

## **Genesis in Biblical Perspective: The Gospel of Christ from Genesis – Growing in Grace from Fear to Faith**

### **Genesis 13**

By [Dr. Harry Reeder III](#)

Genesis 13:1-7 says

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.

We are in Genesis 13. I'll meet You in the morning. Where do you meet Him? You meet Him in His Word. Lord, I will follow You. How do you follow Him? You follow Him from His Word. Lord, I'll learn of You. Where do we learn of Him? We learn of Him in His Word. It's the Truth. God's Word is true. It's our only rule of faith and practice. Now follow along with me. We are going to cover all of Genesis 13 in this study but I will initially read 1 through 7. This is the Word of God, it's the Truth. The grass withers. The flower fades. The Word of our God abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

As some of you know my dad and mom a couple of years ago went to be with the Lord within a year of each other. We had the interesting experience of gathering with my three sisters and going through the household, putting things where they need to go and distributing things. I'll never forget one little experience I had then. I walked into my dad and mom's bedroom and my oldest sister walked in. I am actually the oldest child in my family but she is the oldest of my three sisters. She said to me, "Harry I think you might want this." She handed me my dad's jewelry box. When she handed it to me I was obviously in a mood of reminiscing and I immediately went back to 2120 Shenandoah Avenue, April 27, 1960. In Charlotte we had four straight Wednesdays of snow and it had been accumulating. So for the entire month of April we hardly went to school because

it kept snowing. We ended up going to school all the way into June. We missed day after day after day after day. What do you do with a kid after all that time? I was getting cabin fever and my mother wasn't too happy with me either. You can eat only so much potato soup at that time. Finally my mom said "Here" and she took my dad's jewelry box and gave it to me. I took it up to my room and started going through it. It was like a treasure chest. There were my dad's cuff links and the tie pin that was silver with a black background and a white elephant. It probably doesn't sound that attractive and I started to bring it this morning to let you see it. Then there was the watch chain that had his name, Harry Reeder, and I thought that was the most amazing thing in the world. There was a coin also. I would just go through it and go through it. There was his I.D. bracelet with his name on it and I now have all of that in my house. I still open it up and think of the treasures of memories. Treasure chests are exciting when you open them up. That's the way I feel about the Bible and I know many of you do too. God's Word is just a treasure chest and we so easily want to skim through it and maybe get a little bit off the top. But there is this treasure chest and like any other treasure the most precious things are generally dug out from the bottom. Genesis 13 is one of those texts that is just starting to open up the treasure chest of seeing the work of grace through the apostasy or falling away of Lot as Lot now makes his appearance here.

Genesis 13 doesn't stand by itself, it stands obviously with the fact that Abram who is the most commented on man of the Bible, is introduced to us in Genesis 12. There is this glorious call where he is called from his kindred, his father's house, from his family from everything and he leaves his house from the land of the Chaldeans in Genesis 12. Finally he arrives in the land of the promise and the Lord says in Genesis 12:7, *Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land."* He says "I'll make you a nation and through you I will bring the Seed that I have promised.

When he arrives in this land of promise immediately there is a test in Genesis 12 and the test is, the land of promise becomes a land with a famine. What does he do at that moment? He doesn't turn to the Lord or consult the Lord. When he arrived at Shechem he built an altar and he worshiped. He went to Bethel and Ai and built an altar and worshiped. Now he goes to the Negev and doesn't build an altar or worships. He begins to solve the issue with his own ingenuity, own initiative and his own reliance. Now fear takes hold of his life.

One person said, "Fear and faith cannot occupy the same house." Fear had come in and he no longer by faith trusted the promises of God. So instead of looking to the Lord he looked to Egypt. The Bible says he went down into Egypt. He descended into Egypt. On the way he began to be fearful of his life and now out of fear for his life he concocts this theme where he not only jeopardizes the land of the promise and the offspring God has promise but he jeopardizes his wife by concocting this half truth into a whole lie that this woman was his sister. Now he jeopardizes her, his marriage, his honor and everything in order to save

his life out of fear for his life. Never plan from fear. Of course in the midst of this you have a woman where the Bible says in I Peter 3 who was not frightened by any fear and her name was Sarai. She turned her husband over to the Lord. What a great place to turn your husband over to. The Lord reached down and took hold of Abram and saved Sarai by bringing plagues upon Pharaoh's house. As the plagues arrived the same time Sarai had been brought into his house, Pharaoh puts two and two together. We don't know this for sure but we think he goes and asks Sarai about the plagues but he knows the information before he goes and talks to Abram. Sarai probably told him the truth. Then Pharaoh says to Abram, "Why did you lie to me? Why didn't you tell me that she was your wife? Why did you tell me she was your sister?" Abram has the silence of conviction. Now a pagan Pharaoh, an unbeliever is used of the Lord to bring correction into Abram's life. Then it says that Pharaoh sent him away. That is where we are at in this study for now Abram is coming up to the land of promise. We looked at the decent to the land of Egypt and now we are going to look at the ascent back to the land of promise. I believe that this is not just a physical description of geological change in location. I believe that is a picture of spiritually what is happening in the life of Abram. This chapter really begins to unfold it as Abram re- enters where he had left. Abram doesn't stop at the Negev but he goes right up to Bethel and Ai.

Bethel, the city's name means the house of God. There he finds the altar he has first built and now he worships the Lord again. He proclaims the name of the Lord and shouts out the majesty and glory of the Lord. He worships the Lord there at Bethel. Now comes the second test of the land. The first test was the land of promise had a famine. Now the land of promise has strife and bickering. When Abram comes back he has herds, herdsman, people and all kind of possessions and so does Lot when he arrives. Where they are all dwelling at Bethel the land cannot support them. So what will happen next? It is another test. What will Abram do?

Genesis 13:8-18 says

*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 (In the original it literally means 'brothers.')* *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.* *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 (this is the third altar he had built) to the LORD.*

So here is the problem. He has ascended back to the land and when he gets back he has all of these possessions, peoples, herds and Lot does to. Now three problems occur. The first problem is the land cannot contain and support both Abram and Lot in the same place. The second problem is that their herdsmen have started arguing with one another where they cannot get along together. There is a third problem and it's almost put there editorially. Did you see it? The third problem is the Canaanites and the Perizzites are in the land also and they are enemies of the land too.

So then Abram makes an assessment. His assessment is that it is not right for brothers to have strife and arguments. Therefore he then comes up with a solution. His solution is that he gives Lot first choice of the land since there is this whole span of land in front of them. Abram says to Lot, "If you take the right I'll go left, if you take the left then I'll go right." They are in a place called Bethel and the elevation level at Bethel is 2, 886 feet above sea level which means in that day you could have looked down from Bethel to the River Jordan and toward the ten cities of the plain with Sodom, Gomorrah and Zoar which is right around what is called today the Dead Sea area. In that day it was not a wilderness but a lush fertile valley. Lot looked and said "I choose the fertile land." So Lot goes down east of the Jordan and pitches his tent near Sodom.

Editorially again, what does the writer tell us here? The comment it makes is "Sodom is an exceedingly wicked city" yet Lot chose to pitch his tent near Sodom. The Lord now says to Abram "You look Abram for all the land is before you. Lot has gone to the valley of the Jordan to the east side and all of Canaan is before you."

Now again the Lord gives the land to Abram a second time. The man who had

abandoned the land out of fear has now been brought back and God gives it to him a second time. God promises him an offspring again and tells him he will be in this land. God renews the promise with Abram again. Then Abram does what a king would have done in those days. One of the first things a king would do when he became king would to take a chariot and ride around his country or he would go to his capital city and walk on the walls of his capital city legally declaring his rule and reign. So Abram walks in his land and declares that this is the land that

God has now given to him by right from the Lord. So Abram leaves Bethel and goes down to a place called Hebron at the oaks of Mamre. There he builds another altar. He pitches his tent and worships the Lord.

Let's just reach into this jewelry box. I want to pull out a couple of nuggets for you, not all of them but just a couple of them. Here is the first one. Profiting from the Scriptures would enable us to see something that you can't miss in this text. Here it is. In a family there must be an unalterable commitment to establish harmony. Let me qualify this. I am fully aware that there are times when you own Christ and you live for Christ and it will cost you your family's affections and approval. I am not talking about the enmity that would come against you for holding to truth with love and grace. As an individual in a family the call of God is by everything possible within me, if I am to live at peace with all men how much more should that be a commitment within my family. Abram said to Lot, "Lot, choose your land because it's not right for brothers to dwell this way."

Again, let me qualify this. This does not mean as parents to get along with your kids you give up parenting. This doesn't mean peace at all costs. This is what this is saying; I am willing to give up my own personal preferences and prerogatives and willing to make myself vulnerable in what I own and what I have in order to promote harmony within the family. If that's true in a family, how true is it to be in the family of God? It is not right for brothers to dwell together in strife.

There will be a counterpart to this found in the New Testament. It is in Acts 15 when two brothers in the Lord are having it out with each other. Barnabas is saying "Let's go to that second missionary journey. Paul "I'm with you, I'll go get John Mark and we'll take him again." Paul says "No sir, we're not taking John Mark for we took him one time and he washed out." It says in the text there arose between them a sharp disagreement. So they ended up in two teams. They had to part company. They had two different philosophies as to what the team was to be. Paul was looking for his special ops team. Barnabas was putting together a platoon of encouragement. So Barnabas went off and did his thing with John Mark and God blessed them. Paul went off with Timothy and Silas and the Lord used him.

It is not right for brothers to have strife. Let the perfect bond of unity bind us together (Ephesians 4:3). Love is patient, kind, long suffering and willing to give up in order to move others forward. This is the call of God in our life. We live as believers under constant assault from the Evil One. I'm working on another series on Spiritual Warfare dealing with Satan's schemes, snares and his servants. You have an adversary and he has an assault plan. As they were surrounded by the Canaanites and the Perizzites, we also will be surrounded. If there is dissention among God's people, it's hard to go to the battle field if you're fighting in the barracks. I'm so grateful that as far as I know I have the privilege to go into this with no axe to grind. It is only a word of exhortation from the text that we do not give Satan a foothold within the family of God or our own personal families.

There must be an unalterable commitment to preserve and promote harmony in the family and in the family of God.

The second thing from the text is always leave room for your brothers and sisters to repent and to grow in grace. Maybe you didn't have the problem I had last week but the problem I have had in the studies leading up to twelve is I'm looking at Abram and wanting to say "You cad! I cannot believe you are willing to sacrifice your wife into a harem just to save your own skin!" Of course when fear takes over it becomes something that both paralyzes and makes us do chaotic things but that's what Abram did. If I had met him after that I would just want to shake him. Always leave room for repentance. Except for the grace of God we'd be doing worse and secondly God is patiently working on His people.

Now Abram who descended to Egypt, ascends back to the land of promise and now when the test comes he says he is going to turn this over to the Lord. No longer is he ruled by fear or become political or maneuver or manipulate. He just trusts in the Lord with all of his heart, leans not upon his own understanding and refuses now to be ruled by fear. In other words, Abram is growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ. He will have some more slip ups just like we do but always leave room for repentance.

Has anyone ever failed you in serving the Lord in your life? Has anyone ever disappointed you? Don't write them off but pray, encourage, assist and leave room for God to do His work that grants repentance and growth in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. Look at Abram's growth. Fear is just a disguise for unbelief. Now by faith he puts his trust in the Lord as he turns the choice over to Lot.

Here is a third thing to think about. I know some may think this is a point that tends to come up a lot in all my sermons and I just have to plead guilty. I love for you and I to see the hand of God's providence at work. God has promised Abram a land. When God works sovereignly and providentially He works through people and their choices. So what does God do? He takes Abram's choice to turn the choice over to Lot and He honors that choice. Then He takes Lot's choice which is to leave the land of Canaan to go to the cities in the valley even though there's exceeding wickedness there and He uses all of those choices to give to Abram the land that He promised.

Now Abram not only has the land but he has the land cleared out of Lot's herdsmen. Obstacles are being removed from the land, except for two obstacles that are still there. Who are they? They are the Canaanites and the Perizzites. Stop and think right here. Who is getting this book? Israel is getting this book. Where are they? They are in the wilderness. Where are they headed? They are headed to the land of promise. Who is in the land of promise? The Canaanites and Perizzites are in the land of promise. Can't you hear what's in their minds right now? Our God who removed the obstacles and gave the land to Abram will

also remove the obstacles as He brings us back to the land. Our God's hand of providence is absolutely trustworthy. We can trust Him in what He does. He will clear the obstacles before us.

I want to share a thought here. We get fixed on this land in the Old Testament particularly with the politics today. This land was here to point you to the new heavens and the new earth. This land is only a type, a shadow of where Christ is going to take all who trust Him, the new heavens and the new earth.

So let me ask you this question. How many of you reading this are saved? Where are you headed? Do you think Satan has any obstacles out there? What is your hope? God is clearing the way and He will bring me home. My trust is in Him, the Founder and Finisher of my faith, Jesus Christ. I have one simple takeaway. Choices in life always have consequences. In this text we find a man by the name of Lot that we will study further in the future. All you have to do is go one more chapter (Genesis 14) and this man Lot who pitched his tent near Sodom will now be in Sodom. He will also be recognized as a leader in Sodom and he will be sitting in the gates of the city. What do you think about Lot? If all the information I have on Lot comes from Genesis 13, 14, 18 and 19 then I would figure Lot is an unbeliever who finally showed his true colors but my problem is that I can't believe that.

The reason I can't believe that is because there is an Old Testament and a New Testament that throws light back on the Old Testament. In the New Testament the Lord refers to this in the writing of Peter. In II Peter 2 there are a series of warnings about false teachers that begin in verse 4. II Peter 2: 4-7 says

*4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; 5 if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; 6 if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; 7 and if he rescued righteous Lot...*

This cannot be referring to Lot's personal righteousness because the Bible says there is none righteous, no not one. So how could he be righteous Lot? I believe he is righteous Lot the same way that I'm righteous Harry. He has a credited righteousness to him. It's the righteousness of Christ that is his and I believe that he is a believer because not only does the text tell me he is righteous Lot but at least inside there is turmoil because of what is going on around him and God rescues him. Notice what it goes on to say in the text.

II Peter 2:7-8 says 7 and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked 8 (for as that righteous man lived among them day

after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard);

It is clear. It says it three times that there is a righteousness attached to this man. If I'm just reading Genesis 13 and 14 I don't think I would have known that but I have II Peter 2 inspired by the Holy Spirit who tells me that I have a believer here who because of choices is trapped in Sodom and all of that which is attached to Sodom begins to attach itself to him. It has consequences. He will lose his daughters, his wife and everything. God will rescue him but he loses everything. I will stick within my own guild, my own profession. I have met pastors who I am convinced are believers who have ended up among Sodom and lost families and ministry, but you don't just get among Sodom. You can't play the victim. How did he get in Sodom?

Back up in the text, it was by doing three things. One, he looked to Sodom and secondly, he chose Sodom, even though he knew it was an exceedingly wicked city. Three, he didn't go to Sodom but he pitched his tent near Sodom. When I was growing up in the Christian Missionary Alliance Church, a man who was well respected in the community and in our church left his wife. He began to engage in a lifestyle that was beyond anyone's thoughts. I'll never forget what my Sunday school teacher said about the situation; "It doesn't surprise me because years ago he pitched his tent near Sodom."

We are here as a body of believers to rescue anyone anywhere just as Jesus reached in to rescue Lot out of Sodom. What a terrible pastor I would be if I waited for those rescue missions. The way to stay out of Sodom is not to pitch your tent near Sodom. In other words, you're never alone with that computer and that internet. You have some men and women who love you so much that they'll always be praying for you and asking you the questions that you need asked in your life. If I don't pitch my tent near Sodom then back up and don't choose Sodom. Don't be allured to it. Here's where you start. I won't look to Sodom. If I don't look I don't choose. If I don't choose I don't pitch my tent there. You don't resist temptation you flee it and then I won't end up in Sodom. Don't look.

My wife Cindy and I since our nest is emptied tend to go out to restaurants more. It's amazing what you can do with a few coupons. You don't have to wash dishes and you can eat almost as cheap as eating home for two. I hold that out as an olive branch for you as you move forward. So I'll say "It's low carb night. I'll have green beans, no fat back, slaw and some kind of meat that doesn't have anything on it and we're going to pay for this." I sit down and they bring the menu. I look at the menu and think 'forget low carb.' Wouldn't it be nice though if one time in your life to look at the menu, order it and they brought what was pictured on the menu? It never comes that way though, does it?

That's exactly the way Satan works on us. He puts out the menu of those soap operas, those songs and those movies that glorify immorality, perversion, and



immodesty. What they don't tell you is what it really looks like once you partake of it. Then comes the rescue operation because of broken families, broken homes and broken bodies. God's grace is always sufficient. He'll reach back, bring you home, renew you, redo you, give you repentance and He'll cause you to grow but there are always consequences that are left out there. Why not have a life that brings honor and glory to Christ, not to be saved, but because He is your Savior. That means don't pitch your tent near Sodom. Don't choose Sodom and don't look to Sodom.

What do you do? You look where Abram looked. He did the same thing. It said Abram lift up your eyes. Abram looked. Then Abram made a choice. He said "I'm going to trust the Lord." It's amazing how prosperity can so dull the sensitivities like it does. Lot has all this money. We think we're insulated in the choices we make in life but Abram somehow is able to see through it and was able to look beyond that.

I'd like to finish by asking you to look where Abram looked. Let's look at Hebrews 11 and this is the way we'll finish it. Hebrews 11:8-10 says

8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. 10 For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

He looked forward to the Lord, a new heavens and a new earth. This world is not my home for I'm just passing through. I have a witness for Christ and a ministry for Christ but this is not my home. I have another place I want to look, another place to go therefore I want to fix my eyes on Jesus. Look to Him your beautiful Savior. See Him in all of His glory. Fill your gaze upon Him. Be Thou my vision, O Lord, of my life. I have no room for Sodom. You fill my soul and my heart. If you do that do you know where you'll pitch your tent? You will pitch your tent where Abram did. You'll pitch your tent at an altar to worship the Lord. I don't how we got so far off in the last fifty years where we now define worship in terms of our own pleasures, instead of a heart that desperately desires to give praise to God in His presence.

O God be pleased to receive our worship. We assemble to give You praise. We live to honor Your Name. Lord, pitch my tent at worship. It is the foundation and the fuel for my life in Christ. Make my worship all about You to extol You, to praise You.

I can't finish just yet. I'm almost finished. I have some great news to tell you. You don't have to wonder if you're always doing well enough or am I always pitching my tent close enough to the Lord. The great news is that the Lord your God has

come and pitched His tent here for you. His tent is His Son Jesus Christ and the Word has become flesh and dwelt among us that we might look and see His glory, the glory and majesty of your God. Your God has come for you. He has pitched His tent, His Son Jesus Christ. Come in for there is room for all. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments that we could be together. Thank You for the privilege to come to this wonderful text of Scripture to look in it and through. O God our God, we live so much in a world of symbol, deceit and fabrication. Give us eyes that look to Christ and Him crucified. Give us hearts that are filled with Him and lives that are pitched at the altar of worship and praise to You so that whether we eat or drink or whatsoever we do we would do all to Your glory. Lord, we don't want to pitch our tent near Sodom to resist temptation. We want to pitch our tent, our lives, our families in Christ who has come for us. O God fill us with the love of Christ, I pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.

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