

**GROUNDS OF FAITH CAFÉ: “Genesis” (Subtitled: Is there a snake in your Garden too?) Further subtitled: Lessons from the Garden! Lesson 12. (Gen 13:1-18; 14:8-24). For lesson copies, go to <http://www.montgomerychurch.org/resources8.html>**

Overview: The *major plot in Genesis*, and perhaps the foundational concept for the rest of God’s storied relationship to His creation is found at the start of chapter 12. God calls Abram to leave Haran and “*go to the land I will show you*” (12:1). He promises “*to make you [Abram] a great nation...*” (12:2). Additionally, God promises to bless “*all peoples of the earth*” through him (12:3). As we noted last week, these several themes continue to play themselves out as the narrative progresses. The “*promised land*” will be given to the “*promised seed*,” who will become a *great nation* and thus a *blessing to the nations* – even though the Canaanites now possess the land (12:6; 13:7) and Sarai is barren (11:30)! Despite these apparent obstacles, Abram *trusts* and *worships* the God who is the Promise maker even though he still has lots to learn about God. The literary device used in Genesis called “ring composition,” presented below, gives us our first major evidence that God is committed to keeping His Covenant Promises to Abram.

- (A) An introductory genealogy (11:10-32)
- (B) Abraham migrates from Haran and separates from Nahor ([12:1-3]; 12:4-5)
- (C) Abraham builds altars and is promised land (12:5b-9 [13:14-18])
- (D) Abraham endangers Sarai, his “wife-sister” (12:10-20)
- (E) Abraham makes a border agreement with Lot (13:1-13)
- (F) Foreign kings defeat Sodom; Lot is rescued (14:1-24)
- (G) God confirms His Covenant through sacrifice (15:1-21)
- (H) Hagar is expelled and rescued (16:1-16)
- (G) Abraham confirms the covenant through circumcision (17:1-27)
- (F) God destroys Sodom; Lot is rescued (18:1-19:38)
- (E) Abraham makes a border agreement with Abimelech (21:22-34)
- (D) Abraham endangers Sarah, his “wife-sister” (20:1-18)
- (C) Abraham builds an altar (22:6) and land is secured (22:17b; 23:1-20)
- (B) Abraham sends Eliezer to Haran and reunites with Nahor’s line (24:1-67)
- (A) A concluding genealogy (22:20-24; 25:1-18)

**Read 13:1-18 and 14:8-24 completely through.** Today we see how strongly Abram has already been blessed by God, and we watch Abram in his journey as he continues to learn to trust more fully in God’s Promise and Power. The story line reveals that Abram re-enters the “promised land” after his sojourn in Egypt (12:10-20). Note the difference in Lot’s and Abram’s actions – contrasted strongly by the phrase of “*lifting up the eyes*” (13:10, 14). Study also Abram’s response to Melchizedek. Contemplate all these actions within the idea of developing “faith,” i.e., trusting God and His Promises as a guide to your actions.

- **Re-read 13:1-7.** In what material ways has God already blessed Abram? Discuss. What actions do Lot and/or Abram take to give worship or praise to God? Discuss. Do you see any difference in Abram’s and Lot’s sense of God’s blessing by their actions? Explain.
- **Re-read 13:8-18.** Notice the apparent attitudes/mindsets of Abram and his nephew Lot with regard to what they “see” before them in verses 8-13. What do you think characterizes their attitudes? Note also what occurs after Lot makes his choice:
  - Re-read 13:11-13. What significance do you think is in the verse about “traveling east” in light of former verses (3:24; 4:16; 11:1-2)?
  - Re-read 13:14-18. Lot makes his choice and after that God instructs Abram to “*lift up your eyes*” and “see” what God reveals regarding Abram’s future. What do you conclude now about the apparent contrast in Lot’s ability to “see” and Abram’s? Now read Heb 11:1. Do you think Abram’s attitudes and actions conform to this definition of “faith”? Discuss.
  - 13:14-18: In what way do God’s Words relate to His Promise to Abram? What action (s) does Abram take after listening to God? Do you think these actions are part of what it means to journey with God by faith? Discuss.
- **Re-read 14:17-24.** Abram successfully rescues Lot from foreign kings earlier in chapter 14. In these verses Abram is met by the king of Sodom and Melchizedek (king of Salem – Jerusalem? –) who is also a priest of *El Elyon* (God Most High, Possessor/ maker of heaven & earth). In 14:22, Abram responds with a more definitive “*name*” for God: *Yahweh, El Elyon* (LORD, God Most High, Possessor/ maker of heaven & earth).
  - Who blesses who in these verses?
  - What does Abram do in response to Melchizedek’s blessing and then to the king of Sodom’s offer of the spoils of war?
  - What do you make of all this? In other words, how has Abram’s behavior been affected?