

Genesis 13 – Abram separates from Lot (Life of Abraham no. 4)

1. Abram's faith tried again (v1-7)

When Abram returned into the promised land of Canaan, he faced another trial. When we believe in God's promises, our faith must often be tested. Paul told us that we would enter God's kingdom through many troubles (Acts 14:22). It was a painful trial; it came from his own family. As brethren we are called to peace (Psalm 133); we must be aware that the devil is always trying to divide us, and be on our guard. Yet, through this trial, God fulfilled his promise; Abraham was to be the one who would inherit the land, not Lot. This trial was also a blessing to Abraham. He learnt through it to trust in the Lord, and not in any riches of his own. Riches do not bring peace or salvation; and they often bring trouble in this life – here they divided an uncle and nephew. If we have money we must be humble; if we are poor, we must be thankful that we are rich in Christ and that he provides us our daily bread still. To be rich is not a certain sign of God's favour, and poverty is not a sign of his anger. Christ himself was a poor man.

2. Abram and Lot separate (v8-13)

Abram acted to make sure that the problems were dealt with and did not grow more serious. He made a generous offer (v8-9). Though Lot was his nephew, he offered him whichever part of the land he desired. He showed a godly submission (Ephesians 5:20), willing to “go the extra mile” (Matthew 5:41) in avoiding trouble. Lot did not return the same generosity to Abram, but seized his opportunity; this showed foolishness and pride. He made a choice based upon what he could see; but he did not make it with spiritual wisdom, because he chose to go near Sodom where the people were very wicked. Their sin was against the Lord; even though they did not know him, he watches all. He preferred outward prosperity to the covenant that was with Abram. He went outside the promised land. Do we make decisions based on money that put our souls in danger? It is not a good deal!

3. Abram's reward (v14-18)

After this trial, the Lord appeared to Abram and comforted him. He repeated the promise to him, that the land would be his; and also told him that his children would be too many to count. Though Lot had the good, fertile ground, yet Abram had a promise that was far greater. We, like him, need to feed on the promises that God has given us, which are far greater than all the riches of this life. Abram then turned to the Lord in worship. He built another altar to the Lord at Mamre (v18). Special blessings from the Lord should bring special acknowledgements from us.

If we possess the Lord and his promises, then we have great riches. We do not need to try to steal or cheat; but to trust in him and wait for his times. If we possess the Lord Jesus, then all things are ours (1 Corinthians 3:22).