



A CASE STUDY IN PRIORITIES

OPENING COMMENT

Our human disposition is geared toward repeated failure and blunders instead of immediate course correction and obedience. Fresh off the heels of colossal failure Abram, Lot, and the whole entourage find themselves faced with another opportunity to trust God and His promises or rely on their evaluation of the circumstances to determine the path forward. Although the story does not resolve this week, we get a clear picture of which path will lead to destruction and which path will lead to ultimate flourishing.

READ THE TEXT: Genesis 13

So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negeb.

² Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. ³ And he journeyed on from the Negeb as far as Bethel to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, ⁴ to the place where he had made an altar at the first. And there Abram called upon the name of the Lord. ⁵ And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, ⁶ so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together, ⁷ and there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were dwelling in the land.

⁸ Then Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we are kinsmen. ⁹ Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left." ¹⁰ And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw that the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) ¹¹ So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed east. Thus they separated from each other. ¹² Abram settled in



the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom. ¹³ Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the Lord.

¹⁴ The Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, ¹⁵ for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. ¹⁶ I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted. ¹⁷ Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you.” ¹⁸ So Abram moved his tent and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron, and there he built an altar to the Lord.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

1. How did Abram leave the land of Egypt? (vs. 1-2)
2. Why do Abram and Lot have to split up and go their separate ways? (vs 5-7)
3. What is Abram’s solution to the problem (vs. 8-9)? How is this different from his approach to the famine in chapter 12?
4. What is being foreshadowed when we read about Egypt in verse 10?
5. God reiterates his promise to Abram in verses 14-17. What are the things that are promised? How are they different/similar to what God promised at the beginning of chapter 12?
6. How does Abram respond to God’s promises? (vs. 18)

APPLYING THE TEXT

1. Given the first couple of stories in Abram’s life, what connections should we make between Abram’s worship and his faith? How might we apply this to our current context?
2. What parallels do you see between Abram in Chapter 12:10-20 and Lot here in chapter 13? How might we fall into the same traps today?
3. What might we learn from the interaction between Abram and Lot, and the conflict amongst their herdsmen? How might we apply that to our disagreements and quarrels today?
4. The passage ensures to inform the reader at several points that these interactions are happening amongst evil people (vs. 7, 10, 13). This foreshadowing reminds us that Sodom is on a path to destruction and the Canaanites are known for their sin. Without villainizing our current culture, what can we learn about holiness in and amongst those who do not follow Christ?
5. What promises in scripture do you find yourself worshiping God over? Why?
6. What things in your life are beautiful, yet can potentially draw you away from Christ? How might we put safeguards in place to ensure our hearts do not stray, even with that which is good and beautiful?

BIBLICAL THREAD

1. Genesis 19 – the foreshadowing of Sodom comes to fruition.
2. Matthew 6:19-24 – Jesus teaching on having the right treasure.
3. Luke 12:13-21 – the consequences of misunderstanding and misusing blessing.
4. John 16:4-15 – the help of the Holy Spirit outlined by Jesus.
5. 2 Corinthians 5:16 - 6:10 – the realities of living in a world prone to sin and rebellion and our role in it.
6. 2 Timothy 3:1-9 – Paul outlining the priorities of the godless and how we can know who they are.
7. 1 Peter – How to live as people in a foreign land, amongst those who deny God and his power.



CONCLUSION

Abram does not explicitly trust God in this chapter of Genesis, but his actions indicate that he is, at least for the moment, unconcerned with the appearance of prosperity. His willingness to allow Lot to choose the better pasture indicates an implicit trust that God will provide and stay true to His promises. The result is a reiteration of the promises of God and a heart of worship for Abram. On the other hand, Lot is seduced by the appearance of prosperity and places his family and flocks in grave danger. The juxtaposition of Abram and Lot is undeniable: One trusts God and one trusts himself.

We would do well to remember that our circumstances are not limited by our own perspective but reach well beyond what we can imagine. We need to train our hearts to seek God and trust his promises despite the issues we face ahead. Instead of solely relying on our temporal perspective, we should be willing to hold our circumstances loosely and trust that God will redeem them for His glory and our good.

SHARE & PRAY

LIFE GROUP VISION:

The goal to meeting together around the word of God is three-fold. First, we want to more clearly understand what God is saying to us through his Word and apply it to our own hearts and minds. Secondly, we want to build a loving community with each other to disciple one another toward maturity in Christ. Thirdly, we desire each of us, as ambassadors of Christ, to look outwards to our community and ask how we can bring the truth of the gospel to bear on those whom God has placed in our lives.

