

**Thursday, January 6, 2022**

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**Genesis 13:5-15:21**

**13** **5** Lot, who was traveling with Abram, had also become very wealthy with flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, and many tents. **6** But the land could not support both Abram and Lot with all their flocks and herds living so close together. **7** So disputes broke out between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot. (At that time Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land.) **8** Finally Abram said to Lot, “Let’s not allow this conflict to come between us or our herdsmen. After all, we are close relatives! **9** The whole countryside is open to you. Take your choice of any section of the land you want, and we will separate. If you want the land to the left, then I’ll take the land on the right. If you prefer the land on the right, then I’ll go to the left.” **10** Lot took a long look at the fertile plains of the Jordan Valley in the direction of Zoar. The whole area was well watered everywhere, like the garden of the LORD or the beautiful land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) **11** Lot chose for himself the whole Jordan Valley to the east of them. He went there with his flocks and servants and parted company with his uncle Abram. **12** So Abram settled in the land of Canaan, and Lot moved his tents to a place near Sodom and settled among the cities of the plain. **13** But the people of this area were extremely wicked and constantly sinned against the LORD . **14** After Lot had gone, the LORD said to Abram, “Look as far as you can see in every direction—north and south, east and west. **15** I am giving all this land, as far as you can see, to you and your descendants as a permanent possession. **16** And I will give you so many descendants that, like the dust of the earth, they cannot be counted! **17** Go and walk through the land in every direction, for I am giving it to you.” **18** So Abram moved his camp to Hebron and settled near the oak grove belonging to Mamre. There he built another altar to the LORD.

**14** **1** About this time war broke out in the region. King Amraphel of Babylonia, King Arioch of Ellasar, King Kedorlaomer of Elam, and King Tidal of Goiim **2** fought against King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (also called Zoar). **3** This second group of kings joined forces in Siddim Valley (that is, the valley of the Dead Sea ). **4** For twelve years they had been subject to King Kedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled against him. **5** One year later Kedorlaomer and his allies arrived and defeated the Rephaites at Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzites at Ham, the Emites at Shaveh-kiriathaim, **6** and the Horites at Mount Seir, as far as El-paran at the edge of the

wilderness. **7** Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (now called Kadesh) and conquered all the territory of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites living in Hazazon-tamar. **8** Then the rebel kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela (also called Zoar) prepared for battle in the valley of the Dead Sea. **9** They fought against King Kedorlaomer of Elam, King Tidal of Goiim, King Amraphel of Babylonia, and King Arioch of Ellasar—four kings against five. **10** As it happened, the valley of the Dead Sea was filled with tar pits. And as the army of the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into the tar pits, while the rest escaped into the mountains. **11** The victorious invaders then plundered Sodom and Gomorrah and headed for home, taking with them all the spoils of war and the food supplies. **12** They also captured Lot—Abram’s nephew who lived in Sodom—and carried off everything he owned. **13** But one of Lot’s men escaped and reported everything to Abram the Hebrew, who was living near the oak grove belonging to Mamre the Amorite. Mamre and his relatives, Eshcol and Aner, were Abram’s allies. **14** When Abram heard that his nephew Lot had been captured, he mobilized the 318 trained men who had been born into his household. Then he pursued Kedorlaomer’s army until he caught up with them at Dan. **15** There he divided his men and attacked during the night. Kedorlaomer’s army fled, but Abram chased them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. **16** Abram recovered all the goods that had been taken, and he brought back his nephew Lot with his possessions and all the women and other captives. **17** After Abram returned from his victory over Kedorlaomer and all his allies, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King’s Valley). **18** And Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High, brought Abram some bread and wine. **19** Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing: “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. **20** And blessed be God Most High, who has defeated your enemies for you.” Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the goods he had recovered. **21** The king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give back my people who were captured. But you may keep for yourself all the goods you have recovered.” **22** Abram replied to the king of Sodom, “I solemnly swear to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, **23** that I will not take so much as a single thread or sandal thong from what belongs to you. Otherwise you might say, ‘I am the one who made Abram rich.’ **24** I will accept only what my young warriors have already eaten, and I request that you give a fair share of the goods to my allies—Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre.”

**15** **1** Some time later, the LORD spoke to Abram in a vision and said to him, “Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your reward will be great.” **2** But Abram replied, “O Sovereign LORD, what good are all your blessings when I don’t even have a son? Since you’ve given me no children, Eliezer of Damascus, a servant in my household, will inherit all my wealth. **3** You have given me no descendants of my own, so one of my servants will be my heir.” **4** Then the LORD said to him, “No, your servant will not be your heir, for you will have a son of your own

who will be your heir.” **5** Then the LORD took Abram outside and said to him, “Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That’s how many descendants you will have!” **6** And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith. **7** Then the LORD told him, “I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land as your possession.” **8** But Abram replied, “O Sovereign LORD, how can I be sure that I will actually possess it?” **9** The LORD told him, “Bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” **10** So Abram presented all these to him and killed them. Then he cut each animal down the middle and laid the halves side by side; he did not, however, cut the birds in half. **11** Some vultures swooped down to eat the carcasses, but Abram chased them away. **12** As the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a terrifying darkness came down over him. **13** Then the LORD said to Abram, “You can be sure that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land, where they will be oppressed as slaves for 400 years. **14** But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and in the end they will come away with great wealth. **15** (As for you, you will die in peace and be buried at a ripe old age.) **16** After four generations your descendants will return here to this land, for the sins of the Amorites do not yet warrant their destruction.” **17** After the sun went down and darkness fell, Abram saw a smoking firepot and a flaming torch pass between the halves of the carcasses. **18** So the LORD made a covenant with Abram that day and said, “I have given this land to your descendants, all the way from the border of Egypt to the great Euphrates River — **19** the land now occupied by the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, **20** Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, **21** Amorites, Canaanites, Gergashites, and Jebusites.”

### Psalm 6:1-10

**6** **1** O LORD, don’t rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your rage. **2** Have compassion on me, LORD, for I am weak. Heal me, LORD, for my bones are in agony. **3** I am sick at heart. How long, O LORD, until you restore me? **4** Return, O LORD, and rescue me. Save me because of your unfailing love. **5** For the dead do not remember you. Who can praise you from the grave? **6** I am worn out from sobbing. All night I flood my bed with weeping, drenching it with my tears. **7** My vision is blurred by grief; my eyes are worn out because of all my enemies. **8** Go away, all you who do evil, for the LORD has heard my weeping. **9** The LORD has heard my plea; the LORD will answer my prayer. **10** May all my enemies be disgraced and terrified. May they suddenly turn back in shame.

### **Proverbs 1:29-33**

**1 29** For they hated knowledge and chose not to fear the LORD . **30** They rejected my advice and paid no attention when I corrected them. **31** Therefore, they must eat the bitter fruit of living their own way, choking on their own schemes. **32** For simpletons turn away from me—to death. Fools are destroyed by their own complacency. **33** But all who listen to me will live in peace, untroubled by fear of harm.”

### **Matthew 5:27-48**

**5 27** “You have heard the commandment that says, ‘You must not commit adultery.’ **28** But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. **29** So if your eye—even your good eye —causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. **30** And if your hand—even your stronger hand —causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. **31** “You have heard the law that says, ‘A man can divorce his wife by merely giving her a written notice of divorce.’ **32** But I say that a man who divorces his wife, unless she has been unfaithful, causes her to commit adultery. And anyone who marries a divorced woman also commits adultery. **33** “You have also heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not break your vows; you must carry out the vows you make to the LORD.’ **34** But I say, do not make any vows! Do not say, ‘By heaven!’ because heaven is God’s throne. **35** And do not say, ‘By the earth!’ because the earth is his footstool. And do not say, ‘By Jerusalem!’ for Jerusalem is the city of the great King. **36** Do not even say, ‘By my head!’ for you can’t turn one hair white or black. **37** Just say a simple, ‘Yes, I will,’ or ‘No, I won’t.’ Anything beyond this is from the evil one. **38** “You have heard the law that says the punishment must match the injury: ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’ **39** But I say, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also. **40** If you are sued in court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat, too. **41** If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile, carry it two miles. **42** Give to those who ask, and don’t turn away from those who want to borrow. **43** “You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbor’ and hate your enemy. **44** But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! **45** In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. **46** If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. **47** If you are

kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. **48** But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.