use in the Bible refers to literal seed (Ge 1:11, 29). In Ge 3:15+ "**seed**" refers to the offspring of the devil and the offspring of the woman. Seed meaning descendants is common in Genesis (Ge 4:25, 9:9, 12:7, etc) and especially in the context of covenant. The most important seed Moses describes is the seed of Abraham, the promised seed, referring to Isaac, Jacob, and his twelve sons (Ge 12:7; Ge 15:3) and ultimately foreshadows the seed of the Messiah (cf Gal 3:16+). The author of Genesis uses the word twenty-one times in this setting (Ex. 32:13; Dt. 1:8).

Zera in Genesis - Gen. 1:11; Gen. 1:12; Gen. 1:29; Gen. 3:15; Gen. 4:25; Gen. 7:3; Gen. 8:22; Gen. 9:9; Gen. 12:7; Gen. 13:15; Gen. 13:16; Gen. 15:3; Gen. 15:5; Gen. 15:13; Gen. 15:18; Gen. 16:10; Gen. 17:7; Gen. 17:8; Gen. 17:9; Gen. 17:10; Gen. 17:12; Gen. 17:19; Gen. 19:32; Gen. 19:34; Gen. 21:12; Gen. 21:13; Gen. 22:17; Gen. 22:18; Gen. 24:7; Gen. 24:60; Gen. 26:3; Gen. 26:4; Gen. 26:24; Gen. 28:4; Gen. 28:13; Gen. 28:14; Gen. 32:12; Gen. 35:12; Gen. 38:8; Gen. 38:9; Gen. 46:6; Gen. 46:7; Gen. 47:19; Gen. 47:23; Gen. 47:24; Gen. 48:4; Gen. 48:11; Gen. 48:19

[Bob Utley](#) - God used several metaphors with which Abraham would be familiar to describe the abundance of his descendants.

1. dust – Gen. 13:16; 28:14; Num. 23:10
2. stars – Gen. 15:5; 22:17; 26:4
3. sand – Gen. 22:17; 32:12

In Genesis Abraham receives many promises from YHWH.

1. land – Gen. 12:1-2; 13:14-15; 15:7,18; 17:8
2. seed/descendants – Gen. 12:2; 13:16; 15:5,18; 17:2,4-7,16,19; 22:17
3. covenant – Gen. 17:7,19,21
4. special blessing of all nations through him – Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14

Genesis 13:17 “Arise, walk about** the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you.”**

- Joshua 18:8
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Related Passages:

Genesis 17:8 “**I will give to you** and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

Genesis 26:3 “Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants **I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham.**”

Genesis 50:24 Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, but God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land to **the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob.**"

Leviticus 14:34 "When you enter the land of Canaan, **which I give you for a possession**, and I put a mark of leprosy on a house in the land of your possession,

2 Kings 13:23 But the LORD was gracious to them and had compassion on them and turned to them **because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**, and would not destroy them or cast them from His presence until now.

Joshua 1:1-3+ Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant, saying, 2 "Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel. 3 **"Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you**, just as I spoke to Moses.

Deuteronomy 11:24+ **"Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours**; your border will be from the wilderness to Lebanon, and from the river, the river Euphrates, as far as the western sea.

GOD COMMAND ABRAM TO ARISE AND WALK

Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth - As you think about this command and God's promise, remember that at that time this land was in the hands of the Canaanites, which means that Abram will need to walk by faith, not by sight! (2Co 5:7+). God commands Abram to lay claim to the promised land now possessed by pagans! This is an authentic "name it, claim it!" Yes he was to walk out physically, but to reiterate, he was walking out in faith, for faith that is real, faith that God blesses, is faith that obeys God's commands, God's words! By faith Abram claimed the promised inheritance ([See related passages above](#) of walking out in faith). In the ancient world when an army won a victory they would lay claim to the territory by walking through the land.

One of the best commentaries on this verse is Hebrews 11:1: "Faith gives substance to our hopes and convinces us of realities we do not see" (REB).

Bruce K. Waltke adds that "Kings asserted their right to rule their territory by symbolically tracing out its boundaries. In Egypt (from ca. 3000 B.C.), on the day of his enthronement, the new Pharaoh circumambulated the fortified wall in a festal procession known as the 'circuit of the wall.' The Hittite king (ca. 1300 B.C.) toured his realm at the annual winter festival of Nun-ta-ri-ya-shas. In a poem of Ugarit (on the coast of Syria about 1400 B.C.), Baal made rounds of 'seventy-seven towns, eighty-eight cities' in order to assert his new kingship over gods and humans. Similarly, the priests within Joshua's army carried the Lord's throne around the walls of Jericho for seven days presumably to stake out their claim (Josh. 6). Sarna notes, 'Early Jewish exegetes (Targ. Jon.) understood this traversing of the length and breadth of the land to be a symbolic act constituting a mode of legal acquisition termed hazakah in rabbinic Hebrew'" (BORROW [Genesis, A Commentary](#) page 222).

NET NOTE on **walk about** - The [Hitpael](#) form הִתְהַלֵּךְ (hithallekh) means "to walk about"; it also can carry the ideas of moving about, traversing, going back and forth, or living in an area. It here has the connotation of traversing the land to survey it, to look it over.

For (term of explanation) - God gives Abram a precious promise to encourage him to obey the commands He had just given him.

I will give it to you - God promises to give the land for the third time (Ge 12:7, Ge 13:15). It is a grace promise and was not something Abram merited or earned. Of course, it did not mean that Abram could just "Let go and let God." No, Abram still had to obey to lay hold of the promises, even as we today must obey (enabled by His Spirit) to lay hold of promises like "His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence." (2Pe 1:3) We experience His divine power when we walk in the Spirit and obey His Word ("Let God and let's go.")

Wiersbe - When you trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior, God gave you "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3+). You now have your inheritance! **All you need do is appropriate that inheritance by faith** and draw on "His riches in glory" (Phil. 4:19+). The Word of God is the "will" that tells you how rich you are, and **faith** is the key that opens the vault so you can claim your inheritance.

THOUGHT - I AGREE WITH WIERSBE OF COURSE, BUT WOULD JUST ADD THE CAVEAT THAT **BY FAITH** REFERS TO **FAITH** THAT OBEYS. IN OTHER WORDS, YOU CAN SAY YOU HAVE **FAITH**, BUT IF YOU DO NOT HAVE OBEDIENCE ENABLED BY HIS SPIRIT, YOUR **FAITH** IS, AS JAMES WOULD SAY, **"DEAD FAITH"** [Jas 2:17, 26+] AND WILL NOT LAY HOLD OF "EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING IN THE

Wenstrom adds that "In Genesis 13:14-17, we see Abram trusting the Lord's promise to give him the land of the Canaanites who were at the time of the promise occupying the land. Therefore, he was going to have to walk by means of faith and not sight and trust the Lord to come through on His promises, even though it appeared that this promise would be impossible to fulfill, but with God nothing is impossible. The circumstances did not look promising but Abram trusted in the Lord to deliver on this promise because he knew the Lord was omnipotent. **The principle of faith:** (1) God **speaks** (2) We **hear** His Word (3) We **obey** His Word. ([Genesis Verse by Verse](#))

Vance Havner - After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram..." (Gen. 15:1). After what things? After Abram had obeyed God and moved to Canaan (Gen. 12). After he had obeyed God and separated from worldly Lot (Gen. 13). After he had obeyed God and refused to let the world reward him (Gen. 14). The word of the Lord always comes to such men after such things. (See Consider Him -- 100 short devotionals)

Genesis 13:18 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.

- **Dwelt** Hebrews 11:9
- **Mamre:** Ge 14:13 18:1
- **Hebron:** Ge 23:2 35:27 37:14 Nu 13:22 Jos 14:13 Joshua 10:36
- **altar:** Ge 13:4 8:20 12:7,8 Ps 16:8 1Ti 2:8 Genesis 26:25 - built Genesis 33:20 - altar Exodus 6:3 - Jehovah
- [Genesis 13 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Related Passages:

Genesis 26:25 (ISAAC) **So he built an altar there** and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well.

Genesis 33:20 (JACOB) Then **he erected there an altar** and called it El-Elohe-Israel.

Exodus 6:3 and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, LORD, I did not make Myself known to them.

Hebrews 11:9 By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise;

Genesis 14:13 Then a fugitive came and told Abram the Hebrew. Now he was living by the **oaks of Mamre** the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner, and these were allies with Abram.

Genesis 18:1 Now the LORD appeared to him by the **oaks of Mamre**, while he was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day.

Source: [Abraham: Following God's Promise](#)

ABRAM BUILDS A SECOND ALTAR

Then - When is **then**? After he had lifted his eyes to look (Ge 13:14) and then lifted his feet to walk in obedience to the commands of God. Now he lifts his heart to God in worship and thanksgiving.

Abram moved his tent - Abram was moving his tent at the "stops and go's" of the LORD, Who had just commanded him to arise and walk about the land.

And came and dwelt by the oaks (aka "[terebinth](#)") of **Mamre**, which are in [Hebron](#), and there he built an altar to the LORD ([Jehovah/ Yahweh](#); Lxx = [kurios](#)) -- Notice Abram builds an altar to Yahweh, but no house for himself, being content with his tent! The **oaks of Mamre** was a grove of [terebinth](#) trees owned by Mamre the Amorite who was in an alliance with Abram in Ge 14:13, 24+. **Hebron** means "alliance," "association," "confederacy" and seems to speak to the alliance Abram made with the pagans in this area. It is interesting to note that an **altar** would have been a more permanent structure than a **tent**. Note also that the **altar** served two purposes: (1) It was for personal worship and (2) The altar was Abram's public testimony to the pagans, a clear witness that

there is One living and true God.

THOUGHT- One can imagine the pagans asking Abram "What is the purpose of this altar?" Will we see any of these pagans in Heaven? We will have to wait and see! Heaven will be a most fascinating place as we see those we did not expect to see there and sadly do not see those we expected to see there! Will you be there? Have you made a profession of Jesus Christ which falls short of a "possession" of Jesus Christ? Paul writes a sobering warning in the form of two commands "**Test** yourselves to see if you are in the faith; **examine** yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?" (2Co 13:5+) See also [How can I know for sure that I will go to heaven when I die? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

The first **altar** Abram built was in Shechem at the oak of Moreh, close to the mountains of Ebal and Gerizim (Ge 12:7). From Shechem Abram went to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar. (Ge 12:8). In Ge 13:3-4 Abram returned to this altar after backsliding into Egypt. Finally, here at the **oaks of Mamre** about 2 miles north of Hebron (and about 20 miles south to southwest of Jerusalem) Abram builds his third altar to the LORD. This became Abram's primary residence, and later the residence of his son Isaac (Ge 18:1; Ge 23:2; Ge 35:27; Ge 37:14).

QUESTION - [What is the significance of Hebron in the Bible?](#)

ANSWER - The ancient city of Hebron, today called Al-Khalil in Arabic, was located approximately 20 miles south of present-day Jerusalem in the Judean valley (See [Wikipedia](#)). Hebron is significant in the Bible for a couple of reasons. **Hebron** is first mentioned in Genesis 13:18 as a place where [Abram](#) (later known as Abraham) traveled after parting company with his nephew [Lot](#). **At Hebron the Lord first showed Abram the land that would belong to him and his offspring** (Genesis 13:14–17). Later, after the death of King Saul, God told David to go to Hebron, and it became the city where David ruled over Judah for seven years because at that time the Jebusites controlled Jerusalem (2 Samuel 2:1–4, 5:3).

After his wife, Sarah, died, Abraham still lived in Hebron, which belonged to the Hittites (Genesis 23). He wanted to bury Sarah there, so he approached a man named Ephron and asked to buy a cave for a burial site. Abraham was so well-respected among the Hittites that they offered to give him any cave he desired. But Abraham insisted on paying full price, and he selected an area called Machpelah, owned by a man named Ephron. Again, Ephron tried to give Abraham the cave, but Abraham insisted on paying full price.

"So Ephron's field in Machpelah near Mamre—both the field and the cave in it, and all the trees within the borders of the field—was deeded to Abraham as his property in the presence of all the Hittites who had come to the gate of the city. Afterward, Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave in the field of Machpelah near Mamre (which is at Hebron) in the land of Canaan. So the field and the cave in it were deeded to Abraham by the Hittites as a burial site" (Genesis 23:17–20).

This cave in Hebron is also called Kiriath-Arba, and, later, Abraham was also buried there (Genesis 25:10); and Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob (Genesis 47:29–30), and Leah (Genesis 49:30–32). The cave of Machpelah in Hebron is considered by the Jews to be the second holiest site in all Israel. Today it is under Palestinian control and is known to Jewish inhabitants as the Cave (or Tomb) of the Patriarchs. Muslims refer to it as the Sanctuary of Abraham.

The land around Hebron was part of the allotment Joshua gave to Caleb when Israel took the Promised Land (Joshua 14:13). Hebron was a reward for Caleb's faithful service and loyalty to the Lord. Caleb probably desired Hebron because it may have contained the "valley of Eschol" from which the spies had brought great clusters of grapes as proof of the land's bounty (Numbers 13:23). Hebron was later designated as a city of refuge (Joshua 20:1–7).

Hebron became the capital of Judah, and from there [David](#) reigned for seven-and-a-half years. During David's reign in Hebron, [Abner](#), the former commander of Saul's army, took Saul's son [Ish-Bosheth](#) across the Jordan River and set him up as king of Israel. Eventually, however, Abner defected to David's side and vowed to bring all of Israel under David's control (2 Samuel 3:8–12). When [Joab](#), David's commander learned of this, he was certain Abner was only spying for Ish-Bosheth (2 Samuel 3:24–25). He also hated Abner for killing his brother Asahel at the battle of Gibeon, so he set out for revenge. Joab met Abner in Hebron and pulled him aside under the pretext of having a private conversation. When they were alone, Joab stabbed Abner in the stomach and killed him (2 Samuel 3:27). David was grieved at the news of Abner's death and pronounced a curse on Joab (2 Samuel 3:28–29).

After Ish-Bosheth was assassinated, David meted out justice against the assassins in Hebron; in this way, David's integrity became known throughout all Israel (2 Samuel 4). David was eventually declared Israel's rightful king, and he moved his capital from Hebron to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5:1–5).

David's son [Absalom](#) made Hebron his headquarters while he plotted to steal his father's kingdom (2 Samuel 15:7–9). Absalom had

spent time cultivating loyalty from Israel's people, then moved his nefarious plot out from under his father's eye in Jerusalem. He appointed himself king in Hebron, striking fear in David's heart (2 Samuel 15:10, 14). David fled as Absalom moved from Hebron to Jerusalem to take control of the capital. He may have wrongly thought that, since it had worked for David to begin his reign in Hebron, it would also work for him.

Absalom forgot an important truth: David had been anointed by God to rule Israel; Absalom had not. As significant as Hebron was to his ancestors, a cave full of ancestral bones could not replace that anointing. Absalom's brief stint as a self-appointed king of Hebron did not lead to future success, and he died in disgrace (2 Samuel 18:9–14). Regardless of a city or nation's great history, unless God's presence and blessing are on it, it holds no power to bless its inhabitants. GotQuestions.org

In Abram's day **Hebron** was the residence of the sons of Heth or Hittites. Hebron played a significant role in Israel's history

- It was a place of Residence—Abram dwelled in Hebron. Ge 13:18
 - It was a place of Rest—Abram buys a cave here for the future burial of his family. Ge 23:2-20
 - It was a place of Reconnaissance—It was scouted out by the spies. Numbers 13:22
 - It was a place of Ruin—It was defeated by Joshua. Joshua 10:1-37
 - It was a place of Relegation—This city was assigned to the Levites. Joshua 21:10-13
 - It was a place of Refuge—It was designated as a city of refuge. Joshua 20:7
 - It was a place of Reward—Caleb expels the Anakims and is given Hebron as a reward. Joshua 14:12-15
 - It was a place of Rule—Hebron was David's original capital. 2 Samuel 2:1-3
 - It was a place of Royal Birth—This was the birthplace of David's sons. 2 Samuel 3:2
 - It was a place of Rebellion—Absalom's rebellion was here. 2 Samuel 15:7-10 (Mattoon's Treasures from Genesis - [hardbound copies are scarce](#) - [here is the very affordable digital version](#) - this is an excellent resource for lay readers, Sunday School teachers, etc)
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Bob Utley - Sacred trees are recurrent themes in early Israel

1. great tree at Moreh – Gen. 12:6; Deut. 11:30
2. great tree at Mamre – Gen. 13:18; 14:13; 18:1 (cf. Josephus, *Antiq.* 1.10.4)
3. great tree at Shechem – Gen. 35:4; Jdg. 9:6
4. great tree at Zaanannim – Josh. 19:33; Jdg. 4:11
5. great tree at Ophrah – Jdg. 6:11,19
6. great tree at Tabor – 1 Sam. 10:3 (no mention of an altar)

OTHER ALTARS IN THE OT

1. Abel – Gen. 4:4
2. Noah – Gen. 8:20
3. Abram – Gen. 13:18; 15:12-21
4. Isaac – Gen. 26:25
5. Jacob – Gen. 33:20; 35:7
6. Job – Job 1:5