



**Genesis – 13:1-14:24**  
**Yahweh Reaffirms His Promises to Abram**  
**(Lesson #23)**

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Last week, while Abram was in Haran, we saw Yahweh made the first seven promises to Abram:

- 1) 12:2 - **I will make of you a great nation.**
- 2) 12:2b - **I will bless you.**
- 3) 12:2c - **I will make your name great.**
- 4) 12:2d - **I am doing this so that you will be a blessing.**
- 5) 12:3 - **I will bless those who bless you.**
- 6) 12:3b - **I will curse those who dishonor you.**
- 7) 12:3c - **In you shall all the families of the earth be blessed.**

Abram would leave Haran and make the trip to Canaan; in Shechem Yahweh would make an additional promise:

- 8) 12:7 - **To your offspring I will give this land**

This week, we pick back up with Abram having left Egypt and traveled back into the Negeb. One thing, we are not positive on the time involved in all of this movement. Here is what we know:

Event	Abraham's Age	Genesis
Abram leaves Haran and enters Canaan	75	12:4-5
Abram fathers Ishmael by Hagar	85-86	16:3-4
Abraham fathers Isaac by Sarah	100	21:5
Abraham's wife Sarah dies	137	23:1
Abraham's son Isaac marries Rebekah	140	25:19-20
Abraham dies	175	25:7

*13:1 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.*

**Vs 13:1** So Abram leaves Egypt and is back in Canaan, in the Negeb.

He has with him his wife Sarai, Lot and all the family clan. This likely includes servants and those under his employ as well as others relying on him for their living. Herdsmen, workers, and servants of various kinds.

**Vs 2** - Here we are reminded again that Abram, was rich and that **as God had promised that he would bless Abram**, indeed he has! Notice, he is not just rich, he is very rich.

This is the first time in the Bible that we are ever told anyone is “rich” the word can mean to **possess honor**.

**DISCUSSION:** It appears God increased his wealth even while he was involved in folly in Egypt. What was the second promise God made to Abram? **Vs 2b - I will bless you!** God did not say, I will bless you if you **don't goof up**.

**APPLICATION: It is true for us too!** If you belong to Jesus, God promises to bless you and **indeed, he has!**

**Vs 3-4** - So he goes back to the place where he enjoyed sweet fellowship with God. Once again, we see he called upon the name of the LORD, here in Bethel.

**I WONDER:** What has gone through his mind or what **lingers about the experiences in Egypt?** I wish I could get a glimpse into his thoughts. I suspect this was a time of reflection and even repentance. A time to quietly reconsider the promises of God.

**APPLICATION:** We too need times of reflection. Especially following failure or great successes.

**Vs 5-6 -** So, Lot is continuing to travel with uncle Abram. In context it appears that Lot has been with Abram this entire time. Even the trip into Egypt.

But Lot is his own man and as Abram is amassing livestock, employees, and riches, **so too is Lot!**

As you can imagine two men amassing livestock, servants, and employees together can become problematic, especially if they are too close to one another geographically.

All of a sudden there is an issue, their flocks are growing, and they are encroaching on one another for resources. The hill country between Bethel and Ai cannot contain these two men and the massive herds that they have amassed. Their possessions have become so great that they can no longer dwell together.

**Vs 7 -** There was **strife**, there were **arguments**, there were **disputes** between the herdsmen of Lot and the herdsmen of Abram.

We can almost imagine this as they are all sorta attempting to use the same lands for open grazing and both groups are needing more and more land as their herds are growing.

Next, we are told: ***At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were dwelling in the land.*** The existence of the Canaanites is likely mentioned for a few reasons:

- 1) They are there and also competing for the land.
- 2) They are there and observing the strife between the herdsmen.
- 3) These are the people who were cursed (Noah's curse) because of the sinful people they would become.

**APPLICATION:** Our inner-family squabbling can be a bad testimony too.

*"34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (Joh 13:34-35 ESV)*

This is the **first mention** of Perizzites in the Bible, they clearly inhabited the southern area of Canaan. When they are mentioned, they are almost always lumped in with the Canaanites (Gen 15:20, 34:30, Ex 3:8, 3:17, 23:23, 33:2, 34:11, Deu 7:1, 20:17, Jos 9:1, etc. 11:3, 12:8, etc.).

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***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.***

**Vs 8-9 -** Uncle Abram takes the lead to put an **end to strife**. The older uncle, no doubt had the right to pick whatever land he desired, but instead he **defers to his nephew**.

It seems to me that **Abram is learning** that God will care for him and he does not need to focus on himself.

**APPLICATION:**

*“3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.” (Php 2:3-4 ESV)*

Notice Abram says, we are kinsmen, our herdsmen should not be quarrelling and we should not be quarreling over resources.

**APPLICATION:** If that is true for an uncle and a nephew, how much truer for you and I. **We are brothers and sisters in Christ**, we should be striving together, for the faith once and for all delivered to the saints. We should not be striving against each other.

So Uncle Abram, looks at his nephew and says, hey there should not be **contention between us**, you pick what you want and I will go the **other direction**. Funny, he does not attempt to **exert his desire**, but leaves it totally to Lot.

**Vs 10** - So Lot, lifts his eyes and looks towards the **Jordan Valley**. He sees it is **“well watered”** like the **garden paradise**. It is watered like the land of Egypt in the direction of Zoar.

Keep in mind, this would have been a **few hundred years after the flood** and the **associated ice age**, so this area was likely **not as barren** as it is **today**.

Did you see the **extra commentary?** This was before the LORD destroyed **Sodom and Gomorrah**.

When we read this, it is likely that we should assume that Sodom and Gomorrah were in this region and it was a beautiful and well-watered area.

And Lot, lifted up his eyes, saw the Jordan Valley, and made his decision based on what he **“saw”** with human eyesight! He has picked the **best place in natural resources**, based on what he observed through the eye-gate. **And who would choose different?**

**APPLICATION:** Just a thought exercise. It is **our eyes**, when the **gaze is misplaced**, that **often** get us in trouble. They got **Eve** in trouble, **David** in trouble (as he gazed upon Bathsheba), they got **Achan** in trouble when he saw the beautiful cloak from Shinar, the silver, and the gold. **Ohhhhh be careful little eyes what you see!**

When the **bottom line**, is the **bottom line**, you will always go with the **bottom line** and anything else that might have an impact on the decision, you can easily ignore.

By the way, **Zoar** will come back around in Genesis 19.

**Vs 11** - So from the theme song of Beverly Hillbillies, Lot loaded up his truck and he moved to the **Jordan Valley**, he **journeyed east** and placed himself in this lush resource filled well-watered area.

**Vs 12** - Abram, settled in the **land of Canaan**. Lot settled in the Jordan Valley.

Then it appears although at this point still living in a tent as a nomad, he relocated his tent to outside the bustling sin city, known as Sodom.

What **starts out as moving his tent towards Sodom**, as we will see in a moment, turns into **dwelling in Sodom**:

*“11 So the enemy took all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. 12 They also took Lot, the son of Abram’s brother, who was dwelling in Sodom, and his possessions, and went their way.” (Ge 14:11-12 ESV)*

Later we will see that not only is Lot “dwelling in Sodom” but he begins to “sit in the gate” of that wicked city (Gen 19:11).

**APPLICATION:** If Lot could speak to us today, I believe he would tell us this is the nature of sin:

- 1) It takes you **further** than you want to go.
- 2) It keeps you **longer** than you want to stay.
- 3) And as we will see in Genesis 19 and following, it costs you more than you want to **pay!**

**So that we see the progression:**

- 1) Lot lifted up his eyes and saw (Vs 10).
- 2) Lot chose for himself (Vs 11).
- 3) Moved his tent to Sodom (Vs 12).
- 4) Started dwelling in Sodom (14:12).
- 5) Seated in the gate of Sodom (19:11).

**APPLICATION:** This is typically and tragically how sin works. One little compromise, one little sin, leads to larger errors and compromises until a moment comes, when something finally happens and we are snapped out of our **spiritual stupor** and we wonder... HOW DID I EVER GET THIS FAR FROM GOD’S WILL?

**Vs 13** - The Hebrew really gets at the **point**: The men of Sodom were (**exceedingly, great, much, abundantly**), (**wicked, bad, evil**) and (**sinful**) against Yahweh!

This language should take you back:

*“The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” (Ge 6:5 ESV)*

It seems the Bible is telling us that the wickedness in Sodom had reached a level similar to the level before God sent the global deluge!

Here the writer introduces us to two problems. The **extreme sin** in Sodom and Gomorrah and that **Lot has pitched his tent outside sin city**. Soon enough he will abandon his tent and **move into the city**. Lot will move **his wife and daughters into sin city**.

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*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.”*

**Vs 14-15** - Abram is alone, Lot has moved to the east and ultimately to Sodom. And the Lord “says” to Abram! Here we see it again, the **Lord said**. We need to recognize that God was communicating in some type of **amazing and supernatural way** with Abram.

This is an **expansion**, and a **further explanation** of the promise that God made to Abraham in Shechem, (**promise #8** from last week) namely: Vs 7 - To your offspring I will give this land.

So, look around you, look north, south, east, and west. All that land that you can see belongs to your offspring forever! Yahweh tells Abram that He has given the land to Abram’s offspring, to the nation of Israel, forever!

Now he begins to expound the initial promise:

**Vs 16** - Now this is an **amazing promise to a man who has no children**. What did Abram make of this promise.

God says: I am going to make your offspring like the dust of the earth.

**Vs 17** – God is reiterating that He has given the land to the descendants of Abram, to the offspring of Abram.

**Vs 18** - So **Abram**, relocates as well, seemingly to be closer to his cattle and herdsmen. He relocates to the oaks of Mamre, which are located at **Hebron**, and he **builds yet another altar to Yahweh**.

This is the third altar that Abram is recorded as building. It seems worshipping with an altar has become Abram's modus operandi.

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*14:1 In the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim, 2 these kings made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). 3 And all these joined forces in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). 4 Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled. 5 In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim, 6 and the Horites in their hill country of Seir as far as El-paran on the border of the wilderness. 7 Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh) and defeated all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who were dwelling in Hazazon-tamar.*

Now we are about to read about the **first recorded war** in the **Bible**. The story involves ten different kings. The war, that is part of the story involves nine different kings, that create two different confederations.

We will see the nine kings divide into **two groups. One with four kings the other with five.**

**Vs 1 - Group 1: Semitic kings** (descendants of Shem)

- Amraphel king of Shinar (what two cities were in Shinar) (Babel and Babylon)
- Arioch king of Ellasar
- Chedorlaomer king of Elam (**this is the guy in charge**)
- Tidal king of Goiim,

This appears to be a **confederation of Mesopotamian Kings** where the local kings are subservient to Chedorlaomer, the King of Elam.

**Vs 2** - These five local **Hamitic kings** (descendants of Ham)

- Bera king of Sodom
- Birsha king of Gomorrah
- Shinab king of Admah
- Shemeber king of Zeboiim
- The king of Bela (that is, Zoar).

**Vs 3** - *And all these joined forces in the Valley of Siddim*, this is the **Dead Sea Valley** to the south.

**Vs 4** - Here we see the explanation, they had all been subject to Chedorlaomer who was the king of Elam for 12 years. We recognize they were likely paying tribute to Chedorlaomer. But in this 13<sup>th</sup> year, for whatever reason, they rebelled against Chedorlaomer.

**Vs 5-6** - The next year after the rebellion in Canaan, the 14<sup>th</sup> year, Chedorlaomer, and these other **three kings** decide to march to Canaan and teach them a lesson. Notice they defeat a number of armies in their trip from the north. **On the way they defeat:**

- the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim
- the Zuzim in Ham,
- the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim,
- the Horites in their hill country of Seir as far as El-paran on the border of the wilderness.

Reading between the lines, it seems Chedorlaomer, gets kings from the Mesopotamia join him in putting down this insurrection in Canaan. Thus, these four kings bring their troops from Mesopotamia to Canaan and reek havoc along the way!

**Vs 7** - So we see their plan to subdue a number of nations since they have come so far!

They go as far as “El Paran” that is the palm of Paran, a city believed to be on the coast of the Red Sea, on the coast of the Yam Suf, on the coast of the Gulf of Aqaba. There it seems they turn and head back north, it is now time to deal with the rebel kings.

But at En-mshpat, only place this word is used, it literally means “spring of judgment” we see it is also known as (Kadesh) (southern extreme of Judah), they stop their southern campaign and attack the Amalekites and the Amorites who are dwelling in Hazazon-tamar.

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**8 Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out, and they joined battle in the Valley of Siddim 9 with Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goiim, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar, four kings against five. 10 Now the Valley of Siddim was full of bitumen pits, and as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into them, and the rest fled to the hill country. 11 So the enemy took all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. 12 They also took Lot, the son of Abram’s brother, who was dwelling in Sodom, and his possessions, and went their way.**

**Vs 8-9** - So these five local kings, join in the battle together against the four-king confederation from Mesopotamia in the Valley of Siddim.

**Vs 10** - Here we have additional commentary that in the Valley of Siddim is full of bitumen (tar) pits.

As the battle raged, the Kings of Sodom and Gomorrah (the five local kings) fled before the armies of the Mesopotamia kings. While fleeing, some fell into the bitumen pits while others fled into the hill country.

**Vs 11** - This confederacy of these four kings, with the five local kings, generals, and armies having fled, as we might imagine, moved in and took all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah.

They took everything they could carry, we can imagine food, livestock, goods, and even men, women, and children. Then they went on their way!

**Vs 12** - More than that, they took Lot, Abram’s nephew. They took him and his possessions and having successfully launched and now funded their battle campaign, they are all headed on their way, we would assume they are headed back home!

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**13 Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, who was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and of Aner. These were allies of Abram. 14 When Abram heard that his kinsman**

*had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, 318 of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. 15 And he divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them and pursued them to Hobah, north of Damascus. 16 Then he brought back all the possessions, and also brought back his kinsman Lot with his possessions, and the women and the people.*

**Vs 13** - A person escaped and came and found Abram (the Hebrew). The word is עֲבָרִי (*ib-ree*), it literally means **ones from beyond**. It might also be used to show **connection to Eber**. Scholars debate the real issue.

This is the first time this word is used in the Hebrew Bible.

Here we learn the additional detail about the oaks of Mamre the Amorite. Mamre had at least two brothers named here, Eshcol and Aner. Then we get the added details that these Amorites, were allies of Abram.

It appears that they had entered into some type of **agreement** or **league** together, maybe for defense of their property, we cannot be sure.

**Vs 14** - Abram gets word that Lot has been taken captive in the battle in the southern Jordan valley, he leads men, born in his house, we can now see that he is much richer than we realized from the text, he is able to muster up 318 men able to fight.

He arms his servants and they pursue the armies of four kings who just whipped an army of five kings. They go in pursuit of the **Mesopotamian joint forces** operation that is now headed back home.

It appears they catch up with them in **Dan**. Now truthfully, having crushed everyone they have encountered, it is likely that they are on a leisurely retreat back home to **enjoy the spoils of war!**

**Vs 15** - Here Abram, divides his forces against them by night.

Notice they defeat them. We are not sure how big their joint task force was, but it seems God gives Abram the victory, and Abram and his servants, those born in his house, pursue them to Hobah, which is north of Damascus.

**THOUGHT EXERCISE:** This appears to be a different Abram that the one we saw standing outside Egypt:

*"11 When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, 'I know that you are a woman beautiful in appearance, 12 and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me, but they will let you live. 13 Say you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared for your sake.'" (Ge 12:11-13 ESV)*

**Vs 16** - He **defeated them** and took back all of the possessions that they had carried off, all of the plunder, all of the riches, all of the animals, and all or the people they had taken captive.

God delivered this mighty four king army into the hands of Abram. **God is fulfilling His promises to Abram!**

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*17 After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). 18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) 19 And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; 20 and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" And Abram gave him a tenth of everything. 21 ¶ And the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, but take the goods for yourself." 22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have lifted my hand to the LORD, God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth, 23 that I would not take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.' 24 I will take nothing but what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me. Let Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre take their share."*

**Vs 17** - The five kings had been defeated by the four Mesopotamian kings, who then fell to Abram.

The king of Sodom, hearing word of what has happened and the great victory that has been brought by the hands of Abram, goes out to meet him and he meets up with them returning from the battlefield in the Valley of Shaveh (the King's Valley). We can imagine he is very excited and thankful!

**Vs 18** - Here we learn of another king, a king that had previously not been mentioned. This king's name is **Melchizedek**. By the way that is more than likely not his name, but his **title**:

- **Melch** means king.
- **Zedek** means righteousness.

He is the king of Salem. He is the king of **שָׁלֵם (Shalem)**. **He is likely the king of Jerusalem**. The king of Shalem, the King of peace, meets Abram upon his return and he brings out **bread and wine**.

Melchizedek, is the priest of the most high God. **He is not Jewish! The Jewish nation does not yet exist!**

Now at this point in Genesis, this may surprise you or it may not. But, here we run into a **king**, who also happens to be a **priest**. This is strange for those of us who have read ahead. In Israel these offices were clearly divided.

**Vs 19-20** - He (Melchizedek) blessed him (Abram) and said:

- 1) Blessed be Abram by God Most High – by **אֵל ('el)** (God) - **עֲלִיּוֹן ('elyown)** (most high)
  - a. (who is) the possessor of heaven and earth
- 2) He (the possessor of heaven and earth) is the one who delivered your enemies in your hand.
  - a. This is not the work of your arm, but of His!

Then Abram gives to this king 1/10 of everything. **This is extremely important for the writer of Hebrews.**

**Vs 21** - Then the king of Sodom looks at Abram and says: "Give me the persons, but take the goods for yourself."

Stuff is a small price to pay for the human lives. So, this makes all the sense in the world. Equally, Abram risked his neck, it makes sense he should receive something for his effort that could have cost him his life!

**Vs 22-23** - So somewhere along the line, Abram cried out Yahweh, he lifted up his hand, he made a pledge to take nothing if God gave him the victory!

Here is a man, whose faith was a little questionable last week, who this week we see some amazing strength in his faith.

Lord, if you will allow me to recapture, I will keep nothing, not so much as a **sandal strap**, let's update the language, **I will not keep so much as a shoe string!**

At the end of the day, I do not want anyone to say I profited of this, this is how I got rich.

The **adversity of the situation** has brought out the **best** in Abram's **faith**.

**APPLICATION:** I have found that to be true in us. **Adversity provides the opportunity for our faith to blossom.** Do not shy away from adversity, lean into it and lean into **God for guidance!**

**Vs 24** - I will take nothing but the food my men ate and a share for those who joined me, namely Aner, Eschor. And Mamre, take a share. But nothing for me!

**APPLICATION:** Our focus should be the glory of God, not selfish gain!