

Genesis Chapter 13 - Commentary By Mike Wells

Chapter 13 Overview:

Genesis Chapter 13 covers more of the early ‘ministry’ of Abram, including (1) his return to the land in verses 1-4; (2) his separation from Lot in verses 5-13; and (3) God’s reaffirmation of His covenant with Abram in verses 14-18.

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.*

- After being kicked out of Egypt by Pharaoh Abram returned to Palestine in the south.

Genesis 13 : 2 - *Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold*

- God’s blessing of Abram was already apparent
- God never promised to make anyone that follows Him and obeys rich in the world’s terms, He does promise to bless them
- In Abram’s case He did both

Genesis 13 : 3 - *And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai.*

- Abram went back to Bethel.
- The name Bethel in Hebrew means “house of God”
- The symbolism is that though Abram had wavered in his faith in Egypt, he now returned true to his faith when he returned to Bethel – The house of God.
- As is always the case, God never moved and was waiting for Abram to come back to him

Genesis 13 : 4 - *unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD*

- Abram had prayed since leaving, but not publicly and openly giving thanks to God for His blessing and deliverance
- Just like us, Abram had moved from God and needed to come back to God openly and publicly.
- Abram like us had forgotten all his blessings and that God was to thank for them

Genesis 13 : 5 - *And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.*

- Abram wasn’t the only one that had prospered, Lot had as well.

- Lot now had flocks and herds, and tents as well.
- Lot had grown into a young rancher with lots of blessings

Genesis 13 : 6 - *And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.*

- The land in the area of Bethel wasn't enough for both Abram and Lot's herds to graze on
- It led to squabbling and friction between the Sheppard's that worked for Abram and Lot
- Some things never changed do they?? Reminds me of the modern Church and Christian.

Genesis 13 : 7 - *And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.*

- Not only were Abram's people and Lot's people going at it, but..the Cannites and the Perizzite's had herds in the area as well
- So, Lot and Abram couldn't spread out any further.

Genesis 13 : 8 - *And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.*

- The true selfless nature of Abram is now revealed.
- Rather than demanding his "rights" and adding fuel to the fire, Adam offered to move
- That is what we should do as brethren in Christ is to put others first and not ourselves and our thoughts.
- Abram offered Lot the first choice of the region

Genesis 13 : 9 - *Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.*

- Abram showed real selfless maturity.
- What ever gain he might have gained by putting himself first was not worth the friction and trouble which come in his relationship with his brethren.
- Wouldn't it be nice if everyone in the church could learn to put others first.
- This a lesson many folks in church still need to learn (life ain't all about you)

Genesis 13 : 10 - *And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.*

- Lot and Abram stood on top of a peak in the highlands near Bethel where they could see the entire region.

- Lot could see the Jordan valley reaching as far as the south shore of the Dead Sea.
- Evidently prior to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the south shore of the Dead Sea was lush
- What is implied is that after the judgment that came against Sodom and Gomorrah, God caused the the once lush land to become arid and desert like as it still is to this day.
- Zoar was one of five cities in the area of the south shore of the dead sea and was next to Sodam and Gomorrah.
- It is possible that Lot had visited there earlier and realized the business potential of the well watered plains and the large markets of Sodam and Gommarh

Genesis 13 : 11 - *Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other*

- Lot made the same mistake most people today still make
- He made life-altering decisions based solely on economic concerns and ignored the spiritual implications
- He made a major move for money and didn't think about how it would impact his family or him spiritually
- Though he would prosper there financially, he would eventually lose his family to the world
- He also left his spiritual mentor and uncle Abram and was now free to make his own choices as his accountability partner was gone now.

Genesis 13 : 12-13 – *12 Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom 13 The men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.*

- Abram continued to live in Canaan, where God had promised to bless him.
- Lot however, “*dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom*”
- Lot had now moved from the well-watered plains of Jordan into the cities on the plain.
- Surely, Lot was aware of the sinful reputation of these cities
- The men of Sodom were wicked and sinned exceedingly said the bible
- He had to be aware of the wickedness and perversion for which these cities were famous
- Business may have been better in Sodom and Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom
- The next time we read of lot in Genesis 14:12 he has moved into Sodom.

Genesis 13 : 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.*

- Abram was saddened to see his nephew and brethren make such a shallow decision

- Abram had more or less raised him as if he were his own son
- In this tough time, the Lord came and brought Abram good news
- He told Abram to look in all directions – Abram was most likely at the altar he had build on the mountain and could see for miles in each direction

Genesis 13 : 15 - *For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.*

- God then after having Abram look around gave him more details of his covenant
- Two promises were made
- 1) God promised all the land that Abram could see to Abram and his descendants
- The phrase in Hebrew for “the land” is (*haeretz*) and is still used by the Jews today to refer to their land.
- All the fighting and trouble which has gone on in Israel over the past decades is very simple
- The Jews seek to reclaim the land God gave to Abram 4 thousand years ago
- The Arabs are not willing to recognize that claim
- Notice that God promised the land to Abram’s descendants “forever”
- That promise still exists today

Genesis 13 : 16 - *And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered*

- God’s 2nd promise was that His offspring would be so many that they couldn’t be counted
- Also, in that promise was the promise of Christ

Genesis 13 : 17 - *Arise, walk though the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee*

- The promise of the land is repeated
- God wanted Abram to go check out the land that was now his

Genesis 13 : 18 - *Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.*

- Abram either as a part of his tour of the land or afterwards, moved south of Bethel and relocated in Hebron
- This is south of what later would be called Jerusalem
- He not only lived there, but he bult an altar to the Lord.