

August 27, 2006 AM

**LAND DISPUTE
GENESIS 13.1-18**

1. ASCENT INTO THE LAND (1-7)

“Resurrection” from Egypt (1): 12.10, Abram “went down” to Egypt; now he is “ascending” out of the land of Egypt.

The language used in this text clues us into a prominent theme in the Scriptures concerning exile/death and restoration/resurrection. There is a descent or an exile of some sort (the ultimate being be death) and then an ascent, a raising up.

He doesn’t come out of the exile with nothing, a starting-all-over-again-from-scratch situation. Rather he comes out of this exile with all that he had before and more (e.g., he took back his wife, he was enriched).

Lot, introduced in 11.27f. now becomes a more prominent figure in the story.

“South” = “Negeb;” south of the Promised Land but north from Egypt.

Glorified through Egypt (2): “very rich” = “heavy,” “glory” in certain contexts. Used in 12.10 to speak about a “heavy/severe” famine. Seems to be a play on words here. Through “heaviness” of suffering “heaviness/glory” comes.

Restoration of worship (3-4): Abram is raised up in order to go back into the land that was devastated by famine and reestablish worship of God.

Two significant facts concerning the return to Bethel. (1) Abram is returning to the witness of God’s promise.

Altars that Abram built were built because God had appeared and spoken to Abram. God made promises at these places and, therefore, Abram built an altar. They were *memorials*; i.e., places where God would remember his promises.

(2) Abram is restoring worship in the land after he has spoiled the Egyptians. This is a pattern; cf. e.g., children of Israel’s exodus. The spoils gained from the Egyptians would then be used to build the new place of worship—a new holy mountain—the tabernacle.

The first or primary act of dominion in the land is the establishment of true worship. If the people of God fail in that, the rest of their labor will be virtually for naught. Indeed, they will become the ones who need to be conquered and spoiled *so that* true worship will be established.

Contention between brothers (5-7): Lot was allied with Abram and had been blessed by that alliance.

(1) At this point Lot is the obvious heir to Abram and thus the “seed.” As we learn in ch. 15, the one who is a part of Abram’s household is his seed/heir.

The land is caused to “fight” against them so that they will be separated. (Remember the curse upon Adam.)

But why would God want to do this? God is making way for the true seed. He will replace Lot with the promised seed to come.

It seems that the discontent with the situation began with Lot and worked its way down through his herdsmen. Lot is obviously chafing under the headship of Abram. He no longer likes the situation and wants to move out on his own.

(2) He is a tent-dweller. At this time Lot is dwelling in tents with Abram, but soon he will be dwelling in cities. This is significant in Lot’s demise.

v. 7: “At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were dwelling in the land.” Why put this in the text? Pagans tend to act with contention toward one another.

The added evidence that this is probably the case is the unfolding story of Lot. Because he acts like the pagans he will be judged like the pagans: he will lose everything.

2. SEPARATION FROM THE LAND (8-13)

A Magnanimous Offer (8-9): Abram seeks a resolution, a means of peace.

The appeal to Lot is based upon the fact that they are brothers. Brothers ought not act this way. Striving with your brother because of jealousy and envy of position is taking up the attitudes and actions of Cain. Living like Cain only produces death.

Abram, wanting to live at peace, beseeches Lot to separate from him if he must. It is better to live at peace at a distance than to live in contention close together. Possibly the time will come when they can live closely again.

A Counterfeit Garden? (10): Choosing good grazing ground is not a sin in and of itself. Abram let him choose.

But cp. previous circumstances. Eve sees the fruit that it is beautiful and good for food. The sons of God see the daughters of men and take them.

There is no doubt that this place is beautiful. The question is not about its beauty but its legitimacy for Lot *at this time*.

This is like “the garden of YHWH.” This takes up back to the original garden scene with all of its provision and beauty.

The text also adds that it was like Egypt. Egypt was like the garden of YHWH. I don’t know if you recall, but in ch. 12.10-20 I brought out the fact that there was an inverted garden scene. Egypt was, in many ways, a counterfeit garden.

The circle of Jordan, though beautiful, will turn out to be another counterfeit garden.

A Questionable Choice (11-13): Lot does not take everything into consideration that he ought.

“Lot journeyed east.” From the beginning of time east has been the direction of exile. E.g., Adam and Eve; Cain; people who build the Tower of Babel.

What’s the big deal with Lot going to the city? The only cities at this time were pagan cities. God had not yet given command to go in and take or build cities. Right now it was time to settle in tents, being ready to move from place to place. When the time was right God would establish his people in cities. Lot is settling in these cities prematurely. He is grasping for the legitimate—for God will give Abram and his seed the cities—he is grasping for the legitimate illegitimately.

The men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked. Almost same language used as in Genesis 6 to describe pre-flood days.

1. Lot is a contrast to Abram. Lot is moving from a place of privilege and life to a place of poverty and death. Lot begins with much but ends up with nothing, living in a cave in the ground, which is symbolic of death. Abram moves from glory to glory.
2. Lot is removed from being seed and heir.
3. Lot is an ambiguous, double-minded character. In the end he is considered to be righteous according to the Biblical commentary of him in 1 Peter, but he is saved so as by fire. His life is a picture of wood, hay, and stubble that is burned up.
4. Lot is impatient. He wants too much too soon. He is tired of moving around the land with Abram. He wants his inheritance now. His impatience, though, will cost him in the end.

3. THE PROMISE OF THE LAND (14-18)

The Replacement of the seed (14-15): Land and seed are tied together in the promise. Even though Lot leaves, God will provide a seed. He will replace Lot.

A New Adam (16): dust of the earth = innumerable, but also allusion to making of Adam. Abram’s family = new Adam.

Marking out the land (17): He is marking it out, est. centers of worship so that eventually his seed will come in and claim it.

A Third Witness Established (18): God appears and speaks, Abram builds an altar; this is third witness in the land.

Application: (1) Impatience and ungodly discontentment can you to make foolish decisions that will lead to your demise.

Application: (2) Be careful of saturating yourself in a pagan culture. **Application: (3)** If you act like the Canaanites you will be judged like the Canaanites. **Application: (4)** Jesus Christ, our faithful husband, has gone through death to take back his bride, spoil the enemy, and establish the worship of the one true God in the entire world.