

# What You Need to Know About ABRAHAM: “God Is Faithful to Keep His Promises”

## Study Number Two – Genesis 13:1-18

In our last message we had our hero from Ur of the Chaldees. He'd received a message from the Lord that he needed to leave his family and leave everybody and go to a land that God was going to show him.

His father Terah was privy to this and so he took the whole family and left Ur of the Chaldees and they ended up in a city called Haran. Haran was the citadel for the moon god. And obviously they were idolaters and he was very happy to stay the rest of his life in Haran. Which ended up being six years.

When he died then we have the opening of Genesis 12, where we started. So it's like it's the second time that God is calling Abram to separate himself from his family and to go and to do what the Lord has in mind for him.

Well, that's kind of the picture we had and then we went through what the Lord said:

1. “I'm going to make you a great nation,”
2. “I'm going to “bless you,”

3. “I’m going to make your name great,” and
4. “I’m going to bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you.”

Those four things were wonderfully fulfilled.

Now when they took this journey Abram was not completely obedient. He took Lot his nephew with him. And then he took all of the things they had accumulated in Haran. They set out for a land they didn’t know, which was the land of Canaan.

Quickly within a verse they’re in the land of Canaan. When they got to Canaan there were two surprises, remember?

Surprise #1:

There was somebody already living there. The Canaanites were living in the land and they probably bought up most of all the good pastureland, which had to be a disruption to Abram to have to trust the promises of God with something he was not expecting was going to happen.

Surprise #2:

The second thing that happened was the market crashed and there was a horrible, horrible famine in the land. And so his thought, so early in his career in walking with God, we don’t wait for instructions when there’s a need, we just get after it

and make it happen.

He took his wife and they went right through the land and went all the way down into Egypt—which is a 250-mile trip.

Before they get to Egypt he says to Sarah, “Now Sarah, you’re a beautiful woman. But I want to tell you something, those people down there are going to see how beautiful you are, they’re going to kill me because they want you. Would you tell them that you’re my sister?”

Well with that lie they went down there and sure enough Pharaoh’s house realized how beautiful she was and took her into his harem. Here is the seed, the fulfillment of the promise, the potential for that seed through the vehicle that God has chosen now in precarious, precarious circumstances because of a man living in the flesh and trying to make things happen on his own.

We need to understand that. The minute that we take the reins into our own hands and we begin to try to manipulate and do the work of God the way we think it needs to be done, rather than the way God wants to do it through us, we end up in this kind of lying, cheating, politicking and power struggles

And that is the picture and it’s embarrassing. And it’s sad for our hero to be there.

Well evidently the time came for Sarah and her number came up, just like Esther came up with Xerxes in the book of

Esther. On that occasion she probably confronted Pharaoh with the truth. She told him that she was already married to Abram.

Well this made him very unhappy and there was an instantaneous response on the part of Pharaoh. It's deportation with no dignity whatsoever.

Let's look at the last four verses of our previous study and then that will get us right into the middle of where we are in these lessons.

v. 17 But the Lord inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household because of Abram's wife Sarai.

God will move in and do those things which have to be done to accomplish His purpose when we fail in what we ought to be doing.

v. 18 So Pharaoh summoned Abram. "What have you done to me?" he said. "Why didn't you tell me she was your wife?"

v. 19 Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her to be my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and go!"

Three very embarrassing statements that speak of the fact that he lied on three counts.

v. 20 Then Pharaoh gave orders about Abram to his men, and

they sent him on his way, with his wife and everything he had.

Who can measure the scars and the hurt and the abuse that comes from times like this when we live in the flesh instead of the spirit? Things that seem to mark us for life with regret?

When we get to know the Lord more fully and deeply we realize it's not an issue of forgiveness, because when we talk to Him He's ready to forgive 75 times if necessary. He'll do this with Abram .

Truth be known, we all sit here as wounded healers, as those who have at times gotten to the flesh and embarrassed ourselves, our mates, our family, the world, by the things we say and the things we do. But isn't God good? Isn't God gracious? Isn't God a rememberer of the promises?

“Yes, Abram you now have it on your resume that you were deported from Egypt by the head honcho. Now that is not a very pretty picture to have on your resume.”

And the reason is because of a capital offense:

“You lied to the Pharaoh of the land.”

And with all that being said, our hero has come to his senses in the far country and he's making a 250 mile trip home. This is probably the longest trip he's ever made.

He wonders what the future holds. Is the famine over back in the homeland? Are the Canaanites still there? Will there be a place for me? Or hereby my actions embarrassed God to the point that He's given up on me?

Those are all questions that immediately flood into our minds.

One writer put it this way:

*...never abandon your altar. Stay in fellowship with the Lord no matter what the circumstances may be. ... go back to the place where you left Him and make things right.*  
(source unknown)

He's on the way back and we see what's beginning to happen.

Here is a great statement Charles Haddon Spurgeon:

“If there was any other condition that would be better for you than the condition you are now in, God would have placed you there.”  
(source unknown)

Now take that to the bank. He's the sovereign God.

Isn't that good? That kind of crystalizes where we are.

Now let's jump into the chapter.

**v. 1 So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, with**

**his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him.**

“So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev,”—that’s the southland just before coming up to the Promised Land—“with his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him.”

When we come to know Christ, God begins to progressively separate us from the things that would entangle us. We run the race with patience that’s set before us. We get rid of the entanglements that tangle our feet to keep us from racing. And we deal with the sin.

We’re separating ourselves progressively unto the Lord so that every time we separate ourselves, God blesses and uses us.

Now there’s one issue, and that’s Lot. And so that’s why he’s also named here. But there’s got to be a separation from Abram and Lot here and we’ll understand why as we get along.

Now we call this the “SO-SO” PASSAGE, because we have: “So Abram,” “So Abram,” “So Abram”—three times. We see it here at the beginning and we’re going to see it down two more times in the passage.

After the forced exodus, and the 250-mile trip back to the land, we’re going to see God is just as gracious to Abram as he was to the Prodigal Son. He’s an old man running to get his arms around his son who’s been in the far country. That’s the

picture of God here as Abram comes back once again to try to be what God wants him to be.

**v. 2 Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold.**

“Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold.”

Well while he was down there, and he received all the gifts that had been given because of the lie that he told Pharaoh, he started investing in cattle futures and precious metals and he scored big time. And so he comes back and he is very wealthy. This is the first time in the Bible we have a wealthy man.

And it says he is “very wealthy.” He has done well. And the three words that describe his wealth are:

1. “livestock,”
2. “silver,” and
3. “gold.”

There are two other things that we need to observe that are going to create some real havoc in his future—and let’s be instructive on that.

First of all, the WEALTH is going to be a problem for Abram in these future studies.

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But the other one is, and she's not named, is HAGAR.

Sarai kind of pitched a fit while she was in Egypt over the fact that she was precariously and in danger of losing the seed and everything else. It said that she thought that the least that Abram could do is give her a maid now to clean up around the tent and take care of things. So they got them a maid while they were down there by the name of Hagar and she's going to be in the middle of the story as we all know.

Sometimes when we sow to the flesh, there's a long, long reaping process, even though forgiveness is instant.

There are things that many never experience. There are scars that we bear. There are things that hurt so deeply that it's just part of what God uses to remind us of the horrible cost when we function in the flesh and when we're not under the control of the Holy Spirit.

These are just some of the wounds that Abram is bring out of Egypt that's going to affect some of the things that we'll be looking at in our future episodes.

**v. 3 From the Negev he went from place to place until he came to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had been earlier**

“From the Negev he went from place to place until he came to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had

been earlier”

Isn't that beautiful? What's the principle?

When we have missed the will of God, or we feel like we have missed it, then retrace our steps back to where we got out. Because God's waiting there to take us in.

When we left the will of God we went in the flesh and we left the Lord there. Now come back to that place, because He is there, and reaffirm and reestablish ourself in the will of God.

And that's what's happened here. He's back where he was. But notice it's back “where his tent had been earlier.” It's like when we're in the flesh everything stops spiritually. And it's like we have to go back right to the beginning and start all over again. That's kind of the feeling we get here.

It's a long trek back into the will of God. And God has providentially created those circumstances and difficulties in Egypt to get him back into the center of the will of God.

So when we leave the will of God, it's best to go back to the place where we left.

Psalm 37:23, 24

If the Lord delights in a man's way,  
he makes his steps firm;  
though he stumble, he will not fall,

for the Lord upholds him with his hand.

So Abram comes back to Bethel.

This is what Alexander MacLaren says at this point and it's so important:

... another lesson is also taught. After the interruption of the Egyptian journey, [that's where we've been] Abraham had to begin all his Canaan life over again. Very emphatically the narrative puts it, that he went to 'the place where his tent had been at the beginning,' to the altar which he had made at the first. Yes! that is the only place for a man who has faltered and gone aside from the course of obedience. He must begin over again.

(source unknown)

There are times when we need to realize that our personal desires and ambitions are not God's ultimate purpose for our life so it's time to put it to bed. It's time to separate ourselves from that and get focused on the one thing that we do well and ride that to the grave.

This is a long journey back, and it's a painful one. But he's coming back and it's going to be wonderful to see what happens.

Our hero comes back. And where do we go?

**v. 4 and where he had first built an altar. There Abram**

## called on the name of the Lord.

“and where he had first built an altar.”

This is the first time it happens but it's not going to be the last.

“There Abram called on the name of the Lord.”

Retrace our steps, eat the crow necessary for the disobedience or the act of the flesh if it's been involved in it, get our heart right with the Lord and then call on the name of the Lord because we're asking for new instructions and direction.

Now, what's involved when we're trying in our life to get right with God? When we really want to get close and we know there are some things that are standing in the way and we haven't really dealt with it but we want to. Every time we see someone like this getting right with God and getting close to God we feel kind of jealous inside.

We don't have to. It's just simply following the directions of the scripture. After David sinned with Bathsheba, we have the full record in Psalm 51—and what a perfect Psalm to use when dealing with acts of the flesh.

### Psalm 51:2-8

Wash away all my iniquity  
and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is always before me.  
Against you, you only, have I sinned  
and done what is evil in your sight, ...  
Surely you desire truth in the inner parts;  
you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.  
Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;  
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.  
Let me hear joy and gladness; ...

So many times we think that's a prayer we prayed in salvation and we don't have to pray that anymore. And this is where so many people are going to be surprised in heaven that there has been a computer print-out going from the day of our salvation that we are going to be facing when we get to glory at the Judgment Seat of Christ. It's simply accountability and has nothing to do with condemnation.

But it's that accountability before Him that we've been sensitive to what's offending Him and we are dealing with it.

In the letters to the seven churches in the book of Revelation, the first letter is the letter to the church at Ephesus.

The only thing that's wrong was they left their first love. And then the Lord says this:

### Revelation 2:5

Remember therefore 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.

To remove our lampstand is to remove our witness. It's just like God saying, "If y'all aren't going to deal with this seriously, as far as any future significant ministry, we're just putting you to bed." That's in essence what He would be saying to Ephesus.

If the people are not going to repent, deal with sin and continue to grow and to mature in Christ, then their witness, as far as the Lord is concerned, is going to be a witness in the flesh and there will not be anything significant coming from the Spirit.

And so at this point Abram is putting himself in a place of great blessing that we're going to see.

Now one other thing we need to notice, we never see Lot build an altar. And we never see Lot call on the name of the Lord.

And yet when we read 2 Peter it speaks of righteous Lot being persecuted because of the homosexuality in Sodom and Gomorrah.

So here's a guy who is obviously living in the flesh scripturally, and because of that he has faced all of these selfish decisions he's getting ready to make and we'll see why he does. He doesn't take time to call on the name of the Lord.

He is not a man who followed in his uncle's footsteps and built an altar unto the Lord.

J. Vernon McGee has a way of putting the whole scenario together:

Although he may stumble and fall, this man comes back to God. There is always a way back to the altar for Abram, the Prodigal Son, and any man or woman who wants to come back to God. The arms of the Father are open to receive them.  
(source unknown)

So we have an expected, exciting moment in our text even before we read further, that this indeed is going to take place. There's going to be reconciliation.

**v. 5 Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents.**

“Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents.”

What's the difference? The difference is, Abram had herds and livestock, but Lot's livestock had him. In other words, it's the major priority in life.

Abram is wealthy. He possesses this. But he has the right attitude. He doesn't have a love for material things. Lot does. All that's going to come out very clear in the passage.

He is a Christian who is possessed by his possessions—that’s kind of the way we could say it.

**v. 6 But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together.**

“But the land could not support them while they stayed together,”—REASON—“for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together.”

They’ve got the best land.

Now as they’re coming back, trying to eke out a living with these increased herds that both of them have—because of their trip south—they’re just not able to find any kind of compatibility.

Right away there’s snipping and fussing with the cowboys of Abram and the cowboys of Lot, over certain pasture land and rights to certain lands. And so they’re just at it, as they’re moving about. The land can’t support them, “for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together.”

There’s just not enough pastureland for them to continue to operate together.

Bruce Waltke says:

Ironically, the problem is the “severity” of blessing that causes strife among the family.  
(source unknown)

Isn't that interesting? The strife among the family comes with prosperity, not with adversity.

When the family is together in adversity, it's survival. But when they're together in prosperity, it's ownership. It's who's who and what's what. And that's what does great damage to interpersonal relationships.

**v. 7 And quarreling arose between Abram's herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time.**

“And quarreling arose between Abram's herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot.”

That last phrase is sad.

“The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time.”

Now it's not that we have been surprised that the Canaanites are there. What is so sad is the Canaanites and Perizzites are seeing these foreigners fighting with each other in a family struggle.

It's going to be shocking to all of us, when we stand in glory

and see what damage has been done to the church, the body of Christ, because of believers fighting with each other over picky little things that are an embarrassment. When people come and see us not speaking to each other, see us neglecting one another, see us with different agendas, all of those things are an embarrassment to the Lord, that we who name His name would stoop to this.

And here are the cowboys of Lot on one side and the cowboys of Abram on the other side and they're quarrelling. They're fighting over who has the right to certain pieces of pastureland. And the whole problem is, their witness is being destroyed by the quarrelling.

### Philippians 2:14-15

Be doing all things without secret complainings and inward questionings; in order that you may become blameless and innocent, children of God, above reproach in the midst of a crooked and depraved generation, among whom you are shining as lights in the world,

The quarrelling puts out our light! The quarrelling puts us aside. And as a result of that, we are not bearing fruit because of the conflict.

God fixes our heart and the quality of our life is up to us to walk daily in obedience to His Word, with deep compassion for a lost and dying world. We have to stay after it and stay focused on who's loyal to the church and what He's trying to

accomplish with us while we're here, to grow in grace and greater productivity, so that greater and greater fruit might be borne through us in the days yet before us.

Listen to what John Ortberg says. He is so realistic.

(Everybody's Normal Till You Get to Know Them by John Ortberg)

To be alive means to be in conflict. People fight. Sometimes they fight a lot, sometimes a little; sometimes constructively, sometimes destructively; sometimes fairly, sometimes unfairly. Sometimes fights end in hugs and kisses and new depths of intimacy; sometimes they end in screaming and loss of control; sometimes they end in coldness and withdrawal.

To be alive means to be in conflict. It's part of the Dance of the Porcupines. People may not be normal, but conflict surely is—at least in our world. It is an inescapable part of being an “as-is” human being.

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Now the choice is how do we deal with it? Remember that story about Cain where the Lord says, “Cain, why are you angry? Why are you downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, the demon of sin is crouching at your door and you must master it. You must make the right choice.” (ref. Genesis 4:6, 7)

And he made the wrong choice and murdered his brother. The consequences are obvious.

**v. 8 So Abram said to Lot, “Let’s not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers.**

“So”—there’s the next “So.” We had “So” in verse 1. Here comes the next one in our “So So” passage.

“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.’”

### Psalm 133:1-3

How good and pleasant it is  
when brothers live together in unity!  
It is like precious oil poured on the head,  
running down on the beard,  
running down on Aaron’s beard,  
down upon the collar of his robes.  
It is as if the dew of Hermon  
were falling on Mount Zion.  
For there the Lord bestows his blessing,  
even life forevermore.

When He sees us loving each other in oneness, the blessing of God starts to fall on the assembly. That’s what the Psalmist is telling us.

And that’s what Abram says. “This is sad. We’re brothers!”

We're fighting with each other. We ought not be doing this."

And so he says let's stop it.

Reason: "we are brothers."

Isn't this magnanimous, by the way? Here's the older of the two, he has all the property rights in the world because he has the promise of the covenant from the Lord. But what does he do? There's something very instructive here.

**v. 9 Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left."**

"Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company."

That's what God wanted all along.

"If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left."

In other words, what he's saying is, "The promises of God to me of the land that I'm going to receive is safe and I don't have to protect my rights so Lot, have at it. Choose whatever you want! Because everything God has for me is not going to be affected by the choice you're getting ready to make. Even though you're going to take the best part of the land, it's still going to be God's promise is going to be fulfilled."

Sometimes we don't have to stand up and protect ourselves because God has promised and obligated to do it on the basis of the promises that He made us. And so this elderly gentleman, so unselfish and so kind, steps forward and says, "To get this problem solved:"

"Is not the whole land before you?"

"Please separate from me."

### 2 Timothy 2:4

And the Lord's bondservant must not be quarrelsome but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged.

Here's a great quote from Rick Rigsby's book:

(Lessons from a Third Grade Dropout: how the timeless wisdom of one man can impact an entire generation by Rick Rigsby, Ph.D.)

Note the words of French author George Sand: "Guard well within you that treasure, kindness. Know how to give without hesitation, how to lose without regret, how to acquire without meanness."

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When are we going to learn as believers that the thing that's going to touch people the most is the kindness we show to each other? And the love and the devotion and the support

and the encouragement?

Yes, kindness is a manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit, isn't it? Just take a look at Galatians 5:22 and 23.

Alexander MacLaren puts the capper on it:

A soul truly living in the contemplation of the future, and filled with God's promises, will never be eager to insist on its rights, or to stand on its dignity, and will take too accurate a measure of the worth of things temporal to get into a heat about them. The clash of conflicting interests, and the bad blood bred by them, seem infinitely small, when we are up on the height of communion with God. An acre or two more or less of grass land does not look all-important, when our vision of the city which hath foundations is clear. So an elevated calm and 'sweet reasonableness' will mark the man who truly lives by faith, and he will seek after the things that make for peace.

(source unknown)

Throughout scripture there are those painful separations that come. We have another one in the New Testament, don't we? Remember after the first missionary journey Barnabas was insistent that John Mark go? He went and got Silas and took off.

And there were two missionary journeys—Barnabas and John Mark went to the island of Cypress and went in their own direction.

It's always important for us to follow Philippians 2:3:

Philippians 2:3-4

do nothing from selfish ambition or from empty conceit, but with humility of mind regarding one another as excelling themselves; not be looking out each one for his own things, but also for the things of others.

Well, the study wouldn't be complete if we didn't have at least one quotation from Fénelon, would it? Fénelon is a 16th century Catholic writer and he's right on this one:

(Fénelon: Selected Writings – The Classics of Western Spirituality Edited and translated by Chad Helms)

All of our faults only come from being still attached to and centered on ourselves. It is our ego that wants to use our virtues to its own end. [Man that hurts] Renounce, therefore, without ever hesitating this miserable ego even in the most minor things where the spirit of grace would have you understand that you are still looking for satisfaction of ego. Here is total and true crucifixion; all the rest is only superficial and touches the surface of the soul. All those who seek to die to their old selves by any other means only end up leaving their life on one hand and then picking it back up with the other. It is never successful.

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Looks like he's writing for us today in what he has to say.

**v. 10 Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.)**

“Lot looked up”—but he didn't look to heaven, did he? He isn't praying.

“and he saw that the whole plain of the Jordan, it was well watered, like the garden of the Lord,”—and then what?—“like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar.”

One of the best, richest parts of Egypt. Still has it in his head. We got the man out of Egypt but not Egypt out of the man here.

“(This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.)”

Isn't it interesting in scripture, how personal choices have affected a destiny so incredibly?

Remember the Reubenites and the Gadites saw all the land on the eastern side of the Jordan and decided they wanted to stay there? That's short of the land—along with the half-tribe of Manasseh. And guess what? When push came to shove, they are the first three nations that go into captivity because they're exposed on the eastern side of the Jordan, short of what God had for them.

The embarrassing thing in heaven is going to be how much we missed because we came short of what God really had in mind to give us. Here Abram is freed from all this, but Lot isn't. And so his eyes become the binoculars of his heart.

He looks down there and his greed sees the well-watered plains of Jordan. The eye-gate is often the manifestation of temptation.

In 1 John 2:16 it's "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."

In the Garden of Eden, it was Eve SEEING the fruit that caused her to desire it so deeply.

And here in the same way we have a picture of a man out of fellowship with God and he looks down there and he sees the well-watered plain and he says, "That's mine." And that was the end of the real estate deal.

Then we see the same thing in Achan. As soon as they go into the land and they get ready to conquer Jericho, what does the Lord say? "Don't touch and don't take anything."

His eyes saw a goodly, Babylonish garment, a wedge of gold and a wedge of silver. And through the eye gate he lusted, took it and felt that in the midst of two and a half million tents it would be secure in the floor of his tent, and he buried it there. (see Joshua 7:21)

“I saw, I coveted and I took,” he said in his testimony just before he died, as a result of being discovered.

And so here Lot looks up and his greed helps him make the choice and he chooses the well-watered plains.

When Abram left Egypt, he left it forever, but not Lot. Lot brought it back with him and it affected the whole future of his life, and the ultimate story as we know is the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

**v. 11 So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company:**

“So “Lot chose for himself”—rather than letting the Lord give him—“the whole plain of the Jordan and he set out toward the east. The two men parted company:”

Just like Judas Iscariot: “Get what you can, can it and then poison all the rest.” He took what he could and he left. And now they are separated from each other.

What does God do when we experience separation in our life in fresh new ways? He just comes right back, He renews the calmness and pours out the blessing. This ought to get us so motivated that we get on our face before God and say, “Lord, if there’s anything You want to take out, have at it! Get it because I want to experience the fresh blessing!”

Obedience frees God to act. Separation leads to blessing. Put those two together. Obedience allows God to act—Separation leads to blessing. And look at the blessing that’s going to come! It’s the complete reinstatement of the Abrahamic covenant.

**v. 12 Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom.**

“Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom.”

He is not going to separate from them, by the way. Because just to put it in a short capsule form, he bought land, he hired an architect, he built a house, and he went into public politics. And he’s functioning in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah as a politician. There is the man who made the choice—the separation from Abram.

**v. 13 Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord.**

“Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord.”

And we know all about this being the citadel of deviant sexual behavior. And it was great, great wickedness.

Now there's a principle here:

More than not, we will not change our environment but our environment will change us.

We have to teach that to kids. We have to help them understand that.

These men of Sodom are characterized in two ways:

1. they are “wicked” and
2. they are “sinning greatly against the Lord.”

That is different from today's explanation of a deviant lifestyle, isn't it? How we salt it down and water it.

**v. 14 The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, “Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west.**

“The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him,”

He's now ready for blessing!

“Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west.”

“You can go to all four points of the compass buddy, because of the decision you made to let Me make the choice. This is what

I have in mind for you. And so just lift your eyes! Look in every direction.”

And then that wonderful promise: “I will give it to you and to your descendants forever.” And He has said that and He means that even today, though there are those who are grumbling and rambling with anti-biblical statements about who that land belongs to. We know who it belongs to! Abram himself is the one.

And so he surrenders it to the Lord and this is a wonderful thing that happens.

Our problem so much in our lives and why we miss so much is simply because we want to control. We just cannot surrender control.

**v. 15 All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.**

“All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.”

That’s going to be reinstated at least two more times as God enters into this unconditional covenant. Here’s the preface to it and the promises that are being made. God is going to keep His promises to Abram.

**v. 16 I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then**

**your offspring could be counted.**

“I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted.”

And we believe, from the bottom of our hearts, that God has been faithful in that.

**v. 17 Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you.”**

“Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am”—and see it again—“giving it to you.”

“It’s yours now because you separated. Every place your foot would tread,” the Lord said to Joshua, “is going to be land that I promised.”

And now our last “So”—number 4. We had it in verse 1, verse 8, verse 11, and now here in verse 18.

**v. 18 So Abram moved his tents and went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the Lord.**

“So Abram moved his tents and went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the Lord.”

And now he's back in fellowship. What a joy to leave him there in fellowship with the Lord.

Abram represents the SPIRIT. Lot represents the FLESH

Abram walked by FAITH. Lot walked by SIGHT.

Abram was GENEROUS. Lot was GREEDY and WORLDLY.

Abram looked for a city whose builder and maker was GOD. Lot made his home the cities of SODOM and GOMORRAH.

Abram, the father of all who believe. Lot, the father of those who perpetuated infamy.

Abram is the heir of the land of CANAAN. Lot lost everything through the DESTRUCTION of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Now there are thirteen lessons. Meditate with the spirit of God on what we have seen in this study.

Lesson #1: If you are out of the will of God, retrace your steps back to the point of departure and then deal with the disobedience and seek the Lord's face for further instructions, and wait until He makes known His way before you proceed.

Lesson #2: Who can measure the negative impact of strife among brothers?

Lesson #3: You don't have to stand for your rights when the

Lord has promised. You can trust Him to overrule in the situation and to be faithful to make provision of that which He has promised.

Lesson #4: When you leave or miss the Lord's will, it is best to go back to the place you left.

Lesson #5: Abram went back to "where he first built an altar. There Abram called upon the name of the Lord" (verse 4).

Lesson #6: What man sees and what God sees are two different things.

Lesson #7: Man's ways and God's ways are two different paths as well.

Lesson #8: Lot chose for himself and Abram let God do his choosing.

Lesson #9: The key phrase is in Genesis 13:11: "The two men parted company." When they did, God was free to bless Abram.

Lesson #10: A wicked environment will probably change you before you change it.

Lesson #11: New assurances of His promises come to those who are obedient in separation.

Lesson #12: Obedience frees God to act.

Lesson #13: Separation leads to blessing.

Here's something from *Our Daily Bread* to wrap up:

## YIELDING CONTROL

During a visit with a friend suffering from Lou Gehrig's disease, I asked what lessons God was teaching her as she traveled down this difficult road. Her immediate response was, "Loss of control."

She had always been a highly organized, independent person whose corporate job involved long hours and frequent travel. Now she had to depend on others for everything from getting dressed to brushing her teeth. Unable to move her arms or legs, she had control over only what she thought and what she said. She knew that soon she would even lose her power of speech. "I used to stress over my job," she said, "and never really gave it to the Lord. Now, with almost all control gone, I can stress about [my physical limitation] or surrender it to Christ."

The question facing each of us is, "Will I retain control of my life or yield it to the Lord today?" To live only for what I want is to be controlled by the sinful nature. Paul said that this leads to death, ...

To one degree or another, we will all lose control of our lives as we grow older. Yielding control to God is a choice we can make every day—starting today. —David C. McCasland

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Monday, May 5, 2003)

Father, the real fruit comes when we do that. And we thank You for showing it so graphically at the decision when Lot left, what You had in mind for Abram. Lord You've got some great things in mind for us and You've got some things You want us to separate from. Enable us in our personal lives to think of those things which are detrimental to Your cause. And may You be glorified and honored in the decisions we make. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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# What You Need to Know About ABRAHAM: “God Is Faithful to Keep His Promises”

## Study Number Two – Genesis 13:1-18

### NOTES

v. 1 So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, with his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him.

v. 2 Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold.

v. 3 From the Negev he went from place to place until he came to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had been earlier

v. 4 and where he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of the Lord.

v. 5 Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents.

v. 6 But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together.

v. 7 And quarreling arose between Abram’s herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time.

v. 8 So Abram said to Lot, “Let’s not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers.

v. 9 Is not the whole land before you? Let’s part company. If you go to the left, I’ll go to the right; if you go to the right, I’ll go to the left.”

v. 10 Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.)

v. 11 So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company:

v. 12 Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom.

## NOTES

v. 13 Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord.

v. 14 The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, “Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west.

v. 15 All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.

v. 16 I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted.

v. 17 Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you.”

v. 18 So Abram moved his tents and went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the Lord.

## QUESTIONS:

1. Read Genesis 13:1-18 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

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2. Describe Abram’s journey and financial condition, according to verses 1-4.

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3. What happened between Abram and Lot, according to verses 6 & 7?

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4. What proposal does Abram give to Lot in verses 8 & 9?

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5. What transpired between Abram and Lot in verses 11 & 12?

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6. Describe the environment where Lot lived.

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7. What does the Lord have to say to Abram in verses 14-17?

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8. What did Abram do in verse 18?

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9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

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10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

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**LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:**

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

**LESSON #1:** If you are out of the will of God, retrace your steps back to the point of departure and then deal with the disobedience and seek the Lord's face for further instructions, and wait until He makes known His way before you proceed.

**LESSON #2:** Who can measure the negative impact of strife among brothers?

LESSON #3: You don't have to stand for your rights when the Lord has promised. You can trust Him to overrule in the situation and to be faithful to make provision of that which He has promised.

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