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Abram Lived in the Land of Canaan, While Lot Pitched His Tents Near Sodom 13: 1-13

Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot pitched his tents near Sodom
DIG: In forsaking rich cities and choosing less fertile land, what does this reveal about Abram (see **Hebrews 11:8-16)? What subtle, but slippery, slope of sin do you see in the lifestyle of Lot? What was the difference between Abram and Lot concerning wealth? How different is their testimony?**

REFLECT: If faced with a similar choice, would you have followed Abram or Lot? Why? Have you ever had the same five-step progression in your life? What are you looking at? What are you choosing to do? Where have you pitched your tent? Does the LORD want you to separate from something or someone?

So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, with his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him even though **he** was not mentioned in the previous chapter **(13:1).**

Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold (13:2). This is the first mention of **wealth** in the Bible. A careful study of the Scriptures shows that there is no sin in being **wealthy** as long as the **wealth** was gained honorably, regarded as belonging to **the LORD,** and used with a sense of stewardship. But as so often happens, human nature gets in the way, and relatives quarrel about money. This will be the case here.

From the Negev desert **he went from place to place until he came to** the more productive hill country of **Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had been earlier (13:3). He** returned to the very place **he** had left. Evidently **he** felt the need to return, confess **his** sins and seek full restoration from **the LORD**, **where he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of ADONAI (13:4).** This is where **he** had begun public worship and here

he renews **his** commitment to **Elohim** after **his** failure in **Egypt**. Because **God** promises to forgive us our sins when we confess them **(First John 1:9)**, **Abram** was restored and once again enjoyed full fellowship with **God**.

Lot, on the other hand, is seen as slowly drifting away from **the LORD**. Some people always seem to take the path of least resistance. It is not that **Lot** was evil; **he** simply seemed to be adrift without a moral anchor. **He** lived life on the edge, and like so many of us, **he** eventually lost **his** way. When faced with hard decisions, **he** acted selfishly and, in some cases, indecisively **(19:6-10).**[240]

Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram also had flocks and herds and tents (13:5). He was not as **wealthy** as **Abram**, but **he** did have **his** own possessions. **Lot** was being blessed because of **his** relationship to **Abram**. But this led to conflict in the midst of **the LORD's** blessings.

But the Land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions gained in **Egypt were so great that they were not able to stay together (13:6). The land** of Canaan had a limited number of water sources as well as limited grazing areas. It is not surprising, then, that the needs of **Abram** and **Lot** soon outgrew the available resources. As always, competing needs led to conflict.[241]



And quarreling arose between Abram's herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot. The rabbis teach that the quarrel arose because Lot's herdsmen led their flocks into pastures belonging to Abram. On being confronted by Abram's herdsmen, they answered that God had promised the land to

Abram, and since he had no children, Lot was his heir. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time (13:7). This was the key reason for the crowded conditions. But the saddest thing about this, of course, was that this was a bad testimony to **the Canaanites and Perizzites** around them, just as **they** had already compromised **their** testimony to the Egyptians.[242]

Abram had learned that **ADONAI** would take care of **his** needs no matter where **he** was, so **he** took the initiative to bring peace to the situation. **So Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers" (13:8). Lot** was **his** nephew, the son of **Abram's** brother **Haran**, but it was time to separate.

Being the oldest **Abram** should have had the first choice, but **he** graciously said to **Lot, "Is not the whole land before you?"** It is a rhetorical question, with the obvious answer of *yes*. "**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" (13:9). Abram** was indifferent to what **Lot** would choose because **Abram** was well aware of **the LORD's** promises to **him (12:2-3).** But this was not an empty gesture on **his** part, nor is it an empty gesture on our part when we are generous to those in the world because we know the promises of **God** on our behalf! Both men were **wealthy** and had material possessions, but there was a difference between **the two** of **them**. On the one hand, **Abram** had **wealth**, but **the wealth** did not have **Abram**. On the other hand, **Lot** had **wealth**, but **the wealth** had **Lot**.

Lot looked up and *saw* the plain that would become **his** ruin. The apostle **John** tells us that **the lust of the eyes** comes **not from the Father but from the world;** therefore, we should **not love the world or anything in the world (First John 2:15-16). When** Eve ***saw* that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it (3:6).** It was through the *eyes* that **Achan sinned. He** said: **When I *saw* in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them (Joshua 7:20-21).** Far too often what our ***eyes*** *see* gets us into trouble. But **the LORD** wants us to *listen* to **Him**. **So, trust comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through a word proclaimed about the Messiah (Romans 10:17 CJB).**

Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of Eden, or **the garden of the LORD, like the land**

of Egypt, toward the delta region of **Zoar. The garden of** Eden had four rivers running through it. Today this **land** is not **well watered**. It is a dry thirsty, salty desert. But **Lot** was looking at it **before ADONAI destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah (13:10).** This is a foreshadowing of what is to come.

So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. Abram was looking forward to the city with foundations whose architect and builder is God (see the commentary on **Hebrews, to see link click Cp – The Faith of Abraham**), while **Lot chose for himself** a **city** built by man, that would be destroyed by **God (19:24). Abram** was thinking about what was best for **Lot,** but **Lot** was thinking about what was best for **himself** and **his** love for worldly things **(First John 2:15-17).** From there, **the two men parted company (13:11).**

Abram lived in the land of Canaan where his opportunities for grazing his **flocks and herds** was limited**, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom (13:12). Lot's** material blessing became a moral decay. This was the great mistake of **Lot's** life, from which **he** would continually suffer. **He** walked away from the blessings **he** had enjoyed while **he** associated with **Abram (12:3).**

This section closes with the divine evaluation of **Sodom**. **Now Lot** did not know that **the men of Sodom were wicked** and probably would not have chosen the territory if **he** had known**.**[243] But **he** would soon find out. The Hebrew word for **wicked** here is *raim* and describes external **wickedness**. This is similar to the time of Noah. **The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time (6:5).** Just as **their wickedness** would have to be destroyed by the Flood, the **wickedness** of **Sodom** and Gomorrah would also have to be wiped out because they **were sinning greatly against ADONAI (13:13). They knew that He was God but deliberately rebelled against Him.** As in the Flood account, one person, Noah, and one family was spared; here also, one person, **Lot**, and one family will be spared as well. At this point, there is no indication that **Lot** is aware of how **wicked the men of Sodom** were. This sets the stage for the events of **Chapter 14**, and **the wickedness** of **Sodom** and Gomorrah will set the stage for **Chapters 18** and **19**.

When any of us **sin**, we **sin greatly against ADONAI.** When **King David** stole the virtue of Bathsheba, the life of Uriah, and the lives of many soldiers; **he** destroyed

the honor of the country and the dignity of **his** throne **(Second Samuel 11:1-27).** Yet when **he** repents in **Psalm 51:1** and **4 he** says: **Have mercy on me, O God;** for **against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.** Although **David** obviously had sinned **against** others, ultimately, **he** had sinned **greatly against the LORD.** You and I cannot **sin** any other way. When we **sin**, we all **sin greatly against Him.** But that doesn't mean that when we **sin** against **God**, we don't **sin** against others also. We can cause great emotional pain to others in the wake of our sin against **the Holy One**. We need to think about that.

But before leaving this section, let us look at **Lot's five-step progression into ruin**. First, **he looked toward Sodom (13:10).** Secondly, **he chose the area of Sodom (13:11).** Thirdly, **he pitched his tents near Sodom (13:12).** Fourthly, **he lived in Sodom (14:11-12).** Lastly, **he sat in the gateway of the city (19:1)**, meaning **he** became a citizen and elder **of the city. Lot** was **a righteous man (Second Peter 2:7)**, but once **he** began to understand the sinful ways of **Sodom**, **he** thought it would not affect him. **He** thought **he** could swim in the toilet and come up smelling like a rose. But **sin** always takes you further than you want to go, and costs you more than you want to pay, and **he** paid dearly. **When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone; but one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, gives birth to death (James 1:13-15).**