

THE LORD IS GENEROUS WITH ABRAM (vv. 14-18)

¹⁴ The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, “Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. ¹⁵ All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. 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. ¹⁷ Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you.”

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

1. While Abram invited Lot to look to his right and his left, God invites Abram to look to the “north and south, to the east and west.” What does this say about the nature of God’s provision? In what ways are God’s choices for us better than anything we could choose for ourselves? Why do we usually insist on choosing for ourselves?
2. God honors Abram’s faith by enlarging his promise. The border of the land becomes far greater than Abram might have imagined, and his descendants will be far more numerous than he might have imagined. What does this tell us about the nature of God’s provision? How has God expanded the promise he made to Abram to include us? How has God given us “immeasurably more than we could ever ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20)?
3. What are some meaningful steps we can take to more fully trust God rather than be distracted by the things of this world?



Last time we checked in on Abram, Pharaoh’s army was escorting him back to the Negev. A famine had driven him to Egypt. Rather than trusting the Lord, Abram devised a scheme to pass Sarai off as his sister. When Pharaoh heard of Sarai’s beauty, he paid a handsome price for her and took her into his harem. Abram says nothing. He does nothing. God immediately inflicts Pharaoh and his servants with horrible diseases. Pharaoh realizes he is dealing with forces far more powerful than anything or anyone he has ever encountered. He returns Sarai to Abram, and begrudgingly allows Abram to keep the sheep, cattle, donkeys, camels, and servants. But Abram is exposed as a fraud and expelled from the land of Egypt.

Abram leaves Egypt a richer man, but his dignity is far from intact. He has lost face with Pharaoh, his herdsman, and Sarai. The father of our faith is everything but a hero of the faith at this point in the story.

The opening verses of Genesis 13 are marked by a return to the land and a return to the altar. The altars that were prominent in the first part of Abram’s story were conspicuously absent as Abram made his way into Egypt. One of the key literary features of Genesis 13 is that it begins and ends at an altar.

The altar is a vivid reminder of the importance of walking with God and trusting him, rather than taking his promises for granted.

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ABRAM MAKES HIS WAY TO BETHEL (vv. 1-4)

So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, with his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him. ² Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold.

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

1. In the original language, the word “very” in “very rich” is the same word as “severe” in “the famine was severe (Genesis 12:10).” We might say Abram was severely rich. How does Abram leave Egypt a richer man? How does Abram leave Egypt a poorer man?
2. What does the altar represent in the Abram story?
3. What do you think it means to “call on the name of the Lord?”
4. What are some meaningful ways we can return to the Lord when we experience personal failure?

ABRAM IS GENEROUS WITH LOT (vv. 5-11)

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

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

⁸ So Abram said to Lot, “Let’s not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herders and mine, for we are close relatives. 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.”

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

¹¹ So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company: ¹² Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. ¹³ Now the people of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord.

1. In chapter 12, Abram’s faith is tested by a scarcity of resources and the threat of a powerful ruler. How will his conflict with Lot test his faith?
2. Abram was the elder statesman, and Lot was his nephew. By every right, Abram should have been the one to choose. Additionally, God had promised the land to Abram, not Lot. What do you think motivated Abram to set aside his rights for his nephew? How is this a model of what Christ has done for us as our elder brother? How is this a model for the way we should respond to others in the body of Christ?
3. In many ways, Lot’s choice replicates Eve’s fatal choice in the garden. He sees that the land is good, and he takes it. What did Lot fail to see? For those of you who are familiar with the story of Lot, how does his story end?
4. While Lot makes his choice based on what he sees, Abram makes his decision based on his confidence in God’s provision (a confidence that was sadly lacking during his sojourn in Egypt). Paul would later tell the Corinthians, “We fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal (2 Corinthians 4:18). What does it mean for us to make decisions based on faith rather than sight? What happens when we reverse the order?