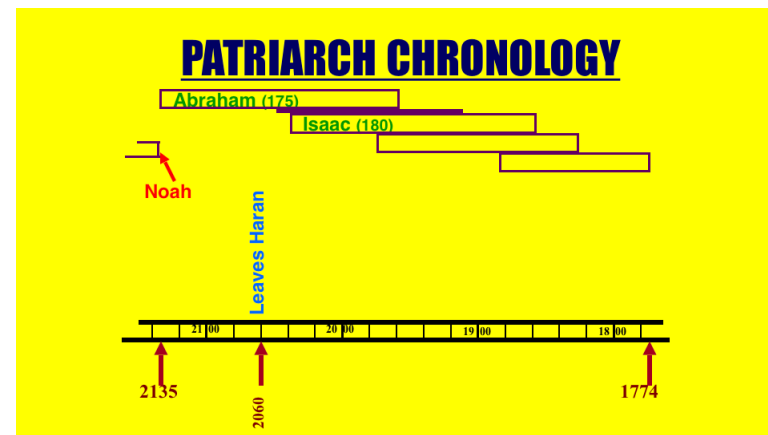


Genesis 13 touches on Sodom and it gives some context before you get to chapters 18-19 that deal with the destruction of Sodom and the events leading up to it. But chapter 13 is the passage that alerted Steve Collins to the possibility that Sodom was not located where the traditional sites were, near the middle or southern part of the Dead Sea. Those sites have been excavated in small measure, but there is no evidence of Sodom there. And when Steve saw a couple of passages in Genesis 13 that we will look at, he thought maybe Sodom is in the site that he is digging right now (2023) in season 16. I will talk a little about Sodom, a little about the dig, about what they have found and the reconstructions and the narrative dealing with Lot and his separation from Abraham going down to the area of Sodom and eventually ending up there.

- I. Primeval History 1.1-11.26
- II. Patriarchal History 11.27-50.26
 - A. History of Abraham 11.27-25.18
 - 1. His Faith and the Land 11.27-15.21
 - a. Call to the Land 11.27-12.9
 - b. Challenge out of Land 12.10-13.4

Just a little context here: The two major divisions are Primeval History, essentially the first 11 chapters of Genesis and Patriarchal History which begins at the end of chapter 11 through the end of the book. There are four major events of primeval history, in fact the most important events of world history, and four major *persons* in patriarchal history—these are the patriarchs of the nation Israel. So it is the story of the origin of the nation of Israel in the book of Genesis. You could even consider the first 11 chapters as *introductory* to the narrative dealing with the nation of Israel.

The first patriarch would be Abraham—these are historical events, all the way to chapter 25 and the main emphasis of the life of Abraham is his *faith* and the *land*, as in the title in the outline, and the call to the land 11.27 through 12.9. Last week we looked at a challenge in a series of challenges to his faith—and that is how faith is developed. We face issues when we need to trust God, and our faith grows. In this first challenge Abraham fails, so it is a process of failing, recovering and sometimes exercising faith again in order to strengthen our walk with the Lord. That was 12.10-13.4 that we looked at last time. The first few verses of 13 that are kind of transitional to the passage we are going to look at today. But first the timeline:



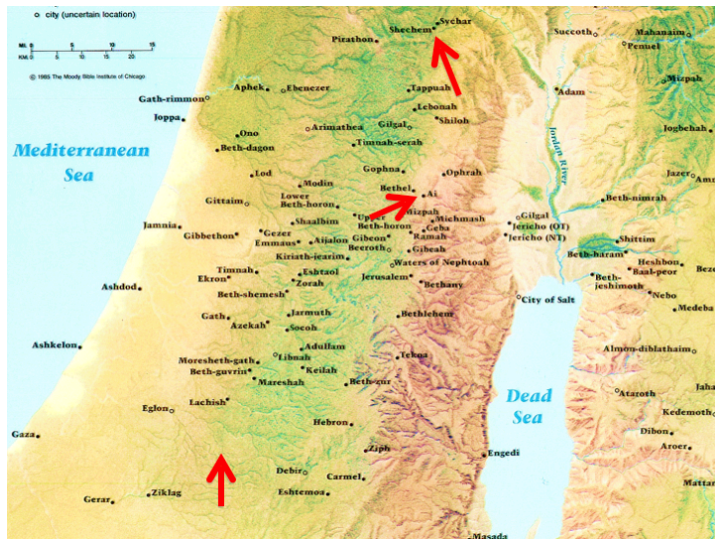
We want to make sure to emphasize the historicity of the passage and in terms of the history we look at chronology and the timeframe. And in terms of the timeframe, the first major time indicator, with an age that was given in chapter 12, we tie it with other timeframes and come up with 2060 BC date when he leaves Kharan. Now these are very conservative dates. Most scholars extend the time longer and certainly there is a whole unbelieving world that adds a lot more time as well. These are as conservative you can find, based on the chronology of Harold Hoehner. So we looked at that patriarchal history.

13.3 He went on his journeys from the Negev as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai.

4 to the place of the altar which he had made there formerly; and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

And then in 13.3, he went on his journeys from the Negev, so he was in Egypt in chapter 12 and the beginning of 13. So he had to come up from the south; Negev is a transliteration from Hebrew which means 'south'. 'as far as Bethel,' the text reminds us of the passage before to the place where his tent had been at the beginning. That is, he had established a little bit of time there early on as he enters into the land, leaving Shechem and then ending at Bethel.

The text tells us ... 'Bethel and Ai to the place of the altar which he had made there formerly; and there Abram called on the name of the LORD'. And with the indicator in verse 4, he goes back to the altar, the place where he dedicates himself to the Lord and dedicates the land back to Him, after the Abrahamic promise. It implies restoration of fellowship has been established, particularly that last phrase there, 'Abram called on the name of the Lord.'



Looking at these maps: in that area between Bethel and Ai, you can look west and see the Mediterranean Sea, and you can also look east and you can see this valley, the Jordan Valley, and on a clear day, you could actually see a city-state by the name of Sodom. In fact there would be several of them in that area. This tells us that he is between Bethel and Ai. And then, in the context we see that Lot is with him and Lot lifts up his eyes and sees the valley. From particular areas near both these ancient sites you can actually have a great panoramic view of that whole Jordan Valley that runs all the way up into Galilee and further north from it.



Based on verse 4, we can draw the main application that I would like to get from the passage. How do we resolve conflicts? At lot of this is just basic principles of dealing with relationships, and because of Abraham's restoration and the emphasis on faith, we can say that the beginning of resolving conflicts, and in fact *avoiding* conflicts would be living a life that is in the power of the Holy Spirit. So one of the characteristics shown here is Abraham back in fellowship, back walking in the Spirit, and that's going to be reflected in how he responds in the passage of this lesson.

And we are also going to see, in contrast, Lot has a different response. We don't have a statement explicitly but we can draw the conclusion because we know the nature of the Christian walk and the nature of a relationship with God, that Lot would represent the walk in the flesh.

Resolving Conflict

<u>Abram</u>	<u>Lot</u>
1. Walk in Spirit	walk in flesh

Number 1, Abraham walking in the Spirit, and that will produce other responses that will deal with these conflicts that the passage focuses on. The first few verses, 5-7, we have a conflict over the land. The overall passage is the 2nd challenge dealing with Lot and the land again. In fact you see the theme of the land throughout all these passages and the text will tell us what the conflict was over, primarily this great wealth that both of them had developed.

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a. Call to the Land	11.27-12.9
b. Challenge out of Land	12.10-13.4
c. Challenge of Lot for Land	13.5-8
1) Conflict over the Land	13.5-7
a) Circumstance of Wealth	13.5-6

The first 2 verses, 5 & 6, explain the circumstance of the wealth which will produce the conflict over the land in 5-7.

13.5 Now Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents.

Remember, Lot was introduced in chapter 12 and then in the early part of chapter 13 because it is kind of transitional to the next narrative, to let us know that Lot is coming up. So here we have him, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. So God was blessing them and certainly blessing Abraham as God has promised.

6 And the land could not sustain them while dwelling together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together.

And the land could not sustain them while dwelling together. If you go to Israel, you will see that the climate and the land is quite dry; it might have been more lush in the valley, but up on the hill country it was not too much different from what it is today. And with an abundance of flocks, in a relatively small area, sustain them while dwelling together. And then the text explains 'for their possessions were so great'—both of them had been blessed and had an abundance of animals—and now a problem arises—'so great that they were not able to remain together.'

That was the circumstance, the situation. It's a good situation: abundance and wealth, but sometimes even good situations can produce tensions and problems within relationships. So that spills over into the relationship of Abraham and Lot.

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c. Challenge of Lot for Land	13.5-8
1) Conflict over the Land	13.5-7
a) Circumstance of Wealth	13.5-6
b) Conflict	13.7

13.7 And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. Now the Canaanite and the Perizzite were dwelling then in the land.

So verse 7 explains the *conflict*— And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. So that is the issue. Now a believer has to respond to the situation.

13.7 And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. Now the Canaanite and the Perizzite were dwelling then in the land.

There is a little editorial comment here: the Canaanite and the Perizzite, which is a group of Canaanites, were dwelling then in the land. That's going to add another complication; it's not just Abraham and Lot that have to deal with limited water supply, limited pastureland for the flocks, but now that have to deal with Canaanite and the Perizzite. And not only that: you have unbelievers that are observers. In other words, you have the world looking on. How are these believers going to resolve this conflict that is going to be somewhat evident? And Abraham is going to choose the walk in the spirit, the walk in faith.

Resolving Conflict

<u>Abram</u>	<u>Lot</u>
1. Walk in Spirit	walk in flesh
2. Relationships	material gain

So, in resolving conflicts it is inevitable that we will have relationships that are strained or sometimes broken or threatened, depending on situations, part of life, part of what happens even in good times, as Abraham is experiencing here. So Abraham deals with it in a godly way, walking in the spirit; the question is, how he will deal with the relationship and with Lot walking in the

flesh. We will see that Lot's attitude is one thinking in terms of material gain. So the next part is 13.8-13.

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c. Challenge of Lot for Land	13.5-8
1) Conflict over the Land	13.5-7
2) Charity of Abram	13.8-13
a) Charity for Resolution	13.8-9

And I have entitled it the Charity of Abraham, because this is the way he is going to resolve the conflict.

13.8 So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers.

9 "Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me; if to the left, then I will go to the right; or if to the right, then I will go to the left."

So Abram said to Lot, and you will see he is very generous and considerate of Lot. You remember the *promise* is given to Abraham, not to Lot—the blessing and all that God intends is to Abraham; Lot is a secondary person in the whole situation, and he only benefits in his relationship to Abraham.

13.8 So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers.

So Abraham does not have to do anything; he can make demands, in fact he has commands from God besides the promises, but instead Abram said to Lot, “Please let there be no strife between you and me,—so he is going to deal with the relationship—‘nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen’, for we are *brothers*. We have a relationship and we want to maintain that relationship. We don’t want to allow the circumstance to hinder the relationship that we have, and based on that prior little note, there are people that are looking on, and certainly the unbeliever is always watching what goes on amongst the believers and if they can find a means of discrediting or an excuse for rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ, they will find it and oftentimes they find it as we struggle with one another in our relationships.

13.8 So Abram said to Lot, “Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers.

9 “Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me; if to the left, then I will go to the right; or if to the right, then I will go to the left.”

So Abraham goes on, ‘Is not the whole land before you?’ That is, there is plenty of land here; we don’t have to quarrel over limited space.

13.8 So Abram said to Lot, “Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers.

9 “Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me; if to the left, then I will go to the right; or if to the right, then I will go to the left.”

So he goes on: Please separate from me; if to the left, then I will go to the right; The separation is only to resolve the issue;

it’s not to break fellowship, it’s to resolve the issue and particularly the extended family because there are others involved like the herdsmen. The land is promised to *him*; the blessings are to him and his descendants, not to Lot. And yet, he yields those rights in order to maintain the relationship. So not only is Lot walking in the flesh, he shows evidence of a heart that desires material gain. Abraham yields the rights that are legally, in God’s eyes, *his*.

Resolving Conflict

<u>Abram</u>	<u>Lot</u>
1. Walk in Spirit	walk in flesh
2. Relationships	material gain
3. Trust in promises	selfish heart
4. Yields rights	moral risks

Lots shows evidence of a heart that desires material gain and a selfish heart, but the text is also going to bring out, as we get further into it that the choices that Lot makes are going to bring moral risks along with them. So that actually leads us to the choice of Lot in verses 10-11:

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II. Patriarchal History	11.27-50.26
A. History of Abraham	11.27-25.18
1. His Faith and the Land	11.27-15.21
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c. Challenge of Lot for Land	13.5-8
1) Conflict over the Land	13.5-7
2) Charity of Abram	13.8-13
a) Charity for Resolution	13.8-9
b) Choice of Lot	13.10

13.10 Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere--this was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah--like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar.

So Lot lifted up his eyes... That kind emphasizes what follows; in fact I want you to skip down to 13.14, later on after the issue is resolved and after Lot makes his choice, then God intervenes and is going to bless Abraham. Notice what the Lord says in verse 14:

13.14 The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward;

‘The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Now lift up your eyes’... This is the identical phrase that we have here in verse 10. God is intentionally contrasting which is what we are doing here: contrasting the responses of Lot and those of Abraham. Lot lifted up his eyes, and the Lord instructed Abraham to lift up *his* eyes.

Then Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan. So we will have this contrast that we can develop. Steve Collins makes a big deal out of this verse here. Keep in mind the location. They are both between Ai and Bethel, and from that perspective you are overlooking that Jordan Valley.

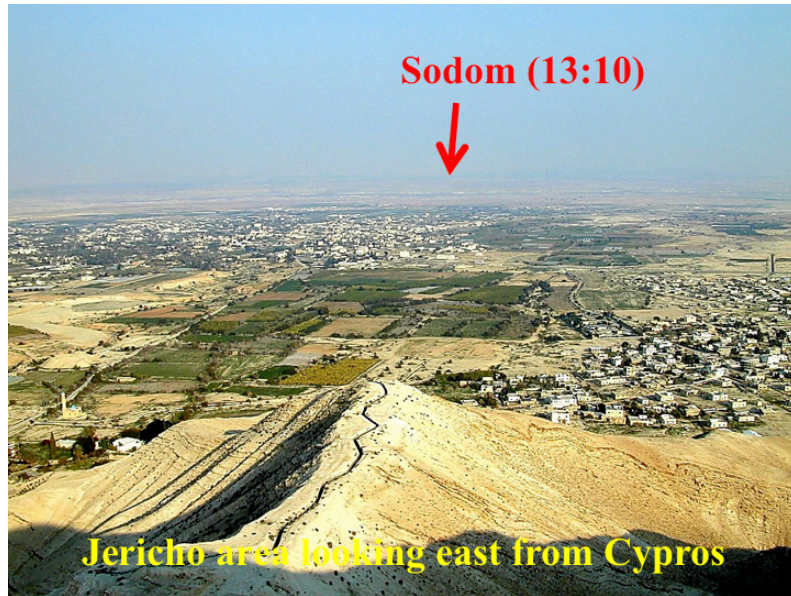
Term

1. Valley - *kee-káhr*
a round - talent (Exodus 25.29),
loaf (Exodus 29.23),
plain (19.17, 28-29, Deut 34.3)

The word that is translated there is sometimes translated ‘plain’; it could actually be translated ‘disc’. The Hebrew word there is an English transliteration. The word can be used in different contexts. It basically means ‘round’, something that is round. In fact, in Exodus it can refer to ‘a talent’, like a coin that is flat and round, or it can refer to a ‘loaf’, like a loaf of bread—not as we would think of it, but like a disc or a tortilla, a flat ‘loaf’. An example of that usage is in Exodus 29.23. So in the same book with not too many chapters separating them, is a *kee-káhr* referring to anything that is roundish or disc-like: a coin, a talent, or a flat piece of bread.



Or it can refer to a ‘plain’ and it is used for the Jordan valley area. And we will see it again when we deal with Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19.17, 28-29 and then later on in Deuteronomy 34.3. So it is kind of the same; the Sodom area is like a disc, a *kee-káhr*.



Here is a photograph showing Jericho in the foreground and Sodom in the haze in the background. And you see that it is a disc-like area, especially from the air.

13.10 Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere--this was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah--like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar.

Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan,—and notice: that it was well watered everywhere. Now probably even more so than today. As this photograph indicates, notice all the green. There was a lot of greenery, lots of open space, lots of farm land, and lots of springs. And that true on both sides of the Jordan River. And in the time of Abraham it was probably even far more lush than it is today. So attention is called to 'well watered everywhere'. Then a little editorial note: 'This was

before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah'. That's coming in chapters 18 and 19, but it is a reminder of the location.

And well watered everywhere—like the garden of the LORD, like the Garden of the Eden, like the land of Egypt that the children of Israel were familiar with, that was watered by the Nile and was very productive.

Then 'as you go to Zoar'. We really don't know exactly where it is at. Steve proposes a location that I will show you.



The point of this slide is that it is a region of best watered 'agriscap' as he calls it. And there actually exist today, and probably more so in Abraham's time, all of these springs that fed into the Jordan and into the Dead Sea which would be to the bottom right of the slide. The stars represent springs that would have fed cities located in those areas—one of them that Steve is excavating, Tall-al-Hammam. And Jericho on the west side of the Jordan is also fed by these springs that come from the hill country. But notice again, the green is this disc-like area, a *kee-káhr*. And from Ai it would look like a disc or round area of very fertile land, well-watered.



On most of the maps, Zoar would be on the tip of the Dead Sea. Steve thinks that it would more likely be closer. In fact a lot of the maps also show Sodom and Gomorrah in this area. But Steve Collins thinks it is this area more in the middle of the Dead Sea. It is distinguished from the other cities, at least in chapter 13. Obviously in the northern part of the Dead Sea is Jericho and Sodom across the river.

Now there are lots of contrasts. We have already pointed out some applicational contrasts, but there are others that some of the commentators bring out and are evident in the text itself.

Contrasts

- | <u>Lot</u> | <u>Abram</u> |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. By sight | By faith |
| 2. Abram offers land | Lord offers land |
| 3. Lift eyes - valley | Lift eyes - all land |

Lot, as we have already seen, responds by sight; that is, he is making choices by that which he can observe, can see. That comes out of verse 10: ‘Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan’. Abraham saw the land, so a contrast there. Lot lifted up his eyes and saw the valley. Abraham responds by faith, and later on we see that the Lord re-offers the land, after Abraham yields his rights to the land, offering it to Lot. And we saw in verse 14 where the Lord encourages Abraham to lift up his eyes.

13.10 Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere--this was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah--like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar.

Let us focus on this part of verse 10: this was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. There were two other cities as well but attention is called to perhaps the most wicked of the 5 cities.

13.11 So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other.

So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan. We have already mentioned that it is by sight, not faith, on the basis of material gain rather than spiritual interest. So we have valley again, *kee-káhr*. and Lot journeyed eastward. Remember we made a big point about Babel: this concept of going toward the ‘east’ seems to be departing from blessing or outside of blessing. But we can bring the contrast of Lot going east.

Contrasts

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Abram</u>
1. By sight	By faith
2. Abram offers land	Lord offers land
3. Lift eyes - valley	Lift eyes - all land
4. Went east	Dwelt in Hebron

Later on we will see that Abraham dwells in Hebron, which is on the *west* side of the Jordan.

Do you remember this slide? Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden...

Outside Blessing

1. Out of Garden - 3.24 *So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.*
2. Cain settles - 4.16 *Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.*
3. Babel - 11.2 *It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.*
4. Lot chooses Sodom - 13.10-12 *Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere--this was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah--like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar.
11 So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other.
12 Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom.*
5. Keturah's sons - 25.6 *but to the sons of his concubines, Abraham gave gifts while he was still living, and*

sent them away from his son Isaac eastward, to the land of the east.

6. Jacob flees - 29.1 *Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the sons of the east.*

13.11 So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other.

Then the text says, Thus they separated from each other. So the separation is done from Abraham's perspective; it maintains a relationship, but from Lot's perspective it is going to introduce some problems that we will see develop later on. He is going to a land of *danger*, not a land that will be conducive for spiritual growth.

Contrasts

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Abram</u>
1. By sight	By faith
2. Abram offers land	Lord offers land
3. Lift eyes - valley	Lift eyes - all land
4. Went east	Dwelt in Hebron, west
5. Greedy and worldly	Generous and humble

So Lot's decision was based on greed and probably worldly thoughts, Abraham's decision based on generosity and humility and dependence on God.

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 - 1) Conflict over the Land 13.5-7

- 2) Charity of Abram 13.8-13
 - a) Charity for Resolution 13.8-9
 - b) Choice of Lot 13.10-11
 - c) Consequences 13.12-13

So after the Choice of Lot, in verses 12-13 we have the Consequences, consequences of both choices.

13.12 Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom.

Abram settled in the land of Canaan...

13.12 Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom.

while Lot settled in the cities of the valley. There you have it again, the cities of the valley or the plain, the *kee-káhr*. and moved his tents as far as Sodom. So Sodom is the focus in the passage, already mentioned once, so here is a second mention and we can add another principle to resolving conflict. Not only does Abraham walk in the spirit in order to preserve the relationship, and he is trusting in the promises of God, and therefore yields his rights to the land, but also leaves the results to the Lord. And Lot, walking in the flesh, looking towards material gain with a selfish heart, enters a land that presents moral risks. And we will see later on that he ignores Biblical principles as well.

Resolving Conflict

<u>Abram</u>	<u>Lot</u>
1. Walk in Spirit	walk in flesh
2. Relationships	material gain
3. Trust in promises	selfish heart
4. Yields rights	moral risks
5. Results to Lord	ignore principles

And then we can add the contrast here: Lot chooses the land to the east. Abraham is waiting for God to fulfill His promise.

Contrasts

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Abram</u>
1. By sight	By faith
2. Abram offers land	Lord offers land
3. Lift eyes - valley	Lift eyes - all land
4. Went east	Dwelt in Hebron
5. Greedy and worldly	Generous and humble
6. Chose land	Waited for God

13.13 Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the LORD.

Then verse 13, with another editorial note and mention of Sodom: the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the LORD. And we will see examples of the extreme and exceeding sinfulness when we get to chapters 18 and 19 where God determines to destroy those cities.

Contrasts

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Abram</u>
1. By sight	By faith
2. Abram offers land	Lord offers land
3. Lift eyes - valley	Lift eyes - all land
4. Went east	Dwelt in Hebron
5. Greedy and worldly	Generous and humble
6. Chose land	Waited for God
7. Dangerous	Confirmed by God

So Lot chooses the land that is dangerous—we will see that in chapter 14 as well as later on in 18 and 19. And then we will see also that God is confirming the promise that He made to Abraham as a result of Abraham walking by faith. He will be rewarded.

So let's take a look at that area of Sodom.



The area from a distance, taken before starting excavations. These are slides from Steve Collins.



(SC slide)

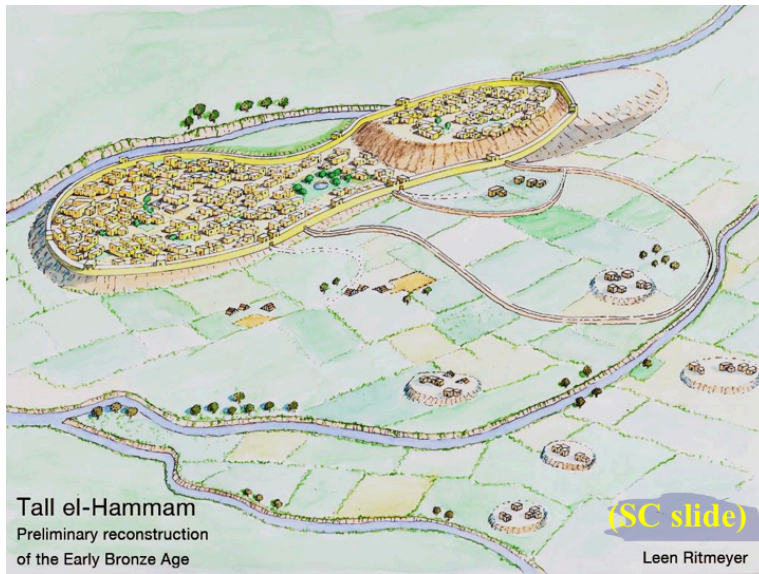
These are past excavations and they are now exploring new areas, adding to the data they have gathered in past excavations. Now it is supposed to be the last one, #16.



(SC slide)

They have already published at least one book. They have also published articles and others have done other research in the area. This is just one from the past to see what an archeological dig is like. You dig in the ground looking for artifacts and you record everything; when you find something you log it, located it, photograph it usually, and then do more scraping and digging, looking for a pot or a wall, continuing to add to the data base you have developed.

Then you can reconstruct based on some of the 50v excavation. This is by Leen Ritmeyer; he is a famous archeology re-constructionist. And this is what he reconstructed as the city of Sodom in the ancient days, based on some of the excavation—on some of the walls there and one of the gates that I will show you other photographs of. It had an upper city that you can see even on the initial slide and had a lower city as well.

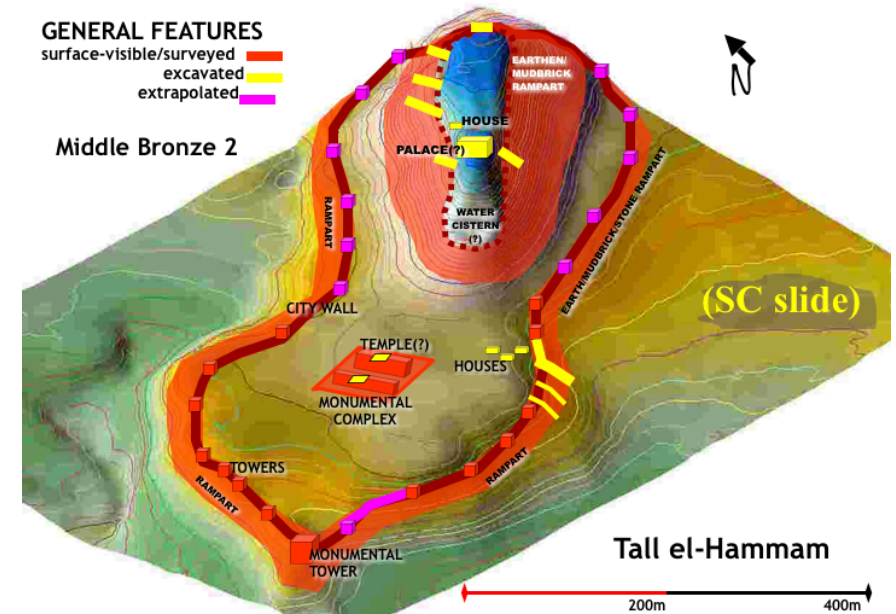


Sodom is a typical example. Jericho across the river would have been very similar in the same timeframe and other cities in the general area would have been very similar as well. It would have had a fortified wall surrounding the city, like this one does. And the elite would live in the walled portion—the wealthy, the politicians, the elite. And many of the others that farmed the land would have their huts and little homes down in the valley because they would be close to the land they would be working. And if an army invaded, they would sound the alarm and then everyone rushed into the city until the enemy was dealt with or they left.

So this is a reconstruction of what it would have looked like. You can see outside the walls little tents and buildings where the common people would live to sustain the economy of the

broader walled city.

50w



This shows the mound like it was before any excavations. Middle Bronze would be in the Abrahamic and patriarchal timeframe. I have a little problem with Steve's dating, but not with the data. Some of his numbers don't quite fit with the numbers we have, and I am not totally satisfied with them. He is confident in the dating, based on radiometric dating and also a very reliable way of dating is the pottery and other artifacts they use to fit different periods. So he puts it in the Middle Bronze period and actually the Early Bronze would fit both Steve's chronology and the Biblical chronology which would probably be accurate.

This slide shows what it probably looked like then: They have done excavations shown with yellow; the little squares in the lower middle are in the temple complex and at the right, they are houses. The red is what was on the surface, visible and surveyed. So that is Tall-el Hammam.

Another view of the dig area:

50x



Here they are excavating one of the gates that were shown on the plan. The yellow is the external part of the wall. And the orange or reddish are the remains of the wall itself. Then the gate would go through the area and there would be a tower filled with soldiers that would keep the enemy out. They found enough to be convinced that this would probably be where the wall went with the gate entrance area into the city itself.

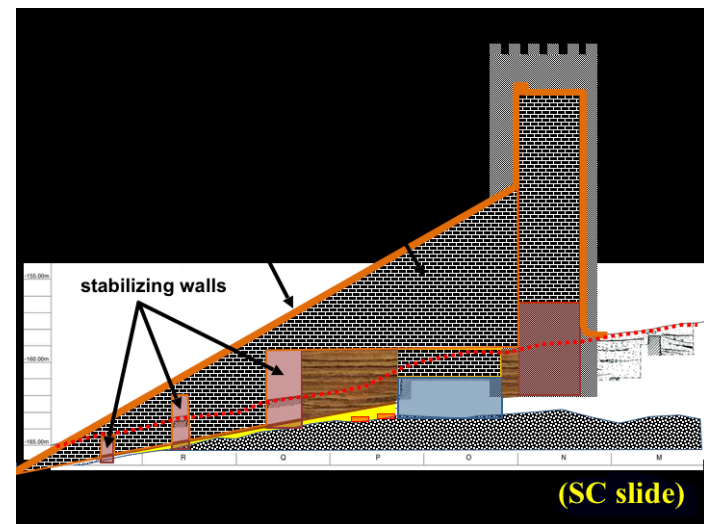


50y

This is a reconstruction of that whole area. They think it would look like this. There is not a typical burn zone—they would leave a relatively thin layer indicating that they burned everything down. In the Biblical text sometimes it talks about a city being destroyed by fire.

They have found similar rock or sand crystallization to what we have in New Mexico when they exploded an atomic bomb in White Sands. It produced what they call *trinitite*: the sand is made into a glass-like material and the same kind of material is found at Sodom. They have done some scientific tests on it and written an article published in a prestigious science journal where they support the idea that an air blast destroyed the cities of that whole valley; you find that trinitite material all over that area.

Also, the area was uninhabited for another 700 years. So they have found an abundance of this unusual high temperature-caused formations. Probably an exploding meteorite.

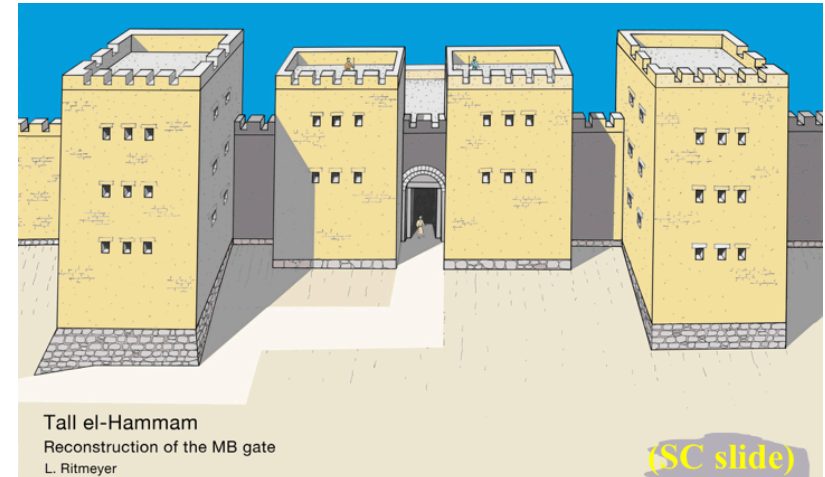


Back to the reconstruction: Those basement parts of the wall would be built up something like this. They have also found stabilizing walls or their foundations, and of these towers as well.

Then note on the next slide two men standing where there is a reconstruction of what they think these towers and these would have looked like. You can see the two men again in the reconstruction to see the size of the towers...



Then Ritmeyer's reconstruction of the towers:



Returning to the text: after Abraham is very generous, acting in charity and giving Lot the choice of the land...

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| I. Primeval History | 1.1-11.26 |
| II. Patriarchal History | 11.27-50.26 |
| A. History of Abraham | 11.27-25.18 |
| 1. His Faith and the Land | 11.27-15.21 |
| a. Call to the Land | 11.27-12.9 |
| b. Challenge out of Land | 12.10-13.4 |
| c. Challenge of Lot for Land | 13.5-8 |
| 1) Conflict over the Land | 13.5-7 |
| 2) Charity of Abram | 13.8-13 |
| 3) Covenant for Abram | 13.14-17 |

God intervenes and enters into Covenant for Abraham. The Covenant for Abraham is still promised, as you see, eventually will become a Covenant, 14-18. It begins in 14-17 where the commitment is reiterated, the commitment that he mentioned in chapter 12.1-3.

13.14 The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; 15 for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever.

The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are. Where is the place where they are? Ai and Bethel.

13.14 The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; 15 for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever.

Then is to look ‘northward’, that is toward the Galilee area and even beyond—the Hula Valley, all the way up to Mt. Herman. And southward, which would be down to the Negev, in the area of Hebron and Beersheba. And eastward—that would be across the river, essentially the same area that Lot chose—that part would be given to Abraham as well—the TransJordan. And ‘westward’ to the Mediterranean Sea; he probably would be able to see the Mediterranean from the spot where he is. So the Coastal Plain, the Foothills of the hill country to the west, he is to observe it.

13.14 The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; 15 for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever.

for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever. So now God is not only reminding that the

promise is still going to be fulfilled, God is still going to bless, and in fact it is a blessing to receive words of God, the words of assurance. And if you remember, we studied the 7 promises, in chapter 12, of a great nation and now the blessing, and more specifics, the land of Canaan, all the land, northward, eastward, southward and westward, the entire land of Canaan. And by the way, Moses is given a view of the same land before he died, but was not able to enter.

7 promises

1. Great nation
2. Blessing - land of Canaan
3. Great name
4. Will be blessing, an imperative that is predicted
5. Bless those who bless
6. Curse those who curse
7. All people blessed, including the gentiles

And all the other blessings: Great name that will follow later in history and he will be a blessing, and then we saw the passage that says: those that bless Abraham will be blessed, those who curse will be cursed. You might even say that to some extent Lot has been cursed, taking away what legally belongs to Abraham. Then, All people will be blessed.

13.16 “I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered.

17 “Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you.”

I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth. So he is expanding the promise of being a great nation. There will be so many descendants that no one can count them. ‘if anyone can number the dust of the earth’, the implication is that no one can.

‘then your descendants can also be numbered.’ So a great nation, many descendants. So the full extent of the land and the blessings, and from that will come all the other blessings as well, a great name, etc.

7 promises

1. Great nation - many descendants
2. Blessing - land of Canaan
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13.16 “I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered.

17 “Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you.”

Then he is instructed, Arise, walk about the land. Now the walking about the land is something like an image of *claiming* the land. Walking the boundaries was a common ancient practice not only in the days of Abraham, but even after, if you were claiming, you would walk the boundaries and claim everything within the boundaries. So God is telling Abraham, ‘walk it’, arise, walk about the land. And again the emphasis: its length—from north to south—and breadth—from east to west. And here is the assurance, for I will give it to you. Reiterating the promise. So the Abrahamic promise is reiterated in chapter 13; and when we get to chapter 15 it will be made into a covenant.

Resolving Conflict

<u>Abram</u>	<u>Lot</u>
1. Walk in Spirit	walk in flesh
2. Relationships	material gain
3. Trust in promises	selfish heart
4. Yields rights	moral risks
5. Results to Lord	ignore principles
6. God rewards	reap and sowing

So the last principle in the resolving of conflict we could say that as we walk in the spirit and apply Biblical principles, trusting God’s promises, yielding our rights, leaving the results to the Lord, we can be assured that God will reward. So God promises again that He will fulfill what He promised initially.

And Lot obviously will reap what he has sown as well; he will reap the issues of the flesh in the area of Sodom.

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3) Covenant for Abram	13.14-17
a) Commitment of the Lord	13.14-17
b) Commitment of Abram	13.18

So the Lord made a commitment to Abraham, and now Abraham makes a commitment of his own in verse 18.

13.18 Then Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to the LORD.

Then Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron,—now this is in the south.

13.18 Then Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to the LORD.

And we have the little note: and there he built an altar to the LORD. Remember, He built an altar between Ai and Bethel, basically dedicating *back* the land to the Lord. He built an altar at Shechem when he first entered the land, worshipping and blessing the Lord for giving the land. And now the land is extended to the south, which is Hebron, and there he offers another altar and will worship the Lord there as well, praising Him and dedicating the land back to Him. That is Abraham's commitment.

Contrasts

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Abram</u>
1. By sight	By faith
2. Abram offers land	Lord offers land
3. Lift eyes - valley	Lift eyes - all land
4. Went east	Dwelt in Hebron
5. Greedy and worldly	Generous and humble
6. Chose land	Waited for God
7. Dangerous	Confirmed by God
8. Lost all	Heir of the world

Final contrast: Lot lost everything—we will see that later on, eventually in chapters 18 and 19—and barely escapes. And Abraham will eventually be heir to all things, heir of the world.

Relationships need to be nurtured and protected! And the emphasis of this passage is the way that Abraham responds by faith, not by sight, trusting in the Lord in order to maintain the relationship with a brother, a brother in terms of blood lines, in terms of faith even, and in terms of his relationship. He is nurturing it and protecting it, primarily by yielding the rights that belong to him.