

The Book of Genesis

Chapter 13

13:1-2 *So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, with his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him. Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold.* (NIV)

Wealth

No doubt Abram traded many of the goods he had brought down into Egypt to accumulate the precious metals. Israel later left Egypt with much livestock, silver and gold (EXO 12:35,38).

13:3-4 *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 and where he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of the LORD.* (NIV)

Calling upon God

We find no evidence that Abram built an altar and attempted to approach God until he came back to this area.

13:5-7 *Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. 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. And quarreling arose between Abram's herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time.* (NIV)

Lot

Lot was apparently a patriarch in his own right, due to the livestock credited to his possession. The name "Perizzites" seems to indicate people who lived in small rural villages.

13:8-11 *So Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers. 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." Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company:* (NIV)

Abram treated Lot as an equal—a detail God inspired Moses to include, possibly to show that the Ammonites and Moabites had no claim on the land in his day since their ancestor had chosen the land to the east.

13:12-13 *Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the LORD.* (NIV)

Sinning Greatly

They were practicing homosexuality, a sin of perversion (LEV 18:22).

13:14-15 The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever ["ad olam" = "to the end of the present order"]. (NIV)

Expansion of the Promise

God now expands the territory earlier defined (12:7).

13:16-18 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. Go walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you." So Abram moved his tents [a reference to going throughout the land, as commanded by God] and went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the LORD. (NIV)

Mamre

Mamre was an Amorite who became a friend of Abram (14:13).

Hebron

Hebron, located approximately 20 miles south of Jerusalem, was later named Kirjath-arba, meaning "the city of the four" (23:2). All of the places Abram chose to go to were of commercial importance and places of religious pilgrimage and consequently on major trade routes.