

Exegetical Lessons 101–200 on Genesis

When I exegete a book, I tend to get very bogged down in the details and so, I decided to develop a series of a few short lessons on various chapters of the Bible, where I attempt to simply deal with the primary points of each verse without getting too detail-oriented. Each lesson is 2–5 pages long and designed to be read at one sitting. Although it is always nice to have a Bible open when studying this, I have, in almost all cases, included the actual Scripture within the text.

I have added addendum lessons at the end of each chapter. These lessons summarize the chapter just studied. So there are not 100 lessons to follow, but 106 (one of the chapters already had a brief review).

I began this study with a general introduction, followed by introductory lessons to studying the Bible, followed by some introductory lessons to the book of Genesis. These 21 lessons precede the lessons below.

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Lesson 101 Genesis 12:1–3 The Abrahamic Covenant and Anti-Semitism

At this point, we will examine the life and person of Abram (later renamed Abraham by God), who is known as the father of the Jewish race.

It is not unusual in God's plan for God to move someone from point A to point B. We find this repeatedly, and one purpose appears to be that of separation. We develop habits and we have set influences where we are raised, and, for some people, it is best to change that. This is not to imply that you personally need to sell your house and move to wherever; but this is found on several occasions in Scripture.

In the case of Abraham (actually, *Abram*), God was not just separating him from his idolatrous family, but God was going to show off the Land of Promise to Abram. God is going to give a huge chunk of land to Abraham's descendants, and God wanted Abram to

walk through this land to see it and to appreciate what God was promising him and his descendants. Ultimately, God was not a proponent of the *two-state solution* with regards to Israel.

Gen 12:1 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your family and your father's house to the land that I will show you.

The last recorded incident when God spoke to man was God speaking to Noah when he exited the ark (Gen. 9:1–17).¹ 300 (or 1200) years have passed since then (recall the difference between the Hebrew and Greek texts). It is possible that during this time, the incidents recorded in the book of Job took place.

Suddenly, seemingly out of nowhere, God is speaking to Abram. We do not know what has led to this. We do not know anything about Abram's background, apart from his family lineage recorded in the previous chapter. We do not know in what form God is. We may reasonably assume that Abram has believed in Jehovah Elohim (which will be confirmed in Gen. 15:6), and Jehovah Elohim is speaking directly to Abram.

Recall that Abram was originally living in Ur of the Chaldees (near the Persian Gulf), and now is living with his father northeast of Canaan. He is actually fairly close to the land where God wants him to be.

This informally introduces the concept of the geographical will of God. There is a place where God wants us to be. This is obviously related to the *will of God*, a doctrine that we will cover in an upcoming lesson.

Terah (Abram's father) has moved his family to Haran (also transliterated *Charan*) and they have lived there long enough for it to be called *his country*.

There is a point to Abram leaving his father's house. Abram is 75 years old and he lives in the shadow of his father and he is under the authority of his father. Abram has to separate himself like a man, and raise his family separate from his father. Abram cannot be seen as the patriarch of his family if he is living in his father's shadow under his father's authority.

Gen 12:1 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your family and your father's house to the land that I will show you.

The final word in this verse is the Hiphil (causative) imperfect (future and/or continuous action) of the very common verb *râ'âh* (רָאָה) [pronounced *raw-AWH*], which means *to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know*. In the Hiphil stem, it means *to cause to see, to cause to look; to show; to cause to see [with pleasure]; to cause to know, to cause to learn; to cause to experience [evil or good]*. Strong's #7200 BDB #906. God is going to *show* Abram this great land that He is giving

¹ In Gen. 11, God spoke to the other members of the Trinity.

him; and the imperfect tense indicates that this will be a process, not a singular event. That is, Abram will not go into the land, park himself in one spot, look around, and think, "That's not bad." He is going to walk throughout much of the land over a period of decades. God will prosper Abram as He shows him the land He is giving to him.

Gen 12:2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.

This begins what is called, the Abrahamic Covenant, which will be repeated and added to throughout the next few chapters. God is making specific promises to Abraham. This is known as an unconditional covenant—these things will come to pass no matter what Abram does. The first thing which God promises is, He would make a great nation from Abram.

In subsequent chapters, it is going to be clear that God blesses Abram. Before he dies, Abram will have been blessed with several children, all born past the time that he was able to sire children. Abram will also be blessed materially; Gen. 13:2 indicates that his material wealth had become great. He had another wife after Sarai had passed away (Gen. 25:1); he had many servants (Gen. 24:2, 35); and vast possessions (Gen. 24:35).

God also promises Abram that, in his life and through his descendants, he would be a blessing to all mankind. The greatest blessing from Abraham to mankind will be his Son, Jesus Christ.

Gen 12:3 I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those cursing you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

God's original promises are made directly to Abram. In vv. 2–3, we find the 2nd person masculine singular suffix again and again, which refers to Abram. However, we may reasonably apply this to the not just Abram but to his descendants as well. It makes little sense for *all the families of the earth* to be blessed by Abram alone. However, God will work through Abram.

This blessing and cursing promise continues to this day, to all those who are descendants of Abraham (Jews), and to all of those who have any sort of relationship with his descendants.

As an application of this, today, the United States is in a precarious position. We have a high debt, we have a nation with large numbers of dependents, we have great enemies in the world (Islam and communism, 2 of the most powerful forces for evil in the history of mankind); and yet we are the most prosperous and the greatest nation in all of human history. Part of this comes from our alliance with the modern-day nation Israel. The people there are the seed of Abraham, and God watches over them, despite the fact that many of them are unbelievers. We are blessed greatly because of the Jewish population in our country and because of our relationship to Israel. "I will bless those who bless you and I will curse those who curse you."

Look at the Arabic nations in contrast. Whereas these nations have the potential of building hundreds of great cities like Dubai (which is an incredible achievement), they instead consume their resources on hatred. Nations like Iraq and Iran and Saudi Arabia have this potential along with the actuality of billions upon billions of dollars flowing into their countries. With this money, they could turn their backward desert nations into a paradise like Dubai. However, despite the great influx of wealth which Arab lands have enjoyed for decades, the Middle East is one of the most backward and wretched places of the world. The key is their hatred of the Jew. The Jews live in a postage stamp-sized country (approximately 0.2% of the Middle East) and they have made it beautiful and prosperous once again, even though they have no oil resources, and the Arabs, with all of their great wealth, are unable to do this. In the U.A.E., we see the potential that all Arabic countries have. However, most of these nations hate Jews and God curses those who curse Abraham and his seed. Hatred is expensive.

Spain is another excellent example. At one time, Spain was a world power, sending out explorers throughout the world. However, almost simultaneous to this was Torquemada and the Spanish Inquisition, which resulted in both the execution and expulsion of Jews from Spain. This evil continued into the 1800's, by which time, Spain was no longer a great power. They became a third-rate power on a downhill slide since then. "I will bless those who bless you and I will curse those who curse you." This is a promise from God which is as true today as it was 4000 years ago.

God would continue to make promises to Abram, throughout his life, but so far, God has promised him:

The Abrahamic Covenant—Gen. 12:2–3

- (1) **I will make a great nation from you;** This would be the nation Israel, which will be the central nation in both the Tribulation and the Millennium. .
- (2) **I will prosper you;** Abram personally became very prosperous. Gen. 13:2
- (3) **I will make your reputation great;** Abram became well-known in the land of Canaan. Abraham and Moses are 2 of the most well-known Jews of history. And, during Abram's day, he became known to kings (Gen. 14) and great armies (Gen. 21:22–33).
- (4) **You will be a blessing;** Jesus Christ would come from the line of Abram. Through Jesus Christ, all men are blessed.
- (5) **I will bless those who bless you;** Nations, peoples and individuals who have treated the Jews graciously are so treated by God. This has been true throughout human history.
- (6) **I will curse those who curse you.** Nations, peoples and individuals who have persecuted the Jews, or even have spoken disparagingly of them, are cursed by God.

In 2 short verses, written thousands of years ago, one of the most dynamic factors of history is clearly laid out, and fulfilled as history plays out, over and over again.

Let's look at the final 2 promises made by God to Abram, 4000 years ago.

**“I will Bless Those who Bless you;
and I will Curse Those who Curse you.”**

Examples from Ancient History:

1. The Amalekites
 - a. As the Jews march toward the Land of Promise, after spending nearly 40 years in the desert, they are viciously attacked by the Amalekites. Ex. 17:8
 - b. Joshua, Moses' general, led the Israelites against Amalek and defeated them. Ex. 17:9–13
 - c. Because this is the first people to attack Israel as a nation, God told Moses to be certain to record this incident, because He would blot out Amalek completely. Ex. 17:14 Num. 24:20
 - d. Amalek has vanished from history. Even archeologists cannot find anything which can be clearly associated with the Amalekites.
2. The Assyrians
 - a. In the ancient world, the Assyrians became one of the eminent empires of that day.
 - b. For 200 years, their army was undefeated, and they, along with the Phœnicians, controlled the world's iron market (and its application to weapons manufacturing).
 - c. Their kings are well-known to ancient historians: Tiglath-Pileser III, Shalmaneser V, Sargon, Sennacherib, Esar-Haddon and Assur-bani-pal.
 - d. As they began to decline as a nation, God sent Jonah to them to evangelize them in 754 B.C. (a mission Jonah rebelled against, because he hated the Assyrians).
 - e. However, anti-Semitism began to fester in this empire (even though the Assyrians were a Semitic people—i.e., descended from Shem). In 739 B.C., they threatened Judah for the first time. Jonah's evangelization had about a 15 year effect, upon one generation of Assyrians.
 - f. Essentially what happened was, many Assyrians were saved under the ministry of Jonah, but there was no dissemination of Bible doctrine. They had no truth to take them from being evangelized to becoming a nation with a subset of mature believers, which would have helped to guide the nation away from anti-Semitism.
 - g. Although there were a myriad of reasons for the fall of the Assyrian empire, the chief cause was their unrelenting anti-Semitism. Jonah hated the Assyrians and it irked him to evangelize them; but that hatred was a two-way street. So, even though many Assyrians responded to Jonah's message, their anger toward the Jews overtook this evangelical movement in a very short period of time.
 - h. Isaiah, of the Bible, records a very unusual incident. The Assyrians had invaded Judah in 701 B.C. and were about to take down Jerusalem.

“I will Bless Those who Bless you; and I will Curse Those who Curse you.”

However, they launched a psychological attack first, where the Rabshakeh (a trained propagandist for the Assyrians) taunted the Jews, warning them of their imminent defeat (Isa. 36:20), in hopes of crushing their spirit. Although the leaders of the Jews were ready to surrender, the people of Jerusalem held fast on the wall. The Assyrians prepared for war, intending to attack the next morning. Then something unusual occurred. **The Angel of the Lord** [Jesus Christ in His preincarnate form] **went out and He struck down the camp of the Assyrians, all 185,000 of them, so that, when they [the Israelites] awoke, they [the Assyrians] were all dead corpses** (Isa. 37:36).

- i. As you may well imagine, you will find that incident recorded in the Bible, but not in any of your ancient history books. However, in the 3rd Volume of the 1965 Edition of The Cambridge Ancient History, we read the following: *The disappearance of the Assyrian people will always remain an unique and striking phenomenon in ancient history. Other, similar, kingdoms and empires have indeed passed away, but the people have lived on. Recent discoveries have proved it is true, and have shown that poverty-stricken communities perpetuated the old Assyrian names at various places, for instance on the ruined site of Ashur, for many centuries, but the essential Truth remains the same. A nation which had existed two thousand years and had ruled a wide area, lost its independent character. To account for this two considerations may be urged. First, even in lands where, as Gibbon has remarked, the people are of a lustful complexion, the Assyrians seem to have been unduly devoted to practices which can only end in racial suicide . . . No other land seems to have been sacked and pillaged so completely as was Assyria; no other people, unless it be Israel, was ever so completely enslaved.*

This quotation came from R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s book *Antisemitism*, ©1974, pp. 21–22.

Portions or all of this quotation can also be found here:

<http://sermons.logos.com/submissions/89651-Anti-Semitism#content=/submissions/89651>

<http://www.jaas.org/edocs/v13n1/yildiz.pdf> (p. 16, footnote).

<http://www.enotes.com/topic/Assyrianism> (footnote)

<http://www.betnahrain.net/1History/Parpola1.htm>

3. We could also examine the Syrians, Phœnicians and Philistines for additional evidence of God cursing those who curse Israel.

Examples from Modern History:

4. Spain
 - a. The king and queen of Spain, Ferdinand V and Isabella I, desired to make Spain into a purely Catholic nation.

**“I will Bless Those who Bless you;
and I will Curse Those who Curse you.”**

- b. Spain was more or less divided at that time into *Christian Spain* and *Moorish Spain*; the former controlled by Catholicism and the latter a mixture of Catholics, Christians, Jews and Moslems.
- c. Previously, Spain had been a refuge for the Jews, but in 1482, the Inquisition began (however, it was not full-blown at that time).
- d. Torquemada, who apparently originated the inquisition, demanded the expulsion of all Jews in 1492, but Pope Sixtus IV told him *no*.
- e. So, Spain simultaneously was a world power, sending out explorers all over the globe; and beginning a persecution of the Jews (among others).
- f. By 1569, Jews had been mostly expelled from Spain and Western Europe, as this anti-Semitic Inquisition began, and with that began the sharp decline of many western European nations, including Spain.
- g. This quotation is from the *Columbia Encyclopedia*, from p. 1863 of its 1950 edition: *The expulsion of the Jews deprived Spain of part of its most useful and active population. Many went to the Levant, to the Americas, and to the Netherlands, where their skills, capital, and commercial connections benefited their hosts....Jewish scholars such as Maimonides had a major share in the development of Christian scholasticism..*

<http://reference.allrefer.com/encyclopedia/S/Spain-history-muslim-spain-and-the-christian-reconquest.html>

R. B. Thieme, Jr. references the actual encyclopedia that this quotation comes from.

- 5. Great Britain, German and the United States could all be examined so show a correlation between the rise and fall of Germany, the rise and decline of Great Britain, and the rise of the United States, all occurring simultaneously to these nations and their positive or negative attitudes toward the Jews.

The principle that God would bless those who blessed the Jew and curse those who curse the Jew, is stated outside of the Bible. We read in the 14th edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol 13, p. 51: *It is a noteworthy fact of history that great conquerors—Alexander, Cæsar, and Napoleon—have always treated the Jew well; On the other hand, lesser men, endowed with narrower outlooks, have failed to recognize the Jew and have sought to crush him. But such Procrustean methods are contrary to nature and tyranny, whether toward the Jew or toward any other [group of people] and this has never secured permanent results. The same policy of religious unification has characterized subsequent dynasties from the Assyrians to the Romanovs, and the same fate has overtaken them The Jews have always survived their disappearance. I am quite certain that this quotation was scrubbed from more modern editions.*²

² I took this quote from R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s study of Jeremiah, lesson #96. This quotation can also be found here: <http://sermons.logos.com/submissions/89651-Anti-Semitism#content=/submissions/89651> and elsewhere on the internet, as well as in Bob's book *Anti-Semitism*.

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The examples of historical anti-Semitism came from R. B. Thieme, Jr., *Anti-Semitism*; ©1974 by R. B. Thieme, Jr.; pp. 15–22, 31–36. This 150 page book examines these histories in much greater detail and may be obtained from Berachah Church without charge (713-621-3740).

<http://www.rbthieme.org/publicationsalphabeticallistings.html> provides a complete list of booklets available from Berachah.

This phenomenon, [I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you](#), is examined on several websites, and many examples from modern and ancient history are given; one of the best is:

<http://sermons.logos.com/submissions/89651-Anti-Semitism#content=/submissions/89651>

http://www.churchisraelforum.com/CH_11_Blessing_or_Cursing.htm is also a reasonable page on this particular topic, of nations which have been both blessed and cursed based upon their relationship with the Jews. I do not know enough about this website to either endorse or disparage the other materials found there.

Lesson 102 Genesis 12:1–10

Abraham Journeys to Egypt

So far, we have examined the first 3 verses of Gen. 12:

Gen 12:1–3 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those cursing you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

God promises blessing to those who bless Israel and cursing to those who curse the Jews, which can be followed throughout history (as we saw, even the Encyclopedia Britannica has made this observation). We can add this to one of the amazing things found in the book of Genesis; 4000 years ago, an historical trend is prophesied, and this trend holds true even to today.

I want you to go back in time, and think about the Hittites, the Amalekites, the Phœnicians, the Canaanites, the Ammonites, the Edomites, the Moabites—how many people from these ancient civilizations do you know? None. They have disappeared from history. And yet God has promised us here that God would make a great people from Abram, and that his direct descendants would be blessed. There are Jews throughout the world, and, in most cases, these Jews are found in the middle to upper class of that society; and, as we examined last time, nations which treat the Jew fairly are blessed by God.

There is something even more important about Jews—when they become a part of a country, they become a reasonably well-integrated and always contributing people. Although some carry on the traditions of Judaism, many do not. Because of years of intermarriage, Jews rarely look much different from those around them. And yet, Jews are singled out regularly for discriminatory behavior. This is *because* they are God's people, chosen by God and blessed by God and, when necessary, disciplined by God.

There is an interesting dynamic which we can observe in the United States—most of us have an opinion about Israel and the Palestinians, and for a reasonably large percentage of us, we have strong opinions on this matter. However, a much smaller percentage of us think about the Kurds in Iraq and what Saddam Hussein did to them. Few of us give much thought to Lebanon, a country once known, very recently in fact, for its tolerance and diversity, and now controlled, for the most part, by radical Muslims. There are all kinds of dynamics taking place throughout the world, but most of us tend to be aware of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This is because the Jews are an important part of ancient and contemporary history.

As we will eventually find out, Jews will be with us until the end, and the Jewish Age—a period of time which begins with Abram—will suddenly pick up again and continue, with the Jews playing a key role in the Tribulation (a 7 year period of time which concludes the Jewish Age—see [Dispensations](#)). This helps to explain the radical anti-Semitism, which is so deep as to cause a nation to attempt to exterminate all of its Jews. Why would such a thing occur? Jews are nearly always good for a society (I cannot think of any instances where they are not). Therefore, it seems counterintuitive that a culture would turn against them. However, this is because the Jews are the people of God and Satan has a vested interest in removing them from history. If Satan can destroy the Jews, then God's promises for the future become void, making God out to be a liar.

One fact which may surprise you is, even though there are roughly the same amount of Jews in the United States as Muslims, and even though Muslims attacked us on 9/11, there are far more incidents of anti-Semitism than there are which are anti-Muslim. Soon after the 9/11 attacks, when anti-Muslim actions would be at their peak, 27% of religious hate crimes were against Muslims and 56% of religious hate crime incidents were against Jews. Since 2002, hate crimes against Muslims have never risen above 13% of anti-religion hate crimes; and, in 2008, these were down to 8%.³ For most people, this is counterintuitive, but that is simply because you believe Satanic propaganda, also known as doctrines of demons in 1Tim. 4:1 (**But the Spirit expressly says that, in later times, some will fall away from the faith [Bible doctrine], devoting one's thoughts to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons**). When it comes to the Arabs and Jews, you may fully expect a barrage of lies from Satan. This is why it is possible for some nations to actually hold *Holocaust Denial* conferences, where they seriously debate whether or not the holocaust occurred. This demonstrates just how powerful Satan's propaganda is.

³ See <http://grendelreport.posterous.com/media-hype-anti-muslim-hate-crimes-are-increa> accessed October 25, 2010.

Back to Abram:

Gen 12:4–5a So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Charan. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot, his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people [slaves and employees] that they had acquired in Charan, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan.

Abram takes his wife, his possessions and his nephew Lot, and they all travel southwest to the land of Canaan, as directed by God.

The writer of Hebrews speaks to this 2000 years later: **By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out into a place where he was afterward going to receive for an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he went. By faith he lived in the land of promise as an immigrant, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs of the same promise with him. For he was waiting for a city which has foundations upon [God] and whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11:8–10).**

Gen 12:5b–6 When they came to the land of Canaan, Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land.

Shechem is pretty much smack dab in the middle of Canaan, which area we know as Palestine or modern-day Israel. As an aside, the Jews in that land today are descendants of Abram, who was given that land by God. The Palestinians in that land have absolutely no clear, definable relationship to any other ancient group of people who have lived in this land.

There is a map below which traces the route that Abram took (remember, Charan = Haran).



From: <http://www.ccg.org/domain/abrahams-legacy.org/images/abrahams-journey-map.gif>

Gen 12:5b–6 When they came to the land of Canaan, Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land.

Although we know where Shechem is, scholars are divided on what the *oak of Moreh* is. The first word is 'êlôwn (אֵלֹון) [pronounced *AY-loan*], which means *oak, terebinth, tall tree, a strong and hardy tree; a plain; possibly a hill*.⁴ Strong's #436 BDB #18. The second word is mōwreh (מֹרֶה) [pronounced *moh-REH*], which means *teacher*; and is transliterated *Moreh*. Strong's #4175 & #4176 BDB #435 (there is much more to know about this word, but I will leave it at that).

With regards to the *oak of Moreh*, let me suggest this theory: an ancient teacher of Biblical truth had a specific place in his area where he would go and teach, and this place was marked by some clearly-defined landmark, such as a great oak or terebinth. Or, maybe this place acquired this name, as this is where Jehovah Elohim would teach Abram (what follows is another appearance of God to Abram). Either theory would allow for these designated areas of learning to be in different places throughout Canaan (Gen. 12:6 Deut. 11:30 Judges 7:1); and it would allow êlôwn to be singular (Gen. 12:6) or plural (Deut. 11:30) or for *Moreh* to be preceded by a different noun altogether (Judges 7:1). Furthermore, these places would have been well-known to the inhabitants of that era; and hence, there is little need for an explanation within the text (which is what we find to be the

⁴ A *terebinth* is an anacardiaceous tree, which trees are found in the Mediterranean region.

case). Finally, we know enough from the Hebrew words themselves to come up with a reasonable explanation as to what the Oak of Moreh was all about.

[Gen 12:6b](#) At that time the Canaanites were in the land.

Noah had 3 sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth. Ham had 4 sons, one of whom was Canaan. Canaan apparently went west and settled in this beautiful land off the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

The Canaanites were, at one time, a great people (great in number and in power). *Canaan* or some form of *Canaan* occurs nearly 160 times in the Bible (mostly between Genesis and Judges). They are among the peoples inhabiting the Land of Promise, and God will tell the Jews to expel or to destroy these people from the land. For many of us, that sounds quite harsh, but, when the time is right, I will give you the details.

[Gen 12:7](#) Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "I will give this land to your descendants." Therefore, he built there an altar to the LORD, Who had appeared to him.

God appears to Abram, and, as we have seen before, nothing is said about God's physical form. I believe that most of the time, God appears to be a man. Furthermore, this would be Jesus Christ in His Preincarnate form. Jesus Christ is the revealed member of the Trinity. God the Father is the Planner, God the Son is the revealed member of the Godhead, and God the Holy Spirit is the power or the energy. They are all persons, but with the same essence and different function.

God has already promised Abram that He would make a great nation from him; in order to be a great nation, one has to have a plot of ground upon which to found this nation. About 4000 years ago, God promises this land where Abram is standing as the land where the nation Israel would be. About 600 years later, Joshua would go into this land and conquer it. And even today, 4000 years later, there are still Jews living in this land given them by God (from what I can gather, there have always been Jews living in the land throughout history, going back to Abram at this point in Genesis).

Part of what is being taught here is, positional truth. Positional truth is where we stand in relationship to God after salvation. We may be the worst Christians to walk the face of the earth, but, if we have believed in Jesus Christ, we are eternally saved, and our position is in Christ. We share His righteousness and His Sonship by our position in Him. Our lives may not reflect this even in the least, but our position is secure.

So it is with unconditional promises. "I will give this land to your seed" is positional truth. Abram will fail and so will his children in the line of promise; but this promise stands forever; it is their eternal, irrevocable promise from God, as is our position in Christ.

Genesis is the book of beginnings, and nearly every important doctrine to the believer is found in seed form in Genesis.

As Abram moves through the land, he builds altars to God. We are not given any specifics about these altars, but we may reasonably assume that animal sacrifices were offered on these altars.

I have spoken before of the subtlety of the Bible. When God covered Adam and Eve with animal skins, an animal had to have been killed (sacrificed) in order for this to happen. The Bible does not make a big deal about this, even though this would have been a big deal (no animal had been killed prior to that time). Then there is Cain and Abel and God respects Abel's offering to God, which is an animal sacrifice, but not Cain's (which were his human works). Noah offers up animal sacrifices to God. In fact, he took additional animals into the ark specifically to sacrifice. Finally, here, Abram builds altars, presumably to sacrifice animals upon.

From the very beginning of the Bible, scores of innocent animals were sacrificed to God. These animals did not take away sin, but they were object lessons. Every Jew for over 1000 years saw lambs (or bulls, rams, or goats)—without spot or blemish—being offered up as a sacrifice to their God. They may have known a little or a lot about their own religion, but they saw animal after animal after animal being offered in their stead, to cover their sins. All of this looks forward to Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, Who was without sin, Who would offer Himself as our sacrifice, Who would take upon Himself the punishment for our sins. He is despised and rejected of men; a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as it were a hiding of faces from Him, He being despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was on Him; and with His stripes we ourselves are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, each one to his own way; and Jehovah has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted; yet He opened not His mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before its shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare His generation? For He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of My people He was stricken. And He put His grave with the wicked, and with a rich one in His death; although He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased Jehovah to crush Him; to grieve Him; that He should put forth His soul as a guilt-offering. He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the will of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand (Isa. 53:3–10). He Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that dying to sins, we might live to righteousness; by whose stripes you were healed (1Peter 2:24).

The offering of an animal sacrifice is a type which looks forward to Jesus Christ being sacrificed (which is the antitype). The type, by itself, makes little or no sense. However, when compared to its fulfillment in the antitype (Jesus Christ), it suddenly makes perfect sense. When Jesus was being offered up on the cross, Jews were to be thinking Isa. 53 or Zech. 12:10 ("I will pour on the house of David, and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they will look to Me Whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourns for his only Son, and will grieve bitterly for Him, as one grieves for his firstborn."). In their minds, because they had seen hundreds of

animal sacrifices during their lifetimes, they were to draw a line between the type and the antitype (which many Jews of the era did).

Gen 12:8 From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD.

What God is doing is, taking Abram throughout the land of Canaan, showing him the land which was going to belong to his ancestors. All of these cities which are named (Shechem, Bethel and Ai) all will play significant parts in the history of Israel.

In this verse, Abram goes due-south and camps again, and building another altar to Jehovah God. Here, he calls upon the name of God. Abram did not have unbroken contact with God. God was not there as a visible presence at each and every place where Abram camped. Abram was to walk through the land and to see all that God was going to give to his descendants, which is why God had instructed Abraham to walk through this beautiful land.

Gen 12:9 And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negev.

The Negev (also spelled Negeb—it is a transliterated word) refers to the southern portion of the land of Canaan, so Abram is making a simple north to south sweep of the land.

Gen 12:10 Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land.

From southern Canaan, Abram will move in a southwesterly direction into Egypt.

Abram and family were not starving because they had great wealth and herds. However, for anyone who has lived off their savings, you can live off the interest, in which case you have money which will theoretically last you into perpetuity and you can delve into the principal, which means that you have a limited time that you can survive until the savings are depleted. Abram realized that with his slaves and family that he was beginning to dig into the principal, and, although he might be able to survive for several years on his present possessions, Abram is not that kind of a person. He looks to experience growth in his wealth and possessions and, when that does not occur, he takes steps to correct the situation.

Sometimes you might find yourself spinning your wheel in a town where there is a depression; some people will pick up stakes and move to a more prosperous city in order to survive. This is what Abram was doing. However, as we will see, this is outside of God's will for Abram.

One of the fascinating things in the Bible is there are similar situations which reoccur. Abram's great grandson, Joseph, will also go down to Egypt, and he will be there during

a famine, and his actions will preserve his family. However, you will also note that God does not tell Abram to go down to Egypt.

I have mentioned the Bible's subtlety many times. Here is another example: God has been telling Abram what to do and where to go. There is a famine in the land of Canaan, so, did God tell Abram, "Get up, gather up your possessions, and go to Egypt?" No, He did not. Therefore, when Abram leaves Canaan and enters into Egypt, he will be out of the geographical will of God.

Knowing the will of God is related to divine guidance. How do I know what God wants me to do? Some believers—particularly new and enthusiastic believers—want to know God's will for their life. They even become weird about it, wondering, does God want them to take this street or that street when driving to work. You may be surprised, but, for the believer, knowing the will of God for your life is relatively easy. And we will cover that next time.

Lessons 103–104: Genesis 12:10

Knowing the Will of God

When we last left Abram, he was in the land of Canaan—the land which God had promised to him and his seed, and then there was a famine in that land, so Abram went down to Egypt to live for awhile. A famine in the ancient world is equivalent to an economic depression today.

Gen 12:10 Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to temporarily reside there, for the famine was severe in the land.

As I mentioned in the previous lesson, this was not God's will for Abram. God did not tell Abram, "If things get tough in Canaan, I want you to travel southwest to Egypt and cool your heels there." However, the Bible is subtle. There is not this literary booming voice from heaven telling Abram, "Stop right there, mister; don't take another step! I never told you to go down to Egypt. Now, turn around and come back to the land." God does not necessarily do that. Now, on occasion, God will do things to let you know, *do this, but don't do that*. However, most of the time, it is much more subtle than that. In fact, your life, as guided by God, can be as subtle as this passage. How do we know God does not want Abram to go down to Egypt? Even more importantly, how do we know what the will of God is for our own lives?

The will of God is a topic which seems to baffle a lot of believers, and it shouldn't. For me personally, it has always been one of the simplest aspects of the Christian life. Knowing the will of God for me has always been fairly simple. It is obeying the will of God which is much more difficult for me.

The Doctrine of the Will of God

1. There are three categories of will:

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- 1) Divine will, which is also known as sovereignty. Job 1:12
 - 2) Angelic will. Job 1:9–11 Isa. 14:12–14
 - 3) Human will. It is important to recognize that you have free will and that you are not simply a product of your genes and your environment. This explains why even identical twins are never identical. Gen. 3:1–7 Isa. 53:6
-
2. The will of God for the human race:
- 1) For the unbeliever, God's will is salvation. 2Peter 3:9: **The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance** [= a changing of the mind toward Jesus Christ]. God wills for all men to believe in Him. **Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved** (Acts 16:31a).
 - 2) For the believer, God's will is spirituality. Ephesians 5:18: **And do not be drunk with wine, in which is excess, but be filled with the Spirit**. That is in the imperative mood, which means, *Be filled with the Spirit* is a mandate. Furthermore, for the believer, God desires for us to grow spiritually: **Grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ**—2Peter 3:18). This is also a mandate, as we have the imperative mood here as well.
 - 3) Therefore, for us as believers, God desires for us to name our sins to Him in order to restore fellowship with Him (1Cor. 11:31 1John 1:9); and for us to learn the Word of God in a church which teaches the Word of God (Heb. 10:25) under the authority of a pastor-teacher (Heb. 13:17). Simply obeying the will of God in these 2 things sets up a believer for always being in the will of God (when he chooses to be).
 - 4) Jesus has promised that becoming a believer and discipleship under Him is not a difficult or burdensome thing. **"Come to Me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke on you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest to your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."** (Matt. 11:28–30).
-
3. God desires for us to grow into spiritual adulthood. This can be illustrated with you and your children. You want your children to grow up to become independent, productive adults. When you first put little Jimmy on a bicycle with the training wheels, and you are behind him, keeping the bike balanced, pushing it, the last thing you want is, for this to end up being the norm for bike rides for Jimmy. What you desire is, after awhile, that the training wheels are removed and that he will no longer require you to be behind him, pushing and balancing the bike. God is the same way—ideally speaking, He wants us to progress to become spiritual adults, able to direct and organize our own lives. The term R. B. Thieme, Jr. used for this is, *spiritually self-sustaining*. We do not outgrow God any more than we dissolve our relationship with our parents when we grow up; but God wants us to become spiritual adults. This is a matter of free will on our

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part.

4. The humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ had free will.
 - 1) No free will in mankind would imply no free will in the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hyper-Calvinism teaches that there is no true free will in man, but they never follow this out to its logical end, which would be that Jesus Christ, in His humanity, lacks true free will.
 - 2) The basic principle of Divine Guidance, however, is based on the fact that man possesses volition (free will) of the soul.
 - 3) Matthew 26:42 is an example of Jesus Christ expressing His free will: **Again a second time having gone away, He prayed, saying, "My Father, if *it is* not possible for this cup to pass away unless I drink it, *then* let Your will be done."** Jesus did not want to go to the cross. In His humanity, He prayed not to have to go to the cross. Going to the cross involved suffering which we cannot imagine, and God the Holy Spirit makes certain that we know, Jesus, in His humanity, did not want to do this. However, **He became obedient to the point of death, even the death on a cross** (Philip. 2:8).
 - 4) The Lord's free will, in principle, is expressed in Hebrews 10:7, 9a: **Then I said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God, as it is written of Me in the scroll of the book." Then He added, "Behold, I have come to do Your will."** (Psalm 40:7). Jesus Christ willingly placed Himself under the authority of the plan of God the Father; this was a choice which He made in His humanity.
 - 5) It only makes sense for Jesus to have free will in His humanity if we have free will. These things are either both true together or both false. Otherwise, Jesus Christ is *not* true humanity.
5. Free will, foreknowledge and predestination (this point is parenthetical, to explain the relationship between these things).
 - 1) There is one stripe of Christian theology (hyper-Calvinism) that does not believe in human free will. They believe that, not only is God sovereign, but that His sovereignty controls our choice to believe in Jesus Christ. They point to predestination to explain this. They may quote Eph. 1:11 to support this position: **In Him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose, Who works out all things according to the counsel of His will.** This theology is wrong, although the verse is, of course, correct.
 - 2) God has a plan, and His will (sovereignty), our will and angelic will are all a part of this plan.
 - 3) God foreknows all things; that is, He knows every single free will choice that will be made by man or angelic being in advance.
 - 4) His plan is based upon His foreknowledge. The best illustration of this is, you and your children. Throughout the young life of your child, you make plans upon how to train him correctly and how to bring him up right. Your

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child has free will, and you adjust your plans in such a way as to consider his free will. The fact that you, as a parent, know what your child is going to do in certain situations, is called foreknowledge (in a limited, human way). That you anticipate the choices of your child and make plans which anticipate those choices, that is predestination and the divine decrees (again, in a limited, human sense). A good illustration of this is the way that we discipline our children—we may spank this one, sternly talk to that one, and ground another. We apply the discipline which we believe is appropriate and might have the greatest affect upon the child's behavior. That is an application of limited human foreknowledge.

- 5) We do all of this imperfectly; we do all of this apart from knowing each and every choice our children will make. However, God knows each and every choice that we will make and He makes this a part of His divine decrees.
- 6) All of this occurs simultaneously, but is presented to us logically in Rom. 8:29–30: **For those whom He foreknew, [those] He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified.**
- 7) Logically, it works like this. God foreknew us, therefore He predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son (which is His plan, the divine decrees). Since we are predestined (foreknowledge and predestination occur in eternity past), God must call us in time. When we respond with positive volition (remember, God foreknew us, so He knew in eternity past that we would respond to His call), we are justified (God declares us positionally righteous because Jesus died for our sins). Then, in time and in eternity future, God will glorify us, with the result that we will be conformed to the image of His Son).

6. There are 3 categories of the will of God as related to the human race. An example of all 3 types of will are illustrated by Balaam:
 - 1) Directive will of God. Numbers 22:12: **God said to Balaam, "You shall not go with them. You shall not curse the people, for they are blessed."** The King of the Moabites wanted to hire Balaam to curse the Jews and God told him not to go.
 - 2) Permissive will of God. Numbers 22:20: **And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, "If the men have come to call you, rise, go with them; but only do what I tell you."** Balaam had, by that time, decided that he would go, in violation of God's directive will. Therefore, God had plan B, which is what He wanted Balaam to do, *if* he went to the King of Moab.
 - 3) Overruling will of God. In this example, Balaam wants to do one thing, and God overrules what he wants to do. Balaam wanted to curse the Jews and God did not allow him to do this. Numbers 23.
 - 4) So you do not misapply this, this incident does not mean that God will

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ultimately overrule all of your bad decisions. This is simply a classification of God's various wills. Man quite obviously will commit sins and God will allow man's free will to function. Therefore, you do not get to make a bad decision and then turn around and blame God for that bad decision that you made. To illustrate this, 99% of parents do not want their children to take drugs, and they will do what they can to keep them from taking drugs. However, if a kid starts using drugs, he cannot turn around and blame his parents for this bad decision. Therefore, if you marry the wrong person, take the wrong job, go to a church where you do not grow spiritually, this is all on you; it is not God's fault.

7. What we need in order to ascertain Divine guidance.
 - 1) Knowledge of the Word of God.
 - (1) Psalm 32:8: *I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.* God pays attention to us and His will is ascertain from being taught.
 - (2) Proverbs 3:1-6: *My son, do not forget My teaching, but let your heart keep My commandments, for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you. Do not let grace and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart, so that you will find grace and success in the sight of God and man. Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways, learn to know Him, and He will direct your path.* We are not to depend upon our own thinking, but we are to endeavor to know Him, and, as a result, He will guide us.
 - (3) Isaiah 58:11: *And the LORD will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.* This is a promise, and the mechanics are stated in the previously cited verses.
 - 2) Yieldedness, which is the filling of the Holy Spirit.
 - (1) Romans 6:13: *Do not present parts of your body to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and every part of your body to God as instruments for righteousness.* The word *present* in this verse means *to proffer; to provide; to place a person or thing at one's disposal; to place yourself under orders to.* The Christian life is not some one-shot decision that you make when under great duress or under some sort of emotional or social coercion; it is a minute by minute set of decisions which you make each and every day of your life (the tense of this verb in the Greek indicates continuous action). .
 - (2) Romans 12:1-2: *I appeal to you therefore, members of the royal*

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family, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies [which means, *place yourself under orders to God*] as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world [= the cosmic system], but be transformed by the renovation of your mind [the key is what occurs in your thinking], that by testing you may discern what is the good, acceptable and perfect will of God. Note that you need to have your thinking renovated in order to know what the good and acceptable will of God is. Furthermore, there is periodic testing. That is spiritual growth; when God tests the Bible doctrine in your soul. Notice first and foremost that the transformation which we go through occurs **by the renovation of our thinking** (which is exactly what is occurring right now, as you read this and if you believe it).

- (3) Ephesians 5:17-18: **Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.** Notice that the two key features are: knowledge of doctrine (**understand what the will of the Lord is**) and the filling of the Holy Spirit.
- (4) We get out of fellowship with sin; we get back into fellowship by naming these sins directly to God. 1John 1:9: **If we admit [cite, name, acknowledge] our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.** *Faithful* means that God does this every time; *just* means that forgiveness does not violate God's character (Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sins, so God is just in forgiving us our sins). *Cleansing from all unrighteousness* means that God forgives us for our unknown sins as well as the sins which we name to Him.
- (5) As we advance in the Christian life, by the filling of the Holy Spirit and knowledge of Bible doctrine, we experience spiritual growth, which leads to spiritual maturity. This, in fact, is what God commands us to do. **Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ** (2Peter 3:18a). As we grow spiritually, we become more grace-oriented. James 4:6: **He gives more grace. Therefore, He has said, God resists the arrogant but He gives grace to the humble** [or, *grace oriented*] (Prov. 3:34).

8. The principle of spiritual growth: as a believer in Jesus Christ, you can choose to remain an infant (child, or adolescent) believer, or you can choose to grow spiritually. Where you presently work, there was some training to get you to the point where you are now. If someone had picked you up as an infant, and assigned you your present job, it is quite likely, as an infant, that you would be unable to perform the duties assigned to you. Assuming that you have personal integrity when it comes to your job, then your maximum production is dependent upon your age, schooling, maturity and training. The same is true of the Christian

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life. As an infant believer, you are saved and will spend eternity with God, but, insofar as the plan of God goes, you are nearly worthless. If you have chosen not to grow spiritually (and, let me make it clear, *that* is a choice that you make), then you will never amount to much spiritually. Your production will be minimal or nonexistent. Only a believer who has doctrine in his soul and who remains in the Spirit for extended periods of time actually does anything worthwhile in the plan of God. Your spiritual growth or your lack of spiritual growth is a personal choice that you make each and every day.

9. The will of God for the Christian here on earth.
 - 1) God wants us to think like He thinks. **Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus** (Philip. 2:5). See also Rom. 12:1–2
 - 2) We need to know what God wants us to do. This can be determined by obeying all of the mandates found in the New Testament epistles.
 - 3) The geographical will of God, which is closely related to our study of Abram. Where does God want Abram to be? In the land of Canaan or in the land of Egypt?
10. The mechanics of the will of God is revealed in Acts 11:
 - 1) Guidance through prayer. Acts 11:5: **"I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision, something like a great sheet descending, being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to me."** I need to say something about prayer, because this is the most misunderstood and misused gift of God. Let me give you an analogy to help explain how prayer is misused: a hammer is a fantastic tool. You can use it to pound in nails and to remove nails. When I go to work, I always carry a hammer. However, you do not use a hammer when you want to cut off a 6' piece of 2x4. You use a saw. Believers without doctrine use prayer as their primary tool—in fact, as their only tool—and they try to use it for everything ("You want me to saw those board there? Good, because I brought my hammer."). Most of the time, when someone wants to know something or to discern God's will, they pray. Depending upon their predisposition and emotions at the time, after praying a lot and working up some emotion, they then go ahead and do exactly what they wanted to do in the first place (with some exceptions, of course, who do the opposite of what they want to do). When you are faced with a decision, do not expect to pray and for God to tap your left shoulder for *no* and your right shoulder for *yes*. God speaks to us and guides us *through His Word*. Most of the time, if you are growing, God is guiding you to make whatever decisions need to be made. However, if you are not growing, then God puts in front of you serious decisions which make you recognize that you do not have enough doctrine in your soul to make these decisions.
 - 2) Guidance through the thinking. Acts 11:6: **Looking intently on this, I observed. And I saw the four-footed animals of the earth, and the wild beasts, and the creeping things, and the birds of the heaven.** If you

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- understand principles from the Word of God, then you can properly evaluate the circumstances that you are in.
- 3) Guidance through the Word. Acts 11:7-9: **And I heard a voice saying to me, "Peter, rise up, slay and eat."** But I said, "No, Lord, because never has anything common or unclean entered into my mouth." But a voice answered me the second time out of the heaven, "What God has cleansed, you do not make common." Hopefully, it is clear to you that God does not periodically speak to us out of heaven. However, His words in this passage represent the words found in the Bible (also called, by the way, the *Word of God*).
 - 4) Guidance through providential circumstances. Acts 11:11: **And, behold, at once three men stood at the house in which I was, having been sent from Caesarea to me.** There are things which are going to cause you to take certain steps in your life. Personally, I had to move in order to find a job, and the places I wanted to move to, had no jobs available. The place I considered moving to, but did not really want to move to, is Houston; and, of course, every door opened for me to move here. Therefore, you may find yourself spinning your wheels in city A, and God is simply guiding you to city B. Or, you may get a job offer out of town, and that is God's way of saying, "Move to that town."
 - 5) Guidance through the filling of the Holy Spirit. Acts 11:12: **And the Spirit said to me to go with them, not discriminating. And these six brothers also were with me, and we went into the man's house.** Just as God the Father does not speak to us audibly out of heaven, God the Holy Spirit does not tell us what to do audibly or through our emotions. However, when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, then we are in His will (we are doing what God wants us to do).
 - 6) Guidance through fellowship and comparison of data. Acts 11:13-15: **And he told us how he saw an angel in his house, standing and saying to him, Send men to Joppa, and send for Simon who is surnamed Peter, who will speak words to you by which you and all your household will be saved. And in my beginning to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, as also on us in the beginning.** One of the things which I have observed is, believers who have the opportunity to gather with others but choose not to, tend to get a bit wacky. This is even true of those who take in doctrine regularly. Maybe it is the academic discipline of listening to teaching with others, but it tends to keep believers more balanced.
 - 7) Guidance through recalling Scriptures. Acts 11:16: **And I recalled the Word of the Lord, how He said, John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit.** You have to know the Word of God in order to remember the Word of God. It is not legitimate, when you are in a jam, to grab your Bible, close your eyes, and put your finger on some miscellaneous verse. It is legitimate to go to the Bible for guidance, and look up this or that particular subject (or, far better than this, get the

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teaching of your pastor on MP3 on that particular topic). It is legitimate to google *promises of God* so that you can find a promise which applies to your situation. However, it is far better to have this information in your soul as a result of good Bible teaching (which is more difficult to find than you may realize).

11. Young believers, immature believers, and carnal believers and the will of God: simply put off big decisions until you have grown spiritually. For most people, this means daily Bible doctrine for a year (or 2 or 3) before they ought to make a decision like, getting married, getting divorced, changing jobs, moving, etc. In any case, do not allow yourself to be bullied into some particular course of action. 1Cor. 7:18–28
12. Young believers, immature believers, and carnal believers and the will of God: avoid cults or churches where other members of the church attempt to bully you into some course of action. When pastors or others inside the church tell you what to do outside of the church, and enforce this in some way, they are out of line. A pastor can certainly teach what you ought to do (do not commit adultery, for instance), but once you walk out the doors of your church, you make the decision before God to do these things or not. There should not be some kind of pressure applied to you (e.g., social ostracism, or assigning someone to *disciple* you, etc.). If there is any kind of pressure for you to do something within the church (give your testimony, confess your sins before others, pray in front of others, speak in tongues, come forward for any reason, give money, etc.), then you are in the wrong church. A pastor and deacons must maintain some semblance of order in a church, taking into account that this is a gathering of dozens (hundreds or thousands) of sin natures; but whatever you are required to do within the church building ought to be related to the teaching of the Word of God, your personal privacy and the privacy of others. So, if you are a disturbance during the teaching of the Word of God, a pastor may go so far as to chew you out or have you removed; because this impacts the ability of others to be taught. However, if there is pressure put upon you to, say, get baptized in front of everyone, that is a different matter. There, the pastor has exceeded his authority.
13. Do not confuse legitimate authority with someone bullying you into a course of action.
 - 1) Parents have authority over their children, so if you are under the roof of one or both of your parents, they do have the authority to tell you what to do.
 - 2) Employers have authority over employees on work-related matters.
 - 3) In the armed forces, commanding officers have authority over their subordinates.
 - 4) The coach has authority over his team, the teacher over his students, etc.
 - 5) The pastor over the congregation with respect to what goes on inside of the church in order to maintain academic discipline to teach the Word of

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God. That is, the pastor cannot tell you that you must go out and witness to 10 people this week, nor can he assign a spiritual mentor to invade your privacy, but he can certainly tell you to shut up if you are a disturbance during the teaching of the Bible.

- 6) We are all subject to legitimate authorities, and we need to obey those authorities. Rom. 13:1–7
- 7) Furthermore, let me add a little application. You ought to have figured out that, your behavior and actions are between you and God. No one in a church has the right to bully you into some course of action, even if the end result is avoidance of sin. The free will decisions which you make are significant, but not if you are simply going along to get along.
- 8) However, you may have a morals clause where you work. That is legitimate, and you have to obey this morals clause if you choose to work for that school district, business or company. As an example, if you are a school teacher, and you are involved in gross immorality, then a school district ought to be able to remove you as an employee. That is not an invasion of your privacy, as you are not just a teacher of young adults but an example to them.
- 9) More application: you can choose to allow people to invade your privacy for your own good, e.g., interaction with a sponsor if you belong to Alcoholics Anonymous or some similar organization. You have made a choice to give them this authority over you.

14. Summary Points: How to be in the will of God and how to remain in the will of God.

- 1) You need to be in fellowship, which is achieved by 1John 1:9: **If we name our sins, He [God] is faithful [i.e., He does it every time] and just [God operates within His Own essence] to forgive us our sins [these are the sins we name] and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness [these are sins which we do not name].**
- 2) You need to be growing spiritually. This does not mean that you reduce the number of overt sins in your life or that you speak a holy language now and again (*Amen, God willing*) or that you become more and more involved at your church (teaching Sunday school, acting as a deacon, etc.). Spiritual growth is achieved by the daily intake of the Word of God taught by a doctrinal pastor-teacher. **Grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ** (2Peter 3:18a). *Grace* is the grace system which God has provided. All believers in Jesus Christ are given the means and the opportunity to grow spiritually, regardless of geographical location. 99% of the time, this will be learning under the ministry of a doctrinal pastor-teacher (I provide a list of them here: <http://kukis.org/Links/thelist.htm>). Many of these pastor-teachers, if they are outside of your geographical area, provide an online MP3 ministry, where you can download (or order) previous lessons and listen to the

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teaching of the Word of God without any financial obligation. Many of them will provide these lessons by sending them to your home by mail. If you are relatively near to any of these churches, then that is where you ought to go.

- 3) If you are not in the geographical area of any of these churches, then you need to operate under normal academic discipline when listening to a lesson. You don't surf the internet, you do not text, you do not do housework, nor do you do anything else which takes your concentration away from the message that you are listening to. Ideally speaking, if you live within driving distance of a doctrinal church, then that is where you need to be when the church doors are open.
- 4) The short explanation is, as long as you are in fellowship and growing, then you will be in the will of God.
- 5) Now, let's say that you are a new believer or a believer who has decided to get with God's program and to start growing, and you face a momentous decision (to get married, to change jobs, to move elsewhere). If you face this as a new believer or as a believer just about to get with doctrine, then you choose not to change your status until you know enough doctrine in order to make this decision. 1Cor. 7:18–24.
- 6) If you are at city A and God wants you to be in city B, do not worry. God will make that happen. Where I was raised up, I had studied God's Word for about 5 years, but I was spinning my wheels career-wise, and it did not seem as if that would change anytime in the near future. I began exploring my options in other cities. On my list of 3 cities to move to, #3 on the list (and, way, way down from #2) was Houston. I thought of moving to Houston because Bob Thieme was teaching Bible doctrine there. However, this was so far down the list from my 1st and 2nd choices. In any case, every door closed to me for my first two choices; and door after door after door opened for me for choice #3. God did almost everything necessary to move me in that direction.
- 7) When it comes to your day-to-day life, God has things mapped out. You have a job or school that you go to, which takes up perhaps 9–10 hours of your day. You do this job (or attend this school) as unto the Lord. That is, you function as if you are working for God, and you remain faithful in all respects, whether anyone else can see what you are doing or not. You have a couple of hours that you spend eating, an hour for Bible teaching, and a few hours for relaxation. If you stay in fellowship all of this time, or get back into fellowship when you get out, then you are in the will of God.
- 8) If you do not have a job or school, then (1) you spend 9 or 10 hours of every single day looking for a job or (2) you set your sights to moving to a different city or to a different state. If you have begun to listen to a particular pastor from the list I provided, then you seriously consider packing up all that you own and move to the city where he teaches (obviously, it is normal to seek out job opportunities in that city by phone

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- and by the internet and then you go there for interviews). God uses your lack of opportunity in city A to get you to move to city B. God allows man to enact foolish political policies, which negatively impact a particular geographical area, to move some believers from point A to point B.
- 9) Gathering together with other believers is extremely important. Heb. 10:25 exhorts us to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. I have known a lot of believers over the years, many of them squared away on doctrine. However, when they go off on their own—they make no attempt to gather under the authority of a well-qualified pastor-teacher or as a group—they get goofy, and I can name a whole host of believers I have known in my life who stopped gathering under this sort of authority, and got goofy. Personally, I gather with believers under the ministry of R. B. Thieme III every time the church is in session, and, on off-nights, listen to his father's teaching. Even though I clearly understand what God's will is for my life, that does not mean I no longer need to study under my pastor's authority.

Again, the key to being in the will of God is to be in fellowship, to grow spiritually, and to carry out your duties in life (at your job, in school, or in the home) as unto the Lord.

This is taken, in part, from http://www.divineviewpoint.com/Gods_will_your_life.pdf (Buddy Dano's website) and edited and appended. Also used as a reference: http://rbthieme.org/Divine_Guidance.pdf which is an online booklet which I strongly recommend, if this is an area of the Christian life where you want more information.

Gen 12:10 Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land.

Abram made a choice here. Abram is going to be out of the geographical will of God, so now, the rest of his decisions are going to be poor as well.

Lessons 105–106: Genesis 12:10–13

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You will recall that we last left Abram, he is about to move to Egypt. He is in the land of Canaan, which God would give to him and his descendants; but now, Abram is under a little pressure, so he decides to move to Egypt.

Gen 12:10 Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land.

This is not God's will for Abram, because God did tell Abram to move to the land of Canaan, but He did not tell Abram to move out of the land of Canaan into Egypt. Therefore, since Abram is out of God's geographical will, he is going to do some stupid things.

Let me try to give you an example that you can relate to. Most of us understand something about our sin natures and where our own weaknesses lie. Let's say that you are a recovering substance abuser; for most people—particularly in the early stages of escaping the hold of drugs—it is better for them not to associate at all with their former druggie friends. You do not decide, “Drugs are ruining my life; I need to stop doing them;” and then, a few days later, hear about a party where all your drug-taking friends are going to be, and go to that party. That is an unsound move, geographically speaking. As a roommate once told me, with regards to remaining faithful to his girlfriend (and later, his wife): he knew his weaknesses with regards to other women, so he did not put himself in a position where he would have to deal with this weakness. He was careful about personal relationships with other women and he was careful about being in situations where he would be alone with other women. Or, as Clint Eastwood once said, “A man has got to know his limitations.”

Abram is leaving God's geographical will; therefore, Abram is going to make some stupid choices. Being outside of God's geographical will, makes you more vulnerable to your own weaknesses; and, you are less likely to grow spiritually.

[Gen 12:11–13](#) When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, "I know that you are a woman [who is] beautiful in appearance, and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me, but they will let you live. Say you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared for your sake."

Abram comes up with this half-baked scheme to preserve his own life. We would expect Abram to behave differently, but the people of the Bible are always presented as real people, with flaws. Abram made mistakes, just as we do, and the Bible never glosses over these mistakes.

Although it is legitimate to lie to your enemy in warfare (2Sam. 15:30–36 17:7–14), it is not legitimate to lie to the people of a host country. Abram's opinion of the Egyptians is, they would notice that Sarai is quite attractive (even at her age) and they would kill Abram in order to have her. The Pharaoh of Egypt will actually show himself to be of a better character than Abram. However, the key to salvation in the Bible is not morality but a relationship to God through Jesus Christ (or, in the Old Testament, a relationship with Jehovah Elohim).

Furthermore, this shows that Abram distrusts God. God has already promised Abram that He would make a great nation from him; and God cannot make a great nation out of a dead man who has no children. Abram is not exercising faith in God and he is not in the geographical will of God.

Remember our previous lesson: Where does God want me to be? What does God want me to think? What does God want me to do? Abram is in Egypt and not Canaan; he is not exercising faith in God's promises, and now he is about to lie to the leader of his host country.

R. B. Thieme Jr., the former pastor of Berachah Church in Houston, had 2 great general achievements in his career: he laid out and explained the mechanics of the Christian way of life; and he developed an updated theological vocabulary.⁵

R. B. Thieme, Jr. developed the doctrine of the faith-rest drill early on in his ministry. The term *faith rest* describes the way of life of the believer in the Old Testament and *faith rest* is one of the spiritual mechanics in our lives as believers in the Church Age. Let me reemphasize that Abram is *not* living by faith-rest at this time.

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1. Definition of faith-rest:
 - 1) You place your trust in God, in His Word, in His promises or in Bible doctrine, and you step back and allow God to keep His Word, or fulfill His promises, or vindicate the doctrine which is in your soul.
 - 2) The believer must be in fellowship and have a true object for his faith. That is, what he believes must be true. Believers are constantly placing their faith in things which are false and which are not promised by God.
 - 3) Whether in the Old or New Testament, the believer must have no unconfessed sin in his life (when you name your sins to God, any unknown sins are forgiven as well—1John 1:9).
 - 4) The believer has to know a promise or some of the promises of God; or they must know true and correct Bible doctrine toward which they can exercise faith. A baby believer can no more use the faith-rest technique than allow his spiritual gift to function properly.
 - (1) As an aside, having been saved and then living for 10 or 20 years, does not mean you have gone from being an infant believer to being an adult believer.
 - (2) Spiritual growth is always a matter of time, grace and doctrine (2Peter 3:18).
 - (3) No one is born again spiritually mature, and no one reaches spiritual maturity simply because they believe in Jesus Christ, and then live for a few years (or, live for a few years and attend church). There is a parallel to this in the growth of a child. If a child is raised without soul stimulation, then they do not grow. Wild children or children raised in closets or cages without the stimulation of their thinking and verbal skills do not grow; and past a certain age, will never mature properly. Such children who are rescued at age 10 or 15 *never* develop a normal vocabulary; they *never* develop normal social skills. Similarly, your brain has to be regularly stimulated by Bible doctrine, or you do not grow spiritually.
 - (4) Although church is designed as the environment for our spiritual growth, attending a church does not guarantee spiritual growth.

⁵ Some of this came from Lewis Sperry Chafer, the founder of Dallas Theological Seminary, where Thieme went to do graduate work in theology.

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- (5) You cannot grow in a church that does not teach spiritual mechanics.
 - (6) For most Christians, they think that spiritual growth is, sanding off the rough edges of their personality and improving their moral behavior. The former will often improve your relationship with other people and the latter will make your life better, but neither of these things are the means of spiritual growth. I am not saying that either of these things are bad or that you ought not to do them; they are simply not the means of spiritual growth.
 - (7) At best, your spiritual life will be mostly ineffective and hit or miss.
 - (8) In many churches, most Christians are simply taught to be moral. There is absolutely nothing wrong with morality—it is commendable—but it is not the Christian way of life. Morality will improve any person's life—believer and unbeliever alike. Morality will improve the nation in which you live, but morality does not commend you to God.
- 5) You need to have enough doctrine in your soul to know whether or not you need to act. In a hopeless situation, you need to stand back and watch the deliverance of God. However, there are times when you must act. The example R. B. Thieme Jr. has used innumerable times is, if you need a job, you do not find a park bench and go sit there and wait for God to drop a job on your lap. That is not faith-rest. A soldier at war who is trusting in God does not rush the enemy head-on without cover, time after time after time. Nor will he sit in a fox hole and wait for God to destroy the enemy with a lightning bolt. The soldier functions as per his training, but with his full faith in Jesus Christ, his Deliverer. The key in faith-rest, when you must act, is that your trust is in God's faithfulness, not in your actions.
 - 6) Most of the time, the application of the faith-rest technique occurs in a time of testing. God sends you problems or difficulties or testing, and you respond to these difficulties by applying the faith-rest technique. Again, you may be required to act or you may be required to sit still; but, if it is the former, you recognize that the results depend upon God, not upon the clever actions which you take.
2. Introductory verses:
 - 1) **And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him (Heb. 11:6).**
 - 2) **We look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal (2Cor. 4:18).**
 - 3) **Trust in Jehovah with all your heart, and lean not to your own understanding (Prov. 3:5).**
 - 4) **We walk by faith, not by sight (2Cor. 5:7).**
 3. Whether we like it or not, *faith* is an integral part of the Christian life. However,

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it is important to note that most of us have great faith. A learned scientist who knows some of the great intricacies of a single cell (no one knows all of the functions of a single cell), may simultaneously believe that this cell spontaneously generated from non-living matter, despite its great complexity. That requires tremendous faith on his part, and he may even try to pass off spontaneous generation as the only reasonable scientific theory for the existence of that cell. Since a biologist could write his doctoral dissertation on one single living cell (and still not tell us everything there is to know about that single, living cell), it takes tremendous faith to believe that cell just happened. My point is, *everyone* has faith, Christians and non-Christians alike.

4. Although this may seem elementary, faith must have an object. You cannot just have faith in some nebulous, undefined spiritual thing. In fact, you must have more than just *faith in some sort of God-entity*. Faith requires specific objects and specific promises to place our faith in. Furthermore, for your faith to have any spiritual impact, these things you place your faith in must be true.
 - 1) This is related to one of the great spiritual problems in the United States. How many times have you heard someone say, “I am spiritual, but I am not religious”? This either means that they have some general feelings about some other, ethereal force out there—in some cases, this is *mother earth*—and in the few cases where such a person has some well-defined concepts of spirituality, it is often just plain weird.
 - 2) Exactly Who and What God is, is undefined to those who claim to be spiritual but not religious; or they define God’s weirdly, based upon nothing in particular. A friend of mine used to see death as a melting pot, and that in death, he would just fall into this great universal melting pot of existence of some sort. It was quite fascinating, because he could not really even articulate what he believed in—and what he believed in changed from time to time—but he expected me to have specifics which I believed in and for the reasons to be carefully researched.
 - 3) So, simply having faith is meaningless, since everyone has faith. Simply having faith in religious ideas or philosophical principles is equally meaningless, if these things are not true.
5. The principle of the faith-rest technique:
 - 1) One description of the faith-rest technique is found in Heb. 4:1–3: **Therefore, while the promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear so that none of you should miss it [the opportunity to enter into God’s rest]. For, indeed, we have had the gospel proclaimed to us, even as they [in the Old Testament] [did]; but the Word did not profit those hearing it, not having been mixed with faith in the ones who heard. For we, the ones believing, enter into that rest—just as He said, As I swore in My wrath, they will not enter into My rest,—though the works had come into being from the foundation of the world.** Simply hearing truth is one thing, but the truth by itself does you no good. You have to hear it and believe it.
 - 2) The most fundamental promise of entering into God’s rest is found in

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- Matt. 11:28: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." This is faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. In salvation, our faith has a specific object and that object is Truth ("I am the way, the Truth and the life; no man comes to the Father, but through Me." (John 14:6).
- 3) However, we also have this same principle which is applied in our lives as those who have already believed in Jesus Christ. The example to which the writer of Hebrews refers back to is the Exodus generation who had believed in Jehovah Elohim, but every time that they faced a crisis situation, they did not mix the promises of God with faith (Heb. 3 gives us this context). Heb. 3:7–11 **Because of this, even as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness, there where your fathers tempted Me, testing Me, and saw My works forty years. Because of this, I was angry with that generation and I said, 'They always go astray in their heart [thinking]; and they did not know My ways [they did not know and understand Bible doctrine];' so I swore in My wrath, They will not enter into My rest."** (Psalm 95:7–11). Heb. 4:2 **For, indeed, we have had the good news proclaimed to us, even as they did, but the Word [of God] did not profit those hearing it, because they did not mix [this Word] with faith in the ones who heard [the teaching of doctrine].** This all refers to Gen X of the Exodus generation. These were the adults who left Egypt. They would die in the desert before God took their children into the land of Canaan (**The Word of God did not profit those hearing it [Gen X], because they did not mix the Word with faith**).
 - 4) Therefore, it takes two things: you must hear the teaching of the Word of God (truth) and then you must mix this teaching with faith—that is, you must actually believe it. This is true in the realm of salvation and in our daily Christian lives.
 - 5) We are saved by faith in Jesus Christ. We also live our lives doing essentially the same thing—believing in divine truth. **For we walk by faith, not by sight** (2Cor. 5:7).
 - 6) The principle of the faith-rest technique was a part of Old Testament mechanics: **You [God] keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Trust in Jehovah forever; for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength** (Isaiah 26:3-4). **When I am afraid, I will trust in you** (Psalm 56:3).
6. The mechanics of the faith-rest technique:
- 1) Whether in the Old or New Testaments, the believer must be in fellowship for spiritual function of any sort; if you are out of fellowship by committing a sin, then you must first name this sin to God. 1Cor. 11:31 1John 1:9 Psalm 51:4
 - 2) The believer must have something in which to believe. Therefore, we must know the promises of God, the essence of God and/or the doctrines of the Bible. Faith requires an object, and that object must be true and

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- accurate.
- 3) When faced with a problem, a time of testing or some difficulty in life, the believer places his faith in an applicable promise of God or a doctrine from the Bible.
 - 4) This may or may not require action on the part of the believer. Each situation is different. Let me illustrate this with you and your child:
 - (1) You are teaching your son to swim, and, as a part of this, you want him to jump into the water where you are. He has to trust you as he jumps into the swimming pool where you are standing. That requires action on his part.
 - (2) That same child depends upon you for safety at home. In this case, the child does nothing. He doesn't add extra locks to his windows, nor does he set up motion detectors in his room or keep a loaded gun on his night stand next to his Barney books. His trust is in you to keep him safe (quite obviously, doing these things would never occur to most children, because their faith in you for their safety at home is so strong). In this illustration, the child does not act.
 7. The key to faith-rest is moving towards being occupied with Jesus Christ. Being occupied with Christ means that you will automatically apply the faith-rest technique to any appropriate circumstance. Psalm 37:4–7a Eph. 4:11–16 Heb. 12:1–2 This comes from learning the Word of God and growing spiritually.
 8. As you become occupied with Christ, you view your life and the circumstances of your life in the light of eternity. **He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, He has set eternity in their heart, without which man cannot find out the work that God makes from the beginning even to the end (Eccles. 3:11). Israel is delivered by Jehovah with everlasting salvation. You will not be ashamed nor disgraced to all eternity (Isa. 45:17). For so says the high and lofty One Who inhabits eternity, and His name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, even with the contrite and humble of spirit [= the grace orientated believer]; to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones (Isa. 57:15).** Spiritual growth leads to seeing life in the light of eternity: **But grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity (2Peter 3:18).**
 9. Faith-rest was the Old Testament system of spirituality. One used rebound in order to get back into fellowship and faith-rest to live their lives. The consistent use of faith-rest was associated with a believer becoming mature in the Old Testament. Abraham and Daniel are examples of this. Gen. 17:15–27 Rom. 4:18-21 Dan. 6:1-22 Heb. 11:33
 10. In the Church Age, we use faith-rest, but we are given much more than Old Testament believers. We have the filling of the Holy Spirit and the complete Word of God.
 11. The present application and Abram and his lack of faith rest:
 - 1) We are studying Abram and what God has given him **And Jehovah had**

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said to Abram, Go out from your land and from your kindred, and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great; and you will be a blessing. And I will bless those who bless you, and curse the one despising you. And in you all families of the earth shall be blessed (Gen. 12:1–3).

- 2) Once Abram travels to the Land of Promise, God tells him, “I will give this land to your seed.” (Gen. 12:7b).
 - 3) Here is how Abram has failed:
 - (1) God has never told Abram, “You know, if times get tough, then you need to move over to Egypt until things are good again.” Yet, Abram goes to Egypt.
 - (2) In order for God’s promises to come to pass, Abram must survive long enough to have children with Sarai, his wife. Therefore, there is no reason for Abram to leave the land of Canaan and there is no reason for Abram to lie to the leaders of his host country about anything.
 - 4) In other words, what Abram is *not* doing is applying faith-rest to his situation.
12. Positive examples of believers correctly applying the faith-rest technique in the Bible:
- 1) In Gen. 14, Abram will intentionally assault an army much larger than his own in order to rescue his nephew Lot. Although Abram faces a great army, he advances against this army because that is the right thing to do. He shows no concern for his personal safety.
 - 2) In Gen. 15, God reiterates His promises to Abram and Abram **had believed Jehovah, and God credited his account with righteousness** (Gen. 15:6).
 - 3) When God was laying judgments upon the Egyptians for not letting the Israelites leave, to go into the Land of Promise, one of the judgments was against the firstborn. In order to protect their own families, the Jews were instructed to kill a lamb at midnight, for each household, and apply the blood of that lamb to the top and sides of the entryways of their homes. The Jews believed God and they followed His instructions, and their families survived. Ex. 11:1–12:13. This function of faith-rest required the believers in Jehovah Elohim to act. For some of them, this was their initial trust in Jehovah Elohim.
 - 4) Moses, Joshua and Caleb in Num. 13–14 (to be discussed in more detail below under the next main point).
13. Negative examples of believers applying the faith-rest technique in the Bible (i.e., they fail to mix the promises of God with faith):
- 1) With regards to God’s promises, Abram was not supposed to act on these promises in order to make them true. In Gen. 16, Abram will act in order to make God’s promise to him come true, and he had sex with his wife Sarai’s slave girl (encouraged by his wife, no less).

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- 2) The Exodus generation is probably the greatest example of those who continually failed to trust God and His promises. Through the Abrahamic Covenant, they knew that God had promised them the land of Canaan, even though they were living in slavery in Egypt. They called out to God to deliver them from this slavery, and God sent them Moses. God promised Israel (through Moses) that He would lead them out of slavery and into the Land of Promise (Ex. 3:15–22). Once this all came to pass, exactly as God had promised, the children of Israel found themselves in the desert following Moses, and facing many tests. The first is the bitter water test at Marah in Exodus 15. In order for the Israelites to travel from the desert to the Land of Promise, a land given them by God, they would have to survive the trip. This means that they would need a huge amount of drinkable water, even though they would travel in a desert. However, when faced with some undrinkable water (called bitter water), these Jews, who had just observed several tremendous acts of deliverance by God, fell apart and began to complain and fret over their situation.
 - 3) These same Jews faced a no food and a no water test at Meribah in Ex. 16–17. They failed again.
 - 4) Literally a few months after they left Egypt, the Exodus generation stood at the entryway of the Land of Promise, and they could have taken the land. However, they did not, because they were afraid of the *giants in the land*. At least 3 men believed God and were ready to function according to His promises (Moses, Joshua and Caleb), and the rest of Israel did not believe God, despite all that He had done previous to this situation. Num. 13–14
 - 5) God has these Jews cool their heels in the desert for the next 38 years, while He kills off the older generation (Gen X) and raises up a new generation of believers (the generation of promise). However, one of their first tests involves them facing another *no water* test, and even this new generation falls apart, and moans and complains, wishing that they had already perished in the desert (which reveals their lack of training by their parents). Num. 20
14. Examples of the promises of God which we may claim:
- 1) **Cast all your anxieties** [or, *cares*] **on Him because He cares for you** (1Peter 5:7).
 - 2) **Delight yourself in Y^ehowah, and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to Y^ehowah. Trust also in Him, and He will do this: He will make your righteousness go forth as the light, and your justice as the noon day sun. Rest in Y^ehowah, and wait patiently for Him** (Psalm 37:4–7a).
 - 3) **Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all** (Psalm 34:19).
 - 4) **Cast your burden on Yahweh, and he will sustain you. He will never allow the righteous to be shaken** (Psalm 55:22).

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- 5) No temptation has taken you except what is common to man, but God is faithful, Who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able. But with the temptation, He will also make the way out, so that you may be able to endure it (1Cor. 10:13).
 - 6) There are websites on the internet which specialize in the promises of God. Just google “promises of God.” There are hundreds of promises that God makes to us in the Bible.
 - 7) The antithesis of faith-rest is panic, worry, anxiety, and fear.
15. A natural outgrowth of faith-rest are various doctrinal rationales. A doctrinal rationale is a general principle which is true.
- 1) The essence of God rationale: We understand the attributes of God; that He is Righteousness, Justice, Sovereignty, Omnipresence, Omniscience, Omnipotence, Veracity, Immutability, Love and Eternal Life. At any time, we can integrate our lives and our difficulties with God’s essence, and we are able to recognize that He must always function within the confines of His essence.
 - 2) The plan of God rationale: God has an individual plan for every single one of us. We know that this plan is going to include difficulties. You might break up with your wife or girlfriend, you might lose your job, those near to you might die; you may contract a deadly disease; you might be forced to move to a new city where you know no one else. We all face a number of problems and difficulties in our lives. Sometimes these things seem to happen all at once, sometimes we go for months or years without dramatic difficulties; and sometimes, they just seem to happen, one right after another. The plan of God rationale tells us that God has a plan for our lives and during our lives, there will be difficulties, for which God has already made provision. Jesus teaches this in Matt. 6:25–33: **“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”**
 - 3) The policy of God rationale. God’s policy for the unbeliever is to provide them with salvation—if they believe in Jesus Christ, they will be saved.

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For the believer, God provides the means by which we may grow spiritually. Jesus said, "If anyone desires to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine [i.e., what Jesus Christ was teaching], whether it is of God, or I speak from Myself." (John 7:17). When Peter tells us to grow in **grace and the knowledge** of God's Word, that means that God has provided the means by which to do this. God does not give us a mandate which we cannot perform (policy of God rationale).

- 4) The "a fortiori" rationale: God has already done the most difficult thing on our behalf: He has provided us with eternal salvation. The *a fortiori* rationale means, if God has done the more difficult thing on our behalf, then we can trust Him to do that which is easier on our behalf. One specific example of a fortiori rationale is Rom. 5:8-9: "But the God demonstrates His own love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died instead of us. Much more, therefore, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be delivered from the wrath of God through Him." Jesus Christ died for us while we were yet sinners; therefore, now that we are in Him, we know that we will be delivered from the wrath of God. If God provides the greater in justification (imputation of perfect righteousness), it follows, a fortiori, that the justice of God can provide the less, the imputation of special blessings at maturity and thereafter. These special blessings, sometimes called supergrace blessings, glorify God in time.
- 5) Of the 4 rationales which I have given here, there is certainly some overlapping. For example, when I said that God will not mandate us to do something which we cannot do, I put this under the *policy of God* rationale; however, that is also related to God's character.
16. Applying the faith-rest drill does not always result in the outcome we desire. The outcome of any difficulty in our life is going to be in accordance with the plan of God and the outcome will **always** be consistent with God's promises and the truth of the Word of God.
17. To sum up:
 - 1) Faith-rest is taking a promise of God, a divine principle or a divine rationale and placing our faith in that promise, principle or rationale.
 - 2) We must be in fellowship in order for the application of faith-rest to have any spiritual impact.
 - 3) Since all men have faith, there is no merit in simply having faith. The merit is in the object of faith. We must place our faith in that which is true.
 - 4) At salvation, we used an elementary form of faith-rest: we placed our faith in Jesus Christ.
 - 5) In using the faith-rest technique, we may or may not act. The serenity prayer (later adopted by Alcoholics Anonymous) comes to mind: "God grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference."
 - 6) The faith-rest drill is both a mechanic in the spiritual life and a means of growth. That is, God tests us with some pressure or difficulty, we apply

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the faith-rest technique (which may or may not require action), and we often experience some spiritual growth as a result.

Many others have presented the Doctrine of Faith-rest online:

<http://www.realtime.net/~wdoud/topics/faithrest.html>

<http://www.prairieviewchristian.org/downloads/written/prep/basic/frd.pdf>

Online slide show on the faith-rest drill (with audio):

<http://www.slideboom.com/presentations/61875/Building-Your-Faith-01%2FIntroduction>

Abbreviated treatises of the Doctrine of the Faith-rest drill:

<http://www.versebyverse.org/doctrine/fr-tech.html>

http://www.lakeeriebiblechurch.org/Doctrine/html/FAITH_REST.htm

http://www.egracebiblechurch.org/faith_rest_life.htm

Here is a series of audio (MP3) lessons on faith-rest, which can be downloaded and listened to:

http://www.gdcmedia.org/MediaMins/archive_id.asp?seriesid=JSH&ClassIDStart=110&ClassIDEnd=117&Subject=Doctrine+of+Faith-Rest+Drill

A second series available online: <http://www.bibleframework.com/lessons/faith-rest-drill/>

The booklet on faith-rest can be ordered for free from R. B. Thieme Jr. Ministries:

<http://rbthieme.org/the7.htm> (or call 713-621-3740). They will also send a CD of mp3's on this same topic.

Faith-rest is another example where R. B. Thieme Jr. took a concept from the Word of God, gave it a name and then applied specific mechanics to this concept, mechanics taken from the Bible.

Other references:

www.jimbrettell.org/deeper/slmancom.doc

http://www.answerbag.com/q_view/1112625

Many of these are references to pastors who have brick and mortar churches, and most of whom provide teaching online as well. It is always my recommendation that you find your proper pastor teacher and get under his teaching ministry regularly (I believe that once a day for an hour is about right).

Lesson 107: Genesis 12:10–16

Abram Goes to Egypt

In previous lessons, we have examined Abram and the will of God, and how Abram got out of the will of God by leaving the land of Canaan. As a result, Abram makes some stupid decisions.

Gen 12:10–13 Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to temporarily reside there, for the famine was severe in the land [of Canaan]. When he was

about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, "I know that you are a woman beautiful in appearance, and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me, but they will let you live. Say you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared for your sake."

Abram's plan is not well thought out. He has 2 very important assets which are required in order for God to fulfill His promises to Abram: Abram's own life and the life of his wife, Sarai. Abram seems to be focused upon the former and not on the latter. He thinks the Egyptians will kill him and then take Sarai from him. However, if they present themselves as brother and sister, they won't kill Abram to take Sarai, but they might still take Sarai. Perhaps, in his mind, he was thinking, "I am still alive, so I will be able to steal her back from a harem." If Abram is presented as Sarai's brother, an Egyptian noble would then ingratiate himself to Abram in order to wed Sarai; if he is Sarai's husband, then he becomes an obstacle to an Egyptian noble who wants Sarai.

In any case, Abram has pre-judged the Egyptians, believing them to be foolish heathen, so he makes a plan to deal with his prejudices. He tells his beautiful wife to say she is his sister, and, in his mind, this is going to avoid trouble. Again, there is no reason for Abram to move to Egypt—God does not require him to move—and there is no reason for Abram to lie to his new host, the pharaoh of Egypt.

Here is a news flash: many unbelievers are moral. In fact, morality is a part of the plan of God for believers and unbelievers alike. Societies are maintained and perpetuated by morality. The [laws of divine establishment](#) are divine laws and principles devised to preserve the human race, and they are designed for believers and unbelievers alike (which is a doctrine that I need to condense and present soon in these lessons).

We have already examined the [Doctrine of Morality](#) back in [Lesson 29](#). Morality is not the Christian way of life and morality is not for believers only.

When God said, "You will not murder" or "You will not covet the possessions of your neighbor;" this was for the entire human race, not just for believers who wanted to become mature believers (or run-of-the-mill Christians who want to become super-Christians). Immature believers don't run around killing gobs of people, and then, once they mature spiritually, stop doing that. These are laws for the human race. God's gift of freedom is not antinomianism. Freedom demands personal responsibility and self-control, as well as societal controls (e.g., a national or regional police force). Each nation must have laws which mirror the final 6 commandments; they cannot just make a few things up and call it good.

Let's take a look at freedom from a different perspective. You have a teenage son who has earned your trust over the years by making good decisions. Let's say that you have made the choice to allow him a great deal of freedom, to take a week-long trip on his own (whether it be to Miami Beach, Galveston, spring break, or whatever). Your allowing him to have this freedom does not mean, he can do whatever he feels like doing. This freedom does not mean, you are telling him, "Drink yourself into a stupor every night, try out many

kinds of drugs, and impregnate any woman who will allow you to.” You only allow him this freedom because you trust him to make good decisions. You are trust his free will to make good moral choices.

God has done the same thing with the human race. God has given us great freedom, but we have to use our freedom wisely. The United States is the greatest country in the history of mankind, and a part of this greatness is our great freedom and our respect for freedom (something many Muslim nations have nearly no appreciation for). However, all it will take to destroy the United States is for one generation to seriously abuse this freedom, and the United States will go down—we will be conquered, we will become even more socialistic, we will suffer great national disasters. The Russians know this principle, and they have been trying for decades to destroy a generation of Americans (as they have already managed to do this throughout much of Europe). Their intent it to use our own free society against us.

Communism, at some point in the mid 20th century developed 45 goals to accomplish in the United States, so that they might take over our nation. These goals were read in Congress in 1963, in order for them to be made a permanent part of our American record. I will list of few of these below, as these communist objectives stand in stark contrast to the laws of divine establishment.

The Goals of Communism in America	
Type	Goals
Political Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">3. Develop the illusion that total disarmament [by] the United States would be a demonstration of moral strength.4. Permit free trade between all nations regardless of Communist affiliation and regardless of whether or not items could be used for war.6. Provide American aid to all nations regardless of Communist domination.7. Grant recognition of Red China. Admission of Red China to the U.N.12. Resist any attempt to outlaw the Communist Party.

The Goals of Communism in America

Type	Goals
Infiltration	<p>15. Capture one or both of the political parties in the United States.</p> <p>16. Use technical decisions of the courts to weaken basic American institutions by claiming their activities violate civil rights.</p> <p>17. Get control of the schools. Use them as transmission belts for socialism and current Communist propaganda. Soften the curriculum. Get control of teachers' associations. Put the party line in textbooks.</p> <p>18. Gain control of all student newspapers.</p> <p>19. Use student riots to foment public protests against programs or organizations which are under Communist attack.</p> <p>20. Infiltrate the press. Get control of book-review assignments, editorial writing, policy-making positions.</p> <p>21. Gain control of key positions in radio, TV, and motion pictures.</p>
Attack upon Morality	<p>24. Eliminate all laws governing obscenity by calling them "censorship" and a violation of free speech and free press.</p> <p>25. Break down cultural standards of morality by promoting pornography and obscenity in books, magazines, motion pictures, radio, and TV.</p> <p>26. Present homosexuality, degeneracy and promiscuity as "normal, natural, healthy."</p>
Attacks upon Christianity	<p>27. Infiltrate the churches and replace revealed religion with "social" religion. Discredit the Bible and emphasize the need for intellectual maturity, which does not need a "religious crutch."</p> <p>28. Eliminate prayer or any phase of religious expression in the schools on the ground that it violates the principle of "separation of church and state."</p>
Remove us from our founding principles	<p>29. Discredit the American Constitution by calling it inadequate, old-fashioned, out of step with modern needs, a hindrance to cooperation between nations on a worldwide basis.</p> <p>30. Discredit the American Founding Fathers. Present them as selfish aristocrats who had no concern for the "common man."</p>
Establish more centralized control	<p>32. Support any socialist movement to give centralized control over any part of the culture--education, social agencies, welfare programs, mental health clinics, etc.</p>
Attack Divine Institutions	<p>40. Discredit the family as an institution. Encourage promiscuity and easy divorce.</p> <p>41. Emphasize the need to raise children away from the negative influence of parents. Attribute prejudices, mental blocks and retarding of children to suppressive influence of parents.</p>

These goals can be found on hundreds of websites:

<http://www.rense.com/general32/americ.htm>

<http://www.resistnet.com/profiles/blogs/the-communist-takeover-of>

http://www.divine-way.com/45_communist_goals_for_take_over_of_america.html

You will notice that many of the keys to the destruction of the United States are related to the Bible, to morality, and to the divine institutions as established by the Bible.

I present this, because morality is part of what holds a nation together. The Ten Commandments are a code of freedom, a code which provides protections for a nation, a code which helps to maintain internal and external peace in a nation.

At this time, Abram is about to enter into a Hamitic country and he believes them to be morally inferior to him, and he will act accordingly. However, because he is going outside of the geographical will of God, he is going to act morally inferior to them. Morality is just as important to their nation as it is important to ours.

The Bible is very subtle in its narrative, but if given enough thought, the narrative tells us all that we need to know. Recall, that I have been teaching that Abram is outside of God's geographical will; what Abram is doing here confirms this. He is preparing to lie to anyone he meets in his host country. This indicates that he is both out of God's geographical will and out of fellowship.

Gen 12:14–15 When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman [Sarai] was very beautiful. And when the princes of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's palace.

You must keep in mind that Abram was a very rich man, with many employees and a very large traveling ranch. Therefore, when Abram goes from here to there, people notice this. When he entered Egypt, various people stopped him and questioned him, and some of these reported back to the Pharaoh. His moving down to Egypt is a very big deal. It is not as if he and Sarai have moved to the capitol city of Egypt carrying a couple of suitcases. There are hundreds of people with them.

Abram's initial assessment was partially correct. The Egyptians found Sarai to be extremely beautiful, so beautiful that the princes of Egypt praised her to Pharaoh so much so, that He brought her to his palace.

Part of this attraction is, Sarai is like a blonde in a room filled with brunettes (or a brunette in a room filled with blondes). She is going to stand out among Egyptian women.

Gen 12:16 And for her sake he dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels.

What has happened is, the Pharaoh has taken Sarai into his harem. Pharaoh has also heaped a great many things upon Abram as a dowry. God has promised Abram to make a great nation of him, so what is he doing, giving away his own wife to Pharaoh? This

reveals a complete lack of trust in God and in God's Word. Remember that God has promised Abram to make a great nation from him, and that requires a wife. It makes no sense for Abram to agree to this, to take a dowry in exchange for his wife, whom he is now telling everyone, is his sister. We recently studied the doctrine of faith-rest; this is the exact opposite of faith rest. Abram knows the promises which God has made to him; yet he does not focus upon those promises. He depends upon human viewpoint rather than upon divine promise.

So we will leave it right there; Abram has lied to the pharaoh of his host country; the pharaoh is very attracted to Sarai, and he takes her in his harem, bestowing great gifts upon Abram in the process. Abram is out of God's geographical will, he is out of fellowship, and he is out one wife. But he has a lot more new stuff.

Lessons 108–109: Genesis 12:10–20

The Laws of Divine Establishment

We have been studying Abram, who has stepped out of God's will (lessons 103–104) because he is not using faith-rest (lessons 105–106), so he has gone into a country which he believes will be uncivilized and heathenistic (lesson 107). In Abram's mind, these are the kind of people who will have no respect for the laws of divine establishment (laws and principles designed by God for the entire human race). He does not believe that these heathen will respect the divine institution of marriage, and therefore, lies to the royalty of his host country.

These are the verses we have covered so far.

Gen 12:10–16 Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to temporarily reside there, for the famine was severe in the land [of Canaan]. When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, "I know that you are a woman beautiful in appearance, and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me, but they will let you live. Say you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared for your sake." When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman [Sarai] was very beautiful. And when the princes of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's palace. And for her sake he dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels.

The Bible is not filled with nice stories, with interesting situations and colorful characters, but God uses these narratives to teach us divine principles.

I have alluded in the previous lesson to the laws of divine establishment. Therefore, I will cover these laws in this lesson, so that you will see that God has laws which are applicable to all people.

Acknowledgment: Insofar as I know, R. B. Thieme, Jr. originally developed this doctrine, although it has certainly existed in bits and pieces by other theologians at other times. I am fairly certain that the vocabulary is his (one of Bob's great contributions to theology is a new vocabulary). I also drew heavily from the works of Jim Brettell and Tod Kennedy (who took their notes, to some degree, from Bob's teaching).

The Abbreviated Doctrine of the Laws of Divine Establishment

Introduction:

1. R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s original definition was: *Divine Establishment* - God has ordained certain laws for the survival and freedom of the human race during the course of human history. Anarchy exists when segments of nations ignore these laws. The laws of divine establishment provide the freedom to fulfill the divine plan as ordained in the divine decrees under many types of government. The laws of divine establishment are designed and directed toward both believer and unbeliever. They operate from the fall of man to the second advent, as well as in the Millennium with some modification in compatibility with perfect environment.¹
2. God, in his omnipotence, knew that the world would be populated by more unbelievers than believers, so he ordained a set of laws designed for the survival and freedom of the human race, which laws apply to both believers and unbelievers. These laws allow for believers and unbelievers to live their lives in an orderly fashion throughout human history.
3. All men are born with a sin nature; and men have competing interests. The laws of divine establishment allow all men to coexist, believers and unbelievers alike, despite possessing a sin nature and despite competing interests.
4. These laws also allow for the evangelization of the unbeliever as well as for the spiritual growth of the believer.
5. The Angelic Conflict is resolved by our free will choices; therefore, human history must be allowed to play out.
6. These laws allow for man to be freely evangelized (and for man to reject this evangelization) and for believers to conduct their lives as per the Word of God, as per the dispensation they find themselves in.
7. These laws are designed to work within the framework of a variety of human governments.
8. These laws are designed for the divine institutions of the human soul, labor, marriage, family and nationalism.
9. God has provided certain divine laws, such as the authority of parents within the confines of the basic family unit in order to protect, care for, nourish, provide for, train, and discipline children to prepare them for life.
10. These laws are designed to function from the fall of man to the beginning of the Millennium, and then throughout the Millennium with some adjustments (there will be perfect environment and Jesus Christ will rule the earth, which changes some things).
11. Satan, of course, opposes these laws, and continues to oppose them in a variety of ways, offering up a myriad of false systems for mankind.
12. These laws are imperfectly accomplished on this earth. However, an imperfect

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- application of these laws does not give us the right to rebel against the authorities which are over us. Furthermore, their imperfect application preserves mankind.
13. The laws of divine establishment provide for man the best system of freedom for all mankind.
 14. These laws of divine establishment are every bit as important as the law of gravity and just as predictable. If you drop something out of a tall building, it will fall to the ground; if you follow the laws of divine establishment, you will get good results for the human race. If you go against the laws of divine establishment, the end result will be bad for the human race (again, for believers and unbelievers alike).
 15. Because man has a sin nature and because Satan is the ruler of this world, there are man-designed and Satan-inspired systems which reject the laws of divine establishment. These include such institutions as anarchy, Islam, gay marriage, communism, socialism, etc. These examples are all attacks upon the laws of divine establishment, and therefore, they are attacks upon human freedom and upon the human race itself. Let me take communism and socialism as examples: communism kills far more people in peace time than nations do in wartime. Communism perpetually attacks human freedom, requiring all men to, at least publically, espouse the principles and goals of communism, or face grave inconvenience, suffering or even death; and, at best, re-education.
 16. Freedom guarantees inequality of outcomes. That is, a free population will experience great disparity of wealth, position and success. This freedom can be attacked in two primary ways: politicians who promise to have more equal results, and who then pass laws and regulations in order to achieve a more equal distribution of wealth. The second way this is attacked is by the wealthy who seek to preserve their wealth, power and position through a legal codification of their wealth (this could be establishing a caste system or inordinate favorable laws for those who are already wealthy and/or powerful). In the United States, this has come to be known as “too big to fail.”
 17. One area of great confusion is, the laws of divine establishment can function with an authoritative government, e.g., a monarchy. The laws of divine establishment can be perpetuated under a monarchy or destroyed by a monarchy; the laws of divine establishment can be perpetuated in a democracy or destroyed by a democracy. In other words, the actual form of government is not the key; the laws of divine establishment are the key to freedom.
 18. The overarching principles are: the laws of divine establishment preserve a national entity and freedom within that national entity; which allows people the freedom to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior or to reject Jesus Christ.

¹ Although I took this from <http://www.bibledoctrinechurch.org/?subpages/GLOSSARY.shtml> I found the same definition word-for-word on another website. My assumption is, this exact definition came originally from R. B. Thieme, Jr.

The 5 divine institutions (which are for believers and unbelievers alike).

1. The human soul—every believer and unbeliever is given a human soul with

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- volition, mentality, norms and standards, a conscience, and self-consciousness. We need to respect the human freedom of those around us. Our volition ends when it begins to infringe on the volition of others.
2. Work is designed for the believer and unbeliever alike. Not only is it necessary in order to live (apart from those who depend upon others), but it is important to a person's mental health. Everyone has come home from a hard day at work, where effort was expended and things were done, and there is some personal satisfaction in having done a good job. Those who live off of others (e.g., welfare recipients) rarely have the same personal satisfaction with their own lives. God's first commandment to mankind included the phrase "**Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it.**" (Gen. 1:28b). In the next chapter, we read: **And Jehovah God planted a garden eastward in Eden. And there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food. The tree of life also was in the middle of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden. And from there it was divided and became four heads. And Jehovah God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to work it and protect it** (Gen. 2:8–10, 15). Subduing the earth is work. After Adam and the woman sinned, God levied punishment upon them both, including: "**Because you listened to your wife's voice and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'Do not eat from it': The ground is cursed because of you. You will eat from it by means of difficult labor all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. You will eat bread by the sweat of your brow until you return to the ground, since you were taken from it. For you are dust, and you will return to dust.**" (Gen. 3:17b–19). Difficult work becomes a part of our judgment. Work is a necessity in the believer's life, Paul tells Timothy, **If anyone isn't willing to work, he should not eat** (1Tim. 3:10b).
 3. Marriage between one man and one woman is designed for the human race. Men and women are dramatically different in makeup, and they are designed to be in balance with one another—yin and yang, if you will. Just as work was fundamental to Adam's life, before he sinned and after he sinned, so is the institution of marriage. Adam had the woman before the fall and Adam had the woman after the fall. You will note that the first 3 divine institutions existed in perfect environment and in a fallen world. That is how fundamental they are to human existence.
 4. Closely related to marriage is family; and children have been shown to be far better off when raised by 2 parents as opposed to one. Children from a nuclear family (1 husband and 1 wife) are shown to be better adjusted, less likely to become criminals, drug users, alcohol abusers, or pregnant at an early age. This is a matter of statistics. You have heard over and over again, how there is an inordinate number of Blacks in prison. If you took the number of whites and Blacks in prison and chose from a similar sample with respect to the divine institution of marriage, there is virtually no difference between Blacks and whites. The strongest determining factor in criminal behavior is not race but parentage.

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A Black from a home with a mother and father is no more likely to enter into a life of crime than a Caucasian from a home with a mother and a father. The reason there is a disproportionate number of Blacks in prison, is because there are a disproportionate number of Black single parent families.

5. The institution of separate national entities preserves freedom, isolates depravity, and best allows for evangelization and spiritual growth. The Declaration of Independence got this point exactly right: *We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. - That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men.*

Attacks against the 5 divine institutions:

1. The soul of man is constantly under attack. Drugs and drinking destroy the soul of a person. If you have known people who have been addicted to hard drugs, you know that their souls have been changed by the drug. Recent studies have shown that marijuana use permanently alters the brain of children who use it (which is exactly what we would expect; what happens in the life of a youth can permanently affect him for all of his adult life).
2. Work is always under attack. There are those who, in their desire to be nice to the downtrodden, set up huge bureaucracies of welfare, with the result that, huge numbers of people either do not work or work abbreviated hours so that they can receive welfare (or food stamps or section 8 housing). I had an internet discussion recently, where a woman has described her plight to me of being a young married woman with a child, and she and her husband are in their 20's, and, in order for them to stay in school, she thinks they will have to go on section 8 housing. They both work part-time, but they just don't make enough money to get by. Well, duh! They are both going to school. The welfare state mentality makes people think that they deserve money from taxpayers in order to subsidize the life they want to live. These same people would not have the nerve go up and down their street each month, and explain their "plight" to their neighbors, and ask them to kick in some money every month so that they can make it. They understand that would be stupid and that most of their neighbors would deny them. Yet, this same couple thinks that government (i.e., taxpayers) ought to help pay their way.
3. In America, it is clear that the concept of one man and one woman in marriage is under attack. People living together outside of marriage, men and women engaging in sex outside of marriage, and homosexual relationships are examples of attacks upon this institution.
4. The concept of family has also been under attack for quite awhile. In the 1950's, we saw a plethora of television shows which reflected both the concept of one man and one woman marriages; and with this was always a family. Today, our government supports and encourages single-parent households (this is because, when you tax something, that something will decrease; and when you subsidize something, it will increase). Women do not have to be responsible for their

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personal choices because, if they end up becoming pregnant, they can kill the fetus, or have the baby and expect welfare and/or government mandated support from the father. Remove these options provided by a misguided government, and sexual morality would make a big comeback in society.

5. Nationalism is under attack by the U.N., by international communism, by appeals to international or other-national laws, etc. The goals of global warming enthusiasts is an attack upon nationalism.
6. There are principles based upon these 5 divine institutions which are for both believers and unbelievers:
 - 1) Authority orientation: God has designed a system of authorities for the human race, which includes parents over children, teachers over students, coaches over players, policemen over citizens, the courts over citizens, business over labor, the CEO of a company over his top echelon, who, in turn, have authority over those below them, etc. **Let every person be subject to higher authorities, for there is no authority except from God, but the existing authorities have been ordained by God** (Rom. 13:1). Spending one's life bucking authority is the quickest and easiest way to have a miserable life. If you want to experiment with this, try bad-mouthing a policemen at a routine traffic stop. See how far that takes you in life.
 - 2) Hard work. **Consider the ant, you slacker! Observe its ways and become wise** (Prov. 6:6).
 - 3) Devotion and adherence to and protection of one's mate, one's family and one's nation. This is taken to the natural end of, being willing to give one's life to protect one's wife, child or nation.

The Ten Commandments:

1. Most of the Ten Commandments are designed for believers and unbelievers alike; including the exactitude given them by Jesus Christ.
2. Although the Ten Commandments were given specifically to the nation Israel, they also provide an outline for the preservation of freedom in an nation.
3. The first 4 commandments provide a basic spiritual code and the final 6 commandments provide a freedom code for believers and unbelievers alike.
4. Paul tells Timothy: **Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it legitimately. Understanding that the law is not laid down for the just [believers] but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane [all categories of unbelievers and out-of-fellowship believers], for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted** (1Tim. 1:8–11). This tells us that portions of the Mosaic Law are applicable to all mankind.
5. Therefore, the Ten Commandments are a freedom code which describe what freedom is within a national entity, which is divine institution #5. In other words,

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- these commandments protect me from you and you from me. These final 6 commandments also codify the Godly concept of private property.
6. The first 3 commandments define the legal relationship between God and man, and are discussed in the complete doctrine of the laws of divine establishment.
 7. Commandment #4: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you will labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you will not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.” (Ex. 20:8–11). This was a law to the Jews only, although there is application to us. Virtually all civilizations have a 7-day week, which is based upon God’s restoration of the earth in 6 days (whether they admit to this or not). This is because all civilizations have their original foundation in a 7-day week.
 8. The final 6 commandments define the relationship between men within a national entity, which are the essence of a code which provides freedom, protects property rights, and protects and preserves divine institutions #1–4.
 9. With the 5th commandment, we begin to get into the laws of divine establishment, which ought to be carried over into all nations and civilizations. Commandment #5: “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.” (Ex. 20:12). Here, the relationship of the family is codified for all time, and the nation which obeys this commandment is assured of a longer continuation of the nation in which he is in. Paul affirms this commandment and adds that this is the first commandment associated with a promise of blessing from God (Eph. 6:1–2). This law is for all dispensations, and a nation which disobeys this is a nation which is on its way down (Communist nations which attempt to brainwash children from a very young age and which even turn children against their parents is in direct violation of this commandment).
 10. Commandment #6: “You will not murder.” (Ex. 20:13). This was one of the first commandments given to man after the flood (Gen. 9:6, where man was responsible to punish those who murdered with death). Murder represents the ultimate in the removal of another person’s ability to make free will decisions. This is an attack upon divine institution #1, and depending upon that status of that person, possibly divine institutions #2 and #3 as well.
 11. Commandment #7: “You will not commit adultery.” (Ex. 20:14). Adultery is forbidden in Rom. 7:2–3 and Heb. 13:4. It is an attack upon divine institutions #2 and #3. Marriage and family are divine institutions, which adultery can destroy.
 12. Commandment #8: “You will not steal.” (Ex. 20:15). Paul writes, in Eph. 4:28: **Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.** This commandment tells us that we have a right to own property. Private property is protected by Scripture. Sharing that property is a matter of free will.

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13. Commandment #9: "You will not bear false witness against your neighbor." (Ex. 20:16). Paul says that the law was designed for liars and those who perjure themselves in 1Tim. 1:10. Going to court can deprive a person of their volition or of their property; therefore, God expects us to tell the truth in court.
14. Commandment #10: "You will not desire to take your neighbor's house; you will not desire to take your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's." (Ex. 20:17). This commandment is repeated in the New Testament. Jesus said to them, "Beware! Keep yourselves from covetousness, for a man's life doesn't consist of the abundance of the things which he possesses." (Luke 12:15; see also Eph. 5:5). If a nation respects commandments 8 and 10, then there will be no welfare state and no socialized anything. Obviously, there would be no communism. These things are attacks upon private property.
15. Commandments 6–10 represent establishment law for any orderly society and apply to both believers and unbelievers alike. When a society turns away from these laws, that society is crumbling from the inside.
16. There are principles from the Mosaic Law which are brought into national law. Again, Paul wrote to Timothy: Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it legitimately. Understanding that the law is not laid down for the just [believers] but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane [all categories of unbelievers and out-of-fellowship believers], for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted (1Tim. 1:8–11). The law is designed for many categories of unbelievers, and these are all associated with their personal sins.

The Purpose of the Laws of Divine Establishment

1. To preserve the population of a national entity.
 - 1) As an aside, it is clear that communism does not make any real attempt to preserve the population of the countries it rules. Both China and Russia murdered far more people during peacetime cleansings (both Stalin and Mao hold the record for the number of people killed by executive order).
 - 2) North Korea today is a good example of a place where the government is doing very little to preserve its population. Many of them are dying of starvation under this repressive regime.
 - 3) Muslim countries which are over 80% Muslim engage in either a cleansing process, to kill those who are not Muslim or to eliminate those who are not of the proper stripe of Islam.
 - 4) Therefore, communist governments and Islamic countries cannot be seen as legitimate authorities.
2. To preserve the freedom of the population of a national entity.

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- 1) Again, we have the example of communism and socialism, where the government takes away private property and severely regulates the actions of the population.
- 2) Islamic countries dramatically regulate the individual freedoms of its citizenry.
3. The laws of divine establishment preserve freedom so that people may believe in Jesus Christ (that is, so that there is legal evangelism within that country); and that people may grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Illegitimate governments, as already noted, forbid evangelism and true spiritual growth.
4. Given the technology of today, there are a number of ways for people to be evangelized and a number of ways for believers to grow spiritually.
 - 1) We may see on a televised football game, someone holding up the sign, John 3:16, and we google this on our iPods, read the verse (**For God had such love for the world that he gave his only Son, so that whoever has faith in him may not come to destruction but have eternal life**), and, as a result, believe in Jesus Christ.
 - 2) We may have some question about the Bible, go on the internet, and come to a website with the gospel, and believe in Jesus Christ.
 - 3) We may learn a Christmas song for the choir (an act which is, unfortunately, less common today than it was 40 years ago) and believe in Jesus Christ because of the lyrics.
 - 4) Although people can grow spiritually, to some degree, through the study of the Bible through websites or finding a pastor one likes, and listens to them on the radio, tv or internet; primarily, spiritual growth occurs in a local church that teaches Bible doctrine as often as the pastor is able to put it out (right now, that seems to be maxed out at 4x/week). Without other believers there to fellowship with, many Christians go off into some weird place (I have known a lot of believers who choose to grow outside of a local church, and even under the tutelage of an excellent pastor through MP3 files, they still get a bit weird).
5. Because of the constant attacks of Satan, there will be an attempt, in every national entity, to keep man from the truth. This is why many schools no longer sing Christmas songs, it is why there are people who go nuts because there is a large cross erected on remote public property in New Mexico, and why there are people who are overly concerned over seeing the Ten Commandments anywhere near a courthouse. As a child unbeliever, I sang all of the Christmas songs, and yet understood nothing of what I sang. I recall shortly after becoming a Christian, coming to the realization that Jesus is God in the flesh. I also knew nothing about the resurrection, even though I celebrated Easter every year. Apart from the legal controversy, I would have never known about the cross in New Mexico, and, even though I have been in several courtrooms, I was oblivious to the religious symbols (if there were any). This is because, there was a proper time for me to be evangelized, and, at that point, I began to develop a better understanding of

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Jesus Christ and the Law (after I had believed in Him). Satan would like to remove all Christian symbols, if possible, relegate them all to churches, and then, simultaneously, denigrate churches, pastors and parishioners.

6. This does not mean that the individual believer needs to be involved politically in his country in order for the laws of divine establishment to function. In a democracy, the believer should obviously vote, and therefore, be reasonably informed. However, whatever else is done politically is optional and sometimes to be discouraged (particularly if it interferes with one's spiritual life).
7. There will never be a national entity which conforms entirely to the laws of divine establishment, although the United States, for much of its history, has come very close (which is one of the reasons we have been greatly blessed).
8. There will constantly be attacks against the principles of divine establishment in any nation where adheres to some or all of these laws.
9. It is not our job, as believers in Jesus Christ, to spend a lot of our time remaking the nation in which we live. It is never the Christians job to whitewash the devil's world.

Countries Which Reject the Laws of Divine Establishment

1. The only time a believer is given the go-ahead to disobey the laws in whatever country he find himself is, with regards to evangelism and spiritual growth. **And Peter and the apostles answered and said, "We ought to obey God rather than men."** (Acts 5:29). Opposition to other attacks upon freedom are generally not a part of the Christian life, even in a communist country. For instance, Christians who live in a communist country may find it frustrating that they cannot freely speak against the current administration; but that is not an issue to the believer.
2. When it comes to a full-out opposition to those who are in power, one needs to consider that very carefully. For instance, there are not many Rahab's in the Bible (and she chose sides, probably knowing that God had given the Land of Promise to the Jews). The attack of the Jews upon Jericho was imminent. Joshua 2
 - 1) Rahab is an example of a woman who legitimately betrayed her country and allied herself with the Jews against the city of Jericho.
 - 2) It should be pointed out that American revolutionaries were not seeking to remove King George from being king over Britain; they were looking to gain independence for the United States. So, in this regard, they were not a revolution, in the strict sense. The *revolution* of the United States was, in essence, a war for independence.
3. When it comes to living in an Islamic country or in a communist country, governments which are clearly anti-God and against the laws of divine establishment, one must behave circumspectly and determine one's political life carefully. It is not up to us, as believers in Jesus Christ, to *fix* the government in this or that country. We are not called upon to whitewash the devil's world. If you become involved in anti-government activities when living in an oppressive, anti-God government, you risk not only your life to probably not accomplish anything,

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but you also detract from your spiritual growth and the use of the spiritual gift. Paul lived in the Roman empire, which was very anti-Christian at that time, and yet Paul wrote: **Let every soul be subject to higher authorities, for there is no authority except from God, but the existing authorities have been ordained by God. So that the one resisting authority has opposed the ordinance of God, and the ones opposing will receive judgment to themselves. For the rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the bad. And do you desire not to fear the authority? Do the good, and you will have praise from it; for it is a servant of God to you for the good. But if you practice evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword in vain; for it is a servant of God, an avenger for wrath to the one practicing bad things. Because of this, it is necessary to be subject, not only on account of wrath, but also on account of conscience. For on this account you also pay taxes, for they are ministers of God, always giving attention to this very thing. Then give to all their dues: to the one due tax, the tax; to the one due tribute, the tribute; to the one due fear, the fear; to the one due honor, the honor** (Rom. 13:1–7).

4. In other words, 99% of the time, believers, even under the most anti-God, oppressive governments, obey their rulers, except in the matters of evangelism and spiritual growth. We base this upon the fact that Paul lived in a country, Rome, which was, in the first century, very much opposed to Christians, Christianity and evangelism.
5. A country which is a monarchy is not necessarily anti-God. Such countries can preserve order and thereby allow for evangelism and spiritual growth. Examples of these from the past are, the Shah of Iran; the governments of Rhodesia and South Africa, all prior to the 1970's. Communist propaganda has made many Americans believe that monarchies are bad, but that a communist government (a monarchy) might be okay for some countries.
6. By fulfilling your function and obligations as a believer, you do more for your country than anyone else. In fact, believers can act as a preservative for their national entities. Matt. 5:13
7. God's conversation with Abram Gen. 18:23–33 is very instructive, because we learn that, if there are enough believers in a national entity, God will preserve that national entity. However, once that percentage becomes very low, God will allow for that nation to be destroyed (the personal spiritual life of the believers alive in that nation will determine, to some degree, as to what God does with them individually).
8. Matt 21:22: **Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's** [laws of divine establishment], **and to God, the things that are God's** [royal family honor code]. Although the context of this verse is taxation, the application which Brettell puts on it is accurate.
9. 1Peter 2:13-14: **Subordinate yourselves.... to every human institution.** You became an establishment person the day you believed in Christ. You should be a true conservative. You obey the governing authorities. On a personal note, as an unbeliever, I have always had difficulties with authority; particularly when they were less intelligent than me and/or they were unjust. However, obeying

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legitimate authorities is a part of the Christian life, even if these authorities are stupid and unjust.

The Separation of Church and State

1. The state must never adopt an official religion supported by taxpayer's money. All religion should be free from taxation and never be supported by taxes. The partnership of government and various faith-based entities where money flows from the taxpayer into the coffers of the church is wrong. There is a fine line here to be carefully established.
2. If the government wants to pay this or that organization or this or that group to deal with a disaster, that should be done by contract. However, if a church does humanitarian work of some sort, the church is not to be remunerated by government.
3. Because it is too easy to place an onerous tax burden upon a church, allowing a church to operate as a non-taxed entity is reasonable.
4. A person's relationship with God or lack of it should be a matter of privacy and personal choice.
5. This separation of church and state does not mean that all religious symbols are banned. We have a strong Judeo-Christian heritage; therefore, symbols of this heritage can be reasonably displayed in public areas (e.g., the Ten Commandments, quotations of Bible verses).
6. Similarly, the separation of church and state does not outlaw the teaching of the Bible in a public school, even as a required course; nor does it ban the singing of Christmas hymns.
7. Our founders got it right. Many schools were established with the intent of teaching the Bible (including grade schools). For the entire history of the public school system (up until recently) Christmas songs were sung in the schools.
8. Our court system has muddied up this water over the past 50 years and has taken a clearly stated axiom—*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion*—and has perverted this into an anti-Christian position.
9. Separation of church and state should never be understood to nullify the faith of our founding fathers, the history of Christianity in America, or to ban the symbols of this faith from public places.
10. Because of our history, it is reasonable to see, for instance, the Ten Commandments posted on a courtroom wall, but not to post, say, various sayings from Muhammad or Confucius. Our greatest historical reference point with Islam is one of our earliest foreign wars.
11. Sharia law and the laws of divine establishment:
 - 1) We should not confuse the concept of the laws of divine establishment with Sharia law.
 - 2) Sharia law is a collection of laws, customs and penalties which were an outgrowth of the teachings of Mohammed. These were developed a few hundred years after the death of Mohammed.
 - 3) Islam adherents often try to establish a parallel court system in order to

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- obey their own set of laws. Most often, this is first established as a family court law, to resolve and adjudicate family disputes.
- 4) Many of their tenets, such as a man being able to have 4 wives and having the freedom to beat an obstinate wife are in opposition to the laws of divine establishment.
 - 5) Furthermore, there is no call in the Bible for a parallel set of laws to be set up for believers (although Paul recommends that, instead of suing a fellow believer in court, that we settled such disputes within the church).
 - 6) It is not the responsibility of believers to whitewash the devil's world. In a democracy, we have the right and the responsibility to vote, as well as the right and privilege of gathering in groups and protesting. However, no matter what form of government we are under, God does not call upon us to push a more Biblically-compliant system of law upon the country in which we live (or to establish a parallel system of jurisprudence).
 - 7) We are required to obey the established authorities in whatever state or country we live.

An Example of Illegitimate Authority

1. Management is the legitimate authority of labor.
2. The labor unions provide a good example of how bucking this authority can destroy a nation from within. There may have been a good reason for labor unions in the beginning. When businesses did not take the initiative to treat their workers fairly, this hurt business and was, in part, a reason for the rise in unions.
3. However, as businesses began to treat their employees with greater compassion, unions did not want to give up their power.
4. As time progressed, unions have since moved into governmental agencies.
5. When a union negotiates with management, there is a bottom line. In fact, even in such negotiations, this bottom line is exceeded (e.g., labors destruction of American car manufacturers). However, with government, there is no bottom line. Any member of government who negotiates with labor has no bottom line. Then can give as many concession as they want, and then simply require more tax dollars in order to make the governmental agency work.
6. Unions therefore realized that there was an untapped bucket of money when dealing with state and federal workers, and that is where they have moved, setting up shop also as a strong political entity.
7. This has given us 2 major problems: the unholy alliance of labor and government; and labor's desire to take as much from government as it possibly can, which is, in part, the cause of the financial ruin of many states (California being one of the most prominent).
8. The amount of money which labor unions have seized from the government is mind-boggling; and their benefits and retirement packages will destroy America financially.
9. This explains, in part, the resistance to alternatives to public education. The unions have an established sugar daddy in the realm of state education systems,

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and any private education system would preclude unions and do a better job of educating our youth. This turn off the spigot of gold into union coffers, so unions come down solidly against educational alternatives.

Establishment and Morality

1. Morality is the observation of the laws of divine establishment. Therefore, morality is for both the believer and unbeliever.
2. The laws of divine establishment include various established authorities and the last 6 commandments of the Ten Commandments. Morality includes obedience to established authorities and obedience to the final 6 commandments.
3. Since sin is an attack on establishment, morality is the antidote and is commanded for both believer and unbeliever.
4. Because we possess an old sin nature, it is our desire to resist the authorities over us and to disobey certain of the commandments. This may help to explain why there is such a strong movement to remove the Ten Commandments from in or around any courtroom—this movement is a reflection of the old sin nature.
5. Therefore, morality is not Christianity, but is the human race functioning under the laws of divine establishment.
6. Morality is not the monopoly of Christianity. However, believers have great responsibility to their nation to obey the laws of divine establishment.
7. Morality is conformity to the laws of divine establishment, which has as a basic tenet: live and let live (which is freedom respecting the freedom of others). This overlaps with the royal family honor code (which is the code that believers are to operate under).
8. While Christianity is not morality but a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, Christianity still demands morality from the royal family of God. We are not exempt from certain civil responsibilities.
9. Therefore, the advancing believer is not to be anti-establishment or immoral. No mature believer is a socialist.
10. Morality is a normal result of spiritual growth, but it is not living the Christian life. Living the Christian life is compliance with the royal family honor code.
11. Living the Christian life is the filling of the Holy Spirit, maximum doctrine in the soul, positive volition to doctrine, and maturity adjustment to the justice of God. None of these can be accomplished by the unbeliever. Christianity is not morality, but this doesn't mean you can be immoral.
12. Morality as an establishment factor protects human freedom, but it does not provide eternal salvation, Gal. 2:16 Titus 3:5 Rom. 3:20.
13. Morality can and does protect human freedom. Immorality leads to anarchy; i.e., no recognition of authority. Christian dynamics includes morality but, at the same time, exceeds morality. Morality is the environment in which Christianity is able to function.

The Component Parts of the Laws of Divine Establishment in a Nation

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1. The freedom to evangelize and to grow spiritually.
2. The unsuppressed and unadulterated function of the 5 divine institutions.
 - 1) The volition of the human soul: John 3:16, 18, 36 Acts 17:27–30 Rom. 6:12
 - 2) Work: Rom. 16:3, 21 1Cor. 4:12 9:6 1Thess. 3:10
 - 3) Marriage: Eph. 5:23–29 Col. 3:18–19
 - 4) Family: Eph. 6:1–4 Col. 3:20–21
 - 5) Nationalism: Acts 17:26–29 Rom. 13:1–7
3. Legitimate authorities in their proper roles (husband over the wife; parents over the children, teachers over their students, administrators over the schools, higher ranking officers over lower ranking officers, management over labor, the police over the street population, the pastor-teacher over his congregation).
4. A legitimate system of law, which embraces the Ten Commandments. Rom. 13:8–10
5. An honest and impartial judicial system. Ex. 23:1–9 Lev. 19:13, 15 20:1–27 24:19–21
6. Equal treatment of all citizens. Ex. 22:22–24 23:9 Deut. 15:7–11 Lev. 19:33
7. Taxing is a legitimate function of government. Matt. 22:17–21

Unregenerate Man and the Laws of Divine Establishment

1. Marriage to one's right woman and hard work are key components of the enjoyment of life for the unbeliever. Eccles. 9:9
2. I have the personal example of an acquaintance of mine, who has been involved with drugs, criminality and hedonism of various types; and yet, when he got married and fathered 2 little boys, stopped doing drugs (insofar as I could tell), that was the happiest and most satisfied I have seen him in his entire life (including the times when he had access to nearly any drug he wanted).
3. I have mentioned the example before of a nuclear family and criminality. It has been shown by research that the key component to criminality in the United States is not a racial one. A criminal is much more likely to come out of a home headed by a single mother than by a home headed by a mother and father.
4. Authority orientation is important to the well-being of the unbeliever. Unbelievers need to respect the authority of their parents, the policeman on the street, the teacher in the classroom, etc. We have several generations of African-Americans who are distinctly unhappy, and it is because (1) they have not been evangelized (the gospel is not taught in many of their churches); (2) they are brought up with mental attitude sins specifically against White people; (3) and they have no concept of authority orientation, particularly when it comes to teachers and police, and this is the bane of their existence for the rest of their lives.
5. As a landlord, I have encountered a huge number of people with varying lifestyles and attitudes. During my tenure, I have had 3 lesbian couples, and one half of that coupling has always been a little crazy and emotionally damaged. This does not mean that I have not had other crazies as tenants, but, right now, it is running 50% for lesbians and about 5% for the others. God designed RM/RW (right

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- man/right woman); He did not designed RW/RW.
6. Work is very important to the unbeliever. God designed us to work. I have had similar observation of people who did not work but lived on governmental assistance. I can cite numerous instances where these people were maladjusted to life. I recall a mother and daughter who both received governmental assistance, and the daughter had 2 or 3 children living with her. Now, you would think that 2 women, living together, with children, where neither person worked, would have time to raise the children correctly and clean their house. Think again. In the times I was there, the children ran around unsupervised while the two adult women sat on the couch watching tv, smoking cigarettes. As for cleanliness, I ran across something I had never seen in all of my life. On the tops of their kitchen cabinets, there were roach bodies and roach droppings which were literally 2 inches high. The smell and the sight of this was quite remarkable, to put it mildly. This, quite frankly, is abnormal and unhealthy. My point is, when you live outside of God's laws of divine establishment, your life suffers for it. So do that lives of those who must interact with you (I had to clean that up).
 7. Along these same lines, people who work into their retirement years tend to live longer and keep their wits about them for a longer period of time. Work is an important and integral part of our life, at all ages.
 8. R. B. Thieme, Jr. often used this axiom, which is for believers and unbeliever alike: *you cannot build your happiness on someone else's unhappiness*. There is no long-lived happiness derived from harassing another person, by attempting to make their lives miserable, by stealing from them, by treating them unfairly. None of these things will make you happy.
 9. Following the final 7 commandments Ten Commandments (with a modification of the 4th commandment) is a key to happiness for the unbeliever.
 - 1) Keeping the Sabbath simply means taking a day off for the unbeliever. Work is a part of our lives and so should rest be.
 - 2) **Honor your father and your mother so that you may have a long life in the land that the LORD your God is giving you** (Ex. 20:12). This is authority orientation, and the most basic authority orientation an unbeliever can have. It is also a key to reasonable contentment.
 - 3) **Do not murder** (Ex. 20:13). Believers and unbelievers alike run into people that we think, our life would be easier or better if so-and-so was not in the picture. It might be a bully from school, a tenant from hell, a co-worker that constantly lies and gossips about you. The unbeliever's life is far better off if he keeps his emotions under control and lets it go. Jesus took this particular commandment further and said, **"But I tell you, everyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Fool!' will be subject to the Sanhedrin. But whoever says, 'You moron!' will be subject to hellfire."** (Matt. 5:22). An unbeliever is happier if he is not filled with mental attitude sins toward other people. I have known a variety of people in my life, and those who were constantly angry with so-and-so were also unhappy. When they were mad at Charley

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Brown, Charley may or may not be aware of it; but their mental attitude sins constantly permeated their souls. Someone might cut you off on the freeway, and you fume for the rest of the drive into work even to the point that you snap at your co-workers. For him, it may have been routine. Who here is the loser when it comes to happiness and contentment? The person with the mental attitude sins.

- 4) **Do not commit adultery** (Ex. 20:14). Jesus elevated this as well to lusting in one's soul for a woman (Matt. 5:27–28). The actual act of adultery may take 5 or 10 minutes, or it may be an affair which continues over several months. However, this potentially destroys a family and the little souls of your children, who are the innocents in this scenario (as is the cuckolded wife or husband, of course). The end result, in many cases, can be months or even years of pain for the adulterer and the innocents in his family.
- 5) **Do not steal** (Ex. 20:15). The unbeliever will be happier if he obeys this law (especially if caught). I have already given the examples of those on welfare (of one sort or another) who did not work. 2 examples immediately come to mind of such people who spent much of their lives drinking. They were stealing from taxpayers, because they were capable of working; and were so miserable, they had to habitually treat their psyche with alcohol. In the United States, we entered into a pretty nasty recession December of 2007. Much of this was because of individual home buyers who both lied and stole money (they took money from the government by means of filing documents with false information on them) in order to purchase their homes, which homes they later lost. Lying on their applications allowed them to steal taxpayer money in order to purchase these homes. There were mortgage companies who went along with it, knowing that they were lying and not bothering to properly vet these people (I know because of direct phone calls from loan processors). This entire scenario involved pain and suffering for much of the United States, as well as to the principle players involved.
- 6) **Do not give false testimony against your neighbor** (Ex. 20:16). Court cases are more justly determined when witnesses are honest.
- 7) **Do not covet your neighbor's house. Do not covet your neighbor's wife, his male or female slave, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor** (Ex. 20:17). This describes much of the Democratic party, whose members seem to be offended that so-and-so makes too much money. What they want is for the government to take (i.e., steal) money from people they believe to be making too much money and to give it to people who have learned how to work the system. As I write this, we have had a far, far left President for nearly 2 years, who followed a very moderate Republican, and the number of those in poverty has increased (1 out of 7 Americans) as well as the number of those receiving some form of governmental assistance (1 out of 6). Greed is one of the fundamental

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- tenets of the Democratic party—they lust over the things which the rich have, and believe that, if they take some of this stuff away, they will be happier...and they never are. It is the conspicuous wealth of the rich which runs part of our economic engine (someone has to make their houses, car, swimming pools and private jets); and there is a great industry of high-end travel. Furthermore, rich people, for the most part, did not become rich because someone gave them the money (through inheritance, for instance), but because they worked for it, which provided a whole host of jobs for other people who work under them. Liberals have the mistaken notion that the poor and the middle class are better off when the government steals from the wealthy and gives entitlements to the poor and middle class, but our citizenry are not happier or better off since with elected a far left president with redistribution of wealth as one of his fundamental principles (violating [you will not steal](#) and [you will not covet](#)).
- 8) God has warned believers to trust in God and not in man. However, even unbelievers ought not place their trust in man. Awhile ago, a well-to-do middle class American woman gave President Obama the toughest question he has received as president, and it was because this woman was not happier, because she had expected a fundamental change from this man (whatever that means; I would assume a redistribution of wealth), and she was not seeing it. This was an educated woman who was working for the government, her husband worked, and their children went to private schools. This is a woman who, despite her intelligence, did not realize that redistribution of wealth was going to affect her own personal wealth negatively. Her exact quote was: “I’m one of your middle class Americans. And quite frankly, I’m exhausted. Exhausted of defending you, defending your administration, defending the mantle of change that I voted for. My husband and I have joked for years that we thought we were well beyond the hot dogs and beans era of our lives, but, quite frankly, it’s starting to knock on our door and ring true that that might be where we’re headed again, and, quite frankly, Mr. President, I need you to answer this honestly. Is this my new reality?” This is a woman—and no idea if she is a believer or an unbeliever—who had everything right with respect to the laws of divine establishment except, she placed her trust in our president to make her feel better. [“Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind, who makes human flesh his strength and turns his heart from the LORD.”](#) (Jer. 17:5b). Obviously, the unbeliever cannot turn away from Lord, because it is not there in the first place; but, placing one’s trust in man is devastating to the human soul.
10. It can be summarized to this: the unbeliever who adheres to the laws of divine establishment will be a happier person with a more stable lifestyle. Unbelievers who buck authority, who do not work, whose heart is filled with lust and desire for things which are not his, who is constantly angry—this is one unhappy unbeliever.

The actual doctrine is approximately 60 pages long and found here:
<http://kukis.org/Doctrines/divineestablishment.htm>
<http://kukis.org/Doctrines/divineestablishment.pdf>

And please let me again emphasize that these laws are optional in a society; the nation which follows them will prosper and the nation which chooses not to follow them will either be tyrannical or chaotic.

Lesson 110: Genesis 12:10–20

Abraham and the Pharaoh of Egypt

Gen 12:10–13 Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to temporarily reside there, for the famine was severe in the land [of Canaan]. When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, "I know that you are a woman beautiful in appearance, and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me, but they will let you live. Say you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared for your sake."

God did not tell Abram to leave Canaan, so Abram is outside of God's geographical will. This is confirmed by the fact that Abram decides to lie to the pharaoh of his host country, Egypt. His plan looks to save Abram, but it does not insure Sarai's safety or purity. Furthermore, this reveals some self righteousness on Abram's part. He believes that the pharaoh of Egypt would simply kill him to have his wife.

Gen 12:14–15 When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman [Sarai] was very beautiful. And when the princes of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's palace.

Abram's arrival in Egypt causes quite a stir, because his entourage is the size of a small town. Furthermore, his wife Sarai is noticed and she stands out; so the princes of Pharaoh report back to him that there's a new gal in town.

Gen 12:16 And for her sake he dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels.

Pharaoh does what an honorable man ought to do; he ingratiate himself to this beautiful woman's "brother" with gifts.

Gen 12:17 But the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.

..... This brief historical incident telegraphs Israel's relationship with Egypt in the future.

Parallels to the Exodus

Abram	The Exodus
Abram goes with his family and servants to Egypt because of an economic depression. Gen. 12:10	Joseph (Abram's great grandson) moves all of his family to Egypt because of an economic depression. Gen. 44–46
Initially, Abram is blessed by being in Egypt and he is given a great many things. Gen. 12:16	Because Joseph was prime minister, his family was greatly blessed in Egypt. Gen. 47
God afflicts Pharaoh with plagues because of Abram's wife. Gen. 12:17	God afflicts Pharaoh with plagues because of God's wife (Israel). Ex. 5–11
Pharaoh sends Abram away with his wife, Sarai. Gen. 12:19	Pharaoh sends Moses away with Israel, God's wife. Ex. 12:31–32

The Bible does this sort of thing again and again. A real life situation will occur, and it will telegraph a real life situation which is to occur again in the future. The Bible is telling us of things which will come to pass. God would, several hundred years from this date, afflict the Pharaoh's house with great plagues. The idea is, many circumstances in the Bible look forward to other things. In fact, some chapters of the Bible, like Psalm 22 and Isa. 53, give us greater details about the crucifixion even though they were written hundreds of years before the cross. God the Holy Spirit, in this situation, wants us to take what is occurring here and to take it forward into time.

This re-introduces the concept of a type and antitype. Abram going to Egypt is the type; this tells us about a very significant incident which will occur in the future, the exodus, which is an antitype. Throughout most of the Bible, type and antitype speaks of Jesus Christ. However, this parallel establishes the concept of type and antitype early on (as the nation Israel will be aware of both of these incidents for its entire history).

The Bible is the result of man writing down these words as guided and moved by God the Holy Spirit (**For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men from God spoke as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit—2Peter 1:21**). I would go so far as to say, there are some passages where, the human author is telling us one thing, but God the Holy Spirit is telling us something else entirely. In this verse, the author is simply telling us what is transpiring—the Pharaoh has taken Sarai into his harem and is suddenly enduring several unnamed plagues. However, God the Holy Spirit is pointing toward the future, where God will bring many plagues upon the Pharaoh of Egypt, demanding that he let God's people go. God the Holy Spirit, as the divine Author, uses this incident to foreshadow what would come to pass in the future.

We find this sort of thing often in movies and in literature. Some character, for instance, will make an initial appearance, and this will foreshadow or telegraph the importance of this character at a later date (the same thing may be true of an incident which takes place early in the plot or something which is said). Where did this literary trick come from? The Bible,

of course. The only difference with the Bible is, one author may record an incident which will foreshadow something to come, and then, a thousand years later, another author will write about what the previous author was foreshadowing (and the later author may or may not be familiar with what the first author wrote). Both men are guided by God the Holy Spirit, so we may recognize that this literary device originates with God the Holy Spirit.

This portion of Scripture is one of the reasons I believe that this portion of Genesis was well-known to later generations. There is a relationship between God and a particular genealogical line. God has directly interacted with this line. Before, that, God specifically interacted with man, as we have studied so far in the book of Genesis. What sense does it make for this to remain hidden from the descendants of Abram, if there is information about our origins and about God's interaction with mankind? For this reason, I believe that portions of Genesis not only existed, but were available to some people—at minimum, to Abram and his children (although I believe it was more widespread than that). In fact, in a few chapters, Abram will meet with Melchizedek, and I believe that Melchizedek is the person who hands off the holy Scriptures to Abram. To be very specific, Melchizedek probably possesses Gen. 1:1–11:9 and the book of Job, a copies of which he will give to Abram. Abram either has his family line memorized or has records of it, and will append the Genesis section, and will be the human author of Gen. 11:10–25:11 (or 25:18). We will discuss this in greater detail when we come to Melchizedek.

This narrative is an example *why* a limited Bible existed during the time of Abram and thereafter: there are parallels being drawn between the experiences of Abram, the father of Israel, and Egypt and those of Abram's seed and Egypt.

There is a major difference between this pharaoh and the pharaoh of the exodus: when God taps this pharaoh on the shoulder and tells him, "Cool your jets;" this pharaoh pays attention and does what God tells him to do. The pharaoh of the exodus is going to treat God's urging entirely differently. This tells us that nations evolve and devolve. God will put pressure on this particular pharaoh, and he will respond positively to God. God will put pressure on the pharaoh of Egypt, and he will resist God, no matter what plagues God subjects him to. The pharaoh of Abram's time will recognize God's power from the outset, and desires to make things right. The pharaoh of the exodus will resist God with every fibre of his being. In other words, the difference between the 2 pharaohs is positive volition.

The same thing is true of the people of Canaan. During the time of Abram and for several hundred years after, God will allow them to remain in the land, because they, for the most part, adhere to the laws of divine establishment and they are not dramatically degenerate (except for those of Sodom and Gomorrah). However, these same people, 500 years in the future, will be so degenerate, that God will have the Jews destroy most of them (which will also be foreshadowed).

[Gen 12:17](#) But the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.

God does not desert Abram because he is out of God's geographical will. God does not desert Abram because he is out of fellowship. God does not go back to Canaan, and stand there tapping His foot, waiting for Abram to return. God deals with Abram where he is, in the place that he is at. God always works with us right where we are, and not where we ought to be.

Unlike the Pharaoh of the exodus, this Pharaoh is a lot more receptive to God speaking to him through tragedy and difficulties. All of a sudden, this Pharaoh's life has turned to crap and he goes back over his life, and pinpoints when things changed—and it is when he took Sarai into his harem. He is able to tie together choices which he has made to circumstances in his life.

Somehow, the Pharaoh eventually finds out that Sarai is not Abram's sister, but his wife. We are not given any details on this, but let me suggest, he got this from direct interview. He goes to Sarai in his harem, takes her aside, and starts out with, "Now don't you lie to me, little missy." Perhaps he did not use the vocative, *little missy*, but he had, after a question or two, the explanation. When everything seems to go wrong in the house of pharaoh, he probably turned to Sarai and asked, *what is going on? Do you know what is going on?* Sarah may have even told him about the God of Abram. It is also possible that God spoke to pharaoh in a dream.

No matter how pharaoh came to this understanding, he then summoned Abram. He has already determined that Abram is Sarai's husband; now he is going to confirm this directly with Abram. This tells us that pharaoh is a reasonable, thinking man, who wants to assemble all of the evidence before him before making any decision.

Gen 12:18 So pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife?"

The reaction of the pharaoh is far different from the one that Abram had predicted. The fact that Sarai is Abram's wife is an important detail to the pharaoh. What immediately comes to my mind are 2 divine establishment laws: **you will not commit adultery** and **you will not covet your neighbor's wife**. These are not laws for believers. These are not principles for mature believers. These are laws for all mankind. This pharaoh recognizes that he ought not to cavort with another man's wife.

We do not know how pharaoh knew this—was man simply aware at that time of the sacredness of marriage? There was no Mosaic Law yet—that is 500 years into the future. Pharaoh understood that his violating Abram's marriage was wrong and he understood that lying was wrong as well. Whether this morality was ingrained in much of mankind, we do not know. In any case, pharaoh understood these things.

On top of all this, Abram lied to pharaoh. Again, another divine establishment law. So the pharaoh continues to upbraid Abram.

Gen 12:19 Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife; take her, and go."

This Pharaoh is obviously of a higher moral caliber than Abram. Had Abram simply told that truth, that Sarai was his wife, nothing would have happened to him or to her. I want you to notice how irrational Abram's thinking has been. He has walked through the middle of a country inhabited by Canaanites and absolutely nothing happened to him. He is safe in the midst of these (mostly) Hamitic peoples. God promised to make a great nation of him. Abram has his own experience in Canaan coupled with God's Word, both of which assure him that he is protected. Yet, he goes to Egypt, and his faith in God's promise to him seems to disappear. What happened? Abram got out of the geographical will of God, and that would have been a result of faulty spiritual thinking, which would have been a result of being out of fellowship. Therefore, in Egypt, Abram continues to compound his mistakes as he remains out of fellowship.

As believers in Jesus Christ, we have two things that we can depend upon: the experience of God in our lives and what He has done on our behalf; and we have the many promises and assurances from the Word of God which we can depend upon. If God has a plan for our lives—and if we are growing spiritually—that plan will be carried out. What's more is, we can depend upon God for His protection.

Gen 12:20 And pharaoh gave men orders concerning him, and they sent him away with his wife and all that he had.

Pharaoh orders his men not to harm Abram or his wife. They had orders not to do anything untoward to Abram. The attitude of this Pharaoh is far different from the Pharaoh in Egypt during the time of Moses. This Pharaoh endures a few plagues, and he gets it right away. He understands what is happening, and he adapts, he does not rebel against God.

Abram has made an horrendous mistake in his dealing with Pharaoh, and yet God still allows him to retain all of his wealth.

At this point, we do not know what happened to this pharaoh. I think that he believed in Jehovah Elohim, the God of Abram. Despite the fact that Abram lied to pharaoh, pharaoh saw the power and reality of God, and responded to this positively. Pharaoh did what God wanted him to do; this suggests that pharaoh believed in the God of Abram, meaning we will meet this pharaoh in heaven.

An Abbreviated Exegesis of Genesis 11:

Bible translation used: The Scriptures 2009. Unless otherwise noted, all other quotations will be taken from this translation as well.

In the Scriptures 2009, instead of *God*, we have the word *Elohim*, which is a transliteration from the Hebrew. The other name for God, YHWH (or Jehovah, Yahweh, Adonai, Lord, JHWH, Y^ehowah) is represented with the actual Hebrew יהוה. The reason for there being so many different words used here is interesting. Originally, the Hebrew was written without vowels—not just YHWH, but every single Hebrew word. Because the Hebrew Scriptures (which we know as the Old Testament) were read aloud so often, the reader could look at the Hebrew consonants and know the word that was there. In fact, the Masoretes, who preserved the Bibles' pronunciation, introduced diacritical marks in the 7th century A.D. (these are vowel points, which was added above and below the original Hebrew text). Up to that time, every word in the Bible was read aloud except for one, and that was YHWH. When the Jews came to this proper name, they said, *Adonai* (= *Lord*). As a result, the Jews preserved the pronunciation of the Biblical text for all but one word. Of the nearly 100 translations of the Old Testament to which I refer, any one of those eight forms may be found—and one of them, the Message (I believe) uses *GOD*. Furthermore, Bible translations are not necessarily consistent at this point. One place we may read *Lord*, and elsewhere we may read *Jehovah* in the same translation.

The Subsections of Genesis 12

[God gives Abram the Abrahamic Covenant](#) (vv. 1–3)

[God commands Abram and his wife to leave Haran and move to Canaan](#) (vv. 4–9)

[A famine in the land causes Abram and his wife to go south into Egypt](#) (vv. 10–20)

God gives Abram the Abrahamic Covenant

Abram has been told by God to go to Canaan. However, Abram had, instead, allowed his father to call the shots. So his father took them toward Canaan, but they stopped halfway there in Haran (probably named after Aram's recently deceased brother)

God speaks to Abram again.

Genesis 12:1 [And יהוה \[= YHWH, Y^ehowah\] said to Abram, "Go yourself out of your land, from your relatives and from your father's house, to a land which I show you.](#)

God tells Abram to leave his family behind in Haran (recall that his father just recently died there); and to go to Canaan (as previously instructed).

Apparently before Abram left, God gives him some great promises. God gives him the first installment of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Genesis 12:2 ["And I shall make you a great nation, and bless you and make your name great, and you shall be a blessing!](#)

God promises to make of Abram a great nation and to bless him and to make his name great. Also God promises that Abram (and his people) would be a blessing to all humanity.

Huge numbers of people of all faiths know Abraham and something about him. At the same time, they know nothing about any of the great political and military leaders of the many nations of the world. Remember that God has caused the people of Shem, Ham and Japheth to spread out across the land in **Genesis 11** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). This would have involved leadership in order for this to take place.

At this time, there are many burgeoning nations led by men who are thought to be great; yet who remembers any of their names today? One person out of a hundred? Or out of a thousand?

Application: How many times have we spoken with great passion about Presidents Ronald Regan, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama, Donald Trump or Joe Biden. Many of us could talk for hours about how great or how bad these various individuals are, and the great emotions we felt, both positive and negative, when these men were elected or defeated. However, these men are not the key to God's blessing for the United States. They may be a part of our blessing or a part of our discipline; but they are not really the cause of either. God blesses this nation, and one of the factors of such blessing is how we treat the Jewish people.

Abram is a blessing because he is the beginning of the Hebrew people and his line will lead to the Messiah, the Savior of all mankind.

Genesis 12:3 “[And I shall bless those who bless you, and curse him who curses you. And in you all the clans of the earth shall be blessed.](#)”

The *clans* being blessed is the feminine plural construct of mish^epâchâh (מִשְׁפָּחָה) [pronounced *mish-paw-KHAWH*], which means, *family, clan, tribe, sub-tribe, class (of people), species [genus, kind] [of animals], or sort (of things)*. Strong's #4940 BDB #1046. Now, how should we understand this? These families of the earth are recently said to be spread out throughout the earth in **Genesis 10** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). So all of these various groupings of families, which are becoming nations, will be blessed by their relationship to Jesus Christ, Who came through Abram. Today, various nations throughout the centuries find themselves being blessed as client nations. One aspect of being a client nation is providing a haven for the Jewish people, who, through much of the Church Age, have not had a nation of their own.

This is a great promise to all mankind from 4000 years ago. Those who bless Abram (by which God means, his descendants, the Jews) will be blessed by God. This is one of the reasons our nation was not completely destroyed over the past 100 years. We have done a lot of things wrong; but we understand that our greatest ally in the Middle East is nation Israel; and we have always been a haven for the Jews.

Similarly, those who curse Abram (and Israel) are cursed by God. The Middle East is a good example of this. The people in the Middle East are, for the most part, also descended from Abram. However, they have not embraced the spiritual heritage of Abram. So they are both blessed and cursed. Throughout much of the Middle East, there is a great deal of oil, which has brought in great revenue into Middle East nations. Nevertheless, many of these nations seem to be perpetually engaged in war (even more than communist and socialist revolutions, there is violence in the Middle East and much of Africa). There is so much wealth in the Middle East and they could have built themselves into a dozen or more great nations (as the UAE has), but they mire themselves in antisemitism, which causes them to be cursed by God.

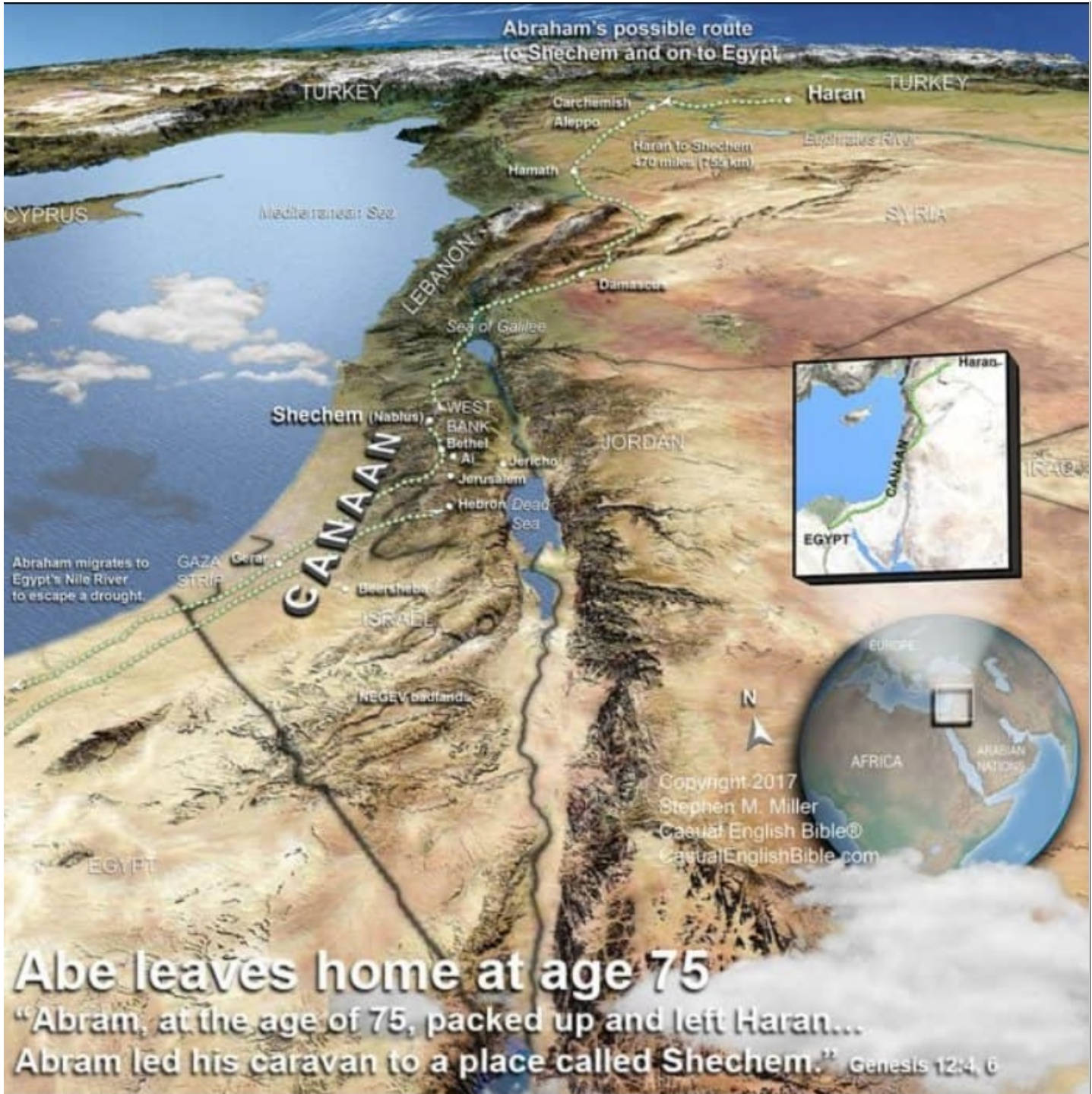
All the world is blessed in Abram because in his line will come the Lord Jesus, Savior of the world.

God commands Abram and his wife to leave Haran and move to Canaan

Genesis 12:4 So Abram left, as הוֹיֵה had commanded him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran.

Abram is in Haran with his family. God told him to go all the way to Canaan. God repeats Himself, and Abram, at age 75, heads out for Canaan.

Genesis 12:5 And Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the beings whom they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Kena'an. And they came to the land of Kena'an.



Abram's Travels from Haran to Canaan (a Casual English Bible Map); from the [Casual English Bible site](#); accessed May 28, 2024.

Most of the times when I borrow a graphic to place in my notes, I cite where it came from, but, most of the time, it did not originally come from the site. However, any map from the Casual English Bible site has been produced there. This guy does the best maps in the business! If you even need an excellent map which gives you everything that you need—and it is pleasing to the eyes—try this site. Also, he has translated the Bible using a limited English vocabulary. I think it is one of the best translations available (outstanding to read to your children from). His material from that page would be a welcome addition to any Sunday School curriculum.

Throughout the movements in this chapter, please frequently appeal to this map. This is specifically the chapter 12 map for Genesis.

Abram takes Lot, his nephew, with him. Why did God want Lot to remain in Haran? When dealing with Abram, Sarai and Lot, God does not simply see these individuals, but God sees them and the families which will come from them. Two peoples will come from Lot, both conceived as the result of incest. Furthermore, those two peoples would be a thorn in the side of nation Israel (which nation would come from Abram).

So Abram, Sarai and Lot all arrive in Canaan. Lot should have been left back in Haran.

Much of what God says and does—particularly in relation to the Jews—is much easier to understand if we recognize that God does not simply see Lot, but He sees Lot and his descendants. Similarly, God does not just see Abram, but He sees Abram and all of his descendants (including the Messiah).

Genesis 12:6 [And Abram passed through the land to the place of Shekem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. At that time the Kena'anites were in the land.](#)

Abram and company pass through Shechem. At this time, the Canaanites occupied the land.

Genesis 12:7 [And הוהי appeared to Abram and said, "To your seed I give this land." And he built there a slaughter-place to הוהי, who had appeared to him.](#)

After Abram had walked a ways through various parts of Canaan, God revealed that this land would be given to Abram's seed. Remember that Sarai is barren. In fact, this fact must enter into Abram's mind from time to time; but God has never told Abram, "Listen, you need to abandon your wife and get a new one." God is able to work with what He has.

Where God appeared to Abram, he built an altar to offer up sacrifices to God.

Genesis 12:8 And from there he moved to the mountain east of Běyth Ĕl, and he pitched his tent, with Běyth Ĕl on the west and Ai on the east. And he built there a slaughter-place to הוהי, and called on the Name of הוהי.

Abram and company travel about, and they find themselves in Bethel and Ai.

The word *slaughter-place* simply refers to an altar where animals would be offered up to God.

Genesis 12:9 And Abram set out, continuing toward the South.

God told Abram to travel throughout the land of Canaan, and so he does. At this point, he is in the Negev (the southern portion of Judah⁶).

A famine in the land causes Abram and his wife to go south into Egypt

Genesis 12:10 And a scarcity of food came to be in the land, and Abram went down to Mitsrayim to dwell there, for the scarcity of food was severe in the land.

There is a famine in the land, so Abram takes his family more south to Egypt.

This is very much a foreshadowing of Jacob leading his family to Egypt when there had been a famine throughout the land.

Genesis 12:11 And it came to be, when he was close to entering Mitsrayim, that he said to Sarai his wife, “See, I know that you are a beautiful woman to look at.

Abram, at this point in time, was no spiritual giant. He got many things right; and he did a few things wrong. For the most part, in a Biblical narrative, we do not have the constant notation, *What Abram did was wrong in God’s eyes; or, When Abram did this, God beamed with pride!* Most of the time, narrative is simply narrative. Where they went, what they saw, who they spoke to and what they all said is given to us. We take it from there.

Although I have not ever sat down to work this out, I would guess that about half the Bible is narrative.

Abram starts to think this situation through, and he is worried about what might happen to him when the people see how beautiful Sarai is (she is 65 or 66 at this time and she is still a beautiful woman).

Genesis 12:12 “And it shall be, when the Mitsrites see you, that they shall say, ‘This is his wife.’ And they shall kill me, but let you live.

⁶ It is not called *Judah* yet because the person Judah does not exist yet.

At this point, Abram is completely wrong. “The Egyptians will see you and want you. Therefore, they will kill me and keep you alive.” Why is he wrong? Reread the promises in Genesis 12:1–3. How can God fulfill these promises if Abram is dead and has no son?

Application: Have you ever run into a serious problem or gotten yourself into some jackpot, and you have over thought the situation, and have gotten all worked up over it, and cannot seem to get through from one hour to the next without worrying about it and filling your mind with human solutions? Well, this is what Abram is doing; and he has all of these promises from God to indicate that, he has nothing to be worried about. He has a future. Because this future is based upon having a son, that means this future is with Sarai.

Genesis 12:13 “Please say you are my sister, so that it shall be well with me for your sake, and my life be spared because of you.”

Abram asks Sarai to pretend to be his sister only; and that he would be spared through this approach. From a human point of view, this may seem right. However, given the promises that he received at the beginning of this chapter, he is all wrong.

Application: As believers in Jesus Christ, God has made many promises to us. In life, do not act in accordance with human viewpoint, but see things from God’s perspective. Think on God’s promises.

Lately, I have been watching a lot of crime drama on television; most of which involves love and marriage. So many of these people think that, if they could only get rid of their spouse or ex-spouse, things would get better. That is a human viewpoint solution and things won’t get better.

To express this generally, spend more time trusting God and less time trying to fix your life (now, obviously, if your idea of fixing your life is eliminating this or that set of sins, then that is a good thing).

Genesis 12:14 And it came to be, when Abram came into Mitsrayim, that the Mitsrites saw the woman, that she was very beautiful.

Abram and co arrive in Egypt, and he is correct. The people see Sarai and she is beautiful to them.

Now, often this is the case when a woman of one racial background finds herself in the midst of a people of a different racial background. A blonde Norwegian woman will find herself to be one-of-a-kind if she is in Japan or in the Philippines. People will see her and be thoroughly taken by her, as she stands out so much.

We have had this in America. Sophia Loren was a very beautiful Italian actress who was well known in the states, and she stood out as a gorgeous actress in the 1950s and 1960s. More recently, Jennifer Lopez, an American actress, but of Puerto Rican descent, stood out as an incredible beauty in the movies.

This was the case with Sarai. However, she is also naturally beautiful.

Genesis 12:15 [And Pharaoh's officials saw her and praised her before Pharaoh, and the woman was taken to Pharaoh's house.](#)

People saw Sarai and praised her beauty, to the point of informing the Pharaoh of her great beauty.

Genesis 12:16 [And he treated Abram well for her sake, and he had sheep, and cattle, and male donkeys, and male and female servants, and female donkeys, and camels.](#)

Now, Abram was right to some degree. Abram was treated well as being the *brother* of Sarai. You cannot simply kill a woman's brother and expect her to cherish you. So Abram was treated well and apparently given many presents as a result of all this. Abram was being made rich so that Sarai could become a part of Pharaoh's harem.

We might also note here that, even though this is not found in the text, that Sarai could be charming and engaging; and that she was very intelligent. There are some women that, the moment they open their mouths and speak, their beauty suddenly fades because they lack any sort of class; or they are crass. On the one hand, a man might want to be seen with such a woman on his arm; but he would not want her to ever speak.

Genesis 12:17 [But הויה plagues Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.](#)

Pharaoh has taken Sarai into his harem and has given Abram a great deal of wealth to compensate him.

However, Pharaoh found great plagues occurring as a result of this.

As an aside, this is another example of the parallels between this visit to Egypt and Israel's eventual move to Egypt for a period of time when Jacob was the patriarch.

Genesis 12:18 [And Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not inform me that she was your wife?"](#)

Pharaoh finds out—probably through a direct question put to Sarai—that she is actually Abram's wife. The Pharaoh is very upset with Abram, and rightly so.

Genesis 12:19 ["Why did you say, 'She is my sister'? And so I was going to take her for my wife. Look, here is your wife, take her and go."](#)

"I wanted to marry this woman, so why did you tell me, 'She is my sister'? Take your wife and go!"

Genesis 12:20 And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him, and they sent him away, with his wife and all that he had.

Pharaoh does not take back the gifts that he gave Abram; but he send Abram and his wife packing, to return to Canaan.

Lesson 111: Genesis 12:10–20 13:1–5 Lessons from Egypt; Returning to Canaan

Let's see if we can review Gen. 12:10–20, and then draw some conclusions from this chapter.

Gen 12:10–20 Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to temporarily reside there, for the famine was severe in the land [of Canaan]. When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, "I know that you are a woman beautiful in appearance, and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me, but they will let you live. Say you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared for your sake." When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman [Sarai] was very beautiful. And when the princes of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's palace. And for her sake he dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels. But the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. So pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife; take her, and go." And pharaoh gave men orders concerning him, and they sent him away with his wife and all that he had.

In Gen. 12, Abram had gone down to Egypt because there was a drought in Canaan (which refers to an economic recession in an agricultural society). He ran into some problems with the Pharaoh of Egypt, but they were of Abram's own making. Some time later, Abram exits from Egypt (the narrative suggests that Abram did not remain in Egypt very long).

Clearly, God was testing Abram, and Abram failed the test. Sometimes God expects you to stay right where you are, in the midst of difficulties; and sometimes, God uses these difficulties to get you to move on. When you have a soul filled with doctrine, distinguishing between the two becomes easier (otherwise, you often do what you feel like doing; and some do exactly the opposite of what they feel like doing). In any case, despite the great amount of blessing Abram had received, he still took an unauthorized leave.

Abram faced a crisis, and that was the economic pressure of a famine. Abram had 2 choices: he could stay or he could go. Leaving, as we have studied, was the wrong choice, and this led to a host of wrong choices after that (one of which was examined in the previous chapter).

God's ideal is for us to experience spiritual growth via Bible doctrine and the filling of the Holy Spirit (2Peter 3:18). However, some people do not learn this way, so that God teaches them through difficulties, testing and circumstance. This is known as *learning the hard way*, which is just what happened to Abram. You may have not been very impressed by this, but Abram was embarrassed and humiliated. He puts together this stupid plan and he looked foolish before the pharaoh of Egypt, who simply followed the laws of divine establishment.

You will notice that, in the latter half of Gen. 12, God did not speak directly to Abram. Once Abram packed up and went to Egypt, God stopped dealing with him directly. He was outside of God's will. However, God was still there, working behind the scenes (Gen. 12:17).

Now let's put this together. God made promises to Abram (Gen. 12:1–3). That is Bible doctrine. Abram chose not to believe that doctrine, which is a breakdown of spiritual growth. You only grow spiritually when you *believe* Bible doctrine, as per Heb. 4:2 (**For to us was the gospel** [the good news about Jesus Christ, which is the most fundamental form of Bible doctrine] **proclaimed, as well as to them: but the word proclaimed** [to them] **did not profit them, because it was not mixed with faith in** [the souls of] **them that heard it**). Abram did not believe these promises. We know this because, when he went into Egypt, he lied about Sarai, which was unnecessary, because God was going to make a great nation of Abram (Gen. 12:2).

Therefore, since Abram chose not to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jehovah Elohim, God teaches him through testing (first the famine and then the humiliation before pharaoh). All Abram had to do was to believe what God told him, and the latter half of Gen. 12 would have been avoided.

If you have personal honor and integrity, then you can understand how embarrassed Abram was before pharaoh, someone he thought was morally inferior to him (Gen. 12:11–13). Yet, in simple morality, pharaoh shows himself to be superior to Abram. This tells us one more thing: morality is not the Christian way of life. God doesn't look down, reevaluate the situation, and decide, "You know what, this pharaoh character catches on a lot more quickly than Abram does. I think I am going to move my blessing from morally inferior Abram to the pharaoh." But God does not do that.

Abram has failed, and he recognizes this. Therefore, he decides to go back to the last place where he had fellowship with God.

God, on several occasions, is going to speak to Abram and make promises to him. Abram has already believed Jehovah Elohim, and has imputed righteousness because of that (Gen. 15:6), but he does not place his faith in God's Word. Therefore, God will repeat these promises and, on occasion, add to them. That is, God will build doctrine upon doctrine (specifically, in this case, promises upon promises). There will be a point at which Abram will understand God's promises and believe them, resulting in the birth of his son, Isaac

Gen 13:1 So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negev.

Remember that the Negev is southern Canaan (Palestine). Abram and company are coming out of Egypt, where he had been out of God's geographical will. Abram had been overly concerned about a famine in the land of Canaan, so he traveled outside of God's will in order to deal with the famine. However, now he is going back where he ought to be.

Gen 13:2 Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold.

In the previous chapter, you will recall that Canaan was in the midst of an economic downturn, so bad that Abram felt he ought to move to Egypt. And yet, here, we find out that Abram is rich in livestock, silver and gold. God is able to bless us, despite surrounding economic conditions. This is important as an application to us today, as I write this during a time when the world is in an economic downturn. God may or may not choose to bless us materially, but that is unrelated to the environment in which we find ourselves. There were many millionaires whose fortunes increased during the Great Depression (just as many millionaires lost their fortunes during this time). Your own personal finances are an outgrowth of your relationship to Jesus Christ and not a result of whatever economic downturn or upturn you find yourself to be in.

It is also important to note that, even though Abram lied to Pharaoh about his wife; God did not severely punish Abram and take away all of his material blessings. Abram continued to be quite wealthy. In fact, he became more wealthy in Egypt because of the Pharaoh's gifts.

As believers in Jesus Christ, we make a lot of mistakes. We all sin. This does not mean the end of our lives. God has made provision for these things, which can include, of course, divine discipline. However, such things will not necessarily end our spiritual lives. We get up, we dust ourselves off, and go back to the land of promise, where God wants us to be.

You will notice what is missing from this narrative—anything which has to do with the famine in the land. There is no telling how long Abram was in Egypt (probably, less than a year). There is no indication that, Abram returns to the land and the famine is all over. It is simply a non-issue. We learn that the famine motivates Abram to go to Egypt, but the famine itself has no real impact on Abram's life. This is an extremely important spiritual principle: we may face a dramatic change in circumstances, but we are who we are, and God is Who He is. The circumstances are inconsequential. You may live in a country being invaded, a country under attack. It doesn't matter. Your country might be falling into socialism. It doesn't matter. You are who you are and God is Who He is. God will vindicate the doctrine in your soul, no matter what the circumstances are around you. If you have no doctrine in your soul, then there is nothing there with which God can work.

Abram has doctrine in his soul; he was out of God's geographical will, and he is getting back into God's geographical will. He went into Egypt rich with possessions and he exits

Egypt rich with possessions. He made a mistake, he is correcting that mistake, and God has not impacted his temporal blessing.

Abram will be going from Egypt to Bethel, which can be seen in the map below.

In 2Samuel, we have a much more dramatic set of circumstances, where King David gets way, way out of fellowship; and he eventually falls into national disaster (there is a revolution in his country spearheaded by one of his own sons). Yet, when the smoke clears and the dust settles, David will have everything which God blessed him with, despite David's sins and personal shortcomings.

I am not saying that, no matter what, God will restore you to all that He has given you. However, there are 2 examples here where both Abram and David got out of God's will (David for an extended period of time), and God still blessed them. The key appears



Abram will go from Egypt, which is southwest of the lower left-hand corner of this map, up to Bethel, which is at the center top of this map.

From http://www.bible-history.com/map-davids-kingdom/israel_davids_kingdom_shg.jpg

to be that, both David and Abram recognize their mistake and want to get back on board with God's plan; and they both have souls filled with divine viewpoint (they were able to think from the Bible doctrine which was in their souls).

Gen 13:3 And he journeyed on from the Negev as far as Bethel to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai,

A Relief Map of Judah

The Negev is the mostly uninhabited wilderness area between southern Judah and Egypt, so Abram is obviously on his way back to the Land of Promise. This area is now desert, although that was not necessarily the case in Abram's day.

Bethel and Ai are roughly in the center of Canaan, not far from Jericho (Bethel can be seen on the map above).

There is a word here that is hidden in many translations: *maçça'* (מַצְעָא) [pronounced *mahs-SAH*] means *a pulling up [of stakes]; breaking camp; setting out; travels, journeys, journeying; stages*. You may recognize that the transliteration of this word is the familiar term *Mecca*. Strong's #4550 BDB #652. It simply means that Abram, when going from Egypt, through the Negev and on up to Bethel, that this took some time. He and his crew would stop, make camp, and then pull up stakes and set out again.

Note that Abram's thinking here is to go back to where he was at the beginning. The idea here is, Abram got out of God's geographical will and went down to Egypt. When he realizes that he was out of God's will, he pulled up stakes and moved back to where God led him in the first place. Here is the concept: Abram knows that he wandered from God, so, in order to rectify that problem, he goes back to the last place where he was clearly in God's will.

Gen 13:4 to the place where he had made an altar at the first. And there Abram called upon the name of the LORD.

Abram realizes that he has made some errors in his life. What is the solution? He goes back to the point at which everything was spiritually sound. When I first read this, I first thought, *superstition*; however, as I reread it, it is clear that Abram was simply going back to a point where he knew he ought to be.

We have all failed, some of us more spectacularly than others. For many of us, this does not mean that you automatically pick up everything you have and move back home (or, wherever). You get with the Word of God; you study the Word of God under a pastor-teacher, and, in many cases, you will pick back up where you left off. You will go back to the place where you were advancing spiritually, and from there, you continue that advance.

God is going to put Abram to a geographical test again. In the previous test, Abram failed, and he went to Egypt. This time, God is going to put Abram in a similar test, and this time, Abram will apply doctrine (what God has promised him) and he will pass.

Gen 13:5 And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents,

Abram was rich because of his relationship with God. Lot was rich because of his relationship with Abram. In the case of Lot, this is known as blessing by association, and it is found throughout the Bible.

Lesson 112: Genesis 13:1–5**Blessing by Association**

We have completed Gen. 12 and, in the previous lesson, we studied the first 5 verses of Gen. 13:

Gen 13:1–5 So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negev. Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. to the place where he had made an altar at the first. And there Abram called upon the name of the LORD. And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents,...

As we will find, Abram is a growing believer who trusts in God and he will come to believe in the promises of God given to him. Lot, despite being quite self-righteous (as we will find out), will still end up doing some very morally repugnant stuff in Gen. 19. However, here both Abram and Lot have all kinds of material blessings. God has blessed Abram directly but He has blessed Lot by association. Lot is associated with a growing believer (Abram) and he is therefore blessed because of this.

It ought to fascinate you that Abram is very rich, and yet, he has just failed spiritually and been humiliated before someone he believed to be morally inferior to him (the pharaoh of Gen. 12). Despite this spiritual failure, Abram is still being materially blessed by God. Furthermore, Abram's nephew Lot is also rich, the blessing of Abram spilling over onto him.

I've mentioned the concept of blessing by association on several occasions, so let me present the doctrine.

Allow me to add a few words to your vocabulary (as all true disciplines require a technical vocabulary): *Reversionism* is reverting back to the sins and/or self righteousness of one's pre-salvation life. A *reversionist* is a person who has reverted by to his sinful and/or self righteous life. A *client nation* is a nation through which God works.

Many people do not understand self righteousness as being a part of the life of the unbeliever. Let me give you some examples: those people who talk about the rich not paying their own fair share of taxes; who associate taxes with giving to good and wonderful causes—these are often sanctimonious, self-righteous people (some of whom are believers and some of whom are unbelievers). Rabid environmentalists and climate change alarmists also tend to be very smug and self righteous.

The Doctrine of Blessing by Association

1. Definition of blessing by association:
 - 1) Once a believer reaches spiritual maturity, God begins to pour blessings upon him, so that these blessings overflow to those around him. Sometimes God pours out blessings on those who are simply advancing spiritually.
 - 2) Often, God blesses those people with whom this mature believer (or growing believer) is associated.
 - 3) Sometimes the mature believer himself will be a blessing in a variety of ways to those with whom he associations.
 2. There are 6 categories of blessing by association:
 - 1) Spiritual periphery: those associated with mature believers in the local church, in prayer meetings, in prep school (Sunday school), on a deacon
-

The Doctrine of Blessing by Association

board, or on a mission board, or in association with any Christian service organization.

- (1) A caveat: when a church does not fulfill its function of teaching the Word of God, God may not bless that church directly. However, there is a normal happiness and blessing which comes from fulfilling the [laws of divine establishment](#). Some churches teach morality, which does not advance its members spiritually, but it does cause them to line up with the laws of divine establishment. So, believers (and unbelievers) within a church may have better lives in general, but it is simply because they are trying to be moral and living according to the laws of divine establishment. This is not a matter of God blessing the members of that church, but simply a matter of natural law.
 - 2) Family periphery: husband, wife, parents, children, in-laws, relatives. Even unbelievers or negative believers are blessed by association with the mature believer in their family periphery.
 - 3) Social periphery: friends.
 - 4) Geographical periphery: those associated with the mature believer in a neighborhood, city, country, state, and nation. Mature believers within a nation preserve that nation. This is known as historical impact. [“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness \[preservative qualities\] be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.”](#) (Matt. 5:13). See also Gen. 18:26–33.
 - 5) Professional periphery: businesses, stores, schools of all types, hospitals, medical clinics, law firms, engineering firms, branches of military service, law enforcement agencies, banks, various financial institutions, insurance companies, athletic teams, symphony orchestras, etc. You can be the janitor for a huge corporation, and that corporation can prosper because you are the janitor there (assuming you are a maturing believer).
 - 6) Blessing by association after death: In certain cases like parents to children. [The righteous man who walks in his integrity—blessed are his children after him](#) (Prov. 20:7). This can extend to the second and third generations, and in rare cases to the fourth generation. One might argue that Abraham’s great spiritual blessings continue down today to the Jews.
 - (1) The only great nation in the Middle East is Israel, by far, despite the terror attacks and bombings. This is a combination of many things: God blesses them because of their genetic association with Abraham, because believers live in Israel, because believers pray for Israel, and because they adhere to morality and the laws of divine establishment.
3. One of the unique aspects of you, as a believer, in reaching spiritual maturity, is that God will use you as a channel of His blessings. When you are saved, the potential for temporal blessings is set up via the grace pipeline (the channel by

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- which God's righteousness blesses the righteousness which He has imputed to you at salvation). Gen. 15:6 Psalm 24:5 Matt. 5:6 Rom. 4:6
4. We have already studied Abraham and the Jews as a conduit of blessing: "I will bless those who bless you and I will curse those who curse you." (Gen. 12:2).
 - 1) Jews are a special case of blessing by association. God only chose one genetic-specific group of people to bless throughout human history (and God blesses those who bless Israel as well).
 - 2) If one had to choose one nation in the Middle East to live in, most knowledgeable people would choose Israel, as they provide the greatest environment and the greatest amount of freedom in the Middle East. Everywhere else, there is religious tyranny and oppressive governmental tyranny. Christians and Jews are routinely taken to court and even executed for their crime of having the wrong faith.
 - 3) The Republican party was cursed because they willingly associated with anti-Semites for many years. As a result, this party produced two good Presidents from 1900–1975 (Coolidge and Eisenhower) and a lot of mediocre ones (Harding and Nixon). Furthermore, this party, for the most part, had comparatively little power in the 1900's. One of the greatest presidential candidates ever was defeated, in part, because of anti-Semitism (Barry Goldwater, who was beaten by one of the worse presidents in American history). As antisemitism was being rooted out of the Republican party, Republican presidents went from bad (Nixon), to okay (Ford) to great (Reagan). It was William F. Buckley who began to weed out the antisemitic element of the Republican party.
 5. God blesses people and nations and companies directly and/or indirectly because of their association with a mature believer.
 - 1) An example of indirect blessing by association: a vice president who is a mature believer, might bring in a great deal of business for the company that he works for, and, as a result, that is a blessing to that company. That is blessing which spills over from the vice president to the companies and those employed by the company (indirect blessing).
 - 2) However, a mature believer may work for another company as a janitor, and God may bless that company directly because of the janitor. That is, God may cause that company to become extremely prosperous. It is not spillover from blessing to the janitor, but blessing directly from God to that company.
 - 3) Lot, in association with Abram, received both direct and indirect blessing from God.
 6. People are blessed by association with leaders who are mature believers, in such areas as business, military, athletics, marriage, family and church. Blessings overflow from the leader to those under the authority of the leader. There are examples throughout Scripture, Lot is blessed by his association with Abram; Israel was blessed as a nation under David; David's army was blessed by being under David. Proverbs 11:11 says that a leader who is a mature believer blesses

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the city-state, but association with the reversionist destroys the city-state. Proverbs 11:11 **A city is built up by the blessing of the upright, but it is torn down by the mouth of the wicked.**

7. The mature believer is not to speak ill of those around him, even if they are negative toward Bible doctrine or the gospel or if they reject divine establishment truth. **Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them** (Rom. 12:14). If we do not have mental attitude sins against those who are unbelievers, then we do not interfere with their response to the gospel.
 - 1) A client nation is a nation through which God works.
 - 2) Unbelievers will use the life, actions and verbal sins of believers as excuses to reject the gospel of Jesus Christ.
8. Although the Roman government at first persecuted Christians, it was transformed into a client nation to God because of all the believers in the Roman empire. The Christian leader Tertullian spoke of believers throughout the Roman empire (circa A.D. 200): “We are but of yesterday, and we have filled every place among you, [your] cities, islands, fortresses, towns, market-places, the very camp, tribes, companies, palace, senate, forum; we have left nothing to you but the temples of your gods.”
9. There is also guilt by association. The innocent suffer because of their association with the guilty. People are cursed by association with a reversionist. Even a mature believer can be cursed by his association with a reversionistic believer. Jonathan was the son of King Saul and Jonathan was a great man, who was able to defer to David and recognize that David would be king over Israel (Jonathan recognized this even though Jonathan was in line to become king of Israel). However, Jonathan died in battle with his reversionist father Saul. Another example is Sodom and Gomorrah. We have not studied this yet, but these cities have very degenerate people in them, and, for that reason, these cities will be destroyed (Gen. 18).
 - 1) *Reversionism* is reverting back to the sins and/or self righteousness of one’s pre-salvation life. A *reversionist* is a person who has reverted by to his sinful and/or self righteous life.
 - 2) A simple example of guilt-by-association is, a kid who gets drawn into a group who commit criminal acts. He may choose to hang out with this group, and they may choose to drive somewhere to commit a crime. He will suffer the legal consequences even though he may not have known what they were intending to do.
10. The believer is both blessed and prospered because he is associated with Jesus Christ. The mature believer who is occupied with Christ is certainly blessed by this association. The disciples of Jesus are wonderful examples. It would be very difficult to find men who were less competent than these disciples, who would argue about which one is the greatest; and yet, later deserted Jesus when He was taken into Roman custody (except for John). These men, who lacked both courage and intelligence, became great men, most of whom suffered a martyr’s death. They were afforded a great deal of protection in their association with

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- Jesus Christ, as Jesus once told Peter that Satan wanted to sift him like wheat. Peter's association with Jesus Christ protected him.
11. Sometimes the believer wrongly associates present disaster with past sins. This is cursing by imagination or cursing by having a guilt complex. Psalm 40:12 **For evils beyond number have surrounded me; My iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to see; they are more numerous than the hairs of my head; and my heart has failed me.** Rebound (naming your sins to God) is the believer associating his sins with the judgment of these sins on the cross. We deal with all sins by means of rebound.
 12. The believer is influenced by sexual association. In fact, a mature believer can be brought down and cursed by his association with carnal believers or degenerate unbelievers. King Solomon is an example of this. He was negatively influenced by the religion of the many wives that he had and, as a result, a great portion of his life was spiritually unproductive. 1Kings 11:2–9 Ecclesiastes
 13. The believer is influenced by social association. A believer can be influenced for evil or for good by the company he keeps. 1 Corinthians 15:33 **Do not be deceived: Bad company corrupts good morals.** When a young person gets caught up in a group which does drugs or crime, he will certainly become corrupted as well. A simple rule of thumb for the young believer: if a group of kids commit any sort of crime—including smoking marijuana—then you need to find new friends.
 14. Some blessing comes directly from the mature believer himself. The mature believer might share time or material wealth with those in need. God blesses the mature believer and he, in turn, pours out some of this blessing on others. Rom. 12:13 1Cor. 16:1
 15. Blessing by association explains why there is a call for separation from some believers and unbelievers. This is an entirely new topic, but suffice to say that God often calls for believers to separate from other believers; particularly from those who would bring you down (that is, attempt to focus your attention away from the Word of God). There is also a call to separate from unbelievers who are particularly carnal. If you had a drug problem, then it might not be the best thing for you to hang out with those who are presently using drugs.
 16. Blessing by association can explain why the wicked sometimes prosper. Psalm 73:3 Jer. 12:1
 17. An example of blessing by association is taught in Prov. 31:10–31 where a woman is a blessing to her husband, her children and to her community.
 18. There is also a mutual blessing by association. Much of the book of Philippians exemplifies this. The Philippian church was filled with maturing believers, so that Paul was blessed by being able to teach them, and they were blessed by Paul teaching them. 2Cor. 11:9 Philip. 4:15–16
 19. The preservation and blessing of the United States depends upon many types of blessings.
 - 1) Within the United States, there are many mature and growing believers; God blesses the nation because of the geographical association with

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- them.
- 2) In order to have mature and growing believers, there must be churches that teach the Word of God. The United States is blessed because such churches exist within its borders.
 - 3) Those who founded our nation based the founding principles upon Bible doctrine, so that we receive a heritage blessing from them. At the top of the original charters of many groups who settled the United States was *to spread the good news of Jesus Christ* (which is almost never taught in American history courses).
 - 4) Our nation supports the nation Israel, and because of this alliance, God blesses us.
 - 5) The United States also sends out missionaries throughout the world.
 - 6) So, there are dozens of reasons why our nation ought to be taken down; and those are 5 reasons why we have continued to exist with great prosperity. Even in the present-day recession that we are in, the poor of our nation are far better off than the middle class of most other nations.
20. One of the internal struggles of the United States is between those who are anti-God, anti-Christian and/or anti-laws of divine establishment and those who adhere to the laws of divine establishment. The former faction seeks to turn the United States into a country of European-style socialism (which nations are under tremendous discipline due to cursing by association, among other things). Do you think that it is just an accident of chance that European countries have become flooded with Muslims?

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Abram was quite prosperous, he failed, and he is still quite prosperous. Lot is with him, and Lot is blessed by association with Abram. We know this because these 2 men will go their separate ways and, in the end, Lot will come away with nothing. He spent time separated from Abram so that he was no longer blessed by association.

If you are a growing believer, then you will receive blessings from God. However, so will your family, the company that you work for, the city that you live in, the state that you live in, etc. As God pours blessings upon you, these blessings spill over to those around you. Sometimes, these peripheral things and people are blessed because that is your blessing. That is, the company that you work for may be greatly blessed so that you, as an employee, get to enjoy some of these blessings.

In the previous lesson, we covered the doctrine of blessing by association. Let's look at a modern-day example. R. B. Thieme, Jr. moved down to Houston, Texas to teach at Berachah Church in 1950. He later moved the church building out to what was thought to be prairie land too far out from the city of Houston. However, his church now sits on top of one of the most expensive pieces of dirt in all of Houston in one of the most prosperous areas in Houston, which is, coincidentally enough, one of the most prosperous cities in the United States in the most prosperous state in the United States. At Berachah Church, there was a concentration of believers who were (and are) interested in the Word of God and in spiritual growth. Therefore, God has greatly blessed this great city (and state and country); it is blessing by association.

Being a growing believer or being in close association with a growing believer does not mean that you live a life without problems or difficulties; nor does it mean that God automatically gives you a million dollars (or, whatever). However, those associated with maturing believers receive both direct and indirect blessing from God.

Nevertheless, if you are a growing believer, then you ought to be able to enumerate the blessings which God has given you. You ought to be able to specifically point to things which God has given you as gifts, and recognize them as blessings (and by things, I do not mean only material possessions). You may have material blessings, spiritual blessings, familial blessings, environmental blessings, vocational blessings, health blessings, or a combination of these. If you are unable to enumerate your blessings—if it is not obvious to you or you do not fully appreciate where you are, then your problem is spiritual.

Again, let me reiterate, this does not mean that you are rich, living in a new house, with all new furniture, with a new car in the driveway, a performing stock portfolio, and the perfect marriage partner in the kitchen making you bacon and eggs right now (just the way you like them). However, that God has blessed you, should be undeniable. That God has given you far more than you deserve, should also be undeniable. A growing believer not only has these blessings but recognizes them as well. Now, you may be the poorest person that you know and still be able to recognize and enumerate all that God has blessed you with.

We got to this discussion because Lot was blessed by being in association with Abram. In the next half-dozen chapters, it will become clear that Lot is being blessed because of Abram and not vice versa.

Gen 13:1–4a So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negev. Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. to the place where he had made an altar at the first.

You will notice how these first few verses read—they are all about Abram, Abram is very rich, and Lot is with him. These alone tell us that God is blessing Abram, and that nephew Lot is along for the ride.

Gen. 13:4 And there [where Abram returned to] Abram called upon the name of the LORD.

This is the third time we have come upon the phrase, *to call upon the name of Jehovah*. The words found here are all quite common and found many times in the Bible, which actually makes it more difficult to interpret this phrase. Literally, this portion of the verse reads: *And so calls out there Abram in a name of Y^ehowah*. This could also be translated: *And so there Abram calls out by means of [the] name of Y^ehowah*. In the many times that this phrase occurs, it sounds as if (in most translations) that someone calls out to God one time, expecting that God will answer them. However, this is nearly always in the imperfect tense, which indicates continuous or future action. The verb has a variety of related meanings: *to call, cry, utter a loud sound; to call unto, cry (for help), call (with name of God); to proclaim; to read aloud, read (to oneself), read; to summon, invite, call for, call and commission, appoint, call and endow; to call, name, give name to, call by* (Brown Driver Briggs definitions). If a person were to summon God, the verb would reasonably followed by *unto God* or, more likely, *unto Y^ehowah* (the latter being the personal name of God, usually referring to the second Person of the Trinity). We do not have the preposition *unto* or even the preposition *to*, but the preposition b^e (ב) [pronounced *b^{eh}*], which usage and meaning consumes over 3 pages in Brown-Driver-Briggs, even though this word was never even assigned a Strong's number. It is most often translated by the Greek preposition $\epsilon\nu$, and is most often translated *in* or *by [means of]*. However, b^e (ב) can also be translated *into, through; at, near, on, upon; with, before, against; among; within, in the midst of; at, before, in the presence of, to, unto, up to; in respect to, on account of; because of; by means of, about, concerning*. Sometimes it simply acts somewhat like the mark of a direct object. It points to the thing that the action of the verb acts upon. Therefore, fixing a meaning on this phrase is difficult because there are so many ways it can be reasonably translated. A very reasonable translation would be: *And there Abram proclaims the name [reputation] of Y^ehowah*.⁷ Therefore, the notion that Abram has not talked to God for a long time and now he is calling out God's name so that God will come down and talk to him is not necessarily what this verse means. The offering of the animal sacrifices upon the altar proclaims the character of God.

When it comes to an altar, we may understand that what occurs on that altar are blood sacrifices. Consistently, throughout the Old Testament, from the skins used to cover Adam and Eve up to the time of our Lord, there are lambs (and other animals), without spot or blemish, being sacrificed to God, their throats being slit open and their blood poured out upon the many altars. These blood sacrifices all looked forward to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins. Jesus offering Himself for our sins proclaims God's love, righteousness, justice and fairness (which things are the essence or reputation or name of Jehovah).

⁷ Sometimes a preposition merely indicates which is the object of the verb and, therefore, by process of elimination, what is the subject.

How the Altar Proclaims the Essence or Character of Jehovah		
God's Essence	Old Testament Approach	The Cross of Jesus Christ
Love	That one could sacrifice an animal and have his sin covered is a demonstration of God's love.	For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16).
Righteousness	God's essence could not have anything to do with sin, so that sin has to be covered. You, God, love righteousness and hate wickedness (Psalm 45:7).	For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rm. 6:23). No man is justified by the law in the sight of God (Gal. 3:11a).
Justice	The penalty for the sin is symbolically transferred to the animal, as God's justice must function. The soul who sins shall die (Ezek. 18:20a).	He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed (1Peter 2:24).
Fairness	There is no limitation upon who might take part in such a ritual.	For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

The altars upon which innocent animals were sacrificed both looked forward to the true payment of sins by Jesus Christ and simultaneously proclaimed the character of Jehovah Elohim.

Also, God the Holy Spirit will bracket this chapter with Abram building an altar here to God and in the final verse of this chapter (Gen. 13:18 **Then Abram moved his tent and came and lived among the oaks of Mamre, which were in Hebron; and he built an altar to Jehovah there**). This is God the Holy Spirit telling us that Abram is back in fellowship. He is in God's geographical will. Recall that Abram got out of fellowship and out of God's geographical will and went down to Egypt and embarrassed himself before the pharaoh of Egypt. All of this stuff occurred, and yet God the Holy Spirit did not specifically tell us, "Now Abram, when he went down to Egypt, was out of God's geographical will." We figured this out based upon what the text said and what the text did not say.

Here, in these first few verses, we are told that Abram returns to where he made an altar originally, so this is God the Holy Spirit telling us that Abram has *rebounded* (i.e., he named his sins to God), and he is therefore back in fellowship with God. Again, God the Holy Spirit does not tell us specifically, "Then Abram named his sins to God and also got back

into fellowship and then back into God's geographical will." This information is conveyed to us by literary device or literary symbolism, which becomes quite important when trying to interpret and understand narrative, where very few qualifiers might be offered. That is, in most narratives, the action does not stop, and then there is a proclamation from God, "And that, by the way, was a very bad idea." Or, "And, in case you could not figure it out, Abram is now out of fellowship and is about to get out of God's geographical will." Such things occur, but only on rare occasion. After David's great sin with Bathsheba, which culminated in his having Bathsheba's husband killed, Scripture reads: **But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD** (2Sam. 11:27b). Sometimes, historical incidents are reviewed later in Scripture (e.g., Moses teaching about the exodus in Deuteronomy or various psalmists explaining the exodus centuries later). However, most of the time, narrative is left for us to read and interpret and by *us*, (by *us*, I mean a pastor-teacher or a commentator).

So that there is no misunderstanding, I am a literalist and I take the Bible literally. However, this does not mean that I am unable to recognize various literary devices. Gen. 11:1 literally reads: **And so all the land [or, earth] is one language and a united vocabulary.** *Land* does not speak; *the earth* does not have a verbal language or a vocabulary. We understand that *all the land* is a metonym for *all the people on earth*. In fact, many figures of speech are so obvious, like this one, that we read it and understand it without stopping to realize that the literal understanding of this sentence makes no sense. Many figures of speech come to us so naturally that our mind does not even process the fact that we are reading (or hearing) a figure of speech.

The Bible is filled with literary devices and figures of speech. It is common to find ellipsis, foreshadowing, aposiopesis, inclusio, repetition, parallelisms, hyperbole, anacoluthon, metonym, idiom, etc. in the Word of God. There is a 1000+ page book by Bullinger called *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*; and it lays out hundreds of literary figures of speech, devices and tricks which are found in the Bible (which book can now be found on the internet, which information I will give to you later in this lesson).

Let me remind you of the definition of inspiration of the Bible: *God the Holy Spirit so supernaturally directed the human writers of Scripture, that without waving their human intelligence, individuality, **literary style**, personal feelings or any other human factor, His own complete and coherent message to man was recorded in perfect accuracy in the original languages of Scripture, the very words bearing the authority of divine authorship.* The literary style of the human author would include a variety of literary devices and figures of speech. Furthermore, there is nothing in the definition of inspiration which precludes the human authors or even God the Holy Spirit from making use of literary devices.

I gave the example of this chapter being bookended by Abram and an altar, which tells us that Abram is where he ought to be. Now, did Abram decide to mention an altar twice in order to convey that he was right with God spiritually, or did God the Holy Spirit do that?

Let me give you a non-answer—just as the Bible is the written word of man and the Word of God, so Jesus Christ is the Living Word of God, fully man and fully God. When He

spoke, He did not reveal every bit of this information with everything He said (when you meet someone new and they say, “Hi, how are you?” this does not reveal everything there is to know about their character). So, when Jesus speaks of the Father being greater than He, then He is speaking from His humanity. When He said, “**I and the Father are One;**” He is speaking from His Deity. And when He said, “**I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no man comes to the Father but through Me;**” He is speaking from His hypostatic union (the union of His humanity and Deity).

Therefore, sometimes in the Bible, it is clear that the information being conveyed, on one level, comes from the human author. Abram is conveying true history here, where he returns to where he built this first altar and this chapter will close with Abram building an altar. That really happened. At the same time, these words are also the Word of God which indicate to us that Abram is in fellowship. And I have even suggested that, there are times when a verse means one thing from the human perspective, and yet, something different from God’s perspective. So you can see the analogous relationship between Jesus Christ, the Living Word of God, and the Bible, the written Word of God (although this is not an exact analogy).

The point being made here, by literary device, is that Abram is back where he should be (he is in the geographical will of God); and he is also in fellowship with God. We know this, not by an outright statement, but by literary device.

Richard Salt has a webpage called *Virtual Salt*; and on this particular page <http://virtualsalt.com/rhetoric.htm>, he lists about 60 rhetorical devices. He is simply teaching literature on his website, but these terms also describe various rhetorical devices found in Holy Writ. Many psalms are so carefully constructed, that understanding them is dependent upon understanding their literary construction (just as we understand in this chapter that Abram is in God’s will because the altars he has built bookends this chapter).

If you recall, the events of the flood were recounted in a chiasm (X) format ([Lesson #80](#)). The key to these chapters and the center of those chapters was the clear emphasis of those chapters, which was obvious as long as you could see the chiasm format. Let me suggest that, possibly from the human perspective, the chiasm format made it easier to recall all of the events of the flood (a mnemonic device, perhaps); and God the Holy Spirit used this format to tell us what was most important in that narrative. So you have a human purpose and a divine purpose—which purposes are different yet not at odds with one another—by means of the same literary device.

Lesson 114: Genesis 13:1–4

Literary Devices/Figures of Speech in the Bible

So far we have studied:

[Gen 13:1–4](#) So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negev. Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. to

the place where he had made an altar at the first. And there [where Abram returned to] Abram proclaimed the name of Y^ehowah.

Because we found an altar at the beginning and end of this chapter, we drew the conclusion that Abram is both in God's geographical will and in His directive will. Taking the Bible literally does not mean that you give a literal meaning to each and every phrase you read. The example which I gave was Gen. 11:1 **Now the whole earth had one language and the same words.** Nobody has ever read that verse and assumed that *the ground* actually spoke a language. *The whole earth* is a metonym for *the entire population of the earth*. A metonym is a figure of speech which means that one thing is used in the place of another.

The Bible is filled with idioms, figures of speech, literary devices and literary structure, an understanding of which helps to flesh out the actual meaning of the text. What follows are a few examples.

Examples of Figures of Speech in the Bible		
Term	Definition	Example Text and Commentary
Acrostic	The repetition of successive letters the same letter at the beginning of a series of word, clauses or verses.	Many psalms are acrostic (or a mixture of acrostic and some sort of corresponding organization): Psalm 25 34 37 111 119. Obviously, this is hidden in the original text and may be simply a mnemonic device. David, for instance, may be in a war, and yet, begins formulating a psalm in his mind; so he organizes the psalm in such a way as to be able to remember it. The complex structure of some psalms is quite amazing.

Sometimes an acrostic is used to hide the name of Y^ehowah (YHWH). God's name, *Y^ehowah*, does not occur in the book of Esther except in acrostic form (Esther 1:20 4:14 5:13 7:7). The sense is, God is working in the background to preserve the Jews, but they do not personally recognize Him; they do not know Who He is. Esther is a book known by almost all religious Jews and by very few Christians. Personally, I think in the end times, many Jews will be brought to Jesus Christ through the book of Esther. He is the God Who has been with them all of this time, and yet, they refused to recognize Him.

To get the effect of an acrostic, John 3:16, by happy coincidence, can be set up as an acrostic:

God so love the world that He gave His
Only begotten
Son, so that whoever believes in Him should not
Perish but have
Everlasting
Life.

Examples of Figures of Speech in the Bible

Term	Definition	Example Text and Commentary
Alliteration	Repetition of the same letter or syllable in successive words.	In many ways and in various ways of old, God spoke to the fathers in the prophets; in these last days He spoke to us in the Son (Heb. 1:1–2a). Since we are dealing with a translation, alliterations are often hidden in the text. A portion of this text reads πολυμερῶς καὶ πολίτροπως πάλαι, which is done to grab our attention.
Asyndeton	The conjunction <i>and</i> is left out to move the action along or to reach a dramatic climax.	“But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you.” (Luke 14:13–14). Both the Hebrew and the Greek tend to use conjunctions between a series of things.
Chiasmus Format; or Introverted Correspondence	Where the first subject of the one series of members corresponds with the last subject of the second	The organization of Gen. 6–8 that we already studied: http://kukis.org/Basicexegesis/Genesis1_100.htm#Lesson%2080:%20Genesis%206%E2%80%938%20and%208:1a%20The%20Organization%20of%20Genesis%206%E2%80%938
Often the key to understanding most psalms is determining the literary structure of the psalm first. Many of them have a very complex structure (this is an area of Scripture which has not been fully explored, even to this day).		
Ellipsis	The omission of a word or short phrase easily understood in context.	Matt. 11:18a “For John came neither eating nor drinking.” John had to eat and drink; he was a normal human being in that regard. What is left out is “declining invitations to eat with others.” In other words, John the Baptizer had set himself apart from normal human function and social life, as the herald of the King, to serve the King only. Ellipsis can be used to indicate great emotion, e.g., excitement or anger.

Examples of Figures of Speech in the Bible

Term	Definition	Example Text and Commentary
<p>There is an interesting type of ellipsis⁸ which is found in the story of the rich young ruler: And behold, a man came up to Him, saying, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" And He said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments." He said to Him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You will not murder, you will not commit adultery, you will not steal, you will not bear false witness, [these are commandments 6, 7, 8, and 9 in order; so we would expect Jesus then to go to commandment #10, "You will not covet; but He does not; this man is rich so he does not desire anything which someone else has] honor your father and mother [Jesus suddenly goes back to commandment #5, which is the commandment this man continually violates], and, you will love your neighbor as yourself [this is a principle which this man continually violates]." The young man said to Him, "All these I have kept. What do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you would be complete [according to the Law], go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." (Matt. 19:16–21). Jesus, without actually saying it, identifies where this man is deficient with respect to the Law (as are we all).</p>		
Epanalepsis, or Resumption	A thought, argument or list is begun; then author goes off on a tangent; and then comes back to resume the thought.	<p>Eph. 3:1a, 14a: For this cause, I, Paul...for this cause, I bow my knees... Paul goes back, 13 verses later, and picks up his original train of thought.</p> <p>Heb. 6:1a, 6a: Because of this, having left the discourse of the beginning of Christ, let us be borne on to full growth, not laying down again a foundation of repentance...and having fallen away, it is impossible for them again to renew to repentance... Not only does the author of Hebrews resume at this point, but there is also ellipsis involved, where the list of vv. 1b–2 is not repeated, but implied.</p>
Epanadiplosis, or Encircling	Beginning and ending a sentence or passage with the same word or phrase, to indicate a completion of some sort (a complete thought, for instance).	<p>"And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything." (Gen. 9:3b).</p> <p>The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets (Ex. 32:16).</p>

⁸ I don't know that I have seen this specifically classified.

Examples of Figures of Speech in the Bible

Term	Definition	Example Text and Commentary
Erotesis, or, Interrogating	The asking of questions, not for information or to get an answer.	Gen. 13:9a: [Abram is speaking to Lot] “Is not the whole land before you?” Abram is not interested in getting Lot’s input on this. He is not really asking Lot a question here. Psalm 35:10 All my bones shall say, “O LORD, who is like You, delivering the poor from him who is too strong for him, the poor and needy from him who robs him?” The psalmist is not expecting an answer from above, saying, “No one is like Me.” That answer is implied by the question.
<p>Such questions may be asked as a positive or negative affirmation; as an affirmative negation, to demonstrate something; to express wonder and admiration, rapture, wishes, refusals or denials, doubts; as an admonition, expostulation, prohibition or dissuasion; to indicate pity and commiseration, disparagement, reproach, lamentation, indignation, an absurdity or impossibility. You may recall that the scribes and pharisees asked Jesus questions all of the time, but never with the intent of eliciting information, but, instead, to trip Him up.</p>		
Homœoteuton, or Like Endings	The ends of several words are the same. This is done in order to draw attention to what is being said.	This is hidden in the original language. Mark 12:30b reads, “This is the first commandment...” In the Greek, that is αὕτη πρώτη ἐντολή.

Examples of Figures of Speech in the Bible

Term	Definition	Example Text and Commentary
<p>Hyperbole, or Exaggeration</p>	<p>When more is said than is literally meant. Many people have gone astray at this point, when they do not understand when a person is speaking in hyperbole.</p>	<p>Matt. 5:29 “And if your right eye offends you, pluck it out and throw it from you. For it is profitable for you that one of your members should perish, and not that your whole body should be thrown into hell.” Jesus is not really suggesting that we pluck out our own eyes in order to get into heaven.</p> <p>On another occasion, Jesus told a rich man to sell all that he had and to give that to the poor (Luke 18:18–25). If you think that, by selling all of his stuff, this rich man would have been saved and eligible for heaven, then you missed the entire point of that passage. Deut. 1:28 is another example of hyperbole.</p> <p>For if a woman is not veiled, let her also be shorn (1Cor. 11:6a). In no way was Paul calling for all women to have their hair cut off. .</p>
<p>Inclusio, or Bracketing</p>	<p>A literary framing device in which the same word or phrase stands at the beginning and the end of a section. Sometimes called bracketing.</p>	<p>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, to the place where he had made an altar at the first. And there Abram called upon the name of Jehovah...So Abram moved his tent and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron, and there he built an altar to Jehovah (Gen. 13:3–4, 16). Here, the chapter is framed in such a way as to indicate that Abram is both in God’s geographical will and in His directive will.</p>
<p>Meiosis, or a Belittling</p>	<p>A belittling of one thing to magnify another.</p>	<p>Gen. 18:27 Abraham answered and said, “Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes.”</p>

Examples of Figures of Speech in the Bible

Term	Definition	Example Text and Commentary
Metaphor	A declaration that one thing is (or represents) another	<p>Matt. 26:26 Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." To almost anyone who reads this, they do not think that the bread which Jesus broke into pieces was His literal body. It is only a cult-type organization which would suggest that eating unleavened bread and drinking unfermented grape juice in a ceremony is actually consuming Christ's real body and blood.</p>
Metonym	One things stands for or represents another thing.	<p>Gen. 11:1 Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. Nobody has ever read that verse and assumed that <i>the ground</i> actually spoke a language. <i>The whole earth</i> is a metonym for <i>the entire population of the earth</i>. A metonym is a figure of speech which means that one thing is used in the place of another.</p>

Examples of Figures of Speech in the Bible

Term	Definition	Example Text and Commentary
<p>Polysyndeton, or Many <i>and</i>'s</p>	<p>The conjunction <i>and</i> is repeated, sometimes to move the action along and sometimes to place emphasis upon each portion of a list.</p>	<p>Daniel spoke and said, “<u>I saw</u> in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the sky broke forth on the great sea. Four great animals came up from the sea, diverse one from another. The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: <u>I saw</u> until the wings of it were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made to stand on two feet as a man; and a man's heart was given to it. Behold, another animal, a second, like a bear; and it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth: and they said thus to it, Arise, devour much flesh. <u>After this I saw</u>, and, behold, another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird; the animal had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. <u>After this I saw</u> in the night-visions, and, behold, a fourth animal, awesome and powerful, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet: and it was diverse from all the animals that were before it; and it had ten horns.” (Daniel 7:2–7). Each portion of what Daniel said was important. At the end, this becomes more intense with the increase of the number of <i>and</i>'s. You will notice that there is also a repetition of <i>I saw</i> and <i>after this I saw</i>.</p>

Sometimes the many *and*'s are used, along with repetition and other clues to indicate a wonderful structure. The following example comes from Rev. 13:

Examples of Figures of Speech in the Bible

Term	Definition	Example Text and Commentary
v. 1	The vision (And I saw...)	
v. 1	The first beast (the Antichrist)	
v. 1	His origin	
v. 1–2	His description	
v. 2	His power derived from the dragon.	
v. 3–8	His deeds	
		The Spirit calls out: “Let him hear.”
		The lesson: “Here is patience and faith.”
v. 11	The vision (And I saw...)	
v. 11	The second beast (the False Prophet)	
v. 11	His origin	
v. 11	His description	
v. 12	His authority derived from the Beast.	
v. 12–17	His deeds	
		The lesson: “Here is wisdom.”
		The Spirit calls out: “Let him discern...”

The Bible is *filled* with chapters and sections and passages set up in a variety of structures, many of which depend, in one way or another, on the various figures of speech found in the Bible.

Quotation	The citation of a well-known saying without quoting the author's name.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where the sense originally intended is preserved, though the words may vary (Matthew 26:31). 2. Where the original sense is modified in the quotation or reference (Matt. 12:40). 3. Where the sense is quite different from that which was first intended (Matt. 2:15). 4. Where the words are from the Hebrew or from the Septuagint (Luke 4:18). 5. Where the words are varied by omission, addition, or transposition (1Cor. 2:9). 6. Where the words are changed by a reading, or an inference, or in number, person, mood, or tense. (Matthew 4:7). 7. Where two or more citations are amalgamated (Matthew 21:13). 8. Where Quotations are from books other than the Bible (Acts 17:28).
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Examples of Figures of Speech in the Bible

Term	Definition	Example Text and Commentary
<p>When we quote someone or some piece of literature, it can be for a variety of reasons. I may quote a person because of their expertise in a particular matter, so that their words give greater weight to a position I am taking (for instance, I may quote C. I. Scofield or R. B. Thieme, Jr. or Norman Geisler). Or, one may quote the words of another to illustrate what a fool that person is. Or, one might quote a person in order to reveal that person's true philosophy or values (this was done repeatedly in some mediums about candidate Barack Obama; he would say something which was unscripted, and this quotation would be repeated many times to indicate his true opinion of some particular issue).</p>		
<p>Furthermore, the way that we quote that person or piece of literature may or may not be significant. Sometimes when I quote Scripture, I will leave off the beginning preposition or conjunction, as it is irrelevant to the point I am making. Or, I will replace a pronoun with the name of the person to whom the pronoun refers, as the contextual verses are irrelevant to the point I am making.</p>		
<p>Writers of Scripture also include many quotations, and such quotations are done for a variety of reasons and in a variety of ways.</p>		
Repetition	The repetition of a set of words or phrases in order to call attention to these words or to be emphatic.	<p>“And, behold, I, even I, will bring a flood of waters upon the earth.” (Gen. 6:17). God's directive hand in this matter is emphasized.</p> <p>And the waters prevailed exceedingly... (Gen. 7:19a). In the Hebrew, <i>exceedingly</i> is a repetition of the word <i>greatly</i>.</p> <p>David's repetition of the name of Absalom indicates great sadness in his soul in 2Sam. 18:33.</p>
<p>Names are occasionally repeated: when God is speaking to man: Abraham, Abraham (Gen. 22:11); Jacob, Jacob (Gen. 46:2); Moses, Moses (Ex. 3:4); Samuel, Samuel (1Sam. 3:10); Martha, Martha (Luke 10:41); Simon, Simon (Luke 22:31); Saul, Saul (Acts 9:4); and in other circumstances: Lord, Lord (Matt. 7:21–22 Luke 6:46 12:25); Jerusalem, Jerusalem (Matt. 23:37 Luke 13:34); Eloi, Eloi (Mark 15:34 Matt. 27:46 Psalm 22:1).</p>		
Syllogismus, or Omission of the Conclusion	A conclusion is implied, but not stated.	<p>“Even the hairs of your head are all numbered.” (Matt. 10:30). This indicates that God is both omniscient and a God Who knows everything about you in particular.</p>

Examples of Figures of Speech in the Bible

Term	Definition	Example Text and Commentary
Zeugma	A general term describing when one part of speech (most often the main verb, but sometimes a noun) governs two or more other parts of a sentence (often in a series).	May the Lord cut off all flattering lips and [may the Lord cut off] every boastful tongue (Psalm 12:3). What is in the brackets was added; the subject and verb are both applied to 2 parts of the sentence.

In most of these examples, it is easy to read through the passage and understand the meaning meant by the figure of speech, without stopping to realize that you are not really taking this passage literally. At the same time, this does not give license to “spiritualize” the meaning of everything found in the Bible (assigning it some goofy meaning which is at odds with the Scripture itself). This simply means that, when we study the Bible, we look to understand it in the same way a person of that era would have understood it. After Jesus taught that looking upon a woman with lust is adultery, His disciples did not start plucking out their eyes.

Similarly, every person who spoke to Jesus was not required to sell all that he had and follow Jesus. The example of the Roman soldier stands out here. He came to Jesus and asked to have his servant healed, and when Jesus was about to set off for his house to do this, he told Jesus, “[Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed..](#)” (Mark 8:8). Jesus did not tell this man to put down his sword, forsake his family and follow Him; Jesus said, “[Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith.](#)” (Mark 8:10b).

I have only given a handful of examples of the hundreds of figures of speech which are found in the Bible.

There are many times when you may be confused by a passage, and the key to that passage is a figure of speech. Below is a list of references, but none of them allow a search by passage (as does Bullinger’s book).

Most of these were taken from:

<http://www.tentmaker.org/bullinger.htm>

<http://www.therain.org/appendixes/app6.html>

<http://rhetoric.byu.edu/figures/groupings/by%20author/bullinger.htm>

<http://www.davidcox.com.mx/library/B/Bullinger%20-%20Figures%20of%20Speech%20used%20in%20the%20Bible.pdf>

The latter two primarily use illustrations from secular literature.

Other sources:

http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/article_idioms.html

<http://www.truthortradition.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=160>

So far we have studied:

Gen 13:1–4 So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negev. Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. to the place where he had made an altar at the first. And there [where Abram returned to] Abram proclaimed the name of Y^ehowah.

Abram had gotten out of fellowship and out of God's geographical will and went down to Egypt. As a result of being in the wrong place at the wrong time, Abram sinned in such a way as to embarrass him before the pharaoh of Egypt.

So, now, Abram is back where he ought to be, in the Land of Promise, and now he is going to make a spiritually significant decision. The idea is, you have to be geographically where God wants you to be, in fellowship, and thinking as God wants you to think, in order to make good decisions. Abram will make a good decision in this chapter without God telling him exactly what to do.

Gen 13:5–6 And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together,...

What we have here are very large herds belonging to Abram and Lot—so large, that it has become difficult to keep them separate. It was difficult for them to find a pastureland large enough for their flocks. God had poured out so much blessing upon them, that there was not enough pastureland to maintain these huge flocks. Now, do you recall what happened in the previous chapter? There was a famine in the land, which was the whole premise for Abram going down to Egypt in the first place. So, despite this famine—despite the downturn in the economy—God has blessed Abram directly and Lot indirectly because he is associated with Abram ([Lesson #112](#)). Since we are in a difficult economy at the time that I write this, it is always good to keep in mind that God is quite able to bless anyone materially during the worst crises in history.

Throughout this narrative, we find interesting parallels. The first was mentioned, that Abram and Lot are in a land where there is an economic downturn, and yet, their problem is, they have too many possessions. Secondly, here they are in the midst of the Land of Promise, the land of Canaan, which will be given by God to Abram and all of his heirs, and yet, this land is not large enough for Abram and Lot together—not in one place, anyway. What is represented by this real set of circumstances is, Abram represents grace and Lot represents legalism and self-righteousness, and there is never enough room for these things to coexist.

Abram represents grace because God gives and Abram receives, as we will see at the end of this chapter (Gen. 13:13–16). On the other hand, Lot was extremely offended by the

behavior of the Sodomites (with whom he will choose to live), yet he does not think to separate himself from them (2Peter 2:7). God will eventually separate Lot from that area in Gen. 19. So Lot is filled with self-righteousness and lacks the knowledge of doctrine to properly direct his own life.

It is important for Christians to understand that, when the geographical area in which you live is undergoing dramatic change (hurricane, earthquakes, recession, revolution, street gangs), God knows you are there in the midst of it and God has made provision for you.

Let me offer a caveat to the being in an area where there is dramatic upheaval of some sort. There is nothing in Christianity that requires you to plant your feet in one spot, lift your hands up to God and say, "Protect me and take care of me." I just heard a story of a person on top of a roof during a tremendous flood praying to God, and someone throws her a rope, which she ignores and goes on praying. This woman is never seen again. This is because she was stupid and completely devoid of Bible doctrine. God had obviously answered her prayer and she is without enough doctrine in her soul to recognize answered prayer.⁹ Furthermore, she is an embarrassment to Jesus Christ; no wonder He took her home!

Sometimes, a disaster is God's way of moving you from point A to point B. Inflexibility is not a measure of true faith. As a believer in Jesus Christ, you need to be flexible. With Abram, the point was, God brought him to the Land of Promise, blessed him greatly in the Land of Promise, and God never told him to move to Egypt when things got rough. So, for some people in the midst of a difficult environment, God wants them to stay; for others, He wants them to move. How do you decide? By divine guidance ([Lessons #103-104](#)); by the Bible doctrine which is imbedded in your soul. Without God's Word in your soul, renovating your thinking (Rom. 12:1-2), you will never know what to do under such circumstances.

There are places where God is very clear as to His will (adultery, covetousness, lying) and places where we have to know the Word of God in order to determine what we ought to do (e.g., moving from point A to point B). Throughout most of our life, our decisions are quite simple—we have to go to work, we need Bible doctrine, and we need food and sleep. If you are married and/or have a family, then you have responsibilities to them. On most days, that is pretty much your entire day and then some. As a believer, you need to stay in fellowship, meet your obligations, and avoid sin, and you are doing exactly what God wants you to do. In other words, for most of your life, you do not need a crystal ball or God tapping your left or right shoulder, telling you which way to go. With God's Word in your soul, you go when you ought to go and you dig in when you ought to dig in. Without God's Word in your soul, you are some poor, lost soul, praying on your roof during a flood, without the common sense to grab the rope God throws your way.

[Gen 12:10](#) And there was a famine in the land. And Abram went down into Egypt to stay there, for the famine was grievous in the land.

⁹ Whether or not this story is apocryphal or not, is unimportant; it illustrates the point.

Gen 13:2 And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver and in gold.

There was a famine in the land (equivalent to an economic depression or a recession) and Abram and Lot's problem is, they have too many possessions. God is blessing Abram directly and Lot by association (which statement will be borne out in the chapters which follow).

Gen 13:5–6 And Lot, who went [from Egypt back into the Land of Promise] with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together,...

Some people think that the solution to the problems in their life is money. If they only had a better car, a decent house, a housekeeper, a few hundred grand socked away in a bank, their lives would be better, and that would solve—in their own minds—all of their immediate problems. Wealth does not reduce the number of problems in your life—for every problem that wealth solves, 2 more pop up in its place. People look at movie stars and think that this is where they want to be—working several months out of the year, living in a huge mansion, being very attractive, and having gobs of money. For some people, I have just described what they see as the perfect existence, yet they got the short end of the stick: they are unattractive, broke, and working far too many hours with nothing to show for it. Having these things do not make your life better nor do they provide any sort of stability in your life. Charlie Sheen and Robert Downy, Jr. are great examples to us of movie stars who have filled their own lives with all sorts of trouble, despite their great talent and wealth.

Money can certainly solve some problems, but not all. Oprah Winfrey has gobs of money that she was going to pour into a school or a group of schools in America, when she recognized that the real problem was the attitude of the kids in the schools. She eventually took a lot of her money and started some academies for girls in South Africa. There she found some young girls with the values and desires which could appreciate a well-equipped school. The problem that Oprah ran into in America was the attitude of the underprivileged American kid. Wealth exacerbates a bad attitude; it does not cure it.

So Abram and Lot are both quite wealthy, and yet, they still have problems.

Gen 13:7 ...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 do not have just Abram, Lot, their families, and a handful of sheep roaming through the land. In the realm of cattle, they are extremely wealthy, and they have hired hundreds of men to keep their herds under control (Gen. 14:14). Even if only 200 of Abram's men are devoted to taking care of these herds, that could translate into as many as 20,000 sheep and cattle.

Gen 13:7b (at that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were dwelling in the land).

The second half of v. 7 seems to be parenthetical: **At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were dwelling in the land.** Canaan was the son of Ham who was the son of Noah. You may recall that Noah cursed Canaan because of Ham's behavior (Gen. 9:21–25). Canaan figured in prominently in the table of nations in Gen. 10 and they moved out west, settling the land of Canaan (which bears their name and was also called Palestine). That is the land that God has given to Abram (Gen. 12:1–3 13:14–17).

The Perizzites here seem to come out of nowhere. The name *Perizzite* means *belonging to a village*. Because of the meaning of this name, this term could have been used in a generalized way, to refer to those who live in unwalled villages; or in a specific way, to refer to a specific tribe of people, whose exact origin is unknown. They are found 23 times in Scripture, and associated with the Canaanites 22 of those times. In only 3 instances, are they listed with fewer than 4 other groups of people in the land (20 times, they are in groupings of 5 or more). Therefore, we know very little about the Perizzites, apart from them being among the 10 or so doomed tribes of the land of Canaan. It is suggested by some commentators that these people lived in unwalled villages, as there were too many people and livestock to be contained in a walled city.

This parenthetical sentence could simply indicate that the people in the land were mostly of a Canaanite origin and that many of them lived as ranchers and farmers in unwalled villages (which would understand *Perizzite* here in a general way rather than as a reference to a specific people).

I believe the sense is, although Abram and Lot are in the Land of Promise, they do not have carte blanc as to where they can go and how much land they can take up. There is land which is owned and/or controlled by Canaanites and Perizzites, and when Abram and Lot stay together, they might spill over into territory which belongs to others. Another suggestion is, if the people of the land observe that there is contention among Abram's group, that they may attempt to take their wealth by force, using their dissension against them.

By the way, that is another problem with wealth—there are people who will attempt to take it away from you. One of the reasons most celebrities live in a bubble is, when they associate with the outside world, they continually run into people who will do anything in order to steal away some of their wealth from them.

Gen 13:8 Then Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we are family.

There is a time for separation in the believer's life, but not in some legalistic way. That is, you do not go through your Rolodex (I should say, cellphone, today) and pick out those people whose sins shock you, and remove them from your list of friends and associates. However, the time will come where you have to break fellowship, and, in this situation, it is simply because God has blessed Abram and Lot with too much substance. Abram is blessed because he is a growing believer; Lot is blessed because he is in association with Abram.

Abram is looking at this situation in a very pragmatic way. He and Lot are both very wealthy—God has greatly blessed them—but all of this wealth has created a new set of problems. There is discord between Abram’s people and Lot’s people. I would assume that Abram tried several approaches in order to solve these problems, and yet they just got worse. Therefore, Abram will suggest that they go their own separate ways.

Gen 13:9 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."

Abram recognizes something that we believers often do not recognize—there is a time to separate from other believers. Furthermore, there are some believers with whom you ought to separate. We, as believers, are commanded to love one another. This does not mean that we have to spend time together. *Love*, in this sense, does not refer to having special feelings for one another. When Jesus commanded His disciples, “**I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. As I have loved you, you should also love one another.**” (John 13:34), this was not a command to have special feelings toward one another. If you think that you are supposed to reach into your emotions and manufacture nice feelings about each and every Christian you meet, you are on the road to psychosis. There are times when we ought to separate from other believers—the very same ones that Jesus has commanded us to love.

Abram tells Lot to choose to go in either direction, and he will go in the other. It is up to Lot to choose. Notice Abram’s graciousness here. Abram is not making decisions based upon arrogance and self-interest. Abram does not begin with self-interest which leads to self-absorption, which leads to self-obsession, which then leads to self-justification and to self-deception (and sometimes even to self-deification).¹⁰ Abram’s decisions are based upon grace. Abram is not thinking, “If I don’t look out for my own interests, no one else will.” That is human viewpoint thinking. Abram knows that God is looking after his interests, and he can therefore be gracious. When you understand and believe that God is looking after your interests, then it is much easier to be gracious and generous.

Gen 13:9 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."

We conclude this lesson with an erotesis (asking a question for which an answer is not desired— “**Is not the whole land before you?**”). Abram is simply telling Lot that all options are on the table; he can go in any direction that he wants. Abram is acting in grace; Lot will act in his own self-interest.

Lesson 116: Genesis 13:5–12

The Doctrine of Separation

So far, we have studied:

¹⁰ Dr. Robert Dean presents this progression in <http://phrasearch.com/Trans/DBM/setup/Genesis/Gen080.htm> (which is Genesis-080).

Gen. 13:5–9 And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together, 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. Then Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we are relatives. 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."

Circumstances are dictating that Abram and Lot separate. Only a few lessons back, we looked at the doctrine of blessing by association; so now, ask yourself, what will happen when Abram and Lot separate and Lot is no longer in close association with Abram? The answer should be obvious: God will continue to bless Abram, but this blessing no longer spills over onto Lot.

There are 2 reasons why Abram needs to be separated from Lot: (1) he needs to separate from Lot's self-righteousness, which will become apparent when Lot is in Sodom (grace and self-righteousness cannot be mixed); and (2) Abram needs to separate from Lot so that he is not tempted to make Lot his heir. It is logical for Lot to be the heir apparent to Abram, simply because he is the young man following Abram, but that is not God's plan. Abram will sire a son and that son will be Abram's heir.

Christians are easily confused about the concept of separation, who want to apply this doctrine to unbelievers whose sins shock them. Cult leaders use separation in order to isolate their members from family and former friends. Too often, separation is used in order to separate the Christian from everything that is non-Christian.

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1. What separation is not:
 - 1) First of all, we are not examining the doctrine of separation for Israel, which is expressed several times with the phrase "You be holy [= set apart, separate] for I am holy" (where God is speaking—Lev. 11:44–45 19:2 20:7, 25). This is a related but different topic.
 - 2) Nor are we speaking of a function of self-righteousness, where you are, quite frankly, just too good to be hanging out with Charlie Brown.
 - 3) Separation is not the means of taking a new believer and pulling him away from his family or friends. Although this is often a sign of a cult, some regular churches do this as well.
2. The concept of separation is based upon the fact that we are in this world, but not of this world. In John 17:15–17, Jesus prayed: "I have given them Your Word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not pray for You to take them out of the world, but for You to keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Your truth. Your Word is truth." We are positionally separate from this world because we are in Christ, and He is separate from this

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world. *Being taken out of the world* is death or complete isolationism—Jesus prayed for this not to happen. Jesus prayed for us to be separated from evil (which is different than sin; evil is the thinking and philosophy of Satan, which can include human good).

3. Separation begins with a mental attitude that results in removing from our lives things and people that are either distractions, or may become distractions, in our own spiritual advance.
 - 1) When Peter brings “**You be holy because I am holy**” into the New Testament (1Peter 1:16, taking this from Lev. 11:44), he is speaking of a mental attitude based upon Bible doctrine (**Therefore, getting your minds ready for action and being self-disciplined, place your confidence completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ—1Peter 1:13**).
 - 2) So, although the passages in Leviticus speak of an actual separation between Israel and her heathen neighbors, the context of the passage in 1Peter says nothing about physical separation from believers or unbelievers. All that we are to think, according to Peter, is based upon understanding that **we were not ransomed from [our former] empty manner of life inherited from our forefathers with perishable things such as silver or gold, but we were purchased with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot** (1Peter 1:18–19).
 - 3) Separation, in the context of this passage where this phrase is brought into the New Testament, is based upon spiritual growth which is a result of thinking divine viewpoint which has its foundation in the revelation of Jesus Christ (i.e., learning Bible doctrine).
 - 4) In other words, the separation that Peter speaks about is in your thinking, which is based upon Bible doctrine. You separate yourself by thinking divine viewpoint.
 - 5) The believer becoming entangled in human viewpoint is involvement with evil, which Jesus prayed that we not fall into.
 - 6) Let me remind you of Satan’s 2 fundamental strategies: (1) keep the unbeliever from the gospel and (2) keep the believer thinking human viewpoint.
4. Separation, then, begins in the believer's personal life as he learns and applies doctrine. The Bible says that separation starts in relation to the sin nature. Romans 6:11 **So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus**. Remember that death is Scripture doesn't always mean *cessation of existence*, in Romans, it means *separation from*. Romans 8:13 **If you live according to flesh** [according to the sin nature], **you are going to die** [temporal spiritual death]. **But if you put to death, by means of the Spirit, the practices of the body, then you will live**.
 - 1) This is all about spiritually versus carnality.
 - 2) Prior to salvation, we are all under spiritual death. We have no innate ability to make contact with God.

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- 3) At the moment of salvation, we are both baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit.
 - 4) However, after salvation, we fall into carnality, which means, we sin and lose the filling of the Holy Spirit.
 - 5) This verse is talking about the fact that, if you are a believer and operating in carnality, then all of the blessings of the abundant Christian life are not yours. Even though you have eternal life you might as well be dead since you are no longer living the Christian life because you are living in carnality (carnal death).
 - 6) After salvation, it is an *either-or* situation: we are either filled with the Holy Spirit and separated from sin or we are carnal and associated with sin. This is a status, not some emotional high of some sort.
 - 7) **But if by the Spirit you put to death the practices of the body, then you will live.** We are to put to death the deeds of the body, which represent sin. That is a calling for separation in the believer's life from sin.
 - 8) This separation is caused by naming one's sins to God (1John 1:9). That restores our fellowship with God and temporally separates us from sin.
5. Separation involves separation from human viewpoint thinking.
- 1) It is not just the sin nature that is influencing the life but also all that human viewpoint garbage that is floating around in the soul. All of the ideas we have grown up with need to be excised by the scalpel of the Word of God. We need to have that stuff flushed out of our system.
 - 2) When you are saved by believing in Jesus Christ, this does not mean that your thinking has changed. The potential for a real change in thinking is there, but the actuality is not.
 - 3) This is what Paul is talking about in Romans 12:1–2 **Therefore, I call upon you, [my] brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies [as] a living sacrifice, holy [set apart, separated], pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world [cosmic thinking], but be transformed by the renovation of your thinking, in order to prove [demonstrate] by (means of) you what is that good and pleasing and perfect will of God.** This is what happens as we advance spiritually: we renovate our own thinking, learning Bible doctrine, and the Holy Spirit changes us from the inside out.
 - 4) In this way, the Holy Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit, the character of Christ in our lives. Furthermore, this change of thinking demonstrates that the will of God is good and acceptable and perfect. We become a living, walking testimony of the grace of God in the angelic conflict.
 - 5) Therefore, this calls for separation from human viewpoint thinking. So the first two categories of separation has to do with what is going on in the believer's soul and the believer's thinking. They don't have to do with what is going on necessarily in the world around him. In other words, the thinking of the believer is to be renovated so that the believer no longer thinks in human viewpoint. They *separate* their thinking from human

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viewpoint.

6. If the world around the believer is producing temptations where he easily succumbs to sin, then that means he has to make some choices about where he goes, whom he associates with, or the things he does. Therefore, the believer needs to recognize that if he is in an environment that easily leads him to sin then he needs to change this environment. That is, there are times for us to physically separate from certain people and situations.
7. We are commanded to separate from certain kinds of carnal believers, such as backslidden, reversionistic believers. This is because there are certain types of carnality that are contagious to certain believers.
 - 1) However, as a corollary to this, we do not invade the privacy of various believers, to determine what evil things it is that they do, so that we separate from them.
 - 2) If we separated from all believers who sin, that would mean that we would be separating from all believers on this planet.
 - 3) Bear in mind that self-righteousness can be very contagious.
8. We are to separate from believers who reject sound doctrine.
 - 1) If there is anything that can destroy our own spiritual life, it is when we closely associate with people who do not hold to sound doctrine. They say, "Well you know, there are a lot of different views in evangelicalism. There are folks who believe this and there are folks who believe that, but we can all just get along and we don't have to draw these doctrinal distinctions." There is an embedded blasphemy there, and that is the idea that God does not communicate clearly enough for us to take strong positions on doctrine. Wishy-washy people don't really think God communicated things clearly, so you can think it means this and I can think it means that, and somebody else thinks it means something else, so we can all just put our arms together and emote on our common experience that Jesus loves us. Then we'll all go home and be happy that we went to church this morning!
 - 2) This is not the biblical view. 2Thessalonians 3:6 **Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother who walks disorderly, and not after the teaching which he received from us.** This isn't tradition for tradition's sake, this is the apostolic doctrine contained in the Scripture. This is a mandate. Vv. 14–15 **And if anyone does not obey our word by this letter, mark that one and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.** Notice that we are speaking of a believer who has clearly rejected legitimate authority (Paul's authority in the teaching of Bible doctrine).
 - 3) The goal is restoration, not exclusion; but if there is no response then there is no option other than to go separate ways.
 - 4) Let me give you an example: homosexuality, which is clearly identified as a sin in the Bible (Rom. 1:24–27 1Cor. 6:9 1Tim. 1:10). Certain believers

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may struggle with homosexuality as a sin and, at times, give in to this lust. It is not our business to follow such believers around to determine whether or not we ought to separate from them. However, when a believer touts his homosexuality as normal and acceptable, that calls for separation from such a one.

- 5) From time to time, a church has to remove a troublemaker (or a small group of troublemakers) who have rejected the authority of the pastor-teacher. Quite obviously, if you are in a church where you cannot accept the authority of your pastor, then you should quietly remove yourself—you do not owe anyone an explanation, nor should you stand out in the parking lot and tell everyone else why they should leave the church. You simply leave and find a pastor whose authority you can accept. More often than not, your inability to accept a pastor's authority is a problem in your soul, not in his.
- 6) By accepting the authority of a pastor, this does not mean this pastor follows you around and tells you what to do.
- 7) As an aside, this is not a call to self-righteousness, nor is this a call to separate from family members simply because they do not think like you think.
- 8) Cults often twist the doctrine of separation into removing you from your friends and family *to your real family*. If you find yourself in a church, and they encourage you to cut off your friends and family, it is time to separate from that church.
- 9) Jesus said, **“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.”** (Matt. 10:34–36). There will be some natural separation which occurs, but not because the believer has initiated it. Throughout the ages, there have been some Jewish Christians who have been virtually disowned from their families because they believe in Jesus. We know just how much hate can exist between Arabs and Jews; there have been times in history that this has existed between Christians and Jews as well (even though, we ought to be natural political allies).
- 10) However, without going too far afield, the point here is, there are times when a believer will separate from his family—but that is a rare exception and not the rule. Jesus is not calling upon us to raise a sword against family members; nor is He requiring us to separate from family members because of different beliefs. Again, that is characteristic of a cult, but not of the Christian faith.
- 11) Although Wikipedia represents a bastion of human viewpoint, there is an article [here](#) on the [cult checklist](#). Although every list is not completely accurate, there are enough trends which these various lists point to in order to keep you out of a cult.

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9. We are to separate from believers who make their own internal lust patterns the motivation for their lives. Romans 16:17–18 **And I summon you, brothers, to take note of those making divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them. For they who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but they serve their own belly [lust patterns]; and by good words and fair speeches, they deceive the hearts of the gullible.**
10. Separation from the immoral social scene where one's norms and standards are gradually eroded through peer pressure. 1Peter 4:4 **In these things they are surprised, that you are not running with them into the same excess of riot, blaspheming.** Proverbs 1:10-19 **My son, if sinners lure you, do not be willing. If they say, "Come with us, let us lie in wait for blood, we will watch secretly for the innocent without cause; let us swallow them up alive as the grave, and whole, as those who go down into the pit; we shall find all precious goods; we shall fill our houses with plunder; cast in your lot among us, and let us have one purse." My son, do not walk in the way with them! Keep back your foot from their path, for their feet run to evil and make haste to shed blood. Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird, and they lie in wait for their own blood; they watch secretly for their own lives. So are the ways of everyone who gains unjust gain; it takes away its owners' life.** As an aside, communism and socialism are a national codification of this attitude.
11. 1Corinthians 15:33 **Do not be deceived; evil companionships corrupt good habits.** The idea here is, believers can be corrupted by certain other believers and unbelievers with regards to certain activities. This is an individual decision to be made relative to the strengths and weaknesses of the individual believer. As believers, we need to develop good positive habits in our spiritual lives. If we find certain associations compromising these habits, then that is an association which must be broken off or dialed back.
12. However, we simply do not separate from gross sin and gross immorality because we are offended. We should be able to witness to people of all different stripes of sinfulness. 1Cor. 5:9–11 **I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people--not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler--not even to eat with such a one.** Paul is talking about separation from a believer, at the end, who knows the truth, and yet is clearly and observably out of line with his actions.
13. We need to exercise a form of separation from unbelievers to avoid having our doctrine compromised. 2 Corinthians 6:14 **Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship does righteousness have with lawlessness? And what partnership does light have with darkness?** This involves some types of business partnerships, not necessarily all. It involves marriage, dating, intimate social life. We are to separate from unbelievers where their influence can affect our own doctrine decisions. This is not a call for the believer to avoid unbelievers

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altogether or whenever possible.

14. We need to separate from believers who are enmeshed in religious modes of operation and apostasy. See 2Corinthians 6:14–17 2Timothy 3:2–6.

I should add that there is much more to the doctrine of separation than this. Although we began this New Testament doctrine above, there is a great deal of separation described in the New Testament which has absolutely nothing to do with the relative geography of you and anyone that you are to separate from (for example: John 5:24 8:12 2Cor. 6:17–18 1Thess. 4:7 1Peter 2:24). We will cover this at another time.

The basic points are taken from <http://phrasearch.com/Trans/DBM/setup/Genesis/Gen068.htm>, which is Lesson #68 of Robby Dean's study of Genesis. This study was extensively edited and appended. Dr. Dean teaches at West Houston Bible Church.

Let's look at the text, which is related to separation, taken in context:

Gen. 13:5–12 And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together, 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. 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. 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." 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.) So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed east. Thus they separated from each other. Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom.

God has not ordered Abram to separate from Lot. This was a matter of circumstance, something which they apparently were unable to work out. There are circumstances which lead us to naturally separate from some friends and relatives, and that is what is occurring here. This was certainly a part of God's plan.

As we will find out in subsequent lessons, Abram has not written off Lot in any way. In fact, when Lot finds himself in trouble, Abram will be right there to deliver him.

Lesson 117: Genesis 13:5–11

Abram and Lot Go their Separate Ways

Here is how far we have gone:

Gen. 13:5–9 And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together, 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. 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. 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."

Abram is expressing no animus. He does not look to Lot and say, "You, nephew, are a total screw up, and you cannot keep your own men together and under control. You are a loser when it comes to running your own herds." Abram is willing to simply recognize that things are not working out between them; that they have far too many material blessings and that it has gotten to a point where they cannot keep their material blessings separate. Abram places no blame; he does not judge Lot; he simply recognizes that it is time to allow his portion of Abram Livestock Inc. to go independent. Lot will automatically become the CEO of this new independent enterprise, and he will make all of the executive decisions for his new company.

In subsequent lessons, it will become clear that (1) God is blessing Abram specifically and Lot by association; (2) there is no animus involved here; (3) Lot is not Abram's spiritual heir.

There is also an excellent mindset that Abram, the CEO of Abram Livestock Inc., illustrates: bigger is not always better. Abram had too much on his plate at this time. He had control of too much wealth (represented by livestock, in ancient times) and he chose to split up his company into 2 independent companies, and put his Executive Vice President, Lot, in charge of this second company. This is something which mega-conglomerates do not do enough of today (however, the Bible does not make this the decision of some governmental body).

Gen 13:9 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."

Therefore, Abram told Lot to look over the land and make a decision as to which direction he would go in, and Abram would go in the other direction. Lot will make his first executive decision as CEO of Lot Cattle Enterprises.

Gen 13:10 And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the area around the Jordan, that it was well-watered (before Jehovah destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah), even like the garden of Jehovah, like the land of Egypt as you come to Zoar.

Abram and Lot are in the center of Israel.¹¹ Off to the east is the Jordan River. To the Southeast is the Dead Sea, which the Jordan River feeds into. Around the Dead Sea, which was not so dead at this time, and the Jordan River, was the Jordan valley. It is very possible that the Jordan River fed all the way into the Red Sea, and that this was cut off when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

It is obvious that this area is much nicer at this time than several centuries later. During Joshua's time (after which some *scholars* allege that Genesis was written), this portion of the Jordan valley was absolutely desolate, the antithesis of the description given in this verse. It would make no sense for an author to make up a story like this, when everyone during and after Joshua's day could see that this land was barren. Since that time, however, in the 19th and 20th centuries B.C., archeologists have shown that there were several populous cities in this area previous to Joshua's time for centuries. Since it is highly unlikely that cities would be founded in a barren desert, this would fit with Abram's description which he gives here (in his writing). As Scofield put it, *the Spade of the archaeologist has served again and again to confirm the Scriptures, not to deny them.*¹² This also tells us that when God told Abram that He would give the land to him, that He was not speaking of some forlorn desert or some barren wasteland. The land was beautiful and fruitful. Even after Sodom and Gomorrah are destroyed, most of the Land of Promise will remain beautiful and fertile.

Gen 13:10 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.)

Lot, here, represents the carnal man, who walks by sight and not by faith (2Cor. 5:7). He and Abram are probably both on a high mountain, just west of Ai, and Lot carefully, from that mountain, looks in all directions. The Jordan Valley looks ideal. It is well-watered, which means there is a lot of foliage for himself, his crew and his animals. Lot will choose to go east, toward Ai, and then south.

It is reasonable to assume that, if Lot looked out and saw a beautiful land, then others had seen that land as well, and had already taken it for themselves.

Now, reread this verse and focus on the final sentence:

Gen 13:10 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.)

This final sentence is what is known as a *gloss*. That is, this sentence is disconnected from the narrative as presented and probably added to the text at a different time. There

¹¹ There is a serious problem with the translation, which you will not find in your English Bibles, so it is possible that Abram and Lot are not standing in the middle of Israel.

¹² p.. 21, 1967 edition of the *New Scofield Reference Bible*

are 2 possibilities: (1) When Abram first recorded this incident, he did not write the sentence, [This was before Y^ehowah destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah](#). (I believe that Abram wrote about his own life, just as Jacob, his grandson, will write about his own life). Therefore, years later, either Abram himself or a later writer (Jacob, Joseph or Moses) added this sentence in order to clarify things. This particular area had become so devastated that it would be hard to believe that once, it was a beautiful place, like the garden of God, so someone adds this explanatory phrase. (2) Abram himself wrote this narrative sometime after it actually occurred (which is very possible), and he adds this sentence, which falls outside of the direct narrative, but helps to explain that the area of Sodom and Gomorrah were once very beautiful. Strictly speaking, the second possibility is not a *gloss*.

My hypothesis is, Abram will receive the Scriptures (Gen. 1:1–11:9) from Melchizedek, the priest. Abram will later add his genealogical line along with the pertinent events of his life. By the time that he records these words, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah are 10+ years in the past. Bear in mind, all of this is conjecture (however, it makes infinitely more sense than the idea that Moses wrote all of Genesis). Although Moses is said, in the Bible, to be the author of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, he is nowhere called the author of Genesis.

The more common view of the Pentateuch is, Moses wrote all of this down, which he knew from the oral tradition. The idea of this oral tradition is based upon 2 things: (1) The Jews actually did have an oral tradition when it came to understanding the Scriptures, and that was later written down as the Talmud and the Mishna. (2) The second reason that people believed in the oral tradition is, for many centuries, people did not believe that language was written down at this time. However, we have since found out that this is not the case. Abram lived around 2000 B.C., give or take. We have Sumerian writings which date between 3500–2900 B.C.; Egyptian inscriptions which go back to 3300 B.C., and Akkadian writing which dates back to 2800 B.C.¹³ Therefore, there is no longer this need to assume that there was a great oral tradition which preserved the words which we are studying.

[Gen 13:11](#) So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed east. Thus they separated from each other.

Lot chooses to go toward the east,¹⁴ which would be toward the River Jordan. Just as Lot looked toward the Jordan valley and saw it as being beautiful and well-watered, so would other people of that day as well. Lot would have observed grasses, trees and bushes; and many fruit and olive trees, as well as a lovely flowing river. It would have appeared to have been a paradise to them.

¹³ From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_languages_by_first_written_accounts accessed January 31, 2011.

¹⁴ Actually, the Hebrew reads *from the east*, which most translators do not like, and so they ignore the preposition. This would change Abram and Lot are standing.

Gen 13:11 Then Lot chose all the valley [lit., *circle*] of Jordan for himself. And Lot pulled up [tent] stakes toward¹⁵ the east. And they were separated, each one from his brother.

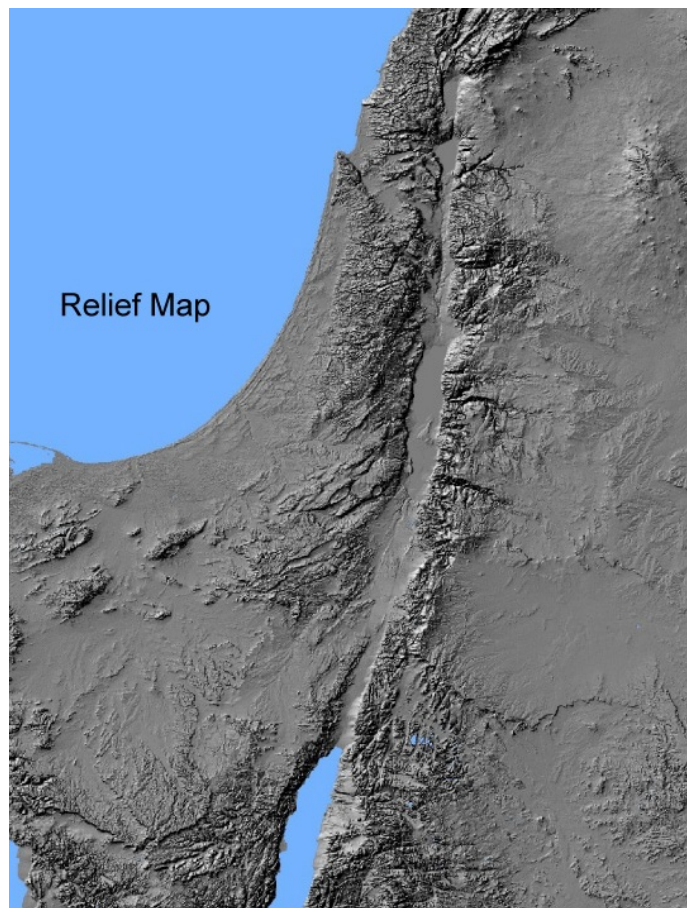
The *circle* of the Jordan was the valley which they saw before them, surrounding the Dead Sea, which, at that time, was not so dead. One explanation which could account for what we will read here is, at this time, the Jordan River fed into the Dead Sea, which then flowed into the Sea of Reeds (which is the Gulf of Aqaba today, next to Egypt).

What makes the ocean salty is, rivers and streams pick up and carry various salts and easily dissolved chemicals and eventually deposit them into the sea. This both purifies the lakes which feed these rivers and streams and purifies the rivers and streams. In some cases, like the Dead Sea, there is no exit for the water. At this time, there is no additional river leading from the Dead Sea into the Gulf of Aqaba. Because of the great Jordan valley which continues through the Dead Sea and further, it is very likely that, at one time, there was a river leading to the Gulf of Aqaba. However, for a variety of reasons, that ended, so that all of the salts being brought down into the Dead Sea remain in the Dead Sea.

Relief Map of the Land of Promise.

The relief map to the right shows the mountainous area surrounding the Jordan Valley. The blue at the bottom-center of the map is the Gulf of Aqaba.

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was the result of great earthquakes and volcanoes in that area, which dramatically changed the geography of that area and completely blocked off the river running from the Dead Sea into the Sea of Reeds. Now, I do not personally know enough about the geography of that area in order to support this hypothesis. However, it does provide a unifying explanation for Sodom and Gomorrah once being a beautiful place to live and then, suddenly—within a century or two—degenerating into a waste land.



http://woodshole.er.usgs.gov/project-pages/dead_sea/images/tectonics.jpg

link to

http://kukis.org/Basicexegesis/Genesis101_200/genesis101_200a1.gif

¹⁵ Actually, *from*.

The process of the valley of the Dead Sea being turned from a beautiful luxurious valley into a barren land took place over a very short period of time—just a few hundred years. If Palestine is well-watered, as the Bible says that it is; and if, suddenly, waters continued to flow into the Dead Sea, but no longer had an exit, then the salt would build up quite quickly, as water evaporated from the lake. Today, there are literal salt embankments being built up along the Dead Sea from all of the salt in the sea.

Gen 13:11 Then Lot chose all the valley [lit., *circle*] of Jordan for himself. And Lot pulled up [tent] stakes toward the east. And they were separated, each one from his brother.

Blessing by association is a big deal and it is real. Lot was associated directly with Abram, and the blessings that God gave to Abram overflowed to Lot as well. However, when Lot chooses to separate himself and to take the best land, things will dramatically change for Lot. When we get to Gen. 19, Lot will have only his daughters, and they will have no prospects in life, which is a far cry from all of the wealth which Lot is enjoying at this time. If they have no prospects, this means that Lot will have lost all that he had (i.e., he is unable to put together a dowry for his daughters).

Application: You might think that you ought to be the big dog—that you ought to be the CEO of the company where you work (or, whatever position is the highest). Lot will become the CEO of Lot Cattle Enterprises, and the value of his stock will plummet to zero over just a few years time. You may think that God ought to promote you, but Lot got promoted beyond his capacity and beyond his ability, and, as a result, he lost everything.

Application: We have seen this with our present president, Barack Obama, who railed against George W. Bush's foreign policy during his campaign. He looked at George Bush's job and decided, "I can do that;" even though candidate Obama had never run anything in his entire life. Interestingly enough, every place where Obama continued with Bush's foreign policy, things have worked out reasonably well; and everywhere where he has departed from the Bush policy, the results have been lacking, to say the least (e.g., the "closing" of Guantanamo Bay Prison; the revealing of many of our CIA secrets; Clinton handing that ridiculous "reset" button over to Russian officials, etc.). My point is, it is easy to point to someone in authority over you and complain about the job that they are doing, and point out all of that person's flaws in policy, real or imagined. It is something else, entirely, to take that person's place and implement policy which is good for the organization.

If God has not promoted you—and you think that He should—then you ought to thank God for His wisdom in not promoting you. Lot thinks that he is being promoted here, but he will use his authority to run his own organization into the ground.

At this point in Lot's life, while still associated with Abram, he has the most material blessing that he will ever have. Once Lot disassociates himself from Abram, there will no longer be all of this blessing coming to Abram and spilling over onto Lot. Lot is a believer in Jehovah Elohim and he will receive *logistical grace blessing* (as will be later illustrated when Abram rescues him from a jam), but the overflow of blessing will stop right here.

In the next lesson, we will define logistical grace, a spiritual asset of every believer.

Gen. 13:5–11 And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together, 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. 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. 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." And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the area around the Jordan, that it was well-watered (before Jehovah destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah), even like the garden of Jehovah, like the land of Egypt as you come to Zoar. So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed from the east. Thus they separated from each other.

There are several doctrines related to this passage: the Doctrine of Blessing by Association and the Doctrine of Separation, both of which we have already studied. However, what happens to Lot once he separates from Abram, and moves out of the realm of blessing by association is logistical grace. God continues to pour out blessing on Abram, but, since Lot is no longer with him, this blessing does not overflow to Lot. But, what about the relationship between God and Lot? Does God simply throw Lot to the wolves (or, to the Sodomites)? This brings us to the doctrine of logistical grace.

I have introduced a new term here: *logistical grace blessing* (this concept is new to this study; not new to theology—R. B. Thieme, Jr. first coined this phrase). Logistical grace blessing applies to both Lot and Abram, as well as to all believers.

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1. The principle of logistical grace is found in Matt. 6:25–33 "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things

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will be added to you.” This is logistical grace in the temporal realm; God provides logistical grace for us in the spiritual realm as well. The principle for the spiritual provision of logistical grace is found in 2Cor. 9:8 **And God is able to make every [category of] grace overflow to you, so that in every way, you always have everything that you need, so that you may excel in every good work.**

2. The origin of the terminology *logistical grace*.
 - 1) Logistics is a military word which refers to the military science of supply, provision, and planning of troop movement.
 - 2) Logistics is the provision, movement, and maintenance of all necessary resources and services necessary to sustain military forces. Logistics involves the national economic capacity and the nation's ability to support its own military forces. This sustenance can certainly go beyond simple food, clothing and shelter. Internet access, for instance, today can be seen as logistical support (it improves the morale of those in uniform).
 - 3) Logistics is a technical military term for the sustenance of the troops in every form of military activity and maneuver, i.e., in the barracks, in the field, when going into battle, as well as before battle, and after battle.
 - 4) From this military nomenclature comes a Bible Doctrine based on analogy (many words in the Bible—including the New Testament—are military terms appropriated for a spiritual usage). Logistics always plays a very important and dramatic part in warfare (poor logistics can result in the loss of a war), but logistics plays an even greater part in your life as a believer. Every believer is alive today because of logistical grace.
 - 5) The word "logistics" comes from two Greek words.
 - (1) Logistês (λογιστῆς) [pronounced *lohg-is-TACE*], which means *an inspector of accounts, an auditor, a calculator, or teacher of arithmetic*. No Strong's #.
 - (2) Logismos (λογισμός) [pronounced *lohg-is-MOSS*], which means, 1) *a reckoning, computation*; 2) *a reasoning: such as is hostile to the Christian faith*; 3) *a judgment, decision: such as conscience passes*. Thayer definition only. R. B. Thieme, Jr. adds the definition *thinker*. Strong's #3053.
3. Logistical grace is defined as what God has planned for us, the Divine support he gives us, His Divine provision, and his Divine blessing. The result is, we as believers in Jesus Christ are able to execute the plan of God just as logistical support on the battlefield allows an army to defeat the enemy. God does not give us logistical grace because we are nice people or really good Christians; God gives us logistical support because we are believers and He gives this to us for a purpose.
4. Logistical grace can be broken down into two categories of Divine provision.
 - 1) Temporal provisions.
 - (1) Life support is provided for every Church Age believer. This explains how and why we are alive at any given moment. The only reason we are alive is because of logistical grace. We do not earn

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it nor do we deserve it. There is no set of spiritual works which we can accomplish to keep ourselves alive. For all intents and purposes, this is food, shelter and clothing. The principle was explained by Jesus in Matt. 6:25–33.

- (2) God also supplies the [laws of divine establishment](#), which provide for an orderly and lawful society. It is quite difficult for the average believer to advance spiritually under chaotic conditions, e.g. are found today in Egypt, Greece or Tunisia (there are Christians in these counties—I write this in 2011 when there are revolutions occurring within these countries). Evangelism and spiritual growth certainly takes place during riots and war, but a society is sustained and calmed by having many believers.
 - (3) Spiritual growth is a slow and steady process, and is more easily accomplished in peace and tranquility.
 - (4) As an aside, this does not mean that every nation functions perfectly under these laws of divine establishment. A recent example of these laws not functioning are in Afghanistan, where a person became a believer in Jesus Christ and was sentenced to death. That is an horrendous failure of the laws of divine establishment in that nation. However, such a thing has occurred in order to cause our leaders to think about what we are doing. If we (the United States) are simply providing an orderly society for Muslims in that nation, then we are wasting our time. This recent event involving one man will call upon no one less than the President of the United States to think about this and act.
- 2) Spiritual provisions:
- (1) Logistical grace is provided for every Church Age believer, both winners and losers. All believers are blessed by God. This exemplifies the justice of God, in that the justice of God sends life support and blessing to the righteousness of God which is in both winner and loser believers (all believers have God's righteousness imputed to them).
 - (2) That spiritual blessings are afforded to all believers emphasizes grace. You are alive only because of the grace of God, not because of anything you do. Winners utilize logistical grace, loser's coast on it, but never utilize or fully exploit it.
 - (3) Jesus Christ provides the Word of God, which He has preserved for at least 4000 years.
 - (4) God gives his provision to every Church Age believer so that they may execute the Plan of God. This means you have access to doctrine (the teaching of the Word of God). In most cases, this means a pastor-teacher and a local church (which is your local classroom). Although, in today's time, you can hear a variety of pastors via MP3 files, the authority of the pastor-teacher in the local

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church (when it comes to teaching the Word of God, not running your life), is extremely important. True positive volition toward the Word of God will solve whatever location problem you have. We recently studied the [will of God](#). If you are not in a place where there is a good local church where doctrine is being taught, then you may be in the wrong geographical location. Quite obviously, moving from point A to point B is a serious decision, and you can allow God to take the lead in this regard. Having had the experience of being moved from point A to point B, I have to say it is one of the greatest decisions God has allowed me to make. I can look at hundreds of things which have happened in my life, which happened since then, which clearly reveal the hand of God to me. There are many cities where there is no careful teaching of the Word of God and many cities where there is. There are many examples in the Bible of God moving believers from one place to another.

- (5) We all have the grace provision which allows us to take in doctrine. God has provided every believer a human spirit at salvation wherein doctrine is stored. God has provided the filling of the Holy Spirit, which is the restoration of fellowship through naming your sins to God. The filling of the Holy Spirit makes spiritual information something that you are able to comprehend and retain. Furthermore, God has made it possible for all IQ types to take in doctrine, through gap ([the grace apparatus for perception](#)). In addition, God provides believers with a prepared pastor-teacher who is able to teach you doctrine. 1Cor. 2:10–16 Eph. 3:18 2Peter 3:18 1John 1:9
- (6) God provides, in this age, the privacy of the royal priesthood (when you believed in Jesus Christ, you became a member of the royal family and, therefore, of the royal priesthood). This means, you should have the privacy to make your own decisions and that you are directly responsible to God for your decisions and actions. This gives the believer great freedom to take in the Word of God and you have the freedom to live your life before God. If you are in a church where part of the church doctrine allows for others to bully you into some course of action (e.g., some sort of spiritual mentoring system), then you are in the wrong church. Quite obviously, there must be some discipline within the local church, so that everyone can learn in a public (classroom) setting. Therefore, if the pastor teacher tells you to sit down and shut up while he is teaching, this is not the same thing as him running your life; he is merely enforcing academic discipline within the local church.
- (7) The God-ward side of spiritual provision is, God cannot violate His own character in order to bless us with any kind of blessing,

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including blessing us with logistical grace. After salvation, we all continue to possess an active sin nature and we all sin. God cannot simply ignore this. God has devised a way, by which He can bless man, and yet simultaneously, maintain the perfection of His essence.

5. As previously mentioned, God provides logistical support through the laws of divine establishment. Some additional points ought to be made.
 - 1) The laws of divine establishment not only protect the freedom of a nation, but they also guarantee the freedom and the privacy of local churches in that free nation.
 - 2) As long as a citizen refrains from disobeying the law, he has a right to his privacy, property, and personal freedom.
 - 3) Evangelism and Bible teaching are legitimate functions in a free society. In fact, without these activities, a society is not really free (contemporary Islamic nations are examples of this).
 - 4) It is the responsibility of the local government and the police officer to protect the rights of a church whether it is a good church or a bad church.
 - 5) These same "laws of establishment" also provide for the separation of church and state.
 - (1) As originally conceived, our founders correctly understood the relationship between church and state.
 - (2) The founding fathers did not understand the separation of church and state to be what it has become today—where the federal government has some control over what is said in church and where religious expression of people or institutions is limited (e.g., not allowing school choirs to sing Christmas carols during Christmas). What recent Supreme Courts have done is, established a wall of separation between any activity of the state and religious expression, which is very different from the separation of church and state. As a result, some things related to the state continue to express some sort of religious thought (e.g., "in God we trust" as the motto on our coinage; various Bible verses and expressions of faith on various monuments, but a disallowance of the captain of a football team leading the prayer before the game). The actual concept of the separation of church and state is, these are two separate entities, and one cannot tell the other one what to do. The state cannot, therefore, threaten to instate taxes on a church because they don't like what s being taught in church. Furthermore, the state, country or federal governments might express a religious thought without this being subsequently mired in years of court battles.
 - (3) Since most people in the United States were believers, there would be deference given to the Bible and to God by our federal government. Therefore, we find Bible verses, the Ten

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- Commandments, and various figures of Moses in most courts at all levels and in many federal buildings and on many public monuments.
- (4) Furthermore, public and private schools were originally established so that the people of the United States could read and understand the Bible. Most private colleges and universities originally had curriculums which were quite similar to seminaries and Bible colleges of today (in fact, when first established, most of them were more Bible-centered).
 - (5) However, the specific limitations were: the federal government could not establish a religion nor could it close a church down because it did not like their doctrine.
 - (6) The Bill of Rights was designed to limit the federal government, not to limit the actions and speech of individuals or churches. So, George Washington could issue a Thanksgiving proclamation which recognizes the blessings of God upon the United States soon after agreeing to all of the provisions of the Constitution. What Congress could not do was establish, for instance, the Plymouth Brethren as the official religion of the United States.
6. God provides a myriad of systems of organizational and enforced humility in order for you to accomplish the will of God in your life.
- 1) For instance, when you drive to church or to your job (which is part of God's will for your life), you encounter stop signs, speed limits and traffic lights. This is organizational humility which allows you to go from point A to point B on the same road with thousands of people, all of whom have sin natures and many of whom have had a bad day, and yet you travel in relative safety (such is not the case in the large cities of most foreign countries).
 - 2) The highway patrol (or however they are designated in your state) provides enforced humility for those who choose to ignore those stop signs, traffic lights and speed limits. The expense of a traffic ticket and the consequences of breaking traffic laws make us more likely to obey the system of organizational humility which has been set up.
 - 3) At your job, there are systems of organizational and enforced humility set up, so that your place of employment can employ 10 or 100 or 1000 people, all of whom have sin natures and many of whom have had a bad day, and yet, enough gets done at this organization in order for it to be productive and self-sustaining.
 - 4) In the local church, there are also systems of organizational and enforced humility. Where I go to church, there is a clear policy in place when it comes to the teaching of the Word of God. We are supposed to be quiet and not distract others (organizational humility). When someone violates that standard, the pastor and/or a deacon would deal with the problem directly (enforced humility).

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7. Why does God provide logistical grace? God has a purpose and plan for our lives. Since we live in the age of grace, God provides *everything* which is necessary in order to further His purpose for our lives. Certainly, you have bought some item where the outside of the box reads, "Some assembly required." If all the parts are not there, you are up a creek and you usually return the item. In our lives, there is certainly some assembly required, but all of the parts are guaranteed to be here. That is logistical grace.
8. The basis of logistical grace is God's integrity. God is able to provide us with logistical grace because this does not compromise His integrity (God must always act within the confines of His character).
 - 1) God is infinite, eternal, and absolute holiness, the latter of which may be classified as Divine integrity or as absolute unchangeable Divine virtue.
 - 2) The integrity of God is composed of His perfect righteousness and His perfect justice. God loves His own integrity. There are four principles related to the integrity of God which apply:
 - (1) What the righteousness of God rejects, the justice of God judges. Most of the time, we follow this logically to, what God judges, God must punish. However, there is a flip side to this coin.
 - (2) What the righteousness of God approves of, the justice of God must bless. This is the basis for logistical grace.
 - (3) The justice of God must administer what the righteousness of God demands. The righteousness of God approves of certain things; therefore, God character demands that God bless these certain things. This is the basis for logistical grace.
 - (4) At the moment of salvation, the righteousness of God is imputed to the believer by the justice of God (Gen. 15:6). The righteousness of God therefore demands blessing from the justice of God, no matter if we fail or succeed as believers. This explains why God continues to provide logistical grace to both winners and losers in the Christian life.
 - 3) Believers who fail to execute the Christian life—that is, they opt for some system of morality rather than to utilize their spiritually operating assets—still have the forty things that they received at salvation (a topic for a future lesson), one of which is the righteousness of God. This means God will support and sustain you regardless of how deserving or undeserving you are (in your own eyes or in the eyes of others).
 - (1) Two additional points: first of all, you may appear quite undeserving of God's grace in the eyes of others, and, it may give you some measure of amusement to know that this makes their hackles rise when He blesses you with logistical grace.
 - (2) Secondly, you may have believed that Christianity was all about knowing what is moral and then being moral, and your life has been fairly good since you began to follow that philosophy (I am assuming that you first believed in Jesus Christ). There are two

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reasons for this: logistical grace (God blesses you logistically because you now have the righteousness of God within you) and the concept of the laws of divine establishment. God has prescriptive behavior for all people—believers and unbelievers alike—which prescriptive behavior we call the laws of divine establishment, of which, morality is a subset. So, if you are moral, good things are going to happen. Simple example: the man who chooses to love his wife and to remain faithful to her is going to have a better marriage than the person who doesn't.

- 4) At the moment of salvation by means of faith in Christ, the righteousness of God is imputed to us. This is true in every dispensation. Because God imputes His righteousness to us, there are several results:
 - (1) Justification. God imputes His righteousness to us and then declares us to be righteous—this is justification. Justification occurs instantly. Rom. 5:1-5.
 - (2) God loves us personally. Because God's perfect righteousness has been imputed to us, God's love toward us changes from impersonal love to personal love. His imputed righteousness allows God to love us personally. God does not step outside of his well-defined character in order to have personal love for us.
 - (3) We become recipients of logistical grace. Because we have imputed righteousness, God is able to bless us with logistical grace, without compromising His righteousness.
 - (4) If you are a new believer, you may not quite understand all of this. You have been taught that God loves you and therefore He blesses you. However, God's love for us as unbelievers is an impersonal, but real, love. God's love for us as believers is a personal and real love. The key is, whatever God does on our behalf cannot violate His perfect character. To help you differentiate between impersonal and personal love: you are commanded to love all other believers—that is impersonal love. There are some believers you don't want to spend 14 seconds with; you can maintain this distance, and still love them impersonally (that is, you don't hate them, you don't spread rumors about them, etc.). You also love your family, which is personal love. Now and again, a family member does something that you do not care for. Perhaps they said something about you that rubbed you the wrong way. Impersonal love means that you overlook what they said. If you are only able to function on emotion and on personal love, that remark may become the basis for a family rift.
- 5) In the function of God's policy of grace, there can be no compromise of God's attributes. God has found a way, through logistical grace, to bless each believer without compromising any of His attributes.
- 6) God's righteousness is the principle of Divine integrity, while God's perfect

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justice is the function of Divine integrity.

- (1) God's justice cannot accept anything less than perfect righteousness as the object of His blessing.
 - (2) Therefore, God cannot bless anything less than His own perfect righteousness, because this takes God outside of the boundaries of His perfect character. He cannot even bless relative righteousness. That is, He cannot bless you simply because you had a pretty good day, sin-wise.
- 7) The indwelling righteousness of God is the recipient of all logistical grace life support and all blessing from God. The grace pipeline excludes human merit and ability from the reception of blessing.
 - 8) The justice of God is the source of logistical grace life support and Divine blessing. Divine justice became the reference point for mankind since Adam sinned.
 - 9) God has found a way to administer logistical grace blessing to every Church Age believer and still act within the confines of His righteousness and justice.
 - 10) Because we have God's righteousness imputed to us, God's own justice requires that He provide logistical grace life support and blessing to the believer.
 - 11) The grace pipeline is established between God's perfect holiness (or integrity) and the righteousness which is imputed to us. This grace pipeline excludes man's works and ability; because man does not earn or deserve logistical grace blessing from God. Rom 3:22 Matt. 6:33.
 - 12) We are studying Abram and Lot, and they are blessed because God imputed righteousness to each one of them when they believed in Jehovah Elohim (Gen. 15:6). For both men, this is logistical grace. For Abraham, he receives logistical support from God as well as more blessing on top of that (which is called *greater grace* in 2Cor. 4:15 and James 4:6).
9. The grace pipeline and logistical grace:
- 1) At God's end of the pipeline is His Divine justice, which is the source of Divine blessing to all believers, winners or losers. At our end of the pipeline is Divine righteousness, which was imputed to us at salvation. This pipeline cannot be destroyed; it does not suffer from any "metal fatigue."
 - 2) God's justice is the source of all logistical grace blessing. Therefore, God is fair and just in supporting winners and losers alike. Since God is perfect, it is impossible for God to provide blessing for imperfect believers on the basis of their character, goodness or works. We are not blessed because of what we do for God, we are blessed because of what God has done for us. After all, if God provides the imputed righteousness for us at salvation, how can we brag about this?
 - 3) Therefore, this grace pipeline excludes all human ability, morality, talent, giving, sacrifice, service, or any other patronizing function of legalism as

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a legitimate source of Divine blessing. In other words, our good works do not prompt God to give us logistical grace. In fact, There is nothing that we can do in order to earn God's logistical grace. It is provided to every single believer.

- 4) Therefore, God is free to bless all believers, winners and losers, spiritual or carnal, without compromising His own character. God has found a way to bless us through His Divine policy, which is called grace. God cannot endorse or accept anything less than perfect righteousness and, therefore, God cannot bless anything less than perfect righteousness. You might see how we would be in quite a jam if we did not possess God's perfect righteousness via imputation.
- 5) Consequently, the justice of God sends His grace blessing down the grace pipeline. All logistical grace life support and blessing travel down this pipeline to both winner and loser believers. Therefore, in logistical grace, the justice of God is the source of all Divine support and blessing, and the righteousness of God is the recipient of all Divine support and blessing.
10. In order for us to receive logistical grace blessing, we must have God's righteousness (which is not something we have the ability to accomplish) and we must have a human spirit as well. God's imputed righteousness and the creation of a human spirit within us are all accomplished by God. We did nothing meritorious in order to deserve God's righteousness or a human spirit.
11. Logistical grace support is necessary for the perception of Bible doctrine and for the execution of the Plan of God. Every believer potentially has access to accurate teaching of the Word of God so that they can execute the plan of God. The fact that few pastor-teachers are doctrinal teachers and the fact that many doctrinal churches are sparsely attended is a matter of volition of the believers in that geographical area. However, potentially, these things are provided, so that every believer has equal privilege and equal opportunity to execute God's plan which results in the glorification God. We all receive the following assets as a part of logistical grace:
 - 1) God creates within us a human spirit at the moment of salvation. This is where doctrine is stored and is the basis for our fellowship with God. 1Cor. 2:10-16
 - 2) God provides the teaching ministry of God the Holy Spirit. This does *not* mean that you can go to the Bible and expect God to tell you what everything means.
 - 3) In every generation, the gift of pastor-teacher is distributed to a number of male believers. Their gift of communicating Bible doctrine to you is a part of logistical grace. 99% of all believers can only grow under a pastor-teacher. There are unusual circumstances where a small fraction of believers are able to advance spiritually on their own. This is rare and this is not you.
12. God's perfect justice can only bless His perfect righteousness.
 - 1) God's integrity God is both the guardian of His Divine attributes and God's

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- integrity is the believer's point of contact with God.
- 2) Even though we live in an age of grace, God's attributes cannot be compromised by the function of His grace. God's plan is the way that God is able to provide logistic grace for the believer without any compromise of His attributes.
 - 3) God's perfect righteousness is the principle of His integrity. God's perfect justice is the function of His integrity. God cannot accept or endorse anything less than perfect righteousness as the object of His Divine blessing. Man's righteousness is completely unacceptable to God.
 - 4) Because God loves mankind impersonally, He was motivated to solve the problem of how to bless man. God solved this problem without compromising His perfect justice. God's attributes cannot operate against one another.
 - 5) From the moment of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, God's perfect righteousness resides in every member of the royal family (Rom 3:22). Therefore, every believer is legitimately qualified to receive life support and blessing whether he succeeds or fails in the Christian life.
 - 6) God's justice of God administers exactly what His righteousness demands.
 - 7) Given what God has given us, logistical grace avoids any compromise of God's attributes. Therefore, logistical grace is compatible with the integrity of God. The function of logistical grace does not compromise God's character in any way.
13. 2 Peter 3:18 reads: **Grow by means of [logistical] grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.**
- 1) Logistical grace is support and supply for growth, Phil 4:5 **Let your reasonableness be known to all men. The Lord is near.** The word *near* means that, God is within supporting and supplying distance. Unless logistical support is *near* to an advancing army, that army cannot survive.
 - 2) The Lord is *near*; that is, He is within supporting distance (i.e., He is close enough to us to bless us). Deut 33:27 Philip 4:19 Psalm 37:25 Eph 1:3 2 Cor 9:8.
 - 3) The key is not His physical nearness and His desire to bless us, but His ability to bless us. Sloppy agapê (ἀγάπη) is, God loves us and so He blesses us. However, God can only bless us when this does not conflict with His perfect character (that is, His blessing us cannot conflict with His perfect righteousness and justice).
14. There are reasonably some differences between logistical grace in the Church Age (the time in which we live) and in previous dispensations. In the Church Age, all believers have a place in the plan of God. Every one of us has a life of purpose, meaning and definition. Therefore, we all must receive logistical grace and we all must utilize logistical grace in our trek toward spiritual maturity.

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I realize that, portions of this doctrine were very technical and involved, at times, a very technical vocabulary (e.g., the integrity of God, enforced and organizational humility, etc.). It is possible that you read this, and there were several points which did not make complete sense. However, the primary principle here is, God provides for us, both spiritually and temporally, after we have believed in Jesus Christ.

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Additional information found here:

<http://www.bibleteacher.org/SOTEROUT.htm#Logistical>

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Lesson 120: Genesis 13:5–13

Abram Separates from Lot

This is what we have studied so far:

Gen. 13:5–11 And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together, 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. 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. 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." And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the area around the Jordan, that it was well-watered (before Jehovah destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah), even like the garden of Jehovah, like the land of Egypt as you come to Zoar. So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed from the east. Thus they separated from each other.

God had poured out so many blessings upon Abram and Lot that, they were unable to travel together without all of their possessions getting mixed together. Their employees and slaves continually got into arguments over all of their possessions. Therefore, Abram suggested that they separate from one another, and he gave Lot the option to choose which direction he would go in.

It is said that the seeds of the entire Bible can be found in the book of Genesis. This chapter illustrates that principle.

A lot has occurred in this passage. First of all, we were introduced to the concept of blessing by association. God is directly blessing Abram, but this blessing spills over onto

Lot, because he is associated with Abram. Although we covered the doctrine, we have not yet seen this all come to pass in the lives of Abram and Lot. In the next few chapters, after they separate, Abram will still be rich and getting richer and Lot will be left with nothing. Remember, there is [a strife between Abram's herdsmen and Lot's herdsmen](#)? The next time we see Lot, after he has been separated from Abram, he will no longer own livestock nor will he employ herdsmen. Lot was successful because of his association with Abram; not because he was a great businessman and not because God blessed him directly. God blessed Abram, and the blessings spilled on over to Lot. Blessing by association.

Now, even though God is blessing Abram directly and Lot only by his association with Abram, does not mean that Abram is leading a sinless life. Recall that Abram went traipsing off into Egypt, which placed him outside of God's geographical will. When in Egypt, Abram, as a maturing believer, embarrassed himself before a heathen king (the Pharaoh of Egypt). However, a believer can fail, and God still blesses that believer. Furthermore, those associated with the believer can be blessed as well. So despite Abram's spectacular failure, here we find him and Lot with too much wealth to function together.

Blessing by association includes the business where that person works, where they go to school, what neighborhood (city, state, country) that person lives in. That person's friends, family and loved ones can all be blessed by association. The key is, you need a growing or mature believer.

Take a moment, and think about the places you would like to go in this world. Did you name off a myriad of Muslim nations? Of course not! These are nations were routinely attack and kill both Jews and Christians, and whose Christian population, as a result, is quite small. Therefore, almost no one wants to travel to these nations. Consider European nations that, only 10 years ago, you would have enjoyed traveling to, and now, not so much. But you say, "I'd like to see China, and they are a godless nation." Wrong; there is a huge growing population of Chinese believers. And where do most people in the world want to go to? The United States. This is because somewhere between 50–75% of the people in the United States have believed in Jesus Christ and there is a small, but vigorous population of mature believers within the United States. This is all related to blessing by association. This certainly does not mean that the United States is a perfect country, nor does it mean that all U.S. presidents have made consistently great decisions. However, despite our imperfections, huge numbers of people would like to visit here and to live here. This is because the believers in this country are blessed directly by God, and the nation receives blessing by association.

You may note current events and say, there is a great democratic upheaval throughout the Middle East. 5 or 10 years from now, half of the Middle East will be fledgling democracies. If you think that, you do not understand the heart of man or the relationship of God to man. Huge numbers of these people despise Israel; and God said to Abram, "[I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you.](#)" These nations are under a curse, despite the great yearning for freedom you believe that they have. Islam is a great evil; antisemitism is a great evil; persecution of Christians is a great evil. No democratic

movement in the middle east will result in a dramatically better country unless they are able to separate themselves from those evils or they are evangelized (which can certainly occur by means of the internet).

I should add that, God does have to cleanse a nation now and again; and there is a great deal of degeneracy in the United States and a lot of negative volition. This cleansing occurred in the United States during the Great Depression which was sandwiched between World War I and World War II. This produced what is reasonably called the *greatest generation* of Americans, along with a decade of great blessing and prosperity (the 1950's). We have tremendous degeneracy in the United States today. We have great immorality, the breakdown of the marriage unit, the rise of homosexual degeneracy, along with some of the most awful self-righteousness that I have seen in my lifetime. Along with this has come a great breakdown in authority. So, we may not be destroyed as a nation, but we are reaching a point where God may need to cleanse our nation once again. Furthermore, all that it takes is for one generation negative toward the Word of God to arise, and the great nation that we know could disappear into history.

At this point, Abram and Lot are separating, which led us to the doctrine of separation. Separation has been distorted in a number of ways: cults have used this doctrine to keep their flock from associating with previous friends and relatives. Legalistic churches and legalistic believers have misused this doctrine to separate believers from unbelievers. However, separation is done for two primary reasons: (1) A church separates from apostasy or sin which is prominently displayed. Individually, we would separate from believers whose lifestyle and actions clearly go against the Word of God. (2) As individual believers, we separate from those who would slow down or stall out our spiritual growth (which is what is happening with Abram and Lot). When it comes to separation from a group of unbelievers, it may be God's will for one person to remain separate from them, because their lifestyle tempts him; and yet, for another believer to associate with them, for the purposes of evangelism.

Lastly, in the set of doctrines, all alluded to in this passage, we came to the concept of logistical grace. That is, Abram and Lot are separating, and God is still pouring out blessing upon Abram, but what about Lot? What does God do for Lot? That would be logistical grace. Now, even though it will become quite apparent, in subsequent chapters, that Lot's life has gone into the crapper, God still provides for him, even bringing him out of Sodom before that city was judged (preview of coming attractions; and, when God does that, we will be introduced to another doctrine—the doctrine of the pivot).

[Gen 13:12](#) Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom.

It is unclear whether Abram moved west or north, but, according to most maps, Lot moved his herds to the Jordan and then traveled south from there, perhaps along the Salt Sea (also known as the Dead Sea), which may have simply been an extension of the Jordan River at this time. As previously discussed, there is good reason to believe that the Dead Sea was not so dead at this time, but a beautiful paradise, which was well-watered, and

which drained out into the sea (which would have kept the salt from building up). At the time that this is written, the area around the Dead Sea would have been prosperous and picturesque. Although I do not know what it was called at this time, it was unlikely called the Dead Sea or the Salt Sea. It may not have been a sea at all.

Lot is now in charge of his own people and his own cattle—Abram no longer overrules him—and he is quite taken with this sudden position of complete authority, and he chose to take all of his possessions down to Sodom. After all, this city apparently had quite a reputation at that time, and Lot, being a man of great wealth, probably figured he could really enjoy this city. Therefore, he moves his tent as far as Sodom.

God wanted Abram to stay more centrally in the land of Canaan, because that is the land God would be giving to Abram's descendants. It is also a beautiful land, but not quite as picturesque as the Jordan valley and the Dead Sea (which will be included in the land God gives to Abram and his descendants).

Near as we can figure, Sodom is at the southwest corner of the Dead Sea, and there are apparently several cities in that area. Recall that the Canaanites occupy this area: *And the territory of the Canaanites extended from Sidon in the direction of Gerar as far as Gaza, and in the direction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha* (Gen. 10:19). We know by the description of this passage, that the general area around Sodom was incredibly beautiful, like the Garden of God, and we find out in this passage that Sodom is occupied by evil men and extreme deviants. When we come to the actual destruction of Sodom, we will see *why* we place Sodom near the southern part of the Dead Sea.

Gen 13:13 Now the men of Sodom were evil men and extreme deviants, against the LORD.

Where Lot was moving was Sodom, filled with a very wicked people. Calling them wicked is actually a rare thing to find in a Bible narrative. Rarely does the Bible specifically point out individuals and say, "These are rat-bastards." However, here, this is clearly laid out.

The Bible certainly does not mince words here. They are called the plural of *râ'âh* (רַעַר) [pronounced *raw-GAW*], which means *evil, misery, distress, disaster, injury, aberration, iniquity, that which is morally reprehensible*. Strong's #7451 BDB #949. In other words, they are evil and morally reprehensible. Then we have the *wâw* consecutive followed by the masculine plural adjective (used as a substantive) of *chattâ'* (חַטָּא') [pronounced *khat-TAW*], which means *sinner, deviates, deviants, transgressors*. Strong's #2400 BDB #308. The men of Sodom are evil, morally reprehensible types, and deviants as well. To seal the deal, the writer adds the adverb *m^eôd* (מְאֹד) [pronounced *m^e-ODE*], which means *exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very*. Strong's #3966 BDB #547. This is one of the strongest statements that the Bible makes about any group of people.

In the case of the men of Sodom, their entire mental attitude and lifestyle is portrayed as being *against the Lord*. The lamed (ל) preposition, which is found here, has a number of

meanings (it takes up 17 columns in Brown Driver Briggs), so the translation *against* is very much a matter of interpretation. *Before, against, in front of, towards, with reference to*, etc. are some of the many varied uses in our language to represent the lamed preposition. This could also be translated *before the Lord*. Even though this is a reasonable interpretation, as there is another way in the Hebrew to simply indicate that they were this was *before the Lord*. Furthermore, the description of the men here suggests that they would be *against the Lord*.

Abram is gracious and grace oriented; Lot is religious and self-righteous. When we mix Lot in with the degenerates of Sodom, it will be like mixing oil and water. Now, Lot is saved—he is a believer in Jehovah Elohim—but he lacks the knowledge of Bible doctrine that Abram has. Further, he lacks the graciousness that Abram has, which comes from Bible doctrine in the soul. As a result, Lot will make a number of bad decisions.

Gen 13:13 Now the men of Sodom were evil men and extreme deviants, against the LORD.

Lot is changing his associations. This is essentially by his choice, by thinking human viewpoint. Lot could be associated with Abram. He could have chosen to work out the problems which his men and Abram's men were having. He could have imposed stricter discipline upon them, to attempt to find out what the problem was. But Abram is telling his nephew that he can separate from him and that he can spread his own wings of independence, and Lot likes this. Up until this point, he has been in the shadow of Abram; but now, he will call all of the shots in his own life. No more will the people around him look to Abram for the ultimate judgement in a matter, but Lot will become the primary authority. Lot is no longer vice president of Abram Livestock Inc., but he will run his own company. He will go where he wants to go and do what he wants to do. He will move into the Jordan Valley as originally decided, but from there, as one of his first executive decisions, he will move south into Sodom, and his new associations will be with the evil men of Sodom; the extreme deviants of Sodom.

How do you think that's going to work out for him?

Gen 13:3 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.

God does not just record miscellaneous history. Here we have Abram and Lot standing between Bethel (the house of God) and Ai (ruins) (Gen. 12:8 13:3). Abram tells Lot to choose whichever direction he wants to go in, and Abram says that he will go in the opposite direction. Lot chooses to go in the direction of Ai, which is *ruins*; and the people in that direction are extremely evil deviants. Abram will go in the opposite direction, which is represented by Bethel, *the house of God*. The cities in between which they are camped are real cities with real names; but they also represent the directions of the lives of Abram and Lot. Again, this is a subtle, literary device, which tells us the direction in which these 2 men choose to go; directions which will be clearly brought out in the narrative which follows.

Later, in the narrative, it will later be clear that Abraham does not go exactly in the opposite direction.

Abram has made the correct decision to separate from Lot. He separated in a spiritually responsible manner. Abram was in fellowship, he was in God's geographical will, and he was making correct decisions. The primary sort of separation taught in the Bible is to be made between believers. Abram and Lot are both believers and both are blessed by God (Abram directly and Lot through blessing by association). However, there are problems, and it is time for Abram and Lot to go their separate ways. Lot takes the direction that looks best to him; Abram goes in the other direction. Lot choose to go in the direction of the evil deviants; Abram goes toward the Word of God.

Lesson 121: Genesis (12:1–3) 13:14–15

Spiritual Growth

Now, after Abram and Lot have separated, the Word of God will speak to Abram. Abram has achieved a real spiritual victory here. It was the right time for he and Lot to separate; Lot was filled with human viewpoint and Abram was thinking (most of the time) with divine viewpoint. God had promised Abram a great spiritual heritage, but not so much to Lot. We may reasonably assert that Abram has reached a nice spiritual plateau here, and God steps in to expand upon His previous promises to Abram.

Gen 13:14–15 The LORD said to Abram, **after** Lot had separated from him, "Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, [look] northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever.

In the previous chapter, God made other promises to Abram; all of these promises taken together are known as the Abrahamic Covenant. What God already promised Abram was: "Go out from your land and from your kindred, and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great; and you will be a blessing. And I will bless those who bless you, and curse the one despising you. And in you all families of the earth shall be blessed." (Gen. 12:1b–3). Furthermore, God made these promises to Abram in connection with him separating from his family.

There are two separations which have taken place; Abram has separated from his heathen family who did not believe in the Creator God. When we express faith in Jesus Christ, then we become separated out from the rest of the human race that has not believed in Jesus Christ. Such a separation is true for all believers. Abram really did physically separate from his family of unbelievers, but that separation represents to us the separation that occurs when God calls us out from among the unbelieving.

When Abram separates from Lot, he is separating himself from the immature believer. He is separating from the believer who has chosen not to grow. Lot is focused upon his earthly treasures, and so his employees and slaves continue to have disputes with Abram's employees and slaves. Abram is focused on that which God has promised him. "And I will

make of you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great; and you will be a blessing. And I will bless those who bless you, and curse the one despising you. And in you all families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Gen. 12:2–3). That is Abram’s spiritual impact, which continues for 4000 years—his life still has meaning to us today. If, in this study, you have understood any spiritual principle or changed your thinking about anything, then Abram has had an effect upon your life. **And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the gentiles through faith, proclaimed the gospel before to Abraham, saying, "In you will all gentiles be blessed."** (Gal. 3:8; Gen. 12:3b).

Abram’s separation from Lot was real, but it was also representative. When you mature as a believer in Jesus Christ, there is a separation between you and those believers who do not grow up spiritually. This does not mean that you need to separate from them, but it means that God sees you as separate from them. You may or may not need to separate from unbelievers and immature believers, but that is not all that is being taught here. Abram and Lot are both believers, but they are on different planes; Lot is focused on the here and now, and Abram sees his life in terms of its spiritual impact.

What logically follows your spiritual impact? Eternal repercussions. When God first spoke to Abram, the focus was upon spiritual impact, but now, notice how that is parlayed into eternal results:

Gen 13:14–15 The LORD said to Abram, **after** Lot had separated from him, "Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, [look] northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever.

God’s promises to Abram are much greater than Abram realized at first; and they have eternal results: **“For all the land that you see, I will give to you and your offspring forever.”** Spiritual impact leads to eternal results.

What happens in most churches? Most churches teach you how to be nice, how to be moral, and the laws of divine establishment. These are all good things, but these are designed for believers and unbeliever. All believers and unbelievers ought to be moral and adhere to the laws of divine establishment; that is what allows the human race to perpetuate itself. Did your life improve after going to church? Very possibly, yes; particularly if you used to be some sort of profligate. Morality is a good thing; it is good for all people, believers and unbelievers, to be moral. It is good that the people in any nation abide by the laws of divine establishment. Furthermore, it is not wrong for a church to teach these things. However, for millions of believers, what church has done for them has given them a standard of morality to which they adhere. This is a very good thing, but it is not the spiritual life. You used to go out drinking and chasing every night; you used to be immoral in your business practices; you used to think about no one but yourself; but, now, after going to church, all that has changed. However, all of that change could simply be you turning over a new leaf, recognizing that what you used to do was horrible, and now you are acting a lot better. This is a good thing, but not the spiritual life.

This is the difference between Lot and Abram—Lot, when he finds himself among a lot of immoral people, is distressed over it, because he is moral; because it upsets him to see people acting outside of the laws of divine establishment. Abram has spiritual impact; Abram's spiritual impact will be parlayed by God into eternal results and rewards.

The difference is the spiritual life. In the Church Age, this is pretty simple, and discussed on several occasions. The spiritual life for all believers of the Church Age is to grow in grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (2Peter 1:2 3:18). The idea is to, renovate your thinking (Rom. 12:1–2). The spiritual life begins at faith in Jesus Christ; is lost temporally when you sin, and is restored when you name to God whatever sin or sins got you out of fellowship (1John 1:8–10). At that point of re-entry into fellowship, you grow spiritually through God's grace system of perception (assuming that you are exposed to the teaching of Bible doctrine while in fellowship). This allows you to understand spiritual things along side of all the saints, which causes you to renovate your thinking.

The Spiritual Life Parlays Spiritual Growth to Eternal Impact

1. Like Abram, our spiritual life began the moment that we believed in Jesus Christ. And Abram believed the LORD, and He credited this faith to his account as righteousness (Gen. 15:6). Know then that it is those of faith who are the [true] sons of Abraham [because] Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness (Gal. 3:7, 6; Gen. 15:6).
2. Jesus, in His humanity, grew in grace and knowledge. The child [Jesus] was growing [physically and spiritually], and was being empowered in spirit, being filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him (Luke 2:40). The human spirit, which Jesus acquired at birth and which we acquire when we are reborn, is the repository for spiritual information. Jesus, in His humanity, grew spiritually, having been filled with wisdom. God's grace was upon Him. This is a pattern for us, except that, we lose the filling of the Holy Spirit from time to time; and Jesus did not.
3. At salvation, we are given God the Holy Spirit. Rom. 8:9, 11 1Cor. 3:16 12:13
4. We are mandated not to grieve the Holy Spirit (Gal. 4:30); we are mandated to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:22).
5. We get out of fellowship through sin; we get back into fellowship by naming this sin (or sins) to God 1Cor. 11:29–32 Heb. 12:11–12 1John 1:8–10
 - 1) In 1Cor. 11:29–32, people are coming to the Communion Table out of fellowship, and their warning discipline is being parlayed into the sin unto death. They are to judge themselves (recognize the sin or sins they have committed) to get out from under discipline (so that we should not be judged).
 - 2) In Heb. 12:11–12, the writer speaks about one being disciplined by God, indicating that the recipient is out of fellowship, and, therefore, a recipient of discipline. Lifting up the hands that hang down and the knees which are feeble refers to going from a non-productive life (being disciplined while out of fellowship) to a productive life).

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- 3) 1John 1:8 speaks of the indwelling sin nature and 1John 1:10 speaks of the commission of sin by the believer. Therefore, sin in the life of the believer, is a certain reality. 1John 1:9 is the solution for sin in time; we name this sin (or sins) to God.
- 4) This is how our spiritual growth differs from the spiritual growth of Jesus Christ; He never had to be restored to fellowship.
6. We are saved by faith in Jesus Christ, apart from any works; and the function of our spiritual life after that involves the renewing of the Holy Spirit. **He saved us, but not because of anything which we have done to gain His approval; but, instead, because of His compassion, He saved us; through the cleansing of the new birth and the renewal of the Holy Spirit** (Titus 3:5).
7. However, that only gets us in and out of fellowship; spiritually (being filled with the Holy Spirit) is not spiritual growth; but it is necessary for spiritual growth.
8. Therefore we are mandated to **Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ** (2Peter 3:18a). Now note what follows: **To Him [is] the glory both now and forever. Amen** [I believe it] (2Peter 3:18b). Spiritual growth glorifies Jesus Christ both now and forever—eternal impact.
9. God's Word is fundamental to this process: **For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of men as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls out, but the Word of the Lord endures forever** (1Peter 1:24–25a). What man is and what man does is temporal, and it will fade away, but God's Word stands forever.
10. Grace is a key factor, because it is by means of grace that we are able to grow spiritually. **Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ** (2Peter 3:18a). It is God's grace system which allows us the ability to hear, process and understand divine truth.
11. This process is summed up in 1Cor. 2:10–16: **But God has revealed them [knowledge of the things which God has prepared for us] to us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God [the Holy Spirit is integral to understanding spiritual things]. For who among men knows the things of a man except the spirit of man within him [the human spirit is the repository for spiritual knowledge]? So also no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. But we have not received the spirit of the world [which teaches human viewpoint], but the Spirit from God, so that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches [again, this is human viewpoint versus divine viewpoint], comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is judged by no one. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? Moreover, we [Paul and other Bible teachers] have the mind of Christ.**
12. This same grace process is described in Eph. 3:16–19: **He may give you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell [= be at home] in your hearts**

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- through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have the ability to comprehend **with all the saints** what is the breadth and length and height and depth [the full extent of God’s plan], and to know the love of Christ that surpasses [human] knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.
13. In other words, this is a grace system—all believers are able to participate in it—and integral to the process is the filling of the Holy Spirit. We learn divine viewpoint, which is quite different from human viewpoint. All believers are capable of learning God’s plan for their lives; I.Q. is not a limitation. The only limitation is the volition of the soul.
 14. Faith is a key factor. Spiritual knowledge is not simply a collection of facts, but these are things which must be believed in order for you to have spiritual impact. Faith is key to salvation: **For also we have had the gospel** [the good news of Jesus Christ] **proclaim** [to us] **as well as them. But the Word proclaimed** [to them] **did not profit them**, [because it was] **not being mixed with faith in those who heard it** (Heb. 4:2). God’s Word has no profit to anyone, unless it is mixed with faith. **But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is rewards those who diligently seek Him** (Heb. 11:6). How do we seek Him? We seek for God in His Word. There is no call for us to seek God in any other way (going off on a high mountain, spending hours in meditation, inflicting pain or deprivation on oneself). Remember, Paul wrote, **“We have the mind of Christ.”**
 - 1) What is sad, in the United States, is, we no longer have a widespread understanding of the Word of God. From before our War for Independence up until about the 1940's or 1950's, a huge number of people knew the Word of God. Our constitution was crafted by believers in Jesus Christ who saw this work as divinely directed and inspired. Our spiritual heritage as a nation has been distorted and lied about in our history books, in order to make our failing schools seem reasonable and palatable to us.
 - 2) We have almost completely lost this as a society. I saw an advertisement the other day for a local church, and, quite frankly, it was a damn freak show. Dozens of people are on stage meandering about with music and shouting.
 15. Back to the topic at hand; the spiritual life: The result of growing in grace and knowledge is the renovation of our thinking. **Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renovation of your thinking, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God** (Rom. 12:1–2). Conformity to this age is adherence to contemporary norms and standards, which vary from culture to culture and age to age; it is thinking human viewpoint.
 16. Therefore, the writer of Hebrews prays for the recipients of his letter: **Now may the God of peace (who brought again our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant) make you**

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complete in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen (Heb. 13:20–21). God is glorified in eternity for what He does within us in time. Our spiritual growth results in eternal impact.

17. We find a similar sentiment expressed in the doxology of Eph. 3:20–21 **Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, forever. Amen.** What God does in us has eternal impact.

We know all of this, because of what is taught in the New Testament; however, what we find here in Genesis is the seeds of this process. Abram is separated from his family through faith in Jehovah Elohim, and God gives him promises and assurances. Abram begins to grow spiritually, thus separating himself from his nephew Lot, and he begins to have an eternal impact. The above doctrine simply is the mechanics of that eternal impact, which we should have.

Lesson 122: Joshua 24:2–3a Genesis (12:1–3) 13:14–15 Abraham's Separation

Joshua, after taking the land from the Canaanites, gave this marvelous speech to the people of Israel, which began with the history of Israel:

Jos 24:2–3a And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods. Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan.' "

This separation was actual and historical, but it represents a spiritual separation. In our narrative, Abram has just separated from Lot and God speaks to Abram a third time. When we believe in Jesus Christ, we are separated out from the world and set aside for Him. That is a one-shot decision with eternal consequences. However, when Abram begins to grow, he separates himself from Lot. Maybe it would make more sense to you to hear that Abram *distinguishes* himself from Lot with regards to know of and obedience to Bible doctrine (Gen. 26:5).

Abram's separation from his family was actual and historical, but it meant more than that—his faith in Jehovah Elohim separated him from his family. Then, Abram's separation from Lot was also actual and historical but it represented the difference in spiritual growth between them. Abraham's spiritual advance means eternal impact. Lot, on the other hand, although he had believed in Jehovah Elohim, had no spiritual growth, and therefore, no eternal impact.

When Abram separated from his family, God told him: “Go out from your land and from your kindred, and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great; and you will be a blessing. And I will bless those who bless you, and curse the one despising you. And in you all families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Gen. 12:1b–3). Abram’s physical *separation* from his family represents a spiritual separation because his family were heathen that worshiped false gods (Joshua 24:2). This separation allows God to spiritually *distinguish* Abram from all mankind, as Abram is regenerated through faith in Jehovah Elohim (Gen. 15:6).

After Abram and Lot separated, God said this to Abram:

Gen 13:14b–15 "Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, [look] northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring **forever**."

Throughout the next few chapters, God will speak to Abram on several occasions, and every time, God goes back to these promises. At first, I was nonplused by God repeating His promises several times to Abram, but this teaches us two things (1) repetition of doctrine is important; we do not hear a doctrine once and then fully understand it; and (2) doctrine is built upon doctrine. As you accumulate more understanding of the Word of God, you begin to believe more of what is in the Word of God, because it all neatly fits together and clearly explains the world and the conflict in which we find ourselves. You may doubt or not completely buy into the concept of blessing by association and you may not, at first, relate blessing by association to the United States today. However, as you continue to learn more about the Word of God, the more examples you see of blessing by association. Furthermore, you begin to observe such things in your own personal life which substantiates this doctrine. You notice Charlie Brown and what you have learned about blessing by association seems to apply to Charlie quite well. You might learn more about the history of the United States and you might be exposed to some of the absolute hatred some people have for us, and then more of this doctrine begins to make sense and fit in with current events that you are observing. As you grow spiritually, you begin to piece together dozens and even hundreds of doctrines that, previously, you did not completely buy into, but now, by the renovation of your thinking (Rom. 12:1–2), it all begins to make sense.

God sent Abram to a particular piece of real estate (the land of Canaan), and God promises to make a great nation from him, blessing those who bless him and cursing those who curse him. Abram believes enough of this to leave his father and to move out west. Now, how Abram becomes a great nation is unclear, as is the land that his descendants will occupy. Furthermore, God has told Abram, “In you, all families of the earth will be blessed.” We understand that now to refer to Jesus Christ; but I can guarantee you that Abram, when he first heard this, he did not completely get it. He heard the words, and got sort of a rough idea that, in some way, all the world would be blessed and this was somehow related to him, but Abram did not fully get it.

So now, God is going to build doctrine upon doctrine, and flesh out His promises to Abram more completely, because it is now time for Abram to be able to absorb more doctrine.

As an aside, for me, some of the greatest doctrines to me are the Hypostatic Union, the Essence of God and the Angelic Conflict. However, the day after I was saved, I was not quite ready to hear these doctrines—I could have heard those doctrines and they would have gone right over my head. At that point, I needed the doctrine of rebound (naming one's sins to God for restoration to fellowship), which I needed to hear repeated, given examples for, and then repeated several times again; along with other doctrines pertinent to spiritual growth. So there is a time when you are more ready to hear specific doctrines, and a time when these doctrines begin to fill in some of the gaps and questions which you have had about life. This is why God repeats His promises to Abram and adds to these promises.

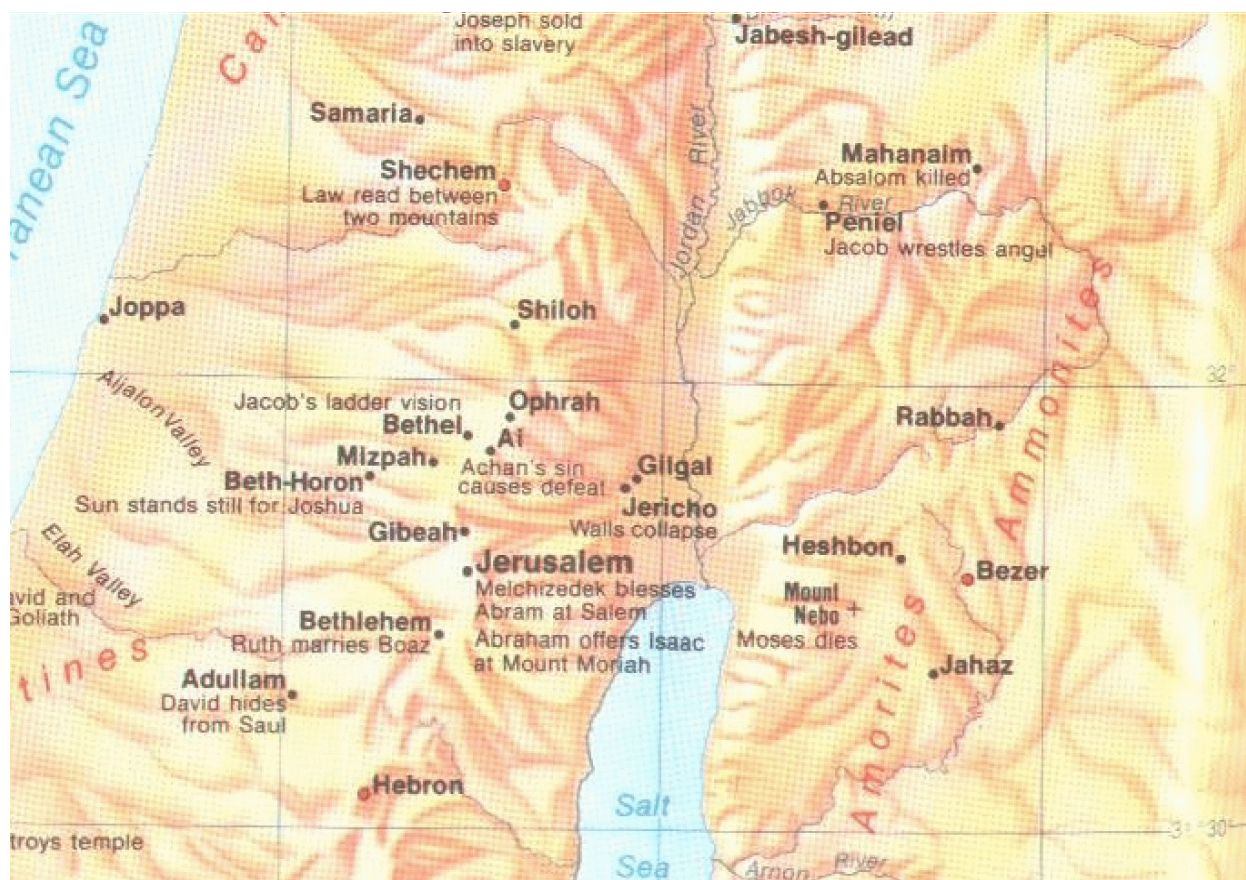
“Go out from your land and from your kindred, and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great; and you will be a blessing. And I will bless those who bless you, and curse the one despising you. And in you all families of the earth shall be blessed (Gen. 12:1b–3). So, why did God give Abram a promise which he did not fully understand? God needed for Abram to move from point A to point B, which was God's geographical will for him, and what God told Abram was enough to get him to do that. However, the final promise of this passage is for us—over 2000 years before our Lord's incarnation, God tells Abram about this will be *for our benefit*, knowing that, 4000 years later, we would read this; and some of us will be amazed by the power of this simple statement: *And in you, all families of the earth shall be blessed*. This very blessing was recognized by Simeon, a believer in Jehovah Elohim, 20 centuries later, as he held the baby Jesus in his arms and said, “*Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation that You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to Your people Israel.*” (Luke 2:29–32).

After Adam and the woman sinned, Jehovah Elohim made a promise to the serpent about the Seed of the woman—a promise which Satan understands today, but did not fully understand then. This was a promise which no doubt baffled Adam and the woman, but a promise which makes perfect sense to us today. In other words, the promise of Gen. 3:15 was meant to stand forever in testimony to the foreknowledge and plan of God.

This is the reason that we have an Old Testament and a New Testament, which are clearly separate entities in time. There is no historian anywhere who believes that these documents were developed side-by-side. We have most of the Old Testament from the Dead Sea Scrolls, which date back to about 100 B.C. We have tremendous evidence of the Septuagint (the Greek translation Old Testament) as being completed around 200 B.C. Therefore, when we examine Old Testament types, e.g., the Seed of Gen. 3:15, they suddenly make perfect sense, being fulfilled by Jesus Christ. This does not happen once or twice; this happens hundreds of times in the Old Testament. We will see this in future studies, e.g. when Abraham offers up his uniquely-born son to God on the altar; or when the first Passover is instituted, and the blood is used to reveal the cross; or when the

furniture of the Tabernacle are laid out in the shape of a cross when it is set up. At the time these things are done, these seem like interesting religious ceremonies; and hundreds of years later, they are fulfilled in Jesus Christ and His death on the cross. This all stands forever as testimony to the foreknowledge and plan of God.

Therefore, God takes the promise which He had previously made to Abram and now He expands upon this promise, giving Abram more information. This will be the land covenant which God graciously grants to Abraham. It is another unconditional covenant; that is, God is making this contract with Abram and Abram has no obligations which he needs to meet in order for this covenant to be fulfilled.

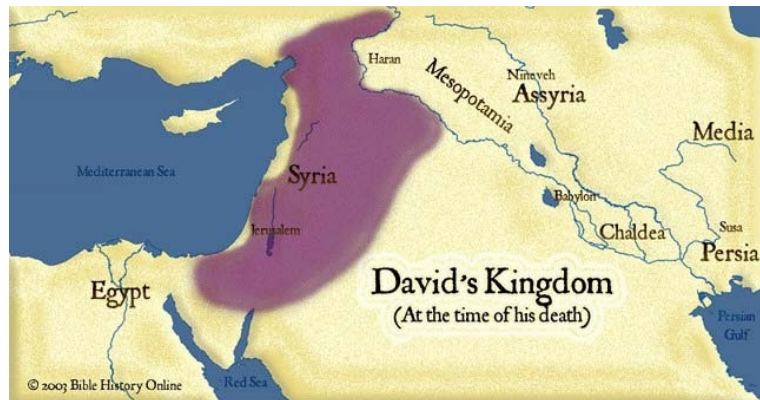


This map is a portion of an e-sword map which shows the location of Old Testament events.

At this point in time, Abram is camped between Bethel and Ai, which is north of Jerusalem in the hill country. We may reasonably assume that he and Lot have traveled to a mountain, from which they could see the land. Lot has taken his possessions and his men and he has moved eastward into the Jordan valley (from which place, he will go south).

Gen 13:14–15 The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, [look] northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever.

As Abram looks off to the west, he is looking down the hills to the coastal plain which stretches out to the Mediterranean Sea. As he looks to the east, again he is looking down the hills to the Jordan Valley to the southern portion of the Jordan River. As his eyes sweep southward, he takes in more of the coastal region, the negev, the southern section of the hill country (which would have included Jerusalem if he is looking from the mountains of Ai) and the mountains cascading down to a valley surrounding the Dead Sea. Abram looks northward and sees the remainder of Israel, the northern hills and mountains, the Sea of Galilee (its name during the time of Jesus; but not during the time of Abram) and the fertile eastern hills. I have not been there, so I don't really know just how far Abram could see from this vantage point, but it is reasonable that God was including modern Israel, Lebanon, portions of Syria, Jordan and portions of Saudi Arabia.



<http://www.bible-history.com/map-davids-kingdom/map-davids-kingdom-near-east.html>

God showed this land to Abram and promises that it would be given to him and to his descendants forever. The land which David ruled over (including the land which he controlled by taxation) is shown in the graphic. If all that we have is the statements made here in Gen. 13:14, then we might assume that this was the fulfillment of God's promise to Abram. However, then we have v. 15:

Gen 13:15 for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever.

God does not simply give this to Abram's descendants at some unspecified time in the future, God promises this land to belong to them forever. When it comes to this eternal promise, Abram's seed must have eternal life. Temporal life cannot inherit that which is eternal. Therefore, from very early on, Jews understood that their relationship to this land and to God was an eternal one.

As we go through the next dozen chapters or so, it will become apparent that, simply having Abram's genes does not make a person a *descendant of the promise*. Abram will have a son by Hagar (Ishmael), and he will not inherit this promise. Abram's son by Sarai, Isaac, will inherit this promise. Isaac himself will father twins, but only one of them (Jacob) will be a Jew who inherits the promise; the other (Esau) will be a gentile. Esau will have the genes of both Abram and Sarai, and yet, he will not be a Jew; and he is not an heir to this eternal promise. The New Testament explains this to us: **But it is not as though the**

word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." (Rom. 9:6–7; Gen. 21:12). The promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith (Rom. 4:13). Just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness" Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham (Gal. 3:6–7; Gen. 15:6).

Believers in the Age of Israel have an eternal inheritance and we as believers in the Church Age have an eternal inheritance, but the inheritances are not exactly the same. These inheritances have some points in common: we both have eternal life and we are both declared righteous, but those who are sons of Abraham by faith and by blood (including those adopted into Israel) have a direct and eternal tie to this land, which we, as believers in the Church Age, do not. As believers, our inheritance is **imperishable, undefiled, unfading, and kept in heaven for us** (1Peter 1:4).

Lesson 123: Genesis 13:14–16

Antisemitism

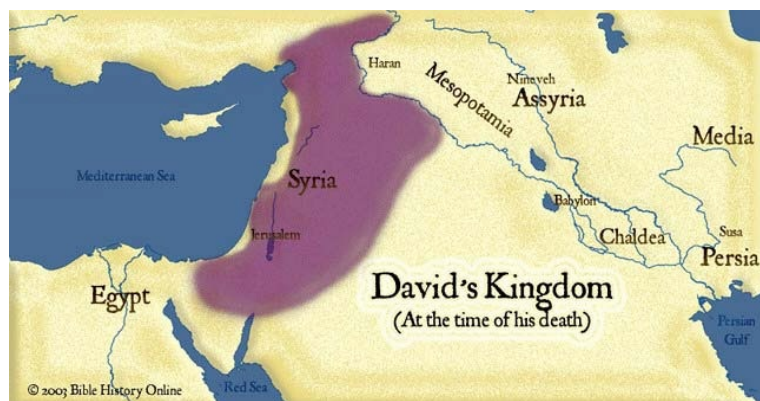
We have already studied:

Gen 13:14–15 The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, [look] northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever.

God continues speaking to Abram:

Gen 13:16 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.

God goes further with Abram and speaks here in hyperbole. There is not going to be a one-to-one match between Abram's descendants and each spec of dust in the world. In the future, Abram is going to have a lot of descendants. However, at this point in time, Abram and Sarai have approximately 0 children with no prospects for having any children, given their ages and the length of time that they had already been married. God is telling Abram that numbering his descendants is going to be like numbering the dust of the earth, indicating that, in the future,



<http://www.bible-history.com/map-davids-kingdom/map-davids-kingdom-near-east.html>

there will be a lot of believing Jews.

In order for God's promises to come true, two things have to come to pass: (1) Abram must have children (and, for whatever reason, he and Sarai have no children at the time of this promise); and (2) his offspring must continue to live on this earth until the end times, as the promise has eternal ramifications. If you understand that and you understand the Angelic Conflict, then you understand the reasons for anti-Semitism. This is why we are mandated in Eph. 6:11–12: **Put on all the armor of God, so that you will be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil, because we are not battling against flesh and blood but against the rulers, the authorities, and the world's rulers of the darkness of this age, and against the spiritual powers of evil in the heavenlies.** One of the most fundamental differences between God and Satan is, God is truth (“**You are God and Your words are truth**”—2Sam. 7:28; because He is the **God of truth**—Isa. 65:16) and Satan is the father of lies, the great deceiver (John 8:44 1Tim. 2:14 Rev. 12:9 20:3, 8, 10). Therefore, when it comes to antisemitism, you ought to expect all manner of lies and deception. We see that continually with regards to the Israelis and the Palestinians. For those who know anything about their conflicts, it seems impossible that any nation could take the side of the Palestinians; if you know anything about the recent history of Israel, it seems impossible that anyone could take the side of the Palestinians, but they do. Again, this is because **we are not at war with flesh and blood, but with the cosmic rulers of the darkness of this dispensation and against the spiritual powers of evil in an unseen war.**

Just this past week, there was a cold-blooded murder of most of a Jewish family by Palestinians in a home invasion in the middle of the night. Because of the tsunami and earthquake in Japan, this received very little attention by the press. See <http://floppingaces.net/2011/03/13/the-israeli-massacre/> Many Gaza residents **celebrated** this vicious, cold-blooded attack. These vicious acts are committed by men who have **gone the way of evil; speaking perverse and deceptive things, forsaking the paths of righteousness to walk in darkness instead, and they rejoice in doing evil, celebrating the perverseness of evil** (Prov. 2:12–14). Such men **claim to know God, but they deny Him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, and disqualified for any good work** (Titus 1:16). Had anyone done this to any family in the United States, not matter what the nationality or religion of the family, almost every American would want to see justice done and see the killers brought to swift justice. In Palestine, that is cause for some to celebrate. This is because **the god of this age has blinded them** (2Cor. 4:4)¹⁶ and therefore, **God has allowed them to become the slaves of their degenerate minds, and to perform unmentionable deeds** (Rom. 1:28).

Satan desires to remove all Jews from the face of the earth so that God cannot fulfill His promises to Abram, thus making God a liar and bringing Him down to Satan's level. Therefore, we have huge groups of people who would love to see the death of all Jews, because they are of their father the devil. They speak of such things often and publically. They have no shame.

¹⁶ Even though the context is to the gospel, this has a wider application.

This helps to explain how it is possible to have this tiny postage stamp-sized nation sitting in the middle of dozens of angry Arabic nations, and yet they still survive. Israel takes up about 0.2% of the land mass of the Middle East, and, until very recently, it did not appear that they had any mineral resources. Yet, some Arabs behave as though Israel has made this great and recent incursion upon their land and natural resources (despite the fact that Jews have continuously lived in this region for about 4000 years).

Satan hates Jews and Satan hates Christians; so we have experience a worldwide attack upon Jews and Christians by Muslims, a continuous attack of oblique warfare over the past 30 or so years in nearly every nation on this earth. Since 9/11, there have been [17,000 terrorist attacks](#) (I write this in March of 2011) throughout the world (these are attacks; the body count is much higher). These attacks have taken place in Iraq, Afghanistan, India, the Sudan, Algeria, Pakistan, Israel, Russia, Chechnya, the Philippines, Indonesia, Nigeria, England, Thailand, Spain, Egypt, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, Ingushetia, Dagestan, Turkey, Morocco, Yemen, Lebanon, France, Uzbekistan, Gaza, Tunisia, Kosovo, Bosnia, Mauritania, Kenya, Eritrea, Syria, Somalia, Kuwait, Ethiopia, Iran, Jordan, United Arab Emirates, Tanzania, Germany, Australia, Belgium, Denmark, East Timor, Qatar, Tajikistan, the Netherlands, Scotland, Chad, Canada, China, Nepal, the Maldives, Argentina, Mali, Angola, the Ukraine, Uganda, Sweden and the United States.

Despite all of these attacks against Christians, Jews, innocents and other Muslims, Jews will continue to be here in this world until the end of time and nothing is going to change that. We can either be on the side of blessing ([I will bless those who bless you](#)) or on the side of cursing ([I will curse those who curse you](#)). In case you doubt God's cursing, which Arab country do you want to live in? If you said the U.A.E., that is because Arabs there are much more involved in capitalism than they are in antisemitism.

Antisemitism actually helps to explain some of the U.S. politics of the 20th century. During a time when antisemitism was clearly a part of the Republican party (it is found in the John Birch Society, in some of the Liberty Lobby broadcasts, and in the weird Bilderberger conspiracy theories which some conservatives used to hold to), we had such notable presidents as Hoover, Eisenhower and Nixon (out of that group, Eisenhower was a very good president, and he was president during a time of great prosperity and blessing). As soon as antisemitism is marginalized in the Republican party, we get Reagan and Gingrich (Speaker of the House). God would not bless a political party which tolerated antisemitism. One of the greatest presidential candidates for the Republican party was defeated by one of the very worst presidents of the United States because of antisemitism in the Republican party (Barry Goldwater was soundly defeated by Lyndon Johnson in a landslide election).

Antisemitism also explains how the party of God, family and small government lacked for many years any sort of ideological purity. It was Richard Nixon who instituted wage and price controls; Herbert Hoover was not as radical as Franklin Roosevelt, but he was certainly not a conservative. One of the battles within the Republican party for many years has been between the country club Republicans and the Sam's club Republicans. However, the key to all of this is antisemitism. It had to be removed from the Republican party and it was. William F. Buckley, in his magazine, just tore into the John Birch Society,

many of whom made up his readership. This was one of the more important events in Republican party history because Buckley said that this small party needed to become smaller by removing antisemitism and conspiracy theory types.

One more thing: do you recall where we first encountered antisemitism? Before there were any Jews. It goes all the way back to Gen. 3:15a: God said to Satan, **“I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed.”** The woman’s seed is continued into the Jewish race, culminating in the God-man, Jesus Christ.

Even though we are just coming to know the first Jew, let’s examine...

The Doctrine of Antisemitism

1. Although the term antisemitism comes from Shem, a son of Noah, the father of both Arabs and Jews, it is properly applied to Jews. The term “anti-Semitic” is used to mean intolerance, hatred, prejudice, opposition to, and persecution of the Jews.
2. Abraham (Abram) is descended from Shem. Gen. 11:10–27
3. The Jewish race was founded upon spiritual regeneration, which is illustrated by circumcision. Gen. 15:6 17:10–14
4. There are 3 overlapping categories of Jews today:
 - 1) Racial Jews: those who are descended from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
 - 2) Religious Jews: those who practice Judaism.
 - 3) Regenerate Jews: those Jews who have believed in Jesus Christ.
5. Antisemitism was first described and predicted in Gen. 3:15a: God said to Satan, **“I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed.”** This great hostility is applied to Jews, believers in Jesus Christ (Christians) and to the Lord Jesus Christ.
6. That some men would revile Jews is implied in Gen. 12, where God first spoke to Abram: **“Go out from your land, your relatives, and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, I will curse those who treat you with contempt, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”** (Gen. 12:1b–3).
7. The two most recent illustrations of extremely vile antisemitism are the holocaust and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict today.
 - 1) Adolf Hitler sponsored an unimaginably inhuman attack upon the Jews, where they were first gathered into ghettos, and then gathered into camps, where 6 million were killed. It is less than a century later, and some people both deny and celebrate the holocaust (most notably, the little dictator of Iran). The fact that this can be lied about and millions of people can buy into this lie is because, Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44).
 - 2) Although the Jews occupy approximately 0.2% of the Middle East, and have lived in this general area continuously for 4000 years (since Abraham), various peoples throughout the Middle East act as if this was the most awful incursion to ever occur. Palestinians, currently ruled, to

The Doctrine of Antisemitism

some decree by Hamas (whose charter calls for the obliteration of Israel), are involved in hundreds of small rocket attacks against Israel. In the past 50 years, Israel has fought several wars to hold onto this land.

8. Throughout human history, there are a myriad of examples of antisemitism.
 - 1) In ancient history, nations and peoples, like Babylon and Assyria, were destroyed for their antisemitism. Persia and Greece both were on the rise during times when their leaders had a benevolent attitude toward the Jews.
 - 2) In more recent times, Germany and the U.S.S.R. were both diminished as nations because of their fierce antisemitism.
 - 3) Further back in history, Spain, once a leading nation in the world, became antisemitic, and became a 3rd-rate nation, a status it has maintained since the crusades.
 - 4) Almost all Arab nations are antisemitic, and, despite their great per-capita wealth, are the most wretched nations in the world. The United Arab Emirates is one of the few nations where capitalism is more important than antisemitism, and they have enjoyed great prosperity (although, there is certainly prejudice against Jews there as well).
9. The United States has received great blessings as a nation for several reasons (we are the most blessed nation in human history):
 - 1) A huge number of people in the United States believe in Jesus Christ.
 - 2) There is a reasonable number of mature believers in the United States. This has resulted in a great deal of Bible teaching, evangelization and missionary activity, all of which originates in the United States.
 - 3) The race and religion of the Jews is not an issue in the United States. We do not practice antisemitism as a nation.
 - 4) Israel is our ally.
10. This does not mean that we ought to treat Jews any differently than anyone else. That is, when it comes to hiring someone, recommending someone for a job or school, working with someone, we evaluate them based upon their strengths and weaknesses, and their racial or religious heritage has nothing to do with it.
11. The Second Advent concludes anti-Semitism in human and angelic history. Zech. 12:1-9 Rev. 19:11-21 Psalm 53

References:

<http://www.gracebiblechurchbaytown.org/doctrine/antisemitism.PDF>

<http://www.versebyverse.org/doctrine/anti-semitism.html>

R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s *Anti-Semitism* which can be ordered for free [here](#) (go to **General Information** for ordering). There is a great deal of history, both ancient and modern, which Bob covers in detail.

So far, we have studied:

Gen 13:14–16 The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, [look] northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. 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.

Then God tells Abram—this is about 4000 years ago—to walk through this land, to see what God is giving him and his descendants.

Gen 13:17 Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you."

This is the land that God will give to the descendants of a childless Abram forever.

Let's stand back and get the big picture here, because what is occurring is rather dramatic. God is beginning a new dispensation with Abram. God separated Abram first from his family and next from Lot. As has been discussed, Abram was *distinguished* from his family, in that he was a believer, and they were idolaters. Abram was *distinguished* from Lot, in that, Abram was a maturing believer and Lot was a legalist believer. Now God comes to Abram and makes a rather dramatic promise, one which is going to be significant for the entire dispensation of Israel, and to the end of human history.

At this point, God begins to build doctrine upon doctrine for Abram. Often, in order to teach a principle or to build upon this concept of Abram's inheritance, God will take Abram back to this point and He will build upon it. The first promise:

Gen 12:1–3 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

When Abram went into the land of Canaan, God then promised him this land.

Gen 12:6–7 Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

And now the third promise:

Gen 13:14–17 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, for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. 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. Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you."

God does the exact same thing with us. He goes back to a point of our spiritual lives that we understand and believe. For some, this is salvation—faith alone in Christ alone. And then God builds upon that. For others, God goes back to rebound and the importance of doctrine. In rebound, we are restored to fellowship with God by naming our sins to Him. That is spirituality. We also recognize how important the Word of God is in terms of it changing the way we think (it renovates our thinking, as per Rom. 12:1–2). We reach a plateau and we build upon that plateau. We develop a sound foundation, and then we build upon that foundation (Luke 6:47–49). Repetition of spiritual principles, often from a different view or in a different context, helps to reenforce these principles so that they can be built upon with more doctrine. Then we face tests in life, and we either apply Bible doctrine to the situation or we apply human viewpoint to the situation, and we see how things work out.

God is going to speak to Abram at least 7 times (this is how many times are recorded in Scripture), and each time, God builds upon what He said before. Furthermore, each time, God says more than He did before. As Abram's understanding of God's promises becomes more clear, that builds a more solid foundation, and God can put more upon that foundation.

Gen 13:14–17 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, for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. 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. Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you."

Abram has 3 categories of *offspring*: (1) those who are descended from him, but are not regenerate (such as, Esau, his grandson); (2) those who are descended from him, and, because of their faith in Jehovah Elohim, are also heirs to the promise (Isaac and Jacob, his son and grandson); and (3) those who have believed in Jesus Christ, who are Abraham's sons by faith (Gal. 3:6–7). The latter 2 categories will be like the dust of the earth (Gen. 13:16), the sand of the sea (Gen. 22:7), and the stars of the sky (Gen. 15:5). These are those God promised would be blessed through Abram's Seed, which is Christ.

At this point in time in the book of Genesis, we are moving from the Age of the Gentiles into the Age of the Israel. We examined the doctrine of dispensations back in [Introduction to the Bible, Lesson #6](#). and we differentiated between these ages at that time. Everyone reacts to this doctrine of dispensations in different ways. For me, the first time I saw it (it was on a small chart I got from a bookstore), it made perfect sense to me—I believed it immediately. To others, this doctrine does not interest them one way or the other. And then, to others, who have been brought up in a church which teaches and emphasizes covenant theology (which teaches that the *church* begins in Abraham's tent), it is a difficult

adjustment. However, simply put, God deals with the human race in a slightly different way and functions through a different set of institutions in each dispensation. Some things remain constant throughout, e.g., salvation comes by faith in Christ in all dispensations; and [the laws of divine establishment](#) remain intact throughout all human history. Some dramatic differences include, God works primarily through the nation Israel during the Jewish Age and primarily through the church during the Church Age. During the Age of the Hypostatic Union, there is no church and the religious institutions in Israel had become incredibly corrupt so that God no longer functioned through them. Furthermore, since Jesus Christ was on the earth, speaking directly to man, there were no intermediary institutions needed. Therefore, the Temple, the Ark of God, and animal sacrifices are all set aside, because their antitype, in the person of Jesus Christ, is walking the earth (John 1:14 Heb. 6:6).

These are 3 very different dispensations (the Age of Israel, the 1st Advent of Christ, and the Church Age), during which God communicates with His people through 3 very different institutions: through Israel, through His Son, and through the church. **Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the Heir of all things, through whom also He created the world** (Heb. 1:1–2).

In the Age of the Gentiles (Gen. 1–11), God worked through individuals—primarily, those in a particular line—and we do not have a record of a codified system of law (apart from a prohibition of murder), although, there appears to have been one (Gen. 26:5). In the Jewish Age, God will work within a particular family, which will become a nation; and God will work through that nation. God will give that nation a very specific set of laws; laws which fall into different categories. There are the Ten Commandments, which are nearly a universal law for all mankind; there is a system of civil law, which can be, to some degree, transferred from nation to nation, and modified according to the norms of that society. There will also be the ceremonial law, which will codify the various animal sacrifices to God, all of which look forward to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. Most of the Bible will be composed during the Age of Israel.

The Age of Israel is broken up into 3 parts: the Time of the Patriarchs (from Abraham to Moses), the Law and the Nation Israel (from Moses to Jesus), and the Tribulation (the final 7 years which will follow the end of the Church Age). Until Moses, we do not have the Mosaic Law (also called the Torah). However, we have some sort of system of law, because God will later say to Abram: **"I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky, I will give your offspring all these lands, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed by your offspring, because Abraham listened to My voice and kept My mandate, My commands, My statutes, and My laws [My torah]."** (Gen. 26:4–5).

In the second phase of the Jewish Age, we deal with Moses and the nation Israel, and Moses will give God's Law to the Jews—which laws are recorded in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. The 3rd phase occurs at the end of the Church Age, after the church is taken out of the world. For the purposes of our study, the Patriarchal Age begins in Gen. 12 and goes until the end of Genesis.

Dispensations, an Overview

Dispensation	Period	Date	Scripture
The Age of Israel	The Patriarchal Period	2100–1445 B.C.	Gen. 12–50
The Age of Israel	The Nation Israel	1445–5 B.C.	Ex. 1 to Malachi
The Age of the Hypostatic Union		5 B.C.–33 A.D.	The Gospels
The Church Age	Pre-Canon Period	A.D. 33–100	The Book of Acts
The Church Age	Post-Canon Period	100–present	The Epistles and Rev. 1–3
The Age of Israel	The Tribulation; the 2 nd Advent of Jesus Christ	7 years following the Church Age	Rev. 4–20

- The Age of Israel looks forward to the Age of the Hypostatic Union. This can be represented by the altars on which animals were sacrificed.
- The Church Age looks backward to the Age of the Hypostatic Union. This can be represented by the Eucharist, which recalls the cross upon which our Lord paid for our sins.
- The Law of Moses from the Age of Israel is fulfilled by our Lord during the Age of the Hypostatic Union.
- The spiritual life of the Church Age believer is initiated in the Age of the Hypostatic Union, where Jesus “test drives” the spiritual life all believers in the Church Age are given.

Dispensation comes from the Greek word *oikonomia* (οἰκονομία) [pronounced *oy-koh-nohm-EE-uh*], which means: 1) *the management of a household or of household affairs; 1a) specifically, the management, oversight, administration, of other’s property; 1b) the office of a manager or overseer, stewardship; 1c) administration, dispensation.* Thayer definitions. Strong’s #3622.

- In the Age of Israel, God works first through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph; and later, through the nation Israel. First the patriarchs and then the nation Israel are in charge or managing the Lord’s household.
- In the Age of the Hypostatic Union, God works through Jesus Christ, His Son.
- In the Church Age, God primarily works through the local church. The church universal (all believers in Jesus Christ) and the local church become the stewards of God’s plan and purpose. God works through us, in the Church Age.

Let’s sum up this information.

Three Dispensations Summarized

	Age of Israel	Age of the Hypostatic Union	The Church Age
Scripture	Old Testament beginning at Gen. 12 including Rev. 4–20	The Gospels	Acts and the epistles and Rev. 1–3
Time	2100–4 B.C. + 7 years	4 B.C.–A.D. 33	A.D. 33–rapture
Ritual and Reality	The Tabernacle, Temple, sacrifices and Ark of God all looked forward to Jesus Christ	The incarnation of Jesus Christ, Who becomes the focal point of human history	We look back to the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, celebrating that in the Lord's supper.
Specific Differences	The Mosaic Law, the animal sacrifices, the rituals and the Sabbaths.	The incarnation of Jesus Christ, fulfilling the Mosaic Law, and pioneering the spiritual life for the next age.	The Lord's Supper; the universal indwelling of the Holy Spirit; the universal priesthood of the believer.
How Jesus is Revealed	Jesus is revealed through types and prophecies	Jesus Christ presents Himself to mankind. His work on the cross delivers us from eternal judgment. He is the antitype of dozens of types, as well as the fulfillment of all Messianic prophecies	In the Church Age, we look back upon all of this historically, as revealed in the Word of God. We study types and antitypes, prophecies and their fulfillments, which gives us great confidence in the Word of God

Three Dispensations Summarized

	Age of Israel	Age of the Hypostatic Union	The Church Age
Spiritual life	Empowerment of the Holy Spirit is given only to a relatively few believers with specific responsibilities.	Jesus Christ kept the Law by means of the filling of the Holy Spirit and test-drove the spiritual life for believers in the Church Age. His disciples received the Holy Spirit by asking for it.	All believers receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and may choose to be filled with the Spirit. All believers potentially have spiritual impact. All believers are priests before God.
Agency through which God works	The patriarchs and then the nation Israel; the Jews themselves; the kings and prophets of Israel	Jesus Christ	Church Age believers (the church universal) and the local church

I realize that this is repetitive, but this keeps you from confusing the dispensations.

The purpose of studying dispensations is so that you can see where we are in human history at this time, and where we are going. We are with Abraham—God is speaking to him, making great promises to him; and these promises begin the Age of Israel.

Lesson 125: Genesis 13:14–17 Dispensations; the Importance of the Word of God

Gen 13:14–17 The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are; [look] northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. 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. Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you."

As discussed in the previous lesson, the Age of Israel begins with Abram. God does several unusual things during the Age of Israel. He founds a new race based upon spiritual regeneration (being born again) through faith in Him rather than upon genes, which is based upon human birth. This new race which is built upon a new birth will be represented by the ritual of circumcision (this *will* be explained fully when we get to God telling Abram to be circumcised). This new race is to be saturated with the truth, so that, as each set of parents raises their children, they inculcate them with the Word of God, which teaches

them about the coming Messiah, His sacrifice as the Lamb without spot and without blemish, and salvation through faith in Him. Also, God will teach them the right way to live.

This all began by God calling Abram out from among his family, thus distinguishing Abram from his idolatrous family (Gen. 31:19–35). This represents God calling Abram out genetically from his family. There was an additional separation, from Lot, which represented Abram's separation based upon his own spiritual maturity and Lot's lack of same.

In Exodus, God calls out a nation from within another nation. He calls Israel out of Egypt. He calls His people—those who have believed in Him—out from among those who have not believed in Him (some non-Jews will respond to this calling). God calling His people out from among the Egyptians is a true historical event; but it is representative of God calling out His people from the peoples of the earth. Jesus speaks of this exact same concept in parables (e.g., separating the wheat from the tares—Matt. 13:24–30). God foretold this by calling Abram out from his family; thus distinguishing (separating) him from his family. These are all real historical events, but they also represent something more.

In the end times (the Tribulation), Jesus will call out Israel (Jews who have believed in Jesus Christ) from all nations.

The Age of the Hypostatic Union is the cornerstone between the Age of Israel and the Church Age. All of the requirements of the Law, all of the fulfillments of prophecy, and all of the types are revealed in our Lord. He perfectly keeps the Law of Moses; He perfectly fulfills every single prophecy in the Old Testament; and He is the antitype for all the Old Testament types which looked forward to Him.

Jesus is the basis of the salvation of everyone in the Old and New Testaments. He takes upon Himself our sins and received the punishment which we deserve for our sins; and we are saved because we exercise faith in Him. The basis for our salvation is accomplished during the Age of the Hypostatic Union. The Old Testament looks forward to this sacrifice in many ways, going all the way back to God putting skins on Adam and the woman, in order to cover up their nakedness. In order for that to happen, an animal had to die.

Jesus lives His life by means of the power of the Holy Spirit and the guidance of the Word of God, which is the prototype spiritual life which we will lead in the Church Age. That is, we have the exact same spiritual assets as Jesus. We lead a spiritual life with the same power that Jesus had. Unless the plan of God called for it, Jesus depended upon the Holy Spirit for his power. He restricted the independent use of the attributes of His Deity (this is known as the doctrine of kenosis). He always had access to the use of His Deity (which is revealed on the Mount of Transfiguration to Peter, James and John), but He chose not to depend upon His Deity (Matt. 4:1–4 Philip. 2:6–8). He depended completely upon the power of the Holy Spirit and the knowledge of the Word of God (Luke 2:40, 52)—in the **exact same way that we depend upon the Holy Spirit and the Word of God**. In the plan of God, Jesus did not sometimes operate from His Deity, when that was convenient; and, at other times, operate from His humanity by means of the filling of the Holy Spirit (this

is what the temptation of Jesus by Satan is all about). For example, Jesus did not depend upon His omniscience to understand all things; He depended upon learning the Word of God, word upon word, doctrine built upon doctrine (again, Luke 2:40, 52).

Jesus not only had His Deity to which He could turn, but He had legions of angels which He could have called upon (Matt. 26:53 Luke 4:9–12). However, this was not in God's plan. Jesus was to accomplish God's plan with the exact same spiritual assets as we have. Therefore, every time that we are in some kind of jam (usually of our own making), we ought not to depend upon some great miracle of God or upon the intervening of angels (they do intervene and they do protect us, but that is in the world that we do not see). Our life, like His, is based upon the filling of the Holy Spirit and the inculcation of doctrine in our souls.

Despite having the example of Jesus Christ, the majority of Christians do not have a clue as to what their lives ought to be about. They are saved by believing in Jesus Christ, they go to church more often, they start behaving more morally and they do good things like, they give money to the church or they see something on television which grabs their emotions, and they send money. They usually change their behavior pattern, if, at one time, they used to be rakes, and now they no longer get drunk, they stay at home with their wives and children, and they try to be nicer people. Morality is a good thing; but it is not spiritual growth nor is it the spiritual life. Doing good things is good, but it is not the spiritual life. Going to church, singing hymns, tossing a few bucks into the collection plate are all fine and good; but these are often unrelated to spiritual growth, and, in many cases, unrelated to the spiritual life. There are myriads of believers who used to be unpleasant, immoral, drunkards, dope-takers; and now, they are easier to be around, because they are now more moral, and they do not get drunk and they do not take dope. We see that, and we proclaim, "He's a new creature in Christ" (2Cor. 5:17). However, it is possible that this person believed in Jesus Christ and then changed his evil ways. That is a great thing, but it is not necessarily spiritual growth. Or, it may indicate minimal spiritual growth. The key to spiritual growth is the Word of God, not the changing of one's morality.

The first time I became aware of the church I attend now, I thought this was another gimmick—their strong emphasis upon the Word of God. I had been in Baptist churches where they were very friendly and sincere; in Pentecostal-type churches where people are revved up emotionally; and in Catholic and Episcopalian churches, where the emphasis was upon ritual. So, when I became aware of Berachah Church, I thought, *this is their gimmick*—lots of teaching. However, as I began to receive more and more teaching, it became clear to me that, this is not just a gimmick.

Some of you who read this study go to a church, and you hear a 20 or 30 minute sermon once or twice a week; and that is how most churches do it, so, when you read me go on and on and on about knowing the Word of God, you do not quite grasp its importance. Therefore, let's just see what the Word of God has to say about Itself.

The Importance of Bible Doctrine

1. Jesus' spiritual growth was related to the knowledge of Bible doctrine. **And the**

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Child grew and became strong in spirit, **filled with wisdom**. And the grace of God was on Him (Luke 2:40). And Jesus **increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man** (Luke 2:52). Ask yourself, how does God increase in wisdom? God does not increase in wisdom; His knowledge is infinite and unchanging. However, Jesus, in His humanity, *increased* in wisdom. He did not depend upon His deity to grow spiritually. Jesus, in the Age of the Hypostatic Union, set the pattern for all believers in the Church Age.

2. When Satan tempted our Lord, there were several things going on; but primarily, these temptations were based upon (1) the misapplication of the Bible versus the proper application of the Word of God (2) and a temptation to get Jesus to depend upon His deity. If you don't believe me, go back and reread this in Luke 4:1–13.
3. Knowing the Word of God was as important in the Old Testament as it is in the New.
 - a. Moses told his people: "And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as bands between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." (Deut. 6:6–9). Jews were to saturate the lives of their children with the Word of God.
 - b. The teaching of the Word of God took place in a number of areas—in the high places or at the gates, the entrance into the cities (Prov. 8:1–3, where Bible doctrine is called *wisdom*). Here are a few verses taken out of Prov. 8: "I [wisdom] call out to all of you, and my appeal is to all people. You gullible people, **learn** how to be sensible. You fools, cause your heart to **understand**. Take my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold, for wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her." (Prov. 8:4–5, 10–11).
 - c. Believers were to seek the Word of God in the Old Testament, and to recognize that God's way of thinking was not their way of thinking. "Seek the LORD while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that He may have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts." (Isa. 55:6–9).
 - d. Believers in the Old Testament were not to depend upon their own understanding. Trust in Jehovah with all your heart, and lean not to your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths [i.e., He will guide you] (Prov. 3:5–6).
 - e. Bible doctrine is the source of happiness, a longer life, and a more

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peaceful and pleasant existence. **Happinesses to the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, for the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace [and prosperity]. She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called blessed** (Prov. 3:13–18).

4. Jesus Himself is the Living Word of God in John 1:1–14.
5. The renovation of your thinking is the key to the Christian life. Paul urges the Romans: **Do not be conformed to this time period, but be transformed by the renovation of your thinking, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and complete will of God** (Rom. 12:2).
6. The Word of God (Bible doctrine) is different from human thinking and human wisdom. Prov. 3:5–6 Isa. 55:6–9 1Thess. 2:13
7. The key is not how you feel or how *zealous* you are for the Lord; the key is knowledge of Bible doctrine. **Brothers, my deep desire and my prayer to God is for Israel, that they may be saved. For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the fulfillment of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes** (Rom. 10:1–4). The example given is, Jews who are industrious and emotionally committed to some form of religion, but they do not understand imputed righteousness, so they, therefore, attempt to establish their own righteousness. They come up short because of a lack of knowledge.
8. It is not possible for the Word of God to fail. Luke 16:17 Rom. 9:6
9. It is fundamentally important that the Word of God is not changed, adulterated or twisted. 2Cor. 2:17 4:2 1Tim. 4:1 Titus 1:9–11
10. Paul urged the Colossians to let the word of Christ live inside of them abundantly. Col. 3:16
11. Those who teach the word of God are doubly honored. 1Tim. 5:17
12. Paul told Timothy, who taught the Word of God: **Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who ought not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth** (1Tim. 2:15).
13. We purchase time through knowledge of the Word of God. **Take great care, then, how you live--not unwisely but wisely, making the most of every opportunity** [lit., *purchasing the time*, which means to get doctrine at your every opportunity]; **for these are evil days. Therefore do not be stupid, but keep on comprehending what the Lord's will is** (Eph. 5:15–17). God does not text you or send you emails as to what His will is; this is found in the Word of God.
14. So there is no misunderstanding, we are not required by God to go to the Word of God and dig out Bible doctrine for ourselves. This is why God provided pastor-teachers for us. We are not renegades roaming about in groups of one.

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15. Timothy's ministry was all about teaching. 2Tim. 2:–14–16 4:2–4
16. One area where believers become confused is, they are told to be obedient to those teaching them (Heb. 13:17). This does not mean that your pastor follows you around and gives you a list of sins that you have committed and now you need to stop committing those sins. The verb found here is the present middle/passive imperative of peithō (πείθω) [pronounced *PIE-thoh*], which means, *to persuade; to induce one by words to believe*. Strong's #3982. The passive voice means, the believer is to allow himself to be convinced or persuaded of the truth of Bible doctrine as taught by his pastor. The imperative mood means, he is mandated to do so. The present tense is linear or durative action. That is, you continually to be persuaded, which means, you think about Bible doctrine continually.
17. Quite obviously, the epistles themselves are a well of Church Age doctrine, which information is dug out by a pastor-teacher and presented to his congregation.
18. The Old Testament is not to be ignored either. Jesus taught the Old Testament and the epistles are filled with illustrations from the Old Testament. Rom. 3 Heb. 4 10 11 Jude 7
19. There are 2 words in the New Testament related to this topic which are used, at times, in a very technical sense:
 - a. There is simple knowledge, called gnōsis (γνῶσις) [pronounced *GNOH-sis*] which means, *[general] knowledge, understanding*. Strong's #1108. If you recall the verse, **Knowledge puffs up**; this is gnōsis. We also find this word in Rom. 2:20, which speaks of having a *form of knowledge*.
 - b. Then there is *over-and-above knowledge*: epignōsis (ἐπίγνωσις) [pronounced *ehp-IHG-noh-sis*], which means, 1) *precise and correct knowledge* 1a) used in the NT of *the knowledge of things ethical and divine*. Strong's #1922. This is Bible doctrine which is believed.
 - c. Having an understanding of Biblical terms and information from the Bible is simply information unless you believe it. When you believe it, it becomes spiritually useful. It is transformed from gnōsis into epignōsis.
 - d. **For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, not being mixed by faith by those who listened** (Heb. 4:2). See also 1Thess. 2:13 2Thess. 2:13 Heb. 3:18–19 11:6
 - e. James calls this the implanted word in James 1:21. The adjective that he uses means *inborn, implanted by nature, implanted by others instruction*. He amplifies this by distinguishing between a hearer of the Word and a doer of the Word (James 1:22–25). This is James' vocabulary, as opposed to Paul's. This does not mean that you read the verse, "Help little old ladies walk across the street" and so you immediately run outside, find some little old lady, and help her across the street. You implant the Word of God in your soul through faith. You believe the Word of God, and it becomes a part of your understanding of the world. Automatically, once you believe something, it will affect your life and what you do.
 - f. This is how you grow spiritually. When Bible doctrine is simply academic

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knowledge, it is much easier to forget; and since it has not become a part of your soul, you are unable to put it into a whole system of thinking, where spiritual things are compared with other spiritual things. 1Cor. 2:13 James 1:23–25

- g. When Bible doctrine is not believed, John speaks of the Word not being in us. 1John 1:10 (this is someone asserting that he does not sin, which is contrary to the teaching of the Word of God).
20. It is Bible doctrine which is accurate and believed which is active in the soul of the believer. **Here is another reason why we never stop thanking God: When you received God's Word from us, you realized it wasn't the word of man [human viewpoint]. Instead, you accepted it for what it really is—the Word of God. This word is at work in you believers** (1Thess. 2:13).
21. The difference between an immature believer and a mature believer is the word of righteousness. Those who are taking in the most basic of doctrines are spiritual infants; those who take in advanced doctrines are mature believers (obviously, these doctrines must be believed). **For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of God's revelation. You need milk, not solid food. Now everyone who lives on milk is inexperienced with the message about righteousness, because he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature—for those whose senses have been trained to distinguish between good and evil** (Heb. 5:12–14). See also 1Cor. 3:1 14:20 Eph. 4:14 1Peter 2:2. In other words, you are not a mature believer simply because you have been a Christian for a long time, and you don't sin as much as you used to. Morality is essential to the preservation of a national entity, but simply improving your morality is not the Christian way of life.
 - a. The Apostle John has a slightly different vocabulary. He has a much more limited Greek vocabulary than Paul, so he speaks of keeping (guarding, protecting) the Word, which results in the perfecting (completing) of the love of God in us (which is synonymous with spiritual maturity). 1John 2:5
22. **The Word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and is able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart** (Heb. 4:12).
23. The Word of God is eternal. Matt. 5:18 1Peter 1:23
24. Peter makes one of the most amazing statements in the Bible. He saw the glorified Jesus Christ, something which we can barely imagine. He and James and John saw Jesus transformed on the Mount of Transfiguration in Matt. 17:1–9. However, even more important than this thing which he saw with his own eyes is the Bible doctrine which he was writing and disseminating. **When we apostles told you about the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, we did not base our message on clever myths that we made up. Rather, we were eye-witnesses to His majesty with our own eyes** [Peter saw the glorified Jesus Christ with his own eyes]. **For example, we were eyewitnesses when He received honor and glory from God the Father and when the voice of our majestic God spoke these words to him: "This is my Son, whom I love and in whom I delight." We heard that voice**

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speak to him from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain [Peter heard the very voice of God with his own ears]. We also keep on having a stable word of prophecy [Peter and his associates know and teach Bible doctrine] that you would do well to keep on being attentive to, as a light that shines in a dark place as you wait for day to come and the morning star to rise in your hearts. First, you must understand this: No prophecy in Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation. No prophecy ever originated from man. Instead, it was given by the Holy Spirit as men spoke under God's direction (2Peter 1:16–21). Peter has the gall to compare what he is writing to (1) seeing the glorified Christ and hearing God speak and to (2) the accepted prophecies of the Old Testament.

25. It might help to simply see synonyms for doctrine and how often they occur in the New Testament:
- a. Didachê (διδάχη) [pronounced *dihd-ahkh-AY*], which means, 1) *teaching* 1a) *that which is taught* 1b) *doctrine, teaching, concerning something* 2) *the act of teaching, instruction* 2a) *in religious assemblies of the Christians, to speak in the way of teaching, in distinction from other modes of speaking in public.* Thayer definition only. Strong's #1322. 30 times.
 - b. Its verbal cognate, *to teach*, is found 97 times in the New Testament.
 - c. *Teacher*, which is based upon this verb, is found 59 times.
 - d. Another related word is didaskalia (διδασκαλία) [pronounced *dee-dask-ah-LEE-ah* or *did-as-kal-EE-ah*], which means *teaching, instruction; 2) teaching; 2a) that which is taught, doctrine; 2b) teachings, precepts.* Zodhiates spends over two pages on this word, giving the meanings *the act or manner of teaching; the thing which is taught, the instruction, the precept, the doctrine.* Strong's #1319. 21 NT occurrences.
 - e. The word for truth is alêtheia (ἀλήθεια, ας, ή) [pronounced *ahl-Ā-thi-ah*], which means [*absolute, unimpeachable, divine*] *truth, divine viewpoint, veracity, verity; reality; of a truth, in reality, in face, certainly; conduct which is in accordance with truth/divine viewpoint.* Thayer Definitions: 1) *objectively; 1a) what is true in any matter under consideration; 1a1) truly, in truth, according to truth; 1a2) of a truth, in reality, in fact, certainly; 1b) what is true in things appertaining to God and the duties of man, moral and religious truth; 1b1) in the greatest latitude; 1b2) the true notions of God which are open to human reason without his supernatural intervention; 1c) the truth as taught in the Christian religion, respecting God and the execution of his purposes through Christ, and respecting the duties of man, opposing alike to the superstitions of the Gentiles and the inventions of the Jews, and the corrupt opinions and precepts of false teachers even among Christians; 2) subjectively; 2a) truth as a personal excellence; 2a1) that candour of mind which is free from affection, pretence, simulation, falsehood, deceit.* Strong's #225. It is found 104 times in the New Testament Bible.
 - f. A noun previously mentioned, epignôsis (ἐπίγνωσις) [pronounced *ehp-IHG-noh-sis*], is found 21 times.

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- g. The verbal cognate of epignôsis (ἐπίγνωσις) [pronounced *ehp-IHG-noh-sis*] is found 43 times.
26. Finally, consider what God left us: the Bible, which is 1000+ pages, some of which is easy to understand; some which seems easy but is not, and some material which is quite difficult to grasp. Personally, I have been studying for 30+ years, and I still have a long ways to go. God did not give us a 20 page or 50 pages rule book, or set of morality laws. What He left for us is far more complex, and takes far more than a lifetime to fully understand.

What I have learned over the years is, the Bible is a very technical and specific book. The Christian life is not simply, you believe in Jesus Christ and then you do whatever. Or, you try to be more moral than you used to be. Morality is a wonderful thing, but it is not the Christian way of life.

Now, let's say, you're skeptical, or you don't care, or you don't have time, or you have some excuse. Once you believe in Jesus Christ, you are saved. You cannot lose that. If you choose to ignore the mandates of Christianity after being saved, then you are subject to God's discipline (Heb. 12:6). It is not my business to follow you around and tell you what you ought to be doing; and it is not the business of your pastor to follow you around and tell you what to do. Before your own master, you stand or fall (Rom. 14:4). You learn to be more concerned about what God does to you and less concerned what man does to you (Heb. 13:6).

Other places where you can read about the Importance of Bible Doctrine. Most of these studies are very different and approach this topic in a different way. I cannot vouch for all of the teachers below, but this particular teaching in each case appears to be accurate:

<http://www.lakeeriebiblechurch.org/Doctrine/pdf/ImportanceofBibleDoctrine.pdf>
<http://www.versebyverse.org/doctrine/importanceofBD.html>
<http://www.swordofthespiritbibleministries.com/RJSonnet/RJSonnetNOTES/Doc%20of%20the%20Importance%20of%20Bible%20Doctrine.pdf>
<http://www.middletonbiblechurch.org/doctrine/idoctrin.htm>
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Lesson 126: Genesis 13:14–17 Dispensations; Intercalation of the Church Age

Gen 13:14–17 The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are; [look] northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. 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. Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you."

With Abram begins the Age of the Jews (or the Age of Israel). Included in this is a land grant to the Jewish people, given above. What was never included in this promise was political independence. Now, God gave this land to Israel, and they will begin as an independent nation, but this independence was never guaranteed. In fact, before they ever enter into this Land of Promise, God warns them about their spiritual state, and how He would bring all kinds of discipline upon them, including being defeated and removed from the land for their apostasy (Lev. 26:14–39).

However, as a part of this same prophecy, if they obeyed God and kept His commandments, then He would bless them as a nation (Lev 26:1–10). Much of the Old Testament is all about the nation Israel and how God either blesses them or curses them, depending upon their attitude toward Him. This is foretold in Lev. 26 and Deut. 27–28.

However, in between the blessing and cursing in Lev. 26 are these verses: **"I will make My dwelling among you, and My soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you and I will be your God, and you shall be My people."** (Lev. 26:11–12). This is one of the many times that the Jews were told that God would be with them (in more than some sort of a spiritual sense). **"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel [which means, *God with us*]."** (Isa. 7:14).

Jesus Christ fulfilled these and many more prophecies when He was born of a virgin and walked among the Jews. He fulfills the words of the prophets, He is the antitype to the hundreds of types found in the Old Testament, and He keeps the Law. In this way, Jesus was related to the Jewish Age.

However, also in His life, Jesus set the pattern for our lives in the Church Age. We function by means of the Holy Spirit as guided by the Word of God. We do not depend upon miracles or signs or dramatic acts of God, but upon the power of God the Holy Spirit and the knowledge of His Word. In these ways, the time of the 1st Advent, the ministry of Jesus Christ, had ties both to the Church Age and to the Age of Israel. In the Age of the Hypostatic Union, Jesus fulfilled almost all that was found in the Jewish Age and His life looked forward to our spiritual lives in the Church Age.

By the way, the 1st Advent is when Jesus is born of the virgin Mary and the 2nd Advent is when He returns to this earth, first to take up those of the church, and then when He comes back to the earth, 7 years later, to destroy nation Israel's enemies. Jesus will fulfill all of the prophecy about Him in the 2nd Advent and the Millennium (His 1000 year reign over the earth).

You will notice how the focus changes from age to age. In the Jewish Age, the focus is upon altars, the Tabernacle, the Temple and the sacrifices. These things all look forward to Jesus Christ and His sacrifice on the cross. When we come to David and Solomon,

there is less focus upon these things, and more focus upon these 2 men, as David represents our Lord in the 1st and 2nd advents and Solomon represents our Lord in the Millennium.

However, once we come into the Age of the Hypostatic Union, Jesus Christ is the focal point. He is the fulfillment of all things in the Old Testament. He offers no animal sacrifices because He is the true Lamb of God (John 1:29, 36 Rev. 5:6). In fact, there is a new ritual which takes place in this age—baptism. There are almost no references to animal sacrifices in the gospels because Jesus is the fulfillment of these sacrifices. The Temple is only incidental in the gospels, because the Temple is the type and our Lord is the antitype. Why spend time studying that which speaks of the Lord when you have the actual Lord before you?

Right now, we live in the Church Age. In the Church Age, we no longer offer up animal sacrifices, because they looked forward to our Lord's death on the cross. We look backwards, through fragrance of memory through the one ritual of the Lord's Supper (the Eucharist).

In the Church Age, the nation Israel is irrelevant to spiritual dynamics. Sometimes there will be a nation Israel and sometimes there won't be. However, there will always be Jews, and we need to respect them based upon their lineage from Abraham and their future relationship to God (only blg Jews have an eternal relationship with God). In the Church Age, God no longer works through the nation Israel, but through the local church. It is through the local church that people are spiritually nourished and by means of the church that missionaries and evangelists are sent out.

The Church Age began in a transitional state called the Pre-Canon period. During this time, there were still animal sacrifices being offered (illegitimately); there were many still alive who had seen the risen Christ, and the Apostles exercised authority over more than one church. Since the Church Age was unknown to the Age of Israel, and barely spoken of in the Age of the Hypostatic Union, its differences had to be fully explained, which took place over a period of about 70 years. This information was called the mystery doctrine by Paul, who was the chief teacher of this mystery doctrine (Rom. 11:25 16:25 Eph. 1:9 3:3–12 Col. 1:26–27). God was no longer working through the nation Israel; God no longer wanted animal sacrifices, the Temple or anything else which was associated with the ceremonial laws of Israel. All of those things looked forward to the Person of Christ. When these things were fulfilled by our Lord Jesus Christ, then they are no longer needed. These are tremendous changes, and these changes needed to be laid out and explained by those who had spiritual authority.

In the Age of the Hypostatic Union, our Lord did signs and wonders so that we knew that He is the Lord (Matt. 11:1–6). However, the import of His ministry was not that He could do miracles—heal the sick and feed the hungry—but that He would die for our sins. Although Jesus felt compassion, and compassion factored into healing the sick and feeding the hungry, alleviation of suffering was not the purpose of His miracles. Jesus, as God, could have waved His hand in the air and cured all sicknesses and provided food for

all over whatever time period that He chose for all people (as He had done for Israel in the desert for 40 years). However, He did not do that. In order to be healed, one had to have personal contact with Jesus Christ (in some way); in order to be satiated, one had to have personal contact with Jesus Christ. Being filled and being made whole had to be associated with the Person of Jesus Christ, as He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; and no man comes to the Father but through Him (John 14:6). These miracles revealed Who Jesus is and were representative of having a relationship with Jesus Christ (i.e., through believing in Him). Through believing in Him, we are healed; through believing in Him, we are fed. Such things are representative analogies of what faith in Christ accomplishes. Therefore, Jesus did not only feed the 5000 and the 4000, but He also proclaimed, **"I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."** (John 6:35b). So, these miracles were both real and representative; and they gave Jesus spiritual authority, at a time when it was the pharisees and the sadducees who had usurped spiritual authority.

Jesus is often referred to today as the *Great Physician*. However, every time Jesus healed someone, this was accompanied by teaching of some sort. In healing the paralytic, Jesus compared his healing to one's sins being forgiven (Matt. 9:1–6). He testified to His Own authority by indicating that He had the ability to forgive sins. Being made well was associated with faith in Matt. 9:20–22 (we are made whole in Christ by believing in Him). When Jesus said, **"It is your faith that made you whole;"** He had set up an analogy to salvation. When you believe in Jesus Christ, it is your faith in Him which makes you whole. That Jesus had the ultimate power over death is taught when He raised the young girl from the dead in Luke 8:49–56.

Because of the way Jesus was revealed in the Old Testament, many expected to see a warrior, like David, who would free Israel from the shackles of Rome. There were many prophecies of the conquering Messiah. Psalm 2:8–9: **Ask of Me, and I will give the nations as Your inheritance; and the uttermost parts of the earth as Your possession. You will break them with a rod of iron; You will dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.** Isa. 9:6b–7: **His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over His kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of the armies will do this.** This we understand to be the 2nd Advent, when our Lord will return and destroy Israel's enemies, establish Israel as an independent and preeminent nation again, and rule over Israel as their king, as David's Greater Son (the 2nd Advent is His return and the Millennium will be the time that He reigns).

This is not an easy thing to understand, particularly during the 1st Advent. Even John the Baptizer was confused about this. Jesus pointed to his sign gifts as proofs of Who He was. Luke 7:18–22 **The disciples of John reported all these things [that Jesus was doing] to John. And John, calling two of his disciples to him, dispatched them to the Lord, saying, "Are you the One Who is to Come, or should we look for another?" And when the men had come to Him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, 'Are You the One Who is to Come, or should we look for another?' "** In that hour Jesus healed many people

of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind He bestowed sight. And He answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them." (Isa. 35:5–6 61:1). These miracles of Jesus were both illustrative of being made whole in Him as well as proofs of Who He was.

You see, John the Baptizer was confused, because he had studied the Old Testament, and there were many passages where the 1st advent (the incarnation) and the 2nd advent (our Lord's return to the earth) were treated as one contiguous event (Psalm 2:6–9 22:22–23 96:11–13 98:2–3, 9 146:7–10 Isa. 9:6–7—there are many more). The best known of these passages is Isa. 61:1–2 **The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD's grace, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn.** These are color-coded to separate the 1st and the 2nd advents. Here is why these words are well-known. They are quoted by our Lord in Luke 4:15–21 **And Jesus taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all. And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And, as was His custom, He went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and He stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to Him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's grace."** [After speaking these words], He rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." Notice what Jesus did—He read v. 1 and halfway through v. 2, and stopped. He just stopped. And He rolls up the scroll, and everyone is looking at Him. Of course, He read with great passion and gave life to these words, but He just stopped in the middle of the verse, and rolls up the scroll, handing it back to the attendant. These 2 verses have the 1st and 2nd advents in them; Jesus read only the portion which spoke of the 1st advent, and He stopped there—all eyes were upon Him (meaning He had their complete attention)—and He said, "Today, this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." They were witnesses to the 1st advent. Now, they certainly did not understand or distinguish between the advents of our Lord, and what amazed them was Him stopping His reading right in the middle of a verse. However, Jesus understood.

In retrospect, we distinguish between the 1st and 2nd advents of our Lord; and many of us have enough doctrine to read the passages from the Old Testament, and we know where the 1st advents leaves off and the 2nd advent begins. I previously quoted some verses which spoke of our Lord's 2nd Advent. Now, let me go back and quote them again, but include both the 1st and 2nd Advents (color-coded again). Isa. 9:6–7: **For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David**

and over His kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. Psalm 3:6–9: Yea, I have set My king on My holy mount on Zion. I will declare concerning the statute of Jehovah: He said to Me, You are My Son. Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give the nations as Your inheritance; and the uttermost parts of the earth as Your possession. You will break them with a rod of iron; You will dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel. In over two dozen passages in the Old Testament, we have the 1st and 2nd Advents of our Lord presented as one event.

John the Baptizer did not get this, which suggests that there were others who understood prophecy, but were confused by our Lord’s incarnation (I personally believe that Satan did not understand this either, and this is why he participated in getting the Lord to the cross). Jesus, in His 1st Advent, was not here to throw off the shackles of Rome (John 18:36).

Intercalated between the 2 advents of our Lord is the Church Age, which was unknown to prophecy. Even that there were 2 advents was not fully understood, because even John the Baptizer, our Lord’s herald, had to send disciples to Jesus to ask Him if He was truly the Messiah. We see much of this as history, so the 2 advents and the intercalation of the Church Age do not generally confuse us.

The Advents of Jesus Christ within the Dispensations

The Dispensation	The Two Advents	Description
The Age of Israel	Prophesied the Lord’s 2 advents (appearances)	From Abraham to Malachi, the Bible looks forward to the 1 st and 2 nd Advents.
The Age of the Hypostatic Union	The 1 st Advent	Our Lord is incarnated as our Savior, here to die for our sins. His life is the model for the Christian walk.
The Church Age	Intercalated (inserted) between the 1 st and 2 nd Advents	This is the Mystery Age, not revealed in the Old Testament. All believers have access to all of the spiritual assets of our Lord. This fulfilled what Jesus said in John 14:12 “Point of doctrine: I say to you, whoever believes in Me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.”

The Age of Israel/the Tribulation	The 2 nd Advent	Jesus returns to destroy all of Israel's enemies. This is the completion of the Age of Israel. The rest of Scripture about the Messiah is fulfilled.
The Millennium	The 2 nd Advent is continued	Jesus rules over Israel during perfect environment

The complete **Doctrine of Intercalation** is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)).

The complete **Doctrine of Dispensations** is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)).

The Apostles also had the credit card of being able to work signs and wonders, just as Jesus had, at the beginning of the Church Age. The Church Age marked a great departure from the Jewish Age, so this could not occur simply because 12 guys started saying, "Listen up, there are changes to be made, and here they are." These men needed to have their authority recognized, and signs and wonders demonstrated their authority through the power of the Holy Spirit (1Thess. 1:5). Once their authority had been established, there was no longer a reason to re-authenticate them. That is, in order for Paul to teach in a church or to get them to accept as authoritative an epistle, he did not have to, time after time after time, heal someone or perform some kind of a miracle. If that were the case, we'd all belong to the church of Penn and Teller today.

Therefore, Paul's ability to heal, for instance, faded as time went on (Philip. 2:26–27 1Tim. 5:23 2Tim. 4:20). Once the epistles are completed, we have all of the information that we need to understand our place and function in the Church Age. We no longer need miracles in order to authenticate a teacher, because his authority rests upon the Word of God, not in some miracle he can perform. Paul first showed that he had the authority of God through signs and miracles, and then he wrote the epistles, having established his authority; and these epistles became authoritative. When I walk into a church, seeing the pastor put on some kind of healing show means nothing to me—where is the spiritual growth in that? What he teaches from the pulpit determines whether or not I want to return. The real power in is the Word of God. If you think that the power of God today is in signs, healings and miracles, you have completely missed the point of the Church Age. The power of God is in His Word. **The Word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of the soul and the spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4:12). You have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding Word of God (1Peter 1:23). By faith we understand that the universe was created by the Word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible (Heb. 11:3). And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the Word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the Word of God, which [Word] is at work in you believers (1Thess. 2:13).** Again and again and again, the New Testament epistles stress the power of the Word; not the power of miracles, signs and healings. When Billy Graham proclaimed the gospel of

Jesus Christ, 10,000 or 20,000 might be in the audience. If televised, there might be a few million more. I personally know an unbeliever who, for many years, would be transfixed by the words spoken by Billy Graham (I don't think he ever believed, but his daughter did). Billy Graham did not do any miracles; he did not do any healings; and yet, he could go to nearly any city in America, and thousands of people would be drawn to him, because he would speak the Word of God to them. Even unbelievers recognized its power.

I saw an evangelist speak to about 800 high school freshmen and they were transfixed. The bell rang for their lunch, and he said, "Give me 5 more minutes, if you would" and no one moved. No one called out, "Lunch." 800 hungry 9th graders were transfixed by the Word of God being proclaimed to them.

The Age of Israel was interrupted by the intercalation of the Church Age; but there were 7 more years to go in the Age of Israel.

Once the rapture occurs, and all believers are taken out of the world, the church is gone, along with the restraining ministry of God the Holy Spirit. This is when the Age of Israel resumes, with the 7 final years of that age. This is when the Jews throughout the world and the nation Israel will become the entities through which God works once again. And, at the end of the Tribulation, our Lord will return as the Great King and Conqueror, which will be His 2nd Advent, and in that, He will fulfill all that is spoken of Him in Scripture.

Lessons 127–128: Genesis 13**The Separation of Church and State**

We will depart from the exegesis of Gen. 13 for just two more lessons (which will be sent all at once as a jumbo lesson)

So that you understand how we have gotten to this point in this study: with Abraham begins the Jewish Age. At some point in the Jewish Age, in the book of the Exodus, God will form the nation Israel. Therefore, we need to examine the various dispensations and the differences within each dispensation (which we have already covered in previous lessons). This leads us to the relationship between church and state, which is directly applicable to us today.

The principles of the Jewish Age and the Church Age become confused when the church and state merge in some way or another; or when one exerts authority over the other. In the Church Age, church and state are two different entities, which our Lord differentiated between in Matt. 12:17–21 and Paul in Rom. 13:1–9. In fact, this is a fundamental change between the Age of Israel (which we are just beginning to study) and the Church Age (the age in which we live).

When the Catholic Church assumed political power, this violated the principal of these two separate entities, and that marked a point of great degeneracy of the Catholic Church. There was little wrong with the doctrines of the early Catholic church. Jerome's Latin translation of the Bible was an excellent translation.

For nearly 200 years, our nation had this balance between church and state just about right. The church and state were separate and, to some extent, equal entities, the state owing its stability and prosperity to the function of the church within the land. The church was able to evangelize and teach the Word of God (this was a part of public and private education), because there was stability and order in the land. However, when the court began to misinterpret the separation of church and state, that was indicative of a national downward spiral to the spiritual state of our nation. The court began to give the state power over the church, and began to restrict *religious expression* by the state. *Religious expression* is not the same as the institution of the local church, but the courts intentionally chose to blur the distinction between these things, so that separation of church and state (a legitimate concept) could be changed into separation of religious expression and state (an illegitimate concept). That is, the state (actually, the courts) would begin to deny, limit and/or regulate religious expression (which is a violation of the separation of church and state).

In this way, our courts became lawmakers. Legally, this is very problematic. When our President issues an executive order that we dislike or the Congress begins passing laws with which we disagree, then we are able to vote them out of office. However, when the courts begin to make laws and strike down laws which the people pass, we have a serious problem. They have become a governing body of as few as 1, determining laws and policies for all, many as non-elected officials (we have the exact same problem when non-elected bureaucrats set policies based upon overly vague or open-ended laws, often designed to give them this power through regulation).

The Bill of Rights, the first ten Amendments to the United States Constitution, were all limitations placed upon the entity of government, not upon the people of the United States. The First Amendment reads: ***Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.*** The first amendment is all about what *Congress cannot do*. There are no restrictions found in this amendment on the people of the United States (which includes, the people in Congress). The restriction is upon the body of Congress as an institution. Congress has the authority to make laws, and the first amendment limits that authority with respect to free expression of religion, speech, press, assembly and petition.

What happened in the 1950's and 1960's is, the concept of the wall of separation between church and state was reintroduced (taken from an old letter of Thomas Jefferson's), but it was changed, through the clever use of language, into a wall of separation between religious expression and state, which is very different concept. This semantical change allowed the courts to become very antagonistic toward certain types of religious expression.

Let me insert a comment here—one thing which I have observed about liberalism over the past decade is, they love to use language in order to obscure their intentions, or to do things or assert things which simply are not true and right. That is exactly what occurs here

with the Warren Court (1953–1969), which became one of the most evil institutions in our nation's history.

Let me add another comment, lest you think I am demagoguing this court. A country gets the government it deserves. As more and more believers turned against the Word of God, this was reflected and institutionalized by our courts. What they did was wrong and evil; but this is a reflection of the evil in our society. Such things do not occur within a vacuum. The spiritual state of our society lent itself to the courts acting as they did.

The Warren Court began to restrict religious expression. Restricting some religious expression by the state or by state entities or by state officials, has led to a very confused state of affairs. How does the Supreme Court ban the Ten Commandments from state courts, yet has Moses and the Ten Commandments featured prominently on the Supreme Court building? How does this make sense? How are the Ten Commandments problematic in a nation of mostly Christians with a handful of Jews and Muslims (all of whom accept the Ten Commandments)? Furthermore, even most atheists accept the second half of the Ten Commandments. How does a set of laws upon which our own laws are based, become so controversial? If various stripes of Christians, Jews and Muslims all accept the Ten Commandments, then how could their display establish a religion? However, this is how the court gets away with banning the Ten Commandments in some places—it is religious expression, and the courts have decided that they have the authority to determine when and where religious expression can occur. The framers of our Constitution would have been shocked at this ultimate power grab.

The Ten Commandments are attacked because they are a part of the Word of God; Satan is at work in this nation; and man has a sin nature. Mix these things together, and the Ten Commandments are going to be attacked.

The sin nature has several lusts in varying degrees: sexual lust, approbation lust, materialism lust and power lust. Lust might be seen as the motivator for the sin nature. What happened was, very liberal men were appointed to the Supreme Court, and they desired power and they took power, essentially enacting law, and changing the power of the court forever. Whereas the founding fathers set up our Supreme Court as the weakest branch of government (and, therefore, with the fewest checks), the Warren Court (named after Earl Warren, the Chief Justice) made it the strongest branch of government, answerable to no one. From that point on, individual judges could strike down whatever laws did not please them, even if a majority of people voted for that law. Because these are generally professional lawyers, they can essentially take whatever viewpoint they believe, and then argue for that when making their decision. It has only been in a recent decision, where our courts actually took into consideration what the words of the Constitution meant during the time that they were written.

As a part of the Warren Court evil, they changed the First Amendment so that it became a restriction upon the people of the United States rather than upon the laws that Congress could make. This change put forth by the Supreme Court, causes great confusion as to what is acceptable and what is not. How do all of our coins have "In God, we trust" on

them, which is the national motto; and how is it that almost every state constitution and motto has God named, but singing Christmas carols in public schools is somehow problematic? Once the true doctrine of the separation of church and state was obfuscated through the use of language, confusion in this area has reigned, with our courts being clogged with all kinds of cases that would have never seen the light of day prior to 1950. At this point in time, we have two sets of entities—the taxpayer supported ACLU and privately supported organizations like the American Center for Law and Justice, the Alliance Defense Fund, the American Civil Rights Union, Liberty Council and the Judicial Action Group—who are usually at odds over these court cases (the ACLU tends to fight against Christian religious expression, unless it is way goofy).

Historically, the wall of separation between church and state was so that neither entity was able to exercise power over the other. The federal government could not establish an official religion and the church could not assume political power. However, religious expression is quite a different matter, which can be seen in many of the pronouncements and prayers of our early presidents. Even FDR recognized publically in his speeches that the United States was the place *where the Word of God is taught* (he used those exact words in public speeches during the war). This man had many failings; but he publically expressed the importance of the fact that the United States is great because this is where the Word of God is taught. This was not a presidential aberration on his part; as nearly every president expressed faith in God, faith in Jesus Christ and/or faith in the Word of God publicly, recognizing how integral this was to the United States as a nation.

The very same people who crafted the first amendment met for church in public buildings (the very buildings where Congress met to enact legislation were also used for church services for many years). In their minds, this did not violate the separation of church and state; this was not the Congress establishing a religion (which was correct). Having prayers, reading psalms from the Bible in Congress, and having a chaplain in Congress all go back to the Continental Congress and continue even to this day.¹⁷

So, in the Church Age, we have the church universal, which is composed of all those who have believed in Jesus Christ; and, in various geographical locations, there are local churches, in which believers receive instruction. Political expression in the church is not to be banned any more than religious expression by the state should be banned. Politics is a rich fountain of illustration and application. However, political expression is not the chief function of the church any more than religious expression is the chief function of the state. The founding fathers had no problem with hearing politics taught from their pulpits and they had no problem expressing their own faith in public, even in their roles as public servants. Many of the arguments of the founding fathers in making law centered upon the correct interpretation of the Bible and its proper application to government function. When authorities are quoted in order to support this or that opinion, the Bible was quoted by our founders more often than any other source as proof of this or that idea.

¹⁷ See <http://chaplain.house.gov/>

There are a myriad of examples of religious expression by our founders, but this one is pretty clear and unambiguous. The proclamation of Thanksgiving by George Washington.

**By the PRESIDENT of the United States Of America
A PROCLAMATION**

WHEREAS it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favour; and Whereas both Houses of Congress have, by their joint committee, requested me "to recommend to the people of the United States a DAY OF PUBLICK THANKSGIVING and PRAYER, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favours of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness:"

NOW THEREFORE, I do recommend and assign THURSDAY, the TWENTY-SIXTH DAY of NOVEMBER next, to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a nation; for the signal and manifold mercies and the favorable interpositions of His providence in the course and conclusion of the late war; for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty which we have since enjoyed;-- for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been able to establish Constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national one now lately instituted;-- for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge;-- and, in general, for all the great and various favours which He has been pleased to confer upon us.

And also, that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions;-- to enable us all, whether in publick or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually; to render our National Government a blessing to all the people by constantly being a Government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed; to protect and guide all sovereigns and nations (especially such as have shewn kindness unto us); and to bless them with good governments, peace, and concord; to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and us; and, generally to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as he alone knows to be best.

GIVEN under my hand, at the city of New-York, the third day of October, in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-nine.

(signed) G. Washington

By the PRESIDENT of the United States Of America A PROCLAMATION

Source: The Massachusetts Centinel, Wednesday, October 14, 1789

From: <http://www.leaderu.com/humanities/washington-thanksgiving.html>

If you want to see this in the newspaper, go [here](#).

Can you imagine a president making a proclamation in this way today? What if the principal of every school, prior to Thanksgiving, gathered the student body and read this proclamation to them? Do you think that the ACLU might be up in arms?

God creates **life**: Jehovah Elohim formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature (Gen. 2:7). See Acts 3:15.

It is Jesus Christ Who has given us our **liberty**. For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery (Gal. 5:1).

The pursuit of happiness is granted by God. I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live; also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil--this is God's gift to man (Eccles. 3:12-13).

The inherent need for law and order is in all mankind: Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus (Rom. 2:14-16).

Quotations from our Founding Documents

Thomas Jefferson, in the Declaration of Independence:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men. We . . . solemnly publish and declare, that these colonies are and of right ought to be free and independent states. . . And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, we mutually pledge our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."

The First Charter of Virginia (granted by King James I, on April 10, 1606) read, in part: We, greatly commending, and graciously accepting of, their Desires for the Furtherance of so noble a Work, which may, by the Providence of Almighty God, hereafter tend to the Glory of his Divine Majesty, in propagating of Christian Religion to such People, as yet live in Darkness and miserable Ignorance of the true Knowledge and Worship of God.

Quotations from our Founding Documents

The Mayflower Compact (authored by William Bradford) 1620 read, in part:
"Having undertaken, for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith, and honor of our King and Country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia, do by these presents solemnly and mutually, in the presence of God, and one of another, covenant and combine our selves together."

In 1812, President Madison signed a federal bill which economically aided the Bible Society of Philadelphia in its goal of the mass distribution of the Bible. This was "An Act for the relief of the Bible Society of Philadelphia" Approved February 2, 1813 by Congress. James Madison said,
"It is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian forbearance, love, and charity toward each other."

At the Constitutional Convention of 1787, James Madison proposed the plan to divide the central government into three branches. He discovered this model of government from the Perfect Governor, as he read Isaiah 33:22; "For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; He will save us." Although some have claimed that this is apocryphal, I have never read any good evidence for that opinion. Given the founders's strong faith in God and the Bible, it makes sense that they were inspired by the Word of God. What I do know for a certainty is, liberals absolutely hate the idea that Christianity and the formation of our nation are fundamentally linked.

Our nation originally recognized and embraced the God Who gave them this land. Our founding fathers spoke of Him and recognized our God regularly, both privately and publically.

Public and Private Quotations from our Founding Fathers

John Adams, writing to Thomas Jefferson, in their later lives:
The general principles on which the fathers achieved independence, were the only principles in which that beautiful assembly of young men could unite, and these principles only could be intended by them in their address, or by me in my answer. And what were these general principles? I answer, **the general principles of Christianity**, in which all those sects were united, and the general principles of English and American liberty, in which all those young men united, and which had united all parties in America, in majorities sufficient to assert and maintain her independence. Now I will avow, that I then believed and now believe that **those general principles of Christianity are as eternal and immutable as the existence and attributes of God**; and that those principles of liberty are as unalterable as human nature and our terrestrial, mundane system. [Emphasis, mine]

Public and Private Quotations from our Founding Fathers

Benjamin Rush, signer of the Declaration of Independence:

"The great enemy of the salvation of man, in my opinion, never invented a more effectual means of extirpating [extinguishing] Christianity from the world than by persuading mankind that it was improper to read the Bible at schools.[54] [T]he Bible, when not read in schools, is seldom read in any subsequent period of life. . . . [It] should be read in our schools in preference to all other books from its containing the greatest portion of that kind of knowledge which is calculated to produce private and public temporal happiness."

Fisher Ames (author of the house language for the first amendment):

"[Why] **should not the Bible regain the place it once held as a school book?** Its morals are pure, its examples captivating and noble. The reverence for the Sacred Book that is thus early impressed lasts long; and probably if not impressed in infancy, never takes firm hold of the mind." [Emphasis, mine]

John Adams to Zabdiel Adams:

Statesmen, my dear Sir, may plan and speculate for Liberty, but it is **Religion and Morality alone**, which can **establish the Principles upon which Freedom can securely stand**. The only foundation of a free Constitution is pure Virtue, and if this cannot be inspired into our People in a greater Measure than they have it now, They may change their Rulers and the forms of Government, but they will not obtain a lasting Liberty. They will only exchange Tyrants and Tyrannies. [Emphasis, mine]

John Adams in a speech to the military in 1798 warned his fellow countrymen:

"We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion . . . **Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people**. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." [Emphasis, mine]

Samuel Adams, from a speech at the State House, Philadelphia, August 1, 1776:

"He who made all men hath made the truths necessary to human happiness obvious to all. Our forefathers threw off the yoke of Popery in religion; for you is reserved the honor of leveling the popery of politics. **They opened the Bible to all**, and maintained the capacity of every man to judge for himself in religion." [Emphasis, mine]

John Quincy Adams, in 1837, at the age of 69, when he delivered a Fourth of July speech at Newburyport, Massachusetts. :

"Why is it that, next to the birthday of the Savior of the world, your most joyous and most venerated festival returns on this day [the Fourth of July]? Is it not that, in the chain of human events, the birthday of the nation is indissolubly linked with the birthday of the Savior? That it forms a leading event in the progress of the Gospel dispensation? Is it not that the Declaration of Independence first organized the social compact on the foundation of the Redeemer's mission upon earth? That it laid the cornerstone of human government upon the first precepts of Christianity?"

Public and Private Quotations from our Founding Fathers

Benjamin Franklin, Constitutional Convention of 1787:

"God governs in the affairs of man. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid? We have been assured in the Sacred Writings that except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. I firmly believe this. I also believe that, without His concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel"

In Benjamin Franklin's 1749 plan of education for public schools in Pennsylvania, he insisted that schools teach "the excellency of the Christian religion above all others, ancient or modern."

Noah Webster, author of the first American Speller and the first Dictionary:

"[T]he Christian religion, in its purity, is the basis, or rather the source of all genuine freedom in government. . . . and I am persuaded that no civil government of a republican form can exist and be durable in which the principles of that religion have not a controlling influence."

John Jay, the first Chief-Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court:

"The Bible is the best of all books, for it is the word of God and teaches us the way to be happy in this world and in the next. Continue therefore to read it and to regulate your life by its precepts."

Patrick Henry:

"The Bible is a book worth more than all the other books that were ever printed."

Thomas Jefferson, from *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*:

"An eloquent preacher of your religious society, Richard Motte, in a discourse of much emotion and pathos, is said to have exclaimed aloud to his congregation, that he did not believe there was a Quaker, Presbyterian, Methodist or Baptist in heaven, having paused to give his hearers time to stare and to wonder. He added, that in heaven, God knew no distinctions, but considered all good men as his children, and as brethren of the same family. I believe, with the Quaker preacher, that he who steadily observes those moral precepts in which all religions concur, will never be questioned at the gates of heaven, as to the dogmas in which they all differ. That on entering there, all these are left behind us, and the Aristides and Catos, the Penns and Tillotsons, Presbyterians and Baptists, will find themselves united in all principles which are in concert with the reason of the supreme mind. Of all the systems of morality, ancient and modern, which have come under my observation, none appear to me so pure as that of Jesus."

Thomas Jefferson, from the Jefferson Memorial:

"God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that his justice cannot sleep forever. Commerce between master and slave is despotism. Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people are to be free. Establish a law for educating the common people. This it is the business of the state and on a general plan."

Public and Private Quotations from our Founding Fathers

James Madison:

"We've staked our future on our ability to follow the Ten Commandments with all of our heart."

Horace Greely: "It is impossible to enslave mentally or socially a Bible reading people. The principles of the Bible are the groundwork of human freedom."

Our founding fathers were not deists (as I was falsely taught in school); nor were they uncertain about their faith; nor did they restrict their expression of faith to private functions and personal letters. They believed that, what they had received by way of freedom and blessing was from God, the God of Jesus Christ, and they were not ashamed of their faith and they were not ashamed of Jesus Christ.

While President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson was elected the first president of the Washington, D.C. public school board, which used the Bible as a reading text in the classroom.

Books could be filled with private and public quotations of the founding fathers and their faith in God and in His Son, Jesus Christ. Many of these came from:
<http://www.seekfind.net/AmericaWiseSayingsAboutAmerica.html> accessed March 22, 2011.

Other examples can be found here: <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/rel04.html>
here http://vftonline.org/EndTheWall/Educ_Bible.htm
here <http://www.free2pray.info/5founderquotes.html>
and here <http://www.wallbuilders.com/LIBissuesArticles.asp?cat=HD> (this link also lists a number of Thanksgiving proclamations, which were, at one time, a recurring part of our history).

This is simply another example of a clear expression of reliance upon God as found in the Preambles of State Constitutions.

The Preambles of State Constitutions

Alaska 1956, Preamble. We, the people of Alaska, grateful to God and to those who founded our nation and pioneered this great land ...

Arkansas 1874, Preamble. We, the people of the State of Arkansas, grateful to Almighty God for the privilege of choosing our own form of government...

California 1879, Preamble. We, the People of the State of California, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom ...

Delaware 1897, Preamble. Through Divine Goodness all men have, by nature, the rights of worshipping and serving their Creator according to the dictates of their consciences...

Georgia 1777, Preamble. We, the people of Georgia, relying upon protection and guidance of Almighty God, do ordain and establish this Constitution...

The Preambles of State Constitutions

Illinois 1870, Preamble. We, the people of the State of Illinois, grateful to Almighty God for the civil, political and religious liberty which He hath so long permitted us to enjoy and looking to Him for a blessing on our endeavors.

Iowa 1857, Preamble. We, the People of the State of Iowa, grateful to the Supreme Being for the blessings hitherto enjoyed, and feeling our dependence on Him for a continuation of these blessings establish this Constitution

Maine 1820, Preamble. We the People of Maine . acknowledging with grateful hearts the goodness of the Sovereign Ruler of the Universe in affording us an opportunity .. and imploring His aid and direction.

Massachusetts 1780, Preamble. We...the people of Massachusetts, acknowledging with grateful hearts, the goodness of the Great Legislator of the Universe ... in the course of His Providence, an opportunity .and devoutly imploring His direction ...

Ohio 1852, Preamble. We the people of the state of Ohio, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom, to secure its blessings and to promote our common ...

Oklahoma 1907, Preamble. Invoking the guidance of Almighty God, in order to secure and perpetuate the blessings of liberty ... establish this ..

Texas 1845, Preamble. We the People of the Republic of Texas, acknowledging, with gratitude, the grace and beneficence of God.

Vermont 1777, Preamble. Whereas all government ought to ... enable the individuals who compose it to enjoy their natural rights, and other blessings which the Author of Existence has bestowed on man ...

Virginia 1776, Bill of Rights, XVI .. Religion, or the Duty which we owe our Creator ... can be directed only by Reason ... and that it is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian Forbearance, Love and Charity towards each other ..

West Virginia 1872, Preamble. Since through Divine Providence we enjoy the blessings of civil, political and religious liberty, we, the people of West Virginia . reaffirm our faith in and constant reliance upon God ...

Wyoming 1890, Preamble. We, the people of the State of Wyoming, grateful to God for our civil, political, and religious liberties .. establish this Constitution .

This is a sampling of what is found in the various state constitutions. Notice that an acknowledgment of God, His blessings, protection and benevolence, are found in the constitution of virtually every state of the union, from all periods of time.

From: <http://www.seekfind.net/TheStatesPreamblesToTheirConstitutions.html>

The Bible was no stranger to early U.S. education.

Early U.S. Education

In 1642 and 1647, Puritan Massachusetts passed a compulsory education laws saying that all children needed to learn how to read; that Satan attempted to keep people from the Scriptures through their inability to read was the rationale for this law. Latin Grammar schools were established in 1635. They taught reading, writing and arithmetic, and prepared students for Harvard.

The New England Primer followed a tradition of combining the study of the alphabet with Bible reading. It introduced each alphabet letter through mostly religious phrases and then illustrated the phrase with a woodcut. The New England Primer was first printed in Boston in 1690 and was used into the 19th century.

The New England Primer introduced colonial children to their ABC's by means of pictures and rhymes such as these.



In Adam's fall
We sinned all.

Thy life to mend,
This Book attend.

The Cat doth play,
And after slay.

A Dog will bite
A thief at night.

An Eagle's flight
Is out of sight.

The idle Fool
Is whipt at school.



As runs the Glass,
Man's life doth pass.

My Book and Heart
Shall never part.

Job feels the rod,
And blesses God.

Proud Korah's troops
Were swallowed up.

The Lion bold
The lamb doth hold.

The Moon shines bright
In time of night.

From: <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/7/71/NewEnglandPrimerAtoM.jpg>

Originally, admittance into Harvard required one to pass a test in Latin and in Greek (the New Testament was written in Greek and the first major translation of the New Testament was into Latin). Although religion was fundamental to a Harvard education, that began to change in the early 1700's.

In 1786, Dr. Benjamin Rush wrote the essay *Thoughts upon the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic*. This was one of the fundamental documents in the history of American education. Some quotes from this essay:

Our schools of learning, by producing one general and uniform system of education, will render the mass of the people more homogeneous and thereby fit them more easily for uniform and peaceable government.

Early U.S. Education

I proceed, in the next place, to inquire what mode of education we shall adopt so as to secure to the state all the advantages that are to be derived from the proper instruction of youth; and here I beg leave to remark that the only foundation for a useful education in a republic is to be laid in RELIGION. Without this, there can be no virtue, and without virtue there can be no liberty, and liberty is the object and life of all re publican governments.

Such is my veneration for every religion that reveals the attributes of the Deity, or a future state of rewards and punishments, that I had rather see the opinions of Confucius or Mohammed inculcated upon our youth than see them grow up wholly devoid of a system of religious principles. But the religion I mean to recommend in this place is the religion of JESUS CHRIST.

See <http://www.schoolchoices.org/roo/rush.htm> for the entire essay.

Article 3 of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 read: Religion, Morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, Schools and the means of education shall be forever encouraged.

This is, by no means, a comprehensive view of early U.S. education. This simply indicates that Christianity and education, at the very beginning, were not at odds with one another, but worked in tandem with one another.

And from a Supreme Court decision: This republic is classified among the Christian nations of the world. It was so formally declared by the Supreme Court of the United States. But in what sense can it be called a Christian nation? Not in the sense that Christianity is the established religion or that the people are in any manner compelled to support it. On the contrary, the Constitution specifically provides that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Neither is it Christian in the sense that all its citizens are either in fact or name Christians. On the contrary, all religions have free scope within our borders. Numbers of our people profess other religions, and many reject all. Nor is it Christian in the sense that a profession of Christianity is a condition of holding office or otherwise engaging in the public service, or essential to recognition either politically or socially. In fact the government as a legal organization is independent of all religions. Nevertheless, we constantly speak of this republic as a Christian nation-in fact, as the leading Christian nation of the world. U. S. Supreme Court Justice, David J. Brewer, The United States A Christian Nation (Philadelphia: John C. Winston Company, 1905), pp. 11-12.

My point in listing a portion of these historic documents or writings or speeches is to indicate that, from our founding, our nation has been closely associated with our Lord Jesus Christ and His Father, our God, and His power, the Holy Spirit. As we find ourselves, as a county, becoming more and more separated from our Lord, the greater are the evils which threaten our country (communism, socialism, Islam, a soaring and nearly unpayable debt, a dependence upon other nations for rare earth minerals, as well as the

disintegration of the family and the work ethic and the dependence upon God). These things all go hand in hand. We must never, as individuals or as a nation, forget the words of Jesus: **“To whom much is given, much is required.”** (Luke 12:48b).

As an aside, I remember very little of what I was taught in my history classes in high school, but one thing which sticks in my memory is, our founding fathers were deists who believed that God started up the world and wandered off, leaving us here without His assistance. This sort of nonsense has been taught for decades in our schools, and it is evidence of the spiritual battle in which we are engaged. **For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places** (Eph. 6:12). Why else would historians go to such great lengths to distort our nation’s history? This is because our adversary is the father of lies (John 8:44).

One of the great enemies of the United States was and is communism. There were 45 goals of communism designed to breakdown America from the inside so that they could take over our country.

Some Communist Goals

17. Get control of the schools. Use them as transmission belts for socialism and current Communist propaganda. Soften the curriculum. Get control of teachers' associations. Put the party line in textbooks.
27. Infiltrate the churches and replace revealed religion with "social" religion. Discredit the Bible and emphasize the need for intellectual maturity, which does not need a "religious crutch."
28. Eliminate prayer or any phase of religious expression in the schools on the ground that it violates the principle of "separation of church and state."
29. Discredit the American Constitution by calling it inadequate, old-fashioned, out of step with modern needs, a hindrance to cooperation between nations on a worldwide basis.
30. Discredit the American Founding Fathers. Present them as selfish aristocrats who had no concern for the "common man."
31. Belittle all forms of American culture and discourage the teaching of American history on the ground that it was only a minor part of the "big picture." Give more emphasis to Russian history since the Communists took over.

It should not come as a shock to anyone that communism is anti-God. This should be further evidence that we are not in some political battle, but the struggle we are in runs much deeper than that.

The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness (2Thess. 2:9–12).

So far, we have studied this:

Gen 13:14–17 The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are; [look] northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. 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. Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you."

We stopped here and took a lot of time to examine the concept of dispensations, as this begins the dispensation of Israel. Also, connected to the dispensations are the advents (appearances, the coming into being) of our Lord. We saw that there is a 1st and 2nd Advent, which appears to be treated as one event in Old Testament prophecy, but is actually 2 events. Sandwiched (intercalated) between our Lord's 2 advents is the Church Age, a period of time which is not prophesied in the Old Testament, a time period which was hidden from view, but a time during which God's function on earth changes dramatically (Eph. 3:5). In the Church Age, the Angelic Conflict kicks into high gear, as does the spiritual life of the individual believer. During this period of time, all of our lives have impact. The Holy Spirit is given to all believers in the Church Age, whether Jew or Gentile, and each individual believer has a real and active place in the plan of God. In the Old Testament, only a handful of believers were given the Holy Spirit, for specific projects (see, for instance, Ex. 31:2–3); and it was possible to lose the Spirit (Psalm 51:11). Most believers in the Age of Israel sat on the side lines. However, in the Church Age, there are no sidelines. All believers are given the Holy Spirit and all believers have a place in the plan of God (1Cor. 12:7, 13 Gal. 5:25 6:8 Eph. 2:22).

Since many who read this live in the United States, I took the time to document the great spiritual heritage of the United States, which spiritual heritage has been deliberately hidden and distorted; and which historical impact has been reduced in the past 100 years. The reason we are on the brink of economic collapse is, we have strayed far from our spiritual heritage.

Now, we return to Abram, who is going to build his 3rd altar to God. Remember, this is like planting a flag in enemy territory (he is in the midst of idolatrous peoples).

Gen 13:18 So Abram moved his tent and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron, and there he built an altar to the LORD.

If Abram moves due south from the Bethel-Ai area, he will come to Jerusalem in 10 miles; if he continues for approximately 18 miles, he will be in Hebron. So Lot has moved off to the east/southeast, and Abram begins to travel throughout the Land of Promise, moving due south. However, if Abram and Lot were on a mountain near the Dead Sea (then the Jordan River), with the land of promise to the west, from there, Lot would be moving west

to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and Abram would be moving northwest up towards Hebron.

Again, Abram builds an altar to God whereupon he will offer animal sacrifices, which anticipate the death of our Lord on the cross.

Altogether, there are 4 altars which the Bible records that Abram builds. God the Holy Spirit communicates to us spiritual information through these 4 altars. On these altars, Abram would offer up an animal sacrifice (or several).

The altar is to the believers of the Old Testament as the cross is to believers in the New Testament. The altar looks forward in time to the cross. On the altar, an innocent animal, without spot or blemish, is offered up to God (which act goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden where the animal skins given to Adam and Eve, to cover their nakedness, had to have come from an animal sacrifice). In the same way, the innocent Jesus, Who was without sin, was offered up to God. This substitutionary death, the just for the unjust (1Peter 3:18), is both clearly represented by these altars, as it is in the manner of our Lord's arrest and trials. Jesus was clearly without fault, and yet, condemned by both the Jews and the Romans (who represent all Gentiles). So, even the system by which our Lord was put on the cross, represents the just being condemned because of the unjust. This is why these altars are important.

The Altars Built by Abram

Location	Meaning	Commentary
<p>The Oak of Moreh in Shechem.</p>	<p>Moreh means <i>t e a c h e r , fruitful.</i></p> <p>S h e c h e m means <i>back, shoulder.</i></p>	<p>Abram leaves the land of his father and comes to Shechem, which is right in the middle of Israel between the two seas and west of the Jordan River, halfway to the Mediterranean. It is here where God first promised the land of Canaan to Abram's seed (Gen. 12:6–8). This promise is the basis for all promises of God to Abram; the basis for Abram being <i>taught</i> by God.</p> <p>These promises are made certain by the power of God (which is represented by <i>back, shoulder</i>).</p> <p>Abram is in the heart of the land of Canaan, which is occupied by a number of different people, most of whom are degenerate idolaters. Building this altar in the middle of this land is akin to Abram planting his nation's flag into the ground (both fallen and elect angels would recognize this). Abram may not realize that is what he is doing, but God does. Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, Who had appeared to him (Gen. 12:7).</p> <p>Being given the land is analogous to positional truth. When we are saved, we are placed into Christ, and that is our eternal position (which guarantees our salvation). Abram is given this land eternally.</p>
<p>Between Bethel and Ai.</p>	<p>Bethel means <i>house of God</i> and Ai means <i>ruins.</i></p>	<p>This is about 20+ miles south of Shechem. The altar indicates the choice that we have between the House of God and the place of ruins. Abram and Lot represent these two choices. Lot chooses the riches which he sees in the world; Abram chooses to follow God. Gen. 13:3–4. In this context, both Lot and Abram choose between the House of God and ruins. Lot would have moved in the direction of Ai. He envisioned vibrant, exciting cities; what he found were ruins. Sodom will become actual ruins in the future.</p>

The Altars Built by Abram

Location	Meaning	Commentary
The oaks of Mamre in Hebron.	Hebron means <i>alliance, confederacy</i> ; and Mamre means <i>rebellious, bitter</i> .	As believers in Jesus Christ, we have two directions in which we can go: toward an alliance with God (Abram was called the <i>friend</i> of God) or towards <i>rebelliousness</i> and <i>bitterness</i> . In other words, we can be in or out of fellowship after salvation. Gen. 13:18. In this context, God has promised Abram the land all around and that his seed would be like the dust of the earth (Gen. 13:15–17).
Golgotha	Golgotha means <i>the skull</i> .	This is where our Lord was sacrificed on the cross. Although the text does not specifically state where Abram was when he offered up his son, I will bet, given the text, that he ended up making this offering on Golgotha. When Abram was to offer up Isaac, his son, he was not allowed to just go to the nearest hill and make an offering. This will be discussed in more detail when we come to this passage (Gen. 22).

Bear in mind the all of this was written about 2000 years before Christ (according to most conservative theologians and historians), and at least a millennium before Christ (according to liberal theologians who do not believe the Bible is the Word of God).

When our military conquers a significant piece of land or when we landed on the moon, what we did was plant a flag there. One of the iconic photos to come out of World War II is American soldiers planting a flag over Iwo Jima. This is what Abram is doing, for all intents and purposes. He is one man in the midst of a land filled with idolaters, and he plants the flag of his country, so to speak, by building an altar to the true God. First in Shechem, then between Bethel and Ai and then at the oaks of Mamre near Hebron. Although we primarily associate Jerusalem with Israel, these are 3 of the most important geographical locations in all of Israel.

Shechem is in the valley between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. Smith describes the *streams issuing from the numerous springs there, flow down the opposite slopes of the valley, spreading verdure and fertility in every direction*. Dr. Robinson, seeing this land in late spring or early summer, remarked, "The whole valley was filled with gardens of vegetables and orchards of all kinds of fruits, watered by fountains which burst forth in various parts and flow westward in refreshing streams. It came upon us suddenly like a scene of fairy enchantment. We saw nothing to compare with it in all Palestine."

Abram's grandson, Jacob, will restate this claim upon the land, when he builds an altar in Shechem (Gen. 33:18–20). Part of the land he purchased will become the final resting place for Joseph, his son, who lived in Egypt until his death, but his bones were brought

back to the land of promise and to Shechem almost 500 years after his death (Joshua 24:32 Acts 7:16).

On both sides of Shechem were Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, from which the sons of Israel would clearly delineate the blessings and cursings that were theirs, depending upon their relationship to God. When reading off these blessings and cursings to one another, these citizens of Israel foretold the future of Israel—how and why God would bless them and how and why God would curse them. When Israel pursued the True God, they would be blessed; and when they disobeyed God, they would be cursed. From one mountain, they would proclaim boldly the words of God: "If you faithfully obey the voice of the LORD your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the LORD your God. Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground and the fruit of your cattle, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock. Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out. The LORD will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before you. They shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways." (Deut. 28:1–7). From the other mountain, they would answer back the words of God: "But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you. Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the field. Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Cursed shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock. Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out." (Deut. 28:15–19). See also Deut. 11:29 27:4–28:68 Joshua 8:30–35

The city of Shechem was given to Ephraim, a son of Joseph's, and it became one of the cities of refuge in which the Levites also lived. Joshua 20:7 21:21

This was a place of great drama, wherein one man tried to make himself king over all Israel, by being recognized in Shechem; and where King Jeroboam lived after rebuilding the city.

Bethel was another great city of Israel, where Jews would go during times of distress to inquire of God (Judges 20:18, 26, 31 21:2). On the other hand, Ai was associated with sin and failure (see Joshua 7–8).

It is the Oaks of Mamre where God will appear to Abram and the place where he will eventually bury his wife. Hebron, where in was the Oaks of Mamre, has an important place in history during several periods of Israel's history. During the patriarchal period of Israel's history, 3 angels will tell Abram that he will become a father; there, Sarai will eventually die and be buried, and there, Isaac and Jacob will spend much of their lives.

During the time of the Exodus, when the people of Israel are about to enter into the Land of Promise, Moses sends in spies to look over the land, as God had told Moses and the people to go into the land and take it. These spies enter into the land from the south and they will go through Hebron and make note of it and the great grapes from there. Hundreds of years later, during the time of the monarchy, King David will begin his reign in Hebron.

Quite obviously, Mount Golgotha in Jerusalem, is significant because that is where our Lord will pay for our sins.

Lesson 129 addendum: Genesis 13:1–18

A brief exegesis of Genesis 13

An Abbreviated Exegesis of Genesis 13:

Bible translation used: The Scriptures 2009. Unless otherwise noted, all other quotations will be taken from this translation as well.

In the Scriptures 2009, instead of *God*, we have the word *Elohim*, which is a transliteration from the Hebrew. The other name for God, YHWH (or Jehovah, Yahweh, Adonai, Lord, JHWH, Y^ehowah) is represented with the actual Hebrew יהוה. The reason for there being so many different words used here is interesting. Originally, the Hebrew was written without vowels—not just YHWH, but every single Hebrew word. Because the Hebrew Scriptures (which we know as the Old Testament) were read aloud so often, the reader could look at the Hebrew consonants and know the word that was there. In fact, the Masoretes, who preserved the Bibles' pronunciation, introduced diacritical marks in the 7th century A.D. (these are vowel points, which was added above and below the original Hebrew text). Up to that time, every word in the Bible was read aloud except for one, and that was YHWH. When the Jews came to this proper name, they said, *Adonai* (= *Lord*). As a result, the Jews preserved the pronunciation of the Biblical text for all but one word. Of the nearly 100 translations of the Old Testament to which I refer, any one of those eight forms may be found—and one of them, the Message (I believe) uses *GOD*. Furthermore, Bible translations are not necessarily consistent at this point. One place we may read *Lord*, and elsewhere we may read *Jehovah* in the same translation.

Genesis 13:1 And Abram went up from Mitsrayim [= *Egypt*] into the South, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him.

Abram and his family came back up from Egypt.

Genesis 13:2 And Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold.

Abram went down to Egypt already being prosperous and having many possessions. He was given a great deal more while in Egypt. Essentially, he was being paid a dowry for Sarai; but the Pharaoh did not request to have it back, after finding out the Sarai was his wife.

Genesis 13:3–4 And he went on his journey from the South as far as Běyth Ěl [= *Bethel, Beth El*], to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Běyth Ěl and Ai, to the place of the slaughter-place which he had made there at first. And there Abram called on the Name of יהוה [= *YHWH, Y^ehowah*].

Abram came up from the south and he pitched his tent between Bethel and Ai.

He had already established an altar there. While he was there, he called on the name of the Lord. Remember that Abram had spoken directly to God in the past. We do not know the circumstances; we do not know how God appeared; we only know that this was really God.

Genesis 13:5 Now Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents.

Lot was also prospered. We understand that to be blessing by association. God blesses Abram, as a growing believer; and God prospers Lot because he is in close association with Abram. This blessing continues despite a misstep by Abram now and again.

Genesis 13:6 And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together, for their possessions were great, so that they could not dwell together.

Abram and Lot were both blessed so much that their possessions (meaning livestock, for the most part) were overflowing. They had so much, that they could not keep them separate and determine ownership.

Unfortunately, the person being blessed by association rarely understands the process of meaning. For that reason, there are many atheists and agnostics who believe that life in the United States would be better if there were fewer Christians and if they had little or no say in the public forum. Such an approach would mean far less freedom and prosperity for the atheists and agnostics. But they don't get this.

Genesis 13:7 And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. And at that time the Kena'anites [= *Canaanites*] and the Perizzites dwelt in the land.

As a result of having too much, there were conflicts breaking out between Abram's hired help and Lot's hired help (some may have been hired; some might be slaves).

Genesis 13:8 Then Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers.

Abram, speaking to Lot, asks for there to be no conflict between their workers. "We are brothers; there is no need for this strife and conflict."

Lot may have been young when he went along with Abram; but at this point, he seems to think that he would be fine living on his own.

Genesis 13:9 “Is not all the land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I go to the left.”

Let me suggest that there were some sour things being said by Lot to his workers and vice versa. All that was happening was, some of the sheep and other forms of livestock were being mixed in together, as Lot and Abram traveled together.

Since the strife seems to be ongoing, Abram says, “Let’s solve it this way: you go left, then I’ll go right; you go right, then I will go left.”

Genesis 13:10 And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of the Yardēn [= *the Jordan Valley*], that it was well watered everywhere – before הוהי destroyed Sedom and Amorah [= *Sodom and Gomorrah*] – like the garden of הוהי, like the land of Mitsrayim as you go toward Tso’ar [= *Zoar*].

The Jordan Valley was most beautiful. It was well-watered and there were plants, various fruit-bearing trees and grazing everywhere.

Genesis 13:11 So Lot chose for himself all the plain of the Yardēn, and Lot moved east. Thus they separated from each other,

Lot chooses the well-watered Jordan Valley and moves off eastward into that valley.

Genesis 13:12 Abram dwelling in the land of Kena’an, and Lot dwelling in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent as far as Sedom.

Abram is west of the Jordan River, away from the valley. This was the land chiefly populated by the Canaanites. Lot went down into the valley, and pitched his tent close to Sodom.

Genesis 13:13 But the men of Sedom were evil and sinned before הוהי, exceedingly so.

The men of Sodom were extremely evil and they continually sinned before God.

Genesis 13:14–15 And after Lot had separated from him, הוהי said to Abram, “Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land which you see I shall give to you and your seed forever.

Once Lot had separated himself from Abram, God said to Abram, “Look up all around you, in all directions. That land is for you and for your descendants forever.”

Genesis 13:16 “And I shall make your seed as the dust of the earth, so that, if a man could count the dust of the earth, then your seed also could be counted.

God further promises that the descendants of Abram would be like the dust of the earth.

Genesis 13:17 “Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you.”

“Get up and keep walking,” God told Abram. “All that you see and everywhere that you walk, that is your land.”

Genesis 13:18 So Abram moved his tent, and went and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamrē, which are in Hebron, and built a slaughter-place there to הוּחִי.

Abram went to the terebinth trees of Mamre in Hebron and he built an altar there as well.

Lesson 130: Genesis 14:1–5

War of the Kings

Every believer faces a set of problems. Sometimes they never seem to end. Abram’s first great problem in the land of Canaan was, he was living in the midst of an economic depression. His solution was to run from it, which is no solution at all. This is how he ended up in Egypt, a place of no spiritual blessing; and a time period during which Abram had no contact with God.

In this chapter, Abram is going to face adversity head on. The land of promise is going to be overrun by war, and, instead of running down to Egypt again, Abram is going to hold his ground, and, when it becomes necessary, he will become directly involved. This indicates that Abram has advanced spiritually.

This is an odd chapter, and J. Vernon McGee observed that, if you removed this chapter from the narrative of Genesis, it would be unnoticeable. You would not feel as if you had missed out on anything, but to leave this chapter out would be to leave out one of the greatest chapters found in the Bible.

There are a lot of moving parts in this chapter. There are 9 different kings involved in this chapter; there will be those who conquer and those who serve. There is going to be several other groups of people involved in this chapter, incidentally. However, the Bible will focus upon Abraham and Lot. This is because God is interested in those who have believed in Him. God has made several specific promises to Abram, so God must make certain that these promises comes to pass. Furthermore, God controls history, no matter how many players are on the field. God controls history to achieve the outcome which He requires.

How does this apply to you? You might find yourself in the middle of a depression or in the midst of a war or in some other national or regional disaster. If you have believed in Jesus Christ, then God is concerned about you specifically. Furthermore, the Bible is filled with promises. There are more promises in the Bible which God has made to us as believers than He made of Abraham—far more. God has to keep these promises. Otherwise, God is not God.

There are a number of reasons why the United States is headed for a great economic collapse, but one of them is, many people, including believers, think that they can develop a system of government which will take care of everyone. They think that they can pass a few laws and organize a few bureaucracies, and that everyone's needs will be taken care of. Children who show up to school hungry? Government will feed them. People who did not save their money for their old age? Government will take care of them. People without medical insurance at the end of their lives when they most need it? Uncle Sam—who is now Dr. Sam—will see that they get whatever medical treatment is necessary. Such promises have led us on a road to economic collapse. Government cannot become God. Government cannot be all things to all men. [Should a people not look to their God? \(Isa. 8:19b\)](#). God can make promises and these promises stand forever. Man cannot. [The grass withers and the flower fades: but the Word of our God shall stand forever \(Isaiah 40:8\)](#). [God forever remembers His covenant, the promise He ordained for a thousand generations \(Psalm 105:8\)](#). [“I will remember the promise that I made with you when you were young, and I will make it a promise that will last forever.” \(Ezek. 16:60\)](#).

The contents of the first half of the chapter are as follows: a great war breaks out, one that we might understand to be the first world war; or, a war which takes in many of the main players on the world stage in the Middle East.

Then Lot is going to find himself caught up in the midst of this, and he is taken as a slave by one side of this war of kings. Then Abram will lead a very small battalion of 318 soldiers against what is easily a brigade (2000–5000) and quite probably a division (10,000–20,000) of hardened, well-trained soldiers. Furthermore, he will defeat the much larger coalition of professional soldiers with his little rag-tag band of citizen-soldiers.

The result is a great spiritual victory for Abram and God will reward him. He will meet King Melchizedek, a type of Christ, and, in my opinion, will be the recipient of one of the greatest spiritual handoffs in the history of man.

[Gen 14:1](#) [In the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim,](#)

Shinar is an early name for the Babylon area. We have come across this name twice already in our study of Genesis. You may recall Nimrod, the grandson of Ham, who was a great hunter and who established a great kingdom in the cities of Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, which were in the land of Shinar (Gen. 10:6–10). This would make Shinar an early name for Babylonia. The descendants of Noah eventually moved from the mountains near the eastern border of Modern Turkey south-southeast until they were overlooking the very lush plain of Shinar (modern-day Iraq). As waters continued to recede after the flood, they moved down into these lowlands (Gen. 11:2).

Ellasar is probably the name of the Chaldean Larsa, which is located just a little northwest from Ur, up along the Euphrates River. In other words, this invading army is coming from the area where Abram originally lived.

Elam is the area just east of Ur, and it would have been the land that Noah's descendants first came down to from the mountains. Elam was a son of Shem, after whom this land is probably named (Gen. 10:22).

You probably recognize the word *Goiim*, which is usually translated *nations* or *Gentiles* (the -im ending is plural in the Hebrew). We do not know if this refers to a specific place here or whether Tidal is king over a small group of city-states. Prior to this, *goiim* has already been translated *nations* in Gen. 10:5, 20, 31–32; in such a way that, it clearly does not refer to a specific geographical area. However, that does not preclude this word from referring to a particular area in the east.

We do not know any of these kings, although the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew-English lexicon suggest that *Amraphel* could be Hammurabi. I haven't a clue as to how they came up with this identity.

In any case, this is not some coalition of desert bandits who are out to plunder; these are invading kings from the east who have come to plunder the people of Canaan. They intend to put down this rebellion, to take their possessions, and to take many of their people as slaves.

This was not the first time that these groups had contact. Apparently, Chedorlaomer had an arrangement with these peoples of Canaan where they paid him tribute, and they were rebelling against that arrangement. We do not know how often this sort of thing occurred. We only know that, this is an invading army and they came from the general area where Abram was raised up, the area that God told Abram to leave. We will come to find out that the people whom they attacked was a very degenerate people.

Gen 14:1 In the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim,

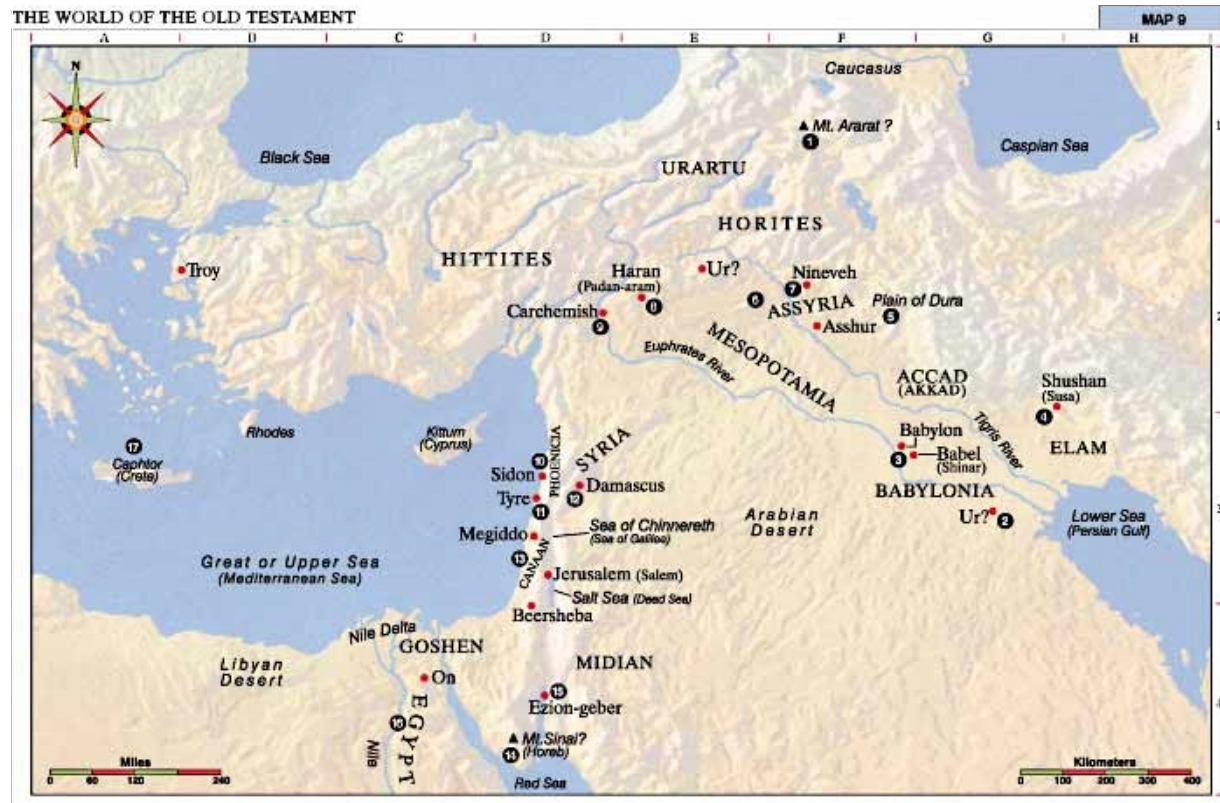
This may have been the first significant war of mankind, which is why it is found here.

There is one more thing which we need to keep in mind: the Middle East then was not this vast, almost uninhabitable desert area that we know today. It was lush and green, and the area around the Euphrates is called the Fertile Crescent (a name given to this area by James Henry Breasted in 1906). Over several millennia, this area has gone from a lush, prosperous area, to what we have today, which metamorphous represents God's judgment on the people who live in these lands.

As you will see in the map which follows, there is quite a bit of distance between the centers of these two regions. They are approximately 500 miles apart. If we take what is later found in the Bible as the way of doing things, then the kings of the east probably had outposts around Sodom and Gomorrah where a tax would be collected and then shipped off to the east. When a tax is not received in the 13th year, an army was sent to deal with it.

The first set of kings (v. 1) come from the Babylonian area (which is to the east). The second kings are from the Canaan area (v. 2), many from around the Dead Sea area.

The World of the Old Testament



Map is from: <http://jesusreigns.files.wordpress.com/2009/07/the-world-of-the-old-testament.jpg>

This is essentially the first world war (or, at least the first one recorded in the Bible).

[Gen 14:2](#) these kings made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar).

Sodom and Gomorrah are cities along the southern end of the Salt Sea (which may not have been salty at this time, but brackish at most, with a river leading from it out into the Red Sea. Admah means *red earth* and it would have been a city in the Siddim valley close to Sodom and Gomorrah (Deut. 29:23). In fact, Admah, Sodom, Gomorrah and Zeboiim are all linked as cities close together, settled by Canaanites, as far back as Gen. 10:19.

Where we read things like *that is, Zoar*, that is called a *gloss*. It is simply taking the name of a place in one era and identifying it with the same place under a new name in a later era, so that the reader knows where the area is. So, a copyist or a writer at a later date (like Moses), adds in this information. It is similar to me identifying the area where the first

kings come from—ancient Babylon—as modern-day Iraq. I also mentioned that Mount Ararat is where Noah’s ark landed, and that it was probably along the eastern border of modern Turkey. Making such references is similar to a gloss in Scripture, which does not alter anything in the Old Testament.

Gen 14:3 And all these joined forces in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea).

Those in the west are rebelling against those over them from the east. Apparently, 13 years ago, kings from the east came over into Canaan and conquered this set of cities. One approach when a place is conquered is, you leave the people there, and they pay a tribute (tax) to the conquering nation (s). It was not unusual for peoples in the east to come into the land of Canaan and conquer portions of it. In fact, this will happen on several occasions in the Bible.

Gen 14:4 Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

What was common in that era is one national entity would dominate another, and the conquered peoples would have to pay their conquerors tribute. *Serving them* meant working in their own land but paying taxes to the conquering country. Many times, a Suzerain-Vassal treaty would be established, which specified the responsibilities of both parties. The Suzerain (ruler from a different country) would provide these people with some modicum of protection (i.e., they would become a protectorate), furthermore, he would not invade them. In return, the vassals would pay taxes to the sovereign and swear allegiance to him. The suzerain would establish this treaty and the vassals would agree to it (otherwise, they would be destroyed by the suzerain).

Such a treaty (or covenant) could be established by means of an invasion; but sometimes these problems could be worked out before an invasion. Psychological warfare was often employed, and if one people were conquered in their minds, that would be enough to establish a suzerain-vassal treaty.

The people living in the land of Canaan had been conquered by Chedorlaomer, a great king from the east. They paid him tribute for 12 years and then they rebelled against him in the 13th year. We may reasonably assume that he sent his tax collectors to collect tribute from them in that 13th year, and they killed these tax collectors. Or, Chedorlaomer established an outpost in the Valley of Siddim (possibly several outposts), and, on the 13th year, these soldier-tax collectors were beaten down.

Gen 14:5 In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim,

This gives us a fairly straightforward time frame. Given the distance from these cities in the west from the main cities of the kings of the east, it took a year for the Chedorlaomer to realize that he had been stiffed and to gather together an army to travel this distance.

However, we now have the problem, *who are all of these other people mentioned in this verse?* Next time.

Gen. 14 is one of the most unusual chapters in Genesis, if not in the entire Bible.

What We Learn from Genesis 14

- ❑ This will give us a much fuller understanding of the person of Abraham with respect to his wealth, his character, his bravery, his assets. Also, the number of his servants and staff is revealed. Furthermore, the loyalty which his people have for him is apparent in this chapter.
- ❑ This chapter gives us a better clue as to the recording and the transmission of Scripture. There are a few places in here where a copyist, or, most likely, Moses, added a word of explanation or clarification. Very likely, vv. 3, 7, 8 and 17 have these points of clarification. Moses, being a genius of history, having been raised in the palace of the Pharaoh and receiving a royal education, a recognizing the need of the readers to properly interpret Scripture, would have been the most likely person to add those words of clarification, by the guidance of God the Holy Spirit. My point is that it appears as though someone recorded this information and then someone added those few words to it. Logically, this would be Abram as the original writer and Moses as the one who copied these things down.
- ❑ This chapter gives us a better idea as to the state that the world was in. This is the first war mentioned in the Bible. This is a major war, but the organization with which this is done and the existence of arms, indicates that this was a normal occurrence in life. At some point in time when the groups of peoples from Gen. 11 dispersed, there were going to be some territorial disputes. Certainly, one group would find a picturesque spot along a river with fresh water and an abundance of wild game and good land for farming and settle there, and another group would come along and either camp nearby or decide that they would like that particular place, and there would be a skirmish. Remember, that they could not communicate as a whole (although, with man's genius, it was apparent that some learned to translate from language to language at a very early time). Just like today, if you took one hundred people at random and dropped them into the middle of Germany, one or two could get by with their German skills and another 2 or 3 might be able to say a few German phrases to begin with, but the vast majority would be without linguistic resource. It was the same here.
- ❑ We understand how various nations interacted. Alliances were formed, nations were conquered, protectorates were formed, nations paid tribute; and, from time to time, a protectorate would rebel.
- ❑ We will actually learn some important principles of military function: the importance of training, surprise, and the proper use of mass.
- ❑ We have a better idea as to the state of the world and corruption of man, the violence that he was capable of soon after the flood.

What We Learn from Genesis 14

- ❑ Most importantly, we learn that Jesus Christ controls history.

These few points of introduction only apply to the first portion of Gen. 14. There is a second portion which will require as much explanation as the first portion.

This is what we have studied so far:

Gen. 14:1–4 At that time four kings—King Amraphel of Shinar, King Arioch of Ellasar, King Chedorlaomer of Elam, and King Tidal of Goiim—went to war against five kings—King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). The five kings joined forces and met in the valley of Siddim (that is, the Dead Sea). For 12 years they had been subject to Chedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

At that time is literally *and so it is in days of...* While God is showing all of the land to Abram, there is this great human drama playing out around the Dead Sea, which is where Lot, Abram's nephew, eventually moved.

A portion of this chapter is going to be a war between two alliances—4 kings who come out of the east and 5 kings who form a coalition in the west. Their kingdoms were far apart—about 500 miles from one another—yet for 12 years, King Chedorlaomer exerted control over these 5 city-states which are situated near the Salt Sea. The exact location of these 5 cities is disputed, but my guess is, there was a river which drained the water of the Salt Sea into the Red Sea, and that these cities were gathered along this river, in what was called the Valley of Siddim.

In the ancient world, the key to any word is its consonants. You will note the consonantal equivalence of Siddim and Sodom (the Hebrew does not double up the consonant as we do in the English, but it puts a dot in the middle of the consonant, to indicate that it both ends one syllable and begins the next syllable). Sodom and Siddim could be equivalent names or one could have arisen from the other. Even today, there is a salt mountain located at the southwest corner of the Dead Sea called Jebel Usdum. *Jebel* means *mountain*; and Usdum is consonantally equivalent to *Sodom* and *Siddim*.

As the Hebrew style is, we get the overall view first, and then this will be followed by details.

Then we read something which is quite unexpected:

Gen 14:5 In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim,

Notice that the Chedorlaomer's eastern alliance is at war with whole different sets of people in vv. 5–7. If this all took place in the 14th year, then this was an amazing military alliance.

The operative verb here is the masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect of *nâkâh* (נָכַח) [pronounced *naw-KAWH*], which means *to smite, to assault, to hit, to strike, to strike [something or someone] down, to defeat, to conquer, to subjugate*. Strong #5221 BDB #645. The Hiphil appears to be the principle form of this verb and the imperfect tense means that this is a process. If this was the perfect tense, we might see this as something which had been done in the past, as in, *these kings also had subdued these groups*.

We understand the 14th year—it takes awhile to respond to what is happening 500 miles away—but then, who are all of these other people? This 4-king alliance from the east appears to be taking the scenic route. This gives us an idea as to how they work. They have a large, well-trained army, and, rather than go directly to Sodom and Gomorrah, they attack and defeat several people along the way. Let me suggest 3 reasons why this is done (1) It is on the way. Just as you might be going grocery shopping, and you are asked to stop by the hardware store and pick up something, since it is on the way; that is how this was viewed. (2) We do not know how logistics worked for this ancient army. They have to be fed. It is possible that they conquer these other peoples in order to eat. (3) Strategically, it is better to control contiguous sets of people, rather than have places here and there which are independent. That means, in order to move tribute from a protectorate in the far west, they would have to move through territory which is independently held. So, in all of these areas in between, they either needed a controlling treaty or they needed to simply conquer these people.

Those conquered by the Chedorlaomer's eastern alliance: the Rephaim are giants, and two sources place Ashtaroth-Karnaim as being 25 miles south of Damascus, which is in Bashan, east of the



From <http://www.lessing-photo.com/p2/030301/03030132.jpg>

Jordan. This is consistent with the location of these giants elsewhere in Scripture. Ashtaroth is likely a reference to an ancient female goddess and Karnaim simply means *two horns*. Interestingly enough, the two-horned goddess, Astarte, has crescent moon on her head (not unlike the symbol for Islam).

Ashteroth-Karnaim mean "Ashteroth of the two horns" or "peaks," situated between two hills, perhaps so named to honor the two horned goddess Astarte, the crescent moon on her head.

Above is a stele from the Tophet in Carthage (today Tunisia). This was probably a grave marker which had been set up over a burial urn for a child or animal which had been sacrificed to the goddess Tanit. You will note the typical Middle eastern symbols of the sun, crescent moon and triangle; with the goddess below.

Astarte was a common goddess found in many ancient cultures, and it is not unusual to find her associated with the sun, the crescent moon, the sacred lotus and/or intertwined serpents.

See also <http://www.lessing-photo.com/dispimg.asp?i=11010417+&cr=71&cl=1> and <http://rekindlingreformation.com/albums.html?action=picture&aid=5426350051771649217&pid=fish-god.png.jpg> One of the more fascinating reliefs is one of Astarte, naked from the waist up, holding several snakes in each hand, and standing upon 14 skulls. http://www.teenwitch.com/divine/phoenicia/pict/f_astarte.jpg Or here, the goddess of Mesopotamia is holding onto the Tree of Life,

The crescent moon is a common symbol of Babylon and Sumeria, which is where these kings of the east are from. Many historians have claimed that the crescent moon symbol used by Mohammed has its origins in Middle Eastern heathenism. However, if this is true, they dropped the female goddess Astarte. For a religion that treats women so shabbily, it would have seemed odd to worship a goddess at the same time.

The Zuzim are also thought to be giants living east of the Jordan (we do not know where Ham is). The Emim are east of the Salt Sea where Moab will be and many believe them to be giants as well. Shaveh Kiriathaim means *the valley of two cities*.

[Gen 14:6](#) and the Horites in their hill country of Seir as far as El-paran on the border of the wilderness.

There is a clear route that this eastern alliance is following. They are beginning around where Abram used to live, in Haran, and moving west and then south, traveling parallel to the Jordan River. The Horites are in the hill country south of the Salt Sea. BDB identifies El-paran as being at the tip of the Gulf of Aqaba at the Red Sea. So this army is coming around to Sodom and Gomorrah, conquering all that they come across. The scenic route.

Gen 14:7 Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh) and defeated all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who were dwelling in Hazazon-tamar.

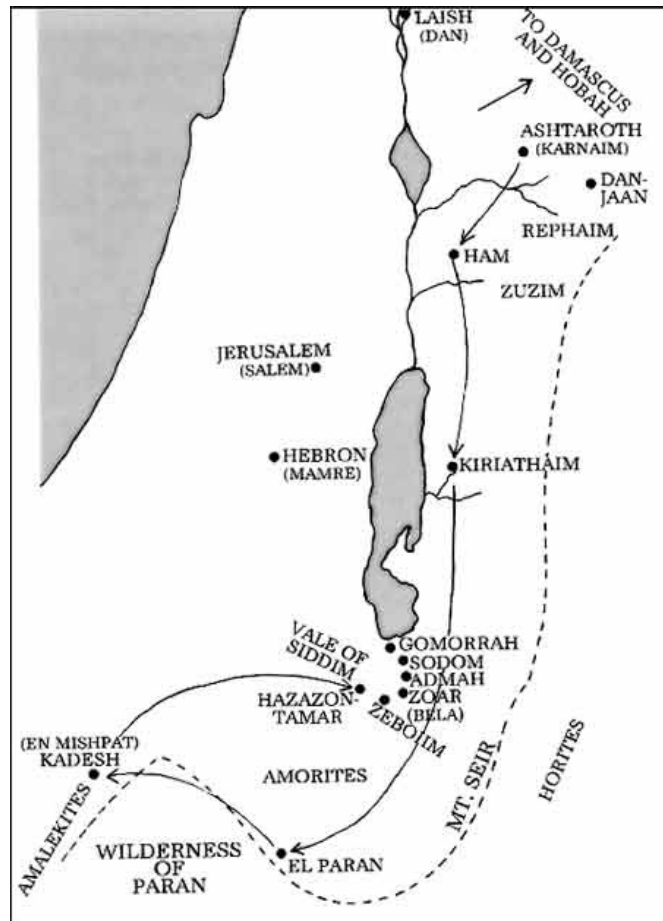
The verb *to turn back* is a very common one in the Hebrew, and it means just that. You will observe in the map how this would mark the point at which the Chedorlaomer eastern alliance began to turn back toward their native land. Up to that point, they were moving further and further away from the east; and after Kadesh, they put themselves on a route back toward the east. It is almost as if they stop by the cities in the Valley of Siddim as sort of an afterthought.

The words *that is, Kadesh* is another gloss. What would be quite logical is, Moses, who was educated in the Egyptian palace, and who would have been an excellent history and geography student, when he took possession of what were the Scriptures of God, that he added these glosses. It

would also be reasonable that Joshua did this as well. Moses, because of his royal education, or Joshua, because he both traveled and conquered the land of Canaan, and then distributed this land to the children of Israel, would have been ideally suited to make such glosses.

The Amalekites and Amorites named here also lived in the land of Canaan, which is the land that God would give to the Jews. The Amalekites lived mostly around this southern region of the land of Canaan, and they will show up in Israel's history on two very important future events. When God leads Moses and the people into this land, the Amalekites, Amorites and Canaanites stand between them and entering into the land, and the people of Israel will be defeated by them (Num. 14).

On another occasion, David will wander out of the geographical will of God, and, while he is preparing to war against Israel, the Amalekites attack his main camp, taking all of the women and things which David and his men had accumulated (1Sam. 30). Both of these incidents take place here in this same geographical area.



<http://heartofwisdom.com/imageslp/4.5kingwar.jpg>

So, what does all of this tell us? Abram, with a very small army, will defeat the Eastern Alliance. The Eastern Alliance defeated many of the peoples in the land which God is giving to Abram. Therefore, Abram is capable himself of taking the entire land (however, it is not time yet, as the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached a point of critical mass).

Moses will bring his people, the Jews, into the land, and they will face the Amorites, Amalekites and the Canaanites right at the very beginning. Their reasoning should be as follows: God led Abram and 318 soldiers to defeat the Eastern Alliance, which defeated the very people that Moses is facing. If Moses still has God on his side and has 2 million people, then how can he be defeated? He has an army much larger than Abram's. He also has God. Therefore, Moses should have been able to enter into this Land of Promise some 400 years later and taken it. What is the key? Knowledge of the Word of God and the history found in the Word of God. Moses and the Israelites will be stopped right here, in this very spot, around the Kadesh area, in land held by the Amorites, Amalekites and the Canaanites. This chapter tells us that there is no reason for Moses and the children of Israel to be defeated at this point by this people.

To state this even more simply:

Moses + 2 million + God > [is greater than] Abram + 318 men + God > the eastern alliance (Chedorlaomer, et al) > the Amalekites, Amorites and Canaanites. Therefore, by the transitive property of inequality, Moses + 2 million + God > the Amalekites, Amorites and Canaanites.

How does this relate to you? You have the power of the Holy Spirit. Access to this power will never leave you. You have the completed canon of Scripture. Potentially, you are greater than Abraham or Moses or David. They could lose the Holy Spirit and they did not have the complete Word of God. Never underestimate your power or your responsibility. You might be a woman with 2 children under your command, and your contact with the outside world is limited. This does not matter. Billy Graham, who is easily the greatest evangelist of my day, was converted at a meeting led by Mordecai Ham. If you are a normal person, you have never heard of Mordecai Ham before today. We all have different ministries, just as there are many parts to a body. Some may pray, some may give, some may have a limited evangelistic ministry to just one other person. All of these ministries are equally important. However, apart from Bible doctrine and the ministry of God the Holy Spirit (through naming your sins to God), you have no ministry. Without these 2 power options, you have shown up for work at a new job for which you have had no training, and nobody tells you what to do. Your production at that job will be about nil.

Lesson 132: Genesis 14:1–11

War of the Kings

So far, we have studied:

[Gen 14:1–7](#) In the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim, these kings made war with Bera king of Sodom,

Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). And all these joined forces in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled. In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim, and the Horites in their hill country of Seir as far as El-paran on the border of the wilderness. Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh) and defeated all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who were dwelling in Hazazon-tamar.

Chedorlaomer has conquered a number of city states and they pay him tribute. This has been the case for several city-states in the Valley of Siddim, which is the valley below the southern tip of the Salt Sea (which may or may not have been salty at this time). After 12 years of paying tribute, the Siddim coalition stopped paying taxes to Chedorlaomer. Although we are not given the full story here, very likely, in the 13th year, they overran the tax collector's outposts and killed the soldiers there. Not receiving payment in that year, Chedorlaomer deduced what happened (he probably had spies in the area as well), so he gathered up an alliance from the east in order to crush this rebellion. Along the way, they conquered several groups of people, most of whom were discussed in the previous lesson.

Gen 14:8 Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out, and they arranged [themselves] [to] battle with them [the eastern alliance] in the Valley of Siddim

These are the rebels, those who formerly paid tribute to Chedorlaomer. They have rebelled against their conqueror and have now refused to pay him tribute. As I suggested earlier, this probably involved the killing of the soldiers who collected this tribute.

The Valley of Siddim is a valley near the southern portion of the Dead Sea, which would be a part of southern Judah. These kings were fully aware of what was to come. If they stopped paying tribute to Chedorlaomer and if they killed some of his tax collectors, then this would involve war, so the Coalition of the Valley of Siddim was organized into the, coalition made up of the 5 kings named above.

The 5 kings of the Siddim coalition arrange themselves in battle array against the eastern alliance in the Valley of Siddim. They have a lot of advantages here. They know that the eastern alliance is coming; they know the terrain, as this is where they live. However, quite frankly, they do not prepare themselves enough, and that will become obvious from the few details of the battle which are recorded.

Another great difference between these armies is, Chedorlaomer's alliance is made up of professional soldiers. They have been trained and they do this for a living. They are so well-trained that they conquered several groups of people simply marching to the Valley of Siddim. On the other hand, the army of the western coalition lacks training and does nothing about its own natural advantages (they live in this area, so they would know the terrain). They are also fighting so that their people might be free, which is usually a great

motivator (see 2Sam. 10:12, for instance). However, it is possible that this particular motivation was not as strong as it could have been. A man protecting his wife and little ones is far more motivated than the gay man who is looking to have sex with more males (and there is a significant gay population in these 4 city-states, as we will see in Gen. 18). It is human nature for the male to want to protect his own family; it is not human nature for a male to want to protect those he deems as sexual objects who will gratify his lusts.

Chedorlaomer's eastern alliance is re-identified in v. 9:

[Gen 14:9](#) with Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goiim, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar, four kings against five.

The 5 kings of the Siddim Coalition versus the 4 kings of the Eastern Alliance. These 5 kings and their people want independence, but their souls are corrupted, as we will find out later in Gen. 18. Therefore, they are willing to fight for independence, but they are not willing to die for it. They do not want to give any more of their produce and production to the eastern kings; but, on the other hand, they do not fully appreciate all that this rebellion entails.

The 4 kings from the east had a very well-trained army which prevailed over the Siddim coalition. The latter wanted to keep more of their own produce, but they were ill-equipped to actually protect their own land. In fact, this coalition from the Salt Sea was apparently a lousy army. They knew the eastern alliance was coming. They had a year to prepare. They would be fighting this eastern alliance on their own turf, so the coalition had that great advantage as well. As we will see, this defending army is pathetic! They are poorly trained, they are poorly motivated, and they do not know their own geography. The eastern alliance will cause them to run in retreat.

You may think, *no matter what, these people are still fighting for their own land; isn't that a greater motivation than Chedorlaomer and his alliance?* Chedorlaomer and his army were motivated by self-righteousness. They had an agreement, a contract, a suzerain-vassal treaty, which gave the vassal states some modicum of protection in exchange for a reasonable amount of taxation. If you don't think an army can be motivated by self-righteousness, just imagine what would happen if we did not repay the Chinese the huge debt that we owe them. It would be very easy for them to motivate their soldiers to abhor the United States for reneging on our obligations to them.

An early secular lesson to come out of the Bible is, if you want to protect your country, then you need a well-motivated, well-armed and well-trained military. We will find out that this is a terribly degenerate people, and degenerates cannot be easily organized into an effective defending army.

[Gen 14:10](#) Now the Valley of Siddim was full of bitumen pits, and as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into them, and the rest fled to the hill country.

There are a plethora of oil and tar pits around the Salt Sea. Most of the oil which *pollutes* the earth today seeps naturally to the surface of the ground and into oceans. It is my understanding that, about two-thirds of oil pollution today occurs naturally. Mother nature often takes care of it from there (various chemicals, enzymes and bacteria apparently will break the oil down, and work much more quickly when dealing with crude oil than with refined oil).

This Canaanite coalition retreats, and some of them are so disoriented, that they fall into tar pits. This is their own land; they should have known their own land and how to use it to their own advantage. They had a year to prepare and they were ill-prepared for the better trained and more powerful eastern alliance army. Therefore, the Western Coalition forces were defeated, and they retreated north, into the hills, some of them falling into tar pits as they ran.

This is why we know this army is poorly trained. They are on their own land; and they should have known their own land and they should have used it to their own advantage. Instead, they are so poorly organized that, even in retreat, some of them fall into tar pits, which they ought to have known were there.

We also know that they fled to the north for two reasons: (1) it is said that they fled into the hill country, and there is hill country along the west bank of the Salt Sea; and (2) by the direction that the eastern army came from. They had come down along the eastern side of the Salt Sea, gone down into the desert area when Moses would someday wander, and then turned around at Kadesh, attacking the western coalition from the southwest.

We also learn about the principle of surprise in battle. Since the Eastern Alliance is coming from the east, they would likely attack from the east, if they came around the eastern side of the Salt Sea; or they would attack from the north, if they came down the western side of the Salt Sea. This was probably quite a surprise that they came at the Western Coalition from the southwest.

The Eastern Alliance had surprise, motivation and superior training. The Western Coalition did not develop a superior military force, they were not motivated by much else than selfishness, and they allowed themselves to be trapped so that the oil pits were behind them, which meant that, when they retreated, it was into an area filled with oil pits.

Tactically, what appears to have happened is, the amateur soldiers lined themselves up on the southwestern portion of the valley, so that the enemy, coming either from the east or the north would be trapped in this valley of tar pits. However, the kings of the east came around from the other direction, so that the Sodomites and their allies now had the Valley of Siddim directly behind them, so that when they began to be beat, they had to retreat into this valley of tar pits. It was a brilliant move by the kings of the east, who, rather than walk into a trap, turned the terrain of the Sodom and Gomorrah area against the Sodomite army.

[Gen 14:11](#) So the enemy took all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way.

Sodom and Gomorrah are near the Salt Sea, in the valley, at a time when this was a much more beautiful country. Recall that Lot looked over this area and told Abram, "I'll go in this direction." (as Abram gave him first pick).

In war, you get all that the other country has. This is practiced by almost every nation in human history, apart from the United States in the 20th century (and in some previous wars as well). This ancient alliance from the east collected the things they liked along with the people, who would become their wives and slaves.

It is worth noting that, prior to this, Chedorlaomer did not bleed these Canaanites dry. Even though they were paying tribute to him, it was not so oppressive as to keep them from prospering on their own. Over the years, these Canaanites had built up enough personal possessions as to make this war very profitable for the Eastern Alliance.

The people in the Siddim Valley had a choice. They could have continued to serve Chedorlaomer, which meant that a percentage of their wealth was sent off to him. In return for this, he did not attack them. However, other city-states in that area did not attack them either, because that would have brought the wrath of Chedorlaomer upon them. This arrangement gave them some modicum of safety and allowed them to build up their own personal wealth as well. My point is, this was not a terrible arrangement for these people who lived around the Salt Sea. They had not been enslaved nor were they bled dry by Chedorlaomer. This verse tells us that Chedorlaomer's Eastern Alliance took all of the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah and v. 16 is going to tell us that there was a lot of stuff taken here (this is hidden in the verb tenses in v. 16).

Along with their poorly trained army, the Siddim coalition had a failure of imagination. They did not think this through. They did not seem to realize the consequences of their actions, if they lost this war. They did not even seem to be prepared for being attacked from the southwest.

Being a protectorate is not a horrible thing. The British Empire has ruled over India, Palestine, South Africa, Rhodesia, Burma, Nigeria, Kenya, Australia, etc. The British brought law and order to these areas, and most of these countries prospered greatly under British rule. Great Britain also brought the gospel of Jesus Christ to these areas, so that there are millions in heaven today from these nations because of Great Britain. Furthermore, it would be hard to argue that South Africa, Rhodesia, Burma, Nigeria, Egypt, the Sudan, Uganda and Kenya are better off today than they were under British imperialism. The idea that being ruled by someone with the same skin color is somehow greater freedom is preposterous.

As a side note, there are two lies which are perpetrated throughout the world today: (1) America is an imperialistic nation and (2) imperialism is bad. Great Britain was an imperialist empire. They were a client nation to God, and, therefore, God allowed them to conquer huge portions of the world. When they conquered an area, they brought law and order (divine establishment) and the gospel to that area. Great Britain is a tiny spec of a

nation and under its imperial power was [a huge portion of the world](#). To look at Great Britain and then to look at the massive British Empire is an awesome thing.

As an example, Rhodesia came under British control in 1890. Although Christianity had been introduced to this country in the 1500's, there was very little positive volition under the 1850's, when a Scottish missionary Robert Moffat set up a mission there. Great gold and mineral discoveries in this area brought Rhode's British South African Company into what would be named Rhodesia. Although there were uprisings, there were also pockets of Christianity throughout. Although they were granted self-rule as a British colony in 1923, and many Rhodesians fought in WWII as British subjects, a rebellion among the people developed, and world politics was brought into the picture in the mid-1960's. Nations, including the United States, were convinced that life in Rhodesia was terrible for the Black man, and that it was wrong from a white minority to rule, and, many nations participated in various types of boycotts against Rhodesia. I recall seeing propoganda favoring such boycotts at a church I cleaned during that era. Eventually this country won its independence from Great Britain. However, even the liberal Wikipedia describes the eras which followed as *Independence and Early Decline (1980–1999)* and then *Deep Decline (1999-2008)*. Dictator Robert Mugabe, who was elected, has ruled for about 3 decades, whose rule includes a legacy of rebellions and torture camps. Since 1990, life expectancy there has gone from 60 to 39. In retrospect, British rule was a far better thing for this land (now called Zimbabwe) than majority rule, which resulted in a far bloodier and more oppressive reign.

The idea that America is some kind of an imperialist nation defies logic. The British empire was an imperialistic empire; the Eastern Alliance that we are studying is an imperialistic empire. What the United States did after WWII was, take the small amount of territory that was carved out for us, and we guided these nations to independence or protected the independence of these nations (Japan, the Philippines, West Germany). Our involvement in Korea left South Korea as a free and independent ally. Communists took over the regions given to them, and turned these areas into communist nations, where a very small minority of a wealthy class rules over a permanent underclass of poor people. In North Korea, this year (2011), between 1–6 million peasants will starve without receiving aid because of some natural disasters which have occurred there. No one in their ruling class will starve; their soldiers will not starve; but the farmers and peasants will starve by the millions. The corresponding problem with the poor in the United States is they are too fat (one of the only nations in human history where this is true).

The propoganda which is sold today is, the United States is am imperialistic nation, which is pure poppycock. We do not go out and conquer other nations and them make them subservient to us. What is presented as imperialism today is, in this or that country, they might drink coke, or walk down the street and go into a McDonald's or a Starbucks. The idea that this represents imperialism is a result of changing the meaning of the word imperialism and reapplying it. If a nation objects to such franchises within their country, they can vote with their feet and not to go to them. The spread of businesses from one country to another is not imperialism. Going to a McDonald's in Thailand is no more imperialism than buying a Volkswagen in America.

Having a basic understanding of the British empire may help to explain why huge numbers of people in the American colonies were willing to continue under British rule before our own War for Independence. They were paying some tribute to Britain, but they were also prospering. They looked at the well-trained British soldiers and they thought about the army that the colonists might raise up, and recognized that the more professional and well-armed British army had most of the advantages. There were very good arguments for keeping things just as they were in the early 1700's.

So, let's return to our passage: in the 13th year, the people of Sodom and Gomorrah attempted to throw off the rule of Chedorlaomer, and, in the 14th year, their coalition army was badly defeated.

Gen 14:11 So the enemy took all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way.

The Eastern Alliance found a great many possessions which belonged to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, and they took them (which was, in part, how ancient warriors were paid).

A portion of this narrative is all about Abram and Lot. They were traveling about the land of Canaan, but they were unrelated to the peoples who lived here. You will recall that they split up and that Lot moved down south into the area of Sodom.

Gen 14:12 They [the eastern alliance] also took Lot, the son of Abram's brother, who was dwelling in Sodom, and his possessions, and went their way.

These people could have chosen to live as a protectorate, and they chose not to. Therefore, rather than keep them as a protectorate, the Eastern Alliance took these people as slaves, including Lot, Abram's nephew.

Lesson 133: Genesis 14:(1-10) 11-16

Abram Defeats the Eastern Alliance

As we have been studying, Chedorlaomer, a king of Elam in the east had control over several city-states at the southern tip of the Salt Sea. They rebelled against paying him tribute, so Chedorlaomer brought in an alliance to put down this rebellion.

Gen 14:1-10 In the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim, these kings made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). And all these joined forces in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled. In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim, and the Horites in their hill country of Seir as far as El-paran on the border of the wilderness. Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh) and

defeated all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who were dwelling in Hazazon-tamar. Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out, and they arranged [themselves] [to] battle with them [the eastern alliance] in the Valley of Siddim with Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goiim, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar, four kings against five. Now the Valley of Siddim was full of bitumen pits, and as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into them, and the rest fled to the hill country.

This Eastern Alliance did not simply come out west to put down this rebellion. They defeated several other groups of people along the way, traveling all the way to Kadesh, in what would be southern Judah, and then coming back on this rebellion from a direction that they did not expect. The rebels apparently were not expecting an attack from the southwest. Furthermore, they were not a very well-disciplined army, and they did not even know their own territory. It is even likely that they functioned without an intelligence unit. As a result, they piddled away every advantage that they had, and were soundly defeated by the Eastern Alliance.

Gen 14:11–12 So the enemy took all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. They [the eastern alliance] also took Lot, the son of Abram's brother, who was dwelling in Sodom, and his possessions, and went their way.

Once the Sodom Coalition army was sent running, the Eastern Alliance went into Sodom and Gomorrah and took all of their possessions as booty and they took their people as slaves, including Lot, who was living there at the time.

You will recall that, when Abram and Lot separated, Lot had first choice of the area that he would take, and he went south, toward the big cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Obviously this was a temperate climate at that time with a beautiful landscape and lots of green.

My guess is, the Jordan River was higher, the Salt Sea was higher, and that it may have even, at one time, flowed into the Gulf of Aqeba. The more water that there is in an area, the more temperate the climate is, as water transmits cooler temperatures from below, but moving water does not change temperature very much. This portion of Genesis takes place 400 to 1300 years after the flood, so the Dead Sea is not dead but vibrant with life. It may have not been too long ago when water moved through the Salt Sea

There is a fascinating interactive map at: <http://deadseachange.webs.com/map.html> If you press *play*, it will show the Dead Sea's different water levels over the ages (from 3500 B.C. to today). Interestingly enough, based on the research done for this *map*, the level of the Dead Sea, at one time, was much higher than it is today. In fact, there shows to be a dramatic water level reduction over a period of 500 years, which takes us to the time of Abram and Lot. This suggests that, at one time, there was a lot more rain in the land of Canaan (Israel) and that the Salt Sea possibly drained into the Gulf of Aqeba, which would have made the Salt Sea a freshwater lake.

Being the dead end lake that it is (that is, throughout most of its history, water flows into the Dead Sea but not out), its salt levels have continued to increase over the centuries. The salts are carried by the Jordan River into the Dead Sea; the water evaporates, but the salts remain. This occurs over a long period of time, which continues to increase the salt level of this lake.

At one time, Lot and Abram had a thriving combined enterprise, which was so large, they had to separate from one another. Abram still has his organization, which could be as large as a 1000 employees, slaves and dependents. It is not clear if Lot has anything remaining at this point. When Lot was in close association with Abram, he received great blessing by association. However, since Lot is not a growing believer and since his blessing depended upon his association with Abram, it appears as though his riches have long since been dissipated.

[Gen 14:13](#) Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, who was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and of Aner. These were allies of Abram.

Abram had quite a large group of people who worked for him. He was a very wealthy man, and, contrary to the propaganda of liberation theology, the Bible is not anti-wealth and it does not show some special contempt for wealthy individuals. Many great Old Testament heroes were wealthy or became wealthy: Abram, Joshua, Caleb, David, and Solomon all quickly come to mind. Jesus knew at least 2 wealthy men who appear to be friends of His: Joseph of Arimathea (who was a disciple of His) and the tax collector Zacchaeus in Jericho, neither of whom did Jesus ask to give away all of their possessions. Wealth is a detail of life and wealth, in itself, is not sinful. It is the *love* of money that is the root of all evils, but not money itself (1Tim. 6:10). The problem is, when money becomes the focus of your life. So, rich and poor alike can be trapped by the love of money.

So, for that day and time, Abram is quite rich; which will allow him to put together an army of 318 (which suggests that there are probably 300–1000 more men, women and children who travel with Abram). Furthermore, Abram, for the past few decades, has been traveling all over this land, so he knows the mountains, valleys, and rivers; he knows the geography. So do all of his men, as they have traveled with him. He will use this to his advantage.

At this time in history, there would have been lions and bears in the land, so Abram and his people were well-armed, and able to deal with animal attacks (their flocks and herds would have certainly attracted wild animals). Also, this large traveling ranch would have caught the attention of men with bad intent, so it is reasonable to suppose that Abram's people had weapons and they were trained and ready to use these weapons. So, although this is a scratch army, these men have a great many advantages: they have weapons and they are able to use them; they know the terrain; they have the advantage of surprise (the Eastern Alliance probably does not even know who they are), and, the greatest advantage of all, most of them believe in the God of Abraham.

In those days, there were a variety of social relationships. Many in the east were bedouin types, who traveled from place to place, in caravans. That appears to be the situation with Abram. Quite obviously, he developed a good relationship with those around him. More than likely, this relationship would have been based upon trading, and there is a strong indication that Abram was honest in his dealings with these traders.

Abram would live in this general vicinity for some time; the oaks of Mamre are mentioned in Gen. 13:18 14:13 and 18:1; so during much of that time, Abram lived here, although it is apparent that he shifted his herds around from place to place.

Finally, there are normal, traditional relationships among the peoples who served Abram. They had wives and children. Nothing gives a man greater motivation than a wife and children. A normal male will kill or die for his family. So, Abram's servants are well-armed and well-motivated, and they have an excellent view of the terrain where they have lived for many decades.

Gen 14:13 Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, who was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and of Aner. These were allies of Abram.

Why would an escapee run to Abram? The most simplest explanation is, this is a man who used to work for Lot, and, at one time, worked under the banner of Abram and Lot's Canaan-bred Livestock, before they went their separate ways. This man knows that Abram will still be concerned about his nephew; and he apparently knows that Abram is a brave and honest man. All of that is conjecture, but it is reasonable conjecture. In the alternative, he may have been roped near Lot, and Lot said, "If only we could contact my Uncle Abram." In any case, this man knew to come to Abram.

Incidentally, this is the first time anyone is called a *Hebrew* in the Bible. The Hebrew word is 'Ib^erîy (יִבְרִי) [pronounced *g^he-VREE*], which means *one from beyond*; and is transliterated *Hebrew, Eberite*. Strong's #5680 BDB #720. This suggests that Abram had become fairly well-known at the time, and had been given this designation, which meant *one from beyond*.

Although this alliance from the east conquered a number of peoples in their trek to the Valley of Siddim, they did not conquer this entire area. Abram remained free, as did the 3 Amorite brothers with whom Abram had an alliance, Eshcol, Aner and Mamre.

We studied blessing by association. Lot has chosen to go his own way, separating from Abram, so, now Lot is caught up in this Eastern Alliance invasion. However, Abram has 3 men with whom he is allied, and they are still free—this invasion of the eastern kings did not affect them directly. Those associated with Abram are blessed and those separated from Abram are not.

This blessing will continue for these men: Mamre's name will continue to be associated with various portions of this area for another 100+ years. Eshcol's name will be associated with this area for another 500 years at least.

Although, it is not completely clear yet, Abram will ally himself with these 3 brothers in war, and they will all attack the entire eastern alliance.

Gen 14:14 When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, 318 of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.

Abram leads 318 men who are born in his house, and these men are *trained*. This is the Hebrew adjective *chânîyk* (חַנִּיךְ) [pronounced *khaw-NEEK*], which means *trained, instructed, trained servant, tried, experienced*. Strong's #2593 BDB #335. So these are not 318 miscellaneous men which Abram chooses, but these men are trained to fight.

The word *Dan* is a gloss. There is no territory called *Dan* at this time (at least, not to the best of my knowledge). It is many generations removed from Abram, and the tribe of Dan occupied an area in central Israel, which they would give up for a territory in the far north, which history is recounted in the book of the Judges.

This suggests that, about 500–600 years later, after this was originally written, someone identified this area with the tribe of Dan, and changed it. There could be a more convoluted explanation, but that is the most likely one. At one time, this may have read, *...and went in pursuit as far as _____*; later to be changed to *...and went in pursuit as far as _____ (that is, Dan)*; and later changed to *...and went in pursuit as far as Dan*. There is no actual change in the area being referred to; just the name by which it is known. This sort of thing occurs enough times in the Old Testament to have its own name: this is called a *gloss*.

Gen 14:14 When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, 318 of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.

It will become clear, further into this chapter, that this military operation is done in conjunction with the 3 Amorite brothers, Mamre, Eshcol and Aner. We do not know how many men that they led into battle, but God the Holy Spirit recognizes the 318 men which Abram employs as his attacking force. Abram is attacking an army of thousands with 318 men, plus those who are under his allies. These 318 would have been his slaves and employees, and he had apparently both evangelized them and gained their respect. It is reasonable to suppose that most of them understood what had happened, the war which had taken place, where the 5 city-states in the Valley of Siddim had been soundly defeated and taken captive by Chedorlaomer's eastern coalition. That Abram was able to gather these 318 men and say, "Now, this is our plan of attack" is quite amazing. This indicates great faith among his slaves and employees.

I want you to notice something: Abram is not under attack. Mamre, Eshcol and Aner are not under attack. This is the first time that we see war in the Bible involving a mature

believer, and it is an offensive war. There are many times in the Word of God where God supports an offensive war. Abram is not under attack, neither are his allies—now, in the future, they may be under attack, but they are not under attack now. God will bless Abram's offensive action against the Eastern Alliance.

Also bear in mind that, Lot is not necessarily the greatest person in the world. When associated with Abram, he was greatly blessed; and, on his own, his fortune has clearly taken a tumble. It would have been easy for Abram to add it all up and decide, *there is no way that we can defeat this army and Lot's situation is his own fault; so there is really nothing that I can do.*

Abram's men are well-trained, which the Bible testifies to. They are not simply shepherders and cattlemen. These men are well-trained to protect Abram's fortune.

Gen 14:15 And he divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them and pursued them to Hobah, north of Damascus.

One of the fascinating things in the Bible is, it is a military-friendly book. Having come out of the hippie culture, that took some getting used to for me. Military terms are used regularly in the Old and New Testaments. There are, from time to time, strategy and tactics noted in the text; or, at least, alluded to. This is one of those times. Abram has very few men, and he apparently forms two flying columns. Each force would be constantly moving, and their attack is made at night, which is the element of surprise. If they are able to kill enough soldiers at the beginning, this would route the entire Eastern Alliance army. You see, they have no idea how many men are actually with Abram. He catches them groggy, possibly with hangovers (they may have been celebrating their several victories). Therefore, their guard is down. They are surprised, confused, and overwhelmed. They thought that they had pretty well conquered all of this area. The 318 of Abram's private army actually sends these thousands of men running, and Abram and company continue to pursue them.

The enemy army does not know who Abram is. They don't know where he's come from. They don't know how many men are in his army. Furthermore, there is no indication that God played a supernatural role here. Abram's army exploited the tactical elements of surprise and movement, and they attacked this army from both sides, allowing them an opening for retreat. Abram's small army uses a pincher movement, sends the enemies into a panic, and routes what is probably a huge army, causing them to retreat to the north.

Abram and his men were well-trained and they knew the land, so they were able to use the terrain to their own advantage (which the Sodom coalition did not). They pushed the retreating army in two directions: some went due north, through what would later be called Dan; and others crossed over the Jordan and made their escape to the northeast, which would be Zobah. So, this grand alliance is not just put on the retreat, but their retreat becomes divided.

Although the context does not suggest this, it is also reasonable that Abram and his men specifically targeted the leaders of the eastern alliance. It is much easier to kill a snake whose head has been cut off.

A mob does not think. A retreating army does not think. They are operating on fear. They do not stop and collectively realize, "If we were being attacked by a really large army, then they would have set up troops in the north to kill us as we try to escape. However, since this passageway is clear, that means, this attacking army cannot be very large." But there is no collective thinking; only collective emoting.

God will later promise: "Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall by the sword before you." (Lev. 26:8). "A thousand will flee at the threat of one; at the threat of five you will all flee away, till you are left like a flagstaff on a mountaintop, like a banner on a hill." (Isaiah 30:17).

The last thing an army of thousands expects is to be attacked by a tiny enveloping force. This tactic is usually employed by a larger force, because they can afford to split up their troops. Abram and company would have moved in and quietly killed as many men as possible before waking up the eastern army. The guard of this army would have been minimal because they had just soundly defeated their enemies, and enslaved many of them. Therefore, they had no idea there was any enemy force out there. So, they wake up from drunken stupors, they see many dead bodies around them, and an advancing force, which they can now hear coming from two directions. Those who are still alive, panic and retreat. Based upon what they hear, they can escape by moving northward and eastward.

During their escape, the enemy forces left behind all of the things and people which they took. Abram and his very small army begin to gather these things up and to free the captives. There is no indication that these captives took part in the pursuit of the eastern alliance. Possibly they did, but we have no way of knowing.

Gen 14:16 Then he brought back all the possessions, and also brought back his kinsman Lot with his possessions, and the women and the people.

Abram rescues all of those who are taken as slaves, along with all of their things, and he brings them back to the king of Sodom. This is a very unusual move. There would have been nothing unusual about Abram retaining all of the people as his slaves and/or as wives for himself. He could have legitimately kept every person and every item of treasure, and no one would have questioned him.

There is an interesting difference in tenses here. We find the Hiphil of *shûwb* (שׁוּב) [pronounced *shoo^bv*], which means *to cause to return, to bring [back], to return something, to restore, to regain, to recover, to be caused to return*. Strong's #7725 BDB #996. With regards to the possessions, the verb is used in the imperfect tense, which indicates continual action, which requires some time, or a process. The eastern alliance had stolen so much, that gathering all that they had taken took several trips to recover (some was probably taken in the retreat, and then dropped in the retreat). However, with regards to the people,

who were taken to become slaves, they were *brought back* in the Hiphil perfect tense, which means, it occurred all at once.

Next lesson: a new king enters into the picture.

Lesson 134: Genesis 14:1–18 Melchizedek, a Type of Jesus Christ/Apologetics

In the previous lesson, there was a world war between a coalition of western kings fighting for their freedom against an alliance of eastern kings who had enslaved them. The eastern alliance soundly defeated the western coalition, taking all of their wealth and placing their people into slavery. However, Abram, an unknown quantity in all this, attacked the eastern alliance with a pincher movement, in a surprise night raid, making them think that Abram commanded a much larger force.

Gen. 14:1–15 At that time four kings—King Amraphel of Shinar, King Arioch of Ellasar, King Chedorlaomer of Elam, and King Tidal of Goiim—went to war against five kings—King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). The five kings joined forces and met in the valley of Siddim (that is, the Dead Sea). For 12 years they had been subject to Chedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled. In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and his allies came and defeated the Rephaim at Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzim at Ham, the Emim at Shaveh Kiriathaim, and the Horites in the hill country of Seir, going as far as El Paran on the edge of the desert. On their way back, they came to En Mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and they conquered the whole territory of the Amalekites and also the Amorites who were living at Hazazon Tamar. Then the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela (that is, Zoar) marched out and prepared for battle in the valley of Siddim. They fought against King Chedorlaomer of Elam, King Tidal of Goiim, King Amraphel of Shinar, and King Arioch of Ellasar—four kings against five. The valley of Siddim was full of tar pits. As the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, they fell because of the tar pits, but the other kings fled to the hills. So the four kings took all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, as well as all their food, and left. They also took Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions since he was living in Sodom. Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew what had happened. He was living next to the oak trees belonging to Mamre the Amorite, a brother of Eshcol and Aner. (These men were Abram's allies.) When Abram heard that his nephew had been captured, he armed his 318 trained men, born in his own household, and pursued the four kings all the way to Dan. He split up his men to attack them at night. He defeated them, pursuing them all the way to Hobah, which is north of Damascus.

Not only did Abram defeat this eastern alliance, but He kept pursuing them for a very long time. Here is the idea: if, after 2 or 3 miles, Abram stopped the pursuit, the frightened and disorganized eastern alliance would realize that they are no longer being pursued. Therefore, they would then stop, take stock of their army, and go back for their spoils, after a pep talk. So, God the Holy Spirit lets us know that Abram did not just send these men running, but Abram pursued them for miles. Bear in mind that there would have been male captives who would have been cut loose, and they would themselves have the weapons

of the dead soldiers from the east. So it is possible that Abram's army was probably much larger now, as he pursued the kings from the east.

However, the initial attack was made with 318 men + whatever confederates were gathered from Abram's friendship with the 3 brothers.

What is fascinating is, although the details of many engagements are limited, there is usually enough information included in order for us to put together a more complete entire picture. Even though it appears as though all we know is, Abram and his 318 men attack the armies of 4 eastern kings, and send them running far into the north and the northeast, there are enough clues to allow us to deduce the details of this battle.

Elsewhere in Scripture, there is an amazing battle between Joab and his Israeli army, who are caught between the Ammonite army and a large contingent of Aramæan mercenaries, and he somehow defeats them (this is 2Sam. 10). Although the details are sketchy, there is enough information to explain how an inferior army could be trapped between 2 formidable armies, one of which is technologically superior to Joab's army, and yet win (and without a miracle). In fact, Joab defeats the Aramæans because of their technological superiority. This is a lesson we need to learn in the United States. We are the most superior technological military force in all human history, but there are ways this can be used against us.

My point is, there are enough strategy and tactics in the Bible to provide great insight to the techniques of war, which, apparently, even General George Patton attested to. General Patton was well-acquainted with the Bible—even more so than some of the preachers who falsely proclaimed pacifism from their pulpits. George Patton said: "These pulpit killers [a reference to preachers to false preach pacifism, which results in the death of many] that go around saying that the Bible says that man dare not kill causes the death of many thousands of good soldiers. Damn little those pulpit killers know about the Bible. They know even less about the way God works. They should read all of the Bible, not just the part they like! God never hesitated to kill. God never hesitates to kill when one man or any race of man needed to be punished. God helped David kill Goliath, didn't He? How about Noah and the Ark? All of the rest of the people were killed in the flood! God took the blame for this mass murder. How about the Red Sea which opened up long enough for one race to escape and another race to be killed. Don't talk to me about God not permitting man to kill. War means that we have to kill people. That's all there is to it. It is a sin not to kill if we are serving on God's side. There is no other way to win. Wars must be won for God's sake. He has a part in every war! The quicker we can kill the enemy, the quicker we can go home and listen to the pulpit killers tell us what we did wrong. If it wasn't for us, those pulpit idiots would be shot for standing in their own pulpits. Our task is to kill the enemy before we are killed."

[Gen.14:16–17](#) Abram [lit., *he*] brought back everything they had, including women and soldiers [literally, *people*]. He also brought back his relative Lot and his possessions. After Abram came back from defeating Chedorlaomer and his allies, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Shaveh Valley (that is, the King's Valley).

Abram probably sends out men ahead, and who carry the news of the defeat of this great Eastern Alliance. They probably also arranged a meeting between Abram and the king of Sodom, as this war ran right through his front yard. Abram has been living in this land for a long time now, so he apparently shows some deference to the city-kings of the land. He is probably well-known to the people of the land of Canaan, but not to the kings of the Eastern Alliance. Abram would have been unknown to this Eastern Alliance because he moved around so often. They did not know who he was, how many were in his camp, what they were capable of, etc. Abram's army and his coalition with the 3 brothers were a complete unknown to the eastern forces. Therefore, when Abram attacked them, they did not say to themselves, "Look, this is just Abram, some wandering cattleman; he only has a few hundred men with him." They did not know him, and therefore, were defeated by him. *You must know your enemy* is an axiom of war dating back at least to Sun Tzu. Here, over a millennium before Sun Tzu, this axiom is implied, but not stated directly.

As an application, this is why we have the CIA; this is why the Brits have MI5 and MI6. This is why Israel has Mossad. These intelligence gathering agencies are constantly gathering information about both friends and enemies. The Mossad, in August of 2001, allegedly warned the United States of an imminent threat of perhaps 200 terrorist who had slipped into the United States and were planning an attack against us. The better we know our enemy, the more able we are to defeat him.

Back to Abram and the King of Salem. Where they meet is called the Valley of Shaveh which is also called the Valley of the Kings. The Bible only names this area twice—here and in 2Sam. 18:18. This is where Abram will meet Melchizedek, the King of Salem, which is Jerusalem. Therefore, we know that Abram's attack upon this army occurred after they moved further north, parallel to and on the west side of the Salt Sea. Because this king named here, we know that we are somewhere close to Jerusalem.

[Gen 14:18](#) And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.)

We have another king now, who was not named among those at war: Melchizedek, the king of Salem.

This leads us to a most important meeting between Abram and Melchizedek, the king of Salem. *Salem* would be ancient Jerusalem. *Salem* means *peace*, so Melchizedek here is the King of Peace. Bear in mind, this was probably written down 2000 years before Jesus walked on this earth. Even the most liberal of historians believe this was written down hundreds of years before Christ (liberal historians are nearly always wrong about theology and history; as has been discussed before, they do not even know this history of our own country).

The name, *Melchizedek*, means *my king is righteousness*. So, Melchizedek is the *king of peace* and his king is the *king of righteousness*. He is called here, *priest of the God Most High*. It should not take a genius to figure out Who Melchizedek represents.

This is the first use of the word *priest*, which is *kôhên* (כֹּהֵן) [pronounced *koh-HANE*], which word is principally translated *priest*. The simplest explanation is, a *priest* represents man before God; a *prophet* represents God to man. Ideally speaking, what we would like, as men, is a mediator between God and ourselves—someone who is equal to both parties. This would incorporate the priest and the prophet into one person. **There is one God, and there is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus** (1Tim. 2:5). Jesus is called the great priest over the house of God in Heb. 10:19–21 and our High Priest in Heb. 9:11. Jesus was recognized as a prophet (or as *the Prophet*) in John 6:14 7:40 9:17 and He is said to be the fulfillment of God raising up a prophet like Moses in Acts 3:22 7:37. Therefore, the first time that we find the word *priest*, it is reasonable that this man, Melchizedek, is representative of our Lord.

Like much of Genesis, the idea of a priest is presented here in its most basic form. Much of the Mosaic Law associates priests with the offering up of animal sacrifices, but that is not mentioned in this context (perhaps there was an animal sacrifice and perhaps there wasn't; we don't know).

What Melchizedek brings out, however, is bread and wine, which are the communion elements, to remind us of our Lord's body, which was broken for us, and of His blood, which was shed for us—and yet, this incident takes place about 2000 years before the cross. Furthermore, there is not a scholar anywhere who does not believe that this history of Melchizedek preceded the era of Jesus Christ by hundreds of years at the very least.

Throughout the Old Testament there are types of Jesus Christ. If this occurred once or twice, we could simply chalk it up to coincidence. However, these parallels between Jesus Christ and people in the Old Testament are amazing. If a person is truly open-minded, then they cannot explain how such close parallels to Jesus Christ occur in the Old Testament, again and again and again. The only reasonable explanation is, God knows the end from the beginning and God the Holy Spirit inspired the writers of Scripture in the Old and New Testaments. "I am God, and there is no one like Me; I proclaim the end from the beginning and from ancient times, I proclaim things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all My purpose' " (Isa. 46:9b–10). "The former things I declared of old; they went out from my mouth, and I announced them; then suddenly I did them, and they came to pass." (Isa. 48:3; see also Isa. 41:22, 26 44:7 45:21). **No prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit** (2Peter 1:21) . No other explanation else makes any sense.

People do not believe in Jesus Christ because they choose not to believe in Him. It is not that there is some lack of evidence. People do not believe that the Bible is the Word of God because they choose to believe that, not because there is a lack of evidence for such an assertion.

A student in a New England university said he had an intellectual problem with Christianity and just could not therefore accept Christ as saviour. "Why can't you believe?" I asked. He replied, "The New Testament is not reliable." I then asked,

“If I prove to you that the New Testament is one of the most reliable pieces of literature of antiquity, will you believe?” He retorted, “NO!” “You don’t have a problem with your mind, but with your will,” I answered. From Josh McDowell, Evidence that Demands a Verdict; ©1972 by Campus Crusade for Christ; p. 12.

Bertrand Russell is an example of an intelligent atheist who did not give careful examination to the evidence for Christianity. In his essay, “Why I am Not a Christian,” it is obvious that he has not even considered the evidence of and for the resurrection of Jesus and, by his remarks, it is doubtful as to whether he has even glanced at the New Testament. It seems incongruous that a man would not deal with the resurrection in great detail since it is the foundation of Christianity. From Josh McDowell, Evidence that Demands a Verdict; ©1972 by Campus Crusade for Christ; p. 12. McDowell took this from Michael Green’s book Runaway World.

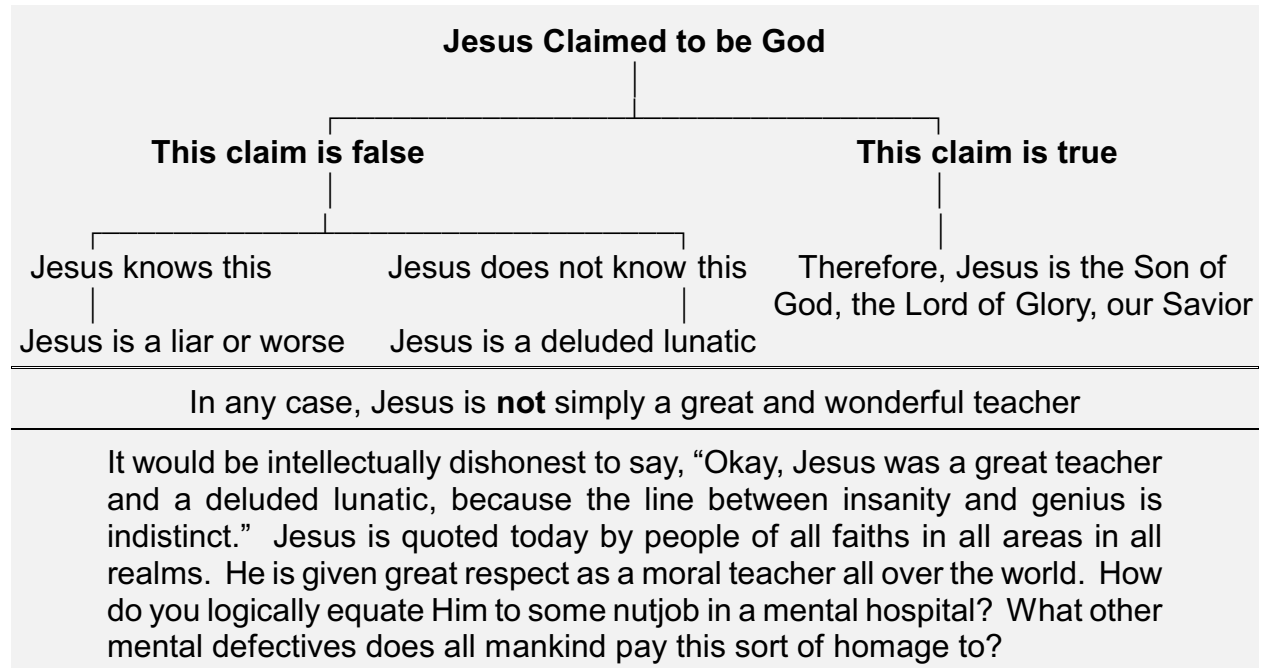
Josh McDowell wrote and rewrote a book called *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* (along with several incarnations of that book, including *A Ready Defense* (however, do not start with *Evidence that Demands a verdict, Vol. II*). If anyone reads this book with an open mind, they must come away with the conclusion that, Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Messiah, the Way, the Truth and the Life; our only gate to God; and that the Bible is the Word of God. Even though we are given salvation for exercising faith in Jesus Christ, that does not mean that the Christian way of life is only based solely upon faith, where all human evidence is opposed to it. God gave us a mind capable of reason and logic, and, if you believe your faith to be weak, then get one of McDowell’s books and feast upon the logic and reason which is the Christian faith.

In McDowell’s book, he collected our Lord’s direct claims to be God, His indirect claims to Deity, and the titles given Him, which are titles of Deity. So, we cannot dismiss Jesus as someone upon whom the concept of Deity was simply overlaid.

*C. S. Lewis, once an agnostic, wrote, I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: “I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God.” That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man who said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. Josh McDowell, Evidence that Demands a Verdict; ©1972 by Campus Crusade for Christ; p. 107, who was quoting C. S. Lewis (I believe from *Is Christianity Credible?*).*

This is followed by a flow chart in McDowell’s book. Under “Jesus Claims to be God” we have two alternatives: His claims were true or His claims were false. Obviously, if His claims are true, then Jesus is our Lord, the Son of God. If His claims are false, then there are two logical alternatives: He knew His claims to be false or He did not know that His claims were false. In the latter case, Jesus is deluded and a lunatic. Does anyone actually believe that to be true? In the alternative, Jesus lied about Who He knew Himself to be,

making Him a liar, a hypocrite and probably demonically-influenced or possessed. From Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*; ©1972 by Campus Crusade for Christ; pp. 108–109. What this logically robs a person of is, the patronizing nonsense that Jesus was a great teacher, but He was not God. Analytically, that view makes little sense.



Personally, I believe strongly in apologetics (the study of Jesus Christ and Christianity from a logical and empirical point of view), because that was the basis, at first, for the building up my own faith. Even though I believed in Jesus Christ at age 21, this did not mean that my faith was completely solid at that point. I read almost anything I could get my hands on, particularly in the realm of apologetics. The more that I read, the more difficult it was to deny that Jesus is God; that Jesus is our Savior.

Therefore, as we study Melchizedek in the next several lessons, remember that he is one of dozens of men who were shadow-images of our Lord. Again, this shadow image of Jesus does not just occur once or twice in the Old Testament; we see it again and again, in nearly every single Old Testament book. How did approximately 2 dozen independent writers, writing hundreds of years before the incarnation, know to present men in such a way that, they are clearly shadow images of Jesus Christ?

So Abram meets with “My King is My Righteousness,” who is the King of Peace, which king is a priest to the God Most High—the God worshiped by Abram—and who brings out bread and wine, the Communion elements.

Gen. 14:17–18 After Abram returned from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.)

We are told in the New Testament that this Melchizedek is a type of Christ. For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and he blessed him, and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever (Heb. 7:1–3; Gen. 14:17–20).

Jesus Christ is called a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4 Heb. 5:6, 10 6:20 7:15). Therefore, there must be some parallels between Jesus Christ and Melchizedek.

Melchizedek is the Type; Jesus Christ is the Antitype	
Melchizedek	Jesus Christ
<p>The name <i>Melchizedek</i> means <i>my King is righteousness</i>. This recognizes that our righteousness is in Christ, not in ourselves. Furthermore, this is in keeping with Gen. 15:6, where Abraham has imputed righteousness because he has faith in Jehovah Elohim.</p>	<p>Jesus Christ, our King, is our righteousness. [God is speaking]: "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and He shall reign as king and deal wisely, and He will execute justice and righteousness in the land [of promise]. In His days Judah will be delivered, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which He will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.' " (Jer. 23:5–6; see also Jer. 33:16 Rom. 3:22 1Cor. 1:30 Phi. 3:9 Heb. 7:2 2Peter 1:1). He made the One who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2Cor. 5:21).</p>
<p>Melchizedek is the King of Salem, which means <i>the King of Peace</i>. Heb. 7:2</p>	<p>Jesus Christ is called the Prince of Peace in Isa. 9:6 and Heb. 7:2. To us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6).</p>

Melchizedek is the Type; Jesus Christ is the Antitype

Melchizedek	Jesus Christ
Melchizedek brings out the communion elements, the bread and the wine, which represent our Lord's death on the cross for the atonement of our sins (Gen. 14:18).	The one clear ritual that we are to participate in during the Church Age is the Eucharist, spoken of by Paul in 1Cor. 11:23–36 and by our Lord in the first communion in Matt. 26:26–29, taken the night before He paid for our sins on the cross.
Melchizedek is presented here as without a recorded genealogy; not even his mother or father is mentioned (as we have seen, the recording of genealogies is quite important throughout the Old Testament). Heb. 7:3	The Deity of Jesus Christ has no mother or father, or genealogy, or beginning or end of days. For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and he blessed him, and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever (Heb. 7:1–3; Gen. 14:17–20).
Being without a genealogy means that Melchizedek's authority was not derived from His genealogy (Levitical priests derive their authority from their genealogy).	Jesus Christ is not authoritative because of His genealogy through Mary; He is authoritative because He is the Son of God and because He speaks the truth (Matt. 7:29 9:6 28:18 John 7:17–18). "Point of doctrine: I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son also to have life in Himself. And He has given Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man." (John 5:27).
Melchizedek (a type of Christ) blessed Abram. The greater blesses the lesser. Gen. 14:18–19 Heb. 7:1, 4–7 Recall that all nations and people would be blessed because of Abram, in Abram, and because of his seed (Gen. 12:3 18:18 26:4).	We are blessed by Jesus Christ and because we are in Him (Rom. 4:6–8 Gal. 3:9 Eph. 1:3, 6). He has blessed us in the Beloved (Eph. 1:6b). All of our blessings are related directly or indirectly to Jesus Christ. The blessing of Abram by Melchizedek reveals this in typology.
Melchizedek was a priest of the Most High God (Gen. 14:18).	Jesus Christ is also know as our great High Priest (Heb. 9:11 10:19–22),

Melchizedek is the Type; Jesus Christ is the Antitype

Melchizedek	Jesus Christ
Because Melchizedek is a priest of the Most High God, he is under God's authority.	Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, was under the authority of God the Father and acting with the authority of God (John 5:17 10:18 14:10 Heb. 5:7-8).

Over and over again, throughout the Old Testament, we do not just have prophecies of Jesus Christ, but we have people, things and circumstances which are *types* of Jesus Christ, which illustrate some aspect of our Lord's Person, His mission or His character. These types are numerous and not always documented in the New Testament. We discover these types by means of an investigation of the Old Testament.

[Gen. 14:17-18](#) After Abram returned from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.)

Even though Melchizedek comes to us out of nowhere, it is clear that he is a legitimate priest, because the Scripture calls him a *priest of the Most High God*. So, again, prior to the Mosaic Law, there was some kind of a spiritual life which was probably well-defined, with overlaps both to the Age of Israel and to the Church Age. However, we know very little about it. We find out here, suddenly, that there is a priesthood, but we find out very little about this priesthood in this context.

Now, so you don't think that some New Testament writer read a couple of verses about Melchizedek in the Old Testament and then made all of these unwarranted applications, a psalmist, writing almost exactly between the time of Melchizedek and Christ, also recognizes the importance of Melchizedek.

Melchizedek in Psalm 110

- Melchizedek is mentioned only one time in narrative, and he is the first person called a priest in the Bible.
- There is a specialized priesthood which will be developed in the Mosaic Law, which is related to those who are descended from Aaron and who had a particular ministry to Israel (which ministry essentially faded away when Jesus came).
- Melchizedek is mentioned just one more time in the Old Testament, in Psalm 110:

Melchizedek in Psalm 110

1 Jehovah said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool."

God the Father (= Jehovah) says to God the Son (= David's Lord), "Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool." This is the ultimate defeat of Satan and his demons in the Angelic Conflict (Psalm 2:9 110:1 Zech. 13:2 Eph. 1:22 Col. 2:15); which defeat, R. B. Thieme, Jr. called *operation footstool* (apropos of his WWII involvement).

2 Jehovah shall send the Rod of Your strength out of Zion. "Rule in the midst of Your enemies."

God the Father (called Y^ehowah in this and the previous verse) sends out the *Rod of His Strength* (Jesus Christ) from Zion in the midst of His enemies. 4 huge armies will maneuver in the valley beneath Mount Zion, intent upon killing the Jews. Zech. 14:1–3 Joel 2:1–10a 3:9–11a Matt. 24:28–30 Rev. 16:16–21 Jesus Christ will go out from Zion and crush His enemies (Isa. 64:1–12 Zech. 14:3 Haggai 2:6–7 Rev. 14:19–20).

Given the rampant anti-Semitism in the Middle East and the implacability of the Palestinians, Egyptians and Iranians (to name a few), it is not difficult to imagine huge coalitions coming to destroy Israel. God the Son here is told to "Rule in the midst of Your enemies." This is the imperative mood.

I write this in 2011, where, in many Middle Eastern countries, there is an uprising going on; and one of the key factors of most of these uprisings is a pronounced hatred for the Jews (a component all but ignored by the media). So, where there has been a peace agreement between Israel and Egypt since 1978, there is a good chance that a future Egyptian government will abrogate that treaty.

3 Your people offer themselves willingly in the day of Your power, in the holy mountain. Out of the womb of the morning, to You [is] the dew of Your youth."

The Jews (called *Your people*) willingly face their enemies in the *day of Your power*, which is another synonym for the Tribulation and the 2nd advent.

The second line references the 1st advent. Throughout the Bible, we find the advents of our Lord presented as one event.

The 1st advent is the incarnation of our Lord; it is His historical earthly ministry in which He gave Himself for us on the cross. The 2nd advent is when Jesus returns to the earth, at the end of the Great Tribulation, when great armies are maneuvering outside of Jerusalem. We find the two advents of our Lord combined at least 22 times in the Old Testament. In between these advents, the Church Age is inserted (intercalated). See the **Doctrine of Intercalation** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) for more information on this topic.

Melchizedek in Psalm 110

<p>4 Jehovah has sworn, and will not change His mind, “You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.”</p>	<p>God the Father calls God the Son a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. This is a declaration made in eternity past; this is the decree of God as to the Person of Jesus Christ, a decree made before the creation of the world.</p> <p>Despite the great massacre of the evil armies, Jesus Christ is a royal priest forever. What it means to be a priest after the order of Melchizedek will be explained in the New Testament. We have 3 different authors, each writing 1000 years apart, each telling us all about Melchizedek, the priest of God, Who is a type of Jesus Christ.</p>
<p>5 The Lord at Your right hand will shatter kings in the day of His wrath.</p>	<p>When Jesus returns to this earth, He will be a conquering warrior, destroying the enemies of the Jews, including the kings who have organized armies to kill the Jews in Jerusalem. The <i>day of His wrath</i> is another name for the Tribulation and the 2nd advent. Rev. 14:15–20</p>
<p>6 He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill them with dead bodies; He will shatter heads over much of the earth.</p>	<p>In the Tribulation, Jesus Christ will return and destroy those armies which have converged on Jerusalem. He will fill the streets with the dead bodies of His enemies. Isa. 34:2–8 66:15–16 Rev. 14:18–20</p>
<p>7 He shall drink of the brook in the way; therefore He shall lift up the head (Psalm 110).</p>	<p>This describes a pursuing force, taking a drink for refreshment, and then continuing the pursuit to wholly and completely destroy the fleeing enemies. Often, a drink of refreshment in the Bible refers to the intake of Bible doctrine.</p>

We continually find in the Bible new aspects to the Person of Jesus Christ. Here, He is called a priest after the order of Melchizedek; and, at the same time, He will judge the nations and fill the streets with dead bodies.

An full exegesis of **Psalm 110** is found here ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)).

A priest represents man to God. Here, this very same priest, after the order of Melchizedek, Who will judge the nations as the Rod and the Power which comes out of Zion.

The passage we are studying reads:

Gen. 14:17–18 After Abram returned from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.)

The priesthood of Melchizedek is a very big deal in the New Testament; particularly in the book of Hebrews.

Melchizedek in the New Testament

- ☐ Melchizedek is then mentioned in the book of Hebrews several times. Heb. 5:6; Heb. 5:10; Heb. 6:20; Heb. 7:1; Heb. 7:10; Heb. 7:11; Heb. 7:15; Heb. 7:17:

5:1–2	For every high priest being taken from men is appointed on behalf of men in the things respecting God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; being able to feel in due measure for those not knowing and being led astray, since he also is circled about with weakness.	The writer of Hebrews refers back here to the Aaronic priesthood (those Levites who are descended from Aaron), and one man was High Priest for each generation. This man offered up gifts and sacrifices for sins for those who came to the Tabernacle or to the Temple, representing man to God. However, the High Priest is just a man, with human failings.
5:3–4	And because of this he ought to offer for sins as concerning the people, so also concerning himself. And no one takes the honor to himself, but he being called by God, even as Aaron was also.	Because the High Priest is just a man who is also beset by weakness (he has a sin nature), he must also offer up sacrifices for himself. He is called by God, but he is just a man—just like Aaron.
5:5	So also the Christ has not glorified Himself to become a high priest, but He [God the Father] speaking to Him [God the Son], "You are My Son; today I have begotten You." Psalm 2:7	Before Jesus Christ was crucified and then glorified, which made Him the True High Priest, God said to Him, "You are My Son; Today I have sired You." God the Father chose God the Son to be our High Priest.

Melchizedek in the New Testament

5:6–10

As He also says in another place, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek," (Psalm 110:4) Who [Jesus Christ], in the days of His flesh, was offering both petitions and entreaties to Him [God the Father], being able to save Him [Jesus Christ] from death, with strong crying and tears, and being heard from His godly fear; though being a Son, He learned obedience from what He suffered and having been perfected, He came to be the Author of eternal salvation to all the ones obeying Him, having been called out by God [the Father] as a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Jesus Christ became our priest after the order of Melchizedek, which means, He represents us to God

Jesus Christ, as a man, recognized the great suffering involved with bearing our sins, and He asked God, with great emotion, to remove this cup from Him (Matt. 26:39). Drinking the cup was taking upon Himself our sins. Because He drank from the cup, Jesus Christ became the Author of our salvation, we who have been called out by Him.

His *suffering* is His spiritual death for our sins; His *being perfected* is being raised from the dead in a resurrection body.

Although Jesus is called here a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, this is not explained.

5:11

Concerning Whom we have much to say, but it has been difficult to explain because you have come to be slow in your response to spiritual information [lit., *lazy in hearing*].

The explanation of what this means for Jesus to be a priest after the order of Melchizedek is difficult to explain, and this is, in part, because the Jews to whom this is addressed, are negative toward the truth (Heb. 5:12–14), where the writer of Hebrews says they ought to be teachers by now, but they are still babies in their understanding of the Word.

6:13–16

For God made a promise to Abraham, [and], since He had no one greater to swear by, "He swore by Himself," saying, "Surely [in] blessing I will bless you, and [in] multiplying I will multiply you." (Gen. 22:16–17) And so, being patient, he [Abraham] obtained the promise. For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath to make things sure is to them the end of all opposition.

God swore, upon the strength of His Own character and essence (there is nothing greater than His Own Person), that He would bless and multiply the seed of Abraham. Abraham, who is patient, as received the promise (although this is still to be fulfilled future from our time—the aorist tense here refers to a point of time, which point of time could be future).

To make an oath certain, to end all discussion of that oath, a man swears by something greater than himself; God swears by Himself.

Melchizedek in the New Testament

6:17-20

In this way, desiring to declare more fully to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, God mediated in an oath, so that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us, which hope [confidence] we have as an anchor of the soul, both certain and stable, and which enters into that within the veil, where the Forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

The oath which God made is based upon 2 immutable (unchangeable) things: the fact that He is the One making the oath and the fact that He swears by Himself.

At the time that this is written, the Jews were suffering great persecution, and, a few years after this epistle, they would be slaughtered in the streets of Jerusalem as they took their last stand against the Romans. For this reason, the Jews are told to seize upon this promise and to hold onto it, despite what is coming. This promise was to anchor their souls.

Entering beyond the veil is the Holy of Holies inside the Tabernacle, which is where the Ark of God was. Entering into the Holy of Holies is Jesus Christ entering into the Throne Room of God, where He sits down at the right and of the Father. Again, the writer does not explain what it means for Jesus to be a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Finally, in Heb. 7, the writer explains exactly what he means:

7:1-3

For this "Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God," the one meeting Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, "and blessing him;" to whom also Abraham "divided a tenth from all" (first being interpreted, king of righteousness; and then also king of Salem, which is, king of peace (Gen. 14:17-20), without father, without mother, without genealogy, nor beginning of days, nor having end of life, but having been made like the Son of God, he remains a priest in perpetuity).

The writer of Hebrews draws parallels between Melchizedek and Jesus Christ. In order to do this, he must remind his readers of who Melchizedek is, and he will pull out all of the pertinent information. Melchizedek is the *King of Peace* (= *the King of Salem*). He is said to be *without* mother, father or genealogy. Of course, Melchizedek had a mother and a father, and he was associated with a genealogy (at that time), but the Bible does not emphasize or record his genealogy. The Deity of Jesus Christ is without beginning or end, and His Deity has no mother or father; no genealogy leading up to it. Similarly, Melchizedek has no beginning of days, no end of life, and, for this reason, he stands as a priest to God forever, just like the Deity of Jesus Christ .

Melchizedek in the New Testament

7:4-6

Now behold how great this one was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils; and indeed those of the sons of Levi receiving the priesthood have a command to tithe the people according to Law, (that is, from their brothers, though coming forth out of Abraham's loins), but he lacking a genealogy collected tithes from Abraham, and he has blessed the one having the promises.

This priest, Melchizedek, without beginning or end, is so great, that even Abraham, the father of the Jews, the recipient of the great promises of God, gave to him, as a high priest, a tenth of all that he had.

The Levites are mentioned here, which were to collect tithes from their brothers, but Melchizedek blessed Abraham, the one to whom the promises were made. The Levites are genetically in Abram as he makes his offering to Melchizedek, so the Levites, in Abram, pay homage to Melchizedek.

7:7-10

But it is not disputed that the lesser is blessed by the greater. And here mortal men indeed receive tithes, but there one receives tithes, of whom it is witnessed that he lives; and one would say, through Abraham Levi also, the one receiving tithes, has paid tithes. For he [Levi] was yet in his father's loins when Melchizedek met him [Abram].

Levi, because he was in the loins of Abraham (so to speak), also paid tithes to Melchizedek.

The one who blesses (Melchizedek) is greater than the one receiving the blessing (Abraham), and in Abraham was Levi (his great grandson), so, Levi is blessed by Melchizedek and is therefore inferior to Melchizedek. Levi, in Abraham, brings tithes to Melchizedek, making the Levitical Priesthood inferior to Melchizedek's priesthood.

7:11

Truly, then, if perfection was through the Levitical priestly office (for the people had been given Law under it), why yet was there need for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek and not to be called according to the order of Aaron?

Man is not made perfect or complete by means of the Levitical priests; otherwise, there would have been no need for the incarnation of Jesus Christ, a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Jesus Christ is our true High Priest, after the order of Melchizedek.

Melchizedek in the New Testament

7:12-14 For the priestly office having been changed, of necessity a change of law also occurs. For the *One* of whom these things are said belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar. For *it is* clear that our Lord came from the tribe of Judah, as to which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.

The priestly office was changed, which change was reflected in the Law of God.

Jesus Christ came from the seed of Judah, not from the seed of Levi (Judah and Levi are brothers, both sons of Jacob, Abraham's grandson). Moses said nothing of a priest arising out from the family of Judah.

Levi and Judah are 2 of the tribes of Israel; the first being the priestly tribe and the second being the royal tribe.

7:15-18 And it is still more abundantly clear that if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, Who has not become so according to a law of a fleshly command, but according to *the* power of an endless life. For it is testified, "You are a priest to the age according to the order of Melchizedek." (Psalm 110:4). For, indeed, an annulment of *the* preceding command comes about because it is weak and useless.

Jesus Christ was made a priest according to the *likeness of Melchizedek*. Psalm 110:4 testifies to this. There was a weakness and unprofitability in the Levitical priesthood, because its ceremonies did not save. Therefore, it was necessary for God to raise up Jesus according to another priesthood.

If there is another priesthood (the priesthood of Jesus Christ), then there is a change made in the Law. The Mosaic Law was set aside with regards to its priesthood and offerings because they were weak and unprofitable (no one was saved because a priest from the tribe of Aaron offered up a sacrifice on their behalf).

7:19 For the Law made nothing perfect, apart from the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

The Mosaic Law did not complete or perfect anything (and the Aaronic priesthood did not perfect anything either). Man is not made perfect by obeying the Mosaic Law. The Law presents to us a better Hope, which is Jesus Christ. The Law brings us a way by which we may draw closer to God.

Melchizedek in the New Testament

7:20–21

And inasmuch as He was not made a priest without taking an oath; for they became priests are without taking an oath, but He (became a priest) by taking an oath, through the *One* saying to Him, *The Lord* swore, and will not change His mind (about this oath): "You *are* a priest to the age according to the order of Melchizedek;" (Psalm 110:4).

Levites were born into the priesthood; they did not take an oath.

There is a greater covenant—a greater contract—between God and man, brought to us by Jesus Christ, our Savior. He is the guarantee of a better contract, since the Law cannot perfect us. This greater contract is, He died for our sins, and we may apprehend the promise of God through believing in Jesus Christ.

7:22

By this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

Another thing which makes the Priesthood of Jesus superior is, it is based upon an oath, and this oath guarantees us of a better covenant (contract). This was an oath made between God the Father and God the Son, immortalized in Psalm 110.

7:23–25

And there have been many priests, but they were prevented from continuing because of death; however, He [Jesus Christ] has the priesthood which is not passed on [from generation to generation], because of His remaining to the age. And from this He is able to save to the *end* completely the *ones* drawing near to God through Him, forever living to intercede on their behalf.

Those in the Levitical priesthood are mortal; when one dies, another arises to take his place. However, Jesus Christ is of a priesthood which is not passed on from generation to generation, and He is able to save those who draw near to God through Him, because He is eternal and His priesthood is eternal. A Levitical priest can intercede on behalf of man to God during the time he is alive, but he will die. Jesus Christ will be forever before God, interceding forever on our behalf.

7:26–27a

For such a High Priest fully meets our needs: [because He is] holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners, and, having become higher than the heavens; He has no need, as do the high priests, to offer sacrifices day by day, first for His own sins, then for the sins of the people.

Jesus Christ was designed by God for us (for all mankind). Jesus Christ is set apart from all else. He is harmless to us (we will not be hurt by believing in Him). Jesus is undefiled by sin, making Him the true Lamb without spot and without blemish, qualified to die for our sins. He is completely separate from us sinners (Jesus Christ has no sin nature and He committed no personal sins). Therefore, He has no need to offer sacrifices each day first for his own sins, and then for the sins of others.

Melchizedek in the New Testament

7:27b–28 For He did this once for all, offering up Himself. For the Law makes men high priests who have infirmity, but the word of the oath-taking after the Law appoints the Son forever, having been made perfect.

Jesus Christ, once and for all, offered up Himself, as a sacrifice for the people. The Law designated certain mortal men as high priests, even though they all had sin natures. However, Jesus Christ has no sin nature, He has died for our sins, and we are made perfect in Him.

Melchizedek is called a *type* and Jesus Christ is the *antitype*. The Bible records enough information about Melchizedek so that, 1000 years later, David, in a psalm, recognizes that God will fulfill this *type* in His Son. Then, another 1000 years pass, and the unnamed writer of Hebrews pulls this all together for his Jewish readers, that the priesthood of Melchizedek, testified to in Gen. 14 and then recognized by David in Psalm 110, illustrates the priesthood of Jesus Christ.

These words are written by 3 different authors—a bedouin rancher, a king and a man of unknown profession—all living 1000 years apart from one another, and yet these words all fit together and complement one another, the author of Hebrews explaining in detail the meaning of the priesthood of Melchizedek and testifying as to why David saw this priesthood to be so important as to document it in a psalm.

Lesson 137: Genesis 14:18–24

The Priesthoods of God

So far, we have studied Melchizedek and we ought to know from the previous lesson exactly who he is. His name occurs but once in Genesis and once in the Psalms. Yet, the writer of Hebrews, as moved by God the Holy Spirit, discusses Melchizedek in great detail, relating his priesthood to Jesus Christ, over a space of 3 chapters. He is a type of Jesus Christ and our Lord is the antitype. Melchizedek is a priest-king and, the king of Jerusalem. Jesus Christ is a priest-king and He will become the King to rule from Jerusalem.

Gen 14:18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.)

The title, *the God Most High*, is found several times in this passage and once in the psalms (Psalm 57:2), and it refers to Jehovah Elohim, the 1st Person of the Trinity, Whom we know as God the Father. There are another 10 verses where Jehovah is called *the Most High God* (in the Psalms and the prophets).

Prior to the Mosaic Law, we have only the barest of religious structure—at least, in terms of what is revealed to us. When Noah and his family emerge from the ark, the mandate against murder is introduced. Noah offered up animal sacrifices as a priest (the term *priest* is not specifically applied to him, however), as does Abram. This has led many to conclude

that, in the antediluvian period prior to the Mosaic Law, there was a family priesthood, where the eldest male family member acted as a priest. Although that may be the case, all we have in the Bible is anecdotal evidence, but no clear mandates from God. This does not mean that they lacked religious structure or that they did whatever felt right; it simply means that religious function mandates are not recorded for us. There were clean and unclean animals taken into the ark, and additional clean animals went with him into the ark, no doubt for sacrifice and possibly for food. So Noah exited the ark and he sacrificed some of these clean animals, but this is apart from any clear Genesis era religious structure. What they certainly did not have was a detailed Mosaic Law, as God will give Moses. Probably what they did have was a religious tradition which came out of the direct interaction between God and man. I would therefore suggest that there was more information on one's spiritual modus operandi which is not revealed to us in Genesis. Hence, there is a man like Melchizedek, who is both a king and a priest, whose origins are separate from Abram. Did he have any direct communication with God? I don't know. This does indicate to us that, there were pockets of believers in the God Most High.

Although we do not know how these pockets of believers came about, we know several things about God.

Post-Diluvian Heathenism

1. Melchizedek, the priest-king, reveals to us that there were believers here and there in the ancient world.
2. We do not know how the worship of Jehovah Elohim, the God Most High, came about, here or there.
3. With Abram, his spiritual life is developed through a series of face to face meetings with God, and a number of promises. However, when Abram was back in the Euphrates valley, he had to have believed in Jehovah Elohim. We do not know the circumstances of this, only the simple recollection that [Abram believed Y^ehowah and it was credited to him as righteousness](#) (Gen. 15:6).
4. In this chapter, we have Abram meeting Melchizedek, the priest-king, who believed in Jehovah Elohim separately and developed a spiritual life separately from Abram. Gen. 14:18–20
5. Therefore, God is able to reach man, no matter where he is and no matter how he is brought up.
6. Here is what we know about God:
 - 1) He is omniscient; He can even see into the hearts of man. Gen. 11:5 1Sam. 16:7 Job 11:11 Jer. 23:23
 - 2) God is just and righteous. Psalm 145:17 Jer. 12:1
 - 3) Therefore, we can conclude that, when a person goes on positive volition toward God, no matter what the time frame, God will see to it that person hears about Him so that the person with positive volition can place his faith in Jehovah Elohim.
7. As a result, there are people like Melchizedek in the very ancient world who have believed in Jehovah God.

I had liberal, unbelieving friends of mine, who brought up their daughter in that way, and then sent her off to one of the most liberal, anti-God colleges in the United States. What happened? She believed in Jesus Christ. Her mother was quite surprised. "How did this happen? We never taught her this," her mother wondered. God is able to reach all mankind, whenever He chooses to.

Here is what we do know: Abram, who has spoken to God, will recognize the spiritual status of Melchizedek. There was a sharing of bread and wine. A sacrifice may have been offered to God. There appears to be a clear mutual respect and recognition between Abram and Melchizedek. And Abram will pay Melchizedek a tithe (a tenth of what he has).

The Bible speaks of priests, high priests, and at least 3 priesthoods. Therefore, we need to get these things differentiated in our minds.

The Priesthoods of God

1. There are a number of priesthoods spoken of in the Bible, and they are certainly interrelated.
2. A priest is a man who represents man to God. We have similar representative relationships throughout our society: an attorney represents us in a court of law; a real estate agent represents us in a real estate transaction; etc. It is someone who acts in our behalf in an arena in which we are not fully qualified to represent ourselves. Num. 15:15, 28
3. The first priesthood is named here in Gen. 14, and it refers to a priesthood which existed after the Flood and before the Mosaic Law was established.
 - 1) We know precious little about this priesthood. We know only one man who acts in this capacity, which man is Melchizedek. We might argue that Noah acted in this capacity as well. However, we have precious little information delineated here as to how this priesthood was organized, how a person became a priest, what the duties of the priest were, etc. There appears to be two rituals connected with this priesthood: the offering of animal sacrifices (an assumption we make, based upon Noah bringing clean animals on the ark and sacrificing some of them when exiting the ark); and what appears to be a pre-communion ritual with bread and wine (although, this could simply represent a meal shared by Melchizedek and Abram). Gen. 8:20 14:18–20
 - 2) Abram will pay a tithe (a tenth of his possessions) to Melchizedek. Gen. 14:20
 - 3) Our Lord's priesthood is said to have its origins in this priesthood. Psalm 110:4 Heb. 6:20
 - 4) Even though this post-diluvian priesthood could be very well-defined, God the Holy Spirit intentionally does not define it for us, but presents this priesthood as being one man, without mother or father, and without genealogy. The idea is, Melchizedek is the best one, in this way, to be a type of Christ.
4. The next priesthood is known by most as the Levitical priesthood. However, the

The Priesthoods of God

Levitical priesthood is a misnomer, but this is how it has come to be known throughout the ages. It is properly the Aaronic priesthood, as all priests are descendants of Aaron. Ex. 28:1 Num. 3:10

- 1) Throughout most of Israel's history, there was one high priest with clearly defined duties. Ex. 27:21 28:41–43 Lev. 1:5–8
 - 2) The priests were all descended from Aaron, and one man, in each generation, would act as high priest. Ex. 28:1 29:44 30:30
 - 3) Aaron was from the tribe of Levi, and the Levites were not a part of the land ownership of the other tribes of Israel. All families of Israel receive a plot of earth which was theirs, but not the Levites, who were involved in the spiritual growth of Israel. They were to inherit a spiritual kingdom and therefore, they did not participate in ownership of land on earth. Deut. 18:1 Joshua 18:7 21:3–4
 - 4) The priests officiated in all of the religious holidays and they offered up animal sacrifices on behalf of the people of Israel. Num. 18:1–8
 - 5) The priests were to encourage the people in war. Deut. 20:1–4
 - 6) The high priest, once a year, on the Day of Atonement, entered into the Holy of Holies (a room of the Tabernacle that *no one* went into apart from the high priest), and sprinkled blood on the Ark of God, a piece of furniture which represented Jesus Christ; a piece of furniture which every Israelite knew about, but was almost never seen. Ex. 26:34 Heb. 9:25 13:11
5. We are told in the New Testament that the offerings of the Aaronic priesthood could never take away sins (Heb. 10:11). However, this is a point we ought to be able to reach with logic, because those is the Aaronic priesthood are mortals, as are we, and first had to offer up sacrifices for their own sins.
 6. In the time of Jesus, the priesthood had become corrupted and the high priests had become evil in their thinking, leading the Lord of Glory before the courts to be crucified. John 19:6 Acts 4:1–10
 7. These same priests persecuted Paul. Acts 23:1–2, 12–15
 8. Jesus, our High Priest:
 - 1) These various priesthoods look forward to Jesus Christ; each ancient priest is a type of Jesus Christ. Heb. 8:1–5
 - 2) The priests of old—even the high priest of Jehovah worship—were imperfect and had to offer up sacrifices even for themselves. Heb. 5:1–3 7:27–28
 - 3) Jesus, on earth, became our High Priest, the true High Priest, after the order of Melchizedek. Heb. 7:1–5, 17, 21 9:11
 - 4) Jesus is not a Levitical priest, as He is from the tribe of Judah, not the tribe of Levi (from which is the family of Aaron); and there is nothing spoken about Judah and the priesthood. Heb. 7:11–14
 - 5) Jesus is able to intercede on our behalf before God, as would a priest. Heb. 7:21–26
 - 6) He offered up Himself one time for our sins, taking them away, as the sacrifice of animals could not do. Heb. 2:7 9:12 10:19–22

The Priesthoods of God

- 7) It is by His blood (His spiritual death on the cross) that we may boldly *enter into the Holy of Holies* (which is representative of coming directly before God). Heb. 9:24 10:19
9. In the Church Age, we are all priests before God; we are able to represent ourselves directly to God because we are in Christ Jesus. Being in Christ Jesus, we share all that He is. Therefore, we can go to God directly in prayer and we can go to Him to restore our fellowship (by naming our sins to Him). These are priestly functions. 1Peter 2:5, 9 1John 1:9
10. The priesthoods of the Old Testament always looked forward to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Melchizedek priesthood, the Aaronic priesthood and the office of the high priest, all spoke of Jesus Christ. When the reality came (the fulfillment of these types), then there is no need to continue on with the types. Just as we no longer sacrifice animals to ceremonially take away our sins, we no longer have a specialized priesthood.
11. There will be another priesthood in the Millennium of those who survive the Tribulation. This will be in memory of the great plan of God, a plan which spanned the ages. Rev. 5:9–10 20:6

We depend upon the intercession of Jesus Christ on our behalf because He is the perfect priest before God.

[Gen 14:18](#) And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.)

Jewish tradition has it that this man, Melchizedek, is Shem, the son of Noah. Shem's life overlaps the life of Abram by about 100 years (as per the Hebrew text; this is not true according to the Greek text). In fact, according to the Hebrew text, the first 4 generations out of the ark lived about 100 years into Abram's life. These 4 generations outlived their sons and grandsons and great grandsons. In fact, Abraham, Isaac (his son) and Jacob (grandson) would be the first ones to outlive the first 4 generations from the ark. However, because of the numbers found in the LXX (the Greek translation of the Old Testament), we do not know for certain that this is true (the Greek text adds an additional 875 years to the line of Shem to Abram, which therefore separates them by three-quarters of a century).

Personally, I do not believe that Melchizedek is Shem, regardless of whether Shem is alive at this time or not. The reason for this is, the book of Hebrews, as we have studied, developed the identify of Melchizedek and his relationship to Jesus Christ (being a type of Christ), but nowhere do they entertain the idea that this man is Shem. If he was Shem, all of this stuff about him lacking a genealogy would be false, as we know Shem's ancestors and descendants both.

On the other hand, I do believe that something very special happened when Abram and Melchizedek met, which will be discussed in the next lesson.

Here is where we have been for awhile:

[Gen 14:18](#) And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was a priest of God Most High.)

The accepted view is, Moses wrote the book of Genesis, although there is no reason to assume that he did. Although he is called the author of various portions of 4 of the books of the Bible (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy), the New Testament does not attribute the authorship of Genesis to him. It is possible that he edited the book of Genesis, or edited it, when it came to a particular region or city whose name had changed, we really have no reason to directly associate Moses with Genesis.

Furthermore, there are sections of Genesis that only the participant would have known about. We have been studying Abram (later, Abraham), and nearly all of what we have read would have been information available only to him. It is far more likely that Abram recorded the information about himself. Furthermore, when we get to Jacob, there will be one verse which no one but Jacob would have written.

At some point, Abram received the Scriptures, and I believe this is where it occurred—a spiritual handoff, if you will. I doubt that you will read this theory anywhere else. Think back to Noah's time on the ark—this was ticked off in terms of days as related to Noah's birth—we know the very day the rains stopped, we know the day the water began to recede, we know on which days Noah let which birds fly from the ark. All of this suggests and Noah—or, at the very least, his son Shem—recorded all this information. As we have discovered, there is a complex organization to the entire flood epic, which would make it easy to learn and to memorize. So, by *recording* this information, I simply mean, it was committed to memory and told from generation to generation. You will recall that nearly every ancient civilization has a flood epic as a part of their history, which would tend to (1) confirm the flood narrative and (2) suggest that this history was originally passed down from generation to generation.

Here is my theory: Melchizedek, king of Salem, possessed the Holy Scriptures up to that point in time, whether they were in written form, or memorized. If Melchizedek is from one of the first 4 generations off the ark—or if he is simply in possession of this information—then this would have been an ideal time for God to have passed along the first 10 or 11 chapters of the Bible to Abram. I think that it is more likely that Melchizedek is a descendant of Shem's—a descendant not named in the Semitic line, and that he will take the Scriptures which he received from Shem and hand them off to Abram.

The Scriptures of the first ten or so chapters of Genesis had to have come from somewhere. Abram came out of a heathen family, which will become even more clear when we study Rachel. So, it seems unlikely that his family has possession of the Word of God (although it is reasonable that they were able to trace their own genealogy back to

Shem, and that would have been placed into Scripture by Abram). Just as we all today know the name of our parents and grandparents (well, most of us do), in the ancient world, it is not a stretch to think that most men, several generations after the flood, could trace their male line all the way back to Noah and one of his sons. It would have been one of the things of one's heritage that each person would learn. Furthermore, given their ages, for several generations, it would have been common for there to be 5 and even more generations all alive at the same time.

Throughout the book of Genesis, we have many details given to us from this or that time from the life of this or that man, and these details suggest a first-hand recording of this information. I have several theories, and one of them was, at one time, man did not need to write anything down because he remembered very nearly everything that he heard, as the Bible suggests that early man was genetically superior to us (if men lived longer, that makes them genetically superior; if they were genetically superior, then their minds were probably better). Furthermore, if the record of Adam and the woman is accurate (and I believe that it is), then genetically and biologically, we would predict that man would not become superior in time but inferior in time. Man's time on this earth decreased in each generation (Gen. 11:10–26); therefore, it is not a huge leap to suppose that there came a point in man's de-evolution that his memory became more and more flawed, and that man therefore developed a written language in order to write things down that his memory no longer retained. The most important thing for man to record is the Word of God, which would have been the first 10 or 11 chapters of Genesis. This is all speculative, but logical and reasonable; as is the idea of the spiritual handoff from Melchizedek to Abram.

For many subsequent chapters, we are going to have an in-depth examination of Abram's life, which information is logically recorded by Abram. The same will be true of Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. During the life of Jacob, Abram's grandson, there will be a very personal verse that no one but Jacob would have written, indicating that Jacob wrote that verse (and, therefore, Jacob likely wrote about the period of time in which he lived). The same will be true of Joseph, Abram's grandson—there will be information about his life recorded in Genesis that he and only he would have known about. When we find such personal information recorded, does it not make sense that the person who experienced these things, also passed them along, either verbally or in written form, to subsequent generations?

And so, from generation to generation, the Word of God was handed off, with a few chapters appended to it. In fact, from this point, the hand-off is easy to determine: from Abram, to Isaac, to Jacob to Joseph. For at least 3 of these men (Abram, Jacob and Joseph), there are very personal things recorded that only these men would have had direct knowledge of.

Let me suggest how this works. Jacob has the Word of God in his hands (or, in his mind), and in it is recorded, primarily, God's interaction with man. Jacob meets with God on a couple of occasions, and so Jacob records these meetings, along with other material which he believes is important (as guided by God the Holy Spirit). The end result is, Jacob adds another few chapters onto the Word of God. Whether he recognizes that he is recording

the Word of God, I could not tell you. But he does recognize the importance of recording these events, and he deems it necessary to record a few things from his own life—particularly his interaction with God.

In the future, several chapters from now (Gen. 27), Jacob will connive a special blessing from his father Isaac. This could have represented the next handoff. Someone had to record the book of Genesis, and there are many aspects of this book which suggest that there were several different authors. If that is the case, then this spiritual information had to be preserved from generation to generation, which not only was done orally or in written form, but, it is reasonable to assume that one man in every generation (or in every few generations) was given the solemn task of preserving God's Word. Let me emphasize that this is just a theory, and it is based upon the very personal nature of some of the narratives in Genesis. We do not have a verse that says, *and Melchizedek handed off the Holy Word to Abram*; however, if Genesis is indeed a series of personal accounts, then it had to be handed off from one generation to the next. If this was done orally, then the handoff might have taken days or even weeks. That is, one believer would learn these things at the foot of his father, grandfather or whatever.

This theory does not mean that no one else knew this information. The Word of God is the Word of God; it is **alive and powerful**, in all generations, and it is **sharper than any two-edged sword**. It has always **distinguished between the soul and the spirit**, separating them as neatly as one would **separate the joints and the marrow**; and it has always **discerned the thoughts and intents of the human heart**. Heb. 4:12 describes the Word of God in all generations. Therefore, then, as now, there are going to be a different level of positive volition from person to person. Therefore, in any generation, there will not be just one person who knows the Word of God. However, in any generation, there would have been at least one person with the responsibility of preserving the Word of God, no matter what form it is in.

Let's approach this from a different angle. Somehow, Melchizedek was able to establish a position of respect in the eyes of Abram. Abram does not simply blow him off saying, "Look, Mr. Priest-man, I've talked to God on many occasions—fact to face—so what can you tell me that I don't know?" And had Abram said that, Melchizedek would have answered, "I can tell you Who Jehovah Elohim is, and how He created the heavens and the earth. I can tell you important information about the flood, and what happened during the flood." I doubt seriously that this conversation took place; however, Melchizedek was afforded great respect from Abram in a way that was different from any other interaction recorded in Abram's life.

Recall that God had Abram separate from his family. His family lived along the Euphrates and they were idolaters, so how does Abram get accurate spiritual information from his own family, if they are idolaters? It would be more logical that Abram receives accurate information from a man who is a priest to the true God, rather than from his own idolatrous family.

Additional evidence of such a spiritual handoff would be simply the fact that we are now studying the life of Abram. Abram would have appended the Word of God with incidents from his own life, as led by God the Holy Spirit, and with his actual meetings with God. In other words, it is logical that Abram, at some point in his life, was given the Word of God, because we are now studying about him.

There is additional evidence of this in Gen. 26:4–5 [God is speaking to Isaac]: “And I will make your seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto your seed all these countries; and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; **because Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.**” What commandments, statutes and laws are we talking about here? Where did they come from and what were they? All of this is taking place 400–500 years before the God gave His Law to Moses. These verse suggest that there was some kind of a system, some sort of law, some set of commandments which Abram was responsible for, and that he attempted to obey them. What has been recorded so far, concerning Abram, and what will be recorded in the future, is God making promises to Abram. God did not lay out a list of rules that Abram must follow in order for God to give the land to his progeny; God simply says, “I will give this land to you.” And yet, Abram obeys God’s voice, God’s charge, God’s commandment, God’s statutes and God’s laws.

Back to Melchizedek.

In this context, there is a ceremony occurring. They are eating bread and drinking wine—the very elements of the Communion—and Melchizedek will call for the blessing of Abraham by God the Most High.

Gen 14:18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.)

As we have already studied, Melchizedek is a type of Christ. His name means *King of Righteousness* or *Righteousness [is my] King*. He is the King of Salem (Jerusalem), which is from where Jesus Christ will rule in the Millennium.

He is identified as priest of the God Most High. A priest represents man before God. Somehow, Abram was able to recognize this, and not think that this man was a priest to some heathen god. As I have suggested herein, Melchizedek had to somehow establish his authority, his position and his relationship as priest to God. I believe that Melchizedek did this through the Word of God. What is most logical to me is, after Melchizedek met with Abram and said who he was, he then said, “**In the beginning, Elohim created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of Elohim was hovering over the face of the waters. And Elohim said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. And Elohim saw that the light was good. And Elohim separated the light from the darkness. Elohim called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.**” Whether Abram had heard these words before or not, he would have recognized immediately their power and authority, and therefore, he would have afforded Melchizedek

immediate respect. Again, this is conjecture, but what other things could Melchizedek have done to get Abram's immediate respect so quickly? What else could be more powerful and effective than for Melchizedek to speak the Word of God to Abram?

Remember, Abram has just returned from a war where he attacked the great alliance of his time and he sent them running. He has collected all of the spoil which they left behind, along with all of the slaves taken from Sodom and Gomorrah (which would have included his nephew Lot). My point being, Abram was not interested in a chit-chat with just anyone who came along. God brought these men together and Melchizedek established who he was almost immediately.

The title *the God Most High* is used here for the first time. *God* is the Hebrew word 'Ēl (אֱל) [pronounced *ALE*], which means *God, god, mighty one, strong, hero*; and is transliterated *El*. Strong's #410 BDB #42. *Most High* is the Hebrew word 'El^eyôwn (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced *ġel^e-YOHN*], which means *Most High, highest, Supreme*. The Phœnicians and the Carthaginians used the same word to refer to their gods. This word has a secular use, where it simply means *high, higher, situated in a higher place*. However, we find it used most often in connection with this title for God. Strong's #5945 BDB #751. God is not portrayed as a local god or a god of heathen worship, but the God over all, the *God Most High*.

The emphasis of the title El–Elyôn is authority. We find it used in this way in Deut. 32:8, where God is said to have divided up mankind: [When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God](#). This title is associated with great authority also in Psalm 83:10 97:9. On many occasions, El–Elyôn or just Elyôn is used as a title of authority against Whom men rebel (Psalm 78:17, 56 107:11).

Most of the times that we find *God the Most High* or simply *the Most High* is in the psalms. This title is associated with hailstones and coals of fire (Psalm 18:3), with grace in Psalm 21:7, with Jerusalem in Psalm 46:4 87:5, with fear and respect in Psalm 47:2, as a God Who can be appealed to in Psalm 57:2, and with protection in Psalm 91:1, 7. In fact, we could easily put together a doctrine where entirety of God's essence is associated with this name.

Finally, we find this name used when Satan rebelled against God: ["How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star \[= Lucifer\], son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars \[angels\] of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'](#) (Isa. 14:12–14). This is the event which precipitated human history. God brought mankind into the picture to reveal His perfect justice, righteousness and love.

In Gen. 14:19, we will come across a very unusual name for God—God will be called the Possessor (by purchase) of the earth.

Gen 14:19 And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor [or, Redeemer, Purchaser] of heaven and earth;

The final verb in v. 19 is the Qal active participle of *qânâh* (קָנָה) [pronounced *kaw-NAWH*], which means *to get, acquire, obtain; [of God] to redeem [His people]; [of Eve] to acquire; to acquire [knowledge, wisdom]; to buy [purchase, redeem]*. Strong's #7069 BDB #888. In the participle, this means God the Most High is the *redeemer, purchaser*; although it can mean *possessor*, the emphasis is more upon *owning or possessing something because you purchased it*.

At this point in history, calling God the *Redeemer [Purchaser] of heaven and earth* should seem a little odd. God created the heavens and the earth, but what does it mean for Him to be the *Purchaser of heaven and earth*? Why is He purchasing the earth? What is the coin of the realm? By what means does He purchase heaven and earth?

We find this sort of thing over and over again in the Old Testament—particularly in Genesis—there will be a word used, a concept put forth, but not fully fleshed out. However, future authors will speak to this word or concept; and, in the New Testament, what this word means is completely defined.

When we read a novel, we do not think of the process involved in writing the novel, because that ruins the story for us. However, the writer in the novel often has a good idea as to the story arc ahead of time, and often throws in clues and incidents which inform us of what is to come. If you don't read much, surely you have seen a television drama or comedy, and something is tossed out there at random, like the detective who says, "I used to play hockey;" and somehow, 30 min. later, this little fact becomes germane to the story. It is like that in the Bible to a much greater degree with the added oddity that, all of these clues and incidents which point toward the future are written by one man, and their fulfillment are written by another man 500 or a thousand years later. Here we have this blessing, said by Melchizedek, 4000 years ago and then recorded by Abraham; and the words of this blessing will have its meaning advanced and explained by Luke, Paul or Peter, all who wrote 2000 years later (even if you believe some of the goofy liberal theories about the Old Testament being written much later than it was, all historians know that the Old Testament was written hundreds of years before the New Testament, because those in the New Testament quoted from a translation made of the Old Testament).

In the New Testament, the word *Redeemer* makes complete sense—Jesus Christ will purchase us with His blood (i.e., His death on the cross). **Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed [purchased] His people** (Luke 1:68). Jesus is the Redeemer of Israel in Luke 24:21. **Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us--for it stands written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"** (Gal. 3:13; Deut. 21:23). We understand fully how we were purchased in the Church

Age; but these are words written 4000 years ago, where the God Most High is portrayed as *the Possessor [by means of purchase or redemption] of heaven and earth*.

Throughout the book of Genesis, we find the seed for nearly every major doctrine and theme which will be developed later in God's Word. This makes the book of Genesis one of the most fascinating books in the entire Bible.

The Doctrine of Redemption

1. The verb *to redeem* means *to purchase, to buy*.
2. There are several Hebrew verbs related to this concept of purchasing:
 - 1) In this verse, we have the verb *qânâh* (קָנָה) [pronounced *kaw-NAWH*], which means *to get, acquire, obtain; [of God] to redeem [His people]; [of Eve] to acquire; to acquire [knowledge, wisdom]; to buy [purchase, redeem]*. Strong's #7069 BDB #888. The emphasis is more upon *owning or possessing something because you purchased it*.
 - 2) In Gen. 48:16, we will be introduced to the verb *gâ'al* (גָּאֵל) [pronounced *gaw-AHL*], which means *to redeem, to purchase*. Strong's #1350 BDB #145. The Mosaic Law will use this verb many times in Lev. 25 and 27 as well as Num. 35; and this verb will play a prominent role in the book of Ruth.
3. *Redemption* in the New Testament refers to Jesus dying for our sins and purchasing our souls with His blood (i.e., His spiritual death on the cross). When He took upon Himself our sins and *paid the penalty* for our sins, that is *redemption*. *That is what He paid for us. For you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life which you inherited from the fathers, not with perishable things, like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish (1Peter 1:18–19). He himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed (1Peter 2:24). In Him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace (Eph. 1:7). See also Col. 1:14 Gal. 3:13*
4. Jesus Christ paid for us; therefore, we belong to Him. *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, Whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body (1Cor. 6:19–20). See also 1Cor. 7:23*
5. Jesus Christ is qualified to purchase us. In the next lesson, we will study the Slave Market of Sin, and Jesus could not be a slave Himself and purchase other slaves.
 - 1) Jesus Christ is born without a sin nature. This is based upon the virgin birth, something which was telegraphed to us as far back as Gen. 3. Isa. 7:14 Matt. 1:23 1Tim. 3:16 Heb. 1:3
 - 2) Jesus Christ did not commit any personal sin during His life. Isa. 53:9 John 8:46 19:4 2Cor. 5:21 Heb. 4:15 7:26–28
 - 3) Since Jesus is born without imputed sin, without a sin nature and since He lived without personal sin in His life, He is qualified to redeem us.

The Doctrine of Redemption

6. Redemption puts all men potentially in the Book of Life. Because Jesus has paid the price for us, our names are written in the Book of Life, unless we die without having believed in Jesus Christ. It is like a city registry. There is a registry of all citizens of a city until they die; and then their names are removed. When a person dies an unbeliever, his name is blotted out of the Book of Life. This understanding, by the way, indicates that Jesus provided unlimited atonement (He died for the sins of all mankind; not just for the sins of the elect). Philip. 4:3 Rev. 3:5
7. God the Holy Spirit, as the divine Author of the Old Testament, portrays this act of redemption in the Old Testament as a shadow of what was to come.
 - 1) In the context of our passage, Melchizedek refers to God as **Possessor** [by means of purchase, by means of redemption] **of Heaven and Earth**. In other words, in this verb is more than the idea, *God made the world so it belongs to Him*. This is related to the concept of *redeeming, purchasing*.
 - 2) Jacob, when seeing Joseph again after many years, will speak of God as the **Angel Who has redeemed him from all evil** (Gen. 48:16).
 - 3) The high priest offering up animal sacrifices was a portrait of Jesus offering Himself on the cross for our redemption. **Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then...He entered once for all into the holy places** [into the Presence of God the Father after the crucifixion], **not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption** (Heb. 9:11a, 12).
 - 4) The blood of the animal sacrifices themselves represent the actual coin of the realm; the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. Gen. 22:8 Ex. 12:21 Job 19:25–16 John 1:25 Heb. 9:22 1Peter 1:19
 - 5) In the Law of Moses, there is a provision for the purchase of a relative who has fallen into slavery. One who is related to him may purchase him out of slavery. Although this is a real law which was actually used from time to time, its purpose was to look forward in time when we would be purchased from slavery to sin by our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, our Relative who can purchase us out of slavery. Like many things in the Old Testament, this is a real thing (in this case, a law); and yet, it is also representative of God's plan. Lev. 25:48–49
 - 6) The thrust of the Book of Ruth is the purchase of Ruth by a Kinsman-Redeemer, one who loves her and wants to take care of her, despite the fact that she has been married (this would be equivalent to being sullied by the sin nature and being purchased by God, Who loves us). Ruth 3:9–13 4:1–13 John 3:16
 - 7) Job, in all of his suffering, when his friends comfort him little, finally gives his plaintive cry, **"I know my Redeemer lives!"** (Job 19:25). The God of Job has purchased him and he knew this.
 - 8) Palmists call out to God to either redeem them or His people Israel. Psalm 69:18 77:15
 - 9) The prophets speak of God as having redeemed Israel. Isa. 43:1 49:7

The Doctrine of Redemption

- 51:11 Jer. 31:11 Hosea 13:14
- 10) God's redemption is related to the blotting out of our sins in Isa. 44:22, which reads: "[I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you.](#)"
 - 11) God's people Israel would not be forsaken, they would be redeemed. Isa. 62:12.
 - 12) Jehovah Elohim is called the *Redeemer* or the *Redeemer of Israel* throughout the Old Testament. Psalm 19:14 78:35 Isa. 43:14 44:6.
8. The Book of Ruth (Ruth 3:9-13 4:1-11) is particularly important in illustrating Who our Redeemer is:
- 1) The redeemer must be a near kinsman. To fulfill this Christ took on human form.
 - 2) The redeemer must be able to redeem. The price of man's redemption was the blood of Christ. Acts 20:28 1 Pet. 1:18-19
 - 3) The redeemer must be willing to redeem (Heb. 10:4-10). Christ was willing to be our Redeemer.
 - 4) The redeemer must be free from that which caused the need for redemption; that is, the redeemer cannot redeem himself. This was true of Christ, because He needed no redemption.
9. When it comes to Old Testament and New Testament verses on redemption, this doctrine only scratches the surface.
10. Redemption yields the following results:
- 1) Redemption purchases the forgiveness of our sins. Isa. 44:22 Eph. 1:7 Col. 1:14 Heb. 9:15
 - 2) Because we have been redeemed by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, God also [justifies](#) us. Rom. 3:24 5:9
 - 3) Since we have been redeemed by the blood of our Lord, we are therefore [sanctified](#). Heb. 10:10, 14, 29 13:12
 - (1) There are 3 stages of sanctification. We are sanctified in Him through faith in Him and His death on the cross. This is positional sanctification. Acts 20:32 26:18 1Cor. 1:2 Heb. 10:10
 - (2) We grow spiritually in time, by means of grace and the knowledge of God's Word. John 17:17 1Thess. 4:3-7
 - (3) We received ultimate sanctification when we are raised with Him in a resurrection body. Eph. 1:14 5:26-27 1Thess. 5:23
 - (4) All 3 stages of sanctification find their basis in redemption.
 - 4) Because we have been redeemed, we will receive an eternal inheritance. Heb. 9:15 1Peter 1:2-4
 - 5) The purchase of us by Jesus' death on the cross (redemption) is the basis for the strategical victory of Jesus Christ in the Angelic Conflict. Acts 2:32-35 Col. 2:13-15 Heb. 2:14-15 1Peter 3:18, 22
11. Summary points on the doctrine of redemption:
- 1) Being born men, we find ourselves born into the slave market of sin. We were slaves to sin, unable to purchase ourselves from the slave market of

The Doctrine of Redemption

- sin (no more than a slave can purchase himself). **I am of the flesh, sold [as a slave] under sin** (Rom. 7:14b). See also John 8:34, where we are told, it we commit sin, then we are slaves to sin.
- 2) Our Redeemer is Jesus Christ, Who purchased us (redeemed us) with His blood on the cross. Luke 1:68 2Cor. 5:21 Gal. 3:13 Titus 2:14 1Peter 1:18–19 2:24 Rev. 5:9.
 - 3) Under the Law, we were cursed. Jesus purchased us from being under the Law. Gal. 4:4–5
 - 4) As believers, we have been purchased (redeemed) with a price; therefore, we are not our own. 1Cor. 6:20 7:23 1Peter 1:18–19
12. Paul, in Colossians, speaks of God cancelling out the debt that we owe: **And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This He set aside, nailing it to the cross** (Col. 2:13–14). Although the word *redeem* is not found here, the concept is summed up quite well in these verses: we are dead in our trespasses and sins, having a considerable debt to God. Jesus Christ, takes this debt and nails it to the cross, so that it has been paid off on our behalf.

Like many of the most fundamental doctrines in the Word of God, we find their origin in Genesis. **Gen 14:19** And he [Melchizedek] blessed him [Abram] and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, the Possessor [or, Redeemer, Purchaser] of heaven and earth;... 4000 years ago, Abram recorded those words, and today, we fully understand what they mean.

The points on the Kinsman-Redeemer were taken from the following website:
<http://www.realtime.net/~wdoud/topics/redemption.html>

Additional places to study this doctrine:

<http://www.versebyverse.org/doctrine/redemption.html>

<http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/0181.htm>

There are 2 booklets at rbthieme.org: *The Barrier* and *The Slave Market of Sin* (these books are free; there is no cost to order them; in *The Slave Market of Sin*, there is *the Doctrine of Redemption* in the appendix)

Scofield: <http://www.biblestudymanuals.net/redemption.htm>

11 pages on reconciliation: <http://pvccia.org/downloads/written/prep/basic/redemp.pdf>

Lesson 140: Genesis 14:19

The Illustration of the Slave Market of Sin

Gen 14:19 And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor [or, Redeemer, Purchaser] of heaven and earth;

In the previous lesson, we examined the Doctrine of Redemption. As we noted, it is odd, here in the early part of Genesis, for God to be called the Redeemer of heaven and earth.

This word usually indicates ownership or possession based upon a purchase (or, redemption). We understand perfectly today how God the Most High is understood to be the Redeemer of Heaven and Earth, as Jesus Christ redeemed us (purchased us) through His blood (His spiritual death on the cross). If you understand that the Bible is the Word of God, inspired by God the Holy Spirit, then you would expect things like this to occur throughout Scripture—you would expect God to reveal Himself and His plan little by little (which is the Doctrine of Progressive Revelation).

Closely related to the Doctrine of Redemption is the concept of the Slave Market of Sin: before we move on, in our passage, we should stop and examine this slave market of sin.

You have heard the verse, “**You will know the Truth and the Truth will set you free.**” The context of that verse is related to the Doctrine of Redemption (which we studied in the previous lesson) and to the Doctrine of the Slave Market of Sin.

The Illustration of the Slave Market of Sin

1. Another way of illustrating the doctrine of redemption, is to picture yourself being sold as a slave in a slave market. You are unable to purchase yourself, as you do not have the wherewithal to purchase yourself. A slave does not have the money to purchase himself (he lacks the coin of the realm, so to speak). Only someone who is not inside of this slave market (a non-slave) can purchase you. No fellow slave can look you over and say, “I’d like to purchase this one.” This is because he is in the same boat that you are in. He cannot purchase himself and he certainly cannot purchase you.
 - 1) This is why we cannot be redeemed by Mohammed, Moses, or Buddha. They are men; they are in the same slave market of sin that we find ourselves in.
 - 2) They are unable to purchase themselves and they are unable to purchase us.
 - 3) Jesus is born *outside* of this slave market.
2. There is a natural barrier between God and us:
 - 1) We are born with Adam’s sin imputed to us. **Therefore, one sin led to condemnation of all men** (Rom. 5:18a). **In Adam, all die** (1Cor. 15:22a). **Because of one man’s sin, death reigned through that one man** (Rom. 5:17a).
 - (1) Paul provides the entire argument for the imputation of sin in Rom. 5:12–21: **Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned-- for sin indeed was in the world before the Law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man’s trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that One Man Jesus Christ**

The Illustration of the Slave Market of Sin

abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation [on all mankind], but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through [or, *because of*] that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the One Man's obedience the many will be made righteous. Now the Law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- (2) There are reasons why Adam's original sin is imputed to us.
 - (3) We have to be condemned first in order to be saved.
 - (4) Babies are born condemned by God; which makes them eligible for redemption. Therefore, when a child dies, God has already redeemed that child, apart from the child's volition (when a child dies prior to reaching God consciousness) by our Lord's death on the cross. Therefore, that child is saved. 2Sam. 12:22–23
 - (5) This is why the *Book of Life* has every person's name in it. Since we are condemned from birth, we stand potentially purchased from the point of birth. Philip. 4:3 Rev. 3:5
 - (6) Similarly, this allows for the salvation of those who lived prior to the Law of Moses. The Law defined sin, so that, man clearly knew when he had committed a sin. Rom. 5:12–14: **Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned--for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.** God did not require first having the Law of Moses in order to condemn man. God did not have to define sin in order for us to be sinners.
 - (7) Again, man has to be condemned in order for God to redeem him; man must be in the slave market of sin in order for God to purchase him.
- 2) The second part of our barrier is the sin nature, which is the distorter of the soul. We inherit Adam's sin nature, which is genetically passed down through the man in conception. The corruption of Adam's sin is therefore genetically ingrained in all of us and it is the part of us which tempts us to sin. **We were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind**

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(Eph. 2:3b). That is, we are prone to sin against God. **By the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners** (Rom. 5:19a). For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin [= the sin nature] that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin [= sin nature] that dwells within me (Rom. 7:14–20). Often, in the Bible, the singular noun *sin* refers to the *sin nature*, which is actually a part of our cell structure (Rom. 7:14 1John 1:8). In short, all men are genetically disposed to sin.

- 3) No man, with a sin nature, goes through life apart from personal sin. At some point in our lives, we move out of child-like innocence and intentionally commit sins. **All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God** (Rom. 3:23). **God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us** (Rom. 5:8). See also Rom. 5:12.
 - (1) At some point in time, we will commit a mental attitude sin; we will look at someone else and we will feel superior to them—arrogance. Or, someone rubs us the wrong way, and we hate them. Or, someone has something that we want, and we envy that person.
 - (2) At some point in time, we will commit a verbal sin. We will do something wrong, and when questioned about it by our parents, we lie. We dislike someone, so we gossip behind their back.
 - (3) At some point in time, we will commit an overt act of sin; some child has a toy we like, and we steal it from him. He cries, so we slug him.
 - (4) I still recall one of the first sins which I committed around the age or 4 or 5—stealing toys from a friend, toys which my soul coveted. Obviously, I could not simply have them out in the open to play with them, so I hid them in front of my house behind some bushes. It was entirely illogical, because there was no way that I could actually play with these toys out in the open. I would have had more opportunities to play with these toys if they were his, because I would not have to hide anything. I was motivated by lust, which was entirely irrational about the end results.
- 4) There are other barriers which stand between God and us. Because of Adam's original sin has been imputed to us and because we have sinned against God, we have a judgment against us, which judgment demands our death. **The wages of sin is death** (Rom. 3:23a).
- 5) Because we are born with a sin nature, we are born physically alive, but spiritually dead. This is something which we cannot fix on our own. We

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- cannot decide one day to be spiritually alive; we have no way of establishing fellowship with God any more than we can physically ascend into heaven to be with God. Rom. 5:12–21
- 6) We have temporal life, God is eternal life. **In Adam, all die** (1Cor. 15:22a). Rom. 5:17, 21
 - 7) As unbelievers, we are of our father the devil. We are not, by birth, children of God. We do not have, therefore, a familial relationship with God. **Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear My word. You are of your father, the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me."** (John 8:42–45).
 - 8) We do not have a way of appealing to God, no more than a dead man can reach out and appeal to us who are alive on any matter. **And you were dead in the trespasses and sins** (Eph. 2:1).
 - 9) We have relative righteousness (we can usually find someone whom we view as a moral inferior to us); God is perfect righteousness. **All our righteousnesses are as a menstruation cloth** (Isa. 64:6b). **That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith** [Gentiles, without the Law, believe in Jesus Christ and were saved]; **but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law** [Israel had the Law, but did not achieve righteousness]. **Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works** (Rom. 9:30b–32a). Criminals serving life sentences for multiple murders feel morally superior to child molesters. That is relative righteousness as well as self-righteousness. One of the most amoral people I know is also the most self-righteous person I know; he is so incredibly self-righteous when it comes to liberalism, but without any reason to be, that it makes me smile. In any case, God has no interest in our own personally developed concepts of righteousness.
 - 10) All of this puts us into a slave market, so to speak. Furthermore, these things are barriers between us and God. We have no means by which we can purchase our freedom; we have no way of removing these barriers which are between us and God.
3. We have to be in the slave market of sin in order to be purchased by Jesus Christ. This is why condemnation from birth is important. It is what fundamentally separates us from God, yet, simultaneously qualifies us to be redeemed from the slave market.
 4. Now let's look at that original passage, and see what Jesus is actually saying: **As Jesus was saying these things, many believed in Him** [therefore, they were born

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again, as per John 3:16]. So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in Him, "If you remain in My Word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." There are two related concepts here: if you know Jesus—i.e., if you have believed in Him—you have been set free from bondage and sin. That is, you have been purchased from the slave market of sin. Secondly, if you continue learning God's Word, you live as a free man (as a mature believer). They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. So, how is it that you say, 'You will become free'?" Many of those who are there, which includes some unbelievers (John 8:13), are confused by what Jesus is saying. They do not get the analogy. Sometimes, these unbelievers asked questions, hoping to catch Jesus in a contradiction or hoping that He would say something contrary to the Mosaic Law. Here, they connect freedom as being the opposite of enslavement. Jesus answered them, "Point of doctrine; listen: everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin [committing a sin also places you into the slave market of sin]. The slave does not remain in the [master's] house forever; [however] the Son remains forever." The slave does not have fellowship with the master; he is not a part of the family. He can be bought and sold at any time. Therefore, the slave does not necessarily remain in his master's house forever. [Jesus continues] "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. Jesus is able to purchase them from the slave market of sin. Jesus is the One who is able to provide them with real freedom. They are enslaved to their trespasses and sins; and Jesus is able to set them free. I know that you [the religious types in this crowd] are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill Me because My Word finds no place in you. I speak of what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have heard from your father [who is Satan]." They answered him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, but now you seek to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. You are doing the works that your father [the devil] did." They said to him, "We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father--even God." [They mistakenly assert that, they are not of their father the devil because they were not born as a result of sexual immorality; Abraham was their forebearer] Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of My Own accord, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you are unable to hear My Word. You are of your father, the devil, and [therefore] your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me." (John 8:30–45). The religious types in this crowd were of their father, the devil, and their intent to kill Jesus proves this. Therefore, they are enslaved to sin. Later, many of these religious types will intentionally lie (or, support this false testimony) in order to send Jesus to the cross.

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5. Jesus Christ is the truth, and these religious types are filled with lies, like their father, the devil. One example of this is their assertion "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. So, how is it that you say, 'You will become free'?" (John 8:33).
 - 1) This is the natural state of man, to be in denial of his (or her) real condition. These Jews are denying their enslavement. They are saying this, even though Jerusalem was under Roman rule at this time.
 - 2) Secondly, they placed themselves under the Mosaic Law as a means of salvation, which is another form of enslavement.
 - 3) Thirdly, they would violate the clear mandate of the Law not to bear false testimony by giving false testimony against Jesus. Those who did not give false testimony will go along with it without objection. They want our Lord to be crucified, no matter what the cost.
 - 4) They were not just trying to keep the Mosaic Law for salvation, but there were a whole host of regulations which the Jews had developed over several centuries, which defined in great specificity how to keep the Mosaic Law. This in itself was enslavement.
 - 5) Finally, they were enslaved to their own natural predilection for sin.
 - 6) These religious Jews are essentially being sold as slaves at a slave auction, and they are in denial about their true status as slaves.
6. The purchase price for a slave in the slave market of sin is the blood of Jesus: You were purchased [redeemed] from your empty manner of life which you inherited from your forefathers [Judaic religious traditions], not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot (1Peter 1:18–19). Peter pulls several things together here:
 - 1) First is the concept of redemption, where we are purchased with the blood of Jesus (which is His spiritual death when on the cross; that is, when He took upon Himself the penalty due us for our sins).
 - 2) The empty manner of life is the religious traditions of the Jews, which were meaningless, and tried to establish their own righteousness through keeping the Law of Moses.
 - 3) Peter notes the purchase price as being the blood of Christ (His spiritual death on the cross).
 - 4) Finally, Peter relates this purchase price to the Old Testament type of the sacrificial lamb—a lamb without spot or blemish, which represents Jesus has having no sin nature and as having committed no sin. Since Jesus is without spot and without blemish—meaning that He was sinless and without a sin nature, and therefore, He is qualified to purchase us—He is both able and willing to purchase us from the slave market of sin.
 - 5) Peter was quite the amazing Apostle, able to fit into 2 short verses, 4 different but related fundamental doctrines of the faith.
7. Since we are in Adam—born with his imputed sin and with a sin nature—we are born slaves to sin.

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- 1) By birth, we are slaves (which is common in the ancient world). We have no means by which we can counteract this. It is our birthright by being born in Adam (if you recall an early lesson, we inherit the sin nature from Adam).
 - 2) We can only be purchased by someone who is not in the slave market of sin; we can only be purchased by someone who is not in Adam.
 - 3) Furthermore, this person must have the purchase price.
8. One way a person could find himself in the slave market is being unable to pay his debts. So he would sell himself into slavery in order to pay this debt. This is analogous to our personal sins, which rack up a tremendous debt. Col. 2:13–14 **You were dead in your trespasses** [your actual sins] **and the uncircumcision of your flesh** [that is, being born with a sin nature and with Adam's original sin imputed to us], **God made us alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This He set aside, nailing it to the cross.** Being indebted beyond your means to pay back, would put you under slavery to your creditor.
9. We find this same doctrine and a similar analogy in Gal. 4. In the ancient world, a rich man or a man in power might look around at his near young relatives (sons and grandsons) and conclude, "These men are not fit to enjoy my fortune or to wield the power that I have." What such a man might do is *adopt* a son—often a family slave. He may observe his own son out drinking all night and chasing women; and his personal servant, on the other hand, is faithful, sober, honorable and intelligent. So, he makes this slave his son. Or, the man might be childless, so he chooses his own heir by a process called adoption (Marcus Ulpius Nerva Traianus, commonly known as Trajan, the 13th Roman emperor, was adopted, and over 40 years old when adopted). Gal. 4:1–8 **Now I say that as long as the heir is a child, he differs in no way from a slave, though he is the owner of everything** [the analogy being drawn here is between those who were natural heirs to the kingdom—Jews; and those who were not natural heirs to the kingdom—gentiles]. **Instead, he** [the natural son] **is under guardians and stewards** [analogous to the prophets and priests] **until the time set by his father.** **In the same way we also, when we were children, were in slavery under the elemental forces of the world** [gentiles are not natural heirs to God's kingdom; so they were under slavery]. **But when the fulfillment of time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those** [born] **under the law** [Jesus purchased the Jews with His blood], **so that we might receive adoption as sons** [Jesus purchased the gentiles out of slavery]. **And because you are** [now potentially] **sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "my dear Father** [addressed to God]!" **Therefore, you are no longer a slave, but a son** [the Father has adopted one of the slaves as His son and His heir]; **and if a son, then an heir through God. But in the past, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to things that by nature are not gods.**
10. Jesus is outside of the slave market of sin and He has the purchase price with which to purchase us from the slave market of sin.

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11. He purchases us from the slave market of sin, which is the Doctrine of Redemption. Also related to this doctrine, is the Doctrine of the Barrier (of the barrier between man and God, which is a sub-point of the doctrine of the slave market of sin).
12. When God redeemed the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt, this was a picture of the slave market of sin. The Jewish people were slaves to the nation of Egypt, and God purchased them, bringing them out of Egypt. Ex. 6:6 15:13 Psalm 74:2 Micah 6:4
 - 1) Again, note the tremendous cohesion of the Old and New Testaments.
 - 2) The history recorded by Moses and the commentary written by psalmists and prophets afterward all appear to have been written by Jesus, who gave the illustration of the slave market of sin, or Paul who also uses the same illustration.
13. The chapter that we are in, Gen. 14, illustrates this doctrine of the slave market of sin. The people of Sodom and Gomorrah and the other cities have been taken by the eastern alliance, and will probably be slaves (some of the women might become mistresses of the alliance soldiers). But, insofar as they are concerned, they are relegated for a life of slavery and they cannot purchase themselves from this slave market (their goods were confiscated as well). Because there is a righteous man among them (Lot—2Peter 2:7), Abram rescues these people from the slave market. The analogy is, God the Father (represented by Abram) devises a plan by which we are all rescued from the slave market of sin (represented by these people of Sodom and Gomorrah) because of Jesus Christ Who died for our sins (represented by righteous Lot who was among them).
14. To sum up: from birth, we are slaves, born into the slave market of sin. We cannot purchase our own freedom and no other slave (person born with a sin nature) can purchase our freedom either. This takes someone from outside the slave market of sin, which would be Jesus Christ, Who was born without a sin nature and without Adam's imputed sin. He paid the penalty for our sins, thus redeeming us out of the slave market. Jesus taught this very doctrine (which is an illustration), Paul used it as a basis for what he wrote in his epistles, and Moses and the children of Israel illustrate this doctrine through real historical events.

Bear in mind that God adopting us as sons and Jesus purchasing us from the slave market of sin are illustrations; they are analogous situations. The Bible is filled with analogous situations. Much of the history recorded in the Bible is to teach spiritual truth via analogous situations. Jesus taught using analogous situations (called parables). Therefore, do not get bogged down in the details of an illustration and do not attempt to apply these illustrations as the reality of what is occurring. The history of Moses leading the children of Israel out of Egypt is true and accurate history; but it is also illustrative.

The slave market of sin will be illustrated in the very chapter that we are studying.

See also http://www.divineviewpoint.com/slave_market.pdf

R. B. Thieme, Jr., *Slave Market of Sin*, and *The Barrier*, both of which can be ordered for free through R. B. Thieme, Jr. Ministries (which is rbthieme.org).

As you read through the Slave Market of Sin, is it beginning to dawn on you just how interrelated the entire Word of God is? Everything that we have studied about Adam all relates to what Jesus taught a crowd of Jews, using the illustration of being a slave, thousands of years after Adam, yet implied in all that Jesus says is, Adam, his original sin, and the fact that this sin is imputed to us. Many similar theological concepts are more formally developed by Paul, in Romans and Ephesians. The Bible that you hold in your hand (or view on your computer screen) is over 1000 pages long, written by 40 different authors, over a period of at least 2000–3000 years (in my opinion); and yet, it all fits together as one cohesive whole. From the sin of Adam, to the use of the word Redeemer by Melchizedek, to the redemption of Israel from Egypt, to the illustration Jesus gives of a slave market, to the theological explanations by Paul which tie all of this together—it is all the Word of God, inspired by God the Holy Spirit.

Lesson 141: Genesis 14:19

The Seeds Found in Genesis 1–14

The last verse that we studied was:

Gen 14:19 And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor [or, Redeemer, Purchaser] of heaven and earth;

This is Melchizedek blessing Abram after Abram has enjoyed a great military victory over the King's Alliance from the east. This particular verse led to the Doctrine of Redemption ([lesson #139](#)) which naturally led to the Slave Market of Sin ([lesson #140](#)).

As I work my way through Genesis with you, on other days, I am studying Psalm 51, and in it, are the exact same principles as we find elsewhere: God's perfect righteousness and our sins against God (*With regards to You—[and] to You alone—I have sinned; and I have done evil in Your eyes. So that You are righteous in Your declaration; [and] You are justified in Your judgment.* Psalm 51:4); being born into sin (*Listen, I was born in iniquity and my mother conceived me in sin.* Psalm 51:5); the importance of Bible doctrine in the soul (*Listen, You [God] desire [and take pleasure in] truth in the inner being; and You make me know wisdom in [my] hidden [being].* Psalm 51:6); and Jesus Christ bearing our sins and taking away the record of debt which is against us (*You will bear my blame [or, take the consequences for my sin; make a sin offering for me] with hyssop and I will be cleansed; You will wash me and I will be made white more than snow.* Psalm 51:7). This is because, this is the Bible, it is God's Word, and its unique message to mankind permeates this book from cover to cover.

We do not learn everything that there is to learn about God in the book of Genesis; nor do we fully understand the doctrines which are introduced in the book of Genesis if we look only at the book of Genesis. This information is revealed to us progressively.

The concept of progressive revelation is, each additional truth builds upon, expands, and better explains that which was already taught. New revelation does not supercede, replace or nullify previous revelation, but it builds upon that which is past. That is, God does not teach a false doctrine early on, and then, explain, "Now you have enough theology so that you can throw away these old notions of things you learned in Genesis and replace them with correct theological information." The Bible never teaches one thing in an early book, and then, later on, contradicts that old idea. What the Bible does is teach progressively; our Bible is not a 10 or 20 page pamphlet, but it is a 1000+ page document, recording God's interaction with man, and, bit by bit, progressively teaching us what we need to know about God, His character, His plan, and our place in that plan.

On the other hand, this does not mean that practices do not change. In Genesis and throughout the Age of Israel, animal sacrifices are offered up. This is because they look forward to Jesus, the Lamb of God, dying for us on the cross. These practices were stopped because, the reality had come—what they looked forward to had come to pass. Therefore, there was no reason to continue to offer up animal sacrifices (Heb. 9:19–28).

Let's look at some examples of doctrines whose seeds around found in the first 14 chapters of Genesis.

The Seeds of Genesis in the first 14 Chapters

1. From the very beginning, we find the Trinity in the Bible.
 - 1) The second noun in Gen. 1:1 is Elohim, which is a plural noun which we translate *God* or *gods*. This plural noun, when translated *God*, always takes a singular verb.
 - 2) In Gen. 1:26, we read the words **Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness."** Suddenly, seemingly out of nowhere, we have a plural verb, which is expressed by the words *let Us make*.
 - 3) We find this plurality continued in Gen. 3:22a: **Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us in knowing good and evil."**
 - 4) And again in Gen. 11:6–7 **And the LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech."**
 - 5) As you probably know, the Jewish religion does not believe in the Trinity; and there are several Christian cults which do not believe in the Trinity. And yet, we find these verses, at the very beginning of the book of Genesis, which suggest the Trinity.
 - 6) Then, thousands of years later, we have the words of God, recorded by Isaiah: **"Draw near to Me, hear this: from the beginning I have not spoken in secret, from the time it came to be I have been there." And now the Lord GOD [= Adonai Y^ehowah] has sent Me, and His Spirit."** (Isa. 48:16). The One speaking is God, which is clear from the preceding verses, yet the One speaking tells us that Jehovah Elohim both sent Him and His Spirit.

The Seeds of Genesis in the first 14 Chapters

- That* is the Trinity; the One speaking, the One sending, and the Spirit.
- 7) The New Testament more clearly reveals the Trinity, but without ever using the word *Trinity* (which is a legitimate theological word).
 - 8) This is known as progressive revelation. It is doubtful that Noah or Abram fully understood or taught the Trinity and the different functions of the members of the Trinity. I went to liberal churches for years as a child and I must have heard the word *Trinity*, but it never stuck in my brain. Even when I was first saved, I did not realize that Jesus was God; I learned that soon after.
2. We learn in Genesis that God created the heavens and the earth; and we learn in John 1 that our Lord Jesus was intimately involved in the creation of all things. **All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made** (John 1:3).
 3. We learn about the 2nd divine institution, which is work, as far back as Gen. 2:15, before there was sin. **The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it** (Gen. 2:15).
 - 1) We find that work is continued in our lives, even after man sinned (Gen. 3:17–19).
 - 2) Even though God had a system of welfare in the Mosaic Law, it required the poor to work to harvest their food. Lev. 19:9–10 23:22 Ruth 2
 - 3) The book of Proverbs is filled with maxims about work, such as: **Go to the ant, lazy one; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. How long will you lie there, you indolent person? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest-and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man** (Prov. 6:6).
 - 4) Prov. 12:24 **Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in slave labor.**
 - 5) Prov. 14:23 **All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.**
 - 6) We find out that work is a part of man's satisfaction in life in Eccles. 2:24.
 - 7) Paul even writes the Thessalonians and tells them, if someone does not work, then that person ought not to eat. (1Thess. 3:10)
 4. In Gen. 2–3, we learn about the 3rd divine institution, which is marriage; and this is the basis not only for the most important human relationship among men and women, but is the basis for explaining our Lord's relationship to us.
 5. We meet Satan in Gen. 3:1–15
 - 1) We learn that he is subtle and that he distorts the truth.
 - 2) We learn that God has judged him.
 - 3) But then, we learn a great deal more about Satan in Job 1–2 Isa. 14:12–16 and Ezek. 28:13–19, where we learn of his origins, his fall from grace and his present-day activity.
 - 4) We meet Satan again in the temptation of our Lord in Matt. 4.
 - 5) Paul tells us more about Satan in 2Cor. 4:4 Eph. 2:2

The Seeds of Genesis in the first 14 Chapters

- 6) We find out more about Satan and his history (taking a third of the angels with him) and his fate (to be burned in the Lake of Fire forever) in Revelation (Rev. 12:3–4 20:10).
6. We find out about our Savior and what He would do in Gen. 3.
 - 1) As we have studied, God judged him with these words: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He will bruise your head, and you will bruise His heel.” (Gen. 3:15). There is a distinction between the seed of Satan and the Seed of the woman, which is later explained in Isa. 7:14 and the virgin birth in Luke 1:35. As more is revealed, we begin to understand that the virgin birth is more than simply a fulfillment of prophecy, but it is the key to Jesus being born without a sin nature.
 - 2) We also understand the difference between how Satan would bruise our Lord’s heel (the cross—a nonfatal wound) but that Jesus would crush Satan’s head (a fatal wound).
 - 3) Later in Gen. 3, we have Adam and the woman being clothed (covered) with animal skins, which means that animals would have had to die in order for these skins to be made. This is a picture of the cross, where our sins are poured upon our Lord, as the Lamb of God.
 - 4) We find this substitutionary death taught again in Gen. 4, where the works of one’s hands are rejected, but the sacrificial offering of an innocent animal is not.
 - 5) We will see this again in Gen. 22 Psalm 22 and Isa. 53, which there is more detail about the cross than is found in the New Testament recorded by eyewitnesses.
7. As just noted, Gen. 4 looks forward to the cross, by distinguishing between the works of man’s hands and the work of God. Abel’s sacrifice of an animal, which looks forward to the death of our Lord on the cross; God found acceptable. However, Cain’s works were rejected by God, leading to the first murder.
8. With Genesis 5, we begin a recording of the genealogies which will eventually take us all the way from Adam to Jesus. These genealogies are recorded by a number of different authors over a long period of time. Some genealogies dead end, but there is one line which continues all the way through, from Adam to Abraham to Moses to David to Jesus. In fact, interestingly enough, the final genealogical line, which goes from Adam to Jesus, is recorded by the only New Testament gentile author that we know of (we do not know who wrote the book of Hebrews, but if a gentile did, then it is reasonable that he would not indicate who he was).
9. Although we begin to learn about the Angelic Conflict in Gen. 3, this becomes even a greater issue in Gen. 6, with the angelic corruption of mankind. This doctrine has become the subject of hundreds of books, as our understanding of our relationship to angels is progressively revealed in the rest of Scripture.
10. During the flood, we have incidents recorded which seem to point logically to Noah or Shem as the author of the recording of this event. This helps us to

The Seeds of Genesis in the first 14 Chapters

- understand the concept of the dual authorship of Scripture by both man and God, which doctrine is explained in greater detail throughout the Bible.
11. In Gen. 9, we are exposed to the notion of a covenant, which is a dominant theme of Scripture, particularly in the Old Testament. Also, there are animal sacrifices and at least two mandates: "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image. And you, be fruitful and multiply, teem on the earth and multiply in it." (Gen. 9:6–7). This covenant theme continues with the Abrahamic covenant, and then is found throughout Scripture after that.
 12. In Gen. 10, we have the book of nations, and we learn the interrelationships of ancient peoples, almost all of whom can be identified today in accordance with specific land areas.
 13. In the passage where we have been for the past several weeks—Gen. 14—we understand God as our Redeemer, although this is not fully explained in Gen. 14.
 - 1) The book of Ruth records an historical incident about Ruth's kinsman-redeemer, Boaz, who is a type of Christ.
 - 2) As we get into the New Testament, we fully understand that our redemption is by the blood of Christ.
 - 3) This logically led us to the slave market of sin, which is illustrated by the real historical incidents recorded in Exodus, and later explained as a parable by Jesus, and then doctrinally by Paul.
 - 4) You may think that we went pretty far afield with the slave market of sin, but, we will find this slave market illustrated in this chapter of Genesis.
 14. The original United Nations is found in Gen. 11.
 15. In Gen. 14, we see city-nations which are under the 4th stage of national discipline (they are paying tribute to a foreign nation) and they are about to go under the 5th stage of national discipline (called elsewhere, the 5th cycle of discipline), which is being removed from their homeland.
 16. In Gen. 14, we see the first illustration of the slave market of sin, where, based upon the plan of Abram, the people of Sodom and Gomorrah are rescued from slavery because there is a righteous man among them (Lot—2Peter 2:7).
 17. Throughout the book of Genesis, we touch on fundamental doctrines of the faith, getting sometimes just the barest glimpse of these doctrines, in a book which I believe was recorded 3000–4000 years ago.

I did not cover all of the seeds of the doctrines found in the first 14 chapters of Genesis. I just covered enough so that you can see, it is as if there is this overlain story-line or story-arc, as if it was predetermined, and then various authors, over time, filled in the details.

When a television series is developed, a story arc is developed before the episodes are written, so that we meet our characters, see their interrelationships, situations are set up, and they all play out, with a grand finale at the end. In any series, there might be a dozen writers, and 3 or 4 of them are assigned specific episodes to write, which furthers the story arc. The characters of the show stay true to their personalities and drives, and ideally, everything fits together as a whole. The first show often introduces the main characters, the main themes, and introduces the story arc; the final show of the series often brings the story arc to a satisfying conclusion, bringing all of the program's themes progressively through the show. Writers meet regularly—often daily—to confer, interact, and to make certain that all of their characters remain true to their essence in each episode.

This describes how the Bible is put together. There is an introduction, wherein all of the main characters and themes are introduced, with the story arc being set up (the Book of Genesis). There is a grand finale at the end, where all of the themes are brought to a satisfying climax and the story arc brought to an end (Revelation). In every book of the Bible, the characters retain their basic essence, the themes progress logically, and we move from the beginning of time to the end of time just as if there was a story arc developed, main characters developed, all of whom whose essence was pre-determined and brought out in each successive book (episode). God the Holy Spirit confers with the writers of Scripture during the time that they record human history and God's interaction with man. Even though the writers of Scripture all had different backgrounds, personalities and vocabularies, their contribution fit into the story arc. They moved the plot forward, those in the Bible retained their essence throughout, so that, over a period of 2000 years or more, some 40 or so authors wrote, as guided by God the Holy Spirit, so that the end result is a cohesive whole.

The point of this doctrine was for you to see the seeds of all that would follow, how a little is revealed here in Genesis, after which more information would be layered upon that, progressively.

I would hope that, as you read through the seeds of Genesis, listed in the previous doctrine, you would develop a profound respect and appreciation for the Word of God, along with the understanding that, this is the Word of God. Nothing else could explain it. If nothing else, you should begin to appreciate that the Bible does have a head Writer, God the Holy Spirit, Who developed the story arc, and assigned the writing of the various episodes to a plethora of various authors (most of whom were not writers); and God the Holy Spirit worked right along side of them, making certain that their episode remained true to the essence of the characters and that it correctly furthered along the story arc.

For prophecy was never produced by the will of man, but people spoke from God, as they were carried along [i.e., inspired] by the Holy Spirit (2Peter 1:21; AUV-NT).

For these words did not ever come through the impulse of men: but the prophets had them from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit (2Peter 1:21; Bible in Basic English).

The prophets did not think these things up on their own, but they were guided by the Spirit of God (2Peter 1:21; Contemporary English Version).

It was never man's impulse, after all, that gave us prophecy; men gave it utterance, but they were men whom God had sanctified, carried away, as they spoke, by the Holy Spirit (2Peter 1:21; Knox NT).

No prophecy ever originated from humans. Instead, it was given by the Holy Spirit as humans spoke under God's direction (2Peter 1:21; God's Word).

Lesson 142: Genesis 14:19

Progressive Revelation

This is how far we have gotten:

Gen 14:19 And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor [or, Redeemer, Purchaser] of heaven and earth;

The word *Redeemer* led us on quite a path, so that we examined the Doctrine of Redemption, the Illustration of the Slave Market of Sin, and other doctrines whose seeds are found in Genesis.

The concept of progressive revelation is, each additional truth builds upon, expands, and better explains that which was already taught. New revelation does not supercede, replace or nullify previous revelation, but it builds upon that which is past.

Much of this is based upon a concept known as *progressive revelation*, which is a true doctrine, but has been greatly distorted by various cults and religions.

Because the Bible is written over several thousand years by 40 or so authors, we would expect it to have more of the feel of an anthology. However, the more the Bible is studied and understood, the more it will seem like a seamless novel, throughout which the same themes and characters progress logically and reasonably.

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1. It is important to note that, progressive revelation, properly understood, is, we are given the seeds of a doctrine, and, throughout human history, information is layered upon those seeds—information given to mankind in a variety of ways—until we have a complete set of fully realized doctrines.
2. God reveals Himself to mankind in various ways by various means over a period of about 4000 years (from the creation of Adam to the completion of the canon of Scripture in A.D. 100). **In the past God spoke to our ancestors at many different times and in many different ways through the prophets. In these last days He has spoken to us through His Son. God made His Son responsible for**

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everything (Heb. 1:1–2 God's Word™).

3. The concept of progressive revelation is, each additional truth builds upon, expands, and better explains that which was already taught. New revelation does not supercede, replace or nullify previous revelation, but it builds upon that which is past.
4. God did not reveal Himself all at once. He did not sit down with Adam (or Noah or Abram) and say, "Start writing; I am going to tell you everything that you need to know about Me." A little is revealed here in Genesis, some of which is explained further in the Law, or in the history of Israel, or in the psalms or prophets. Many of these doctrines are explained in their final form by Paul in his epistles. Some of these doctrines are developed after the fact, after the Scripture has been completed, building line upon line, Scripture upon Scripture (Isa. 28:9–10).
 - 1) As an aside, we have reason to believe that, Abram (and possibly other Old Testament saints of this era) and before had a more well-defined concept of right and wrong, not all of which was recorded in the book of Genesis. God says, in Gen. 25:6 "I will bless you because Abraham obeyed Me and completed the duties, commands, laws, and instructions I gave him."
5. A good example of a doctrine that is reveal progressively is the doctrine of the Trinity, which is found throughout the Old and New Testaments, but never fully laid out or explained—not even by Paul. It is reasonable to suppose that we know, even better than Paul and John, about the Angelic Conflict (those of us who have studied this conflict). It is not that God is providing new revelation (He is not—Rev. 22:18–19); but that we are taking the revelation which He has given us and developing a complete theological understanding of our relationship to Him and our place on this earth. This is why theologians, 2000 years after the canon was closed, can develop a Systematic Theology (e.g., Chafer or Hodge) with spiritual information that is organized and categorized, even superior to that known by the saints in the 1st and 2nd centuries. And, even today, after hundreds or even thousands of books on systematic theology have been written, there are still pastors, teachers and theologians who are building upon these theological systems.
 - 1) As an example, much of what R. B. Thieme, Jr. taught in the first 10–20 years of his ministry came right out of the pages of L. S. Chafer's "Systematic Theology;" a theological set which Bob apparently returned to again and again in his teaching. However, Bob built upon this foundation that Chafer laid (which foundation was built upon the Bible), developing an updated theological vocabulary (much of which I and others use) along with some needed updates in theology. Bob did not receive additional revelation from God, which he hurriedly wrote down, but he took what he had learned from Dallas Theological Seminary and built upon that with additional studying of the Bible.
 - 2) The foundation of divine knowledge is and always will be the Bible; but as

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we learn more, this logically leads us to a more complete system of doctrine.

- 3) Just as the final chapters of 2Samuel lay fallow for 3000 years before they were properly explained, there are still great chunks of the Bible waiting for theologians to sink their teeth into, and to fully explain.
- 4) However, let me clearly state that, even though theology, which is based upon the Bible, can progress, this does not mean that there is any new revelation which occurs after the closing of the canon of Scripture (as per Mormons, Pentecostals, Jehovah Witnesses, etc.); and all that which is discovered and taught theologically is (1) in accordance to orthodox Christianity and (2) based upon the revelation in the Bible.
- 5) In other words, there is no legitimacy in some cult surfacing with new doctrines which contradict the foundation which has been laid by Christian theologians over the past 2000 years. Jesus is and always will be the Messiah of Israel and the Savior of mankind. Our salvation is based upon faith in Him and His substitutionary death on the cross. Spiritually is based upon naming our sins to God; and we advance in the spiritual life through knowledge of God's Word.
- 6) Sometimes, what happens is, truth is rediscovered based on the Bible, which has been there all along. Just as the Old Testament manuscripts were set aside in some generations and rediscovered by later generations (2Kings 22), so it is with the teachings of the faith. What comes to mind is, in my grandparents' generation, there were huge number of people who had a real working knowledge of the Bible. Even reprobates and infidels knew the Bible and they would sometimes base arguments on the Bible. However, in my generation, I have known huge numbers of Christians whose knowledge of the Bible was based upon salvation (which they barely understood) and living a good, clean life. I even know a number of Christians who are liberals, and do not see any sort of contradiction between Christianity and their pagan-based political beliefs.
 - (1) As an aside, this lack of knowledge of the Word of God has destroyed our society and its thinking.
 - (2) Because our society does not know or understand Scripture, they believe in false teaching, like humanism, socialism, liberation theology and the worship of the earth (ancient Gaia worship which is today has morphed into *environmentalism*).
6. Isaiah gives the principle of progressive revelation in Isa. 28:9–10 **To whom will He teach knowledge, and to whom will He explain the message? Those who are weaned from the milk, those taken from the breast? For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little.**
7. Progressive revelation does not mean that, God reveals a truth on Tuesday that truth nullifies everything that He told us on Monday (e.g., what is taught in Islam). All that we learn progressively in the Bible is built upon what has come before,

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like a brick wall, being built upon successive brick rows. A brick on the 5th row of a brick wall does not negate the bricks below it, but depends upon them for its basis.

8. The concept of dispensations does not negate or contradict the principles of progressive revelation. All that God promised Abraham and his seed will still be fulfilled. During the Church Age, Abraham's seed are temporarily set aside as a national entity, but there continues to be a reality and meaning connected to the Jewish people. For instance, the United States is blessed because God has promised that He would bless those who bless Israel and curse those who curse Israel (Gen. 12:1–3). Even though we live in the Church Age and the nation Israel is set aside, this does not nullify or set aside God's promises (like Gen. 12:1–3).
 - 1) What nation do people of the world want to move to? The United States. This is, in part, because of our relationship to Israel and the Jewish people. Most of the people who move here do not understand or even know Gen. 12:1–3; they simply recognize the great blessings which are inherent in the United States.
 - 2) What nations do people have little or no desire to go to? All of those nations who hate Israel (or the United States): Iran, Syria, or Jordan. When was the last time a member of your family spoke longingly of traveling to any of those countries? When have friends of yours said, "You know, we're going to pack everything up and move to Syria to make our fortune"?
 - 3) People come here to the United States because of the prosperity, but God draws them here so that they may have a better chance to understand Him. There is little or nothing being taught about God in Syrian, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, etc.
 - 4) As an aside, this does not mean that the United States always acts sensibly as a nation. Even though our actions and intentions in Iraq and Afghanistan are noble, for the most part, we have deliberately impeded evangelization in those countries (which was not our approach in Japan, South Korea, or the Philippines). As a part of the degenerate path that we are on, we will be encouraging soldiers to express their homosexuality but not their Christianity. And it makes little sense to argue that suppressing the expression of Christianity shows respect for the Muslim nations where we are, at the same time, to argue for the repeal of "Don't ask, don't tell." Those trends simply reveal Satanic thought creeping into our military.
9. Many examples of progressive revelation were given in the previous lesson. We just took a look at the seeds of doctrines found in the first 14 chapters of Genesis, and we saw how these doctrines were built upon their foundation laid in Genesis.
10. There is a sense in which progressive revelation is personal. That is, when you are saved, you understood barely a thimbleful of doctrine. Jesus Christ died for your sins, you believe in Him and you are saved. You heard that, you believed that, but then, since then, you have learned more and more about the Christian

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faith. For instance, you have learned that in order to grow, this takes the confession of your sins to God—which provides the filling of the Holy Spirit—coupled with the learning of Bible doctrine. No one just automatically grows as a Christian after they are saved.

- 1) As an aside, this is an area which perturbs innumerable Christians. They are saved, they go to some legalistic church each Sunday, and they try really hard to be good, so when you tell them that they have not progressed one iota spiritually, this offends them.
 - 2) They point to 2Cor. 5:21 and say, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;” and then note that they have stopped getting drunk, they have stopped chasing women, and they have settled down to a respectable life with a wife and children. They equate this to spiritual maturity. It is not.
 - 3) What has happened is, they went from a point where they ignored or defied the laws of divine establishment (which are for believers and unbelievers) and have begun to learn and follow the laws of divine establishment ([lessons #108–109](#)).
 - 4) Every person, believer or not, will have a better life if they follow the laws of divine establishment. For instance, if you are some layabout dope smoker, and you quit dope and start working hard, this is in accordance with the laws of divine establishment. You will have a better life as a result. That is totally unrelated to becoming a believer in Jesus Christ. Furthermore, such a change of behavior is not Christian growth. It is a good thing for you and society, but it is not Christian growth.
 - 5) So, a better life is not necessarily a result of becoming a Christian; a better life can often result from self-regulated behavior and adherence to the laws of divine establishment.
 - 6) This is why Mormons, some of whom are saved and some of whom are not, are very nice people to be around and people that you will often personally like. It is not that they are growing Christians; it is that they adhere to the laws of divine establishment.
11. Back to our topic: implied in progressive revelation is, there is an order in which things happen in human history, and our understanding of theology is built progressively upon that timetable.
- 1) This is one of the reasons I have been fascinated about the Old Testament and have chosen to spend most of my time exegeting it.
 - 2) Christians have boiled their faith down, in many cases, to a 5 page pamphlet which is mostly a description of moral behavior.
 - 3) However, our faith is not based entirely upon the New Testament (I am using *faith* in the sense of our understanding of Christianity). Our faith has an historical basis, and that history ought not be ignored.
12. Progressive revelation is found within the New Testament. The Apostles did not know all there was to know on day one of Pentecost. At that point in time, they taught the gospel, primarily, and how this was based upon what was found in the Old Testament.

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13. To sum up, progressive revelation simply means that God reveals Himself, to a limited degree, in the Bible, at a point in time, and later reveals more and more of Himself as time moves forward. Similarly, we learn more and more about our relationship to God, progressively in the Bible and progressively in our lives.

Again, progressive revelation means that, each additional truth builds upon, expands, and better explains that which was already taught. New revelation does not supercede, replace or nullify previous revelation, but builds upon that which is past.

Progressive revelation is integral to God's plan. Otherwise, He would have revealed Himself all at once and, at salvation, we would know all that we need to know.

Other articles on this topic, which appear to be reasonable:

<http://www.eldrbarry.net/clas/gb/b12progres.pdf>

http://www.scionofzion.com/progressive_revelation.htm (They bring in many examples of modern-day cults that believe in continued revelations from God)

http://maranathabiblesociety.org/progressive_revelation

My listing of these sites is not an endorsement of their entirety; only of the information on this particular topic.

Progressive revelation is also personal. The moment you are saved, you do not understand everything that there is to know about Christianity. You learn more and more, beginning with the foundation of faith in Christ, and building upon that. At no time will we learn some maxim of theology which contradicts the basic tenets of the faith (however, you may, from time to time, learn spiritual information which will cause you to set aside some previously held personal beliefs which were incorrect).

Gen 14:19 And he [Melchizedek] blessed him [Abram] and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor [or, Redeemer, Purchaser] of heaven and earth;

So, Melchizedek blesses Abram by the God Most High, the Redeemer of heaven and earth, the One Who will purchase us from the slave market of sin.

One of the things which I have learned, as I study the Bible, is patience. When I began to study and write, I had hoped to write a commentary on the entire Old Testament and possibly on some New Testament books. I've come to realize that, given my age and the time I have left, this is virtually impossible. However, at the same time, I have begun to appreciate more the ride, the trip, and the stops along the way, as opposed to only focusing upon the destination. It's become far more fulfilling to stop, every now and again, and look around, to see how far we've come, and to appreciate where we are.

Gen 14:19 And he [Melchizedek] blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor [or, Redeemer, Purchaser] of heaven and earth;

Melchizedek recognizes that it was God Who blessed Abram and it was God Who gave these enemies into the hands of Abram.

Gen 14:20 and blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" And Abram gave him [Melchizedek] a tenth of everything.

Abram is so impressed by this meeting with Melchizedek, that he gives him a tenth of everything. A *tenth* means *tithe*, so we ought to understand what tithing actually is.

We need to keep the dispensations separated in our minds; furthermore, some doctrines have been misrepresented over the years.

The Doctrine of Tithing

1. The Hebrew word here is: ma'āsêr (מַעֲשֵׂר) [pronounced *mah-ghuhs-AIR*], which means *tenth part, tithe, payment of a tenth part*. Strong's #4643 BDB #798. There are several related Hebrew words.
2. Pre-Mosaic occurrences: A system of giving:
 - 1) In this passage, Abraham gives a tenth to Melchizedek, which we can reasonably see as spiritual giving (although there is very little discussion of what this means). Gen 14:19–20 Heb 7:2, 6
 - 2) Jacob promised to give a tenth, although it is unclear to whom this would be given (he promised to give this to God). Gen. 28:20–22
3. For Priest-nation Israel, during the Age of Israel, a tithe was income tax for both believers and unbelievers. All people of Israel paid tithes; yet, it is reasonable to suppose that not all Israelites were believers in Jehovah Elohim.
4. There was no graduated system of taxation in Israel; the percentages here were applied straight across the board, whether you were rich or poor.
5. Categories of tithing:
 - 1) The people of Israel gave a tenth of what they had for the maintenance of the tribe of Levi. The Levites were given this rather than land. The idea was, they had their inheritance with God. Lev. 27:30 Num. 18:21, 24
 - 2) Israelites set aside 10% of their new crops and animals to take with them to the feast days. So these things were not given to some outside entity, but set aside as God's, so to speak, and eaten outside of their own city limits, in whatever city God had them gather. Deut. 12:17–19 14:22–27 2Chron. 31:5
 - 3) There was a tithe, also, every third year for the Levite, the foreign resident, orphans and widows. Deut 14:28-29
 - 4) In addition to this, when crops were harvested, a portion of the field was to be left unharvested so that the poor could come and harvest these crops themselves.
 - 5) So, altogether, because Israel was a priest-nation to God, it paid 13⅓%

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- in taxes and an additional 10% was set aside to be consumed by the family itself out of town on feast days (this could almost be called a vacation fund).
- 6) This is how Israel functioned when not under a king, which was the first 400 years of Israel's existence. When a king was on the scene, the taxation was less well-defined, as the king had to be paid for, along with a standing army. Although this certainly could have been subsidized, in part, by the conquering of other nations and collecting tribute from them; there is an indication that Solomon, with all of his building projects, put a very difficult burden on the people (meaning that, he taxed them excessively). 1Kings 12:3–11 2Chron. 10:10–11
 6. In addition to tithing, there was free will (spiritual) giving. Lev. 22:18 Deut. 12:17
 7. Therefore, Old Testament tithing was more closely related to taxation and a vacation fund rather than to free will giving (which, again, was a separate category).
 8. There were periods of Israel's history when they stopped paying tithes and stopped their freewill giving, and the Tabernacle (or Temple, depending upon the time) fell into disrepair. Hezekiah's reform saw a return to tithing. 2Chron. 31:5–6, 12
 9. Because Israel was a priest-nation to God (it represented man to God), refusing to tithe was equivalent to robbing God. Mal. 3:8, 10
 - 1) However, it ought to be made clear that the passage cited belongs to a very particular place and time. **“Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me. But you say, In what have we robbed You? In the tithe and the offering! Bring all the tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house. And test Me now with this, says Jehovah of Hosts, to see if I will not open the windows of Heaven for you, and pour out a blessing for you, until there is not enough room.”** (Mal. 3:8, 10).
 - 2) This is a time when there was a storehouse in the Temple of God and this storehouse held grain which was used for the Levites as well as for the poor.
 10. The New Testament references to tithing refer to the legalism of the pharisees, as they simultaneously ignored to the justice, compassion and doctrine of God. Matt 23:23 Luke 11:42
 11. In the Church Age, we are no longer under the Mosaic Law, but under grace. John 1:17 Rom. 6:14 2Cor. 3:6
 12. We all should to pay our taxes, regardless of whether we think they are fair or not. Matt 22:17–21 Mark 12:13–17 Rom. 13:7
 13. Tithing is not a part of New Testament giving. 1Cor 16:1-2 2Cor. 8–9
 14. The basis for giving is not tithing, but giving from a generous soul, in both the Old and New Testaments. Prov. 11:24–26 2Cor. 8:1–3 9:7–12

References:

<http://www.swordofthespiritbibleministries.com/images/simplelists//NOTESSZ/Tithing.pdf>

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We are able to learn from what we find in the Old Testament, even if we do not apply it directly.

Modern Applications of Tithing

1. There is an ideal tax rate. This does not mean that we rebel against a tax rate that is too low or too high, but that a nation functions best within certain parameters.
2. Art Laffer, economic advisor to Ronald Reagan, gave us the Laffer curve, which simply explains that, the best tax rate is somewhere between 0 and 100%. At the 100% tax rate, the government will get nothing, because no one will work; and at 0%, the government will get nothing. The application of Calculus tells us that there is a maximum somewhere between 0 and 100%. Furthermore, as you get closer and closer to 100% (or to 0%) the tax revenue becomes less and less. For those who understand such curves, this does not mean that the number right in the middle, 50%, is the ideal tax rate—it is not.
3. That a tax rate can be too high is found in 1Kings 3–11, where those who grew up with Rehoboam, Solomon's son, came to him and complained of the excessive taxation of Solomon. Part of the reason that God the Holy Spirit placed this in the Bible was to indicate that a government can pile on too much by way of taxes. Over and over, we find the Bible speaking to both sides of an issue or to both sides of a controversy: the Bible speaks to the rich and the poor, to the slave and the slave owner, to the employee and the employer, to the government and to its citizens.
4. We have, by trial and error, seen our own country's economy function best under certain percentages. We have seen government spending (related to taxation) have an effect upon the economy. In the past, when government spending was held at 16–18%, we tend to have a very prosperous economy. However, at 25% spending, where we are now (I write this in July of 2011), we have an economy which is growing very slowly and appears as if it may stall out at any time.
 - 1) People falsely argue that we had a 90% tax rate for much of our history, but that is not strictly true. For the very, very rich, they paid 90% of their income to the government after a certain point. That is (and I do not know the actual numbers here), once they made \$1 million, then 90% of their earnings after that million went to the federal government (again, I do not know the exact number of when the 90% kicked in).
 - 2) Associated with this were great tax breaks for these same people, many of which are still available today. They could develop some sort of a non-profit organization of foundation, give massive amounts of money to that organization, and that organization, in turn, would have to give about 4% of their total monies to whatever they were dedicated to doing. The rest

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- could be eaten up in expenses and remuneration, even to the person donating his money to this tax-sheltered foundation. Michael Moore, the very liberal film maker, has one of these which is related to film making, so that he does not have to send so much of his money to the government.
- 3) Many people simply did not work past a certain tax bracket. Ronald Reagan would often do just 2 films a year, even if offered more work. His salary for the 3rd film would end up going mostly to the government, so why work? This is one of the reasons that President Reagan cut tax rates to about half of what they were—he knew that he himself, as a liberal, would not work in order to send most of that money to the government. Therefore, high graduated tax rates essentially reduced productivity.
5. That a tax rate which is too high and a government which spends too much is a drag on the economy is not a difficult proposition to prove. Our economy is built upon productivity. If potentially productive members of society do not work and receive a check from the government, that reduces productivity, by definition. If the government is taking too much capital out of the system, that leaves less for the free enterprise system to use and invest. I personally have a very small business and most of what I make gets put back into my business. When I am taxed, that money is not put back into my business and that money is not used in the free market economy.
6. The Bible appears to be in favor of a 23 $\frac{1}{3}$ % tax rate, but this is not quite correct. Bear in mind that, much of this tax provided for the Levites, who provided a spiritual service for Israel at that time. 10% of that was spent by the family on itself and on animal sacrifices for attending religious feast days.
7. Governments today ought not to pay for churches. We have seen how that has gone so far awry in the Middle Ages in Spain, England and more recently in Muslim countries.
8. However, a tax exempt status for churches seems to be a reasonable approach. This is based upon Israel supporting the Levites and the feast days.
9. The 10% every 3rd year combined with private businesses providing some assistance is an ideal approach to helping the poor. Obviously, a compassionate nation is not going to allow its poor to die in the streets. There are many examples in Scripture about God requiring that Israel take care of its poor.
10. God often encouraged people to look out for the poor, the needy, the widow, the orphan and the stranger. Genuine compassion was expected along with some measure of support. Although the Bible was rarely specific here, it is quite obvious that God expects for us to look after the poor and the helpless. However, only a small part of Israel's budget (3 $\frac{1}{3}$ %) was designated for this. Furthermore, private landowners allowed the poor to come into their fields to harvest crops for themselves. God expected people to act individually in this respect.
11. Bear in mind that, if a government attempts to do too much, then people no longer have a reason to give, and giving is important both to the recipient and to the giver. The person who is able to give has to realize that, his life is not made up simply of the possessions which he has. Luke 12:22–34

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12. However, less obvious to many, a compassionate nation ought not to simply give money away to a point where, not working and living on the government dole becomes a persistent, alternative lifestyle. This violates the 2nd divine institution, which is *work*.
13. Therefore, it is reasonable that each year for approximately 3 $\frac{1}{3}$ % of our budget and revenue be devoted to the poor, in one way or another and then allow private individuals and businesses to provide for the poor in their own way from their own free will.
14. No one appeared to be exempt from taxation in the Jewish Age. Today, in America, 51% of people are exempt from taxation.
 - 1) As an aside, the inadequate amounts collected as FICA taxes are not really taxes, but monies used for social security and medicare.
 - 2) If these are reduced or eliminated for some, that means that one set of people are working to support the retirement and medicare benefits for another set of people.
 - 3) Whereas, people in the Old Testament were encouraged to give to the poor, they were also encouraged to take care of themselves, putting monies aside for their own retirement. Prov. 6:6–8 (the Scripture speaks of putting aside crops for the winter, but this is certainly applicable to retirement as well)
15. Also, in the Bible, the people claimed that King Solomon made them pay too much in taxes (1Kings 12:4). We do not know how much that is, but we know from Ecclesiastes that Solomon spend a lot of money on building projects. Since we find this in the Bible, we can reasonable assume that a government can tax too much.
16. Based upon all of this, it seems reasonable that our taxation ought to fall between 3 $\frac{1}{3}$ % and 23 $\frac{1}{3}$ %.
17. There is no graduated tax system in the Bible. The rich do not pay a higher percentage.
18. However, a rich man with a large field would, by the law, leave portions of this field unharvested (like the corners) and allow for the poor to come in and harvest. This approach ought to appeal to both liberals and conservatives. The successful farmer-landowner has a large field which he harvests, and, therefore, he provides a great deal for the poor—more than the smaller landowner who is a small-time farmer. At the same time, the poor are required to come and actually do work in order to eat, which is in keeping with conservative and Biblical values.
19. One of the additional taxes I strongly support is the gas tax, as long as this is used to pay for roads and bridges. The more miles a person drives, the more he ought to pay for the use of these public roads. Since the government collects more than it needs for roads and bridges through this gas tax, there ought not to be calls for more money to pay for roads and bridges.
20. All of this does not mean that we can refuse to pay our taxes if they exceed 25%. The Bible, in several places already noted, requires all believers (and unbelievers) to pay taxes, regardless of their amount.

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21. However, we have enough information in the Bible to set an ideal tax rate, which works best for a country's prosperity—somewhere between 3 $\frac{1}{3}$ % and 23 $\frac{1}{3}$ %.
22. What about social security and medicare?
 - 1) The Bible speaks of working hard and setting aside a portion of your labor for the future.
 - 2) The Bible never speaks of the government doing this on our behalf, even when this government was under God's rulership (Israel).
 - 3) We have found out, the hard way, that politicians, when given charge over great sums of money, will just squander that money without regards for the hard work related to providing it—no matter what their political persuasion is.
 - 4) In our own social security system, there has never been a "lockbox." These monies collected go into the general fund and politicians spend these monies for a variety of reasons, which can include political payoffs as well as actual compassion.
 - 5) The end result is, too little is collected much of the time. When there is an excess of funds collected, politicians always manage to find things to spend this excess on. Therefore, we stand before a social security and medicare debt chasm which is staggering and could possibly even break this country economically (future entitlement monies which are not that far exceed the national debt—by trillions).
 - 6) The intelligent way to deal with this is to have a national discussion about these funds and various alternatives, with the understanding that, whatever monies politicians will collect, they will spend, waste or embezzle. However, since we are dealing with Washington D.C., intelligence rarely plays a part when it comes to policy. Power and greed nearly always outweigh practical considerations.
 - 7) In any case, for we taxpayers, the Bible is clear—no matter what our opinions are with regards to social security and medicare, we still have to pay the taxes which the government requires.
23. In the Bible, what is taught is, we work hard, we set aside for a rainy day, and children provide for their parents and grandparents when necessary. A very small amount of relief funds are provided directly by the government; and private enterprise takes up any additional slack (the Biblical example, again, is leaving a part of a field unharvested, so that the poor could work and harvest these fields themselves).
24. Never, in the Bible, is there any sort of a welfare system set up where young and healthy people simply live off the government dole. As Paul wrote to the Thessalonians: **If a man does not work, then he does not eat** (2Thess. 3:10).
 - 1) As an aside, people often point to the early church in Jerusalem, and how they held all things in common (Acts 4:32). This was a rare situation where the early church in Jerusalem was heavily persecuted and many people were cut off from the free enterprise because of their faith. Furthermore, the book of Acts tells what the early church did; it is not a

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book which is prescriptive (that is, it is not telling us, *you must do the exact same thing*). Also, the saints in Jerusalem expected that Jesus was going to return within a matter of days. If we knew for a fact that Jesus was going to return a week from Tuesday, our relationship to material things would be changed dramatically.

- 2) Because of being cut off from the free enterprise system of that day, and possibly because of their way of dealing with that (holding all goods in common), the Jerusalem church never recovered financially, and they were supported by other churches (which did not hold all their private possessions in common) until Jerusalem fell in A.D. 70. Rom. 15:26
1Cor. 16:3

What I have found interesting is, most liberals are unable to define what ought to be a maximum tax rate (apart from those who think we ought to be paying 70–90%, and many of them are embarrassed to state that). Many conservatives can give you a range and/or a maximum for what they believe is a correct tax rate.

Related to taxation is one of the most misunderstood passages in the Bible, where Jesus speaks to the rich young ruler and asks him to give away everything that he has. Liberals often latch onto this passage, and somehow think that the government needs to take away the money of rich people for this reason.

Matt. 19:16–21: **Just then someone** [Luke tells us that he is a ruler of some sort] **came up and asked Him, "Teacher, what good must I do to have eternal life?" "Why do you ask Me about what is good?" He said to him. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments." "Which ones?" he asked Him. Jesus answered, "Do not murder; do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not bear false witness; [Mark adds, "Do not commit fraud"] honor your father and your mother; and love your neighbor as yourself. "I have kept all these," the young man told Him. "What do I still lack?" "If you want to be perfect," Jesus said to him, "go, sell your belongings and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me."**

The first thing to bear in mind is, one cannot be good enough to enter into the Kingdom of God. There is not some good thing which we can do in order to enter into the Kingdom of God. However, this man believes that he is good enough for God, and Jesus is going to show him that he is not.

The rich young ruler would be nodding his head as Jesus ticked off the commandments: commandment #6: **Do not commit murder**; commandment #7: **do not commit adultery**; commandment #8: **do not steal**; commandment #9: **do not bear false witness in court**. The rich young ruler knows the Ten Commandments and he would be nodding his head up and down, ticking off his obedience to these commandments. Then, all of a sudden, Jesus, rather than going to commandment #10 (**do not desire that which belongs to your neighbor**); and the rich young ruler had pretty much anything that he wanted, so he did not need to

desire what his neighbor had), suddenly, Jesus says, “**Do not commit fraud.**” That ought to get your attention. After ticking off commandments 6–9 in order, one would expect Jesus to then name the 10th commandment. However, Jesus then tells this man not to commit fraud. This would suggest that this rich young ruler is involved in some sort of fraudulent transaction. However, he may not see it as fraudulent.

At this time, there was what is known by some as the corban gimmick, where a rich person could dedicate his wealth to God, and thereby protect his wealth. That is, no one could compel the rich young ruler to do something like support his parents or to give to the poor because his wealth was corban. This would mean that all of it or a percentage of it would go to the Temple after his death. So, this rich young ruler protected his money from being charitable by this corban gimmick, which is essentially fraud in a priest nation. So, what is the next commandment that Jesus says to the rich young ruler? **Honor your mother and father**, which is the 5th commandment. The order in which these commandments are given indicates what the problem with this man was. Jesus had to show this man that he was not perfect; that God would not accept him for his good works. What he was apparently doing was, not supporting his parents and using the korban gimmick to get around that. This is because he was inordinately in love with his own riches.

Then Jesus gave him a fairly simple command: “**Sell all your things, give the proceeds to the poor, and then follow Me.**” The idea is not that, this was the final thing necessary for this rich young ruler to do to be saved; it was the chink in his armor. The Law tells us that we have sinned; the Law does not save us. **For, by the Law is the knowledge of sin** (Rom. 3:20). **For, by the works of the Law, no man is saved** (Gal. 2:16).

Jesus did not tell the rich young ruler to sell everything and give it to the poor because this was his ticket into heaven. Jesus told him that because that revealed where he had sinned against God. The rich young ruler thought that he was good enough for God to accept him, and Jesus showed him, that was not the case.

We know that we are not expected to sell everything and give it to the poor because of Matt. 26:7–13, where a woman takes a very expensive ointment and pours it out upon the feet of Jesus. When she is upbraided by Jesus’ disciples for not selling this ointment and giving the proceeds to the poor, Jesus sets His disciples straight.

The rich young ruler is told to sell everything and give it to the poor because this reveals to him very clearly why he cannot be saved by works. The woman is defended for not selling her expensive ointment to provide for the poor, because she recognized the importance of Who Jesus was and that He would not be with them for very long.

These passages, taken together with Acts 5:3–4, indicate that God does not expect us to sell all that we have and give it to the poor. However, almost invariably, each of us will face situations where God will expect us to provide for someone in need.

We have almost completed our study of Abram's meeting with Melchizedek. Surprisingly enough, we have spent 10 lessons on the following 3 verses:

Gen 14:18–20 Then Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine; he was a priest to God Most High. And he [Melchizedek] blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor [or, Redeemer, Purchaser] of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" And Abram gave him [Melchizedek] a tenth of everything.

There is one last thing to look at in this passage, which is a fascinating phrase that is found throughout the Bible, but is rarely discussed: *Blessed be God*. Most of us have an idea as to what it means for God to bless us, and most of us believe that we have experienced that blessing at various times in our lives. Many of us have uttered the words, "God bless you" to someone else, often as part of a prolonged good-bye. But how are we to understand someone saying, "*Blessed be God*"? *Blessed* here is the Qal passive participle of *bârak*^e (בָּרַךְ) [pronounced *baw-RAHK*^e], which means, *to bless; to kneel down, to bend the knees, and therefore to invoke God, to ask for a blessing, to bless*. It also means *to praise, to salute, to curse*. Strong's #1288 BDB #138. The gist of the phrase *God is [continually] blessed* is, *God is [continually] happy; God is continually praised* [for His plan and His essence]; or, perhaps this may be loosely understood to mean *Let us continue to be thankful to God and to recognize His perfect essence*.

Melchizedek, in saying this, recognizes that God delivered Abram's enemies into his hand and saying *Blessed [is] God* is recognizing God's deliverance and thanking Him for it. In studying the battle itself, the fact that Abram was victorious is quite amazing, because he was so vastly outnumbered by the armies of the kings of the east.

It is fascinating that Melchizedek's name is only mentioned one time here, but we find it again in Psalm 110:4 and then 9 times in the book of Hebrews (all occurrences of his name have already been studied).

Now we leave Abram and Melchizedek (the King of Salem) and see the interaction between Abram and the king of Sodom. He is a part of the western coalition which was soundly defeated in battle by the eastern alliance, which Abraham and company have just sent packing.

As a heads-up, you are going to learn exactly why this portion of Gen. 14 is in the Word of God, something which, to the best of my knowledge, has never been taught before. Everything that we have studied in the past 10 or so lessons are going to fit like a glove with what we are about to study, and yet, insofar as I know, this has never been taught before.

Gen 14:21 And the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people, but take the goods for yourself."

The king of Sodom reveals a common Old Testament period tradition. A person who delivered you or who protected you ought to be paid. They did not necessarily live where there was a standing army or where there was police protection. This will help us better understand future incidents where a young David and his men function as protectors for some people, and they are due remuneration for this protection. This is not some protection racket (as one misguided author described it) but a long-standing tradition of remunerating those who protect you, simply because there is no local police force. After the time of Christ, many provinces were glad to be conquered by the Romans, because that meant law and order, with police protection.

The king of Sodom understood that it was legitimate for Abram to keep all that he took in his defeat of the eastern kings. In fact, Abram could have legitimately kept these people as his slaves.

I want you to note that this king is an honorable man. He is concerned for the safety and freedom of his people. We do not know if this was Bera (Gen. 14:2) or the next in line and we do not know if he is among the captives who were taken. Because of what Abram has done, this king recognizes that Abram has claim upon all of the goods taken in this attack (which, strictly speaking, includes the people as well).

One might call the book of Genesis, *the Book of Seeds*, because there are so many seeds of fundamental doctrines found in Genesis. One of the doctrines found in this chapter is called the *Cycles of Discipline* or the *Progression of National Discipline*, which sequence is laid out more specifically in Lev. 26:14–44. The 4th stage of national discipline is when a country is ruled over or controlled by an outside power. This is often because the people have become so degenerate that the authority and guidance of an outside power is necessary in order to provide structure for the society. This is known as *enforced humility*.

This is what has happened to Sodom and Gomorrah. Chedorlaomer, a king from the east, had conquered their country, and was taxing it. In order to be taxed by another country, there is some order that must be enforced by this outside power. This is what had gone on for over a decade (Gen. 14:4). Chedorlaomer had conquered Sodom and Gomorrah, as well as several other city-states in that area, and soldiers would have been left behind to provide some law and order, so that the tax could be collected.

If this nation in the 4th stage of discipline does not change its ways, which would mean to go from enforced humility to genuine humility, then they would be further disciplined, which could involve being enslaved and removed from their country, or being destroyed (which is the 5th and final stage of discipline).

These cycles of discipline are applied to a priest-nation because of its spiritual state; and they can be applied to a heathen nation for a variety of reasons, mostly related to the laws of divine establishment.

What has happened is, these city-states have gone from the 4th stage of discipline (being controlled and taxed by an outside entity) to the 5th stage of national discipline (being defeated and enslaved as a people, and then removed from their homeland).

When a people have gone into deep degeneracy, so that God will allow them to be under the 4th and even 5th stage of discipline, what is the best way for them to recover? Military discipline and military training followed by the application of military training (war). This has been an underlying theme of this chapter.

God will spell out these stages of discipline to the nation Israel in Lev. 26, and the history of Israel is going to be all about a nation going into degeneracy and then being subjected to these stages of discipline. In fact, the Northern Kingdom of Israel will go into captivity (the final stage of discipline) in 721 B.C. and the Southern Kingdom of Israel will go into captivity in 596 B.C.

Gen 14:21 And the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people, but take the goods for yourself."

Now, this king sounds like a reasonable guy; in fact, a very nice guy. He wants his people back, he recognizes Abram's ability to make the call here, and so is making a pretty forceful request (it is in the imperative mood). I suspect that, this king of Sodom is too nice of a guy. He is possibly too indulgent with his people. With all nations, there must be a system of law and order imposed, and it is possible that enforcement of these laws (or the outright lack of these laws) is part of the reason God took these people into the 4th and 5th stages of national discipline. This will be borne out when we get to Gen. 19, when the degeneracy of Sodom and Gomorrah will be laid bare—such degeneracy that this nice king should have kept under control.

There is one more great theme at work here, and I don't know if this has been taught before. This is a great opportunity for the Sodomite people. They were taken in war, about to face a lifetime of slavery; and here we have the king of Sodom, who appears to be a decent man, speaking with Abram, being not too far from Melchizedek. This is their opportunity. They can believe in the God of Abram. They know just how bad their lives could have been, as they witnessed the slaughtering of their fellow Sodomites in war and, for a short time, had a lifetime of slavery staring them in the face. They have just been purchased out of slavery by Abram and by Abram's God. Remember the slave market of sin that we recently studied? These people are the slaves God has purchased from the slave market of sin. They are themselves an illustration of this doctrine.

The people of Sodom and Gomorrah have seen with their very own eyes the army of Abram, and how this few hundred men just defeated the greatest national alliance of that day. They now know the power of God. The God of Abram has delivered them. They could potentially learn about this God, both through Abram and through Melchizedek. Here they are, a people about to go into slavery, and miraculously, this tiny army of God defeats their captors and sets them free. **The Spirit of the LORD God has taken control of me! The LORD has chosen and sent me to tell the oppressed the good news, to heal the**

brokenhearted, and to announce freedom for prisoners and captives (Isa. 61:1 CEV; which passage was quoted by our Lord in Luke 4:18).

However, instead, 20 years or so in the future, they will become one of the most degenerate peoples on earth and God will destroy them as a part of their final stage of discipline. God has delivered them—they know that this is no ordinary deliverance—and yet, they will not turn to Him. The God of Abram purchased them from the slave market of sin and has given them their freedom, and now they are at the crossroads of their national life.

They are without excuse. God is, at this time, offering them grace before judgment, which God often does. The entire salvation package is before their eyes: they themselves were the slaves just purchased from the slave market of sin by the God of Abram, a God Who is more powerful than any heathen god; and now, they have to choose. Sadly, their future indicates that they did not choose to believe in Abram's God.

Now Abram will witness to this king about his God. Abram will tell this king about his God.

Gen 14:22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I had lifted my hand to Y^ehowah, God Most High, Possessor [or, Redeemer, Purchaser; Creator] of heaven and earth,

Notice what Abram doesn't say: "I know that we are a small army, but we are tough and well-trained, and we used the correct strategy to minimize the numerical difference between our armies." All of that is true, but Abram, instead, speaks about the God who delivered them, the Purchaser of heaven and earth, the God who just purchased this people from a lifetime of slavery.

Abram's God is a personal God; He is a God who will listen to Abram. Abram faced an impossible situation and Abram went to his God for guidance and for power.

Lifting up one's hand to God is making a vow to God (Deut. 32:40 Daniel 12:7). The perfect tense of the verb indicates that this is an action already completed. The content of this vow is given in the next verse:

Gen 14:23 [I vowed] that I would not take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that is yours, so that no one will say, 'I have made Abram rich.'

Abram had vowed to God, prior to this battle, that he would not take anything from his raid for himself, apart from a reasonable remuneration for his men. Although Abram led them, they did all of the work, and they were due payment for their work.

Why would Abram make this vow to God? Why not rescue these men and pocket a lot of goods and money? He obviously deserves it.

3 times, already, God has appeared to Abram and has promised to bless him. At the end of Gen. 13, God told Abram to look in all directions (he was apparently on the Judæan

mountains with a clear view of the area about him), and God said, “Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever.” (Gen. 13:14b–15). Abram does not need the spoil from this battle; God has already promised him the very land he is standing on, as far as Abram’s eye could see and farther than that.

Abram looked to God to be able to save Lot, his nephew. He did not look upon this attack on the eastern alliance as a means by which he could be made richer. So, prior to his attack, Abram spoke to God and determined what he expected out of victory and what he was not after in this military victory.

What is occurring here is, Abram is enjoying a great spiritual victory. Not only has he defeated an army which is at least 10X the size of his own (if not 100X), but, more important than that is his choice of what to do with all that he captured. By ancient world standards, all of the people and goods which Abram took from the kings of the east belonged to him. Abram could have added all of the goods to his treasury and kept all of the people as his slaves. However, Abram was not really interested in anything other than rescuing his nephew.

The Contents of Abram’s Spiritual Victory

1. Abram recognized that God would bless him and his family with a great land grant, so there is no reason for him to take the things which the King of Sodom is offering.
2. Abram recognized this war as being of God, and he went to God with a vow concerning the war.
3. This vow indicated that Abram was not greedy. He did not 90% want to rescue Lot and 10% want the resultant loot from this battle. Abram’s motivation is pure.
4. Abram was willing to risk his life for his nephew Lot.
5. Abram recognizes that God has promised him a son, and he did not yet have a son; therefore, he could expect to live through this war.
6. Abram knows Who God is; Abram knows What God is capable of doing. Abram knows that he can depend upon his God.
7. Abram applies this knowledge (this doctrine, if you will) to his life and situation.
8. We have already seen that Abram can be a lousy witness for his God when he lied to the King of Egypt about his wife. However, at this point, Abram is a great witness to the King of Sodom, as to Who his God is and What his God can do.

We are seeing Abram depend upon God and put his trust in God. He is now acting in accordance with that faith. He is applying the truth that he knows to the situation.

As we come to the end of Gen. 14, we are going to look at a lot of application from this chapter. What we have studied so far:

Gen 14:21–23 And the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people, but take the goods for yourself." But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I had lifted my hand to Y^ehowah, God Most High, Possessor [or, Redeemer, Purchaser; Creator] of heaven and earth, [I vowed] that I would not take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that is yours, so that no one will say, 'I have made Abram rich.'

After spending time with Melchizedek, the King of Salem, a type of Christ, Abram speaks with the King of Sodom. Recognizing the customs of his day, the King of Sodom asked for his people to be returned to him (using the imperative mood), but was willing to let Abram keep the vast wealth which had been taken. This is legitimate, as we studied; Abram could have kept all the wealth and possessions which he rescued and he could have kept the people as slaves, if he so chose. However, prior to this battle, Abram made a vow to God not to take any of the plunder. Abram wanted it to be clear that God prospered him, and not this battle in which he engaged to free Lot.

Abram continues speaking to the King of Sodom in the final verse.

Gen 14:24 I will take nothing but what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me. Let Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre take their share."

A few words of explanation—there were some nations which loathed farming and even looked down upon that profession. However, they, as warriors, would take the produce of other nations. If a nation had 3 or 4 subservient nations, they could collect enough tribute, which would include agricultural produce, for their nation to get by with little or no farming. Although we do not know if those in the eastern alliance eschewed farming, this verse indicates that they took foodstuffs after defeating the western coalition. So, what was taken from Sodom was also produce, some of which was eaten by the soldiers that Abram had with him.

Enjoying the spoils of victory in war is not just some ancient custom, but this is part of today's standards as well. England, when it was a client nation to God, conquered



From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:The_British_Empire.png

about a fourth of the world's population (beginning around the 1600's and extending into the early 1900's). To see tiny England compared to all that it controlled is awesome. On the map above, you can barely see England, and all of the nations it controlled at one time or another are in pink.

Why did God allow such imperialism? Most American schools teach that imperialism is bad, and even our President returned a bust of Winston Churchill to England because of England's control of Kenya. During the 1950's, while the United States was enjoying somewhat of a blissful existence, Kenya was under martial law because of the rebellions against British control. When control of Kenya was seized away from the Brits, there were elections, but Kenya was ruled then by elected dictators and continued to suffer unrest, attempted coups, one-party rule, and many unopposed elections for the next 40+ years. Even after what appeared to be a legitimate election in 2002, the people continue with a fairly rebellious attitude, and protests turned into violence in 2007, where 1000 people were killed and 600,000 displaced. As has happened in many African countries, throwing off the yoke of imperialism did not result in a great Jeffersonian democracy. It resulted in far greater social unrest and political tyranny.

Imperialism by an honorable power is a good thing. England brought both law and order (the laws of divine establishment) and the gospel to all of the places above in pink. The land that England controlled, it civilized and evangelized. Millions of people are in heaven today because of the tremendous expansion of the British Empire. If you ever want to know the power of the Word of God, look at tiny England and all that it controlled. And as England became more and more secular, its control over this great empire began to be challenged.

In all of the places that England controlled, the gospel went, and there have been large pockets of believers throughout the great British Empire—India, Australia, New Zealand, Kenya, Rhodesia, South Africa, Canada and the American colonies. Many of these nations still have significant Christian populations because of Great Britain's imperialism.

Why do you think there is so much propaganda against imperialism? Our very own current president, Barrack Obama, does not understand or appreciate the greatness of the British empire. Why do you think Gandhi is glorified even here as some great hero? Why do you think there was such a concentrated attack against the British control of Rhodesia and South Africa a few decades ago? All of these rebellions and wars for control have a spiritual connotation to them.

Gandhi was not some great hero who rescued India for subjugation and tyranny. The only reason Gandhi could do what he did was *because* India was controlled by the British. If India had been controlled by China, for instance, we would not know who Gandhi was. Day one: Gandhi announces his intention to rebel against China's control of India; day two: Gandhi has gone missing, along with all of his family and friends. End of story. Gandhi was able to do what he did because of the civilized nature of the British; because they believed in Jesus Christ, and because they respected human life and human dignity (this does not mean that there were not some abuses of power; all men have sin natures).

When I was new in the faith, my pastor, R. B. Thieme, Jr., would rail on and on about the immorality of what was being done to Rhodesia and to South Africa. Quite frankly, I knew about zilch when it came to those countries. I knew they were in Africa, and I knew that every media outlet was telling me that these nations needed to throw off the shackles of apartheid, and move forward as a people. One church that I used to clean as a janitor had literature all over their foyer about this horrible apartheid in Rhodesia and South Africa, and how this is so evil, and yet, there was one lone voice, the voice of my pastor, saying that these were great nations and their lives were good. They had law and order and they had the gospel of Jesus Christ because of British imperialism.

In Rhodesia, there was a rebellion, and one of the rebel leaders was a man named Robert Mugabe, and white rule was thrown off, the nation's name was changed to Zimbabwe, and it has been ruled by tyrant Robert Mugabe ever since. Because these people were in rebellion against white rule—the legitimate authority in the land—they were, therefore, in rebellion against their God. What has been the result? Rulership by a tyrant, Robert Mugabe, continued civil unrest, including many rebellions against Mugabe, and AIDS has infected as much as 25% of their population. I can personally guarantee that the percentage of Christians under apartheid, among Blacks and whites, was much greater than it is today.

Let's make an application to recent American history. At the end of World War II, the allies had defeated the axis forces. The allied forces were therefore able to divide up the world, and to take for themselves whatever spoils of war there was (recall, that was our original topic). Stalin, our evil ally at the time, salivated over all the lands which had been defeated, and he took a great deal of land and peoples which would be subjugated to the Soviet Union. In fact, the conference at Yalta placed as much as a third of the world into Soviet slavery, and only a few people batted an eye over this. To the victor belongs the spoils

On the other hand, the United States did something which was unprecedented in human history. We went into Germany, Japan and elsewhere, not as conquerors to take these lands as our spoils and to exploit them, but as a benevolent conquering power. When Rome conquered a land, it was brought into the Roman empire, and given (generally speaking) good governance and law and order, under the S.P.Q.R. banner. Great Britain did much the same thing when it expanded the British empire. But the United States, after World War II did something brand new in the world. We essentially rebuilt Japan, and guided them into national indecency and an allied relationship—the very ones who attacked us at Pearl Harbor—and turned them into an independent and prosperous allied nation. This was an amazing step in international relations, and one which is virtually ignored in modern American history books (along with the Christian evangelism which took place, at the request of great military figures like General Douglas MacArthur).

Let's make an even more recent application: Iraq and Afghanistan. Going into 2 countries which were antagonistic toward us and turning them into allies was a good and reasonable thing to do. After 9/11, we could not simply do nothing. The message that, *if you attack us, we may take over one of your countries* was a reasonable message to send to our enemies. However, our shortcoming was in not evangelizing the people of Iraq and

Afghanistan. There were pockets of positive volition, and many people in those nations wanted to know the God of America. However, our military literally burned Bibles which were taken over their to evangelize, and severely limited soldiers evangelizing the people. And, to make things worse, when we had the ability to throw our weight around in those countries, we could have demanded a Bill of Rights be introduced as a part of their governance, which would have included freedom of religion.

President George W. Bush was a great student of history and recognized that what we did in Japan and South Korea was good and honorable. However, he left out the most important ingredient, which is the gospel of Jesus Christ. For this reason, our alliances with Iraq and Afghanistan will be short-lived.

Communist propaganda falsely labels the United States as an imperialistic nation because you can find a McDonald's in almost every civilized country in the world, and this sort of nonsense is taught in many of our schools and believed by many of our young people (the ignorance of many of our youth today is astounding; most would identify the United States as being an imperialistic country, but would not say the same about Russia).

At Yalta, the U.S.S.R. grabbed every bit of land and people that they could, and enslaved them. On the other hand, the United States took upon herself the responsibility for these nations under its control, and, through a benevolent leader (Douglas MacArthur), turned Japan around and restored them to their independence. As a result, Japan had become, until very recently, the second highest producing country in the world and a great ally and trading partner of the United States.

There are even those who complain about *English imperialism* today, by which they mean, people in other countries today learn the English language. For all intents and purposes, the English language has become a common language throughout the world, and some people, from different nations will speak to one another using English—not their native language—because they both know it. To pretend that this is some sort of imperialism is simply lying propaganda. The English language, which is common to so many nations, is the blessing of Christianity. Now, with the internet, people from all over the world are able to access so much of the great theology which has been developed in the United States over the past 50 years, because they speak English.

[Gen 14:24](#) I will take nothing but what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me. Let Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre take their share."

It is legitimate for Abram to keep all that he rescued; in fact, he could have kept all of the people as his slaves, if he so chose. That is his right because of his military victory. Both he and the king of Sodom understood this.

For the believer in Jesus Christ, we have certain freedoms, but we are supposed to self-regulate, even when we are free to do otherwise. That is, we do not take our freedoms and apply them in each and every situation. The example that Paul gives in 1Corinthians is, believers had the right to eat meat that had been sacrificed at a heathen temple; because,

after all, it is just meat. However, there are some circumstances in which, the believer who is hungry for a heathen steak might take a pass on it, if it adversely affects a weak believer. In the past year or so, we have had several examples of this. A so-called moderate Muslim imam wants to build a mosque near Ground Zero in New York City. This man has the right to do so (although the okay for this mosque seemed to go through the bureaucratic system at light speed, as there is a church destroyed by the 9/11 attack which still does not have the go-ahead to rebuild). However, when it became clear that this was a vastly unpopular idea, the imam should have backed off, and sought land elsewhere to build his new mosque (he oversees another mosque about 12 blocks from the proposed Ground Zero mosque and there are well over a hundred mosques in NYC). A believer in Jesus Christ with some doctrine would understand that having the right to do something does not mean that you just go ahead and do it.

The radio personality Dr. Laura used the N-word several times during one call. Dr. Laura had the freedom to use this word and she probably could have weathered the storm caused by what she said (I believe that she retired); but, she should have self-regulated here, and chosen not to say the word out loud.

There was a pastor of what appears to be a very small congregation down in Florida who threatened to burn the Koran, something which he has every right to do. However, such an action may have put American soldiers in danger and fractured an uneasy alliance that we have with Iraq, Afghanistan and other Arab countries. This pastor, although he had the right to do so, chose not to (however, since then, I think he has burned a Koran or two, but with much less news coverage).

Abram has the right to these spoils that he has taken in war, but he chooses not to exercise that right.

[Gen 14:24](#) I will take nothing but what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me. Let Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre take their share."

Abram had an alliance with Aner, Eshcol and Mamre (Gen. 14:13). Abram could have taken and kept all that he captured—including the people. However, instead, he requests only a reasonable remuneration for what was done, and that would go to his people and his allies.

There is an additional lesson that we should take from this. Abram does not force others to live by his standards. He chooses not to take any of this wealth for himself. However, his allies rightfully deserved share of the spoils, and they receive their share. Abram did not self-righteously declare that he would not take any of the spoils and that his allies would not either. He let them take what was rightfully theirs.

Let's look at a modern application of this. In this past year, I have seen a great many people, overflowing with self-righteousness, brimming with self-righteous pride, saying about how we need to provide free healthcare for everyone because healthcare is a fundamental right. But, in reality, there is no we. The people I have heard this from do not

anticipate actually paying for this right of healthcare themselves. They believe it is a right, and they believe that the *rich* ought to pay for it. I will guarantee you that if these same self-righteous twits who believe that healthcare is a right, saw their next month's check cut in half to pay for other people's healthcare policy, and all subsequent checks were cut in half, that they would change their minds mighty quick about this *right*. If the money came out of their pockets; if they worked 10–20 hours a week to pay for someone else's healthcare—particularly if this was someone who chose not to work—I know that their feelings about healthcare being a fundamental right would suddenly change. That self-righteous support for healthcare would suddenly change. Such people are very generous with other people's money, and they are very insistent when it comes to imposing their own values upon others.

You may say, "What about Warren Buffet? He's a billionaire and he wants to pay more taxes." To the best of my knowledge, even though Buffet can pay as much as he wants to in additional taxes, he has never chosen to do so. Furthermore, since he does not receive a salary, Warren Buffet would not be affected by raising the tax rates, which he supports. Buffet is involved in many charitable organizations. Personally, I would rather that those who are rich choose the charitable organizations to which they want to belong or those they wish to found, rather than this money be given over to the government. There are a huge number of generous millionaire liberals. Do any of them say, "We should stop giving to our pet charities and give this money instead to the government of the United States." No, of course not! Nor do they give huge sums of money to the government, because they know, deep in their liberal hearts, that the government is just going to piss this money away anyway. They would prefer to direct their money toward worthy causes that they believe in (hospitals and medical research) as well to many unworthy causes as well (liberal educational institutions and global warming organizations).

So, even though there is an organization of millionaires who think they ought to be taxed more, few if any of these millionaires give any money to the government.

In our passage, Abram does not force his standards on others—he does not require that Aner, Eshcol or Mamre to forgo being paid for risking their lives—he applies this only to himself.

Lesson 146: Genesis 14

A Retrospective of Genesis 14

We have actually come to the end of Genesis 14. Originally, I anticipated spending 2 or 3 lessons on this chapter. From the outset, I had not the slightest clue how much was packed into this chapter.

I knew a lot about many chapters of Genesis because of having been taught them by R. B. Thieme, Jr. and others, but I had no real background in this particular chapter. I think it would behoove us to take one last look at the entire chapter, and see just how many doctrines and seeds of doctrine are found within it.

A Retrospective of Genesis 14

Scripture

Commentary

Gen.14:1–3 At that time four kings—King Amraphel of Shinar, King Arioch of Ellasar, King Chedorlaomer of Elam, and King Tidal of Goiim—went to war against five kings—King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). The five kings joined forces and met in the valley of Siddim (that is, the Dead Sea).

At this point, we introduce what appears to be the world's first world war. Chedorlaomer of the east (where Iraq is today) had conquered various portions of the west, which included Sodom and Gomorrah.

Being under the control of another country will be taught at the 4th stage of national discipline (or the 4th cycle of discipline). These stages of national discipline are fundamental to understanding the history of Israel.

This sort of imperialism was common in the ancient world. A greater power would control a smaller nation, and exact tribute from them on a regular basis. Military posts would be set up within the nation to keep order and to collect tribute for the conquering nation. Generally speaking, in exchange, there would be a modicum of protection from other world powers. What came out of such arrangements is the suzerain-vassal treaties, which parallel, in many ways, the covenants of God with man (which treaties have been alluded to, but not yet taught).

Gen.14:4 For 12 years they had been subject to Chedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

For 12 years, these western nations paid tribute to Chedorlaomer—for 12 years they were in the 4th stage of national discipline. In the 13th year, this western coalition rebelled against him. Consequently, Chedorlaomer gathered up his allies and they went to put this rebellion down.

A Retrospective of Genesis 14

Scripture

Commentary

Gen.14:5–7 In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and his allies came and defeated the Rephaim at Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzim at Ham, the Emim at Shaveh Kiriathaim, and the Horites in the hill country of Seir, going as far as El Paran on the edge of the desert. On their way back, they came to En Mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and they conquered the whole territory of the Amalekites and also the Amorites who were living at Hazazon Tamar.

The army of the eastern alliance is quite powerful, and they do not come west simply to quell this little revolt. Along the way, they defeated the Rephaim, the Zuzim, the Emim and the Horites. So, with this great alliance, they also brought other nations into their fold. Because this is the 4th stage of national discipline, we can assume that many of these nations had become quite depraved.

Not many people appreciate ancient history, but this chapter will reveal the power of the Word of God in the soul of one man, Abram. Abram is changing world history at this point in time. This eastern alliance is about to establish the greatest world empire at this time, and Abram will change all of that. One believer with doctrine in his soul can change world history (David will do the same in the latter half of 2Sam. 10). Interestingly enough, the Bible is quite subtle in these matters. You will never read, “And by these actions, Abram changed the course of world history.” I suspect that 99% of those who have read or studied this chapter do not realize that this is a world-changing event.

Gen.14:8–9 Then the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela (that is, Zoar) marched out and prepared for battle in the valley of Siddim. They fought against King Chedorlaomer of Elam, King Tidal of Goiim, King Amraphel of Shinar, and King Arioch of Ellasar-four kings against five.

The eastern alliance then pulls off a surprise attack against the very western coalition which is waiting for them. They would have been expected to come around the Dead Sea, either from the north going south, or at the tip of the Dead Sea, from the east moving west. This eastern alliance comes at them from the southwest.

The western coalition obviously had no G2 force working, so they were unprepared. Surprise is one of the greatest tactical weapons in war, and this eastern alliance managed to come at the western coalition from a different direction, throwing them off their game.

A Retrospective of Genesis 14

Scripture

Commentary

Gen.14:10 The valley of Siddim was full of tar pits. As the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, they fell because of the tar pits, but the other kings fled to the hills.

This general area, where the men of the western coalition live, had the unusual feature of tar pits, which could have been used by the western coalition to their own advantage. Key to any ground war is terrain, knowledge of the terrain, and the exploitation of that knowledge (which is a key component of Taliban resistance in Afghanistan). We are on the home turf of the western coalition, and they are beaten, in part, because of the very land that they live on. What should have been used to their advantage played a part in their own defeat.

The army that the west organized was cowardly and poorly trained, and, when they faced-off the well-trained army from the east, they fell apart, scattering. The very own tar pits that they lived around all of their lives, that they could have used to their own advantage, they fell into themselves and they ran from the eastern alliance.

What is the problem with the people of Sodom and Gomorrah? They are a degenerate people, which will be borne out by subsequent chapters. You cannot properly organize and train a degenerate people into a strong fighting force.

Key to any war is training and preparation; knowledge of terrain, the element of surprise, and information (provided by a G2 force). The eastern alliance used all of these factors of war to their own advantage. The degenerate troops of the western coalition had no advantage because of who they were and what they were.

Gen.14:11 So the four kings took all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, as well as all their food, and left.

The degeneracy of the western coalition results in them going from the 4th stage of national discipline to the 5th stage, where they are removed from their own land.

These stages of national discipline will be fundamental to the history of Israel. And found both in Lev. 26 and throughout the books of Kings and Chronicles.

A Retrospective of Genesis 14

Scripture

Commentary

Gen.14:12 They also took Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions since he was living in Sodom.

There is blessing by association and cursing by association. Lot chose to associate with these cities in the west, despite their degeneracy (which will become apparent a few chapters from now). Therefore, Lot suffers in this association. He is taken by the eastern coalition along with all of his possessions.

Who does not suffer loss? Abram and the people that associate with him. This eastern alliance came across these western lands conquering people after people, but they don't touch Abram and they don't touch Abram's allies. Blessing by association.

What we are not told here, but becomes clear in v. 16 is, the people of Sodom and Gomorrah and the other cities had been taken into slavery. By analogy, these men and women now found themselves in the slave market of sin. They had nothing by which they could buy their freedom (all their things had been taken), and they were destined to remain in slavery for the remainder of their lives.

Gen.14:13 Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew what had happened. He was living next to the oak trees belonging to Mamre the Amorite, a brother of Eshcol and Aner. (These men were Abram's allies.)

God is a part of all this, although He is not mentioned for the first half of this chapter; and He allows one man to escape to tell Abram what was going on.

Just as Lot had alliances with a pretty flaky group of people, Abram has alliances with some noble people, who had likely become believers in Abram's God.

The people of Sodom and Gomorrah enjoyed few benefits by their association with Lot (and vice versa). These people that Abram knows are blessed in their association with Abram and they appear to be people of great character. You may have heard the expression *water seeks its own level*.

The one who escaped knew who to go to for deliverance—Abram, a man of God. Somehow, this man knew who to go to, whether this was based upon Abram's reputation or he learned this from Lot. In any case, God's man is the man for the crisis.

A Retrospective of Genesis 14

Scripture

Commentary

Gen.14:14–15 When Abram heard that his nephew had been captured, he armed his 318 trained men, born in his own household, and they pursued the four kings all the way to Dan. He split up his men to attack them at night. He defeated them, pursuing them all the way to Hobah, which is north of Damascus.

Abram has a ridiculously small army, yet he follows out this huge professional army, which is weighed down with goods and slaves. Abram waits for the right time, and commits his troops to a nighttime surprise attack.

We know that Abram waits for the right time, studying this opposing army. Abram pulls off a surprise attack at night, and he attacks his enemies from several directions (his troops were split up). Strategy and tactics.

This tiny army sends the huge eastern alliance running. We have no idea as to many of the particulars, but it seems fairly obvious that the eastern army had no idea as to the actual size of Abram's army.

The book of Genesis is a book of seeds; later in Lev. 26:8 and Deut. 32:30 (and elsewhere), God promises that a small army will be able to defeat a large one, as long as God is with the small army.

Gen.14:16–17 Abram [lit., *he*] brought back everything they had, including women and soldiers [literally, *people*]. He also brought back his relative Lot and his possessions. After Abram came back from defeating Chedorlaomer and his allies, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Shaveh Valley (that is, the King's Valley).

Because God is with Abram, he defeats this great army with a tiny company, and brings back with him all of the people and possessions taken by the Chedorlaomer and his allies.

Now note the parallel, because of the plan of Abram and because a righteous man (Lot) was among the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, they were removed from the slave market. These people were destined to be slaves for the rest of their lives. There was nothing that they could do about it.

The analogy is, of course, that we find ourselves in the slave market of sin. There is nothing which we have by which we can purchase our freedom from the slave market. It is the plan of God the Father executed by the Righteous One Who walks among us, which plan rescues us from this slave market.

The King of Sodom comes out to meet Abram. This all takes place near Jerusalem.

A Retrospective of Genesis 14

Scripture	Commentary
<p>Gen 14:18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.)</p>	<p>Seemingly out of nowhere comes Melchizedek, the King of Salem (Jerusalem), who is a priest of Abram's God. As we have studied, Melchizedek is a type of Jesus Christ.</p> <p>You will note that nothing is said of Salem being attacked either. Again, this is the power of the Word of God. This eastern alliance came to put down a rebellion, and, along the way, they defeated several other peoples. Notice who is missed in all of this conflict—the people of Salem. Right in the midst of a world war, the people of Salem have peace.</p> <p>This is the picture of the mature believer; in the midst of a crisis, he has peace in his soul.</p>
<p>Gen 14:19 And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor [or, Redeemer, Purchaser] of heaven and earth;</p>	<p>Melchizedek calls for the blessing of Abram by God the Most High, and then refers to God as Possessor <i>by Redemption</i> of heaven and earth, which is a seed of one of the great doctrines of the Word of God: Jesus Christ, the Great Redeemer. This also logically leads us to notion of the slave market of sin, which just so happens to be one of the themes of this chapter. The wicked people of Sodom and Gomorrah find themselves in the slave market, destined for a lifetime of slavery, and yet, God overrules this because of the plan of Abram and their association with Lot.</p>
<p>Gen 14:20 and blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" And Abram gave him [Melchizedek] a tenth of everything.</p>	<p>We are told very little about Melchizedek. However, Abram gives him a tenth of everything, which indicates that Abram recognizes the legitimacy and preeminence of Melchizedek's priesthood. I suggested that Melchizedek possessed or knew the Word of God to that point in time and gave it to Abram (whether in written or spoken form). This would be the first 10 or 11 chapters of the Bible.</p> <p>It was obvious that Abram and Melchizedek worshiped the same God; but there is more going on here than that simple recognition of that fact, based upon Abram's tithe to Melchizedek.</p>

A Retrospective of Genesis 14

Scripture	Commentary
<p>Gen 14:21 And the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people, but take the goods for yourself."</p>	<p>The king of Sodom is a different matter. He demands to have his people back, but acknowledges that Abram can keep the spoils of war (which is commonly understood throughout world history, but not currently in the United States).</p>
<p>Gen 14:22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I had lifted my hand to Y^ehowah, God Most High, Possessor [or, Redeemer, Purchaser; Creator] of heaven and earth,</p>	<p>Abram reveals that he took a vow before Jehovah God, the Most High, the Redeemer of heaven and earth. You will note that Abram's vocabulary is in synch with Melchizedek's—they both speak of God in the same way; they both understand God in the same way.</p>
<p>Gen 14:23 [I vowed] that I would not take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that is yours, so that no one will say, 'I have made Abram rich.'</p>	<p>Abram had a duty to rescue Lot and this sense of duty was pure, unadulterated by a lust for things, which would be a part of Abram's victory. Abram vowed to God that he would take nothing from this war, apart from Lot and his family.</p>
<p>Gen 14:24 I will take nothing but what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me. Let Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre take their share."</p>	<p>You will note that Abram does not hold his allies to the same standard that he lives by in his own vow. They entered the war because they are allies of Abram. They deserved to take a share of the spoils of war.</p>

There are so many seeds of doctrines in this chapter: the 4th and 5th stages of national discipline; blessing by association, cursing by association; the power of God when He is behind an army; strategy and tactics in war; warfare; the importance of having God on your side in war; redemption, the slave market of sin, the priesthood, typology, vocabulary, and personal integrity. All of these topics are found in this one great chapter of Genesis, a chapter many people read or skim over in about 5 minutes, if that.

Lesson 147: Genesis 15:1–3

Abram Complains to God

In the previous chapter, Abram had enjoyed a great spiritual victory. So, now, God comes to him. Abram defeated a coalition of kings in battle, and he chose not to take the spoils of victory for himself. However, Abram did not self-righteously force his standards upon his own allies. Furthermore, after the battle Abram understood and accepted the authority of Melchizedek, the priest of the Most High God.

Gen 15:1 After these things the Word of Y^ehowah came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward will be very great."

After these things refers to the events of Gen. 14, which was about Abram rescuing Lot, who had been captured and taken hostage in a war between alliances of kings. In that chapter, Abram met with Melchizedek, the king of Salem (Jerusalem) and gave him a tenth of everything. Then Abram declined to keep all of the goods and people which he took from the eastern alliance of kings.

Notice the time frame; Abram has gone off and fought against the four strongest kings of that region and has recovered his nephew Lot. This required courage and strength and divine guidance. After this is over, then God tells Abram "I am your shield." This is a also a promise to us. As believers in Jesus Christ, we are protected by God in many ways:

- He is our shield (Gen. 15:1)
- He is our wall of fire (Zech. 2:5)
- He has provided guardian angels for us (Gen. 32:24 Ex. 14:19 Dan. 3:28 6:22 Psalm 91:11)
- If we desire to know the Truth, God will guide us into all Truth (John 16:13)

As we have assumed for a long while, Abram believes in Jehovah, and this is the basis of his salvation. That will come out in this chapter. Also, Abram lived a life after salvation, which involved knowing the Word of God and then acting in accordance with that truth. The end result is, Abram enjoyed great spiritual victories, which will be translated into great eternal rewards.

With this apparition of God, we are given a little more information. What comes to Abram is *the Word of Y^ehowah (Jehovah)*, Whom we know as Jesus Christ (John 1:14). He comes to Aram in a vision, which is a fairly rare word, occurring only 4 times in the entire Old Testament. The word is machāzeh (מַחֲזֵה) [pronounced *mahkh-uhz-EH*], and it means *vision*. Strong's #4236 BDB #303. It is related to the much more common word chāzāh (חָזָה) [pronounced *khaw-ZAW*], which means *to see, to behold, to look upon; to see [God], therefore, to enjoy His favor, to know Him*. Strong's #2372 BDB #302. Therefore, Abram is likely in a state where he is seeing something which is not necessarily there (that is, if there was anyone around Abram, they would not be able to see what he is seeing). We might even say this is an hallucination, as long as we understand, this is really happening and this is really God.

In our physical world, there are things which we can see, hear and/or touch. However, outside of this physical realm is a great spiritual realm. Now, I know when I interact with other people, I am interacting with their souls—however, I am not able to actually see their souls. As a teacher, I interacted with 20–30 different souls every hour, and I had to be cognizant of the variety of personalities within my classroom in order to manage the classroom. I could see the manifestations of these various souls, but I could not ever see the actual soul of any student.

Similarly, I also have a relationship with God and there is this great spiritual world which, in this life, I am unable to see. Perhaps God made Abram able to see into this spiritual realm to some a limited degree.

Or in the alternative, think about your dreams—you see things which are not physically there. Your mind is powerful enough to concoct images which appear to be real to you. Some people who take various drugs see things which are not physically there. So, all we can do, when we come to a word like this, is speculate. Abram is able to see Jesus Christ, in His preincarnate form. Apart from this being visual to Abram, we do not know anything else.

When it comes to things like this, people get goofy, and they think, once they reach some spiritual state, that they are going to, now and again, have visions of God or Jesus. Here it is, in the Bible, and so they think, therefore, they ought to experience these visions as well. There are 4 things which they never take into consideration: (1) Given the billions of people who have lived on the earth, only a tiny fraction of a percentage of them have really seen Jesus Christ (Jehovah Elohim) in a vision; (2) what God is about to reveal to Abram is significant, not just to Abram, but to the entire human race; (3) those who claim to have had visions or want to have visions are usually idiots (and their best friends, if they have any, can confirm this); and (4) the canon of Scripture had not been closed yet in the time of Abram; therefore, God was still revealing Himself in person, in visions and in dreams.

We do not need to have a vision or a dream in order to figure out our lives. We do not need to have some vision or some dream about God in order to figure out what we ought to do tomorrow, or next year or for the rest of our lives. It is all in the Bible; we have the written Word of God in its totality. Therefore, what will a vision do for us? Will it reveal to us some aspect of God that no one has known before? Is there some hidden secret about salvation or spiritually which is not found in the Word of God, that God needs to reveal to you personally? Is it so important tomorrow that you take 59 to work, rather than cutting down West Lake Houston Parkway, and taking the beltway from there, that God needs to come to you in a vision? Are you that insane or that egotistical?

When God appeared to Abram, these were times of great significance. Abram is the father of the Jewish race, and much of human history is related to the Jewish people who would come from Abram's seed.

Gen 15:1 After these things the Word of Y^ehowah came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward will be very great."

What Abram has a vision of is, Jesus Christ, in a preincarnate form. Jesus Christ is the Word of Jehovah. **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:1–3, 14).**

These appearances of Jesus Christ to Abram are quite amazing. This marks the 4th time that God has come to Abram. This is very unusual for God to appear to anyone, and even more unusual to appear to one person so many times. In his generation, Abram was certainly unique in this regard.

What is even more amazing is, Abram recognized the spiritual authority of Melchizedek in the previous chapter. There was no spiritual standoff where Abram challenged Melchizedek, saying, "I have seen God on 3 occasions; how many times have you spoken face to face with Him?" Abram paid a tithe to Melchizedek, so, whatever took place between them must have been quite significant.

At this point in time, Abram probably has access to about 10 or 12 chapters of the book of Genesis, a small portion of which he may have written himself. He probably also had the book of Job. That is obviously not the complete Word of God. As previously discussed, much of this may have been passed along to him by Melchizedek (which is uniquely speculative on my part).

And, even though the Seed of the Woman is revealed as far back as Gen. 3, Abram is going to find out (eventually) that this promise made to Adam and the woman so long ago was going to be fulfilled in his line. Let me remind you that Abram still has no natural son at this time.

This is significant. We find out in this chapter that Abram, who is nearly too old to have a son, will have a son. In later revelations, it will be revealed that this line will lead to Jesus Christ, the Savior of all mankind.

Now, put this revelation side-by-side a vision in which some doofus claims to have seen God and read what he says about his vision, and you will walk away, after talking to such a one, thinking, "What a load of meaningless tripe;" [other words may have occurred to you]. "This guy has got nothing but an ego-trip going for him." I recall one such person who claimed to have numerous encounters with Jesus Christ, including having a splash fight with Jesus in some river in heaven.¹⁸ Do you grasp just how insignificant and meaningless this experience is, compared to Abram finding out that from him will come a people whose number will be like the sand by the sea or the stars in the sky; within which people will the blessing of God be? All that Abram hears directly from God still has meaning for us today; and the Jews are still with us. 4000 years later, this impacts our lives; 4000 years later, the seed of Abraham have a significant impact upon the world. So, when you compare illusionary splash fights with Jesus as over against God's Word being promised to Abram of what would occur in the future; which seems like a vision of God and which seems like Doofus-insanity?

Let me give you a simple application: if you meet any person who claims to have seen God, or claims to converse with God (apart from normal prayer) or claims to be a prophet,

¹⁸ I'm serious. <http://www.jesusneedsnewpr.net/what-do-you-think-did-this-pastor-really-go-to-heaven/> accessed August 15, 2011. Just in case you thought I just made up this illustration.

then it is time to back away and to remove that person from your circle of acquaintances. If he talks about splash fights with Jesus, then I would make a run for it.

The power of God is in His Word (Heb. 4:12), not in visions or face to face meetings with God. Our interest ought to be upon the mind of Christ (1Cor. 2:16); our spiritual life ought to be about the renovation of our thinking (Rom. 12:1–2); our focus ought to be growing in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2Peter 3:18). We ought not to chase after unique “spiritual” experiences and things which titillate the emotions; in fact, we are told to avoid those whose God is their emotions (Rom. 16:17–18 Philip. 3:18–19). The key to the Christian life is having the correct doctrine, not having some grandiose experience (Rom. 16:17 Eph. 4:14 1Tim. 4:6–7, 15–16 6:3–5 2Tim. 4:2–4 Titus 1:7–9 2:1 2John 2:9–10). One of the most important passages in this regard is 2Peter 1:16–21; wherein Peter speaks of a real and legitimate experience which he had—seeing the glorified Jesus Christ with his own eyes—and yet, more important than this, and more accurate than this is, the word of prophecy which Peter was teaching. If a real and legitimate experience of seeing the glorified Christ is subordinate to the **more certain word of prophecy**, then how much less meaningful is some contemporary vision of God today?

People desire an experience like this for 2 reasons: it titillates their emotions and they now have a religious experience that none of their friends have. This same person might be listening to almost no Bible doctrine; they may entertain various gross sins in their lives (e.g., pride, anger, jealousy); they might, from their ignorance, be making all kinds of absurd applications, and then think that God ought to appear in their lives and guide them in incredibly trivial matters. Such people live in the midst of the perfect storm of ignorance and arrogance.

Gen 15:1 After these things the Word of Y^ehowah came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great."

The first thing that God says to Abram is, “**Fear not;**” and it means just that. I don’t care who you are, the thought of having a conversation with the Lord of Glory ought to give you some pause. You ought not to be thinking, *it’s cool*. The idea of having any encounter with God ought to make you uncomfortable if not outright afraid, because you know what you are like and you know what God is like. So Abram, who was far more important to the scheme of things than you or I, would have been struck with fear to speak to God (more accurately, to have God speak to him). It does not matter that God has spoken to Abram before; Abram should be taken aback, and God reassures him by saying, “**Fear not.**”

God gives Abram 2 assurances, the first being, “**I am your shield.**” As believers, we are protected by God; we are protected by a wall of fire. If you are in fellowship and you are growing spiritually, then you need not fear because God is your shield; He is your Protector.

Revealing Himself as Abram’s shield is quite apropos, because Abram was just in a battle with a huge professional army—an army which Abram defeated with a comparatively small company of men.

God also assures Abram that his reward will be great. Recall that Gen. 14 was an incredible chapter, rich with meaning and content, and all the Abram did was correct. Abram recognized that he needed to rescue his nephew Lot. He used good strategy and tactics in order to defeat an army which was perhaps 10–100 times the size of his own army. Abram was fearless in making such an attack. He met Melchizedek and recognized his spiritual authority, and paid him a tithe. However, at the same time, Abram refused to take any of the spoils of victory because he had made a vow to God that he would not.

Furthermore, we have such great doctrines as the Doctrine of Redemption and the Slave Market of Sin Illustration to come out of that chapter, as well as the seeds to the Stages of National Discipline, all found within Gen. 14. Therefore, God would reward Abram for his correct actions throughout Gen. 14, as this is one of the greatest and most overlooked chapters in all of Scripture.

The Word of Y^ehowah came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." Having heard this, You or I might have said, "That's great. Thanks." Not Abram. Back in Gen. 12:2–3, God promised him: "I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." God told Abram to go the land of Canaan (which would become Israel), and when Abram got there, God told him, "To your offspring [seed] I will give this land." God expands on this promise in Gen. 13:14–17.

Abram has no child at this point, so Abram doesn't say, "Thank you, Lord, for what You intend to bless me with." Instead, Abram says this:

Gen 15:2 But Abram said, "O Lord Y^ehowah, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"

What Abram says is rather impertinent. It is almost, "What are you going to promise to give me this time? Oh, by the way, I don't have a child yet. My heir is Eliezer, and he's from Damascus" (indicating that Eliezer is pretty far removed from being Abram's actual seed, which is the word which God used).

Bear in mind, nearly a decade has passed since God first spoke to Abram (compare Gen 12:4 and 16:16). Abram is still young enough to father a child, but his years are running out. So, Abram, having heard God make promises to him on 3 previous occasions is now becoming somewhat impatient with God.

There are times when ancient saints say this or that to God, and my jaw drops. But what Abram is saying has some legitimacy, at least from the view of a man. God made Abram a promise. God promised Abram that the entire world would be blessed through his seed, and yet, he has no seed. God promised him that his seed would be like the dust of the earth (Gen. 13:16), and yet, here is Abram, without seed one to his name. It is almost as if Abram is saying, "So, what are You going to promise me this time? Oh, by the way, I don't have that son yet, who You already promised me."

Gen 15:3 And Abram said, "Listen, You have given me no offspring [seed], and a member of my household will be my heir."

Do you understand what Abram is saying? He is explaining to God his circumstances in detail. "You have made promises to me, but I don't have a son; and this guy—totally unrelated to me—will be my heir. So, what will You promise me this time?" He is speaking to God as if God did not fully understand the first thing that Abram said, so now he is explaining the implication of the first statement. He essentially repeats the first statement, so that God fully understands:

"O Lord Y^ehowah, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus? Listen, You have given me no offspring [seed], and a member of my household will be my heir."

God promised Abram a son, and Abram does not have a son. God promised Abram a great inheritance for his seed, and he has no seed. Some random employee is slated to inherit what Abram has. "Look, You have not given me a child; the only heir I have is some person in my household who is not remotely related to me."

As Abram becomes older, discussion have been had and possibly provisions have been made as to who would inherit his possessions. Recall that Abram was very wealthy. Therefore, some thought had to be given to what would happen to Abram's wealth if he passed away or died in battle. Someone would have to take over; someone would have to run the show. So, in some way, Abram had determined that this would be Eliezer of Damascus.

Abram with 300+ men, and maybe some additional help, just defeated the greatest army in the world at that time. Abram just changed human history with this victory. Abram just met Melchizedek and possibly was given the Word of God. Abram just enjoyed the greatest week of his life, which could only have come about by God running interference for Abram, and yet, he does not get it.

The illustration I have heard is, a quarterback may be the fastest man on the gridiron and able to throw a 60 yard pass and hit a dime; but he is not going to advance one foot without good blocking. Most of the people in the stands have their eye on the quarterback and the ball, but he cannot move an inch without blockers. Does Abram think that he just defeated the greatest army of his day, and that God had nothing to do with it. Does he think that running into Melchizedek was some fluke event?

God clears all of this up for Abram in the next lesson.

Lesson 148: Genesis 15:1–5

God Promises Abram a Son

As we are finding out, God speaking to Abram is a lot like Bible class: there is a lot of review with some new stuff thrown in. God will clarify for Abram a misapplication of the

doctrine that he knows, God will give Abram another illustration, and God will even offer a little proof (apologetics, if you will), taking Abram back 10 or so years, so that Abram can understand how far he has come in his relationship with Him. Since this was a small Bible class, God even allowed Abram a chance to ask a few questions. Finally, God will teach Abram a little eschatology (doctrines of future things).

So far, this is what we have studied in Gen. 15:

Gen 15:1–3 After these things the Word of Y^ehowah came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." But Abram said, "O Lord Y^ehowah, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "Listen, You have given me no offspring [seed], and a member of my household will be my heir."

God comes to Abram, telling him that He is his shield and that his reward will be great; but Abram answers with a bit of impertinence. "Remember that son you have promised me, 3 times already, and I have no son. What I have is, Eliezer of Damascus; somehow, he is going to be my heir? Is this what Your promises mean?"

There are so many things going on in these narratives, most of which, are rarely taught. God made some fairly clear promises to Abram, and Abram thinks that these promises are going to be half-fulfilled or fulfilled in some half-assed way.

You may or may not be aware of Covenant Theology, but this is a theology which takes all of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David and to the Jewish race, and says that they will be half-fulfilled or fulfilled in some half-assed way. Covenant Theology is God saying, "These promises that I made to you Jews about your race and what will happen to you in the future? That's not really how it's all going to shake out. Your spiritual children are the people in the Church Age who believe in Jesus and all that stuff I promised you, is actually going to be fulfilled with respect to them, because, after all, they are your spiritual children. I chose you Jews, and that turned out to be a pretty lousy choice. You failed, failed, failed, and now I am moving on to a much better group of people, the church. Furthermore, whatever happens to you Jews, well, that is just how the cookie crumbles."

Dispensational Theology, which is accurate and Biblical, see the Jews and the Church as two different but related entities. There are a set of absolutes which are a part of the Jewish Age and a part of God's relationship with the Jew, and these will be fulfilled, just as God has promised. These promises are not going to be transferred from group A (the Jews) to group B (church age believers). God made these promises to Abraham and his seed, and God will fulfill these promises to Abraham and his seed. The Church Age is a dispensation which had not been prophetically revealed, with the exception of a few things which Jesus said (which would include the Upper Room Discourse).

There is a certain continuity between the Jews and Church Age believers: God's promises will be fulfilled to those who have believed in Jehovah Elohim in the Old Testament and in Jesus Christ in the New Testament (Who are One and the Same Person). This non-

meritorious faith will be credited to both Jews and Gentiles as righteousness. Just as Gentiles in the Age of Israel could be saved, Jews during the Church Age can be saved. We all come to God in exactly the same way—sinful, undeserving, exercising faith in Jehovah Elohim (Jesus Christ). We may not know very much about Jesus, but Whoever and Whatever He is, we put our trust in Him, which changes our lives forever.

So now, God comes to Abram with another promise, and Abram says, “So, is this going to be like Your last promise, which really did not shake out the way I expected it to?” So God corrects Abram from this misapplication of His Word.

Gen 15:4 And behold, the Word of the LORD said unto him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir."

God reiterates His promise to Abram, so that there is nothing to be confused about. Eliezer is not Abram's heir. God clearly states to Abram, that his very own son will be his heir—the son which Abram does not have yet, but will have, based upon God's promise to him.

There are a lot of things that God could have said. “Listen, Abram, despite what happened on the battlefield—all of which was My doing, by the way—I am a bit fed up with this attitude of yours. I told you that you would have a son, and you can take that to the bank. However, if you pop off like this to Me again, I might just knock you flat on your butt.” God does not take that approach.

Surely, you have told your kids, a student, an employee or a loved one something, repeated it a couple of times, and then they came back on you, acting as if you never said it in the first place. God is far more patient with Abram than you or I might have been. God succinctly corrects Abram: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." In other words, “I promised you a son, and what I promised you is exactly what I meant.”

Gen 15:5 And He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then He said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

We find out 2 more things about this vision that Abram had—he was inside of his home and it was nighttime. God brings him outside and has him look toward the skies.

God gave Abram another analogy—he is to look into the sky and number the stars, and that would be the number of his children (seed). This statement makes me smile. How many stars are there? We don't know. Billions? We have no way of knowing. However, due to telescopes and the like, we know far more about the stars than Abram.

Just as the smallness and complexity of God's creation is beyond our ability to grasp, so is the very magnitude of His creation.

Now, on a clear night, I don't know how many stars you can see—a couple thousand maybe from the best vantage point on earth? So God tells Abram to look up into the sky, look at the stars, and says, “Just like those stars up there, so will your seed be.” And Abram looks up, sees say, 3000 stars, and thinks, “Hmmm, I will eventually have a line with 3000 descendants. Big whoop.”

However, God makes 2 other analogies: “Your seed will be like the dust of the earth” (Gen.13:16 28:14) and “Your seed will be like the sand of the sea.” (Gen. 22:17 32:12). So clearly, without having access to a telescope, God is telling Abram the dust of the earth = the sand of the sea = the stars in the heavens = the number of your descendants. Probably, I should not have used the equals sign there, but the idea is, Abram is going to have millions and millions of descendants—Abram who now has exactly 0 children. Along with this is the implication that, there are a lot of stars in the heavens—far, far more than we can see. We know that now, but God knew it then, and used the number of stars in the heavens to parallel the number of descendants that childless Abram would have.

Gen 15:6 And he had believed Y^ehowah, and He credits it to him as righteousness.

Here, we would have expected a wâw consecutive followed by an imperfect verb. “And so, Abram is believing in the Lord...” The wâw consecutive would suggest that there is a continuation of the action (moving the narrative forward); and an imperfect would indicate that Abram began to believe in the Lord and continued to believe in the Lord. But, that is not how the text reads. A wâw conjunction is found instead, which does not move the narrative forward (which can, in fact, indicate parenthetical information). Then there is a perfect tense of the verb, which indicates this is either a past action or an action which took place in a point in time.

It would be very reasonable to even to render this as a parenthetical statement: (and he had believed in Y^ehowah, and so He credits it to him as righteousness).

The alternate approach of using a wâw consecutive followed by the imperfect of the verb *to believe*, would mean that, God made these promises to Abram, Abram listened to the promises, and he believed them. But that is *not* how the sentence is constructed in the Hebrew. So, we are not looking at Abram believing God or believing these promises of God, but this refers back to a previous point in time where Abram believed Jehovah, and this faith was credited to him as righteousness. In other words, Abram may or may not be exercising continuous faith—in fact, right at this moment, he seems to be fairly skeptical of what God has promised him. However, he did exercise faith in the past or in a point of time, and, at that time, God credited him with righteousness.

The second half of this sentence begins with a wâw consecutive, which moves the action along or, in this case, gives us a logical result. It is permissible to render this wâw consecutive as *therefore*. A wâw conjunction + a wâw consecutive can indicate a logical progression of thought. A then B; A causes B. Because of A, B occurs. When a verb in a perfect tense is followed up by a verb in the imperfect tense, then a logical progression of events is exactly what the writer is giving us.

The second verb is *châshab* (חָשַׁב) [pronounced *khaw-SHAH^BV*], which means *to think, to regard, to account, to count, to determine, to calculate*. Strong's #2803 BDB #362. Although this verb can be translated in several ways, this is also an accounting term, and it can be rendered *to credit to an account*. The second verb is an imperfect tense, indicating continuous and/or future action (or, in this case, a logical and continuous result from the action of the first verb).

This gives us: **He [Abram] had believed in Y^ehowah and He [God] therefore [continually] credits it [this act of faith] [as] righteousness to him (to his account).**

There is one more nuance in this translation (and the translation above is extremely literal). With the 2nd verb, there is a feminine singular suffix which is translated *it*. Now, *it* refers back to something, and that would be Abram's act of faith. He believed and God credited it—his faith in Jehovah—to Abram as righteousness.

Therefore, the proper interpretation of this verse is, at some point in the past, Abram believed Y^ehowah, and this act of faith is the basis for God crediting Abram with righteousness continually after that.

What we have here is the earliest and clearest statement of the gospel in the Old Testament. Although almost any translation gives us a reasonable understanding of the verb and what is being said here, this is the most accurate and literal rendering of this verse:

Gen 15:6 And he [Abram] had believed in Y^ehowah and He [God] therefore credits it [this act of faith] [as] righteousness to him [crediting righteousness to his account].

Do you recall when we studied the barriers between man and God? One of them was righteousness. God has perfect, eternal righteousness, and we have temporal, relative righteousness which is rooted in self-righteousness. In order for us to have fellowship with God, we must possess His righteousness. God credits righteousness to Abram's account. His bank account was empty (our personal righteousness means nothing to God—Isa. 64:6), and now it is filled with righteousness.

The meaning of the second verb is important. God did not *make* Abram righteousness; nor did God act in Abram's life so that he became a much better person. God credited righteousness to the account of Abram. If you know one or more Christians, you know that there are periods of time when it is clear that they do not possess anything close to a true personal righteousness.

Similarly, some people can have a huge bank account, but, based upon the clothes that they wear or the car that they drive, it may not appear as if they have a nickel to their name. So it is with some Christians. You may not associate the concept of righteousness with the Christian Charlie Brown, but, because he has believed in Jesus Christ, God has credited his account with righteousness, which is necessary in order for Charlie Brown to have fellowship with God. Charlie Brown may be walking around in clothes from WalMart

and driving a 15-year-old car, but in his bank account, there are millions of dollars. So it is with all believers; we may or may not appear righteous; and we certainly have days where righteousness is not a word that anyone would associate with us; but, in our bank account is perfect and eternal righteousness, deposited there by God.

Gen 15:6 And he [Abram] had believed in Y^ehowah and He [God] therefore credits it [this act of faith] [as] righteousness to him [crediting righteousness to his account].

Lesson 149: Genesis 15:1–6

Gen. 15:6 in the New Testament

So far, we have studied:

Gen 15:1–5 After these things the Word of Y^ehowah came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." But Abram said, "O Lord Y^ehowah, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "Listen, You have given me no offspring [seed], and a member of my household will be my heir." And behold, the Word of the Y^ehowah said to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." And He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then He said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

The Word of Y^ehowah appears to Abram in a vision, and God identifies Himself as Abram's shield, which is apropos because of the battle Abram had just been in (Gen. 14). God promises Abram that he would have a son, and that his seed would be multiplied like the stars in the sky. What God had promised would be exactly what God would bring about.

Then we have one of the most amazing passages in all the Old Testament: **Abram believed in Y^ehowah, and it was credited to his account as righteousness.** Or, more literally:

Gen 15:6 And he [Abram] had believed in Y^ehowah and He [God] therefore credits it [this act of faith] [as] righteousness to him [crediting righteousness to his account].

Gen. 15:6 is a pivotal point in Scripture, and so important that it is quoted or referred to 5 times in the New Testament.

Genesis 15:6 in the New Testament

Scripture

Commentary

Paul's first point: we are saved by faith alone in Christ alone.

Genesis 15:6 in the New Testament

Scripture	Commentary
What then shall we say that our father Abraham has found, according to flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has a [reason to] boast; but not before God (Rom. 4:1–2).	<p>In Rom. 3, Paul made several arguments, starting with the importance of being a Jew, but this is not a reason to boast. God is a God of the Jews and Gentiles, and keeping the Law is not a reason to boast because it is not a system of salvation.</p> <p>If Abraham here was justified by works, then he has a reason to boast—however, Abraham has no reason to boast before God.</p>
For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." (Rom. 4:3–4; Gen. 15:6).	<p>Notice that Paul takes the Old Testament as authoritative. When he writes, <i>what does the Scripture say</i>, he is quoting from the Old Testament, and what it says will settle the matter of justification. Paul's first point that he makes in Rom. 4 is, we are justified by faith alone, and he backs this up with Scripture.</p> <p>The Jews see themselves as superior—after all, God gave to them the Scriptures and His promises. They work hard at keeping the Law (the Gentiles don't even try to keep the Law). So Paul points back to the father of the Jewish race, Abraham, and says, <i>here is what your Scriptures tell you: Abraham believed God and it was credited to him for righteousness</i>.</p>
But to him working, the reward is not calculated according to grace, but according to debt. But to him not working, but believing on Him, Who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness (Rom. 4:5).	<p>This is the point that Paul is making. If you work to impress God, you are paying him from a position of debt. Furthermore, no matter how much you work, you will never be able to work enough to cancel out your debt to God. God credits righteousness to us, not based upon works, but based upon faith. Abraham is proof of this.</p>
Paul's second point: the Bible teaches us clearly that righteousness was imputed to Abram apart from being circumcised. By application, this means that God justifies us based upon our faith in Jesus, apart from receiving the Law, apart from sabbath keeping, and apart from any other aspect of the Law of God.	

Genesis 15:6 in the New Testament

Scripture

Commentary

Even as David also says of the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness without works, saying, "Blessed are those whose lawless acts are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord will in no way impute sin." (Rom. 4:6–8; Psalm 32:1–2).

The term *blessedness* refers to happiness; and David says that there is a happiness associated with have one's lawless acts forgiven (literally, in the Hebrew, *lifted up and taken away*). There is a happiness association with God covering one's sins. Finally, there is a happiness to the person that God does not impute sin to. Note how this contrasts with Gen. 15:6, where God imputes righteousness to the person exercising faith in Him.

At birth, Adam's original sin is imputed to us, which is the basis of our condemnation. We are born condemned before God. However, the imputation of righteousness will trump the imputation of sin.

Is this blessedness then on the circumcision only, or on the uncircumcision also? For we say that **faith was imputed to Abraham for righteousness** (Rom. 4:9; Gen. 15:6).

Here, Paul is making a fairly simple argument: righteousness is imputed apart from works and apart from circumcision. His evidence is quite simple: at the time that the Bible tells us that Abraham's faith was imputed to him for righteousness, Abraham was uncircumcised. Later on, God would have Abraham become circumcised along with all the males with him, but this came long **after his faith was imputed to him for righteousness**.

Part of the Mosaic Law is to circumcise a child soon after birth, which is understood by the Jews to be the first act of obedience to the Law for every Jewish child. This is the first step in the keeping of the Law, which Jews consider to be one of many ways in which they are superior to Gentiles. But Paul tells them here, *you're wrong to think that. Even Abraham was declared righteous before he was circumcised*.

Circumcision is not a part of the attainment of salvation and salvation is not simply obedience to the law of God. Circumcision has a meaning, which will be examined later on in our study.

Genesis 15:6 in the New Testament

Scripture	Commentary
<p>How then was it [righteousness] imputed? Being in circumcision or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision (Rom. 4:10).</p>	<p>Paul continues his line of reasoning. At what point in time was Abraham declared righteous? How does this match up with the rite of circumcision, which was practiced by the Jews, at God's command?</p> <p>To any Jew who knows a smattering of the Old Testament and knows even a small amount of Scripture can hear this argument and be turned around. In fact, it is hard to argue against Paul's logic here. If Abraham, the father of the Jewish race, is clearly proclaimed righteous before being circumcised, then man is saved and made righteous apart from circumcision.</p> <p>The father of the Jewish race was made righteous in uncircumcision. Being circumcised or uncircumcised had nothing to do with God making him righteous.</p>
<p>And he received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while still uncircumcised. This was to make him the father of all who believe but are not circumcised, so that righteousness may be credited to them (Rom. 4:11).</p>	<p>You will note that circumcision is seen as a sign and as a seal of those who have been made righteous by faith.</p> <p>Circumcision was not needed in order for Abram to be righteous. Circumcision was a sign of the righteousness of his faith. He was uncircumcised, he exercised faith in Jehovah Elohim, and was made righteous. Then he was circumcised, years later.</p>
<p>And he became the father of the circumcised, not only to those who are circumcised, but also to those who follow in the footsteps of the faith our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised (Rom. 4:12).</p>	<p>So Abraham, who is known as the father of the Jews, here is called the father of all who believe. The play on words in v. 12 is really something. Abraham became the father of the circumcised, but to the circumcised <i>and</i> to those who follow him in faith, which faith he exercised in uncircumcision.</p> <p>Most important of all is, Abraham is the spiritual father of all those who believe, whether circumcised or uncircumcised, whether Jew or gentile, whether under the Law or not.</p>

Genesis 15:6 in the New Testament

Scripture

Commentary

For the promise that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed by means of the Law, but by means of the righteousness of faith (Rom. 4:13).

Being heir to the world was not a matter physical birth according to the Law, but this is all based upon the righteousness which is by faith. The promises which God made to Abraham are based upon imputed righteousness which comes by faith.

Now, take this exact same reasoning and apply it to the Law of God or to Sabbath-day keeping, and what comes first? Abram believed in Jehovah and his faith was credited to him as righteousness. All of this other stuff that Jews cling to came 400 years later. The Law of God and the Sabbath are all important and they have great meaning, but they have nothing to do with being made righteous. God made Abraham righteous while uncircumcised, apart from the Law, apart from Sabbath keeping, and apart from any other ritual or mandate found within the Mosaic Law.

Paul's 3rd point: Gen. 16:5 is recorded for all time as a lesson to all mankind, whether Jew or gentile.

And not being weak in faith, he [Abraham] did not consider his own body already dead (being about a hundred years old) or the deadening of Sarah's womb [with regards to making from Abraham many nations] (Rom. 4:19).

One point which Paul is making here is, the passage in the Bible was not just written about Abram, but it was written so that we have Abram as an example. The example for us is that, our faith in Jesus Christ results in imputed righteousness.

However, there is a more complex explanation for this passage. It involves understanding that, when an Old Testament was quoted in the New, it was not always used as a *proof text*. Sometimes the Old Testament could be used as an illustration or by way of analogy.

He did not stagger at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what God had promised, He was also able to perform (Rom. 4:19–21).

Paul is not using this Old Testament to prove, once again, that we are saved by faith alone in Christ alone; but that this faith glorifies God, and therefore, gives us righteousness in a different way than the righteousness imputed to us at salvation.

At salvation, we are made righteous in God's sight by exercising faith in Him. However, after salvation, there are times when we will exercise faith in Him and this faith will glorify God. This tells all generations which follow that, whatever God promises us, He is able to bring it to pass.

Genesis 15:6 in the New Testament

Scripture

And therefore [because Abraham did not stagger at the promises of God, but was strong in faith] it **was imputed to him for righteousness**. Now [this passage] was not written for him alone that it [righteousness] was imputed to him, but for us also to whom it is about to be imputed, to the ones believing on Him Who has raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered because of our offenses and was raised for our justification (Rom. 4:22–25).

Commentary

There are 3 stages of righteousness in a person's life—righteousness imputed to him as he has faith in Jesus Christ; righteousness which is a part of normal spiritual growth; and ultimate righteousness, when our bodies are raised again without a sin nature.

Here, we are actually looking at Abraham's faith in the promises of God with the result of imputed righteousness to him. That is experiential righteousness. Paul uses verbiage to indicate experiential righteousness will be imputed to us, the ones believing in the One Raising Jesus from the dead. The way that this is worded means that we are not talking about salvation righteousness here, but a righteousness which *is to be imputed*.

Paul makes a different argument with the legalists in Galatia. Your spiritual life began in faith; you believe in Jesus, and that initiated your spiritual life. So, now, do you perfect yourself by following the Law? Is that logical? If you begin the spiritual life in faith, then you continue the spiritual life in faith.

Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, do you now perfect yourself in the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain, if indeed it is even in vain? Then He supplying the Spirit to you and working powerful works in you, is it by works of the law, or by hearing of faith? Even as Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. Therefore know that those of faith, these are the sons of Abraham (Gal. 3:3–7; Gen. 15:6).

There were believers in the city of Galatia who thought that keeping the Mosaic Law was a part of their spiritual walk. Paul tells them, that they began the spiritual life through faith, they received the Holy Spirit through faith, God worked powerful works in them through faith. And then Paul goes back to Abraham, who predated the Mosaic Law, and cited Gen. 15:6 to show that we are the sons of Abraham if we follow him in faith in Jesus Christ. The rest of the passage, which I did not quote, contrasts faith with following the Law.

Salvation is based upon the grace of God and faith in Jesus Christ. Our spiritual lives are based upon God's grace as well. We did not become saved through keeping the Law; therefore, our spiritual walk is not based upon keeping the Law.

Genesis 15:6 in the New Testament

Scripture

Commentary

James takes a different approach. Salvation and your life do not begin and end with salvation. You do not just believe in Jesus Christ and then, you just hang around waiting to die. God has a plan and purpose for your life; you have works which God intends for you to do. These works do not complete your salvation, make you any more saved, nor do they keep your salvation; these works are a part of a natural response to God making you righteous (ideally speaking).

You believe that there is one God, you do well; even the demons believe and tremble. But will you know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead [non-operational]? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Do you see how faith cooperated with his works, and from the works faith was made complete [brought to a fulfillment]? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness, and he was called the friend of God." You see then how a man is justified by works, and not by faith only (James 2:19–24; Gen. 15:6 Ex. 33:11 Isa. 41:8).

First of all, James is speaking of the spiritual life after salvation. He is not focused on salvation in this passage. James is explaining the importance of works in the life of the believing Christian. A believer without works in his life is operationally dead. Faith and works are 2 sides of the same coin. The works that we do complete our faith.

Then James gives an example of Abraham's works, where he offers up Isaac on the altar (representing for centuries, God the Father offering up God the Son on the cross—we have not gotten to that passage yet). In other words, there was more to Abraham's life than simply believing in Jesus Christ (Jehovah Elohim in the Old Testament); and what he did later in life made him *the Friend of God* (which is experiential righteousness).

As has been mentioned before, every believer experiences 3 stages of sanctification in the Christian life; and we could call these 3 stages of justification as well. We are justified by faith in Jesus Christ; we are justified in our life on this earth; and we receive ultimate justification after we die.

Let me use the illustration of marriage. You choose to get married and then you stand married, ideally, forever. Now, maybe you choose to make good or bad decisions while married, but that does not make you unmarried. Your marriage is an accomplished state. However, you can do things in your marriage to make it better. The state of marriage is not the end-all and be-all. Other things must happen after you get married.

In other words, there are works in marriage. The fact that you work at your marriage and do things as a part of your marriage, does not make you more married or less married; but it does improve your life as a married person.

Genesis 15:6 in the New Testament

Scripture

The same is true of believing in Jesus Christ. You believe, you are saved and made righteous; however, that is not the entire Christian life. What do you want? You want to be called *the friend of God*.

Commentary

Gen. 15:6 is one of the most important verses in all the Bible, and we know this because Paul, in one very long passage, refers back to it 3 times (in Rom. 4); he uses it again when reasoning with the Galatians; and even James quotes this verse.

You will note that, each time this verse is quoted, a different emphasis is in view, even though this is clearly a salvation verse.

The way Gen. 15:6 is referenced also helps us to understand portions of the New Testament. We are so often oriented to thinking in terms of *proof texts*—we believe this or that and here is the text which proves it to be true. That approach was used by the Apostles, but it was not the only way that the Apostles used Old Testament Scripture. If you examine the number of times that Gen. 15:6 is quoted, you will note that there is a different use of the verse each time; and a different approach. If we understand how the Apostles used the Old Testament, this helps us in our study of both testaments.

Lesson 150: Genesis 15:1–12

God Makes a Covenant with Abram

So far, we have examined the first 6 verses of Gen. 15:

Gen 15:1–6 After these things the Word of Y^ehowah came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." But Abram said, "O Lord Y^ehowah, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "Listen, You have given me no offspring [seed], and a member of my household will be my heir." And behold, the Word of the Y^ehowah said to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." And He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then He said to him, "So shall your offspring be." And he [Abram] had believed in Y^ehowah and He [God] therefore credits it [this act of faith] [as] righteousness to him [crediting righteousness to his account].

God comes to Abram, after Abram has won a battle which changed world history with essentially a handful of men, and God begins to speak to Abram. However, Abram stops God, and asks about these promises. "I don't have a son; my heir is this guy from Damascus. I thought my son would truly be my son." God then assure Abram that he will have a son from his own loins, who will be his heir. Then God takes Abram outside and tells him that his descendants will be like the stars of the heavens. "If you can number the stars, then that is how many descendants will come from you."

Because of the way many of us have been raised, what Abraham is about to do in this passage may sound surprising to you. God has made these promises to Abram and in the middle of receiving another promise, Abram stops God and says, "Okay, God, how do I know I am going to inherit this land? You keep making these grandiose promises, and yet, there is no reason why I should believe these things will actually come to pass."

God has promised Abram that his descendants were going to be like the stars in the heavens, yet Abram, at this point in time, does not have child one. Abram is going to be the father of many nations, but right now, he does not have child one. God is then going to give Abram this land that he is walking in, and Abram interrupts God and says, "How do I know any of this is true?"

Gen 15:7 And He said to him, "I am Y^ehowah Who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess."

In Gen. 11, we studied God, through circumstance, and by direct command, taking Abram from the heart of early civilization, what is now southern Iraq, a little over 100 miles from the Persian Gulf; and they traveled up along the Euphrates River and then up the Balih River settling down in Haran.

Then God moved Abram and his wife from Haran to Canaan, which is where Abram is now. And God tells Abram, "I brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess;" the very land that Abram is standing on, this very land that God has Abram walking across, a small portion of which is under the control of Jews today.

This is the life which Abram has himself lived. He knows that, apart from God, he would not be where he is. He knows that, apart from God, he would be back in Haran, because Abram did not decide on his own to come to Canaan; God told him to go to Canaan (Gen. 12:1–3).

You ought to be able to point to several things in your life which are different because of Bible doctrine in your soul. There is information from God's Word which has changed the course of your life. If you can honestly say that, you would probably be right where you are right now, even if you had not believed in Jesus Christ, then you have given testimony against your own spiritual life. This is quite obviously a personal inventory. If you have experienced any spiritual growth at all, then you ought to be able to point to dozens, if not hundreds, of decisions which you have made, on the basis of the Word of God, which have changed the direction of your life. God is reminding Abram of the most important decision of his young life, to leave Haran and to come to Canaan. **And He said to him, "I am Y^ehowah Who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess."** If Abram is able to objectively examine his life, then his very life in Canaan—his great riches and success—all point to God's guidance.

What God is doing here is giving Abram the big picture. Abram has this whole other life living along the Euphrates, probably in the shadow of his own father, with a life that is so nondescript that, Abram does not even record anything except his family line, his move

from Ur to Haran, and the death of his father (which is recorded in Gen. 11:32, but had not actually taken place yet in the timeline of our narrative). When he leaves Haran, Abram is 75 years old, and his father would be 145 years old (compare Gen. 11:26 to 12:4). Abram is not yet 100 in our passage (Gen. 17:1), so that his father is not yet 170 (his father will die at age 205—Gen. 11:32).

In any case, the big picture is, Abram moved to Canaan, as God directed him to do, and this has changed everything in Abram's life. Over a period of 75 years, Abram had nothing to say about his life; however, over the past 20+ years, quite a bit has happened and Abram recorded this (or, Isaac or Jacob recorded it, based upon what Abram told them).

At this point in time, Abram is a very rich and successful businessman; people all over Canaan know and respect him, and he has just changed world history with a tiny army. This is what God wants Abram to recognize. However, what God is saying to Abram flies right over his head. He focuses on what God said, which has not been fulfilled yet. "You said You are going to give my people this land; how do I know that is true?"

Gen 15:8 But he said, "O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I will possess it?"

If you are not careful, it appears as though there is a contradiction here. Gen. 15:6 reads: "And Abram believed in the Lord and it was credited to him as righteousness." Two verses later, Abram is asking God how can he know that he will possess the land, which indicates a distinct lack of faith. As explained, Gen. 15:6, Abram exercised faith in Y^ehowah some time ago, and that faith was credited to him as righteousness. However, here we are, maybe 20–50 years later (God told Abram to leave Haran nearly 25 years ago), and now Abram is expressing some doubt. This ought to strike you as a little odd, because Abram has just defeated the greatest army of his day with a handful of men. However, so it is with the believer in Jesus Christ. We have good days and we have bad days.

So Abram asks God a reasonable question, for a person who has ignored much of what God has said and much of his own life. God promised him a son, and he doesn't have a son yet. Now God is promising him this land, and Abram says, "Okay, God, You say You are giving me this land—how am I to know that's true? I don't even have the son yet"

Interestingly enough, God does not perform some miracle or sign to answer Abram; This would have been the easiest thing in the world. God could have given Abram a vision of Moses leading the Jews, poised on the eastern border of Israel. God could have caused an earthquake to affect everything around Abram, except for the ground upon which he stands. However, God makes a covenant with Abram instead. No great future visions; no miracles.

Gen 15:9 He said to him, "Bring Me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon."

When I first became a believer, and heard or read passages like this, it just seemed like random animals being used. "You own a goat, right? Let's use that as well."

This heifer is never used in the Levitical sacrifices. It is not mentioned in the Pentateuch, except by Moses in Deut. 21. Here, when a man is murdered, and the culprit is not known, a heifer is beheaded near a stream, and the priests are to wash their hands in the stream, to be cleansed of this murder. Punishing someone for murder is not just the right but the duty of a client nation to God, and when they fail in that duty, a heifer is offered up as a substitute for the murderer. This represents a failure in their ability to carry out their solemn duty. This also indicates that, no matter what the situation, justice must be done. There must be a payment for sin.

Later, sacrificing a heifer is associated with Samuel naming David as king (and David represents Jesus Christ in His 1st and 2nd advents). 1Sam. 16:1–5

The heifer, therefore is associated with both failure (Abram's failure of faith in this passage); as well as with the *substitutionary* death of Christ on the cross (which was an unjust taking of a life, before which, Pilate washed his own hands); and with Jesus Christ during the 1st and 2nd advents. This is the Person with Whom Abram is making a covenant—Jesus Christ, the revealed member of the Trinity.

The female goat is found more commonly as a sacrifice in the Old Testament. However, like the heifer, this is its first mention in the Bible. The Levitical offering of a goat appears to be tied to rebound (naming one's sins to God—Lev. 4:23, 28). Now, why does Abram need to restore his walk with God? He has called into question God's veracity. He has implied that he is losing faith in what God promised him. So he needs to be restored to fellowship.

Like the other two animals, this is the first time a ram is mentioned. The word translated *ram* actually has a number of other meanings: *a strong man, leader, a chief* (Ex. 15:15 Ezek. 17:13); *a mighty tree* (Isa. 61:3 Ezek. 31:14); and *pillars, door posts* (Ezek. 40–41). I believe what is suggested, with the ram, is the power and the strength and the preeminence of Jesus Christ.

The idea of the 3 years is, this would be the age of these animals in the prime of their lives, just as Jesus Christ, in His humanity, was in the prime of His life when He was hung on the cross.

The turtledove is mentioned here for the first time, and this was an offering often given when the person offering it was poor (and the same is true of the pigeon—Lev. 5:7, 11 12:8 14:22, 30). The pigeon in particular is the offering of a poor person. It does not matter our station in life in order to come to the cross—rich or poor, it makes no difference. Furthermore, the pigeon is representative of Abram's relative poverty, compared to what God has promised him (Abram is a very successful businessman, but his holdings are far less than God will ultimately give his seed).

Gen 15:10 And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half.

Now, normally, what happens when a covenant is made is, those who are parties to the covenant walk between the pieces of animals in order to seal the covenant. The blood and the deaths of the animals seal the covenant, just as we have a covenant with God, based upon the death of His Son. In a sense, we walk *through* the Son in faith (“**No man comes to the Father but through Me**” —John 14:6b).

Gen 15:11 And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

These animal sacrifices represent a covenant between God and Abram, and this covenant is both about Abram’s son, his descendants, and the gift of Canaan to Abram’s descendants. This covenant is going to be attacked repeatedly, represented by these birds of prey, and Abram drives them away, protecting this covenant with God. Therefore, Abram is back in fellowship and he understands the importance of protecting and preserving this covenant, even though he has not a son as of yet.

Again, we have a parallel. All that God has promised Abram is based upon his son, in whom he must have faith for the other promises to have any sort of meaning. For us, the same is true. All of the promises of the Bible are based upon one thing—the Son of Abram. We must have faith in Him first and foremost (this may help to explain the genealogies found throughout the Bible; they testify to Jesus being the Son of Abram).

This covenant is the promise of God to Abram that his descendants would possess the land upon which he stood. The attacks upon this covenant continue even to this moment, when hundreds of Hamas rockets are fired each year into Israel, and groups of people—even nations—who today refuse to recognize that Israel has a right to exist. The leader of Iran has spoken of the complete destruction of Israel.

A contemporary bird of prey today would be Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who said "Iran's stance has always been clear on this ugly phenomenon (Israel). We have repeatedly said that this cancerous tumor of a state should be removed from the region."¹⁹ One of the so-called Arab spring protestors proclaimed, "If the people are free in Egypt... they're going to go free Palestinians, they're going to destroy Israel. The country who control the United States is Israel!"²⁰

Israel may lose and regain that plot of ground on many occasions, but that region has been given by God to Abram and to his seed, and at some point in the future, in the Millennium, they will possess much, much more land in that region than today or at anytime in their history.

Gen 15:12 As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him.

¹⁹ From <http://archives.cnn.com/2000/WORLD/meast/12/15/mideast.iran.reut/> accessed September 20, 2011.

²⁰ From <http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2011/01/31/egyptian-protester-claims-destroy-israel/> accessed September 20, 2011.

We have an unusual continuity here. God is speaking to Abram, Abram does what God tells him to do, and then there is a period of time which passes, which includes a frightful darkness.

This darkness represents various periods of time during which the Jews do not fully trust in the promises of God. These will be periods of time when God does not speak to any Jew, or periods of time when they have been expelled from the land (the 5th stage of national discipline). God will certainly bring these things to pass; but there will be times when this is doubted and times when this covenant will be attacked.

Why do we have these periods of darkness? A lack of faith on the part of the Jews. God has given them promises, both short-term and long-term, and the Jews have chased after other gods. Or the Jews have questioned or doubted their spiritual history. Or the Jews have gotten so far into gross sins and idolatry that God punishes them with severe discipline.

What will follow is, God's assurances to Abram, giving him even more specific information about what would transpire.

Lesson 151: Genesis 15:1–16

God Makes a Covenant with Abraham

So far, this is what we have studied:

Gen 15:1–11 After these things the word of Yahweh came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Don't be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." Abram said, "Lord Yahweh, what will you give me, seeing I go childless, and he who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" Abram said, "Behold, to me you have given no seed: and, behold, one born in my house is my heir." Behold, the word of Yahweh came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir, but he who will come forth out of your own body will be your heir." Yahweh brought him outside, and said, "Look now toward the sky, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." He said to Abram, "So shall your seed be." He believed in Yahweh; and he reckoned it to him for righteousness. And He [God] said to him [Abram], "I am Y^ehowah Who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess." But he said, "O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I will possess it?" He said to him, "Bring Me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

The entire context of this narrative is related to a vision, which is introduced in v. 1. It is difficult to determine if Abram leaves this vision at some point in this narrative. He goes outside and it is night in v. 5; but then the sun is going down in v. 12 and it is down in v. 17. Abram is doing things throughout this chapter—talking with God, getting animals and offering them up as sacrifices and to seal and agreement, and then driving away birds of prey. Part of the problem is the word *vision*, which only occurs 4 times in the Bible. So,

one way of putting all of this chapter together is, all of this takes place within this one vision, so that Abram is doing these things, but they are taking place in his mind. He is going outside, but that is in his mind; he is getting these animals and offering them up, but that is in his mind.

In the alternative, this chapter takes place over 2 nights and one day, and it begins with a vision, perhaps coming to Abram while sleeping at 4 in the morning or when Abram awakens early before the dawn. So God takes Abram seamlessly from a vision into reality. In the vision, God is speaking with Abram (vv. 1–4), but then God actually takes Abram outside to look at the stars in v. 5. When God tells Abram to gather up the 5 animals, Abram does this the next morning, in the daytime. That is, this really occurs, and there are real birds of prey who attempt to swoop down and to take the meat, and that Abram spends the latter half of the day driving these birds away. Then, in v. 12, the sun is going down, and Abram falls into a deep sleep.

I lean toward the latter explanation, simply because there is a word for *dream*, the noun and verb both occurring nearly 100 times in the Old Testament. Had this word been used, then it would seem more reasonable for this narrative to all take place in the dream. Since the word *dream* is not used here, it seems more likely that what is said to occur, actually does occur.

In either case, it is the substance of this chapter that is important. You could believe that all of this occurs in a vision; and you could believe that we move from a vision into real life, and that this is all taking place over a period of, say, 15 hours. However, with either interpretation, the words of God are what they are; the objections of Abram are what they are. The activities in this chapter may have actually taken place or maybe they took place within the vision. However, what is actually being taught in this chapter is unchanged.

Abram, despite all that has happened to date, has begun to question God and the validity of His promises. Abram overlooks all that has happened because God told him to go to the land of Canaan; and focuses on what has not yet happened. “How do I know that You are going to actually give this land to my descendants? I don’t have a son yet who is my heir.”

God gives Abram a taste of what is to come while making a covenant with him. This covenant is made with the animal sacrifices of vv. 9–11. The birds of prey which come down to eat the meat of these carcasses indicate that Abram’s genetic line would be attacked again and again—right down to today, in the year of our Lord, 2011. All during this time, Abram drove these birds of prey away (this represents what God would do to protect the Jews). What Abram was supposed to do takes time. Getting these 5 animals and offering them up takes a few hours, and with the first carcass that Abram lays out, birds begin to circle; and Abram finds himself driving these birds away as he gathers the other animals.

This takes us to the end of the day; the animal carcasses are all laid out, the larger animals split apart with a walkway in between them; and then Abram falls into a deep sleep.

Gen 15:12 As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him.

The darkness in which Abram finds himself is quite unusual. It is a terror of great darkness which comes down upon Abram. So Abram is in a deep sleep, but he perceives this great darkness around him.

God then will make a covenant with Abram, at which time God interprets this covenant, the birds of prey and the great darkness that fell upon Abram. So Abram is near these animal carcasses which he laid out; he is in a deep sleep, and he perceives great frightening darkness about him; and God speaks to him.

Gen 15:13 Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring [lit., seed] will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be slaves there, and they will be afflicted for 400 years.

The descendants of Abram will go into a land which is not theirs. Recall that, Abram's descendants will have no land which is theirs at this time, apart from this promise from God. They will go to this other land (which is Egypt) and they will be in slavery there for 400 years.

The people of Egypt are the birds of prey who descend upon the covenant which God is making between Himself and Abram, and they would attack this covenant, making it appear as if these promises of God will never come to pass. The Egyptians are the first of many who would attack this covenant of God, down to the Palestinians today.

This is one of the prophecies in the Bible which will have a relatively immediate fulfillment. Within the next century or so, Abram will have a child, who will have twins, one of which will have 12 sons, and Abram's grandchild and his children and their families will all go to Egypt. They actually resided in Egypt for 430 years (Ex. 12:40–41); they would be *afflicted* for 400 of those years (Gen. 15:13 Acts 7:6).

My thinking is, Genesis was written in portions; and every generation or so, some man of God would add to the book. Moses undoubtedly wrote the other 4 books of the Pentateuch (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy)—he is called the author of these books in several places, but he is never said to be the writer of Genesis. It is possible that he edited Genesis, but I am of the opinion that Moses was given the book of Genesis at some point in his life or, most likely, the Jews had this book with them while in Egypt.

In order for this prophecy to have much meaning, it needed to be written down and for there to be some knowledge of it while the Jews are enslaved in Egypt. During this time of slavery, someone had to have these writings, these prophecies of God; and some of the Jews knew about these things. Let's put it this way: they were supposed to know about these things. It is like believers in the Church Age; there are things we are supposed to know, but many believers do not.

As we will find out in the far future, the Jews in slavery had some knowledge of the God of Abraham, as they would call out to Him. This would suggest that they had the book of Genesis and knew some portions of it.

In any case, what we are reading would be fulfilled, but the prophecy and a part of the fulfillment are found in the same book, Genesis. For the most part, prophecies are not fulfilled in the same book in which they are given.

Now, if there are several authors to the book of Genesis, then this prophecy is actually prophetic—that is, one author records the prophecy and then another author records the fulfillment (or, a partial fulfillment) of the prophecy.

As I have suggested before, Genesis is a narrative written by several different authors, each one adding onto what had already been written. We will come to a very personal statement made by Jacob—something which only Jacob himself would have written (or one of his sons, to whom he revealed this). However, there is no reason whatsoever to credit Jacob with the writing of all of Genesis.

My personal theory is, Melchizedek had the Scriptures, recorded up to Gen. 11, and that he handed a copy to Abraham, who preserved and added to these words. This would explain why Abram, a man who had spoken with God on several occasions, could, in a very short time, place himself under the authority of Melchizedek. Only a man who had heard the Word of God spoken to him, could recognize this same voice in written form.

We have already studied the [Seeds of Theology Found in Genesis](#). This, in itself, should have been quite amazing to you. How is it possible for a book written 4000 years ago to contain all of the basic strains of Christian theology? In the very near future, we will examine the “Lucky Guesses” of Genesis, chapters 1–15; and it will cause you to wonder, if Genesis is just a book like any other, how did the author get so many things right?

Back to the narrative: God continues to speak to Abram, telling him what would come to pass.

Gen 15:14 But I will bring judgment on the nation [Egypt] that they [the Jews] serve, and afterward they will come out with great possessions.

Will come out is the very common Hebrew verb *yâtsâ'* (יָצָא) [pronounced *yaw-TZAWH*], which means *to go out, to come out, to come forth*. Strong's #3318 BDB #422. This word in the Greek is *exerchomai* (ἐξέρχομαι) [pronounced *ex-EHR-khoh-mai*], which also means *to go out, to come out*. Strong's #1831. Closely related to this word is *exodos* (ἐξοδος) [pronounced *EX-ohd-oss*], which means, 1) *exit, i.e. departure*; 2) *the close of one's career, one's final fate*; 3) *departure from life, decease*. This is from whence we get the English word *exodus*. Strong's #1841.

God promises Abram that He would bring judgment against the nation Egypt—the nation that they will serve—and that the people of Israel would exit Egypt with great possessions.

This will be fulfilled in the book of Exodus. Remember this great darkness that came upon Abram? This represents the judgment that God will bring down upon Egypt, which is fulfilled literally in Ex. 10:21–23. The great darkness that Abram experienced is representative of the judgment of God upon Egypt. And one of those specific judgments was a thick darkness over the land of Egypt.

The concept being introduced here is a very specific prophecy which will be fulfilled. God has already made prophecies specific to Abram, which are both short-term (having a son) and long term (Israel being given the land upon which Abram is walking). The latter prophecy will not be fulfilled until the Millennium. However, in this chapter, God is telling what will happen over the next several hundred years after Abram passes from the scene. So these prophecies are not actually for Abram, even though they are spoken to Abram; they are for his descendants. Like all other portions of the Word of God, if believers in that day knew these things, they could depend upon God to bring them to pass; if they did not know these things, they had less to depend upon.

The exact same thing is true for believers today. If we know what is in the Bible, then we have things we can place our faith in; if we do not know what is in the Bible, we have a very limited relationship with God. We have the Bible in order to understand Who and What God is and what is our place in this world after salvation.

In any case, Egypt placing Abram's descendants into slavery is future from Abram; Abram would not see any of this. He would die at a ripe old age and go to be with his fathers (which suggests that Abram's ancestors believed in Jehovah Elohim as well).

Gen 15:15 As for yourself, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age.

Abram will have died long before these prophecies come to pass, and he will die having lived a long and fulfilling life. Obviously, he must have a son before he dies in order for any of this to be true. *Peace* here is the Hebrew word *shâlôwm* (שָׁלוֹם) [pronounced *shaw-LOHM*], which means *completeness, soundness, welfare, peace, safe, secure, tranquil, undisturbed, unagitated*. Strong's #7965 BDB #1022. Abram's death would be tranquil, peaceful and represent him having lived a complete life. Abram will die at age 175.

Also, Abram would have a son from his own loins. These things Abram would see fulfilled; but before that comes to pass, Abram will have faith in what God tells him.

You will note that v. 15 is oddly placed. God talks about the Jews in Egypt in vv. 13–14 and v. 16, but in the middle of that, God talks about Abram.

Gen. 15:13–16 He said to Abram, "Know for sure that your seed will live as foreigners in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them. They will afflict them 400 years. I will also judge that nation, whom they will serve. Afterward they will come out with great substance. **But you will go to your fathers in peace. You will be buried in a good old age.** In the fourth generation they will come here again, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full."

It is not Abram who will live as a foreigner in Egypt; this is for his seed. The 400 years of affliction will be for Abram's seed. However, Abram will not suffer any of this. He is going to live his life in peace and be buried in a good old age. God is telling Abram, "These prophecies are not about you; they are about your seed. Your life is going to be fine and peaceful." Abram is about 85 at this time and most of his life is still ahead of him.

There is quite a difference between Abram and the Jews (his descendants) who are put into slavery. Abram fails, but he trusts God. He may question God, but he knows God's Word. At the beginning of this chapter, Abram got quite impertinent with God, but his questions were in line with what God had promised him. Those who follow Abram's grandson, Jacob, in time, will not appear to know the promises of God. For 4 generations, they will be afflicted. This suggests to us that, there are no great men; and that God needs to exert strong controls over His people. So God allows them to be enslaved. Do not become confused over this. The Jews could be a very hard-headed people. So the slavery that these Jews will find themselves in will be apropos to their thinking.

In the United States, we have almost no concept of what it is like in the rest of the world. We do not have any sort of idea as to the suffering that is out there; but it all comes back to the individual and corporate relationship to God—and not to just any god, but to God, the Father of Jesus Christ. We in the United States enjoy great comforts and great prosperity, but it is because a huge number of people in the United States believe in Jesus Christ; and a subset of these people actually know much of what is in God's Word. Salvation and knowledge of doctrine is the key.

There is one more thing: most of the modern conveniences which are beginning to be found throughout the world—they were invented by Americans and produced, in many cases, by Americans. Much of the prosperity in the world is because of the United States.

God told Abram, "[I will bless those who bless you; and curse those who curse you.](#)" The same is true of the United States, as long as we retain our status as a client nation; as long as we adhere, for the most part, to the laws of divine establishment; as long as there are a significant percentage of believers in the United States; and as long as there is a significant percentage of those who are growing spiritually.

You may wonder, *what about China?* China is easy to explain. They have been controlled by an evil system of communism for decades, and more people have been slaughtered in that country in peacetime than in any war. But, as of late, the number of believers in China has increased. Adherence to the laws of divine establishment, which are almost the direct opposite of communism, has also increased. What should we expect? We should expect that their nation and their lives would improve. We should expect that their influence in the world should increase. At one time Christians were persecuted, reeducated and murdered by the Chinese government. Today, even though Christianity is discouraged and not taught in any way in their schools, Christianity is beginning to grow by leaps and bounds. There is some limited toleration for it by the government.

Why is Europe beginning to fall apart? Christianity has declined in the past 50 or 100 years. There are fewer and fewer believers which means that the nations of Europe will become worse places in which to live.

The fundamental key is this: how many are believers and how many of them are growing spiritually?

Lesson 152: Genesis 15:12–16

Four Generation Degeneration

Abram began having a vision; and it is my opinion that God took him “out of this vision” to look at the stars, to offer up specific animal sacrifices, and then to hear what would happen to his descendants in the future.

Gen 15:12–15 As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. He [God] said to Abram, "Know for sure that your seed will live as foreigners in a land that is not theirs, and they [Abram's seed] will serve them. They [the people of this other land] will afflict them 400 years. I will also judge that nation, whom they will serve. Afterward they will come out with great substance. But you will go to your fathers in peace. You will be buried in a good old age."

Recall that all of this is related to the sacrifices which Abram had offered up; between which he and God would walk, which would indicate a covenant between them. The dreadful and great darkness is related to the judgment upon Egypt; and the birds of prey that had come down to pick at the carcasses represent the attacks on this covenant, which attacks continue down to this very day.

Gen 15:16 And they [the Jewish slaves in Egypt] shall come back here [to the land of Canaan] in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

Since we are given the time frame 400 years and 4 generations, we will assume that, at that point in time, 1 generation was considered to be 100+ years (people of that era still lived longer than they do today—Abram's father lived to age 205; Abram to 175).

The Amorites here are representative of those who are in the land of Canaan. What is implied here is, there is a degeneracy process going on. The Amorites, at this point in time, are not so degenerate as to have their land taken from them. However, 4 generations down the road, their iniquity will be full and God will have the Jews completely and totally annihilate some cities and some peoples.

Some of the people in the land of Canaan are already quite degenerate. We will come upon the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, and we will see that these men are ruled by their sexual lusts. However, the rest of the land is not like that. As we have seen already, the King of Sodom seems like a reasonable man and the King of Salem, Melchizedek, is a great believer who possibly imparted the Word of God to Abram. However, there will come a point in time when all the inhabitants of the land will become

very degenerate—even to a point where God will tell the Jews to wipe them out completely and totally, men, women and children.

Throughout the Bible, there is a mention of four generations. What this means is, each generation has its own identity which it develops and its own relationship to God as a collective whole. Sometimes, there is a clear degeneracy process which takes place; and sometimes, 4 generations can represent a recovery process.

An Example of Four-Generation Degeneracy

1. First of all, there is a great generation of believers. These are men and women who have believed in Jesus Christ (or, Jehovah Elohim in the Old Testament) and they know and understand the Word of God.
2. The second generation are also believers, but their knowledge of doctrine is spotty. They do understand the laws of divine establishment, and they follow these laws, which brings them a modicum of blessing. Recall, the laws of divine establishment are for believers and unbelievers alike; and these laws preserve nations.
3. The third generation no longer believes in Jesus Christ, but they still continue with the values and practices of their parents, meaning, they follow most of the laws of divine establishment. This 3rd generation survives reasonably well because the laws of divine establishment are designed for all mankind; and these laws perpetuate national entities and man's life on this earth.
4. However, the fourth generation not only does not believe in Jesus Christ and they also reject the laws of divine establishment. They become a law unto themselves. Every man does what is right in his own eyes. All that stuff that their parents believed in is old fashioned and out-of-date. The stuff their grandparents and great grandparents believe in went out with the stone age, in their opinion. They are a new, fresh and irreverent generation. They become a generation of great degeneracy, because there is no reason, in their own minds, for them to modify their own behavior. There is no written code, there are no absolutes, and there is nothing authoritative in their lives. Their parents believed one set of rules and they believe another set of rules. There was nothing which allowed the laws of divine establishment to take root in their souls. They were indulged as children; their parents did not set strict standards and their parents did not whup them. So, if they want to do something, they do it. If it feels good or if it gratifies them, they do it. Who has all of the answers? Those of their own generation. They do not look to what has come before; they look to the opinions of their contemporaries and they forge their own morality.

Quite obviously, this does not apply to each and every person in a generation and this is simply an example of the way generations can go. In the same way, generations can rebuild themselves, and follow just the opposite path.

We have seen a similar degeneration occur over 4 generations in the United States. We have the greatest generation, those who went through the depression and who fought World War II. Defeating evil Nazi Germany was a national effort. What is not known about them is, many of them knew the Word of God. I read through a journal of my great grandfather, and, although it is not clear whether or not he was a believer, he did know a lot about the Bible and many arguments were settled (or left unsettled) by using Scripture. FDR, for all of his faults, touted the United States as being the nation in which the Word of God was taught, in at least one of his major speeches to the nation.

Then my generation came along, the Baby Boomers, many of them are saved, but very few of my generation understand a thing about the Bible or the spiritual life. Billy Graham spanned both of these generations with his message of the gospel. Also during this time, prayer and the Bible were taken out of the schools and abortion was legalized.

Then Gen X came on the scene, fewer of whom are believers, very few know much about the Bible; and the effect of the Baby Boomers and Gen X on our government has been to spend the United States into one of the deepest holes of debt that we have ever been in, mostly in the name of human good (the safety net). Dishonest politicians were afraid to level with us; and we were afraid to look at the truth of what was happening. Even today, we have huge numbers of people who believe that the solution to our problems is more government spending. We have used the money from many generations to come in order to provide this safety net for ourselves for just the next few years. This is because, if we do not have faith in God, then our faith is placed in something else like celebrities, politicians and/or government.

As an aside, this is why candidate Barack Obama was seen almost as a national savior, who thrilled and excited people. Huge numbers of people put so much trust in him, that they believed, if he was elected, their life struggles would be lessened.

Then we have the millennials, who can be convinced of almost any false notion. As a result, we have had the rise of homosexuality, homosexual “marriages” and food, housing and healthcare as rights granted to us by the state, and paid for by the super-rich. To some degree, to many people in the United States, the government has become our grantor of all things that we need. It has become both god and the dispenser of “rights,” dangerous things for any government to be. The time during which I write this, hundreds of millennials are camped out in front of financial institutions all over the United States, protesting capitalism. They have no doctrine; they reject the laws of divine establishment, few of them are believers, and they can be convinced of anything which is false. Those who know anything about Jesus think He was the first true activist; the first political leader.

This is not a matter of political party. Neither Democrats or Republicans will level with the people when it comes to the national debt. If acquiring more debt will get them reelected, then they will acquire more debt. If telling us that we can afford universal healthcare, social security, and basic provisions for all members of our society, whether they work or not, they will tell us this.

This puts the United States at a tipping point. We are teetering on economic collapse. Baby boomers in particular are ready to retire and we baby boomers believe that we deserve to retire and do nothing for the next 20 or 30 years, living off of pensions which, in many cases, are not actually there. Being of that generation, I know many baby boomers. They have been looking forward to retirement for many years; they expect to enjoy this retirement with their healthcare benefits paid for, and they expect not to work for 20 or 30 years. In their minds, they already paid for it and they deserve it, even if those things are not true. Many of my contemporaries will vote for anyone who tells them this is still true. So politicians of both sides tell us who are 50 or older, “Don’t worry; this safety net is fine; we will keep it all in place for you. We’re not going to change anything.” And we believe them and we think the next 20 or 30 years are going to be fine.

It is my firm belief that, many baby boomers, when faced with the reality that there is not enough money to fund a 20–30 year retirement for them, with their medical procedures paid for, that they will balk at this. Even if going forth with such retirements bankrupts the United States, they will continually say, “We paid into this. We’ve paid for our retirement and medical.” We could become the first generation to not give a rip whether or not we have left behind a better nation than we were born into.

The debt our government has now is nothing compared to the obligations our government has promised in the future, by way of social security and medicare. I have seen estimates in the \$50–100 trillion range (our national debt is around \$14 trillion, which is roughly the same as what we produce as a country in one year).

We have completely misjudged our relationship with China, a nation with far too many males, with a huge army, and to whom we are deeply in debt. If we are unable to pay this debt, all it takes is the stoking of their self-righteousness, and they will have an army motivated to come and take back what belongs to them. One of the things which saved us in WWII was our ability to manufacture tanks and planes at a phenomenal rate. Many of the rare earth metals used in manufacturing are now under the control of China (90% was the figure I have heard); so that China could develop a war machine that we would be almost powerless against—in a conventional war.

Whereas, we have the greatest army in the world in terms of quality; this is not even 1 out of 100 Americans. Their contemporaries do not know how to fight, how to resist, how to use weapons; and if faced with a ground war on our own soil, it is hard to imagine that we could resist this as a country, as we would lack both the armor and the personnel.

My point is, within 4 generations, we can go from being a great and vigorous people who quite literally saved the world, into a nation which could not stand up against hardship or an invasion. In fact, our generation of young people today invite invasion. Many of them actually believe that a socialist system would be better for us.

We can do this the easy way or the hard way. The easy way means more evangelism, more Bible teaching, more spiritual growth. The hard way is to endure national discipline. Imagine the 1930's depression along with being invaded. That's the hard way.

Gen 15:16 And they [the Jewish slaves in Egypt] shall come back here [to the land of Canaan] in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

The word complete is *shâlêm* (שָׁלֵם) [pronounced *shaw-LAIM*], which means *whole; complete, completed, finished; safe, at peace; cherishing peace and friendship*. Strong's #8003 BDB #1023. There is a play on words here; Abram would die in peace—*shâlôwm* (שָׁלוֹם); and the iniquity of the Amorites comes to a completion—*shâlêm* (שָׁלֵם).

4 generations from now, the people of Canaan are going to become extremely degenerate, to a point where God wants them destroyed. So God has told Abram that his seed will leave Canaan and move to Egypt, where they will be enslaved for 400 years. Then they will return to the land of Canaan, when the iniquity of the Amorites has been completed.

We are coming to a point in the Bible, where we will be covering some of the most controversial material in the Bible, where God tells the Jews to completely destroy a people. Not only will this all be explained, but it will have great application to today.

We will be given the briefest look into the souls of the kinds of people who occupied Canaan when we come to Gen. 19. However, archeology has turned up much more information about them, and the extent of their degeneracy (which include child sacrifice). It is these people to whom God refers when He says, "The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." When their iniquity is full, blood will flow like water in the land of Canaan. Whole peoples will be killed—men, women and children.

Lesson 153: Genesis 15:12–21

The Fourth Generation

Gen 15:12–16 As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. He [God] said to Abram, "Know for sure that your seed will live as foreigners in a land that is not theirs, and they [Abram's seed] will serve them. They [the people of this other land] will afflict them 400 years. I will also judge that nation, whom they will serve. Afterward they will come out with great substance. But you will go to your fathers in peace. You will be buried in a good old age." And they [the Jewish slaves in Egypt] shall come back here [to the land of Canaan] in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

Recall that these animals have been slaughtered and some of them are in pieces, with a walkway in between them. This represents two parties coming to an agreement about a covenant. Abram fights off birds, which represents attacks upon this covenant. Then, a

deep sleep came upon him, representing 400 years of slavery to Egypt. Finally, a great darkness descended upon him, which represents the judgment of Egypt.

Gen 15:17 When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces.

Anything to do with fire, in the Bible, often refers to judgment. The animals that became blood sacrifices, represent the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The smoking fire pot and the flaming torch represent God the Father pouring out our sins on God the Son and judging those sins.

Part of the tradition of making a covenant, and walking in between the animal parts, is the sealing of the covenant or the 2 parties agreeing to the covenant. God's justice and righteousness, represented by the smoking fire pot and the flaming torch, pass between the animal parts, thus binding God to the covenant which He has made with Abram. It is key that His justice and righteousness are what are bound to this covenant.

Remember how this chapter started? Before God got much more than a full sentence out of His mouth, Abram began to complain, asking God, "What are you going to promise me now? By the way, I do not have that child yet and my only heir is a man who is not even related to me." This ritual binds the covenant which God has made with Abram. God's justice and righteousness are making a covenant with Abram.

Abram has fallen into a deep sleep. Is this smoking fire pot and flaming torch real? Could someone else have come upon this scene and seen the same things? We don't know. But, to Abram, this is real. He laid out these animal pieces himself and he sees God's righteousness and justice pass between the pieces. To him, this is real; it is not simply a vision that Abram is having. However, the context or the set up for this verse is, **a deep sleep fell on Abram**. So, despite what the narrative says after this, all of this could have simply taken place within the context of Abram's vision or in a dream-like state. It is my opinion that Abram began seeing God in a vision, but that he moved on from there.

Again, what is key is not the circumstances or the actual reality of these events, but what is true and what stands forever are the words spoken by God.

Gen 15:18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates,

The verb *to make* is the Qal perfect of *kâath* (כָּאַתַּת) [pronounced *kaw-RAHTH*], which means *to cut off, to cut down; to kill, to destroy; to cut [or make] [a covenant]*. Strong's #3772 BDB #503. This word is clearly related to cutting these sacrificial animals into pieces. The perfect tense indicates that God already made this covenant with Abram. The covenant was made first, and then the smoking pot and the flaming torch went between the pieces of the animals (after it became dark). That sealed the covenant. The darkness is the judgment of God against Egypt, after which, God will move forward with fulfilling this covenant. The Jews will, as a nation, come into this land and take it.

Now, why didn't God just give the Jews the land and let Abram have children, and let them have children, and simply live in the land and, once their numbers were large enough, take it? Canaan is a land of great degeneracy. God needs to isolate the Jews. They cannot be mixed into the Canaanite culture and they cannot be mixed into the Egyptian culture. They must be kept separate and spiritually pure. Abram was not left in Hebron because he would have become corrupted; the Jews were not left in Canaan because they would have become corrupted as a people.

Furthermore, what happens in the future will be an event as has never occurred before or after. Even today, Jewish people will gather around a meal—the Passover Seder—and talk about God taking their people out of Egypt. Even today, people who are evil will take this story and distort it into liberation theology. 3500 years later, the exodus still plays a part in modern human history. When God wants to step into history and get our attention, He is quite able to do so.

[Gen 15:18](#) On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates,

The land which God gives to Abram is far larger than anything which the Jews have ever controlled, even at the height of their power under Solomon. Right now, Israel is less than 0.2% of the Middle East (*not* 2% but 1/5th of 1%). In the many surrounding Muslim countries, there are a handful of Jews, if that many, because of the incalculable attitude of the Muslim people, who occupy the other 99.8% of the Mideast lands. The hatred of many of those in the Mideast is so great that, even this tiny sliver of land occupied by Jews is too much for them to bear. These Muslims are the birds of prey, swooping down, trying to destroy the covenant of God made with Abram. So many Muslims today, if they could snap their fingers and have the Jews disappear, they would. If they could snap their fingers and have the Jews die horrible, miserable deaths before Israel went away, they would. This is the nature of evil in our world.

God here gives the Jews the land between the Nile and the Euphrates, which takes in a small portion of Egypt, the Sinai Peninsula, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia (it is unclear whether this description includes the Saudi Arabia) and a large chunk of Iraq. In other words, about 40% of the Middle East.

Today, Israel is a postage stamp of a country, and various Arabic nations would like to see it destroyed. Their hatred of the Jew is deep and lasting, and no matter how small Israel is, they want to see all of Israel destroyed. In my lifetime, I have seen Israel attacked several times and in a number of ways, yet God has been faithful even today to keep them alive as a people. Whether this present-day Israel will be a part of the end-time prophecies or not, is another topic (it could be destroyed and another Israel raised up in its place decades or even centuries later).

Behind Islam is Satan. If God does not keep this covenant with Israel, then God is not God. Therefore, Satan, throughout history, has worked tirelessly through various nations

and various religions to destroy the Jew. Knowing this may help to explain to you the irrational hatred of the Jews throughout history.

As a teacher and as a normal person, I have known a number of Jews throughout my lifetime. I could not define them physically; I could not look at a group of people and pick out the Jews from the group; nor could I separate them by a set of core beliefs. My point is, there is nothing superficial about the Jews which ought to cause such hatred. We can make clear and immediately distinctions between Blacks and Whites, and therefore, racial tensions are going to occur between these groups of people—it is inevitable. However, there is no such clear distinction between Jews and other peoples. Because of this, Islamic propaganda tells its believers that Jews come from monkeys and dogs, and some Islamic adherents actually believe that (it is taught at a very early age). However, non-European Jews could blend into any Middle East country, and, as long as their origins are religion were not known, they would not stand out. There is nothing overt or obvious in the appearance of Jews which causes such recalcitrant behavior on the part of Muslims

However, despite the lack of dramatic physical differences, Jews are hated from time to time in many nations, or even by certain nations, not because of anything which they have done or not because of the way that they look, but because they are God's people, and they will always be God's people. Therefore, Satan hates them, wants to destroy them, and Satan is able to infect whole nations with this sort of irrational hatred.

One of the reasons that the United States is so blessed is our relationship to Israel and to the Jewish people. God promised Abram, "I will bless those who bless you and I will curse those who curse you." And so it has been down throughout the ages, up until this point in time. I discussed the precipice upon which our nation happens to be. One of the reasons that we have been preserved is our attitude toward the Jewish people. However, this could change in one generation. We may live to see the day when a majority of people in the United States see no difference between the Jewish people and Muslims; and that their differences in the Middle East are to be seen as equal; and that a reasonable man could be seen to take one side as well as the other. When that day comes, our nation has reached its most dangerous place.

In the 1400's, Spain was one of the greatest nations in the world, sending out explorers throughout the world, claiming great chunks of the new world for Spain. Spain was a world power. However, simultaneously, the Spanish Inquisition, which began as a tribunal in 1480, forced Jews and Muslims out of Spain, if they did not convert to Catholicism. That was a decree issued in 1492 and in 1501. And suddenly, in a very short period of time, Spain went from being one of the great nations of the world to a 3rd class power, which is where it stands today.

Back to the narrative. Next God tells Abram which peoples will be dispossessed or destroyed in order for them to take the land.

Gen 15:18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates,

Gen 15:19 the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites,

This is the first mention of the Kenites, who apparently have ties to Midian (who will be a son of Abram—Gen. 25:1–2), from whom are the Midianites, a people who will be antagonistic toward the Jews for several centuries after the Jews leave Egypt. The Kenites are less well-known and are thought to be by some identical to the Midianites (however, that would make little sense, since the Midianites are descendants of Abram).

The Kenizzites are barely mentioned in Scripture. To some degree, this is their first and last mention. Caleb—one of the great men of the Exodus—is Kenizzite on his father's side. The word means *hunter*. So, at this point in time, they occupy a portion of the land that God is giving to Abram, but their historical significance seems to all but disappear after this promise (apart from Caleb).

The Kadmonites are mentioned only here, in this one passage. These people are known to Abram but have vanished from this earth as a people—all that remains of them is a name found once in the Bible.

Gen 15:20 the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim,

Unlike the 3 previous groups of people, the Hittites were a great people, but the land which is associated with them is Turkey. This passage suggests either that God has given much of Turkey over to the descendants of Abram, which would mean that this land grant includes even more land than I have herein described (there is no northern border, per se, given here). The alternative is, the Hittites also exercised some control over land which was south of Turkey, and that is what God is giving to Abram and his seed. The latter explanation makes the most sense.

The Bible treats the Hittites as a very prominent people, mentioning them almost 50 times over several generations, indicating them to be a great powerful empire in the Middle East. And, for many centuries, critics of the Bible scoffed at this, saying that the Hittites were, at best, some little local tribe with much less influence than the Bible indicates. However, archeology has proven these critics wrong and the Bible right (as is so often the case with the Word of God).

Also interesting: I cannot locate any recorded conflicts between Israel and the Hittites. However, one Hittite plays a prominent role in the Bible (Uriah the Hittite) and another is an ally of David's when he is on the run from King Saul.

All of those groups named so far—the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites—are first named here in this passage. The next 6 peoples have already been named in Genesis.

The Perizzites were those who live in the open country of the land of Canaan (*Perizzite* means *open region, unwalled village, open country*). They were the grazers, farmers, and peasants of the time and they probably lived east of the Jordan. Of the 23 times they are

mentioned in the Bible, 22 of them have them in a list of names, as we have here. The only time they are listed separate from 3 or more other peoples is in Joshua 17:15. So, their land is given to the Jews, but we do not have any recorded conflicts between the Jews and the Perizzites.

The Rephaim are the giants of the land, and we will come across them on several occasions (although they may not all be related). Some of them will live east of the Jordan River, and others will be found along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea (which is west of the Jordan).

Gen 15:21 the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites."

The term Amorite is used in 3 different ways: (1) as representative of the people who live in the land of Palestine (which generic usage explains a number of problem passages—Gen. 15:16 Judges 6:10) (2) as the people who live in the hills as opposed to those who live on the plains (Num. 13:29); and (3) as a racially specific group (Num. 21:21–31 Deut. 2:26–35). According to ISBE, *The Amorite kingdom was of great antiquity. About 2500 B.C. it embraced the larger part of Mesopotamia and Syria, with its capital probably at Harran, and a few centuries later northern Babylonia was occupied by an "Amorite" dynasty of kings who traced their descent from Samu or Sumu (the Biblical Shem), and made Babylon their capital.*²¹ If this is accurate, then God has been separating Abram from this people for several decades. Also, according to ISBE, the Amorites are mentioned in several extra-Biblical records (e.g., in the Tell el-Amarna Letters, and the Hittite archives discovered at Boghaz-keui).

The Canaanites are the descendants of Canaan, a son of Ham. They moved westward into Palestine and Egypt. They lived in the lowland areas, near the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea (Num. 13:29).

The Girgashites are descended from Canaan (Gen. 10:16) and found in Scripture 6 times, always in a list of names. They are always found associated with the Hittites (Heth), the Canaanites, Amorites and Jebusites. This is because these tribes are all related. There are differing opinions as to where these people lived and who they might be in extra-Biblical history.

The Jebusites are one of the most well-known people in the Old Testament, their name occurring 41 times. They are also sons of Canaan and they will play a part in the history of Israel for the next 1000 years, at least to the time of David. At that time, they will occupy a city called Jebus, a city that David will conquer and make the capitol city of all Israel (this is Salem of Gen. 14:18). At the time that Moses returns to the Land of Promise with his sorry band of soldiers, the Jebusites will be living in the hill country (Num. 13:29), which possibly included Jerusalem.

²¹ *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*; James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; © by Hendrickson Publishers; from E-Sword; Topic: Amorites.

All of these groups, when Abram entered into the land, were major and minor players in that arena of history. Every single one of them was a *people* at that point; Abram was not. Abram was simply one guy with a wife, no kids, and the men who worked for him. Yet, throughout the centuries, God promised that His Angel (Jehovah) would go before the Jews and drive these people out (Deut. 7:1 Joshua 3:10) and even blot them out (Ex. 23:23 Deut. 20:17). 10 peoples, who controlled the land of Canaan, would fall into great degeneracy, and God would take the land from them and order Joshua to slaughter them.

So, Abram and his wife are the only Jews in the land. Of the people named above, there must be millions in the land of Canaan at this time. Do you know any Amorites, Canaanites or Hittites today? Yet these were 3 of the greatest peoples in that day. God has blotted them out of history. Do you know any Jews? There is a future for the Jews in God's plan, so we will always have Jews. **God's Word lives and abides forever** (1Peter 1:23b). God's Word told Abram, "I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you." Words which were true 4000 years ago and words which continue to be true today.

Lesson 153 addendum: Genesis 15:1–21

A Brief Review of Genesis 15

An Abbreviated Exegesis of Genesis 15:

Bible translation used: The Scriptures 2009. Unless otherwise noted, all other quotations will be taken from this translation as well.

In the Scriptures 2009, instead of *God*, we have the word *Elohim*, which is a transliteration from the Hebrew. The other name for God, YHWH (or Jehovah, Yahweh, Adonai, Lord, JHWH, Y^ehowah) is represented with the actual Hebrew יהוה. The reason for there being so many different words used here is interesting. Originally, the Hebrew was written without vowels—not just YHWH, but every single Hebrew word. Because the Hebrew Scriptures (which we know as the Old Testament) were read aloud so often, the reader could look at the Hebrew consonants and know the word that was there. In fact, the Masoretes, who preserved the Bibles' pronunciation, introduced diacritical marks in the 7th century A.D. (these are vowel points, which was added above and below the original Hebrew text). Up to that time, every word in the Bible was read aloud except for one, and that was YHWH. When the Jews came to this proper name, they said, *Adonai* (= *Lord*). As a result, the Jews preserved the pronunciation of the Biblical text for all but one word. Of the nearly 100 translations of the Old Testament to which I refer, any one of those eight forms may be found—and one of them, the Message (I believe) uses *GOD*. Furthermore, Bible translations are not necessarily consistent at this point. One place we may read *Lord*, and elsewhere we may read *Jehovah* in the same translation.

God's Gracious Land Grant to Abram and his Descendants

Genesis 15:1 After these events the word of יהוה came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your reward is exceedingly great."

The previous events are those which took place in Genesis 14, and the great war between the four kings and the five kings.

This was a serious exposure to Sodom and Gomorroah with regards to national discipline. As we will find out in Genesis 19, they will not take this to heart.

Genesis 15:2 And Abram said, “Master הוהי [= YHWH, Y^ehowah], what would You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eli'ezer of Dammeseq [= Damascus]?”

Abram is beginning to give serious thought to the promises made to him by God. He has thought about what God has said and considered his actual circumstances.

“Listen,” he said to God, “I am obviously childless—that does not appear to be anything that is going to change; so by my heir, maybe you are thinking of Eliezer of Damascus?”

Genesis 15:3 And Abram said, “See, You have given me no seed, and see, one born in my house is my heir!”

Abram presses this point with God. “You, God, have given me no descendants. So what do you think about my heirship falling upon Eliezer, who was born in my house.”

I do not quite get how this man was born in Abram’s house but is also called Eliezer of Damascus. However, in their travels, perhaps they stopped at Damascus and Eliezer was born there.

There is another way to read this. Abram is thinking that Eliezer of Damascus is one possibility. Perhaps another possibility is someone else who is born in Abram’s house.

Genesis 15:4 And see, the word of הוהי came to him, saying, “This one is not your heir, but he who comes from your own body is your heir.”

God makes it clear that Abram himself will sire his true heir. It won’t just be someone whom Abram favors from his household.

Genesis 15:5 And He brought him outside and said, “Look now toward the heavens, and count the stars if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So are your seed.”

God then challenges Abram to look into the sky and count the stars. “This is what your seed is going to be!” God tells him.

Abram is not just the father of the Jews but of the Arab people as well.

Let me suggest that God is referring to all the true heirs of Abram, which is anyone who have trusted in Abram’s God. Whether we are considering those born to Abram, no matter what their spiritual status; or whether their spiritual status is foremost, but their race is not key—either way, Abram would have a huge number of descendants.

We do not know how many stars Abram is able to count, but God knows that the total number of stars is almost impossible to count. We have estimations, but I have not the slightest idea by what means these estimations were determined.

Genesis 15:6 *And he believed in הוהי, and He reckoned it to him for righteousness.*

Abram believed God here, and this was counted to him as righteousness.

Genesis 15:7 *And He said to him, "I am הוהי, who brought you out of Ur-kasdim [= Ur of the Chaldeans], to give you this land to inherit it."*

God tells Abram, "I brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees. This is the land which is all around you that I will give to you and to your descendants."

Genesis 15:8 *And he said, "Master הוהי, whereby do I know that I possess it?"*

Abram then asks, "Lord, you keep telling me that I will have an massive number of descendants and that they will own all of this land, but will I really? How do I really know that this is going to happen?"

Genesis 15:9 *And He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, and a three-year-old female goat, and a three-year-old ram, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon."*

God tells Abram, "You are going to gather some animals up to be offered to Me."

So, this seems like an odd way of answering Abram's question.

Genesis 15:10 *And he took all these to Him and cut them in the middle, and placed each half opposite the other, but he did not cut the birds.*

Abram took the animals which God told him to get, killed them, and then cut them in half, and set the halves opposite each other.

Genesis 15:11 *And the birds of prey came down on the carcasses, and Abram drove them away.*

There were birds of prey which came down on these carcasses, and Abram chased them away.

This is representative of nation Israel and the many nations which try to destroy Israel.

Genesis 15:12 *And it came to be, when the sun was going down, and a deep sleep fell upon Abram, that see, a frightening great darkness fell upon him.*

A deep sleep falls upon Abram as the sun begins to go down.

Genesis 15:13 And He said to Abram, “Know for certain that your seed are to be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years.

What God is doing is giving Abram more of a short-term prophecy. Abram won't be able to confirm this, but all of his descendants who walk out of Egypt behind Moses will.

God speaks to Abram while he is in this deep sleep. God tells Abram what is going to take place over the next hundreds of years. At some point, Abram's descendants will end up in another land, and they will live there as immigrants, but that land will not be theirs.

Genesis 15:14 “But the nation whom they serve I am going to judge, and afterward let them come out with great possessions.

God will judge this land (which is Egypt), and after that, all Israel will emerge with great wealth and possessions (this will be despite the fact that they were afflicted for many years in this nation).

Genesis 15:15 “Now as for you, you are to go to your fathers in peace, you are to be buried at a good old age.

Abram is promised that he will have a death of natural causes, and he will be buried at an age when he is very old.

Genesis 15:16 “Then, in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the crookedness of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

The fourth generation here apparently refers to the 400 years.

Genesis 15:17 And it came to be, when the sun went down and it was dark, that see, a smoking oven and a burning torch passing between those pieces.

Abram is still having a vision, and he sees a smoking oven and a burning torch passing between the animal carcasses. Let me suggest that the burning and smoking refers to judgment, sometimes on Israel but mostly on the nations which try to destroy Israel.

Genesis 15:18–21 On the same day הוהי made a covenant with Abram, saying, “I have given this land to your seed, from the river of Mitsrayim [= *Egypt*] to the great river, the River Euphrates, with the Qəynite, and the Qenizzite, and the Qadmonite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Repha'im, and the Amorite, and the Kena'anite [= *Canaanite*], and the Girgashite, and the Yəbusite [= *Jebusite*].”

That day, God makes another covenant with Abram telling him that this massive chunk of land, all that is between the river in Egypt and the River Euphrates is going to belong to the Jews.

There are all of these other peoples living in Canaan right now. They are not going to change this prophetic promise.

Lesson 154: Genesis 1–15 **“Lucky Guesses in the Bible”**

We just completed Gen. 15, where God has renewed His covenant with Abram and we discovered that Abram’s righteousness was imputed to him because he had faith in Jehovah Elohim sometime in the past.

In this lesson and the next, we are going to step back a moment a look at a few things which might give you a greater appreciation of the Bible, because you have now thoroughly studied 15 chapters of the first book of the Bible.

There are a significant number of people who doubt that the Bible is the Word of God. To them, some old guys a long time ago, wrote this book trying to pretend that they were writing God’s Word, and they fooled a lot of people. If this indeed describes the origin of the Old Testament, then the writer (or, writers) of Genesis made some marvelously lucky guesses about the future, about theology and about science.

“Lucky Guesses” found in Genesis	
The Lucky Guesses	Scripture
A sudden creation akin to the Big Bang theory, which theory was developed in the 20 th century.	Gen. 1:1
The idea of an ice age is hidden in the language of Gen. 1:2; where the Member of the Trinity who represents power and energy—the Holy Spirit—warms the surface of the earth.	Gen. 1:2
Even though most scientists believe in the Big Bang theory, they also believe that there was an extended period of time before man came on the scene. This is completely consistent with the language of Gen. 1:2.	Gen. 1:2
The concept of an atmosphere. God spends one entire day making the earth’s atmosphere. That there is an atmosphere and that it is dramatically significant to our lives was not known until thousands of years later (air, as being a mixture of gases, was not studied by science until the 1700’s). One of the most significant arguments of my generation—the CO ₂ in the atmosphere—is all about something that we cannot even see. Mankind, for thousands of years, took the atmosphere for granted—man literally did not know it was there—and yet, the author of Genesis 1 tells us that God took one full day to make the atmosphere God took a full day to make something that ancient man did not know existed.	Gen. 1:6–8

“Lucky Guesses” found in Genesis

The Lucky Guesses	Scripture
The concept of the Trinity, found over 1000–3000 years before it became Christian doctrine. The reason that this is such a lucky guess is, Jews do not believe in the Trinity, yet we appear to find the concept of the Trinity in the first chapter of Genesis.	Gen. 1:26 (see also, Gen. 1:2 18:1, 2, 9)
Man is made out of the same chemicals found in the ground.	Gen. 2:7 3:19
In the first few chapters of the Bible, we have the most fundamental relationships and human behavior patterns defined. Work is fundamental to man, whether in innocence or in a fallen state. Even today, we have cultures which try to give primacy to vacation time and to the weekend, but people who are happiest are not those who live for the weekend, but those who have passion for their work.	Gen. 2:15 3:17
From the very beginning, the Bible defines and describes the singular relationship between a man and a woman, even though, throughout the ages, people try to claim this relationship is old fashioned or even dead. Nevertheless, marriage between one man and one woman continues to be the both the primary and fundamental relationship in all societies. No matter what society, the most common and fundamental organization is marriage and family.	Gen. 2:18
The Bible speaks of the concept of cloning and genetic manipulation in the second chapter of Genesis. Science never considered such concepts until maybe the last 50 or so years. Prior to this, it seemed silly that God could take a rib from man, and somehow, from that rib, design another person. Now we know, that is more than enough genetic material to work with. Whatever manipulation of this genetic material was done, is beyond science today, but most scientists see that on the horizon.	Gen. 2:21–22.
From the very beginning, the Bible speaks of <i>the Seed of the Woman</i> when this would be an oddity to speak of at any point in time. Culturally and biologically, <i>seed of the man</i> makes sense and the <i>Seed of the Woman</i> does not. Yet key to Jesus Christ being born into this world without a sin nature is His being born to a virgin, apart from the <i>seed of man</i> . How was the writer of Genesis able to lay the groundwork for what is a fairly subtle and difficult point of Christian doctrine? Perhaps it was just a lucky guess?	Gen. 3:15 Isa. 7:14 Matt. 1:18–23

“Lucky Guesses” found in Genesis

The Lucky Guesses	Scripture
<p>The relationship between God Incarnate and Satan is defined from the very beginning. God speaks to Satan, saying, “I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will strike your head, and you will strike His heel.” How did the writer of Genesis know that Satan would be allowed to strike the heel of Jesus Christ? Jesus would take upon Himself the venom of sin, and yet, after He had paid for our sins, God would raise Him from the dead. And in the 2nd Advent, Jesus Christ would crush the head of Satan, casting him and his angels into the lake of fire. Again, Genesis, which is written anywhere from 500 to possibly even 3000 years before the Christian era, describes a fundamental Christian doctrine.</p>	<p>Gen. 3:15 1Peter 2:24 Rev. 20:10</p>
<p>The fundamental importance of a blood sacrifice, which is taught from the very beginning. This is fundamental to Christian doctrine. 1000–3000 years before Jesus, men in the Old Testament recorded the importance of the blood sacrifice. In order for Adam and the woman’s nakedness to be covered by animal skins, an animal had to die. Both Cain and Abel offered up sacrifices to God: Cain offered up the works of his hands and Abel offered up a sacrificed animal—God ignored Cain’s offering and respected Abel’s. There is no such thing as Christianity apart from the blood sacrifice; and the foundation for this is laid in the Gen. 3–4.</p>	<p>Gen. 3:21 4:1–7</p>
<p>The gospel of Jesus Christ is given in the genealogy of Gen. 5. When the English meanings of the names from the genealogy of Gen. 5 are strung together, we get the gospel of Jesus Christ: (from Chuck Missler) “Man [is] appointed [to] mortal sorrow; [but] the blessed God will come down teaching [that] His death will bring [the] despairing, rest.” A slightly revised version would be: “Man [is] appointed [to] mortal [ity]; purchased (or, possessed) [by] the Praise of God [Who] will descend [as the] Dedicated [One] (Who will be taken up). He dies and is sent [to the] poor [who are strong in Christ] [bringing them] rest [or, comfort, repose, consolation].”</p>	<p>Gen. 5</p>

“Lucky Guesses” found in Genesis

The Lucky Guesses	Scripture
<p>The idea that there could be a flood which would cover the entire earth. The idea that God could change topography and that would prevent a worldwide flood from reoccurring. When we studied the flood, we found out that a similar flood <i>could not</i> occur today. However, if the world were completely flat, then we would be covered in water. We know today that, if the topography of the earth was different, all the earth could be flooded. Again, what an amazingly lucky guess!</p>	Gen. 7–9
<p>Also, the dimensions of the ark are both seaworthy and able to carry the cargo of the animals spoken of. This was written anywhere from 3000 to 5000 years ago. Again, a tremendously lucky guess on the part of the writer of flood epic. Noah's Ark: A Feasibility Study by John Woodmorappe, describes in the most minute details how this was all possible. You may think, <i>well, so what?</i> But there are other worldwide flood traditions, but none of them can be examined this carefully without revealing a number of fundamental flaws with the story, the design of the boat, or whatever.</p>	Gen. 7–9
<p>The general historical trends of the people to be descended from Shem, Ham and Japheth are described.</p>	Gen. 9:24–27
<p>The naming and distinguishing of all the major peoples in the world is laid out. You may read Gen. 10 and think, “Well, so what.” However, in what ancient document do you have these races laid out, distinguished and associated with logical geographical areas in that chapter and elsewhere in the Bible? Only one that I can think of is, Josephus, who based his ancient history on the Bible.</p>	Gen. 10
<p>Data that shows the reduction of age of each successive generation would follow an exponential decay curve. All life and death is based upon exponential curves; and these ancient writers guessed that?</p>	Gen. 11:10–32
<p>The concept that the Jews would be a blessing to the world (which would come through Jesus Christ) and that nations would be blessed or cursed, depending upon their relationship with the Jews. This is an historical fact, whether we are speaking of Assyria, Egypt, Greece, Rome, Spain, Great Britain, the United States, or Iran. These nations, when their relationship with the Jews has been good, have been prospered. Those who treated the Jews as enemies have had a much more difficult history.</p>	Gen. 12:2–3

“Lucky Guesses” found in Genesis

The Lucky Guesses	Scripture
<p>The idea that the stars in the sky could be used as an analogy to refer to an incredibly huge number. In the ancient world, they could only see a few hundred, or, at most, a few thousand stars. Yet Abram’s descendants are compared to both the dust of the earth and to the stars in the heavens. With regards to numbering the stars of the heavens, Hipparchus, in 150 B.C., determined that there were 1026 stars. Ptolemy, another astronomer, not only counted the stars but documented that there were 1056 of them in 150 A.D. Later astronomers even proposed fewer stars (Tycho Brahé in 1575 A.D. suggested 777, Kepler in 1600 A.D. suggested 1005). Finally, Carl Sagan has determined that there are 25,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 (or 25 sextillion) stars and that there are many more beyond that. Yet, Gen. 15:5 and Jer. 33:22 suggest that the number of stars are uncountable and in Gen. 22:17, the stars in the heaven are compared to the sand of the sea. Given that you can hold 1000 grains of sand in one hand quite easily, it is fascinating that the authors of Scripture knew, several thousand years ago, what science is only most recently beginning to realize.</p>	Gen. 13:16 15:5
<p>The concept that faith alone in Jehovah Elohim is all that is needed to be declared righteous by God. This is not just the most fundamental concept of Christianity and the Bible, but this is absolutely unique in religious thinking—that one can be justified by faith alone, apart from any works. What is thoroughly amazing is, when Jesus walked on this earth, those Jews who taught the Old Testament, taught that salvation was gained by being a Jew and by obeying the Law of God (despite Gen. 15:6). In all religions and in all cults, works are a part of salvation; except for Christianity. Only in Christianity, faith alone in Christ alone results in eternal salvation, a salvation which cannot be taken from you; a salvation which you cannot lose by your lousy manner of life. And Gen. 15:6 (among other passages) telegraphs this fundamental of the faith 2000 years before Jesus Christ and the recording of the words of the New Testament.</p>	Gen. 15:6
<p>The very idea that the Jews would remain and that the major peoples of that day would be blotted out from history. Given the tremendous amount of anti-Semitism which has occurred throughout the ages, it is amazing that there are any Jews alive.</p>	Gen. 15:18–21 Ex. 23:23

There are so many different writings about creation, about how man started; by the Greeks and Romans of course, and by the ancient Egyptians and Assyrians. Yet, what creation story, apart from the Bible, is ever taken seriously? *In Norse mythology, there was only a chasm, Ginnungagap, in the beginning (somewhat like the Greeks' Chaos) bounded on either side by fire and ice. When fire and ice met, they combined to form a giant, named Ymir, and a cow, named Audhumbla, to nourish Ymir. She survived by licking the salty ice blocks. From her licking emerged Bur, the grandfather of the Aesir.*²² When, over the past 500 years, have influential people suggested, "We need to take another, closer look at the Norse view of beginnings; I think there may really be something there for us to study"? I took this particular example simply because it was at the top of the page; I could have taken any mythology of beginnings as illustrative of the fact that, the Bible is in a different classification from all other stories of creation. Look at any of the myths of creation and tell me which ones deserve a second look.

We are only 15 chapters into the first book of the Bible, and, already, there are 20 amazing things—20 lucky guesses, if you will—about things that no one should have known about. Could you sit down and write out scientific concepts before they are even thought of? Thousands of years before someone discovers them? Can you choose several peoples from the earth and tell me which of them will be here in 1000 years and which would be blotted out or no longer have a clear identify? Could you choose various peoples and tell me how they will interact over the next few thousand years? Could you outline some of the fundamental doctrines of a religion that will be established 1000 years (or more) from now?

I will agree that if you say, "1000 years from now, marriage is going to be the fundamental building block of all societies and work will still be fundamental to the well-being of man," you would be right. So, I will agree that, if you hold to these predictions, then you are correct about the future.

But, apart from those 2 things, how did the Bible get so many things right? What in the Bible in these first 15 chapters can you point to, and say, "Well, they got it totally and completely wrong there." Even evolution versus creationism or evolution versus intelligent design are still debated today. There have been college courses discussing this scientific debate, and, in the cases I am aware of, more people exit such a course believing in creationism than began the course believing in creationism.

²² From <http://ancienthistory.about.com/od/creationmyths/tp/090808CreationMyths.htm> accessed October 10, 2011.

When it comes to the Bible, there are three logical choices that you are left with: (1) some ancient, primitive man (or, a group of men) just happened to make some phenomenally lucky guesses (and without making any mistakes); (2) some religious fanatic trying to pull the wool of everyone's eyes just manages to make all of these lucky guesses, without making any mistakes (besides being able to fool everyone as to the time of writing of Genesis), or, (3) the Bible is the inspired Word of God, just as it claims to be. Writers of Scripture were carried along by the Holy Spirit, Who is God, Who knows the end from the beginning. Which is the most logical approach? What other alternatives are there? Is it really that logical that someone was able to write this stuff down, 3000–5000 years ago, and get it all right?

Will Durant, who wrote with Ariel Durant, at least 11 volumes of world history (each volume being around 1000 pages), did not believe in any of the supernatural elements of Genesis. Yet, he wrote: *The discovering here summarized have restored considerable credit to those chapters of Genesis that record the early traditions of the Jews. In its outlines, and barring supernatural incidents, the story of the Jews as unfolded in the Old Testament has stood the test of criticism and archeology; every year add corroboration from documents, monuments, or excavations. E.g., potsherds unearthed at Tel Ad-Duweir in 1935 bore Hebrew inscriptions confirming part of the narrative of the Books of Kings. We must accept the Biblical account provisionally until it is disproved.*²³

God gave us a brain and God does not expect us to disengage this brain when it comes to our faith in Jesus Christ. Faith is a choice that we make, but God gives us a lot of reasons why the choice of faith that we have made—faith in Jesus Christ and faith in the Bible—is the right choice.

Everything that you know is based fully or mostly upon faith, which is a result of making a choice to have that faith. Most of us do not fully understand how gravity works, but we all believe it exists, and we have dropped stuff, which has confirmed our belief in gravity. I get into planes all of the time—into tons and tons of metal—and I believe, each and every time, that monstrosity of metal is going to go into the air, rise to an altitude of 5000 ft. and take me to my destination. Obviously, my faith has been confirmed again and again. But then, so has my faith in God and in God's Word.

Lesson 155: Genesis

What is Incontrovertible about the History of the Bible

In the previous lesson, we looked at 20 “lucky guesses” which are found in the first 15 chapters of the Bible. These guesses involved science, scientific theory, historical events (future from the time of writing), sociology and Christian theology. The logical choice is, some author, or group of authors, writing thousands of years ago, took 20 shots in the dark and scored 20 bulls-eyes or, the Bible is the Word of God, as it claims to be. God knows

²³ *The Story of Civilization; 1. Our Oriental Heritage*, by Will Durant; MJF Books, ©1963; p. 300 (footnote).

science, God knows the future as well as He knows the past, and God invented Bible doctrine. Therefore, it is logical that God is able to inspire writers to write that which is true, even though that truth may not be fully apprehended until centuries or millenniums later.

When I was younger, and did not know much about anything, I was told some things about the Bible which simply were not true. One of them was, some religious hierarchy, like the Catholics took out all references to reincarnation in the Bible.

Even though we cannot prove, beyond a shadow of a doubt, when the portions of the Bible were written and by whom, anyone who knows any history knows these things:

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1. The Old and New Testaments are the products of many authors over a long period of time. Even the most hardened liberal scholar believes the Old Testament to be written over a period of 600 or more years. Most believe it to be written over a period of 1000 years or more (I personally believe the Old Testament to be written/recorded over a period of 2500 or more years).
2. I have given a partial list of amazing things found in the first 15 chapters of Genesis. No matter when these chapters were written, they are still extremely amazing things and the writing predates the science, scientific theory and Christian theology by hundreds to thousands of years, even if the most liberal beliefs about when the Bible was written are applied.
3. There is a long tradition of the Jews, early on, accepting the writings of the Old Testament as divine, and of Christians accepting the Old and New Testaments as divinely inspired. There does not appear to be some murky area of a few hundred years where these writings go from just popular writings to becoming the Word of God. The acceptance and recognition of these books as the Word of God happened almost immediately. Only a handful of books in both testaments was ever seriously questioned.
4. Because the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) was committed to writing some time between 300–100 B.C., we know that the canon of the Old Testament was *closed* and that the Jews clearly recognized which of their ancient writings were divinely inspired. Furthermore, we know that the completion of the Old Testament had to have come before that time—at least 100 years before Christ, and, more than likely, long before then.
5. In other words, we know that the Jewish canon of Scripture, the Old Testament, was first recognized and then the translation into Greek took place. It would make logical sense that these two events had a century or two of time between them, which is completely in line with what we know about the history of the Septuagint.
6. We know by the writings of the rabbins, by the historical writings of Josephus and by the way the Scriptures were treated in the New Testament, that they were accepted as being the Word of God and authoritative in all matters, to the Jews and then to the Christians.
7. We also know by the treatment of the Old Testament Scriptures—how they were

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copied and the high status of those who devoted their lives to making copies of the Old Testament—that the Jews believed the Old Testament to be the Word of God, and that this belief historically extends back centuries before Jesus Christ. This is the only logical reason why the Scriptures were so carefully preserved for 1000's of years.

8. We know that the copying of the Bible throughout the ages was extremely accurate. We have dozens of Old Testament manuscripts ranging in time from the Dead Sea Scrolls (which go back to approximately 100 B.C.—there were several means of dating methods used to determine the date of these manuscripts) to complete and nearly complete manuscripts from the early second millennium A.D. These manuscripts are preserved by very different groups of people in a number of ancient languages (Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, Latin, and Arabic). Although there are differences in manuscripts, these differences are clearly human mistakes, differences in spelling or quirks of translation as opposed to their being intentional alterations in the text in order to put forth this or that doctrine. The vast quantity of manuscripts that we have confirm that Jews and Christians over hundreds of years have made every attempt to preserve the accuracy of each and every letter of the Old and New Testaments.
9. Examples of the accuracy of the text:
 - 1) After the Dead Sea Scrolls had been discovered, textual critics compared the ancient manuscripts of Isaiah to the Masoretic text (which is the accepted version of the Old and New Testaments based upon manuscripts produced around A.D. 1000). In all of the 66 chapters of Isaiah, only 13 different readings were from the Dead Sea Scrolls' version of Isaiah as preferred over the Masoretic text. 8 of those alternate readings were already known because of other ancient texts; and few of these readings represent a significant change of meaning.
 - 2) A common example given to confirm the accuracy of later manuscripts, is Isa. 53, which is compared word-by-word, letter-by-letter, the Masoretic text to the Dead Sea Scrolls text. There are 166 words in Isa. 53, but only 17 letters are different. 10 of these letters represent a slightly different spelling of the same word and 4 letters represent minor stylistic changes (such as, conjunctions). The most dramatic difference in these manuscripts, copied down over 1000 years apart from one another, is the 3 letter word *light* in v. 11, which had been dropped out of the MT.
 - 3) These examples indicate that there was no attempt to slant the text of Isaiah toward one theological point of view or another; these are mostly changes in spelling, a few differences of grammar, combined with very few minor human errors.
 - 4) Textual critics have laid the texts side-by-side and have examined every single word and every single letter of Dead Sea Scrolls and the MT and have found this to be the case.
10. It should be noted that people who strongly disagreed with one another preserved the manuscripts of the Bible, which manuscripts are in close agreement with each

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other even to this day. We do not have the Jews making the Old Testament more Jewish and the Christians making the Old Testament more Christian. There are Christian and Jewish Bibles, but they are based upon the same set of manuscripts. The idea that anyone or any group made widespread changes in the Bible at various times in history is completely unfounded and contradicted by hundreds of manuscripts which exist today. No one could make dramatic changes in the Old or New Testaments then any more than they could do this today. This is because copies of the Old and New Testaments were held by and preserved by widely divergent groups far apart from one another.

11. Now, you may say, "But isn't there a Catholic Bible and a Protestant Bible?" There were books written in between the testaments called the apocrypha. The Catholics accept these books as inspired and they are a part of the Catholic Bible. Protestant Christians do not believe that the books of the apocrypha are inspired (neither do Jews, and these are Jewish writings). However, when it comes to the Old and New Testaments, there is little if any difference between a Catholic-approved Bible and a "Protestant" Bible. In fact, Jerome, who is claimed by the Catholic church, translated the Bible into Latin, because that was the language of his day, and some Catholic translations use this Latin translation (called the Latin Vulgate) as their primary or secondary basis for translation. When I translate a verse in Scripture, I always make reference to the Catholic Douay-Rheims Bible, which was a translation made around 1600. Jerome's Latin translation is a very good translation of the Bible and so is the Douay-Rheims Bible. A Catholic may do well to ignore the apocrypha and any commentary found in his Catholic-approved Bible; but, other than that, a Catholic translation is as good as any "Protestant" Bible.
 - 1) As an aside, the approved Catholic Bibles are: the Douai-Rheims Bible, the Confraternity Edition, Revised Standard Version (RSV) - Catholic Edition, New American Bible (NAB), Jerusalem Bible, New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)- Catholic Edition, New Jerusalem Bible (NJB), Today's English Version - Catholic Edition.
 - 2) I use the NRSV, the NJB and the NAB nearly every day. They are wonderful translations of the Bible. They are very readable and some of their translated verses are insightful. I work in the Old Testament primarily and there has *never* been a time when I came across something in the NJB, for instance, and noted how "Catholic" it was.
12. Because of the Greek Septuagint and the Dead Sea Scrolls, we know that there is a large gap of time between the Old and New Testaments. There is a bare minimum of 200 years between the testaments, between hundreds of prophecies about Jesus Christ and the fulfillment of all these prophecies. Even the most liberal of scholars would admit that this gap is 200 years or more. Conservative scholars put this gap at 400 years.
13. Therefore, all of the types in the Old Testament (animal sacrifices, specific incidents in the Old Testament) which have their fulfillment in the antitype, Jesus Christ, were written prior to incarnation of Jesus Christ. There is absolutely no

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historical question about this.

14. All of the prophecies about the coming Messiah and the types, therefore, were written long before the Messiah came. We are not talking about 1 or 2 or even 9 or 10 prophecies; I have counted over 180 Messianic prophecies and types in the Old Testament, and I am certain there are more. All of these prophecies were written before Jesus was born—that is incontrovertible. How is that possible? How did that just happen?
15. In the previous lesson, I gave several examples of very specific Christian theological views, all of which are specific to Christianity (the necessity of a blood sacrifice, the prominence of faith over works, the Trinity)—all of which are not found anywhere but in Christianity, which seeds were clearly planted in the first 15 chapters of Genesis.
 - 1) No such continuity exists in Islam or Buddhism. The concept of progressive revelation is Islam is, if two passages contradict one another, the most recent passage is taken as being authoritative.¹
 - 2) There have been some changes in the modus operandi of worship in the Old and New Testaments. Jews, in the Old Testament, sacrificed animals over and over again, and Christians do not. This is not a contradiction, but simply a recognition of what side of the cross people are on. In the Old Testament, millions of animals were sacrificed day after day after day in order to look forward to the cross. No Jewish person in the 1st century could hear Paul talk about the blood of Christ or the sacrifice of Christ without understanding the continuity of Jewish religious worship. When the unnamed author of Hebrews wrote **Under the Law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins**; Jews fully understood that.
16. Furthermore, these prophecies were recorded by a myriad of authors over many centuries. There are just not one or two authors of the Old Testament who churned out a lot of lucky prophetic guesses; prophecies about Jesus Christ are found in the old books of the Bible as well as the most recent as well as in nearly every book of the Bible.
 - 1) So far, in Genesis, we have had the sacrifice of the animals to make animal skins to cover Adam and the woman; the Seed of the Woman prophecy, the difference of the quality of Cain and Abel's sacrifices, all of which foretell of the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ. When we come to Gen. 22, we will see the cross and our Lord's substitutionary death portrayed by Abram offering up his son on the altar.
 - 2) In Exodus, we have, for instance, the Passover, where the blood of the sacrificial lamb is put on the sides and top of the doorway to the Jewish house, which blood matches the blood of our Lord on the cross (from His head, hands and feet—the blood at the top of the doorway would drip to the bottom). God would see blood and pass over that house, sparing those inside from the death of their firstborn.
 - 3) In Leviticus, the animal sacrifices are all types pointing toward Jesus

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Christ.

- 4) I could continue, book by book, through the Old Testament, showing you types and prophecies of Jesus Christ, in each and every book.
17. So, we know that 20–25 different Old Testament authors, writing over a period of 600–2500 years, all writing about the very controversial subject of religion, all spoke of Jesus Christ in one way or another, developing a theology which was completely fulfilled by Jesus Christ. This is an incontrovertible fact.
18. The writings of the Old Testament are based upon human history. What we find in the Old Testament is inseparable from the human history it records. The ancient historian, Josephus, took the Old Testament as being authoritative in historical matters. Modern historian, Will Durant, who is not a Christian, does as well. He wrote: *The discoveries here summarize have restored considerable credit to those chapters of Genesis that record the early traditions of the Jews. In its outlines, and barring supernatural incidents, the story of the Jews as unfolded in the Old Testament has stood the test of criticism and archeology; every year add corroboration from documents, monuments, or excavations... We must accept the Biblical account provisionally until it is disproved.*³
19. No other religion, apart from Judaism, is so firmly dependent upon actual human history than Christianity. Christianity is rooted his historical events. Christianity is not a philosophy or a set of ideas; it is a system of thought and doctrines concerning a relationship between man and God which is grounded in actual human history. If the history is fiction, then there is no Christianity.
20. There was a lot of writing which took place during the time of the New Testament, and Christians were decidedly unpopular during this era. All historians agree on this. Therefore, if people seriously questioned the Person of Jesus Christ and His resurrection, or His actual existence, we ought to find writings of critics from that era. There were critics of Christianity and there were disputes, and we have writings of all of this. Therefore, if there are historical events found in the gospels or in the epistles which were in dispute at that time, then we ought to have hundreds of manuscripts from that era disputing the basic claims of historical Christianity. Today, there are many best-selling books which criticize Christianity and the Bible; so it is logical that books which criticize the historical facts found in the gospels ought to be numerous. However, even though there anti-Christian writings which come out of subsequent centuries, there are no writers in the first century who dispute the historicity of Jesus, the crucifixion, or the Apostles and what they did. Why are the historical facts of Christianity not questioned in the 1st and 2nd centuries? Given the appreciation for logic, which has a tremendous history in Greek culture, why did not ancient critics write, “None of this stuff every happened”? Rome was, in many ways, based upon Greek culture, so debate and logic were very much a part of Roman culture as well. There was the great historian Josephus (and several others). But no one of that era questioned the historicity of Jesus or His death on the cross. Logically, if these things could have been disputed—if the New Testament events were inaccurate—then that would have been the first line of attack on Christianity in the 1st century A.D. However,

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we have none of the history of the New Testament disputed in that first century.

- 1) As an aside, there are many modern books which attack Christianity based upon historic matters. One of the examples given was the Hittites. Archeology, for a long time, did not produce a history of the Hittites which could be squared with the Biblical record; so the Bible was questioned for many decades. However, as more information was unearthed from the archeological research, it became apparent that the Biblical record of the Hittites was quite accurate.
 - 2) Archeology affirms again and again the historical facts of Scripture.
21. Our partial manuscripts of the New Testament go way back, within 100–200 years of their being written (which is very rare—most ancient manuscripts are separated in time by 1000 years or more from the actual events which took place). Therefore, recognizing Jesus as divine did not occur over a long period of time. This perception of Jesus occurred almost immediately after, if not simultaneous, with the events of His life. For people to grow in stature by legend and rumor, generally 400 years or more must pass before their historicity is distorted and falsely magnified. We have commentary by people from His generation and from the generation which followed Him who recognized Him as God—people who knew Jesus spoke of Him as God. We have manuscripts that are so ancient that we know this understanding of Jesus goes back to His time on earth. The literature which we have—and we have a lot of it—indicates that Jesus was believed to be God from the very beginning; and that there was no evolutionary process which takes us to that doctrine.
22. When it comes to the New Testament, the accuracy of transmission is unparalleled in ancient writings. We have about 26,000 partial and full manuscripts of the New Testament, some of which date back to nearly the first century A.D. In fact, the accuracy of the New Testament is more certain than the accurate transmission of Shakespeare's writings. John Lea writes: *It seems strange that the text of Shakespeare, which has been in existence less than two hundred and height years, should be far more uncertain and corrupt than that of the New Testament, now over eighteen centuries old, during nearly fifteen of which it existed only in manuscript...With perhaps a dozen or twenty exceptions, the text of every verse in the New Testament may be said to be so far settled by general consent of scholars, that any dispute as to its readings must relate rather to the interpretations of the words than to any doubts respecting the words themselves. But in every one of Shakespeare's thirty-seven lays there are probably a hundred readings still in dispute, a large portion of which materially affects the meaning of the passages in which they occur.*⁴
23. Finally, the power of the Bible is as strong today as it ever was. Do you know what was the best selling book last month? The Bible. Do you know what was the best-selling book the month before that? The Bible. Do you know which book sells more copies month are month, year after year than any other book that has been written? The Bible. This book is so powerful that there are national governments will do everything in their power to keep the Bible out of their

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country. Some governments will incarcerate or execute people who bring Bibles into their country. People will sue to keep the Bible out of the classroom; a controversy which continues in the United States today. If an English teacher wants to teach Greek or Roman mythology, no one bats an eye. But if that same English teacher wants to teach this or that book out of the Bible, then expect there to be near riots at the school board meetings (I exaggerate by half). There are books written every year which denigrate the Bible. Hundreds of times, authors believe that they have written the book that will, for all time, bring the Bible down.² And these books and these authors always fade into obscurity, and the Bible still stands, as the most powerful living document today. **For the Word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing apart of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is able to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart** (Heb. 4:12).

¹ <http://www.islamreview.com/articles/quransdoctrine.shtml> accessed October 18, 2011

² I own at least one book like this, where the author assured me in his preface that this book would be the death knell of the Bible. I can guarantee you that you have never heard of this book or this author. He faded into obscurity.

³ *The Story of Civilization; Volume I Our Oriental Heritage*; Will Durant; MJF Books; ©1963; p. 300.

⁴ John W. Lea, *The Greatest Book in the World*; Philadelphia; ©1929, p. 15. This was taken from Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*; ©1972 by Campus Crusade for Christ; p. 22..

The historical points above are not disputed by any serious historian.

You may ask, *how can all of these things be true, and yet, some scholars still doubt that the Bible is the Word of God?* Negative volition is the key. People who are negative toward God and toward the Word of God will allow almost anything to dissuade them. For some of them, the idea that the Bible is the Word of God in some real and unique way is simply fundamentally impossible to them, regardless of the facts.

As a simple example, Jesus performed miracles on many occasions; He healed people who had suffered particular maladies for decades. Yet, some people who observed the healing or knew the person healed, did not believe in Jesus.

We see people closing their minds to the truth over and over again. One of the true conspiracies of our day—the Communist conspiracy, which reaches back into the 30's in the United States—is still scoffed by many, despite overwhelming evidence for it. We know for a fact, for instance, that Joseph McCarthy had real concerns about communist infiltration into the highest levels of government and society in the United States; and yet, he is treated by many, historically, as a joke and a blowhard. What is almost never discussed, when he is historically maligned is, *was he right?* Despite whatever personal failings McCarthy had, the question, *was he right*, is the most important consideration to any discussion about Joe McCarthy. Yet, this fundamental historical fact is ignored or glossed over by those who speak of *McCarthyism* or of *the McCarthy era*.

Another example: we are presently in a war with Islam—a war which Islam started—and this war is against all of the west and the east, with 5 or more attacks occurring every single day. Yet, there are still people who will say, “All religions have their radical fanatics; there are just as many radical Christians who are a threat to us as radical Muslims.” Many people have made that statement because (1) they know some nice Muslims and (2) they have never seen an Islamic attack close up (and have blotted the significance of 9/11 from their minds). This is called, negative volition. Despite all the empirical evidence to the contrary, they say, “There are radicals in all religions—Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam.” They try to equivocate things for which no such equivocation exists. If you say, “What about the crusades?” you have just made my point. More people are killed in the name of Allah each year than all those who died as a result of the Spanish Inquisition over a period of 350 years. If you were to name all of the attacks made by radical Christians over the past 50 years (and, in most cases, you would be wrong), that would be fewer attacks than those which take place each and every single day in the name of Islam. Yet millions of Americans are either willfully ignorant of this war we are in or they completely misjudge it. And yet, this is more than history—these are current events which occur each and every day.

<http://thereligionofpeace.com/> keeps a running total of all current Jihad attacks. You may think that, since 9/11, there have been 10 or 20 Jihad attacks; maybe you think there were 100 since then. As of today, there have been nearly 18,000 attacks since 9/11, yet not one person in ten knows this. People have world views—their way of understanding the world—and they do not let any facts get in their way.

Lesson 156: Genesis 16:1–5 Misapplication of Faith: Abraham, Sarah and Hagar

So far, God has promised Abram several things: (1) God would make a great nation from him; (2) he would be a blessing to all mankind; (3) those who blessed him would be blessed and those who cursed him would be cursed; (4) Abram’s offspring would be given the land of Canaan; (5) Abram’s offspring would be like the dust of the earth or the stars in the sky. However, Abram finds himself getting old, and he realizes that he has to have a son in order for these promises to be fulfilled. So his wife convinces Abram to help God a little bit. That is what this chapter is about. Abram will act when no action is called for. He will try to help God, even though God does not need our help. This will be an act of human good, and God hates human good.

From what we read, it will become apparent that Abram did not keep these promises to himself, but that he shared them with his wife. “God came to me and told me that He would make a great nation of me.” At no time did God indicate that these promises were to be kept secret, so we would expect that Abram would tell Sarai all of the details. every time that God appeared to him.

Gen 16:1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar.

You will recall that Abram and Sarai just spent some time in Egypt because of the famine in Canaan, and while they are there, they apparently picked up an Egyptian servant girl whose name was Hagar.

Sarai thinks about these promises which Abram has shared with her, and she apparently believes them, but she seems to think that God needs help. She and Abram have been married for some time at this point (I would guess 20–30 years; possibly more) and they understand how to have children, and they have certainly been having sex over the years (recall that, even at an advanced age, Sarai looked beautiful). However, Sarai had no children yet. But, Sarai has an idea:

Gen 16:2 And Sarai said to Abram, "Look, [up until] now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to [and obeyed] the voice of Sarai.

To listen is the Qal imperfect of *shâmaʿ* (שָׁמַע) [pronounced *shaw-MAHG*], which means *to listen, listen intently, to listen and obey, to listen and act upon, to listen and give heed to, to hearken to, to be attentive to, listen and take heed to, listen and take note of, listen and be cognizant of*. Strong's #8085 BDB #1033. This is a very common word in the Hebrew and it means more than to simply hear something. The imperfect tense indicates that Sarai kept talking to Abram about this. The word *said* is also in the imperfect tense. So, this did not happen one time over the dinner table. Sarai either talked about this at length or brought up the subject several times, and Abram listened to what she said and thought about it.

What Sarai suggests here is not out of the ordinary. It was a cultural norm for a barren woman to allow her husband to sire a child by a servant, and for the child to be raised as her own. We will find that again with Jacob (Abram's grandchild).

So, Sarah has been thinking about these promises of God, and she has no children, which is key to God fulfilling His promises to Abram. Therefore, she comes up with an idea. Abram needs to have sex with their slave girl so that they can fulfill the plan of God through Hagar. Their slave girl is younger, appears to be at the right age, and this is socially acceptable.

Between 1925 and 1930, the University of Pennsylvania spearheaded an archeological dig in Iraq where 20,000 clay tablets were unearthed. They dated back to the 14th and 15th centuries before Christ. Some of these tablets dealt with inheritance, and it was permissible for a man to "adopt" a son if his wife was barren (see Gen. 15:2–4) or it was the obligation of the wife to provide her slave girl to the husband. Therefore, what Sarai suggested was not only socially acceptable, but expected.

So, God has made specific promises to Abram, and at no time did Sarai's name come up in these promises. Sarai realizes this, and comes up with a plan. Her plan is for Abram to have sex with Hagar, their Egyptian slave girl, who is likely much younger than either of them, and probably reasonably attractive. Abram probably finds this plan/temptation to be

to his liking. His wife is telling him to have sex with another woman in order to fulfill the promises of God.

You will note that Sarai does all of the talking and Abram does all of the listening (imperfect tense for each verb). There does not appear to be a conversation going on. If there was any discussion, Abram apparently had very little to offer. Because, as the verse tells us, Sarai kept talking and Abram kept listening. Finally, at some point, Abram said, "Sure, honey; for you, I'll do it."

Gen 16:3 So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife.

Most translations smooth out the Hebrew, because there are things in the Hebrew which are peculiar to that language, but not to ours (such as, the word *face* is always in the plural). So, a more literal translation of v. 3 is: **And so, Sarai, a woman [wife] of Abram, takes [seizes] Hagar the Egyptian her slave girl from the end of ten years Abram to dwell in a land of Canaan. And so she [Sarai] gives her to Abram her man [husband] to him for a woman [to wife].**

What is not quite as apparent in most translations is, this verse emphasizes the relationships of these 3 people. Sarai is Abram's woman; Abram is Sarai's man; Hagar is an Egyptian slave girl to Sarai. This is who and what they all are—these relationships are all made clear in v. 3. But then Sarai seizes Hagar and gives her to Abram—to him—for a wife (in the Hebrew, there is one word used for both *woman* and *wife*). For Sarai to seize Hagar and to give her to Abram changes everything. They all have specific relationships, clearly laid out in the Hebrew, and Sarai changes everything.

Abram and his wife left Haran when Abram was 75 years old (Gen. 12:4). It is 10 years later, and he is now 85 years old. In a year, he will have a son born to him by Hagar, and he will be 86 years old (Gen. 16:16).

In order to help you with the time frame, I have put together a timeline for Abram here:

<http://kukis.org/Charts/abrahamictimeline.htm>

<http://kukis.org/Charts/abrahamictimeline.pdf>

In this timeline, I give two very different views of the actual date (for instance, MacDonald has Abram being born in 2164 B.C. and Reese has him born in 1967 B.C.). Also, in this timeline, we have the various ages of Abram coinciding with different events of his life. Whereas, the dates may be suspect, the ages of Abram are accurate because they are given in the Bible.

What is happening here is strictly human viewpoint. Abram and Sarai have no children; God has promised them not just children, but a great legacy, and Sarai has developed a plan on her own to fulfill God's promises. One of the problems with this plan is, it involves introducing another moving part into the complex relationship of marriage. God created Adam, and then, through clone-manipulation, created the woman. God did not create 2

or 3 women for Adam. One woman was more than enough for Adam to handle. From that point on, monogamous relationships were the order of the day. We have already studied the first polygamous relationship in the Bible—Lamech and his two wives. Lamech was a folksinger, and he sang about killing two men, and how God would avenge his death more than Cain’s (Gen. 4:19, 23–24). Lamech’s line went nowhere, even though Lamech could father more children because he had 2 wives. Immediately, in the very next verse, the Bible presents, as a contrast, Adam and Eve who then have Seth, the line which will lead us to Noah (Gen. 4:25). If Abram thinks about the Scriptures (I believe that he is in possession of them at this time), then he knows about the polygamous relationship of Lamech versus the monogamous relationship of Adam and Eve, which produced Seth. Abram should have said, “Sarai, I think that this is a bad idea.” That was, unfortunately, not Abram’s reaction. He looked at Little Egypt (Hagar) in a different light, and obeyed the voice of his wife.

Nowhere in the existing Bible (the first 10 or so chapters of Genesis), does God give an equal standing to a polygamous union. Just as Adam listened and obeyed the voice of Eve before the fall, so would Abram listen to and obey the voice of his wife.

This in no way suggests that a man not listen to the voice of his wife. However, as the spiritual leader of the family (which is one of the man’s roles), Abram needs to evaluate what Sarai has suggested and then reject this scheme of hers. There is no indication that God sponsors polygamy; there is no indication that God needs some additional assistance in order to make His promises come to pass; and God has not suggested at any time that Abram take up with a slave girl in order for His promises to be fulfilled.

What Abram is about to do is legitimate in his culture; it is socially acceptable by human viewpoint standards, and this represents human works. For these reasons, we know that this is a bad idea. By the words the Holy Spirit uses to define the proper relationships of Abram, Sarai and Hagar in v. 3, we know that this is a mistake.

Gen 16:4 And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress.

Euphemisms, when it comes to sex, are as old as the Bible. The verb *to go in* is the Qal imperfect of *bôw’* (אָוַב) [pronounced *boh*], which means *to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter*. Strong’s #935 BDB #97. This verb is found more than 2500 times in the Bible and it is used here, euphemistically, to refer to sex.

There are a number of *she’s* in this verse, so we need to sort them out. We have two clues: the name *Hagar* is the only feminine person named in this verse until we come to *mistress*. This word *mistress* does not refer to Hagar, as the mistress of Abram, but it refers to Sarai, as the mistress over Hagar (Gen. 16:8–9). Therefore, all of the *she’s* in this verse logically refer to *Hagar*. Therefore, to help sort this out, we might read Gen. 16:4 in this way: **And Abram went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when Hagar saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress, Sarai.**

The tenses are interesting in this verse. The verb *went in to* is a Qal imperfect, which indicates that Abram probably had sex with Hagar on several occasions. The first time we find the verb *conceived*, it is also in the Qal imperfect, so the idea is, Hagar entered into a state of having conceived, and remained in that state for a long time (my guess would be about 9 months). The next verb *saw* is a Qal imperfect followed by the Qal perfect of *conceive*. So, Hagar kept looking at (thinking about) her situation of having conceived (perfect tense; past action); which meant that, each and every day, the fact of her carrying Abram's child was given consideration in her own mind. She thought about this and tried to figure out what to do in order to usurp Sarai's position in the family. Let's take this information and try to translate this verse to reflect these various tenses.

Gen 16:4 And Abram went in to Hagar [on several occasions], and she conceived [became pregnant and continued to show signs of pregnancy]. And when Hagar kept observing that she herself had become pregnant, she kept looking with contempt upon her mistress, Sarai.

The final verb is the Qal imperfect of *qâlal* (קלל) [pronounced *kaw-LAL*] and it means ❶ *to be diminished* (note the passive meaning); ❷ *to be despised, to be contemned* (again, a passive meaning); ❸ *to be swift, to be fleet* (this verb is rarely so used). Strong's #7043 BDB #886. All of a sudden, this slave girl looked down upon her mistress; this slave girl saw herself as superior to Sarai. Sarai had become quite diminished in her eyes. Remember in v. 3, how their relationships are carefully defined; and then, at the end, Sarai seizes Hagar and gives her to Abram? That messes up their well-defined relationships. So now, in this verse, Hagar, the slave-girl, who ought to be obedient to her mistress, Sarai, now looks down upon her mistress. She no longer has the proper deference for her mistress.

Women are very keyed into these things. It is possible that Abram, being a man, noticed very little; but I can guarantee that, this new opinion that Hagar had of Sarai was very well-known to Sarai. Hagar was younger than Sarai and now she was carrying Abram's child. She first stated a few simple facts to Sarai, such as, "I do believe that I have morning sickness." But, at some point in time, 7 or 8 months into pregnancy, I can just see Hagar saying to Sarai, "Could you be a dear, and fetch that for me?" Hagar is no longer the slave girl in her own eyes. She is not under Sarai's authority anymore. She is Abram's woman carrying his child, something that Sarai is unable to do. Sarai is struggling with this new relationship as well.

Related to this is Hammurabi's Code, ¶ 146, which tells us that a slave woman who has borne children, may not assert herself over against the unproductive wife. She may not usurp the wife's position or achieve equality with the wife in this situation. Again, we can see how closely this situation parallels with the traditions of that era. Hammurabi's code clearly recognizes the problem which could erupt and makes an attempt to fix everything with a law.

You will note that, in laying out this entire scheme, Sarai seems like a very modern and progressive woman. This is what a modern woman ought to do under these

circumstances, in that culture. However, after Abram has sex with Hagar, after Hagar bears Abram the child that Sarai could not, and after Hagar begins to see herself in a different light, Sarai's feelings about this situation changed.

Bear in mind, all of this is Sarai's idea, but now that Hagar has a son sired by her husband, Abram, she is less than happy with the results. Therefore, Sarai is going to complain about the situation. And this you might find shocking: Abram cannot simply say, "But, honey, this was all your idea." That approach just isn't going to fly.

Gen 16:3–4 So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress.

All parties involved share in the fault here, even though there were no clear guidelines that we are aware of, apart from the norms of society at that time. Hagar was being told by Abram and Sarai, her two masters, what she had to do. There does not seem to be any resistance from Hagar in all of this; and it is very likely that she saw this as a possible power play. Abram was a nice guy; she was a slave girl with no prospects, so becoming his wife through pregnancy looked like a step in the right direction to her.

Furthermore, it was not unusual, in that day, for a younger second wife to supplant the first wife, which situation was addressed in Hammurabi's code (mentioned above). So, it is very likely that, in all of this, Hagar looked at this as her way out of being a slave girl. Maybe she would get her own slave girl?

From Sarai's standpoint, this was all wrong. This woman had sex with her husband; this woman now had a child that Sarai was unable to provide, and Hagar was now indicating to Sarai, by her very looks, that she would supplant Sarai as Abram's wife.

Gen 16:5 And Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done to me be on you [that is, *this is all your fault, Abram*!] I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the LORD judge between you and me!"

Sarai blames Abram for this. It was her idea, and yet she blames Abram. Obviously, some things in male-female relationships never change over time. And notice Sarai's complaint: *she gave me a mean look!* It is the same verb as in v. 4—it is clear that Hagar now has a diminished view of Sarai—and Sarai knows it. What has been going on may have been news to Abram, because Sarai has to point this out to him.

So far, we have studied this in Gen. 16:

Gen 16:1–3 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said to Abram, "Look, [up until] now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to [and obeyed] the voice of Sarai. So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife.

Sarai clearly wants a child very badly; my guess is, Abram, when asked to have sex with another woman, responded as any male would. "Of course, honey; I'll take one for the team." Today, he might ask, "Do you really want me to impregnate Hagar or is this some kind of a test?" It is possible that some thought is being given to God's promises as well, but God is only mentioned twice in this passage: (1) Sarai blames God for her being infertile and (2) after the child is born to Hagar, Sarai asks for God to judge between her and Abram. That tells us that God's promises to Abram were not first and foremost on their minds. It is certainly possible that Sarai used God's promises to rationalize what she was doing.

With regards to Sarai, patience and waiting on God ought to be the order of the day. She obviously wants a child and blames God that she does not have one. However, she certainly knows that promises that God has made to Abram.

At this juncture, instead of moving ahead with their human viewpoint plan, Abram should have stopped this process and said, "I need guidance from God, just to make sure." However, there are other things at play here. Sarai wants a child and she believes that God is preventing her from having one, so she is willing to go the surrogate-mother route. Hagar wants to elevate her position in the household, and this is the ideal way to make that happen. And Abram is, as a male, tempted. Since Sarai proposed this plan, it is likely that Abram has begun to see Hagar in a different light. So, even though God is mentioned twice in this passage (vv. 1–5), it is unrelated to His plan or His promises.

Gen 16:4–5 And Abram went in to Hagar [on several occasions], and she conceived [became pregnant and continued to show signs of pregnancy]. And when Hagar kept observing that she herself had become pregnant, she kept looking with contempt upon her mistress, Sarai. And Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done to me be on you [that is, *this is all your fault, Abram*!]! I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the LORD judge between you and me!"

Sarai is apparently aware of the promises that God made to Abram. There is no indication that these promises were to be kept a secret from Sarai. However, her actual desire is to have a child. Her solution was to have her husband have sex with her personal female servant, and use her as a surrogate; something which was not unknown in that time period.

When Hagar, Sarai's servant, becomes pregnant, the servant girl begins to look down on her mistress, because she is able to get pregnant and her mistress is unable to. This has

dramatically changed the dynamic of Abram's marriage, as the introduction of a 3rd party into a marriage would naturally do.

How should Abram have responded? With Bible doctrine. He has doctrine in his soul. He knows what God has promised. God told Abram that his heir would be from his own loins (that is, Abram would sire such a child—Gen. 15:4). That Abram's seed would eventually be like the stars of the heavens or the dust of the earth (Gen. 13:16 15:5). Abram has already suggested that his heir would end up being one of those in his household, and God told him, *no* (Gen. 15:2–4). Combine this with what Abram and Sarai both know about Adam and Eve, and there is clearly no reason for Abram to go outside of the marriage in order to sire a child. At the very least, Abram should say, "I'll ask God about this." But this was not his response. Instead, he listened and obeyed his wife.

Gen 16:5 And Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done to me be on you [that is, *this is all your fault, Abram*]! I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the LORD judge between you and me!"

Abram is at a loss here. The problem is, he has allowed Sarai to undermine his authority, and she is technically right—this is Abram's fault. She may have had the idea to do this and she may have made the suggestion, but Abram followed through with the action. Abram is the head of their household, and what he chose to do was wrong. It does not matter that this was Sarai's idea. He ought to take responsibility for what has transpired; however, instead, he takes the path of least resistance.

Gen 16:6 But Abram said to Sarai, "Listen, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please." Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she [Hagar] fled from her [Sarai].

So, Abram does exactly what you would expect: he abdicates his responsibility in the matter and suggests that his wife deal with the problem.

We know that this argument took place on several occasions; or that this was a long discussion. *Said* in both verses is a Qal imperfect, indicating that Sarai kept talking and Abram kept talking. Did Abram try the line, "But, honey, this was all your idea"? We don't know. But we are only given the gist of the conversation here, but with the implication that this topic of conversation came up again and again between Sarai and Abram.

The bullet points are:

Sarai: "This is all your fault—even God knows this."

Abram: "She's your servant; you deal with her."

If you have been married for over one month, I am sure that you have had a lengthy conversation with your spouse, where this pretty much sums up your discussion.

Gen 16:6 But Abram said to Sarai, "Look, your servant is in your power [lit., *hand*]; do to her as you please [lit., *do what is good in your eyes*]." Therefore, Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she [Hagar] fled from her [Sarai].

Abram is in complete failure mode here. He tells Sarai to do whatever she wants to do with her servant girl, because she is her servant. *To deal harshly* is the Piel imperfect of 'ânâh (אָנָה) [pronounced *gaw-NAWH*], which means (in the Piel) *to oppress, to depress, to afflict; to persecute; to intimidate; to humble; to deal harshly [with someone]; to harangue [harass, provoke, hassle]*. Strong's #6031 BDB #776. The imperfect tense indicates that Sarai kept intimidating and harassing her servant-girl. Sarai treats her so harshly that Hagar runs away.

At this time, Abram and Sarai are living somewhere in southern Canaan (what would later become Judah); and a very pregnant Hagar is walking back to Egypt. This is about a 200 mile trek, much of it through uninhabited wilderness. A pregnant Hagar would not survive such a walk.



Gen 16:7 The Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the desert-wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur.

Hagar is carrying Abram's child, and that counts for something to God, even though this child does not represent the seed of promise.

Shur was an area south of Judah, between Israel and Egypt. The *Way to Shur* would have been a road, albeit more crude than the ones we are used to. The Angel of the Lord comes to her at this time. Who exactly is the Angel of Jehovah?

This is taken from the **Doctrine of the Angel of Jehovah** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)).

The Abbreviated Doctrine of the Angel of Jehovah

1. The Angel of the Lord is one of the preincarnate forms of Jesus Christ, the 2nd Member of the Trinity.
2. There are actually several names for the Angel of Jehovah, all of which are related to divine designations:
 - 1) The Angel (Messenger, representative, one sent) of Jehovah. Gen. 16:7
 - 2) The Angel of God. Gen. 21:17 31:11 21:17 Ex.14:19 Judges 6:20

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- 3) The Angel (Messenger) Who has redeemed me. Gen. 48:16
 - 4) The Angel (Messenger) of His Presence (Face). Isa. 63:9
 - 5) The Angel of the Covenant (Contract). Mal. 3:1
 - 6) The Destroying Angel. 1Chron. 21:15 2Sam. 24:16
3. The Angel of Jehovah is identified as Jehovah. Gen. 16:7-13 21:17-18 22:11-18 31:11-13 48:15,16 Ex. 3:2 cf. Acts 7:30-35 Ex. 13:21 14:19 Judges.2:1-4 5:23 6:11-23 13:3-22 2Sam. 24:16 Zech. 1:12-13.
- 1) Genesis 22:11-12 **But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." And He said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."**
 - 2) Genesis 31:11, 13 **"Then the Angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob,' and I said, 'Here I am.' 'I am the God {of} Bethel, where you anointed a pillar, where you made a vow to Me; now arise, leave this land, and return to the land of your birth.' "**
 - 3) Exodus 3:2-4 **And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. So Moses said, "I must turn aside now, and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up." When the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush, and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am."**
4. The Angel of Jehovah is distinguished from Jehovah. Gen. 24:7 40 Ex. 23:20 32:34 Num. 20:16 1Chron. 21:15-18 Isa. 63:9 Zech. 1:12-13.
- 1) Exodus 32:34 **"But go now, lead the people where I told you. Behold, My Angel shall go before you; nevertheless in the day when I punish, I will punish them for their sin."**
 - 2) Isaiah 63:9 **In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saved them; in His love and in His mercy He redeemed them; and He lifted them and carried them all the days of old.**
 - 3) Zechariah 1:12-13 **Then the Angel of the LORD answered and said, "O LORD of hosts, how long wilt You have no compassion for Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, with which You hast been indignant these seventy years?" And the LORD answered the Angel Who was speaking with me with gracious words, comforting words.**
5. The Angel of Jehovah does the works of God.
- 1) He provides a substitutionary sacrifice for Abram and blesses Abraham, confirming promises given to him by God. Gen. 22:11-18
 - 2) The Angel of Jehovah imposes God's will upon Balaam in Num. 22:22-35
 - 3) The Angel of the Lord becomes the Savior of Israel as well as their Redeemer. Isa. 63:8-9 **He [God] said, "They are indeed My people, children who will not be disloyal," and He became their Savior. In all their suffering, He suffered, and the Angel of His Presence saved them. He**

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- redeemed them because of His love and compassion; He lifted them up and carried them all the days of the past. Jesus Christ is our Redeemer, Who has given Himself as our ransom. Matt. 20:28 Col. 1:14
6. Therefore, the Angel of Jehovah is the Second Person of the Trinity. John 1:18 6:46 2Cor. 4:4 Col. 1:15 1Tim. 6:16 Heb. 1:1–2 1John 4:12.
- 1) The Second Person of the Trinity is the visible God of the New Testament.
 - (1) John 1:18 **No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God [Jesus Christ the Son], who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained {Him.}**
 - (2) John 6:46 **"Not that any man has seen the Father, except the One [Jesus Christ] Who is from God; He has seen the Father.**
 - (3) 1 John 4:12a **No one has beheld God at any time;**
 - 2) The Angel of Jehovah never appears after the Incarnation. Note that Acts 12:7, 11 is not a reference to the *Angel of Jehovah* but to an angel *from* the Lord (Jesus Christ). (compare Col. 3:1)
 - 3) Both the Angel of Jehovah and Jesus Christ are sent by the Father. Gen. 24:7 Ex. 23:20 Num. 20:16 Dan. 3:25, 28 6:22 John 3:17 6:44 John 17:3, 8, 18, 21, 23, 25 1John 4:14
 - 4) Since neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit can be seen by man (John 1:18 John 4:24 3:8), and since Jesus Christ has been seen (John 1:14 John 18b; 14:9), it is concluded that Jesus Christ is the Angel of Jehovah or the visible member of the Godhead in the Old Testament.
7. Other pre-incarnate appearances of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Old Testament which are not specifically spoken of as the Angel of Jehovah:
- 1) **...the Lord God (Jehovah Elohim) walking in the garden...** Gen. 3:8
 - 2) **...a Man wrestled with him (Jacob)...** Gen. 32:24-32;
 - 3) **...the Lord appeared to Abram...** Gen. 17:1-22; 18:1, 2, 10, 13, 14, 17-33
 - 4) **...a Man (captain of the army, or host, of Jehovah)...with his sword drawn...** Joshua 5:13-15 6:1–2
 - 5) The destroying angel, most likely the Angel of the Lord in 1Chron. 21:15
 - 6) **...a Man riding on a red horse...** from Zech. 1:8-12
 - 7) **...a certain Man dressed in linen...** Dan. 10:5-9; 12:6-13; cf. Ezek. 1:26-28; and Rev. 1:12-20

The Introduction of the Angel of Jehovah is another instance in the Old Testament where the doctrine of the Trinity was taught but never formally codified in Rabbinical literature and probably not understood or discussed in Old Testament times.

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Basic doctrine is taken from http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=28 which are probably notes taken from R. B. Thieme, Jr. and from <http://www.swordofthespiritbibleministries.com/images/simplelists//NOTESAF/Angel%20of%20Jehovah.pdf> <http://www.portlandbiblechurch.com/DoctrineFolder/DOCTRINE%20OF%20THE%20ANGEL%20OF%20JEHOVAH.pdf>

Gen 16:7 The Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur.

Interestingly enough, God went to Hagar, and this suggests that she is a believer in Jehovah Elohim (or she becomes a believer in Him). She has lived with Abram and Sarai for several years, so it is reasonable that, through them, she believed in Jehovah Elohim.

You will note that some time has passed. God does not go to Hagar 20 minutes after she leaves. God gives her some time to walk and vent; and to also take stock of her situation. She is pregnant, in a desert, without any help, ready to make a 200 mile trip. So God gives her some time to wear out her anger with Sarai and Abram; and to begin to think about the situation that she is in. At some point, she is going to recognize, on her own, that this walk to Egypt while pregnant, is a very bad idea. That is when God comes to her.

The application is fairly simple here. There are times that we go off, headstrong, in this or that wrong direction; muttering about our situation, and cursing half of the people that we know. For awhile, there is no reasoning with us. However, given a little time and doctrine in our souls, and we just might be open to reason and correction.

Lesson 158: Genesis 16:1–9

God Tells Hagar to Return to Abram and Sarai

Gen 16:1–7 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said to Abram, "Look, [up until] now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to [and obeyed] the voice of Sarai. So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. And Abram went in to Hagar [on several occasions], and she conceived [became pregnant and continued to show signs of pregnancy]. And when Hagar kept observing that she herself had become pregnant, she kept looking with contempt upon her mistress, Sarai. And Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done to me be on you [that is, *this is all your fault, Abram!*] I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the LORD judge between you and me!" But Abram said to Sarai, "Listen, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please." Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she [Hagar] fled from her [Sarai]. The Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the desert-wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur.

So far, we have reasonably determined that Sarai knows about God appearing to Abram and of the promises which were made, but it does not appear as though these promises are going to be fulfilled. However, more important than these promises to Sarai is, she simply wants a child. Therefore, Sarai suggests that Abram use her Egyptian slave girl as a surrogate mother, and that Sarai would raise the child as her own (which was socially acceptable in that day and age).

Introducing a new moving part into a marriage was a bad idea, and chaos erupted. After a heated discussion between Abram and Sarai, Abram told Sarai to do whatever she wanted, as Hagar was her slave girl. As a result, Sarai harassed Hagar so unmercifully that a very pregnant Hagar ran away.

When Hagar is on the road to Shur, the Angel of Jehovah, Who is Jehovah, *found her*. The verb here is the Qal imperfect of *mâtsâ'* (מצא) [pronounced *maw-TSAW*], which means *to attain to, to find, to detect, to happen upon, to come upon, to find unexpectedly, to discover; to meet (encounter)*. Strong's #4672 BDB #592. This is a very common verb and ought to be translated *to meet, to encounter* in this instance. This gives us [The Angel of the LORD encountered her by a spring of water in the desert-wilderness, the spring on the road to Shur](#). The *way to Shur* is actually a road—not as we would understand a road to be—but it is a clearly defined route which would take her eventually to Egypt. She was at a rest stop, which would have been a well to drink from. In that era, a well would be a deep hole dug in the ground.

As we have studied, the Angel of the Lord is Jehovah Elohim, the 2nd Person of the Trinity, the revealed Person of the Trinity and the object of our salvation faith.

Hagar is clearly angry and disappointed with her life at this point. We do not know the circumstances which caused her to become a slave, but they could not have been very good. Becoming a slave to Abram and Sarai was a great blessing to her, whether she recognized this or not. During her service to Abram and Sarai, she believed in Jehovah Elohim, the God of Abram. We know this because God has come to her in these desperate times.

There is one more lesson here: God comes to us when we are ready and in whatever state we are in. God did not come to Hagar 3 minutes after she stepped out of the door and began walking to Egypt. She was not ready at that time. She would not have listened even to God. God waited until she got to this point—she was tired, probably hungry and thirsty, at a well—and Egypt was still a very far ways off. By this point in time, she may have begun to realize what she had chosen to do might not have been a good idea.

[Gen 16:8](#) And He said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai."

You will notice that, when dealing with someone who is out of fellowship, God seems to invariably open the conversation with a question. So God asks her where she is going. Hagar explains that she is running away from her mistress, Sarai. The very fact that God is speaking to Hagar suggests that she believes in Him.

What is also very interesting about this question—when she tells what God she has done, she has just named her sin to Him. Her sin is, she was running away from her mistress.

You may recall that, when the idea of Hagar being a surrogate mother came up, the relationships of Abram, Sarai and Hagar were all clearly defined. God again reminds Hagar of her true relationship. ["Hagar, slave-girl of Sarai"](#) is how God addresses her.

Hagar even acknowledges this, admitting that she is fleeing from her mistress. Hagar recognizes their relationship—that she is the slave-girl and Sarai is her mistress.

You will notice there is a second question asked by the Angel of Jehovah: “[Where are you going?](#)” Hagar does not answer the second question. Or, if she did, the Bible does not record her answer. This is for the simple reason that, she is not going to get there. This is not a true option in her life: Sarai or Egypt. First of all, she will be unable to walk to Egypt and, secondly, what is she going to do there? She already was in Egypt, in slavery, and she was likely given to Abram as a slave (Gen. 12:6). This suggests that she either lacks a family or does not have a family that she can return to for support. Hagar has 2 real options before her: return to Sarai or die in the desert.

[Gen 16:9](#) The Angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress and submit to her."

Here, as in many other places, God’s approach to what has gone on is much different from our approach. Slavery is the law of the land and Hagar belongs to Sarai. We do not know any details of this conveyance of ownership. The most likely scenario is, when Abram and Sarai were in Egypt, pharaoh gave Abram a number of gifts for Sarai, which included male and female slaves (Gen. 12:16). There is no indication that any of these items were returned to pharaoh when the truth became known about Sarai. There is the possibility that, when Abram and Sarai were in Egypt, that they purchased Hagar. Hagar may have offered her own services to them. However, this is less likely because they just received a large present of cattle and slaves; so it is not as if they are out there looking to buy one additional slave-girl.

We know that Abram did not take her as a result of combat in Gen. 14, because he personally took none of the spoils of that war (Gen. 14:23–24). So, most likely, the Egyptian girl, was among the slaves given to Abram when he and Sarai were in Egypt.

You will notice that God does not appear to Abram and Sarai and tell them, “Slavery is a social evil and you need to eschew it and set Hagar free. And then you need to travel about to your neighbors and tell them to set their slaves free.” Abram probably had dozens of slaves (Gen. 12:16 20:14 24:35). Instead, God speaks to Hagar and tells her to return and to submit to her mistress, Sarai. Slavery was her station in life; she belonged to Sarai; and God never suggests or implies that this is a bad thing that the elimination of slavery is what Sarai and Abram need to devote their lives to.

Many slave contracts were agreements between the master and slave. At times, there appears to be an exit clause or a time limit clause. We may or may not like it, but God did not repudiate slavery as a human institution in the Old Testament. Even in the New Testament, when Paul dealt with the slave of Philemon, he sent this slave back to his master Philemon. Paul did suggest that Philemon free Onesimus, the slave who came to Paul; but, clearly, the final decision was Philemon’s.

In our culture, we have heard over and over again about the evils of slavery, and it was, no doubt, at times, very cruel and evil. We have heard almost endlessly in our own history,

what a great evil slavery is. However, despite the cruelty and abuse that existed, millions of Africans who were brought to America have believed in Jesus Christ as a result. The same is true of their descendants. The descendants of slaves today have a far better life than the descendants of those whose ancestors were not taken into slavery. In fact, for many years, Biblical Christianity was the greatest driving force in the American Black community. Throughout American history, there have been many Black churches and many Black believers in Jesus Christ who adhered to the teachings of the Bible.

The first great distortion of the Black church was the civil rights movement, which became closely associated with many Black churches. Rather than teaching the Word of God within some local churches, the people were taught about social issues and encouraged to become involved in social issues, which is not the place of the church.

One of the reasons we know that the civil rights movement distorted Black churches is, additional false doctrine and distortion of the gospel has since crept into many Black churches, as Paul warned about (2Cor. 11:13–15 Gal. 1:7 2:4). The social consciousness and the social action of the civil rights movement made the Black church ripe for additional perversions, the most common of which is [Black Liberation Theology \(PDF format\)](#) (from what I have read, that has found its way into a tenth of the Black churches today). In fact, the church that President Obama attended for 2 decades teaches Black Liberation Theology.

Black Liberation Theology has its roots in Liberation Theology, which was a communist approach to distorting the beliefs of the deeply religious in South America and elsewhere. Communists found out that they could not easily oppose the faith of the people of the countries that they wanted to take over (they were mostly Catholic), so they subverted the faith instead. They made the Bible say things that it did not say and perverted the churches from the inside. The less the people knew about the Bible, the more easily they could be convinced of enough false doctrine to make them compliant to communism.

Furthermore, because many African-Americans have been removed from their faith, Islam has ironically made great inroads into the Black community since the 60's and 70's, particularly with Blacks who are disenchanted with American society in any way. If they can be convinced that Christianity is a white man's religion (which is absolutely foolish, since it comes out of the Middle East), then they can be convinced that Islam is a religion for the Black man. This is quite ironic because Islam was the religion of many of those who originally captured and sold Africans into slavery.

Over a period of time of 50 or so years, the Black Church in America was dramatically changed; and with this change came the corruption of the Black family and the dramatic rise of drug use, crime and fatherless families in the Black community. It all goes back to the perversion of Christianity. You may not know this, but, at one time, prior to the Great Depression, Black unemployment was lower than white unemployment. Black families were every bit as strong as white ones. Education was a strong family value in the Black community. This is because they focused first and foremost on the gospel of Jesus Christ and the teaching of the Word of God. The key to Black families is the key to all

families—Bible doctrine in the souls of the family members. The key is churches which teach the Word of God as opposed to churches which are involved in temporal social issues.

During the 50 years or so after the Civil War, Blacks in America developed strong churches, which in turn blessed the Black community. There were problems and social ills, as there is with every generation (e.g., President Woodrow Wilson re-segregating our armed forces); but the Black community was progressing spiritually and socially.

Let's talk a little more about slavery. There is something distinctly honorable about slavery in some respects. Some people, who were deeply in debt, paid off these debts by voluntarily placing themselves into slavery. Personally, I find that to be much more honorable than going into bankruptcy or filing a chapter 13 bankruptcy, and leaving your creditors out there to dry. Placing oneself into slavery because of debt is taking real responsibility for one's debts.

For some young people in the ancient world, this was their start in life—orphans or those coming from very poor families. Becoming a slave to a wealthy family was their start in life; and it is what sustained them for the rest of their lives.

Many young people—particularly those from poorer countries—become au pairs for some families. The timing often works out well; the job may last a few years or longer, allowing enough time for the au pair to put away some money and to gain some direction in life. The life to the au pair is not dramatically different from the life of Hagar.

Even though some Americans look at slavery as America's greatest sin, God still tells Hagar to return to Sarai and to submit herself to her. One of the clear teachings of Scripture is authority orientation; that we have certain authorities over us in this life, and that we are to obey those authorities. Sarai was Hagar's authority in slavery. Despite the unfair treatment by Sarai herself, Hagar was still subject to her authority, Sarai would be providing food, clothing and shelter to both Hagar and her son throughout her pregnancy and during the time her son is an infant. And this is God's plan for Sarai, Hagar and Hagar's child.

[Gen 16:9](#) The Angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress and submit to her."

Returning to Abram and Sarai will preserve the lives of Hagar and her son.

Lesson 159: Genesis 16:1–9

The Doctrine of Slavery

So far, we have studied this:

[Gen 16:1–9](#) Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said to Abram, "Look, [up until] now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I

shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to [and obeyed] the voice of Sarai. So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. And Abram went in to Hagar [on several occasions], and she conceived [became pregnant and continued to show signs of pregnancy]. And when Hagar kept observing that she herself had become pregnant, she kept looking with contempt upon her mistress, Sarai. And Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done to me be on you [that is, *this is all your fault, Abram*]! I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the LORD judge between you and me!" But Abram said to Sarai, "Listen, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please." Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she [Hagar] fled from her [Sarai]. The Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the desert-wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. And He said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai." The angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress and submit to her."

Hagar is a slave to Abram and Sarai; she is Sarai's personal slave (often called a *handmaid* in the KJV). So, this brings up the question of slavery and the Bible.

Let's look at slavery objectively, from the standpoint of the Bible.

The Biblical Doctrine of Slavery

1. Slavery, as a human institution, is not specifically condemned in the Bible. No one in the Bible is ever told to leave their master; no one is told to lead some great revolt against slavery.
 - 1) In the context of our passage, Hagar is told by God to return to and submit to her mistress, who maltreated her. Gen. 16:9
 - 2) The book of Philemon deals with a slave that escaped from Philemon—Onesimus—who comes to Paul in prison, and who Paul sends back to Philemon, his master. Although Paul requests that Philemon set this slave free, he does not command it. The final decision is the master. This is found in the Epistle (letter) to Philemon.
 - 3) Jesus did not condemn slavery, even though He had the chance to on many occasions. Matt. 8:5–10 10:24
2. Several great men in the Bible owned slaves. For example:
 - 1) Abraham in Gen. 24:35.
 - 2) Isaac in Gen. 26:13–14.
 - 3) Job in Job 19:15.
3. However, it is clear that slavery is not the ideal in God's eyes:
 - 1) The Hebrews were enslaved to Egypt and God told the pharaoh to let them leave.
 - 2) Paul suggested to Philemon that he free Onesimus. Philemon 1:8–16
 - 3) When northern Israel defeated southern Israel (Judah) in a battle, they took 200,000 men, women and children, many of whom would become slaves. God sent a prophet to them and told them not to do this.

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- 2Chron. 28:8–11
- 4) There would come a day when Israel would no longer be enslaved to her enemies. Jer. 30:8 Ezek. 34:27
 - 5) When listing those who are opposed to God and opposed to sound doctrine, Paul includes those who are *slave-traders* (also called *man-stealers*). This would indicate that there are clearly some illegitimate aspects of slavery which some slave traders practiced. 1Tim. 1:10
4. There were a number of ways a person could become a slave in the ancient world:
- 1) Foreign slaves could be captured in war. 1Sam.4:9 17:9 2Chron. 36:20 Ezra 9:7–9
 - (1) As an aside, a woman taken as a captive in war could also become the wife of a Hebrew. Deut.21:10-14
 - 2) Slaves could be purchased. Ex.12:44 21:2 Lev. 25:44–46 Eccles. 2:7
 - 3) Slaves could be a gift. Gen. 21:10
 - 4) Joseph's own brothers threw him into a pit, and traveling Midianites found him and sold him to Ishmaelites who then sold him to the Egyptians. Gen. 37:23–24, 28
 - 5) One could enter into slavery or sell one's children into slavery because of debt. 2Kings 4:1
 - 6) Some men are born into slavery because their parents are slaves. Gen.15:3; Jer.2:14.
 - 7) As restitution for crime, a person could commit himself to slavery. Ex.22:3
 - 8) A person could become a slave because of defaulting on debts. Lev. 25:14–28 2Kings 4:1
 - 9) One could become a slave by means of abduction, which the Bible teaches to be wrong. In fact, this illegal act could be punished by execution. Ex.21:16 Deut.24:7 1Tim. 1:10
5. The point is, most of these ways that a person could become a slave are legitimate. The application of this institution could be sinful; but slavery, in itself, was not necessarily evil. In fact, a person with absolutely nothing could become a slave and eventually earn his freedom and walk away financially solvent. Some slaves were elevated from slavery to very high positions of authority and responsibility.
6. There was a form of slavery where a nation would be conquered and they would be taxed instead of being taken hostage and made slaves. 2Sam. 8:2, 6, 10–12 1Kings 4:21 2Chron. 17:11
- 1) In some cases, this was codified where a stronger power protected a weaker country; and the weaker country would pay tribute to the stronger country. The agreement was called a Suzerain-vassal treaty.
 - 2) The Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:2–17) are said to be in the form of a Suzerain-vassal treaty, containing a preamble (identification of the covenant giver), an historical prologue, stipulations, provision for deposit and public reading, a listing of treaty witnesses, blessings and curses, a

The Biblical Doctrine of Slavery

ratification ceremony and an imposition of the curses.

- (1) See <http://www.haverhillcc.org/files/IntrotoBibleClass15.pdf> This writer suggests that the entire book of Deuteronomy is in a Suzerain-vassal treaty format.
7. Just as owning a business today with hundreds or thousands of employees is seen as a good thing today, owning many slaves in the ancient world was considered a blessing from God. Gen. 24:35 26:13–14 Isa. 14:1–3
8. God required that the Egyptians pay restitution to the Hebrew slaves for their years of labor. It should be noted that payment was made by slave-holders to the slaves themselves, and not many generations later (like the reparations being called for by some liberal Black groups in the United States today). Ex. 3:22 11:2 12:35–36
9. The slaves of Hebrews often became believers in Jehovah Elohim. Gen. 24:52 Ex. 12:43–44
10. Slaves were to participate in some of the religious celebrations of Israel. Deut. 12:18 16:10–11
11. A relative could redeem a slave from slavery. Lev. 25:48–49
12. Slaves were supposed to be released in the Year of Jubilee (every 49th year). Lev. 25:50–55
13. In the end times, even slaves would have God's Spirit poured out upon them. Joel 2:29
14. Slaves were entrusted with important tasks, material things and great responsibilities. In this way, slaves were not much different than a live-in employee. In the case of Joseph, he rose from being a slave to a great ruler in Egypt. Gen. 24 (see, for instance, v. 53) 39:1–6 Psalm 105:17–23
15. Therefore, if you envision a slave as someone who was followed around by someone with a whip who constantly beat the slave; and that this slave did only menial tasks, then you do not have a clear picture of slavery in the ancient world. Matt. 18:28–29 21:34–35 25:21–23
16. Quite obviously, many slaves did perform menial tasks as well. In many cases, this was their only function. Gen. 26:15, 19, 25, 32 Joshua 9:18–23 1Kings 9:21
17. However, a smart slave-owner would recognize potential and responsibility in his slaves, which is why Joseph could rise from being a slave to prime minister over Egypt. Gen. 39:1–6
18. Female slaves sometimes became the wives or mistresses of their masters or their master's sons. Gen. 16:1–4 30:1–18
19. The Bible provided protections for the slave in the Mosaic Law.
 - 1) Hebrew slaves were enslaved only for 6 years and then they were to be freed. Ex. 21:2 Deut. 15:12–15
 - 2) If another Hebrew becomes your slave as a result of their debt, you are not to treat them cruelly as a slave; but to work out a future time when they can be financially solvent and free. Lev. 25:35–43
 - 3) Such manumission occurred on other times as well. Jer. 34:8–10

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- 4) A Hebrew slave could choose to remain a slave. Deut. 15:16–18
- 5) If the master of a slave purchases a woman who becomes the slave's wife, he may remain with his wife in slavery. Ex. 21:3–6
- 6) Slaves were not to work on the Sabbath. Ex. 20:10 23:12
- 7) A slave-owner could not simply kill one of his slaves without retribution. Ex. 21:20
- 8) Under some circumstances of causing injury to a slave, the owner had to set the slave free. This is more an indictment of the slave-owner, rather than a reward to the slave. It is obvious that such a man should not own slaves. Ex. 21:26–27
- 9) If a woman taken in slavery was made a wife, and then rejected, she could not simply return to being a slave. She had to be set free. Deut. 21:10–14
20. These protections for slaves in Israel provide a great contrast between slaves in Israel and slaves in Egypt. Egyptians treated the Jews with great harshness in slavery. Ex. 1:10–14 3:7–9
21. In Jesus' time, slaves clearly had independent financial transactions from their masters as well as some freedom of movement. Matt. 18:28
22. Slavery is used as an illustration for our spiritual depravity before God. Because we are born with Adam's sin imputed to us, because we have a sin nature and because we sin personally against God, we are in the [slave market of sin](#), unable to purchase our own freedom. Only Jesus Christ, from outside of the slave market (He is born without a sin nature, without Adam's imputed sin, and without personal sin), can purchase (redeem) us. The Israelites freed from Egypt illustrate this. Ex. 13:3, 14 Deut. 6:12 7:8 15:15
23. Slaves were a part of several of our Lord's parables:
 - 1) The parable of the sower. Matt. 13:18–30
 - 2) The slaves waiting for their master. Luke 2:37–48
 - 3) The man having the great supper sends out his slave with the invitations. Luke 14:16–24
 - 4) In the prodigal son parable, the slaves prepare for the return of the son. Luke 15:22
 - 5) The slaves being left with money with the intent that they invest this money. Luke 19:11–26
 - 6) The farmers who beat the slaves who come on behalf of their master for the fruit of the field. Luke 20:9–16
 - 7) This was not a complete listing of parables which featured slaves.
24. The human race is born into slavery, 1Cor.7:21-23. The unbeliever is a 3-fold slave.
 - 1) The unbeliever is spiritually dead, a resident of the slave market of sin.
 - 2) The unbeliever is a slave to the old sin nature.
 - 3) The unbeliever is a slave to human viewpoint.
25. The believer can become enslaved. Enslavement to the sin nature is basic soul slavery, Rom.6:20. Advanced soul slavery is reversionism, where the believer becomes indistinguishable from the unbeliever.

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26. As believers, we ought to see ourselves as slaves to God. Paul and other communicators of God's Word saw themselves as slaves as well. Luke 1:38, 46–48 Luke 2:29 Acts 4:29 Rom. 1:1 Gal. 1:10 Philip. 1:1
27. Jesus differentiates between believers who are slaves of God and believers who are friends of God. John 15:15
28. Paul uses slavery to illustrate positional and temporal sanctification in Rom. 6:15–23
29. When a person becomes a believer, he should not look to suddenly change his status—even if he is a slave. 1Cor. 7:17–23
30. There are no human distinctions which are carried over into the spiritual life, including being slave or being free. The idea is, a believer who is a slave is equal in the eyes of God to a believer who is free. 1Cor. 12:13 Gal. 3:28 Col. 3:11
31. Paul saw even himself as a slave to the Corinthians for their spiritual growth. 2Cor. 4:5
32. Paul uses this real life illustration of Abraham's children by a slave woman (Hagar) and by a free woman (Sarah) to being under the Law of Moses or heirs to God's promises. Gal. 4:21–31
33. Paul mandates the believers who are slaves obey their masters. Eph. 6:5–8 Col. 3:22–24 1Tim. 6:1–2 Titus 2:9–10
34. Similarly, masters were to treat their slaves justly. Col. 4:1
35. By application, we can take much of what is said in the Bible about slaves and masters and apply this to employees and employers.
36. When Jesus became a man, He was taking upon himself the form of a slave. Philip. 2:7
37. So, like it or not, apart from abduction slavery, the Law of Moses sought to regulate slavery and to protect those who were slaves. The Bible did not seek to end slavery.

Some points were taken from <http://www.versebyverse.org/doctrine/slavery.html>

There are several applications from the Doctrine of Slavery.

Lessons from the Doctrine of Slavery

1. There are social evils in this world that we cannot solve; nor is God calling for His people to lead this or that social movement to fix this or that social problem. This includes slavery. At no time does God call upon His people to end slavery.
2. The believer in Jesus Christ is not called upon by God to fix social evils in this world.
3. We have already studied how the Black church became corrupted by social action. Their lives, in many ways, became worse, because of social action. What good is freedom if that freedom is squandered? If you use your freedom to take drugs, to commit crimes and to have children without caring for them, is that a good thing?

Lessons from the Doctrine of Slavery

- 1) As an aside, Oprah Winfrey first went to some American Black children to see about setting up her school in the United States. They wanted sneakers and other material things; so she set up an educational institution for girls in South Africa. There, they appreciated what an education would do for them.
4. It is clear that slavery can be a social evil in the way that it was practiced. However, nowhere in the Bible are believers called upon to correct this social evil. If they were slave owners, then they were called upon by God to treat their slaves justly and honorably.
5. Laws from God to Israel were cognizant of slavery yet did not call for the out-and-out removal of slavery as an institution.
6. This suggests that there aspects of slavery which were not necessarily evil. With the correct relationship between a master and a slave, the slave was to be taken care of and treated justly; and the master received the service of the slave. Col. 3:22 **Slaves, obey the lords according to flesh in all respects, not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God.** Col. 4:1 **Lords, give what is just and equal to the slaves, knowing that you have a Lord in Heaven also.**
7. If a person was born again while a slave, they were not to expend effort trying to secure their own freedom. 1Cor. 7:21–23 **Were you called as a slave? It does not matter to you. But if you are able to be free, rather use it. For the one called while a slave in the Lord is a freed man of the Lord. And likewise, the one called while a free man is a slave of Christ. You were redeemed with a price; do not become slaves of men.** This final statement has to do with becoming a slave to human viewpoint, not with some sort of resistance to becoming a slave in some way. There would be some instances where one believer might petition another to request the freeing of an individual slave, as Paul requested of Philemon. The spiritual duty of Onesimus was more important to the plan of God than was his labor to Philemon.
8. Meaningful decisions are made by individuals or corporations based upon Bible doctrine. A corporation can be a married couple, a family, or some other organization of people.
9. So, in the Bible, it is legitimate for Philemon, Paul's slave-owning friend, to manumit Onesimus from his own free will; however, it would not be right for Paul to demand that he do this. It was legitimate for Paul to ask Philemon to manumit Onesimus.
10. David, as leader of his country, originally developed a friendship with Ammon (2Sam. 10:1–2) and put Moab into slavery (2Sam. 8:2). He did not decide that Israel needed some more slaves, so he enslaved Moab. David originally had a friendship with the King of Moab (1Sam. 22:3). Moab had simply become hostile to Israel, so David soundly defeated them, killed 2/3^{rds} of their males, and enslaved the nation (after that, they paid Israel tribute). We, in the United States, do not grasp that some countries and some leaders are implacable and hate us and only understand military might. In fact, the only reason 50 or so countries

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- have not attacked us is, our military would destroy them. Moab was right next door to David and he had to act. Therefore, after Moab was defeated militarily, it was legitimate to make Moab pay tribute (David was essentially taxing them for being overtly hostile towards Israel).
11. In our own history, it ought to be clear that, forcing the manumission of slaves is quite costly—if memory serves, 600,000 men died in the Civil War and the South was devastated for another 100 years following the Civil War (not because of the manumission of slaves, but the north devastated the south in the war, and then continued to do so via legislation from Congress). This was not an issue that needed to be forced, particularly in a democracy. England freed their slaves legislatively, as a matter of course, discourse and debate. Even the abolishment of slavery took place over a period of time in Great Britain, after the Abolishment of Slavery Act in 1833.
 12. Israel had been enslaved to Egypt for 400 years; and this slavery was illegitimate. Jacob and his sons had moved to Egypt for legitimate reasons, his son Joseph was the Prime Minister of Egypt, and the Jews were not hostile to the Egyptians. In fact, the Jews always had it in their souls to return to the land of Canaan, the Land of Promise. They did not want to take over Egypt. Therefore, enslaving the Jews was a matter of paranoia on the part of the Egyptian king; and not on the basis of any legitimate principle (the Jews were not, for instance, organizing uprisings in the land of Egypt).
 13. God did call upon Egypt to set His people free and to reimburse them for their time of slavery. Because the Egyptians resisted this, God punished them (the 10 signs or judgments). However, even this was done according to God's timetable and could have been accomplished without loss of life, had the Egyptians been willing to recognize that Moses was operating with God's authority.
 14. In conclusion, social evils are not what a believer ought to focus on. The believer focuses on Bible doctrine and allows himself to be guided by Bible doctrine.

10 or 20 lessons from now, we will examine the history of [slavery in the United States](#).

Lesson 160: Genesis 16:1–12

God and Hagar/The Geographical Will of God

In the previous lesson, we examined the [doctrine of slavery](#). We have also studied the first 9 verses of Gen. 16:

Gen 16:1–7 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said to Abram, "Look, [up until] now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to [and obeyed] the voice of Sarai. So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. And Abram went in to Hagar [on several occasions], and she conceived [became pregnant and continued to

show signs of pregnancy]. And when Hagar kept observing that she herself had become pregnant, she kept looking with contempt upon her mistress, Sarai. And Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done to me be on you [that is, *this is all your fault, Abram*]! I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the LORD judge between you and me!" But Abram said to Sarai, "Listen, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please." Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she [Hagar] fled from her [Sarai]. The Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the desert-wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur.

Sarai suggested to Abram that he have a child with Hagar, her slave-girl, so that Sarai might raise this child as her own. Although many teachers speak of this fulfilling the covenant of God to Abram, it sounds much more like Sarai just wants a child.

Gen 16:8–9 And He [the Angel of the Lord = Jehovah Elohim] said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai." The angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress and submit to her."

That the Angel of Jehovah appeared to Hagar is quite remarkable. As we have studied, the angel of Jehovah is the 2nd Member of the Trinity, the Revealed Member of the Trinity, Jesus Christ in His preincarnate form. Hagar is a slave-girl and God appears to her. There is no one in her line, apart from Ishmael, who will be well-known; but the very fact that this boy is Abram's son is meaningful to God. This is known as [blessing by association](#), which has been mentioned and studied before. Hagar is blessed in many ways because she is associated with Abram. Part of that blessing is, she became a believer in Jehovah Elohim. Because she is a believer and because she is carrying Abram's child, God appears to her. God will take care of her and He will take care of her child; but Hagar must return to mistress. This is God's geographical will for her.²⁴ There is a place where God desires for us to be. For Hagar, it is in the household of Abraham.

I have mentioned the geographical will of God on many occasions. Therefore, it might be useful to have it laid out in doctrinal form.

The Geographical Will of God

1. Anything related to the will of God has several common elements:
 - 1) First of all, you must be a believer in Jesus Christ. There is no will of God whatsoever for the unbeliever, apart from, "**Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.**" (John 3:16, 18, 36).
 - 2) In order to discern the will of God, including His geographical will, you must be in fellowship, which requires you to name your sins to God (1John 1:9).
 - 3) You must know Bible doctrine (2Peter 3:18). God does not give you a tingling feeling when you are doing the right thing and a stomach ache when

²⁴ We have spoken of God's geographical will on many occasions and it is integral to the [Doctrine of the Will of God](#).

The Geographical Will of God

- you are not.
2. There are things which are true for all human beings, which are the [laws of divine establishment](#). Believers and unbelievers ought to function within the confines of these laws.
 3. You do not use your free will to sin or to commit crimes. When you do that, you are out of the will of God and probably out of the geographical will of God.
 4. It is a part of man's nature and a part of man's responsibility to work. So, during working hours, you ought to be at work.
 - 1) Adam worked both in perfect environment and in a fallen world. Gen. 2:8, 15 3:17
 - 2) On many occasions, God teaches the importance of hard work. One example is Prov. 6:6–11.
 - 3) When believers lost track of this in Thessalonika, Paul told them, **if one does not work, then neither should he eat** (2Thess. 3:10).
 - 4) As an aside, a believer should not be sitting at home collecting a check from the government. I have personally known dozens of people who collect checks from the government, and, apart from a social security check collected after age 65, I have never known a single person who would have starved without this government check. In most cases, the same is true of most of the retired social security recipients that I have known.
 5. Believers and unbelievers both have a responsibility toward their spouses and toward their children. To properly function in a marriage to properly raise a child, there must be time spent on these things. That time spent with the family is being within the geographical will of God.
 6. Believers grow by means of the Spirit and knowledge of the Word of God (2Peter 3:18). That means, you ought to be under the teaching of the Word of God every day that your church is open. Unfortunately, in most cases, it is only open 2–3 times per week. This ought to be supplemented with additional teaching on the off days.
 7. Once you have taken into consideration your job, your spouse, your family, the intake of Bible doctrine, along with meals and sleeping; it is generally quite easy to be in God's geographical will 24 hours a day.
 8. What about the big things, like moving from point A to point B?
 - 1) If you are in a city where there is no Bible doctrine being taught (and there are many cities like that), and no group which studies under a pastor from another city, you need to consider other cities. I have known a lot of people over the years and very few who did not have the academic discipline of the church classroom (which could be a group in which a person meets) were able to make a go of the spiritual lives. This is a [list](#) of doctrinal churches that I am aware of.
 - 2) When it comes to making a big move, there will certainly be other factors, e.g., advancement in your profession, a job promotion, specialized training for your profession, etc. You may not be able to find a job in your field in

The Geographical Will of God

- your city. However, if you are looking to make a move because of your vocation, then the spiritual availabilities where you are moving to must be a part of your decision making process.
- 3) All of your decisions ought to have a spiritual aspect to them. That is a part of being occupied with the Person of Jesus Christ.
 - 4) God will not talk to you, He will not email you, He will not give you tingly feelings to move your from point A to point B.
9. The same thing is true when it comes to any major decision in your life, e.g., changing jobs. Personal problems or a personality conflict are not sufficient reasons to change jobs. One of the best decisions I made was to stay at a job where there were problems, and that encouragement to stay came from Bible teaching which I received just at that time. Similarly, one of the best decisions I made was to change jobs (that very same job) about 15 years later.
10. For the new believer or the immature believer, your best decision is to stay right where you are about 99.9% of the time. Paul advises that the believer remain in the state wherein he was calls. If he is a slave, do not expend effort trying to be free. If you are married to an unbeliever, do not seek to break the bonds of your marriage. 1Cor. 7:20–21 **Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called. Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.)** Read all of 1Cor. 7:18–24 to get the full impact of this passage.
11. We have had several instances of God's geographical will being made clear (that is, God came to these individuals and told them what to do and where to go):
- 1) Noah building the ark and then entering into the ark with his family.
 - 2) Abram and his wife moving to the Land of Promise.
 - 3) Hagar being sent back to her mistress.
 - 4) You will never receiver these sorts of verbal instructions because you have the entire Word of God available to you.
12. We also have instances of a believer being in God's geographical will without God having to tell him exactly where to go and what to do.
- 1) Abram chose to separate from Lot because they were involved in constant disputes over the ownership of the assets of their two companies. God came to Abram almost immediately after and continued teaching the Abrahamic Covenant to him. Gen. 13
 - 2) Abram in Gen. 14 gathered his men and fought to free his nephew Lot from what would be a lifetime of slavery. God did not have to come to Abram and tell him to do this. As a result, Abram enjoys the fellowship of Melchizedek, one of the pivotal people of the Old Testament.
13. For the growing and mature believer, the key to the geographical will of God is being in fellowship with God and knowing the Word of God.

Additional resources:

The Doctrine of the Will of God ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#))

R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s [Divine Guidance](#).

Buddy Dano's [God's Will for Your Life](#).

The example of [Paul and the geographical will of God](#).

Gen 16:8–9 And He [the Angel of the Lord = Jehovah Elohim] said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai." The angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress and submit to her."

Abram's line through Hagar to Ishmael will be a fallen line; and Abram's line by Sarai through Isaac, will be the line of promise. Even today, if you had to choose between living in Israel, where there is relative freedom, and living in any other middle eastern country, where churches are burned and Christians are persecuted and killed, it will be obvious which people are the Lord's and which people are the fallen line. After all, what kind of people would celebrate a "Day of Rage"?

Gen 16:10 The Angel of the LORD also said to her, "I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude."

Surprisingly, God makes a promise to Hagar. Hagar is carrying Abram's child, and God honors this, despite the fact that sin brought them to this point. God promises that Hagar will be the mother of a very large group of people. In fact, the words used here—that Hagar's descendants cannot be numbered—suggests that Hagar's son will father even more people than will Abram. However, as a distinct people, they will fade from history.

Gen 16:11 And the Angel of the LORD said to her, "Listen, you are pregnant and you will bear a son. You will call his name Ishmael, because the LORD has listened to your affliction."

The name Ishmael means *God hears*, and this is because Hagar is a young pregnant woman, running away from her home, and God tells her that He hears her and is concerned for her situation.

Bear in mind, God is the authority over Abram, and he is Sarai's authority. Therefore, God can see to it that Hagar is treated reasonably. Although this topic is not covered specifically in the narrative, Abram's relationship with his future son Ishmael, will be such that, it is apparent that Sarai backed off.

As an aside, there are unjust people, unjust institutions and unjust situations in this world. It is not up to the believer to go out there and try to fix them all. This is the devil's world and these things will never be resolved in our lifetime. Some people believe that slavery is an unjust situation and the Bible itself states clearly that Sarai treated Hagar unfairly. God does not send Hagar back with a list of demands. God does not outlaw slavery nor does He take Abram aside and outlaw slavery within his household. God's perfect justice

will reign in all of the earth when Jesus reigns over all the earth, and not until then. In other words, Hagar is to live in her circumstances as she finds them. This does not mean that God has abandoned her or that God will not deal with the specific treatment that caused Hagar to leave her mistress, Sarai.

God will not take Sarai aside personally and say, "Listen, you need to lighten up." In fact, up to this point, God has not spoken to Sarai directly. However, what appears to be the case is, Abram gave this situation some thought—Sarai's unjust treatment of Hagar and Hagar running away because of it (which endangered Abram's only son)—and he apparently took care of the matter. Abram cannot have the mother of his son die while pregnant out in the desert somewhere. So, even though there is no narrative about what is happening behind the scenes, no doubt that Abram took control of the situation.

In v. 12, God describes what Hagar's son would be like, which prophecy would follow and God will define Arabs and other middle eastern peoples even to this day (Ishmael's descendants are not clearly defined today, as they appear to have been blended with the Midianites at some point in time).

Gen 16:12 He shall be a wild ass of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen."

Here is a fascinating principle recorded 3000–4000 years ago. We have the son of a single mother about to be born, and what does God tell her about the son? He is going to be unruly and undisciplined and in conflict with all those around him, including his own relatives (which would include the descendants of Abram).

We have found this to be true in our own culture. One of the false statistics out there is this great racial disparity when it comes to, say, young men in jail. A disproportionate number of them are Black. Many Black activists look at the statistics and fret and march and try to lay guilt on white liberals, who are far too susceptible to this sort of guilt. They will allege that these Black men are in jail just as much because of racism as for the crimes they committed.

However, it is not the race which is the key factor here but the mother—single mothers are the reason that we have so many criminals. If you remove the single mother component from prison statistics (that is, if you compare the number of people from this or that race in jail, but do this in such a way that the sons of single mothers are normalized), then racial disparity all but disappears. A Black father is no less tough on his kids than a father of any other race. He has expectations and limits, and he teaches by example. Remove this fatherly influence and you have a mother who is often overindulgent and too tired to properly raise her children. Her skin color is not the key; her being single is the key.

There are a huge number of studies which have been done, and the children of single mothers are more likely to become criminals, to use drugs, to drop out of school, to go to prison, to become single mothers themselves (or absentee fathers), etc. Whatever you as a parent don't want for your children, and that is what single motherhood tends to produce

in higher percentages. Even though Hagar will be in a household with the biological father of her son, she will be a single mother. The true marriage bond will be between Abram and Sarai, not between Abram and Hagar.

This prophecy—"He shall be a wild ass of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen."—is specific to Ishmael and his sons; but it describes the Arabic races in general and it describes the children of single mothers in general.

Lesson 161: Genesis 16:1–13

Calling on the Name of the Lord

So far, we have studied the first 12 verses of Gen. 16:

Gen 16:1–12 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said to Abram, "Look, [up until] now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to [and obeyed] the voice of Sarai. So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. And Abram went in to Hagar [on several occasions], and she conceived [became pregnant and continued to show signs of pregnancy]. And when Hagar kept observing that she herself had become pregnant, she kept looking with contempt upon her mistress, Sarai. And Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done to me be on you [that is, *this is all your fault, Abram*]! I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the LORD judge between you and me!" But Abram said to Sarai, "Listen, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please." Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she [Hagar] fled from her [Sarai]. The Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the desert-wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. And He [the Angel of the Lord = Jehovah Elohim] said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai." The angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress and submit to her." The Angel of the LORD also said to her, "I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude." And the Angel of the LORD said to her, "Listen, you are pregnant and you will bear a son. You will call his name Ishmael, because the LORD has listened to your affliction. He shall be a wild ass of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen."

Sarai has decided that she wants to have a child and, since this apparently is not going to occur in the natural way, she suggests the socially acceptable way of using her servant-girl as a surrogate mother. Abram would impregnate her and Sarai and Abram would raise the child as their own. Some have suggested that Sarai was attempting to fulfill God's promise to Abram, but I think that all of this took place because she did not believe God's promises. Abram surely told her what happened when he met God on those several occasions, and who knows what she thought? "God? My husbands speaks to God? *That's* rather nice!"

What we do know for certain is, Sarai either did not believe the promise or did not believe that the promise could be fulfilled through her. I lean toward the former explanation. Even though God's plan for a family is one man, one woman and assorted children; Sarai pushed for a different approach, one which society accepted, but God did not—introducing another moving part into a marriage—a young Egyptian slave girl.

I suggested earlier that Abram now had access to the full Word of God, from Melchizedek, up to his point in time. I believe that he would have known about Adam and Eve at this time; and one may surmise from the creation account that one man, one woman and assorted children is God's plan. God did not give Adam a little Egyptian girl on the side.

Anyway, despite the fact that Sarai suggested for all of this to take place, it is Sarai and Hagar, her Egyptian slave girl, who butt heads during the pregnancy. Sarai complains to Abram, Abram says, "Look, she's your slave girl, do with her what you want." And Sarai just starts walking all over this young girl until she walks out.

So we left Hagar out in the desert, walking toward Egypt, tired, thirsty and hungry (we surmise), and God comes to her and speaks to her. God tells her to return to her mistress and that her son would be a wild ass of a man.

We have studied [divine institutions](#) awhile back, and one of the 5 divine institutions is family, and family is defined as a mother, a father and children. Both parents offer things to their children which are important to the development of the child. The relationship between a father and his daughter is unique; this cannot be duplicated by the mother alone. The relationship between a father and his son is unique; and it cannot be duplicated by the mother (the same is true of the mother's relationship to her son or daughter). These relationships are not simply unique because the mother and father are different people with different perspectives; but because the mother and father belong to opposite and sometimes warring gender camps. No one knows a male psyche, responsibilities and weaknesses more than a male; and it is up to the man to convey this to his sons and daughters. No one knows the strength, love and joy of being a woman other than a woman, which information she conveys to her children. Furthermore, these relationships are fundamental to a person's growth: the respect and deference one ought to give to one's mother and the obedience one owes to one's father.

God will send this single woman, Hagar, back to the man who fathered her child, and Abram will raise this boy as his son for many years. A 3-person household + 1 child is not ideal; but it is far better than Hagar trying to make a 200 mile walk back to Egypt (which she would be physically unable to do). And, as has been discussed, even if she got there, what could she do? She would still be a pregnant, unmarried woman.

This appears also to change the timing of God's promise. Abram and Sarai do not have a child together until Ishmael is sufficiently grown. God did not want Abram to raise the next child in his life in conjunction with Ishmael, both having different mothers. These two children would be very different; and God has a very different purpose for each one of them. Ishmael would be the fallen line; and Isaac would be the child of promise. Whereas,

it is certainly possible for a man and a woman to raise 2 or 3 or 10 children together; it is far more difficult for a man and two women to raise children by different mothers. We have already seen problems crop up between Abram, Sarai and Hagar, and there are no children involved yet.

After God has told Hagar to return to Sarai, He tells her about her son.

Gen 16:11–12 And the Angel of the LORD said to her, "Listen, you are pregnant and you will bear a son. You will call his name Ishmael, because the LORD has listened to your affliction. He shall be a wild ass of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he shall dwell over-against all his kinsmen."

Ishmael would be hard-headed and he would not play well with others.

Suddenly, it appears as if God—the [Angel of the Lord](#)—is gone.

Gen 16:13 So she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, "You are a God of seeing," for she said, "Here I have seen Him Who looks after me?"

This phrase, where men call upon the name of the Lord (or similar phrasing), is found 26 or 27 times in the Bible. Many of these occurrences will be examined below.

Calling on the Name of Jehovah

Text/Scripture

Commentary

Old Testament passages:

And a son was also born to Seth, and he called his name, Enos. Then it was he began to call on the name of Jehovah (Gen. 4:26).

Even after the fall, it appears as if God would regularly speak to Adam and the woman and to Cain and Abel. However, at the time that Adam's grandson was born, Seth began to call upon the name of Jehovah, suggesting that God had less direct contact with the human race as time went on and that they called upon Him, desiring contact with Him.

And Abram moved from there to a mountain on the east of Bethel, and stretched his tent with Bethel toward the sea, and Ai on the east. And he built an altar there to Jehovah, and called on the name of Jehovah (Gen. 12:8).

God told Abram to move west, into the land of Canaan. Once Abram was in the land, then he began to call upon the name of Jehovah. This suggests that Abram wants to know, "What do I do next?" Quite obviously, this indicates that God was not manifest to Abram all of the time.

Calling on the Name of Jehovah

Text/Scripture	Commentary
<p>And Abram called on the name of Jehovah there (Gen. 13:4b).</p>	<p>Abram wandered off into Egypt, but when he returned to where he first erected an altar, he called upon God. He knew that he had gotten off-track. God will speak to Abram after he separates from Lot.</p>
<p>And Hagar called the name of Jehovah, the One speaking to her, "You [are] a God of vision! For she said, Even here have I seen the One who looks after me?" (Gen. 16:13).</p>	<p>Hagar (the slave girl of Abram's wife) will carry Abram's bastard child, and this occurs after Sarai (Abram's wife) harasses Hagar until she is unable to take it any more. She leaves Abram and Sarai. God has told her to return.</p> <p>What appears to be the case is, God is talking to Hagar, and then, suddenly, He is gone. So she calls out to Him.</p> <p>Furthermore, this incident tells us that Hagar is a believer in Y^ehowah, the God of Abram.</p>
<p>And he [Abraham] planted a tamarisk tree in Beer-sheba, and there he called on the name of Jehovah the everlasting God (Gen. 21:33).</p>	<p>This is Abram (now <i>Abraham</i>) after his son Isaac has been born, Hagar and Ishmael have been cast out, and Abraham has moved to Beersheba in southern Judah, which is considered to be Philistine territory at this time. There is no indication that God came to Abraham at this time.</p>
<p>And Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of Jehovah. And he pitched his tent there. And the slaves of Isaac dug a well there (Gen. 26:25).</p>	<p>God has already spoken to Isaac and reconfirmed His promise to Abraham through Isaac. Isaac is Abram's son of promise, through whom the covenants to Abraham will be fulfilled. God has already promised to fulfill His covenants to Abraham through Isaac and He warns Isaac not to go down to Egypt.</p> <p>It appears as if the altar and calling upon the name of Y^ehowah are functions of worship. Calling upon God's name indicates faith in Him.</p>
<p>A great deal of time will pass—500 years or so—and we go from Isaac to Moses, when this phrase is used again.</p>	

Calling on the Name of Jehovah

Text/Scripture

Commentary

And He [God] said, "I will cause all My goodness to pass before you. And I will call out the name of Jehovah before you. And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." (Ex. 33:19).

This is quite fascinating, because here, Jehovah calls upon the name of Jehovah (as per the context of this verse). The verbiage is exactly the same as above, except there is a perfect tense here and an imperfect tense above (God calls upon the name of Jehovah once; Isaac calls on the name of Jehovah many times). What is being implied here is the Trinity, so Jehovah can communicate with Jehovah. The name *Elohim* refers to all 3 members of the Trinity; and *Y^ehowah* (*Jehovah*) refers to one Member of the Trinity.

This passage where God calls upon the name of Y^ehowah appears to be unique. Although several translations read, "And I will proclaim the name of Jehovah before you..." the construction of the Hebrew here is exactly the same as in the other passages that we are studying. We have the b^eyth preposition rather than the particle of the direct object (which would indicate that the verb means *to proclaim*).

And Jehovah came down in the cloud. And He stood there with him [Moses], and he called on the name of Jehovah. (Ex. 34:5).

Here, it appears as if it is Moses calling upon the name of Y^ehowah, yet God is standing there with him. Moses does not realize that God is there until He passes before him (vv. 6–8).

500 years pass before we have this phrase occurs again in a narrative passage.

"And you call upon the name of your god, and I will call upon the name of the LORD, and the God who answers by fire, he is God." And all the people answered, "This is good." Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first, for you are many, and call upon the name of your god, but put no fire to it." (1Kings 18:24–25).

This is the remarkable incident where Elijah compared his God to the gods of the heathen. Elijah gives them a very long time to call on their god, Baal; and he uses sarcasm when Baal does not answer (call louder, for maybe he is asleep or on vacation or out chasing women). Then Elijah set up an altar to God and called upon Him, and fire from the sky consumes this sacrifice. It is clear here and in the passages in Exodus that calling on Jehovah involved a loud, audible cry to Jehovah.

Calling on the Name of Jehovah

Text/Scripture	Commentary
<p>“Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon His name; make known His deeds among the peoples!” (1Ch 16:8)</p>	<p>This was part of a psalm which was sung aloud when the Ark was being moved into Jerusalem on the direction of David. Those who called upon the name of the Lord were His people. People who believe in the God of Israel call upon His name. At this point in time, there did not appear to be an expectation of direct contact (I cannot think of a single instance where the Angel of Jehovah spoke to David).</p>
<p>Moses and Aaron were among his priests, Samuel also was among those who were calling [or, <i>proclaiming</i>] His name. They were calling to the LORD, and He answered them (Psalm 99:6).</p>	<p>This was one of the few times where we have this phrase where to verb is a Qal active participle and there is no bêyth preposition (which is the “on” in <i>called on the name of the Lord</i>). This simply referred to the spiritual Atlases in various times. This psalm also suggests that, even though we do not find this phrase in a narrative associated with Samuel (or with other believers in historical narratives), that does not mean that Samuel did not call upon God. Moses, Aaron and Samuel all call upon Y^ehowah.</p>
<p>Oh give thanks to the LORD; call on His name; make known His deeds among the peoples! (Psalm 105:1).</p>	<p>Those who called on the name of Jehovah are those who believe in Him. What is implied here is, when we pray to God, we are calling upon His name.</p>
<p>And you will say in that day: "Give thanks to Jehovah, call upon His name, make known His deeds among the peoples, proclaim that His name is exalted." (Isa 12:4)</p>	<p>This appears to be the end times, when Israel turns back to Jehovah, and calls on His name. After the rapture, when the church has been called by God and the Tribulation begins, many Jews will suddenly recognize that Jesus is their Lord.</p>
<p>"I called on your name, O Y^ehowah, from the depths of the pit." (Lam 3:55)</p>	<p>Jeremiah is speaking to God—praying to Him—from a difficult situation.</p>

Calling on the Name of Jehovah

Text/Scripture	Commentary
<p>And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as Jehovah has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom Jehovah calls (Joel 2:32)</p>	<p>This passage is quoted twice in the New Testament, and associates calling on the name of Jehovah with deliverance. This same verb is used for those whom Jehovah has called (in the text, this is a Qal active participle, which indicates continuous action).</p>
<p>New Testament passages:</p>	
<p>“ ‘And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.” (Acts 2:21–23).</p>	<p>Salvation is presented in a number of different ways, throughout the Old and New Testaments. If you call upon the name of the Lord (Jesus Christ), you will be saved because this indicates that you believe in Him.</p> <p>Peter here is speaking on the Day of Pentecost and quoting Joel 2:23. In the verses which follow, Peter immediately speaks of Jesus Christ, who is the Lord.</p>
<p>As an aside, the bêyth preposition found in the Hebrew is not carried over into the Greek. There is no parallel preposition in the Greek for this phrase; the preposition is considered to be a part of the verb.</p>	
<p>If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Rom 10:9, 12–13</p>	<p>Paul also ties calling upon the name of the Lord to salvation, which is by means of faith in Jesus Christ. Paul is also quoting Joel 2:23.</p>
<p>To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours (1Cor. 1:2).</p>	<p>Again, calling upon the name of the Lord simply indicates salvation faith in Him as well as prayer made to Him.</p>

There are a number of other passages where this phrase is found, which we will not discuss:

Then I called on the name of Y^ehowah: "O Y^ehowah, I pray, deliver my soul! (Psalm 116:4).

I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of Y^ehowah (Psalm 116:13).

I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving and call on the name of Y^ehowah (Psalm 116:4).

But Naaman was angry and went away, saying, "Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of Y^ehowah his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper." (2Kings 5:11).

And I will put this third into the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will call upon my name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'They are my people'; and they will say, 'Y^ehowah is my God.'" (Zech. 13:9)

"For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of Y^ehowah and serve him with one accord." (Zephaniah 3:9).

Lesson 162: Genesis 16:1–13

God's Promises to Hagar; textual problems

We have studied the first 12 verses of Gen. 16:

Gen 16:1–12 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said to Abram, "Look, [up until] now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to [and obeyed] the voice of Sarai. So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. And Abram went in to Hagar [on several occasions], and she conceived [became pregnant and continued to show signs of pregnancy]. And when Hagar kept observing that she herself had become pregnant, she kept looking with contempt upon her mistress, Sarai. And Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done to me be on you [that is, *this is all your fault, Abram*]! I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the LORD judge between you and me!" But Abram said to Sarai, "Listen, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please." Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she [Hagar] fled from her [Sarai]. The Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the desert-wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. And He said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai." The angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress and submit to her." The Angel of the LORD also said to her, "I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude." And the Angel of the LORD said to her, "Listen, you are pregnant and you will bear a son. You will call his name Ishmael, because the LORD has listened to your affliction. He shall be a wild ass of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen."

Hagar has gone along with Sarai's scheme to bear a child on behalf of Sarai, which was socially acceptable, but a very bad idea. However, it is difficult to blame her, as she is under the authority of Abram and Sarai.

God also told her about her unborn son, that he would be a wild ass of a man. Now, although this may conjure up some odd things in our own minds, it simply meant that the Ishmaelites would not be confined to a particular geographical area, but they would roam wild, like a wild ass. It also indicated that there would be a lack of external constraints put upon him. We will eventually study the words **Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws** (Gen 26:5). For Ishmael and for his sons, there would be fewer external controls.

We stopped at v. 13, where Hagar called on the name of the Lord. This was the 4th time this phrase had been used, so we examined the passages where in the Bible this phrase is used. We also confirmed that the Angel of the Lord is God.

Gen 16:13 So she called the name of Y^ehowah, the One speaking to her, "You are a God of seeing," for she said, "Here I have seen Him Who looks [lit., *Who is seeing*] after me?"

What appears to be the case is, God came to Hagar, He spoke to her, told her what to do, and then He left. So she calls for Him. Unlike many of the passages quoted in the previous lesson, there is no *bêyth* preposition; therefore, this could be translated **So she proclaimed the name of Y^ehowah, the One speaking to her: "You are a God of seeing;"** for she had said, "Here, I have seen Him Who looks after me?"

Grammatically, what we have here is the definite article and the Qal active participle of *to speak*. This is commonly used in the Hebrew not to express continuous action but to refer to someone by means of the actions which they do. For instance, if the Hebrew reads *hunting*, then we are describing an act that someone is involve in regularly or continuously. However, if the Hebrew reads *the hunting*, then we are speaking of a *hunter*. Therefore, the Hebrew words *the speaking*, can be reasonably rendered *the One speaking to her* or *Who is speaking to her*. So, what is *not* occurring here is, Y^ehowah is speaking and Hagar interrupts Him, to make this observation. God had been speaking to her; He is called *the One speaking to her*; and she calls out to Him, after He is done speaking, and at a point where He is probably no longer visible to her.

Hagar says that she has seen God, the God Who looks over her, Who looks out for her.

Hagar recognizes that she was speaking to the God of the Universe. The fact that she believes this indicates that she knows some basic Scripture. Therefore, Hagar is not just a believer, but she apparently has grown somewhat spiritually. The fact that she is straying from God's geographical will does not mean that she lacks spiritual growth. It simply means that she strayed.

Gen 16:13 So she called the name of Y^ehowah, the One speaking to her, "You are a God of seeing," for she said, "Here I have seen Him Who looks [lit., *Who is seeing*] after me?"

In this verse, Hagar uses a verb and a cognate of this verb 3 times. The first *rô'îy* (רֵאִי) [pronounced *row-EE*], which means *looking, seeing, sight; vision, appearance; spectacle*. Strong's #7210 BDB #909. "You are a God of vision [seeing]." God has told her what will happen with her son in the future, and she recognizes that God can see into the future. In other words, Hagar recognizes the omniscience of God, which is not limited by time—and she believes what He says (that is, she believes this Bible doctrine). Then Hagar twice uses the verb, *to see*, which is *râ'âh* (רָאָה) [pronounced *raw-AWH*], which means, *to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know*. Strong's #7200 BDB #906. When God speaks to her, she recognizes it as truth.

There is some confusion as to what she says here. John Joseph Owens here offers another possible reading for this verse, as do some others. Many textual scholars believe that there is something missing here.

If we take the Hebrew, exactly as it stands, Gen. 16:13 reads: *And so she calls a name of Y^ehowah, the One speaking unto her, "You [are] a God of seeing," for, she had said, "Have I even here seen after Him Who is seeing me?"*

Some believe the text say that she is alive though she has seen God; other texts suggest only that she has seen God. As it stands, she simply sounds amazed that she has seen God. In some ways, this verse is a little clunky in the Hebrew exactly as it stands. We have 2 adverbs thrown together, *even here, also here, indeed here*; soon followed by a *after Him*, which is not the way that this preposition is usually used. Also, there is designation for God not found anywhere else in the Bible: *a God of seeing*. There is an explanation for this chunkiness which has eluded many commentators: this girl is Egyptian, so there are some things she may have difficulty saying in the Hebrew language—particularly when she is speaking in a mental attitude of great excitement. We get the gist of what she is saying; but it is someone irregular in the Hebrew—but not out of the ordinary for a person whose native language is not Hebrew (this occurs a few times in the Hebrew; the actual Hebrew is quite clunky and is hard to translate; and it is being spoken by a person who is either excited or by a person whose first language is not Hebrew).

This chart may get further into the weeds than you are interested in.

Various Ancient Takes on Genesis 16:13	
Text	English Translation/Text/Commentary
Kukis literal from Hebrew	<i>And so she calls a name of Y^ehowah, the One speaking unto her, "You [are] a God of seeing," for, she had said, "Have I even here seen after Him Who is seeing me?"</i>

Various Ancient Takes on Genesis 16:13

Text	English Translation/Text/Commentary
Owens adjusted and updated translation from a change in the text	So she called the name of Yahweh who spoke to her, “You are a God of seeing;” for she said, “ Have I really seen God and remained alive? ” I emphasize the portion that Owen changed. Essentially, Owen is saying that this text is very clunky in the Hebrew, and he attempts to smooth it out, suggesting that some words were dropped out of the text. Owens revised the text, but did not give a reason for doing so.
Updated Douay-Rheims, which is based on the Latin	And she called the name of the Lord that spoke unto her: You the God Who has seen me. For she said: Verily, here have I seen the hinder parts of Him that sees me. This follows the Hebrew text very closely; <i>hinder parts of Him</i> is a substantive translation of the preposition <i>after</i> . In other words, this is in complete agreement with the Hebrew text.
English translation based upon the LXX	And Hagar called the name of the Lord God who is speaking face to face with her, You [are] the God who sees me; for he (she?) said, For in the presence of, I have seen the one appearing to me. The final verb is translated as an aorist passive participle. The rest of the Greek is rather confusing, indicating that the Greek translation is somewhat different from the accepted Hebrew text.
Lamsa Updated Translation of the Peshitta	And she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, and said, You are God Whom I saw; for she said, Behold, I have also seen a vision after He had seen me. This is an English translation taken from the Syriac.
The Complete Jewish Bible	So she named ADONAI who had spoken with her El Ro'i [God of seeing], because she said, "Have I really seen the One who sees me [and stayed alive]?" So, their take is, she gives a name to God, based upon her experience here. Also, the gist of the verse at the end is, she is still alive after seeing God.
Updated Darby's translation	And she called the name of Jehovah who spoke to her, You are the God who reveals Himself, for she said, Also here have I seen after He has revealed Himself.

Apart from Owens, I am not coming up with anyone who suggests alternate text (we do not have Gen. 16:13 in the Dead Sea Scrolls). It is also very common for a translation to sound better than the original; there is nearly always an attempt to “smooth out” the text so that it is more readable.

There is one more consideration, which is generally ignored, but a real factor in what Hagar says. She is an Egyptian, and has been a slave to Abram and Sarai only for a couple of years, so her ability to speak in their language is going to be limited. I have run into this on several occasions—the text seems rough, until you realize that, the person speaking is possibly speaking in a language that is not his or her primary language. Secondly, she is speaking excitedly. Sometimes, in a rush of emotion, not all of your words come out in a way that makes perfect grammatical sense.

Some do not like the text as it stands simply because it is difficult to translate and, therefore, to interpret. The very end of this verse more literally reads, "**Have I here seen after Him** [or, *His after parts*] **Who is seeing me?**" Hagar apparently recognizes that she has seen God, Whom she refers to as the *One Who is Seeing me*. The words *after Him* (or, *his after parts*) could simply mean that the Angel of Y^ehowah is walking away from her. The end of this verse indicates that God is watching her at all times. So, Hagar understands the omniscience of God. In other words, taking the text exactly as it stands, Hagar does not say anything which is in conflict with divine truth.

The implication here is, possibly, that she did not, at the first, realize that this is God Who had spoken to her, and she calls on the name of Jehovah after He has spoken to her and left. Maybe He is walking away and she is calling Him, suddenly realizing Who He is.

Gen. 16:13 And so she calls a name of Y^ehowah [Who spoke to her and is walking away], the One [was] speaking unto her, "You [are] a God of seeing [she calls out to Him, realizing Who He is]," for, she had said, "**Have I even here seen after Him Who is seeing me?**" "I am out here in the desert, alone, and I have seen the God who always sees me?"

My point here is, I attempt, whenever possible, to take the text exactly as it stands, unless there is a strong reason for assuming that the text is corrupt. On occasion, there are errors—far fewer than you might think—in a manuscript which dates back 3000 years or so. Most of the time, I am able to take a legitimate meaning from the words. There have only been a few times that I come to a verse and am unable to comprehend what is being said when taking the verse at face value.

On the other hand, all of that having been said, that does not mean that Owens is wrong. Essentially, he has changed a few letters (I believe he switched two letters around and added in a wâw consecutive to come up with his translation): **So she called the name of Yahweh who spoke to her, "You are a God of seeing;" for she said, "Have I really seen God and remained alive?"**

In the Bible, there are occasions where the text is difficult, and a few times when the text is suspect. However, the difference between the resulting translations does not affect the teaching of the Bible in any way. The science of determining what text is actually here is called *textual criticism*. *Textual criticism* (also called *lower criticism*) is the science of determining what the original text is. Such a person will examine various manuscripts of a passage, as well as consider early translations that have been made of the same passage (the Greek, Syriac or Latin translations, for instance, because they would have been

working from earlier Hebrew manuscripts than we have today). In some cases, such as this verse, John Joseph Owens will suggest that, because the text is difficult to translate, that perhaps this or that minor change may result in a better estimation of the original text. The people involved in this science have the utmost respect for the Word of God, and are simply trying to ascertain the exact original text. What is never the case is, some fundamental doctrine is in question (e.g., the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine of the Hypostatic Union). The only desire is to have the most accurate original text possible. Primary and secondary doctrines from the Word of God remained untouched by such examinations of problem passages. For many people, they may not even appreciate the amount of effort involved in making these determinations because the resulting textual differences are often trivial.

If I examine a passage in the Latin Vulgate (which the Catholics rely on), the Greek Septuagint or the original Hebrew text, such as it is, I will never come up with a passage that, in one language, supports specific Catholic doctrines; and, in another language, supports specific Greek Orthodox doctrines; nor, in another language, support specific Protestant doctrines. The specific differences between Catholicism and Protestantism do not arise from the Latin versus the Hebrew text; these differences are a result of traditions of the Catholic church, the teachings of various popes in their past, and the use of the Apocrypha, which additional text most churches (all Protestant churches) reject as inspired.

Lesson 163: Genesis 16:13

Why Didn't God Perfectly Preserve the Bible?

We just spent several pages studying Gen. 16:13, and much of this study was actually upon the Hebrew text itself, and we wondered if the text had been incorrectly transmitted to us (as some have suggested).

The text in question reads:

Gen. 16:13 And so she calls a name of Y^ehowah [Who spoke to her and is walking away], the One speaking unto her, "You [are] a God of seeing [she calls out to Him, realizing Who He is]," for, she had said, "Have I even here seen after Him Who is seeing me?" "I am out here in the desert, alone, and I have seen the God who always sees me?"

We have just spent several pages on one verse, which may or may not have been preserved accurately in the Hebrew. We know that God is perfect. We know that He is capable of doing anything (within the confines of His perfect character). Most of us understand how important the Word of God is. So, why didn't God perfectly preserve His Word so that we do not spend 2 pages considering what may or may not have been in the original Hebrew?

The question is simply this: since God is perfect, omniscient and omnipotent; and since His Word is of the utmost importance to our lives; why did God not, therefore, perfectly preserve His Word?

The doctrine below was taken out of **2Samuel 13** (which is presently a work in progress).

Why is the Word of God not Perfectly and Supernaturally Preserved?

1. Anyone who has any formal training in the Scriptures (and many who have had informal training) are aware that the Bible has not been perfectly preserved. There are alternate readings, there is text which has been dropped out, and a number of things which indicate to us that, the manuscripts which we have are not perfect.
 2. The question is, *why?* After all, God is omnipotent; God could have chosen to perfectly preserve the Word of God exactly as it was originally recorded.
 3. First of all, God did not want there to be veneration or worship of the Scriptures themselves. We respect the ancient manuscripts which have been preserved and we work hard to make the information of these Scriptures available, but there is no church of the Holy Scriptures where a supernaturally preserved manuscript is under glass and men all go there to worship it. We are never given objects to worship in Christianity (or, in the worship of Jehovah Elohim).
 4. The key to the Word of God is, to get the information from the Word of God into our souls. This cannot be done if the Scriptures themselves are an object of worship.
 5. The Bible needed to be translated into the languages of the people. If we had the Greek, Aramaic and Hebrew manuscripts perfectly preserved, then there might be less call for them to be translated into another language. After all, what we have is perfect, so why would you want to change perfect? As a result, only scholars of these 3 languages would be able to study and appreciate the Word of God.
 6. How many scholars of these languages would dare to try to teach the Scriptures by providing a modern translation of this or that passage? This may have been seen as adding to or taking from the Scriptures.
 7. The focus of teaching would either be removed from the actual content of the Word of God, as there would be those who had no such formal training. So, veneration of the manuscripts themselves in the original languages would result in teaching that is separate from the Scriptures or the teaching would be so focused on each letter and word that little learning would occur. Let me give you an example: Keil and Delitzsch have written an excellent commentary of the Scriptures, but it is so thick with language and language references that it is hard to read and understand even a single paragraph before your mind goes numb.
 8. If I know that I have access to the exact perfect words of God, recorded as they were originally in the original languages, I am going to be much less likely to translate these words imperfectly into another language. There may be some countries and churches which would even forbid such a thing from being done. However, I am less overwhelmed by this perfection if I know there are a few textual problems here and there. As a result, we have hundreds of translations into so many different languages. I personally refer to over 50 translations into the English alone. Furthermore, I have come to appreciate many of the looser
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- translations to the point where, once and awhile, I understand a verse only because I see how the NIV or the Living Bible translated it, and the meaning becomes more clear to me than I find in the KJV, the NKJV or the NASB.
9. The textual problems which exist—and there are many in the book of Samuel, for example—have absolutely no affect upon our doctrinal understanding. There are at least 4 places in the text of 2Sam. 13 where there are major problems with the text. No matter how what text and what version we choose to believe is the original text, our understanding of the fundamentals of the faith are unchanged. I cannot choose one set of readings, someone else chooses another set of readings, and the end result are two very different theologies. That will not happen, even with the errors and textual problems that exist.
 10. Consequently, God has allowed the imperfections of the world to have an effect upon the text of the Word of God without destroying its power or its meaning. As believers, this is reflected in our lives. We fail again and again; but, as long as we remain alive on this earth, God's plan continues for our lives, despite our imperfections.
 11. Because the text is imperfect, there is not an overwhelming need to make every Bible translation into a word-for-word translation. What the New Living Translation may lack in exactness of translation, it makes up for in reaching people who would not have any interest in reading the King James Version. The gospel and most fundamental doctrines are as clear in the Living Bible as they are in the KJV.
 12. Similarly, we have other translations in simple English, so that a person on a 6th grade reading level and lower can understand what he is reading.
 13. We know from history that the Catholic church persecuted and even executed those who attempted to get the Word of God into the hands of the people in a language that they understood. That is key. The idea of having services in Latin is absolutely ridiculous; there is nothing that can be learned, unless the people know Latin.
 14. We develop an appreciation for the scribes who preserved the Scriptures over the past 3000 or so years. We have come to learn what they did and the lengths that they went to in order to preserve the Word of God.
 15. Knowing the lengths that the Scribes went to in order to preserve the Word of God tells us that they had tremendous respect for those old manuscripts as the Word of God. This indicates to us that the Bible was recognized as the Word of God very early on.
 16. God has given us enough manuscripts of various kinds so that we can determine, in almost every case, exactly what is in the Word of God. In the places where we have difficulty, most of these difficulties are minor, and involve number or modernized spellings or change of script. I may come up to a verse that I do not have a complete grasp of; however, I almost never come up to a verse where I am unable to understand it or explain it because I might not have the exact correct text to work from or text which is close enough to the original to work from.

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In other words, almost never do I come across a verse and say, "Well, I do not have a clue as to how this should actually read in the original language; and therefore, I have no clue as to how to explain it." I may be unhappy with my explanation, but it is almost never because of a problem with the text.

17. As a result of text being imperfect, there have been men of all sorts of spiritual gifts rise up and tackle the problem of textual criticism, and their thoughts and work on these matters are often quite helpful in determining what is to be found substantively in any verse. God has granted men spiritual gifts which allow them to deal with imperfect text.
18. The inexact text (and some of this is a result of the changing of the spelling of some words or the insertion of glosses) keeps people from getting weird with the text, and looking for hidden messages unearthed by various numerology methods. There are some goofballs out there who claim to find the Kennedy assassination and a variety of other things hidden in the text of the Word of God by taking, say, every tenth letter and stringing the results together, but this falls apart as, by the end of Gen. 1, we do not truly know what the tenth letter was (which may be, by the way, because of a simple change in spelling a word).
19. I would argue that, the pastor who is moderately obsessed with determining the correct text will also, in this search for the correct text, be able to best present the meaning of the passage in question to his congregation.
20. One may reasonably argue that God has preserved His Word. There is nothing more hated and more attacked throughout world history than God's Word (except for the Jewish people). Yet, we have 26,000 full and partial manuscripts of the New Testament (no other ancient manuscript has anywhere near that many preserved copies) and the time between the original manuscripts being written and the first copies to emerge is far shorter for the New Testament than for any other ancient document.
21. When it comes to the Old Testament, its accuracy was preserved in a much different way. For many years, our Old Testament text was based upon principally one manuscript copied perhaps 1300 years after the canon for the Old Testament was closed. Since then, only a handful of manuscripts have been discovered—and then came along the Dead Sea Scrolls, which confirmed the accuracy of the few manuscripts that we have. 2Sam. 13 is perhaps one of the weakest and most poorly transmitted chapters in all of the Bible. And yet, the problems we unearthed in this chapter have nothing to do with the fundamentals of the faith. We are not questioning any of God's attributes, the advent of His Son, His death on the cross for our sins, etc. The textual problems that we come across do not affect the information that we have.
22. Now, although there are only 7 or so complete or near complete ancient manuscripts of the Old Testament (along with the Dead Sea Scrolls), the Old Testament has been preserve in the Greek, the Latin, the Syriac, the Arabic, etc. So, when we are confused about, say, the meaning of this or that word, this or that phrase, or about the transmission of the text, we have several other

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languages to go to, translations made 1000–2000 years ago and more (from more ancient manuscripts than we possess today), and we can see how they understood it.

23. One may argue as to the corruptness and apostasy of the Catholic church; however, St. Jerome's Latin translation (which was adopted by the Catholic church) is outstanding; it is accurate; and it has been preserved by the Catholic church, despite the problems within that institution. And, if one ignores the apocrypha, you can pick up any English translation approved by the Catholic church and use that as your main Bible, and your spiritual life will not be harmed.
24. In John Lee's *The Greatest Book in the World*, we read: *It seems strange that the text of Shakespeare, which has been in existence less than two hundred and eight years, should be far more uncertain and corrupt than that of the New Testament, now over eighteen centuries old, during nearly fifteen of which it existed only in manuscript...With perhaps a dozen or twenty exceptions, the text of every verse in the New Testament may be said to be so far settled by general consent of scholars, that any dispute as to its readings must relate rather to the interpretation of the words than to any doubts respecting the words themselves. But in every one of Shakespeare's thirty-seven plays there are probably a hundred readings still in dispute, a large portion of which materially affects the meaning of the passages in which they occur.*¹ Assuming the truth of this quotation, that would make the Bible supernaturally but not perfectly preserved.

One of the very best books available on the topic of the Bible, its transmission, the ancient manuscripts, etc. is Geisler and Nix's *General Introduction to the Bible*. Somewhere in this book, there are additional points on this very topic.

I audited a couple of classes at a Bible institute as a young believer and getting this text was one of the greatest blessings from attending that institute.

I have given this example before, but I find it to be very instructive: when the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered, there was a word-by-word, letter-by-letter comparison between the text of Isa. 53 in the Dead Sea Scrolls (100 B.C.) and the Masoretic text (A.D. 900). There are 166 words in Isa. 53, but only 17 letters are different. 10 of these letters represent a slightly different spelling of the same word and 4 letters represent minor stylistic changes (such as, conjunctions). The most dramatic difference in these manuscripts, copied down over 1000 years apart from one another, is the 3 letter word *light* in v. 11, which had been dropped out of the MT.

¹ Taken from Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*; ©1972 by Campus Crusade for Christ; p. 22. He takes this from p. 15 of John Lee's *The Greatest Book in the World*; who is quoting an unnamed author from an article in the *North American Review*.

Here's a table which I have seen in both Geisler and Nix and McDowell's books.

The Manuscripts of Ancient Texts

Author	Date Written	Earliest Copy	Approximate Time Span between original & copy	Number of Copies	Accuracy of Copies
Lucretius	died 55 or 53 B.C.		1100 yrs	2	----
Pliny	61-113 A.D.	850 A.D.	750 yrs	7	----
Plato	427-347 B.C.	900 A.D.	1200 yrs	7	----
Demosthenes	4th Cent. B.C.	1100 A.D.	800 yrs	8	----
Herodotus	480-425 B.C.	900 A.D.	1300 yrs	8	----
Suetonius	75-160 A.D.	950 A.D.	800 yrs	8	----
Thucydides	460-400 B.C.	900 A.D.	1300 yrs	8	----
Euripides	480-406 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1300 yrs	9	----
Aristophanes	450-385 B.C.	900 A.D.	1200	10	----
Caesar	100-44 B.C.	900 A.D.	1000	10	----
Livy	59 BC-AD 17	----	???	20	----
Tacitus	circa 100 A.D.	1100 A.D.	1000 yrs	20	----
Aristotle	384-322 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1400	49	----
Sophocles	496-406 B.C.	1000 A.D.	1400 yrs	193	----
Homer (Iliad)	900 B.C.	400 B.C.	500 yrs	643	95%
New Testament	1st Cent. A.D. (50-100 A.D.)	2 nd Cent. A.D. (circa 130 A.D. f.)	less than 100 years	5600	99.5%

This table was taken from <http://carm.org/manuscript-evidence> This table indicates to us that there is no book quite like the Bible, and certainly no ancient book which is like the Bible.

Here's another table with the **Earliest Manuscripts of the New Testament**:

Individual Biblical Manuscripts	Date Written	Earliest Copy	Time Span
Magdalene Ms (Matthew 26)	1 st century	50-60 AD	co-existent (?)
John Rylands (John)	90 AD	130 AD	40 years
Bodmer Papyrus II (John)	90 AD	150-200 AD	60-110 years
Chester Beatty Papyri (N.T.)	1 st century	200 AD	150 years

Diatessaron by Tatian (Gospels)	1 st century	200 AD	150 years
Codex Vaticanus (Bible)	1 st century	325-350 AD	275-300 years
Codex Sinaiticus (Bible)	1 st century	350 AD	300 years
Codex Alexandrinus (Bible)	1 st century	400 AD	350 years
(Total New Testament manuscripts = 5,300 Greek manuscripts, 10,000 Latin Vulgates, 9,300 others = 24,000 copies). (Total manuscripts compiled prior to 600 AD = 230)			
From: http://debate.org.uk/topics/history/bib-qur/bibmanu.htm			

Lesson 164: Genesis 16:13–16

Hagar's Child, Ishmael

So far, we have studied Gen. 16:13:

Gen. 16:13 And so she calls a name of Y^ehowah [Who spoke to her and is walking away], the One speaking unto her, “You [are] a God of seeing [she calls out to Him, realizing Who He is],” for, she had said, “Have I even here seen after Him Who is seeing me?” “I am out here in the desert, alone, and I have seen the God who always sees me?”

Here is what we can understand from this verse. God came to Hagar and told her what she needed to do. God did not stick around to walk her back to Abram’s compound. She recognizes that she was hearing God, that she was seeing God. She learned about Y^ehowah Elohim from Abram. She had learned from Abram that God is omniscient—He is always seeing her. This is the characteristic by which she knows God, and now she has seen God. So what she is saying, even though it is clunky in the Hebrew, makes perfect sense. Abram told her about Y^ehowah; what stuck out in her mind was His omniscience—He could always see her. And now, she has seen God.

So, even though the actual text is in question, we are still able to come up with clear conclusions of what the passage is telling us.

Hagar left Abram’s compound because she was upset. Hagar left because she was treated poorly. Hagar attempted to change her environment, something that I have observed women do quite often in my own personal life. God is telling Hagar that a change of environment is not the solution to her problems. God does *not* tell Hagar, “Good, you have escaped from slavery; now keep on running!” In at least two instances where slaves have made their escape from slavery (Hagar and Onesimus, who belonged to Philemon), God told them to return to position as slaves (God told Onesimus through Paul).

God places us in an environment, and we live in that environment to glorify Him. Hagar belonged with Abram and Sarai. It was doubtless that through Abram or Sarai, Hagar learned of the God of Seeing and she believed in Him, receiving righteousness exactly as Abram had, through her faith in the God of Seeing (Gen. 15:6).

One of the reasons that God wants Hagar to return to Abram is, *she has just seen God*. God wants Abram to know this. God will not appear to Abram for 13 years, while Hagar's child grows to be a young man. The last recorded words spoken by God were spoken to Hagar; not to Abram. So Abram needs to know this. When Abram listened to his wife Sarai and had sex with Hagar, this was the wrong move. He should have been listening to God rather than to his wife. Therefore, God is going to set Abram aside for a time.

Gen. 16:13 And so she calls a name of Y^ehowah [Who spoke to her and is walking away], the One speaking unto her, "You [are] a God of seeing [she calls out to Him, realizing Who He is]," for, she had said, "Have I even here seen after Him Who is seeing me?" [or, less literally, "I am out here in the desert, alone, and I have seen the God who always sees me?"]

Sarai, Abram's wife, had suggested to Abram to impregnate her slave girl, Hagar; and he did. Sarai became incredibly jealous, and she gave Hagar such a hard time that she fled their household. God met her out in the desert, as a very pregnant Hagar began to walk to Egypt, and He told her to return to Sarai, her mistress.

Hagar recognized that this was God speaking to her and she would return and obviously tell her master, Abram, all that happened. She has seen the God of Seeing; the God of Seeing has spoken to her; so it would be human nature for Hagar to tell Abram about this meeting and what God said.

Furthermore, God wants Abram to know this. God wants Abram to know that He has spoken to Hagar, but not so recently to Abram. God's plan always moves forward, with or without us; and it will pick up with Abram specifically once he has seen to the details of his child by Hagar.

Gen 16:14 Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; it lies between Kadesh and Bered.

Interestingly enough, although Hagar calls Jehovah a *God of Seeing*; she is not the one who names this well. The well where she is, was later named, *Beerlahairoi*, which means "The well of the Living One seeing me." God is alive; the God Who sees her is living. The name given to this well testifies that God spoke to her.

Although we do not know for certain who named the well, it is the Hebrew morphology which suggests that someone else named the well. Therefore, it is possible that Abram even asked to know where the well was and traveled there, hoping to speak to God as well. That is conjecture; but it is not an unreasonable one. It is possible, also, that she and her son would return to this well, when they exit Abram's household 13 or 14 years from now (Gen. 21:9–21) and it is possible that her son names the well. It is possible that, she told Abram what happened and Abram told all of his people what happened; and the well just took on that name, as a result.

We do not know for certain where Beerlahairoi is, despite some folks associating it with this or that well. We simply do not know. Kadesh is in southern Judah, so we reasonably

assume that this is a well which would have been along the desert road to Egypt. We can only make guesses as to where Bered is, as it is mentioned only here in the Bible. It appears to be further along this route toward Egypt (but not too far from the land of Canaan).

Kedesh, generally called Kedesh-barnea, has already been mentioned in Gen. 14. You may recall that the kings from the east, led by Chedorlaomer, did not strike those who rebelled against them from the east or from the north—the direction where they would be expected—but went around them, struck the Amalekites and the Amorites in the southwest, and then turned around at Kedesh, and struck the rebels at Sodom and Gomorrah, coming from a direction that was unexpected.

When the Jews, after the exodus from Egypt, first enter into the Land of Promise, it was from the south while they were headquartered in Kedesh–barnea. Their assault on the land was half–baked and half–hearted, and out of step with God’s will. Therefore, they were decisively defeated and pushed back (Num. 13–14). As a result of their failure here, the Jews will spend about 38 years living near Kedesh (Num. 20:1 Deut. 1:2 2:14).

Although most people speak of the Jews as wandering throughout the desert, it is very possible that they stayed in one place for most of this time. There is nothing in the Bible which suggests that the Jews wandered in this desert area because they were confused and could not find the Land of Promise. They went right up to the land of Canaan, had a serious misstep at that point (they did not exercise faith in God), and backed off. For the next 38½ years, the Jews just cooled their heels near Kadesh, while God killed off the older generation who failed. When that generation had died off, then the next generation advanced into the Land of Promise (but at a vastly different entry point).

After invading the Land of Promise, this new generation, led by Joshua, would conquer much of Israel. In their march across Israel (Joshua invaded central Palestine from the east), they would eventually move down south and conquer this area near Kadesh, and it would be given to the tribe of Judah (specifically to Caleb); after which time, we will never hear about this particular Kedesh again (Joshua 10:41 14:6–7 15:3).

Hagar is in this general area right now and will return to this area in Gen. 21.

Back to Gen. 16. Hagar returns to Abram and Sarai. She tells them what occurred to her and how she spoke to God (there is no reason why she would keep this secret from Abram, who introduced her to the God of Seeing).

Gen 16:15 And Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.

Quite obviously, Hagar listened to God and returned to Abram and Sarai. It says here that Abram named his son. No doubt, Hagar returned, told them Jehovah Elohim had told her to return, and that the name of her son was to be *Ishmael*, as per God’s instructions. In the Hebrew, this is Yish^omâ‘êl (יִשְׁמָעֵל) [pronounced *yish-maw-GALE*], which means

whom God hears; God is hearing and is transliterated *Ishmael*. Strong's #3458 BDB #1035. Hebrew names which have an 'el in them refer to God. Shâma' means *to hear*; and when a yodh is added to the front, that indicates the imperfect (continuous or future) tense. When she returns to the Kadesh area when Ishmael is a young lad, God will hear them.

The name *Ishmael* indicates that God heard Hagar, as she walked through the desert, so many months pregnant, crying and complaining of her situation. God saw her and God heard her, testified to with the designation *the God of Seeing* and Ishmael's name, *God hears*.

In order for this passage to be recorded in the Word of God, Hagar would have had to relate this entire incident to Abram. It would only make sense that a woman who was this close to Abram, who has seen Jehovah Elohim, would tell him all that happened. Furthermore, because this is an appearance of God, Abram knew that it needed to be recorded in the Word of God.

This, by the way, is another great act of humility by Abram. When he met Melchizedek, Abram recognized his authority and his relationship with God, which is why he paid Melchizedek a tithe. Now here, even though God has appeared to Abram 3 times, Abram does not sweep this 4th appearance under the rug. God appeared to Hagar and not to Abram because it is Abram who screwed up, listening to the voice of his wife (Gen. 16:2).

Obviously, Abram has taken a great interest in this child, giving him the name that God had told Hagar to use. Abram clearly believed that God spoke to Hagar. We know this because he recorded²⁵ this incident in the Word of God and because he names this son, Ishmael.

Abram raised this young man as his son, despite the discord which no doubt existed in their household. Given Abram's wealth, his "wives" (Sarai and Hagar) could have lived in different tents. However, Hagar is Sarai's slave-girl. From events which take place in Gen. 21, it will appear that Sarai and Hagar remained as mistress and servant-girl, which is going to continue to be a source of tension. After all, Abram may become a bit more assertive and tell either Sarai or Hagar to lighten up; but this sort of command would be heeded only temporarily.

I should add that, whenever the Bible speaks of a polygamous union in any detail, there are always considerable problems associated with that union. Consequently, there will always be friction between Sarai and Hagar; and, between their respective children and their descendants (Gal. 4:22–28, which passage we will study in the future).

Just in case this particular topic interests you, I have covered the **Doctrine of Polygamy** for a different study. ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#))

²⁵ There is no passage anywhere in the Word of God which suggests that Moses wrote the book of Genesis. Moses is associated with the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, but *never* with Genesis.

Ishmael did eventually become a man who had 12 sons, and his family rapidly multiplied in number. Some of them would become famous traders (Gen. 37:25); and, in an odd twist of fate, Joseph, who is Abram's great grandson, would be sold to an Ishmaelite caravan heading to Egypt many years later (Gen. 37:27–28 39:1). So, at a time when the Abrahamic line through the son of promise was very limited in number, the line through his other son, Ishmael, had grown considerably.

There apparently came a time when the Midianites and the Ishmaelites either joined forces or intermingled (Judges 7–8), so that we do not hear about the Ishmaelites as a separate people in any of the historical literature after that point. Midian is mentioned a few times after this in the history presented by the Bible.

Gen 16:16 Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

At 85, Abram is still able to father a child. He has now been in the Land of Promise for 11 years. 14 years will pass after this before Abram sires the child of promise. In the next chapter, we will jump ahead 13 years.

There is one more important consideration: God appeared to Hagar; He did not appear to Abram. In fact, over the previous 10 years, God appeared thrice to Abram. However, Abram will not hear directly from God for the next 13 years. He was given second-hand information from Hagar, who speaks to God; but Abram will not speak directly to God for a very long time. Why? When Abram impregnated Hagar, that changed things dramatically for Abram. God had been promising Abram a son, but now, God will place Abram on a shelf to wait for 13 years, as Hagar bears this son who grows to an young adult age before God makes it possible for Abram to have his own son by Sarai. So, 13 years of silence, during which time, God speaks to Hagar but not to Abram. Abram was out of step with God's plan because he listened to his wife rather than to God.

Isaac, Abram's son with Sarai, would be a great blessing to Abram and Sarai. However, this blessing is put off 14 years. Have you ever done something which postponed blessing from God? That is exactly what is happening here.

The Jews will do this when God comes to them in the flesh as Jesus Christ. God comes to the Jews in the flesh and He will offer them the Kingdom of Heaven. He tells them to change their mind about their legalistic religion (*repent*, in the King James' vernacular) and to accept the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ. However, The Jews will reject Him, and God will put them on the shelf; God will postpone His blessing to the Jews for many years (so far, over 2000 years) and God will, instead, bless the gentiles who come to Him in faith. God will no longer speak directly to the Jews, but His Word will resonate with the Gentiles (just as they did with Hagar, who is a Gentile); and for a period of time (13–14 years), God's promises to Abram are set aside. These promises are not cancelled out; nor do Hagar and her son take the place of Abram and the son God promised to him. God's promises to Abram stand; those promises are not cancelled out. However, God will wait for a time before He fulfills these promises to Abram.

For a decade, God had come to Abram and made promises directly to him; and, for two millennia, God had come to the Jews and made promises directly to them. They were His people and He was their God. However, for a time, God's direct communication with Abram will be set aside; and, similarly, for a time, God's direct communications with Israel will be set aside. However, God's promises to the Jews have not been forgotten, cancelled out, or transferred over to the church; just as His promises to Abram were never forgotten, cancelled out, or somehow transferred over to his son Ishmael.

So here we have, way back in the book of Genesis, a parallel situation to the Jews and believers in the Church Age. This is the sort of thing a great author often does—he telegraphs the future by some incidents which take place early on in the book. God telegraphs such things to us as well. In the first book of the Bible, there are seeds for many things which will come to pass; there are parallel circumstances and there are seeds for the great and most fundamental doctrines that we know today. There were 40 or 50 human authors who recorded the Word of God over a period of maybe 2000–3000 years; but God the Holy Spirit was the co-Author, who carried these men along as they wrote, not dictating the words to them, but supernaturally acting through them, in such a way that their very words reflected their personalities, their vocabulary, their frames of reference, and their emotional connection to the things which they wrote; while simultaneously communicating the complete, connected and undiluted Word of God to those of us who read and study the Bible. These very words and phrases which we study are at once God's complete Word to mankind as well as the actual words which these men thought and recorded.

I am the sort of person who loves timelines, so I put together a timeline for Abram which gives us his age (which is based upon the Bible) for various incidents in his life. Also, there are two sets of dates given by two different men who have studied this.

The **Abrahamic Timeline** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#))

Lesson 164 addendum: Genesis 16:1–16

A review of Genesis 16

An Abbreviated Exegesis of Genesis 16:

Bible translation used: The Scriptures 2009. Unless otherwise noted, all other quotations will be taken from this translation as well.

In the Scriptures 2009, instead of *God*, we have the word *Elohim*, which is a transliteration from the Hebrew. The other name for God, YHWH (or Jehovah, Yahweh, Adonai, Lord, JHWH, Y^ehowah) is represented with the actual Hebrew יהוה. The reason for there being so many different words used here is interesting. Originally, the Hebrew was written without vowels—not just YHWH, but every single Hebrew word. Because the Hebrew Scriptures (which we know as the Old Testament) were read aloud so often, the reader could look at the Hebrew consonants and know the word that was there. In fact, the

Masoretes, who preserved the Bibles' pronunciation, introduced diacritical marks in the 7th century A.D. (these are vowel points, which was added above and below the original Hebrew text). Up to that time, every word in the Bible was read aloud except for one, and that was YHWH. When the Jews came to this proper name, they said, *Adonai* (= *Lord*). As a result, the Jews preserved the pronunciation of the Biblical text for all but one word. Of the nearly 100 translations of the Old Testament to which I refer, any one of those eight forms may be found—and one of them, the Message (I believe) uses *GOD*. Furthermore, Bible translations are not necessarily consistent at this point. One place we may read *Lord*, and elsewhere we may read *Jehovah* in the same translation.

Genesis 16:1 *And Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no child. And she had a Mitsrian [= Egyptian] female servant whose name was Haġar.*

Abram and Sarai have certainly talked about God's promises. First Abram tried to help God out in the previous chapter by saying, "Oh, by a descendant, You simply mean someone born in my house, like Eliezer of Damascus, right?" God told Abram, "No, wrong. You will sire this child."

Sarai considers this and decides, since she cannot have children, that they would follow the ancient custom of having a child by her personal servant. That could be done and the resulting child could be treated as the child of Abram and Sarai.

Genesis 16:2 *And Sarai said to Abram, "See, הוהי [= YHWH, Y^ehowah] has kept me from bearing children. Please, go in to my female servant. It might be that I am built up by her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.*

Sarai has been thinking about this for awhile and so, she offers up her solution.

In both cases, the human solution is not the solution. Abram cannot help God and Sarai cannot help God. Neither approach is the true solution.

Abram should have, at the very least, called upon God and asked, "What about this idea of Sarai's? Is she on the right track here?" But Abram did not do this.

Perhaps he considered, Hagar is a beautiful young thing; why not give Sarai's idea a try?

Genesis 16:3 *And Sarai, Abram's wife, took Haġar her female servant, the Mitsrian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Kena'an [= Canaan].*

Abram, listening to the voice of his wife, decides to give this surrogate birth a shot. He and Sarai both know that Sarai is not going to give birth to anything.

Genesis 16:4 *And he went in to Haġar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.*

Hagar is very fertile and she becomes pregnant easily.

Genesis 16:5 And Sarai said to Abram, “My wrong be upon you! I gave my female servant into your bosom. And when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes. Let הויה judge between you and me.”

Sarai was not happy about any of this. Hagar, who is supposed to be Sarai’s personal servant, is now acting all haughty because she is carrying Abram’s son—something that Sarai was unable to do.

Sarai had never factored into this idea her own feelings and what might result from Abram fathering a child by Hagar.

Hagar has come to the realization that the most important and powerful man in her periphery is Abram; and now she is carrying his son. That changes the power dynamic dramatically.

Genesis 16:6 And Abram said to Sarai, “See, your female servant is in your hand, do to her what is good in your eyes.” And Sarai treated her harshly, and she fled from her presence.

Abram is, no doubt, rather frustrated with this situation. He did what his wife suggested; and now, somehow, things are worse. *How the heck did that happen*, he wonders.

Sarai treats Hagar despicably and Hagar finally flees her unjust mistress.

Genesis 16:7–8 And the Messenger of הויה found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur, and He said, “Haġar, Sarai’s female servant, where have you come from, and where are you going?” And she said, “I am fleeing from the presence of Sarai, my mistress.”

God does not happen upon this whole thing after the fact and then go running after Hagar in hot pursuit. God knew from eternity past that this was going to take place. God needs to give Hagar some time to vent and some time to consider the real situation she has placed herself in.

God, when speaking to someone out of fellowship, asks questions; and these questions often elicit the confession of sin. Her running away from her mistress is a sin.

Genesis 16:9 And the Messenger of הויה said to her, “Return to your mistress, and humble yourself under her hand.”

God sends her back.

Genesis 16:10 And the Messenger of הויה said to her, “I am going to increase your seed greatly, too numerous to be counted.”

God also makes a promise to Hagar not too different from His promises to Abram.

God is not in the habit of making promises to unbelievers. From everything else that I read here, Hagar clearly believes in the Revealed God, the God of Abram.

Genesis 16:11 And the Messenger of הוה said to her, "See, you are conceiving and bearing a son, and shall call his name Yishma'ël, because הוה has heard your affliction.

God tells Hagar what to name her son. He suggests this name because God heard of her difficulties.

Genesis 16:12 "And he is to be a wild man, his hand against every one and every one's hand against him, and dwell over against all his brothers."

God warns of what sort of man Ishmael is going to be. Mostly, he will be raised by his mother, and it is not unusual for a child raised only by the mother to lack self-discipline.

Genesis 16:13 And she called the Name of הוה who spoke to her, "You are the Ĕl who sees," for she said, "Even here have I seen after Him who sees me?"

Hagar recognizes that this angel is God. She even asks, "How can I see after God has seen me?" In other words, "How is it possible for me to still be alive after seeing and hearing God?"

Genesis 16:14 That is why the well was called Be'ër Laḥai Ro'i, see, it is between Qadēsh and Bered.

This well was apparently known for a long time. The name means, *Well of the Living One Who Sees Me*.

Genesis 16:15 And Haġar bore Abram a son, and Abram called the name of his son, whom Haġar bore, Yishma'ël.

Hagar names her son *Ishmael*, as God commanded her.

Genesis 16:16 And Abram was eighty-six years old when Haġar bore Yishma'ël to Abram.

Abram is 86 years old when Ishmael is born.

Lesson 165: Genesis 17:1**Abraham, 13 years later**

We are now ready to begin Gen. 17.

As an aside, you may think that we have spent too much time on each chapter. Quite frankly, when I began this project, I never expected to spend 5–10 lessons on each chapter. I actually anticipated spending 5–10 pages on each chapter. However, Genesis is filled with great information. There is no book in the world like Genesis. Although the book of Genesis is principally narrative, it is filled with principles and doctrines and is the very foundation of all that we know to be true. Furthermore, there are times when individual words and phrases require no little investigation. Therefore, rather than focus on how fast we can get to Gen. 50, we should focus on the scenery and enjoy the drive along the way. It is why God recorded these words for us to study.

Gen 17:1a When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram...

It is most logical that much of what is recorded about Abram’s life will be the instances where he spoke with God. That is, I don’t believe that Abram had face to face dealings with God on a daily or weekly or even yearly basis. God appears to Abram perhaps a half-dozen times throughout his life. In recording the details of his life, it would seem odd for Abram to leave out a meeting with God, and yet record some other event which would surely be seen as more trivial (any event ought to be seen as more trivial than God having direct contact with Abram). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that every time that God spoke to Abram (or to someone that Abram knew), that incident is recorded in the Word of God.

May I again suggest the **Abrahamic Timeline** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)). In this timeline, the times during which Abraham speaks to God are denoted by a lavender background. Deaths and births are denoted with a pale yellow background. This timeline allows you to step back and take in a fuller view of Abraham’s recorded life; so that you can see the forest rather than the individual trees. What follows is a small portion of that timeline:

Genesis 15–17 in the Abrahamic Timeline

Brent MacDonald	Christian Shepherd (age of Abram)	Reese’s Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
		1882 B.C.	Gen. 15:1–21	God’s covenant with Abram is given in greater detail.
	85	1882 B.C. 1881 B.C. (Klassen)	Gen. 16:1–14	Sarah gives Hagar, her Egyptian slave girl, to Abram in order to sire a son. Gen 16:3 So Abram’s wife Sarai took Hagar, her Egyptian slave, and gave her to her husband Abram as a wife for him. This happened after Abram had lived in the land of Canaan 10 years.
2078 B.C.	86	1881 B.C.	Gen. 16:15–16	Ishmael born to Abraham and Hagar in the land of Canaan. Gen 16:16 Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.

Brent MacDonald	Christian Shepherd (age of Abram)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
	99	1868 B.C.	Gen. 17:1–8	God renews His covenant with Abram and renames him Abraham. Gen 17:1 <i>When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to him, saying, "I am God Almighty. Live in My presence and be complete."</i>

At the time of Gen. 17:1, Abram is 99 years old. 13 years have passed since the previous chapter, during which time, Abram's son Ishmael was given birth to by Hagar and then raised by Hagar and Abram. Apparently, God has not appeared to Abram at all during these 13 years. Abram has been temporarily set aside, just as God would later set aside the people of Israel. Abram got off track. He tried to pursue a life which was in keeping with his culture, which pursuit went against God's plan. So God stepped out of Abram's life for 13 years. However, it is now time for God to begin to fulfill His promises that He made to Abram on 3 earlier occasions.

Abram is learning to wait on God. God has given specific promises to Abram, and God expects Abram to wait on Him for these promises to be fulfilled. God has made it clear what these promises were and that there are no shortcuts, like using a surrogate mother in order to fulfill these promises. You cannot fulfill God's plan through the efforts of the flesh (that is, human good).

Ishmael, Abram's son by Hagar, is now 13 years old. God has made several promises to Abram—13 years ago and earlier—and has been speaking to Abram over these past 24 years, from time to time, but not lately. At this point in time, none of God's promises seem to make sense, as they are all dependent upon Abram having a son, and that is becoming less and less likely. 13 years ago, Abram was capable of fathering a son. In fact, the situation was becoming so dire that, his wife suggested that he impregnate her personal slave girl, because it appeared as though she was unable to have a child. As we have studied, Sarai probably wanted children herself, and this seemed the only way for it to happen. In any case, this tells us that, for awhile, Abram and his wife chose not to believe the promises of God, but to trust in their own human ingenuity. God had promised them that they would have a son and that Abram would be the father of many nations. If what God is saying is true, then there is no reason for Abram and Sarai to do anything other than to wait on God to fulfill His promises to Abram.

Now, 13 years have passed, Abram himself is no longer able to sire a child. He is sexually dead (Gen. 17:17 18:12 Rom. 4:17, 19).

Gen 17:1 When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature,...

We often take verses like this for granted. We read a verse like this in 3 seconds, and give it very little thought. What is God telling Abram to do? When it comes to a specified moral behavior, very little is revealed in Genesis as a clear command. There is a clear commandment not to murder in Gen. 9:6 (which commandment is not so much a prohibition of murder, but what society should do with a murderer). Mankind is told to split up in Gen. 10 (which God forces to happen by confusing the languages). Gen. 12 implies that lying and adultery are wrong. Gen. 14 implies that, in a war, the victor legitimately may take all that belonged to his vanquished enemy. Finally, God legitimizes the authority in slavery in the previous chapter. In other words, in the book of Genesis, as far as we have gone, there is no clearly-defined code of moral behavior which stands written, beyond the implications named. Yes, God tells Abram: “Walk before Me, and be blameless [*complete*; i.e., spiritually mature].”

God first identifies Himself to Abram as *Él Shaddai*, which means *God Almighty* or *God Most-Powerful*. This is a title which indicates power and ability, which is important here, because God is going to repeat His promise about Abram bearing a son. Abram no longer has the ability to sire a son; Sarai no longer can bear children, so the fulfillment of God's promises are dependent upon God. No one can bring any of God's promises into reality except for God. In order for God's promises to Abram to be fulfilled, Abram will have to depend wholly upon God Most-Powerful, as only a God Who is omnipotent will be able to fulfill the promised which He made to Abram.

Rom. 4:19–21 *And not being weak in faith, Abram did not consider his own body already dead (being about a hundred years old) or the deadening of Sarah's womb. He did not stagger at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what God had promised, He was also able to perform. God is able to do what He has promised because He is Él Shaddai, God Almighty.*

This title for God is found 6 times in the book of Genesis and 31 times in the book of Job. It is for this, and several other reasons, that the book of Job is thought to be from this era (who knows? Maybe God spent these 13 silent years with Job). This same name for God occurs only 11 times throughout all the rest of the Old Testament books, occurring no more than 2 or 3 times in any single book.

God tells Abram: "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature,..." In there King James Version, the final word is translated *perfect*, which has caused no little confusion in the Christian doctrine. This word does not mean *perfect* in the sense of attaining some level of sinless perfection in this life. We continue in this life with an old sin nature. We may come to a point where we sin less today than we did 10 years ago; but we do not reach a state of perfection or flawlessness.

What we have here is the imperative of *to be* followed by the adjective *tâmîym* (תָּמִים) [pronounced *taw-MEEM*], which means *complete, whole, entire, sufficient, without blemish*. When spoken of a man, it means a man who operates on the basis of spiritual integrity; i.e., he is spiritually mature and in fellowship. Strong's #8549 BDB #1071. You may recall that this adjective was applied to Noah in [Gen. 6:9](#). In the immediate context, God would

be calling for Abram to be in fellowship and focused on the words of God while they discussed this covenant. God expects Abram to hear these words, concentrate on them and to believe them. In the context of the rest of Abram's life (he still has 76 years to live), God wants him to reach a state of completion, which is spiritual maturity, and to maintain that spiritual state. No more fooling around with Egyptian slave girls; no more trying to help God keep His promises.

God tells Abram to walk before God and to be blameless, and this implies that there is some concept of moral or spiritual behavior. However, there is no indication that this standard of morality is enumerated by God at any point. 500 years or so from this point in time, God is going to give the Law to His people; but at this point in time, God has not laid down a specific set of laws. Almost everything we know about right and wrong, at this point in our walk through Genesis, is found in the implications of the previous chapters, which then logically suggests that what is right and wrong is imprinted on the souls of mankind. Let's go back to Gen. 9:6, which reads: **Whoever sheds man's blood, his blood shall be shed by man. For He made man in the image of God.** You will recall that, previous to this, God allowed those who murdered to live. Cain was banished, but not executed. Lamech sang a folk song about murdering and he continued to live and sing about it. But in Gen. 9:6, God sets up consequences, which implies there ought to be specific consequences for certain acts that are wrong. This takes us back to, *how do we know what is wrong?* We have two possibilities: (1) God specifically gave a pre-Mosaic Law, where right and wrong was defined—and there is no indication of that. Or (2) the concept of right and wrong was imprinted on the souls of most men. This does not mean that it is inherent in their souls, but that it is imprinted there. How? By their parents. And they learned it from their parents, who learned it from their parents, who, going back far enough, learned from Noah. Recall that we are not that far removed in time from the flood, and, by one estimation of dates, the sons of Noah are still alive at this time.

God created Adam and the woman, and there was only one defined act of wrongdoing—taking and eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Apart from this, Adam and the woman were created perfect. So, even after they sinned and acquired a sin nature, they understood right from wrong (recall, they ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil). In their souls—which souls were created directly by God—they understood notions of right and wrong. As the population of the earth grew (recall that Adam was nearly 1000 years old), he was able to take what he knew in his soul and apply it to his life. This soulish understanding of right and wrong was carried by many simply through the training that they would have received from their parents. This was certain true of the soul of Noah. **Noah was a just man and perfect [spiritually mature] in his generations. Noah walked with God** (Gen. 6:9b). Noah would have taught the concepts of right and wrong to his own children, even in a most corrupt world, which world they would all escape. The 3 sons of Noah would continue to perpetuate the morality in their own souls by teaching their sons and daughters, who would perpetuate this teaching.

Therefore, let me further suggest that, for many people, during this era, even so separated from God, they had an innate desire to define right and wrong, and to set up just

consequences for doing wrong. From this general time period, a number of well-defined codes of ethics were developed.

These are the codes which we actually have records of, which suggests that there were many legal codes from this era.

Ancient Law Codes		
Codes	Date	Information
The Code of Urukagina	2,380–2,360 B.C.	Urukagina was a ruler of the city-state Lagash in Mesopotamia circa 2380–2360 B.C.
The Code of Ur-Nammu	circa 2100–2050 B.C.	This is the oldest known tablet which contains a law code that survives today. It was written in the Sumerian language.
The Laws of Eshnunna	1930 B.C.	These laws are inscribed on two cuneiform tablets discovered in Baghdad, Iraq. This law code is named after a city, rather than after a person. This apparently governed an area north of Ur. These laws are written in the Akkadian language.
The Codex of Lipit-Ishtar	1934–1924 B.C.	Lipit-Ishtar was the fifth ruler of the first dynasty of Isin. He is partially known for the legal code written in his name. This is apparently written in Sumerian, and the laws were a legal code, defining specific penalties for specific crimes and acts of wrongdoing.
The Code of Hammurabi	circa 1780 B.C.	The Code of Hammurabi is a Babylonian law code written by the sixth Babylonian king, Hammurabi

This suggests that during this time period, there was a profound concern with law, morality and legal consequences. This is the time period during which Abram lived.

These references are taken out of Wikipedia, accessed November 16, 2011, and linked below:

- [The Code of Urukagina](#)
- [The Code of Ur-Nammu](#)
- [The Laws of Eshnunna](#)
- [The Codex of Lipit-Ishtar](#)
- [The Code of Hammurabi](#)

My conclusion would be that, by the teaching of Abram’s parents, Abram had a good understanding of right and wrong in his soul. Historically, this was of profound importance to mankind. They were beginning to have groups of families living in close proximity, and codes of behavior had to be established along with laws to regulate groups of people. In a family, particularly with their long lives, they could go to the oldest, who is probably father of all of them, and resolve disputes. However, as these families began to gather side-by-side, codes had to be developed, not just to define morality, but to deal with acts of immorality. Hence, these many codes that we know of. In fact, let me suggest that these

codes existed in nearly every city and town; and certainly in any city-state. Just because we have records on these codes does not mean they are the only codes from that era.

Gen 17:1 When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature,...

When God tells Abram to walk before Him, this would be analogous to the Christian walk; that is, there would be a *modus operandi* of some sort that Abram would follow. This is stated specifically with Enoch (Gen. 5:24) and implied with Noah (Gen. 6:9). This spiritual code would include faith in Jehovah Elohim (Gen. 15:6), a limited system of animal sacrifices (Gen. 12:8 13:18 15:9–11), and probably [rebound \(confession of personal sin to God\)](#) and [faith-rest](#) (which is what Abram ought to be doing with the promises of God). These links, by the way, will function when this lesson is affixed to the lessons which came before.

There would have been a specific moral behavior, but that is much like the function of moral behavior in the Church Age; it is a part of [the laws of divine establishment](#), it is something which Christians ought to adhere to, but it is designed for man universal and not only for believers. These laws are designed to preserve freedom, families, and nations. That is what these codes were all about; and they established a code of justice, necessary for any society.

The actual Hebrew word for *walk* is the Hithpael imperative of the very common word *hâlak*^e (הלך) [pronounced *haw-LAHK*^e], which means, *to go, to come, to depart, to walk [up and down, about]; to wander, to prowl; to go for oneself, to go about, to live [walk] [in truth]* (these are all Hithpael meanings). Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229. Although the Hithpael is most simply described as the reflexive intensive, it actually has several uses which are not specifically reflexive. Here, its iterative use is probably what is meant, which means that there will be several (even thousands) of periods of time when Abram is walking. What follows qualifies the verb "[Walk before Me](#) [or, [walk in My Presence](#)]." This is why there is a spiritual connotation to the interpretation this phrase.

You will recall the Hagar understood God to be the God of Seeing; and she would have learned this from Abram. God is omniscient. Therefore, God is telling Abram to walk before Him, with this understanding. God may not have contacted Abram for the past 13 years, but that does not mean that God is not there. Abram is to conduct his life knowing God is there; knowing that He is an omniscient God. And because God is going to reiterate and expand on His promises, Abram needs to know that God is *able* to bring these promises to pass. God does not need Abram to traipse off with some Egyptian gal in order for His promises to be fulfilled. God is omnipotent. He does not need us to help Him with our human works or with our human schemes.

Gen 17:1 When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me [or, [walk in My Presence](#)], and be complete [whole, sufficient, spiritually mature],...

So, essentially, God is commanding Abram to live the spiritual life and to be spiritually mature. We have guessed what this means, but it is not laid out as a simple, step-by-step process in the book of Genesis (these [mechanics](#) are clearly laid out for believers in Church Age, however). In order to determine what this means, we need to dig a little deeper into the chapters of Genesis which we have already studied.

Lesson 166: Genesis 17:1

The Spiritual Life so far in the Book of Genesis

So far, we have begun to study this verse:

Gen 17:1 When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me [or, *walk in My Presence*], and be complete [whole, sufficient, spiritually mature],...

In this first verse of Gen. 17, God identifies Himself and gives Abram two mandates: "**Walk in My Presence and be spiritually mature.**" These commands are both in the imperative mood; which suggests (1) these are things that God wants Abram to do; and (2) Abram understands what he is being commanded to do.

As we have already studied, *complete* is the adjective *tâmîym* (תָּמִיִּם) [pronounced *taw-MEEM*], which means *complete, whole, entire, sufficient, without blemish*. When spoken of a man, it means a man who operates on the basis of spiritual integrity; i.e., he is spiritually mature and in fellowship. Strong's #8549 BDB #1071. So far, we have one clear example of what it means to be *tâmîym*, Noah was declared to be *complete* (*whole, sufficient, spiritually mature*) in Gen. 6:9.

Therefore, let's step back and see if we can understand what the spiritual walk would be for Abram, based upon what stands written in his time.

The Spiritual Life Implied and Stated so far in the Book of Genesis

1. Salvation:
 - 1) It is clear that salvation is based upon faith in Jehovah Elohim. Gen. 15:6 reads: **And Abram had believed Y^ehowah, and He [God] counted [or, valued, imputed, regarded] it [Abram's faith in Y^ehowah] to him as righteousness.**
 - 2) Throughout the book of Genesis, up to this point, we have seen the emphasis which is made upon animal sacrifices, which is a picture of Jesus Christ dying for our sins.
 - (1) In order for Adam and the woman's nakedness to be covered by animal skins, those animals had to be killed, something which had never been done before. They had never seen anything die before and they had never seen blood before. Gen. 3:21
 - (2) God valued Abel's animal sacrifice over Cain's works (bringing a bloodless offering of vegetables). Gen. 4:1-7

The Spiritual Life Implied and Stated so far in the Book of Genesis

- (3) From the clean animals, Noah was to bring 7 pairs of them. My assumption is, some of those would be used for sacrifice. Gen. 7:2–3
 - (4) Noah, immediately after stepping off the Ark after the flood, began to offer animal sacrifices to God. Gen. 8:20–21
 - (5) Abram, on several occasions, builds altars to God. Since this is clearly associated with Noah and offering up animal sacrifices, we may reasonably conclude that was the purpose of the altars built by Abram. Gen. 8:20 12:7–8 13:4, 18
 - (6) The author of Hebrews explains the connection between the animal sacrifices and the death of Jesus on the cross (Heb. 9:13–20). Even though the author of Hebrews was specifically describing the Mosaic code for sacrifices, this still applies to sacrifices of animals which occurred prior to the Mosaic Law. After all, he was writing to Jews about their rituals, telling them that the reality of those rituals had come to pass, so that there was no further need to practice these rituals now that Jesus had become our sacrifice, one man for all time. Heb. 9:23–28
2. Confession of sin (naming one's sins to God, for which R. B. Thieme, Jr. coined the word *rebound*).
- 1) When Adam and the woman had sinned, God has them first name their sins to Him. This is established first before God moves forward with His judgment. Gen. 3:9–13
 - 2) God attempts to coax a confession of wrongdoing from Cain in Gen. 4:8–10, which confession, God does not seem to get. God imposes a permanent judgment of exile upon Cain in Gen. 4:11–12.
 - 3) God speaks to Hagar and she admits what she has done. There is no punishment placed upon her; she is simply told to return to Abram and Sarai. Also, God makes a promise to Hagar about the descendants of her boy. So, interestingly enough, she sins, she admits this sin to God; and she is not punished by God but given promises from Him. Gen. 16:8–13
 - 4) In raising a child and teaching them right from wrong, when they do wrong, the first thing that we do when they do wrong is get them to admit what it is that they have done that is wrong.
3. Faith-rest, which is knowing the promises, guarantees and doctrines of God, believing them and adhering to them.
- 1) God gave assurances to Cain, even though he may not have gotten back into fellowship. Gen. 4:14–15
 - 2) God promises Noah (and all mankind) that He would never flood the earth again. Therefore, man was to operate on that basis, despite the fact that Noah and his 3 sons went through a world-wide flood. Gen. 9:9–16
 - 3) God told Abram to go to the land of Canaan, but God also gave promises to Abram, toward which he was to exercise faith. Gen. 12:1–3
 - 4) When Abram separated from Lot, God came to Abram again and gave him

The Spiritual Life Implied and Stated so far in the Book of Genesis

- promises. Gen. 13:14–17
- 5) On occasion, God has to reinforce the promises that He made to Abram. Abram questions how these promises are to be fulfilled, and God reiterates the promise, and then gives Abram more information—more promises and prophecies to believe in. The implication is, if you are having trouble believing this or that doctrine, the key is to have more information (more doctrine). God does not simply stop right there, when Abram questions Him, and say, “I am not going to teach you any more until your first believe this.” God teaches Abram more. Gen. 15:1–21
 - 6) Abram found out, after 13 years of silence from God, that one does not try to bring God’s promises to pass by means of human good or by doing things which are outside of God’s plan. Abram has also faced 13 years of household friction based upon his mistake of listening to his wife and stepping outside of the plan of God. Gen. 16
 - 7) As we have recently studied, God even made specific promises to Hagar in Gen. 16:9–12.
 - 8) This may seem pretty elementary, but some people do not get it: *you must have something to believe before you can exercise faith*. Having faith is meaningless unless that faith has an object and that object is true. Everyone has faith; everyone believes in a variety of things. People believe in global warming, evolution, supply-side economics, conservative principles socialism, and abortion (which they call a woman’s right to choose). These things may be true or false; but all kinds of people believe in some of those things. Having faith is not enough. God does not look down and say, “Wow, you *really* believe in evolution; your faith is strong; I appreciate that.” Your faith is of no value when it is placed in the wrong things. Your faith must have an object and that object is truth, also called Bible doctrine. It is not your faith, per se, which is meritorious; it is the object of your faith that is meritorious.
 - 9) Paul will, many centuries later, tell us that there is a righteousness associated with faith in God’s promises. Rom. 4:19–22 **And [Abraham] being about a hundred years old, not weakening in faith, he did not consider his body to have died already [he was sexually dead], nor yet the death of Sarah's womb, and he did not stagger in unbelief at the promise of God [that they would have a son], but was strengthened by faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what God has promised, He is also able to do. Because of this, "it was also counted to him for righteousness."** You will note that Paul has taken the words of Gen. 15:6 and given them a different application here. Abram will place his faith in what God has promised, and *this* faith—the faith that Abram places in the promises of God—would be credited to Abram as righteousness. This is fascinating because Paul took a promise of salvation to Abram and gave it a new spin—his faith in God’s promises. Therefore, subsequent to salvation, faith in God’s promises are counted to Abram as righteousness.

The Spiritual Life Implied and Stated so far in the Book of Genesis

So there is an accumulated righteousness which is a part of our lives post-salvation, that when we believe God's promises, *this* faith is counted as righteousness. In the New Testament, we call this experiential sanctification or phase II sanctification. We are already saved, but we continue to accumulate righteousness based upon our faith in God's promises, doctrines and mandates.

4. The concept of grace—which is an attitude that results in acts that bestow upon people that which they do not deserve.
 - 1) From the very beginning, God came to Abram and promised to make a great nation of him and to give him the land of Canaan. At this time, Abram had done very little that we could consider meritorious. Gen. 12:1–3
 - 2) Abram rescued Lot. It was Lot who chose to associate himself with the most degenerate elements of Canaan. Lot did not deserve Abram's faithfulness or the deliverance that he brought to pass. Gen. 14:12–16
 - 3) Abram is gracious toward the King of Sodom, returning to him both his people and all of their belongings, which Abram could have legitimately kept. Gen. 14:21–23
 - 4) However, closely associated with Abram's graciousness is his not requiring his friends to be held to the same standard. That is, Abram did not impose his standards of righteousness upon others. They were remunerated for their services. Gen. 14:24
 - 5) Even though we have grace being taught throughout Gen. 14, the Old Testament word for *grace* will not be found until Gen. 19:19 (which will indicate that, in the midst of judgment, there is God's grace).
5. Blessing by association and cursing by association.
 - 1) Forever, nations would be cursed or blessed based upon their relationship with God's people, the Jews. Gen. 12:3 (“**And I will bless those who bless you, and curse the one despising you. And in you all families of the earth shall be blessed.**”)
 - 2) Lot was blessed by his association with Abram. Gen. 13:6
 - 3) Lot was cursed by his association with the worst elements of Canaan. Gen. 14:12–14 15:13–16 19:1–28
 - 4) This concept may be further generalized into being blessed if you are in association with those associated with God; and cursed if you are in association with those who are in rebellion against God.
6. The concept that Jesus Christ (in the Old Testament, Jehovah Elohim) controls history. This is most clearly seen and understood in Gen. 14 and 19 (which chapter, obviously, we have not studied yet).
 - 1) We have already studied Gen. 14, which is simultaneously, one of the greatest and one of the most ignored chapters in Scripture. Abram led a tiny battalion of about 300 men against a brigade of possibly 3000–5000 well-trained soldiers and they defeated the larger army, causing them to retreat, and changing history in that region.

The Spiritual Life Implied and Stated so far in the Book of Genesis

- (1) By the way, if you scoff at this and say, "That is just silly; these things don't happen." Israel today is a tiny country; it is 0.2% of land mass of the Middle East. All around them are people who have been raised from childhood to hate the Jews. There are nearly 8 million people in Israel, $\frac{3}{4}$ ^{ths} of whom are Jewish (I write this in 2012). They are surrounded by countries which hate them. Egypt has about 85 million people and various political parties in Egypt continually speak of the destruction of Israel. Syria has nearly 23 million people. Iran has about 78 million people. All of these nations are, for the most part, hostile toward Israel. There are 1 billion Muslims in this world; they are hostile to Israel. Why don't they simply attack Israel? Because of 6 days in 1967, when the Jews fought against Syria, Egypt and Iraq and defeated them. Israel fought an offensive war and God gave them victory. Although a repeat of this war in 1973 was not as successful for Israel (they were not as aggressive to begin with), still, the small population of Israel held their own against nations which were much larger (Egypt and Syria). Since Israel's war of independence, there are been a dozen wars between the Jews and others in their periphery, and Israel has continued to increase their land holdings.
- 2) Back to Gen. 14, and God controlling history. God wanted Abram to meet Melchizedek, which came about because of Abram's military victory, which took place in the proximity of Melchizedek's city. Jesus Christ controls history.
- 3) Abram showed grace to the King of Sodom, which gave him a window of time during which he could have turned his own city-nation around. However, this king simply took from Abram what he was given, and had little interest in what was in Abram's soul to make him do what he did. Similarly, the king of Sodom and his people had little interest in Melchizedek.
- 4) Quite obviously, with the flood and with the confusion of the languages, God has controlled history throughout the ages.
- 5) In application to today, we believers in the United States must continue to have faith in Jesus Christ controlling human history, because our nation is in the worst shape it has ever been in. There are many nations with large armies that do not like us. We have a national debt as we have never had before. Our government has made trillions more in promises which it has no ability to keep (with regards to social security and medicare), and we have a huge number of people who refuse to think that this is a problem. So, whatever happens in the next year, or the next decade or in the next half-century, our faith needs to be in Jesus Christ, that He controls history.
7. Obedience to God's commands:
 - 1) God told Noah about the flood to come and told him what to do to prepare

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- for it. What Noah did in building the ark and gathering all of the animals was acting in obedience to God's Word. Gen. 6:12–22
- 2) The Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1–5) was disobeying the order from God for man to swarm the earth (Gen. 9:7). God told Noah not to worry about being flooded after the great flood, and the Tower of Babel appears to have been built with the partial intention of a place of safety in a great flood.
 - 3) God came to Abram and told him to move to Canaan. The Jewish race is dependent upon Abram's obedience to God's geographical will. Gen. 12:1–5
 - 4) Abram tried to fulfill God's promises to him by having sex with Hagar, in order to raise up a son, and God put Abram on the shelf for 13 years. His faith and resultant actions were misplaced. Gen. 16:3–4, 16 17:1
8. Living our lives, making choices and doing things, based upon what we know about God. God did not follow Abram every step of the way, saying, "Now, go 5 miles southwest, take a 10 minute rest, and then go 3 miles west." That is, the spiritual life does not consist of following a long list of specific, narrow and tedious commands from God, which guide our each and every step. Obedience to God, does not mean that He stands there as a drill sergeant, orchestrating our each and every move, Whose orders we obey robotically. The process is far more organic than that.
- 1) Let me give you the football game analogy. During a football game, every individual player operates on the basis of free will and, even though there are well-defined and well-practiced plays, every player has to also be cognizant of events transpiring around them. 11 coaches are not simultaneously speaking into 11 headsets telling each and every player what to do next. God has designed us to have a modicum of independence and to make a variety of free will choices. However, these choices must be made according to the rules of the game, as football players must follow. A pass receiver might see an open spot out of bounds, but he is wasting his time to rush to that open spot in the stands.
 - 2) God appears to Abram about a half-dozen times, and each time is for a fairly short period of time. In the interim of these appearances are years of Abram's life, where he functions, having God's promises, but without having God continually come to him, telling him exactly what to do moment by moment. Gen. 14 is a perfect example of Abram doing what is right, but without God telling him exactly what to do, moment by moment. Although God is always with Abram, as He is with all of us, God is not right there with us, telling us each and every step to take and direction to move in. For this reason, Hagar calls Him, a *God of Seeing*.
 - 3) Therefore, the function of our free will in our lives and doing what ought to be done is very much the spiritual life (in conjunction with being in fellowship and knowing God's Word). In Gen. 14, Abram did not sit around and wait for God to give him marching orders. He had to act and

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he acted. He had to save his nephew Lot. Gen. 14 represents one of Abram's greatest spiritual victories. One might even say there was symbolic indication of this spiritual victory, where Abram went from offering animal sacrifices to taking the wine and bread in a pre-Church Age communion service. Gen. 14:18

- 4) Many systems of evil seek to restrict the free will of man, particularly when it comes to expressing our spiritual lives. In communist countries, Christianity is all but outlawed; in Muslim countries, Christianity is outlawed and/or viciously persecuted; in liberal thinking, no government official ought to publically profess faith in God or faith in Jesus Christ. We have actually had government authorities tell chaplains and pastors what they can and cannot say in various services.
 - (1) There was an attempt to [remove God from public prayers at veterans' funerals](#) (leading to the common sense question, *just Who the hell are you praying to, then?*).
 - (2) New York City Mayor Bloomberg thought that [prayers mentioning God at a 9-11 memorial were inappropriate](#) (causing many to ask, just who exactly are we praying to, then?).
 - (3) One religious writer for the Washington Post [warns that there are times the majority in a democracy ought not to get what it wants](#), if we are speaking of the 65% of Americans who want to see prayer reinstated in school. He also suggests considering prayers without the mention of God or religion, whatever that means.
 - (4) We have a myriad of instances where the words *Christmas* and *Easter* are virtually banned from mention, in public schools which just happen to celebrate those holidays each and every year. Many such schools do not hold a Christmas pageant or allow the singing of Christmas songs, even though this is a rich tradition in American history. If a principal of a school came on the intercom and recited George Washington's Thanksgiving message or even a public prayer from FDR, he would be disciplined or fired by the school board for his over-the-top religious fervor.
 - (5) Chaplain Klingenschmitt's, a former Navy Chaplain, [was court-martialed and fired for praying publicly in uniform "in Jesus name."](#)
- 5) We have the illustration of our own children. We want the best for them and we don't want them to make a series of life-destroying mistakes. Therefore, we raise them with the best intentions of guiding them, knowing that, at some point, they will function independently of us. The last thing a normal parent wants to do is be with their child every minute of the day telling them what to do next and what not to do. I believe the contemporary term for this is *helicopter parents*.
- 6) We live lives, therefore, with some independence from God, but functioning within the boundaries that He has established.

The Spiritual Life Implied and Stated so far in the Book of Genesis

9. When Abram meets Melchizedek, they seem to bond immediately, based upon the fact that they both worship of the same God, even though these men had no previous contact and are likely only distantly related to one another (they share the common ancestors of Adam and Noah, but are probably descended from different sons of Noah).
10. In this era, there was a rudimentary understanding of the [laws of divine establishment](#), which many rulers attempted to [codify](#) into law at that time. These were laws which applied to all of their citizens, in order to have an orderly society. Again, Gen. 14, while illustrating Abram able to act and make good decisions without God telling him what to do; we also got to peer into the understandings of morality and the interaction of nations at that time.
 - 1) Some of these laws of divine establishment would include punishment by society for murder. However, there is no indication in Scripture that this ought to be practiced by vigilantes. Gen. 9:6
 - 2) The concept of nationalism over internationalism is taught in Gen. 11:1–9
 - 3) The right of self-defense, the right of defending one's own family, and the right to the spoils of war are all found in Gen. 14.
 - 4) Although God would give the land of Canaan to Abram's progeny, this would be based upon the great degeneracy of the Canaanite people in the land. This also indicates that, being the first people into a geographical area does not guarantee perpetual ownership or control over that geographical area, either morally or actually. Gen. 12:1–2 13:15–17 15:13–16 17: 19:1–28
 - 5) God punishes nations for great degeneracy within that nation, which punishment can include being defeated militarily and even having one's land taken away. Gen. 15:13–16 19:1–28
11. Although there are the laws of divine establishment and there was an attempt to codify that which is true, that does not mean that cultural norms and standards define what is right and wrong.
 - 1) When Abram and Sarai decided to use Hagar as a surrogate mother, this was in accordance with the customs of that day, but it was not in God's directive will that Abram impregnate Hagar.
 - 2) Although it was legitimate for Abram to keep the goods and people that he liberated in Gen. 14, he kept neither. At this point, he was obeying higher principles of his faith in God blessing him as He had promised.
12. There is a concept of right and wrong—one's conscience—which is embedded in the soul. This conscience appears to be fairly well-developed in some, and I would attribute that to parental training and guidance.
13. So, even though we do not have the spiritual life laid out for us step-by-step in the book of Genesis, there is enough information here so that we can understand that there was, nevertheless, a well-defined spiritual life. Furthermore, when God tells Abram to live the spiritual life, that suggests that Abram understood what God was telling him to do.

This information, primarily culled from Gen. 3–16, taken with the various laws and codes which were developed during this time period, indicates that there was certainly a rudimentary spiritual life for believers as well as a national code of morality and justice for unbelievers (which we call the laws of divine establishment).

Similarly, the book of Job, besides giving us a lot of information about the Angelic Conflict in the first two chapters, also allows us to see 4 men from the ancient world discussing their ideas about God, the world they live in, their lives, and the application of what they believed to be universal spiritual laws to their lives. This book, more than likely, took place prior to Abram or coterminous with Abram's life.

For an historical context, I believe it is important to stop, like we did here, and review, and see if there was a spiritual life defined for believers in Abram's era, as there is for us in the Church Age. Because Gen. 3–16 covers an era of 1000–2000 years, the limited amount of writing that exists in the canon of Scripture has to be carefully searched to recognize the continuities between our time and theirs. Furthermore, this helps to explain what God means when He tells Abraham to walk before Him and to be spiritually mature:

Gen 17:1 When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature,...

Lesson 167: Genesis 17:1–4

God's Covenant with Abraham

Gen 17:1 When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature,...

So far, God has delivered a series of commands and promises to Abram, which is why he is living in Canaan in the first place. However, there is no indication that God has ever laid out a system of specific laws and that the pre-Mosaic spiritual life is only implied. However, as we have studied in the [previous lesson](#), there appears to be enough information presented so that we can reasonably determine the basic spiritual life for believers and the concept of right and wrong for believers and unbelievers alike (the common morality for believers and unbelievers is known as [divine establishment](#) or the [laws of divine establishment](#)). So, the function of the spiritual life combined with the morality of the laws of divine establishment was how a believer was to function.

In fact, one of the things which has been lost to our society is the concept of right and wrong, good and bad, which is for nations of believers and unbelievers both. In the United States, this is being foisted upon our young in the form of relativism, humanism and multiculturalism (all of which are taught in the public schools); and in Muslim countries, sharia law is replacing divine establishment laws. It would be wrong for believers to think that morality applies to them alone; and for unbelievers to think, whatever they think they ought to do, that is what they ought to do (or, as it phrased in the book of Judges, [every man did what was right in his own eyes](#)—Judges 17:6 21:25; see also Deut. 12:18 Prov. 12:15).

As we will soon discover, nations are preserved by the believers in that nation. Some of that preservation is direct. That is, if there is a large percentage of believers in a nation and a reasonable percentage of them understand Bible doctrine, then the nation is preserved simply because so many in that nation understand the [laws of divine establishment](#). The direct influence of such believers on a society helps to preserve that society. As divine norms and standards are a part of the lives of believers in a society; and these believers are large enough in size to affect that society, in this way the society is preserved. That is the principle; we will study it in the not-too-distant future.

As an aside, one way that concepts of right and wrong are distorted in a society is by taking the vocabulary of right and wrong and distorting that. We have seen that in the past few years with the word *justice*, redefining it in such a way so as to reflect Marxist thinking (state directed redistribution of wealth), as in *economic justice*; or to reflect fanatical environmentalism, as in *environmental justice* (which is a cover for *economic justice*). These very same people would shrink back in horror, if you were to suggest any restrictions be placed on their sexual behavior, even though there are simple straight lines that can be drawn from sexual immorality to crime, increased immorality, increased lawlessness (which 3 things are a result of single motherhood), and a decreased lifespan (which results from homosexual activity). On the other hand, when it comes to so-called economic justice, any attempt to equalize income distribution results in a less productive, a less free and a more restrictive society. So, these same people who want complete freedom when it comes to sexual behavior—regardless of the negative consequences on society—are more than willing to place devastating restrictions on the productive elements of their society.

Back to Abram. It is 13 years after Ishmael was born to him by Hagar, his wife's Egyptian slave-girl; and God appears to Abram once again.

[Gen 17:1](#) When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature,...

God reminds Abram that He is omnipotent and indicates that there is a specific *walk* for believers, as well as a concept of spiritual maturity even in Abram's day, over 4000 years ago.

[Gen 17:2](#) ...that I may make My covenant between Me and you, and may multiply you greatly."

This is the second time that God has spoken of making a covenant with Abram, the first being back in Gen. 15. Although God has talked with Abram on 3 previous occasions, only once did God speak about a covenant. A covenant is simply an anachronistic word for *contract*. Sometimes Christians hold on too tightly to some of these anachronistic words, and young people are confused and put off by their foreign-sounding words (churches which continue to use the excellent but anachronistic KJV should be warned about this). God is simply making an agreement with Abram; He is establishing a contract with Abram.

The word here generally translated *to make, to establish* is actually the very common Hebrew word *to give*. Anytime you see *God* as the subject, *give* as the verb, and some person or group as the recipient of that gift, we are talking about *grace*. Grace may be defined as, *all that God is free to do for us based upon the cross; and which things God does for us, are undeserved by us*. We have touched on [grace](#) in the previous lesson, but we have not yet fully studied this word.

This verb is *nâthan* (נָתַן) [pronounced *naw-THAHN*], which means: 1) *to give, put, set; 1a) to give, bestow, grant, permit, ascribe, employ, devote, consecrate, dedicate, pay wages, sell, exchange, lend, commit, entrust, give over, deliver up, yield produce, occasion, produce, requite to, report, mention, utter, stretch out, extend; 1b) to put, set, put on, put upon, set, appoint, assign, designate; 1c) to make, constitute*. All of these BDB meanings for the Qal stem of *nâthan*. Strong's #5414 BDB #678

At the end of the verb *to give*, we have the cohortative *hê*, which simply means that the Hebrew letter *hê* (ה) is added to the end of the verb. When applied to the first person, the idea is an expression of will or compulsion, and in the singular, may be expressed with *I must, I could, I would, I will, I should, I may*.

God is there, tapping His foot, as it were, waiting to bless Abram by giving him an agreement, a gracious contract. In Gen. 15, it appeared as though God was going to start to make good on His promises made thus far to Abram, and then, Abram went out ahead of God and impregnated Hagar the Egyptian slave-girl. So, for 13 years, God has been there, tapping His foot, waiting to give grace to Abram.

Let's not become confused here. God has not withdrawn His promises from Abram. God is not punishing Abram for 13 years because of his dalliance with *Little Egypt*. What Abram did was throw off the timetable. God cannot desert Abram's seed, which is Ishmael, born to him by Hagar. So God allows Ishmael to be born and to grow into a young man (13 years old). God's specific promises to Abram had to be put on hold until that time.

Abram's spiritual heritage is going to flow through one very specific genetic line, which line will be begun with a child sired by Abram and carried by Sarai. God still has to allow for Abram's decision to impregnate Hagar; and time must be allowed for their child to be raised properly in a good environment. That takes 13 years. So, for all intents and purposes, Abram is not waiting on God but God is waiting on Abram.

[Gen 17:1–2](#) When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature, that I may make My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you greatly."

God has to let certain things run their course before He can step back into Abram's life. Raising up Ishmael to the point of being a young adult has to occur, and then God can come back to Abram and give him grace. God can come back into Abram's life and bless him with a gracious contract. But, because of Abram's actions, God had to wait. This was

not punishment to Abram; God has not walked off in a huff, saying, “I’ll show him!” A certain amount of time has to transpire and Ishmael has to become a young adult before God can step back into Abram’s life and to continue the work which God had begun.

Walking before God and being spiritually mature means, Abram is in fellowship (there is no unconfessed sin in his life), he is trusting God’s promises, and he is obedient to the laws of divine establishment.

To multiply is in the Hiphil imperfect. The *Hiphil* is the causative stem, and this verb is given the following Hiphil definitions: *to make much, make many, have many; to multiply, increase; to make much to do, do much in respect of, transgress greatly; to increase greatly or exceedingly; to make great, enlarge, do much*. What follows is a repetition of the adverb *m^eôd* (מֵֹד) [pronounced *m^e-ODE*], which means *exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very*. Strong’s #3966 BDB #547. Not only is the verb intensified, but it is doubly intensified, as this adverb occurs twice, which is rare in the Hebrew. Verbs in the Hebrew are often doubled, relatively speaking; adverbs much less so. This indicates that God has an incredible amount of blessing that He wants to pour on Abram.

Abram is just one man, a very successful rancher, who comes down to us today as one of the most well-known people from the ancient world. During Abram’s day, there were many vigorous peoples, many powerful nations; and yet, the most well-known person of this era is Abram. What king from Abram’s day is as well-known? What king or man of great power can you name from that era (say, 2100–1900 B.C.)? And yet, Abram is not a king he is simply a very successful businessman, successful because God has greatly blessed him. He is known to us today as the father of the Jewish race or the father of the Jewish people. Furthermore, he is known to us because God promised him, “*I will multiply you greatly.*”

[Gen 17:3a](#) Then Abram fell on his face.

This is new. Abram’s response was to do obeisance to God, which is something he has not done before. God has not spoken to Abram for a long time. God spoke to Hagar, Sarai’s slave girl, 13 years previous to this (which information, she apparently passed along to Abram), and prior to that, God spoke to Abram, which would have been perhaps 15–20 years previous (Abram left Charan at age 75, and he is now 99). Therefore, Abram, having no idea how much longer he will live, is quite overwhelmed to speak to God again.

It is reasonable to suppose that Abram has remembered and/or recorded all that God said to him earlier. In other words, all of the contact between God and Abram are recorded for us today. There is no reason to think that there were several other meetings between God and Abram that Abram chose not to talk about.

[Gen 17:3b](#) And God said to him,...

The Hebrew is much more difficult than most English translations make it out to be here. First of all, there are 2 verbs here which mean *to speak*. The first is the Piel (intensive

stem) imperfect of *dâbar* (דָּבַר) [pronounced *daw^b-VAHR*], which means (in the Piel): *to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce*. Strong's #1696 BDB #180. This phrase ends with the words *to speak, to say* (the more common verb for *to say*). Furthermore, we do not have the normal preposition here; we would expect the *lâmed* preposition, which simply means *to* or the more formal preposition, *unto*. What we have here instead is, *with*. The implication is, God is speaking to Abram as a friend and willing to interact with him. Literally, this reads: **And so speaks with him, Elohim** [the subject of the verb, in Hebrew, usually follows the verb], **to say...** My point is, this is much more formal than it appears in most English translations.

Gen 17:3b **And Elohim spoke with him, saying,...**

God is about to lay out His covenant with Abram, so the Hebrew indicates that this is a very formal event.

Gen 17:4a **"Behold, My covenant [is] with you,...**

Like v. 3b, this phrase is also more complicated than most English translations make it out to be. Literally, it reads: **"I, behold! My covenant [is] with you."** Some translators render this, **"As for Me, behold..."** Several ignore these first 2 Hebrew words. Essentially, the first 2 words might be more idiomatically rendered, "Listen to Me" "Listen up" "Pay attention to what I am going to say." Remember, Abram fell on the ground before God. God needs his full attention here.

The second phrase leaves out the verb *to be*, which indicates great emphasis in these words. Elliptical phrases often indicate great emphasis. As mentioned before, God has not said anything to Abram, and now He tells him to listen, saying, **"My covenant with you!"** The idea is, God has not changed His mind. He has not been observing Abram over the past 15 or so years, deciding, "Naw, I need to pick someone else as a part of my covenant." The power and force here indicates that we are speaking of something which is quite exclusive and directed specifically toward Abram. God is not going around and making agreements with several dozen people. This is a very specific and very exclusive contract that God is making with Abram.

There is a reason I am putting great emphasis upon this: God, who is all-knowing (Job 37:16 Psalm 139:1–4 147:4–5), Who knows the end from the beginning (Isa. 46:10), did not make a mistake by choosing Abram and He is not going to transfer all of His promises to Abram to another group of people (the church) because the Jews never turned out to be quite the people that God wanted them to be. That view is called Covenant Theology, and it is the basis for much of the Christian theology today. God will set the Jewish race aside, for a time, and work through the church (just as He has done with Abram), but the Jews are still His people.

Gen 17:4 **"Behold, My covenant [is] with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.**

God tells Abram that he will be the father of many nations; so from Abram will not just come Israel (in its various forms), but a number of Semitic nations. *Semitic* then refers back to Shem, Abram's ancestor from the ark. Today, we use the term *Semitic* to refer exclusively to Jews.

Lesson 168: Genesis 17:1–6

God Changes Abram's name to Abraham

So far, we have studied:

Gen 17:1–4 When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature, that I may make My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you greatly." Then Abram fell on his face. And Elohim spoke with him, saying, "Behold Me, My covenant [is] with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.

Up to this point, Sarai, Abram's wife, had talked Abram into siring a wife by her Egyptian slave girl, Hagar, which Abram did. Although this was culturally acceptable, it was outside of the Divine plan for Abram. Although God has never specifically told Abram that his seed would come through Sarai, all historical precedents involved one husband and one wife. God began with Adam and Eve, not Adam, Eve + 1 surrogate mom. Although marriages to more than one woman existed, they were aberrant.

So, God did not abandon Abram's child by Hagar; but this was outside of God's directive will, and our study of what the spiritual life was in the ancient world involved a one-man/one-woman marriage (which is a part of the laws of divine establishment, which apply to all people).

So, 13 years have gone by since Abram's child was born, and during that time, God did not appear to Abram. However, God is with Abram now, and this will be a pivotal chapter, both in the life of Abram and in human history.

God continues speaking to Abram, saying something which is quite unusual:

Gen 17:5 No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.

God changes Abram's name to Abraham. *Abram* means *exalted father; father of high and windy places* One might even understand Abram to mean *father of wind*. However, his new name is Abraham, the name by which we know him. *Abraham* means *father of many*. *Abram* can be understood to mean that Abram is the father of nothing; or the father of something that is just too far off to see; he is the father of something which cannot be seen. However, his new name is *father of many*, which indicates that this is a major change for Abram. He is still a father, but he is no longer a father of *wind* but of *many*, of a *multitude*.

Both of the verbs at the end of this verse are in the perfect tense, indicating a completed action. “You name has been Abraham for I have [already] made you the father of a multitude of nations.” So, forever, his name has been Abraham and forever, Abraham has been the father of a multitude of nations.

God exists outside of time; God is not confined to time. Time is God’s invention for man. Therefore, from God’s point of view, this name-change is a done deal; this has already been accomplished. From Abraham’s vantage point, his being named *Abraham* has just occurred, and these multitudes of nations are future from this point in time. To God, these things have already taken place, hence the perfect tense, indicating completed action. We will find this approach throughout this chapter.

If at the beginning of this study, if you knew very little about the Bible, you still probably knew the name of Abraham and you may have even known him as the father of the Jewish race. All this time, you may have wondered why his name has been Abram or you may not have even known that we were even talking about Abraham all this time. Because his name *has been* Abraham and God has already made a multitude of nations come from him.

One of the cults that I was familiar with, took in new cult members and gave them new names (usually from the Bible). I supposed this was based upon God renaming Abram here and Saul of Tarsus took the name Paul. However, this is not spirituality. You don’t walk into a church and someone says, “Your name used to be Charley Brown, but now it is Hezekiah” (they like to take your new name out of the Bible). This sort of thing is goofy. However, it is common for a cult to take a minor occurrence in the Bible and turn it into a fundamental church doctrine or practice. It is as if they find 40 or so passages, and they build their doctrine upon those particular passages. There is never the instruction in the Bible that we are commanded by God to rename people. This is why verse-by-verse teaching is so essential; it keeps you from falling into cults or into churches with a lot of false principles.

I mention this not because you are familiar with such a cult, because you probably are not. You probably recognize that as a goofy idea without me telling you that it is. I mention this because it lays the groundwork for an important principle for the Christian life. Just because something happens in the Bible, Old or New Testaments, does not mean that you should imitate it. The Bible is filled with verbs in the imperative mood, so it is not as though we lack direction in the Bible; but there is no imperative mood when it comes to changing the name of people like Abram (Abraham) and Saul of Tarsus (Paul). Their new names are indicative of what God has done in their lives; therefore, it is appropriate that God renames them, as God knows what is planned for them.

Let me take a practice that most Christians agree upon: the Eucharist (also called Communion). We may have disagreements about the way this is practiced and what it means, but one thing is clear: this is a ritual all Christians should participate in. Not only do we have the example of the first Communion occurring with Jesus and His disciples on

the night in which He was betrayed, but, Jesus tells us to do it, using the imperative mood. **“Do this in memory of Me.”**

Now, let me append this slightly. There are some *conditional* statements in the Bible (*if...then...* statements) which also teach spiritual mechanics. 1John 1:9 **If we name our sins, [then] He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.** This is a mechanic designed for the believer (most of the epistles are written to believers; *Hebrews* being an exception in part). In order to be temporally cleansed, we name our sins (*after* we have sinned, of course). There are synonyms for this practice of naming our sins where the imperative mood is used: **walk in the Spirit** (Gal. 5:16); **be a follower of God** (Eph. 5:1); **be filled with the Spirit** (Eph. 5:18); **“Abide in Me”** (John 15:4); and **walk in love** (Eph. 5:2). In order to reach the status of *walking in the Spirit, being filled by the Spirit, walking in love, being a follower of God*, we use the exact mechanics given to us in 1John 1:9.

What I am doing here is setting you up for something; I am planting a seed in your soul. You may find this or that thing in the Bible, and this or that thing may be fundamental to your church’s doctrine and practice. However, you may need to ask yourself—particularly if it is a controversial practice—did anyone at anytime in the Bible tell you to do this practice? Did God or Paul or Peter or John use the imperative mood and tell you, “Do this”? At any time have you been told that you ought to do this practice—not by someone in your church, but by the Bible itself? Is this a practice or a doctrine which is clearly laid out in Scripture which is not based upon imitation alone?

Let me lay out a simple principle, and leave it here: if your church, denomination or group imitates something that they have found in the Bible, and yet, God the Holy Spirit through Scripture has not commanded you to do this (either by using the imperative mood or some other unambiguous language), then let me submit to you, that could be a false tradition at best and a cultic practice at worst.

One of the reasons that we must know the Word of God is, we find out if we belong to a church or denomination which has traditions and practices which are outside of what God has specifically told us to do. The Bible is our life-manual; it is our Standards and Practices textbook.

Back to Abraham:

Gen 17:3b–5 And Elohim spoke with him, saying, "Behold Me [= listen up!], My covenant [is] with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.

The verbs which are future for Abraham are actually in the perfect tense, indicating that these are past events or completed events, when spoken by God. **“Behold Me! My covenant with you and you have been the father of a multitude of nations. Your name will**

no longer be called Abram, but your name **has been** Abraham, for I **have made** you a father of nations.”

Let me get into the weeds here a little bit with the Hebrew language. In the past (and in some Hebrew classes today), we have the misnomer, the *wâw conversative*. It is claimed that the *wâw* conjunction (and/or the *wâw* consecutive) convert the verbs from perfect tense to imperfect (from a completed action to a future action) or vice versa. Well, as far as I am concerned, that is a lot of hooey. I have translated entire books word-by-word from the Hebrew, and there was never a need to convert this or that verb to a different tense. In a narrative, about every 6th word or so is the *wâw* consecutive and all of the verbs are imperfect tenses. Converting them all to the perfect tense makes no sense.

I think it is passages like this which caused the original confusion. Nearly every English translation and even many ancient translations take these verbs in the perfect tense and change them into the future tense. With respect to Abraham, all that is being said is either occurring right at this instant or will occur in the future, so we often use the present or future tense to express the action here. However, one very important consideration is being ignored. God is speaking and He has decreed all that will occur, taking our free will into consideration (which God always does). For God, the One using these verbs, this has already happened. God uses these verbs in the perfect tense, because all that is contained in vv. 4–5 is what God has decreed, so, insofar as God is concerned, these are accomplished events. These things have already taken place because He has decreed them and He is not confined to time.

Let me see if I can present an analogy here that is easier to grasp than saying that God invented time and that God is outside of time. Let's say you just saw a movie and you thought it was great. At the end of the movie, the hero shoots the bad guy dead and rides off into the sunset with the beautiful girl. It moved you so much, that you take your best friend or significant other to go see it. Now, you know how this movie turns out; you know the end from the beginning. You still enjoy this movie because you are sharing it with a friend, but you know the hero is going to get the girl; and you know that he will shoot the bad guy dead. You, in seeing this movie a second time, are seeing it from a different perspective. All of the events that are future in the movie for you have already occurred and you know what they are. So, in that way, you are standing outside of the time frame of the movie, and all that takes place in the movie has already taken place for you. For your friend, these events are still unfolding; he or she doesn't know if the hero will shoot the villain yet; he or she has doubts about the hero getting the girl at the end and riding off into the sunset. So, for you, these events have already taken place; for your friend, they are future events and unfolding as the movie continues. You, like God, stand outside of the time frame of the movie, because you have seen it already. You may catch some plot points that you missed before. “Oh, there's how the hero got a hold of the gun; that's how he *shot* him.” Even though, during the second time through, the hero has not yet shot the villain, you see it as an action which has already occurred and you even use past tense verbs in your thought process.

For God, because He decreed these things to come to pass, taking into consideration the free will of Abraham and all those associated with Abraham, He knows the end from the beginning. Therefore, God speaks of these things in the past because, God has decreed them, and therefore, they have already occurred. If Abraham were speaking, then he would use the future tense, because the action of these verbs is future for him.

Now, let's apply this to your life: God knows everything that will occur in your life. Nothing will catch Him by surprised. God, in eternity past, made provision for every difficulty that you would face. There are difficult situations in your life to come (or situations that you are in right now), and God had designed a solution for them. This may involve you making certain choices with regards to Bible doctrine and they may involve you to **stand back and watch the deliverance of the Lord**. The choice of what you do is based upon your knowledge of Bible doctrine. Your ability to make the right choice is always based upon the Word of God. Do you stand back or do you act? The better you know Bible doctrine, the easier this question is to answer. God obviously knows because He made provision for that difficulty back in eternity past; the better we know God, the easier it is to determine His path for us.

Gen 17:6 I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you.

Although that is how most Bibles translate v. 6, here is a more literal rendering of it:

Gen 17:6 I have made you exceedingly fruitful, and I have made you into nations, and kings will come from you.

The first two verbs, where God is the subject, are in the perfect tense—completed action. What God does is a completed action. However, the third verb is in the imperfect tense (continuous or future action) because God is no longer the subject of the verb. *Kings* is the subject of that verb. Abraham is in time and the kings who will come from him are also confined to time; therefore, in the future, there will be kings who will be descended from Abraham. So, if you understand God and His foreknowledge, then the tense of these verbs make perfect sense.

If Abram is the father of many nations, then many kings will be descended from him. All of the kings of Israel are descended from Abraham and our Lord Jesus Christ, Who will rule over this earth, is descended from Abraham as well.

In the next lesson, we will continue with God having renamed Abram to Abraham, and with God's covenant with Abraham.

Lesson 169: Genesis 17:1–12a God's Covenant of Circumcision with Abraham

So far, we have studied the first 6 verses:

Gen 17:1–6 When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature, that I may make My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you greatly." Then Abram fell on his face. And Elohim spoke with him, saying, "Behold Me! My covenant [is] with you and you have been the father of a multitude of nations. Your name will no longer be called Abram, but your name has been Abraham, for I have made you a father of nations." I have made you exceedingly fruitful, and I have made you into nations, and kings will come from you.

Jehovah Elohim has renamed Abram (*father of high places, father of wind*) to *Abraham* (*father of the multitude*). God's promise to Abraham is that He has decreed that Abraham will be a father of nations and that kings would come from him. One set of nations would be set in the land of Canaan, where Abraham is right now. This would first be called Israel, which would be ruled by Saul, David and then Solomon. All of these kings came from Abraham. Then Israel will break up into two nations, the northern kingdom (Israel) and the southern kingdom (Judah), and they would be ruled by kings who all were descended from Abraham. Under the 4th Cycle of Discipline (the 4th Stage of Discipline), the Jews would be ruled over by a series of other nations, during which time, these two nations would be known as Judæa and Samaria. In short, *Abraham* is a father of a multitude; he is a father of many; and we remember him today as *Abraham*, and not as *Abram*. God has made Abraham into nations and kings would be descended from him.

Gen 17:7 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants [lit., seed] after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants [lit., seed] after you.

Will establish means, in the Hiphil form, *to raise up, constitute; to cause to stand, set, station, establish; to make binding; to carry out, give effect to*. *Descendants* is actually the singular of *seed*, but it may be reasonably translated *descendants*. This covenant or contract that God will establish will be with Abraham and with his descendants as well. Furthermore, this is an *everlasting* covenant. Since God is all-knowing, and because the future to Him is as perspicuous as the past, when God establishes a covenant with someone, He knows exactly what will happen throughout the centuries. The fact that many religious Jews rejected Jesus Christ at the 1st Advent did not catch God by surprise. God does not and cannot cancel an everlasting covenant.

The verb *to establish*, is in the perfect tense, because, insofar as God is concerned, this is a completed action. God has already established His covenant between Himself and Abraham and between Himself and Abraham's descendants.

I have mentioned a Suzerain-Vassal treaty on sever occasions. This may be a good time to delve into it.

God first established a covenant with Noah in Gen. 6:18 9:9, 11–17; and He has established a covenant with Abram, beginning in Gen. 15:18. However, in this chapter, we have the word covenant repeated 13 times.

The Suzerain Vassal Treaty

1. In the Ancient Near East, treaties between kings was common. However, also common in that era were treaties between a superior and his inferior. If the relationship was familial or friendly, the parties are referred to as "father" and "son." If the relationship is bereft of kindness and intimacy, the parties are referred to as "lord" and "servant," or "king" and "vassal," or "greater king" and "lesser king." However, what is often established as a treaty would be between a king and another people, over whom he is clearly superior (he has a much larger army; he rules over a much greater population, etc.).
2. Such a king would establish a treaty between himself (the suzerain) and this inferior people (the vassals). Typically, the people would allow themselves to be taxed by this sovereign, and he would offer them protection.
3. These treaties were quite common in the ancient world, and wikipedia lists the essentials of [Hittite treaties](#).
4. These Suzerain/Vassal treaties begin with two sections:
 - 1) The identification of the Suzerain by his name and titles;
 - 2) The historical survey of the Suzerain's dealings with the vassal. The purpose is to illustrate to the vassal how much the Suzerain has done to protect and establish the vassal who therefore owes submission and allegiance to the Suzerain. These two sections are referred to as the "Preamble."
5. The next section of these treaties list the "stipulations." What the vassal is required to do is spelled out in principal and detail. This section is often concluded with the requirement that the vassal deposit his copy of the treaty in his temple, where he is to occasionally read and study it to refresh his memory concerning his duties.
6. The last section of these treaties contains the blessings and curses of the Suzerain. If the stipulations are met by the vassal, he will receive the Suzerain's blessings, which are listed. If the vassal fails to meet the stipulations, he will receive the Suzerain's curses, which are also listed.
7. The Suzerain would keep one copy of the treaty and the vassal would keep one copy of the treaty. A number of ratifying ceremonies were used depending upon the era and culture. But the most widely used rite was that of cutting the bodies of animals in halves and placing them in two rows with enough space between for the two parties of the treaty to walk side by side. As they walked between the pieces, they were vowing to each other, "May what has happened to these animals, happen to me if I break this covenant with you."
8. This treaty, like any other treaty, was dependent upon the integrity of the people committed to the treaty.
9. When a people no longer cared for the agreement which they had made, often they would rebel, which was what we studied in Gen. 14.

Although this chapter is not, strictly speaking, given in the order above; it is similar, in some ways, to a Suzerain-Vassal treaty in content.

Sources:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suzerainty>

<http://www.fivesolas.com/suzerain.htm>

Gen 17:7 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you.

Because *seed* is in the singular, this promise applies to Isaac, Abraham's son who is yet to be born; and it applies to *Jesus*, Who is also the Son of Abraham. Paul will make this point in Gal. 3:16: **And to Abraham and to his Seed the promises were spoken. It does not say, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, "And to your Seed," which is Christ.** So, this is specifically applied to Jesus Christ. God's covenant with Jesus Christ

The One speaking to Abraham is the 2nd Person of the Trinity and this contract is being made with Himself, Who will become confined to time as the God-man.

At the same time, the singular of *seed* is used in such a way as to refer to all of Abram's born-again descendants. This is clear in the next verse:

Gen 17:8 And I will give to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you the land of your wanderings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."

The land which Abraham is walking through will be given to the Jews for an everlasting possession. God had already told Abraham to walk throughout this land, so that Abraham could appreciate what was being given to him. **"Come, walk through all the land from one end to the other for I will give it to you."** (Gen. 13:17).

God has already specified the boundaries of this land back in Gen. 15:18–21 **In the same day Jehovah made a covenant with Abram, saying, I have given this land to your seed [descendants], from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, the Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the giants, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.** This is a huge swath of land, which we studied back in [lesson #153](#).

Although God gives the land of Canaan to Israel, there will be times throughout history—particularly during the Church Age—when they do not live in this land. During the Age of Israel, Jews will live in this land, apart from the times that they have been removed under the principle of the 5th stage of national discipline (these stages will be taught in Lev. 26). However, these stages of national discipline are taught [here](#) and [here](#).

I mentioned that the covenant here is between God and those who are born again from Abraham's seed. We find this at the end of v. 8, where God says, **"And I have been to them God."** *Jehovah* (or, *Y^ehowah*), Who is speaking to Abraham, is not the God of the Muslims; He is not the God of those trying to keep the Law and the Sabbath for salvation;

but He is God to those who believe in Him; and He is known to us today as *Jesus Christ*. For those who have been born again through faith in Jesus Christ (John 3:1–18), the same have Y^ehowah as their God.

This does not mean that the land of Palestine has been transferred over to Church Age believers. God gives this to *Abraham and his descendants*; the land is *an eternal possession*; and the One speaking to Abraham is their God as well.

This possession is forever. The Hebrew word is *ʿôwlâm* (עֹלָם) [pronounced *ʿo-LAWM*], which means *what is hidden [time]; of [in] times past, from ancient time, old, antiquity, long duration, forever, perpetuity; for future time, futurity; of the world, worldly*. Strong's #5769 BDB #761. As you can see, this word not only means *forever, in perpetuity*; but it is tied very specifically to this world. As long as there is a world, this promise stands.

Gen 17:9 And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.

V. 9 is one of the few times there is a responsibility laid upon Abraham with regards to this covenant with God. When God spoke to Abraham before, the covenants which He made with Abraham were unconditional covenants, meaning, God was going to fulfill those promises to Abraham and his seed no matter what. However, this time, God tells Abraham, "You will keep My covenant." Furthermore, Abraham's seed would keep this covenant as well.

The verb here is the Qal imperfect of *shâmar* (שָׁמַר) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*] and it means *keep, guard, watch, preserve*. Strong's #8104 BDB #1036. This is a very common verb and the emphasis is not as much on *obedience* as on *preservation*. And what the Jews did for hundreds of years, for over 3 millennia prior to the printing press, is preserve the Word of God, which contains His covenants to Abraham and to the Jews in general.

At first, the Old Testament was preserved in all consonants and by its being read to the people. And then, because they would not pronounce the name *Y^ehowah* aloud, they realized that they had lost its true pronunciation, which was not preserved in Scripture, because they recorded only consonants. They knew what it said because they read, re-read and studied these words. However, their language was changing, and the Bible was in danger of becoming just a list of consonants that no one understood. Then they had the brilliant idea of adding vowel points. The Jews understood the value of the manuscripts that they had been preserving; they understood this to be the Word of God. They could not just fix the manuscripts by simply adding vowels into the mix, so they developed a set of vowel points, which were dots, and squiggles and short lines, placed above and below and, sometimes, in the midst of the consonants, so that the consonants remained unchanged. In fact, if you mentally blocked out all of these vowel points or covered up what is above and below the consonants, you would read the Word of God exactly as it had been recorded hundreds of years ago. So:

רמשתיתירבתא (My cvnt y wll kp) became רְמִשְׁתִּיתִּי־בְתָא (My covenant you will keep)

In this way, the scribes brilliantly preserved the words of God, just exactly how they were written originally, but added in the vowels in such a way that, they did not change the text but so that subsequent generations would know how to pronounce these words. This pointing occurred sometime between the 5th and 10th centuries A.D.²⁶

The preservation of God's Word, entrusted to the Jews, is certainly something to behold. In the late 1700's, two separate lists of known Hebrew manuscripts were made, one listing 615 and the other 731. Since then, there was a discovery of some 200,000 Hebrew manuscripts in Old Cairo, Egypt (called Cairo Genipa), 10,000 of which are Biblical. These manuscripts reflect a full millennium of time (from 870–1880).

I have mentioned the Dead Sea Scrolls discovery in previous lessons, which takes us back to a pre-Christian era, around 100 B.C. As a result of these and other discoveries, today, we know of tens of thousands of Old Testament manuscripts (these are not complete manuscripts, but books and fragments of books). We do have a handful of complete Masoretic manuscripts as well. So, the Hebrews devoted themselves to preserving God's Word, as did many other groups of people. Apart from the New Testament, no other writing has been so well-preserved.

Gen 17:9 And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.

When God makes this contract, it is not between Abraham, his household and his seed; it is between God and Abraham; God and Abraham's household; and between God and Abraham's seed. God is on one side of the contract, Abraham, Abraham's household and Abraham's seed are on the other side of the contract. Abraham does not get to negotiate this contract; this contract stands based upon the provisions which God is making, which indicates that this most closely follows the format of a suzerain-vassal contract, as God is laying down all of the provisions.

Then God tells Abraham exactly what he will do for his part of the covenant:

Gen 17:10 This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised.

What God requires here will require a lot of faith from Abraham. He and all of the males with him will be circumcised. The verb *to circumcise* is in the Niphal (passive) stem. The verb *to circumcise* originally meant *to cut*. We may have evidence of circumcision in Egypt going back to around 2300 B.C., which is only a few hundred years before these words are being said. Therefore, this may not have been the beginning of circumcision in the world (however, most archeologists who have an opinion believe that circumcision pre-dated Abraham).

²⁶ Norman Geisler and William Nix; *A General Introduction to the Bible*; Chicago; Moody Press, ©1986, p. 339.

In the next lesson, we will see exactly what circumcision is all about. Although I have come across many sources who know the purpose of circumcision, I have not seen the doctrine carefully laid out before.

Lesson 170: Genesis 17:1–11

Circumcision and Regeneration

Gen 17:1–10 When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature, that I may make My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you greatly." Then Abram fell on his face. And Elohim spoke with him, saying, "Behold Me! My covenant [is] with you and you have been the father of a multitude of nations. Your name will no longer be called Abram, but your name has been Abraham, for I have made you a father of nations. I have made you exceedingly fruitful, and I have made you into nations, and kings will come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you. And I will give to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you the land of your wanderings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised.

God first told Abraham what He has done for him; then God tells Abraham what he will have to do. "Every male from among you will be circumcised."

Gen 17:11 You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you [all].

As an adult male, thinking about circumcision gives me the heebie jeebies. As an infant, my feelings about the matter were probably made known when it occurred. Fortunately, I have forgotten that.

Circumcision would be a sign between God and Abraham and all of his descendants (*you*, in this verse, is in the plural).

Why circumcision and what does it mean? God's relationship to the Jew is going to be a familial relationship. That is, this will be a race of people who all come from Abraham; those who are his seed. Every time that Abraham urinated, he would be reminded of this covenant with God and he will be reminded that this covenant will be with Abraham's physical descendants (those which are his seed). From time to time, throughout history, various individuals would adopt themselves into the Jewish race, and worship their God. In the Old Testament, this almost invariably would be someone who would believe in Jehovah Elohim, and therefore, be deemed righteous by imputation. The idea is, there would be a race of people who are directly related to God through Abraham's seed.

I am related to my grandfather on my father's side and I am related to my nephew of my youngest brother. We are genetically related. Every Jew is genetically related to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is fully human and fully divine. Mary is the mother of His humanity, and in His humanity, Jesus is physically related to every Jew who is alive today and every Jew who has ever lived (apart from those who became Jews by choice, and even some of them are still related to Jesus, like Rahab the prostitute).

So, every time, Abraham urinated, he would see his circumcised penis and be reminded that God has made a covenant with him and with all of his descendants. It is a familial thing.

All men are born with a sin nature. It is a part of being human. We inherit this sin nature from Adam; it is the distorter of the soul. It is the tempter of the soul. The sin nature the sign that we are fallen creatures. Circumcision, for the Jews, will be the outward sign of their relationship with God; the outward sign of their inward regeneration.

Gen 17:12a He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised.

God had a particular, familial relationship to the Jews, even though, at this point in time in Genesis 17, just what that means and how it will come to pass is unclear. However, just add this to the “lucky guesses” found in Genesis—God establishes here that there will be a familial relationship between Abraham and his descendants and God. That relationship will be developed more fully in prophecy and then it will come to pass in time. Genesis is often called the book of beginnings and the seeds of the most fundamental and important doctrines are found in this book. This is one of them—that the Jews have a familial relationship with God.

Many of those genealogies that you see in the Bible take us from Abraham to the humanity of Jesus Christ. Again, this is the concept of progressive revelation. The seeds are all planted in Genesis, and, as we move through the Bible, are revealed with greater and great depth.

In this lesson, we will see exactly what circumcision signifies. Circumcision is a picture of regeneration. The basis of the Jewish race is regeneration; that is, they believe in Jehovah Elohim and they are regenerated (born again) and made righteous.

Circumcision is the cutting away of some skin at the end of a male's phallus. *Regeneration* refers to the act of being born again. Circumcision represents the act of regeneration.

Circumcision Represents Regeneration

1. The circumcision of Abraham will establish new life in Abraham and new life in Sarah. At this point in time, Abraham is too old to have sex and Sarai is too old to conceive. God will change this. God will give them new life.
 2. When Abraham steps out in faith and has himself circumcised, God will revitalize
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Circumcision Represents Regeneration

- him sexually. His sexual organ will be brought back to life. In this way, Abraham will be reborn.
3. Circumcision is therefore connected to rebirth or to regeneration.
 4. Abraham was sexually dead; God will make him sexually alive and potent. This is a picture of Abraham moving not only from death to life, but this is the key to the fulfillment of all God's promises to him. As uncircumcised (sexually dead, unregenerated), none of God's promises can be fulfilled to Abraham. As circumcised, Abraham is sexually revitalized, which represents regeneration; and so all of God's promises to Abraham can be fulfilled.
 5. So there is no misunderstanding, Abraham was spiritually regenerated many years ago. However, all of this is done to develop an analogy of rebirth, an analogy to rebirth that was set up 4000 years ago and still has meaning today.
 6. Sarai had never given birth to a child, so we may reasonably assume that she was barren all of her life. Now, she is too old to have children. So, she is doubly-barren: barren throughout her life and now, simply too old to conceive.
 7. As a result of God's covenant, which included the circumcision of Abraham, Sarai will be made fertile. Her reproductive system will be given new life.
 8. Circumcision therefore means, that which is dead is made fully alive.
 9. In our illustration, Abraham and Sarah, who have never before had children of their own, and, therefore, cannot see God's promises to them fulfilled, will be given life more abundantly than they ever had before.
 10. Therefore, we need to understand that circumcision is taking that which was dead and giving it life again. Doctrinally, this is regeneration. Circumcision represents being born again.
 11. Jesus explains the concept of regeneration (being born again) to Nicodemus. **There was a man from the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Him at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher, for no one could perform these signs You do unless God were with him." Jesus replied, "I assure you: Unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "But how can anyone be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked Him. "Can he enter his mother's womb a second time and be born?" Jesus answered, "I assure you: Unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I told you that you must be born again. The wind blows where it pleases, and you hear its sound, but you don't know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." (John 3:1–12).**
 12. Paul expresses this doctrinally, tying circumcision to regeneration: **And when you were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive with Him and forgave us all our trespasses. He erased the certificate of debt, with its obligations, that was against us and which was in opposition to us, and He has taken it out of the way by nailing it to the cross (Col. 2:13–14).**
 13. Understand that circumcision is a (visible) sign of God's relationship to Abraham. It is a visible sign of this covenant between Jehovah Elohim and Abraham.

Circumcision Represents Regeneration

14. However, in most situations, we cannot simply look at someone and say, "Yeah, he's circumcised." Unless you go to the gym with your buddies, and use the showers there, you do not know which of them are circumcised and which are not. That is, a person who is circumcised is unknown to the outside world; your family members know this, but the rest of the world, for the most part, does not know. Therefore, circumcision is a good representation of regeneration, which occurs in a number of people, but you cannot just look at a person and say, "Oh, you are regenerated." Circumcision is real but not something that we can readily see; regeneration is real, but not something that we can readily see.
15. Circumcision is a ritual, and, as a ritual, it must mean something. God does not have us go through meaningless rituals; all of the rituals in the plan of God have great meaning. Circumcision means that God will take that which is dead and make it alive. Abraham is sexually dead, and God is going to revive his sexual apparatus.
16. Note an additional piece of information concerning this ritual: God has come to Abraham right before he has been sexually revitalized. This represents regeneration. We are not regenerated on our own; God the Holy Spirit regenerates us.
17. All Jews must be regenerated (born again) in order to have a permanent relationship with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Abraham's son and grandson).
18. Every male Jew views his phallus several times a day when urinating, and he recalls this portion of the Bible, where God will physically regenerate Abraham's sexual potency along with Sarai's womb, and this represents the spiritual regeneration which establishes a familial relationship between man and God. The family relationship must take place in order for God's promises to man to be fulfilled. Ideally speaking, all believers, several times a day, take note of their spiritual status and their relationship to God.
19. Every Jew, when he urinates, ought to recognize that he is related directly to God and that this ritual goes back in time 4000 years. It is God's desire for such a one to ask himself, "Just what does this mean? Am I circumcised for no reason? Why did God, 4000 years ago, determine that all Jews would be circumcised?"
20. All rituals have meaning, and if we do not know what they mean, then we are wasting our time participating in them. The only clearly required ritual for the Church Age is the Eucharist, where Jesus's death for our sins is represented by eating the bread and drinking the cup.
21. Regeneration means that, God takes that which is dead and He makes it alive again.
22. Our free will is a part of this decision process. I must admit, if I were Abraham, I may not have had the same faith to agree to circumcision. But Abraham, by an act of his free will, trusts God here; and he trusts that God will regenerate Abraham so that he is able to father children once again.
23. The act and affects of circumcision are real and last a lifetime; the act and affects of regeneration are real and last forever.

Circumcision Represents Regeneration

24. Even Moses later helped to interpret the concept of circumcision in Deut. 30:6 **And Jehovah your God will circumcise your heart** and the heart of your seed, to love Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul, **so that you may live**. God will circumcise our hearts, with the purpose that, we will live. Since the ritual circumcision is performed upon living males, circumcision of the heart must therefore refer to an internal regeneration.
25. The physical act of circumcision is not the same as the spiritual act of regeneration; circumcision only represents regeneration.
26. The act and affects of circumcision are real and last a lifetime; the act and affects of regeneration are real and last forever. You cannot go from being circumcised to being uncircumcised, just as you cannot go from having been regenerated back to being unregenerate.
27. God, through Ezekiel, describes this circumcision of the heart: **“Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God.”** (Ezek. 11:19–20). **“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.”** (Ezek. 36:26–27). God gives those with *hearts of stone* a new heart; God takes that which is dead and makes it alive so that they may live unto Him.
28. Paul teaches this in Rom. 2:28–29a **For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that outwardly in flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart**. Salvation is regeneration; not being physically circumcised. It is the *circumcision of the heart* which God looks upon. Jews were not related to God because they were physically circumcised; they were related to God because they had been circumcised of heart; their heart had been regenerated.
29. This is all related to the new covenant between God and Israel, which will come to pass in the Millennium: **“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”** (Jer. 31:31–34).
30. Because circumcision is a ritual, it is not the ritual that is important but what the ritual represents. Circumcision represents regeneration. **“You must be born again.”**

Circumcision Represents Regeneration

31. We as believers in the Church Age are not called upon to be circumcised. Some of us are and some of us are not. God does not require us, when we are born again, to be circumcised. Paul explains that circumcision is a Jewish ritual, and that it has meaning, but it is not required of believers in the Church Age: **In Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not done with hands, by putting off the body of flesh, in the circumcision of the Messiah. Having been buried with Him in baptism, you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And when you were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive with Him and forgave us all our trespasses** (Col. 2:11–13). God making us alive is regeneration. The key to our relationship with God is regeneration and not circumcision. Just as baptism represents being dead in our trespasses and sins, and then being raised up; so circumcision ultimately represents regeneration.
32. There were legalists who came into Galatia and tried to convince the gentiles in the Galatian church to be circumcised. Paul writes to them, saying: **For both circumcision and uncircumcision mean nothing; what matters instead is a new creation** (Gal. 6:15). It is regeneration which is the key; not whether a person has been circumcised or not. In fact, Paul spends much of 2 chapters telling the Galatians that they do not need to be circumcised (Gal. 5–6). Since this was a problem in the early church, Paul reiterates this position in 1Cor. 7:18–19 **Was anyone already circumcised when he was called? He should not undo his circumcision. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? He should not get circumcised. Circumcision does not matter and uncircumcision does not matter, but keeping God's commandments does.**
33. Therefore, circumcision is a ritual which God required of the Jews. This ritual both emphasized regeneration and His familial relationship with the Jews.

To the best of my knowledge, I do not believe that this relationship has been formally established in theology before. Gill mentions it as an aside in his exegesis of Col. 2:11, as does the Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary. The closest I saw to a completely developed doctrine was in some writings by Spurgeon.

However, there are several Christian individuals who have already recognized this relationship. And, unfortunately, this connection is posted on some legalistic websites and on, quite frankly, weird websites.²⁷ Personally, I put together this concept, and then searched the internet to see if this had been developed before by anyone of note. So this relationship has been previously noted, but not really developed into a complete doctrine.

²⁷ One place that I found this connection was at the *Global Oneness (co-creating a happy world)* website under the banner *Christian Dream Interpretation*.

One of the fascinating things is, in do-your-own-thing, degenerate San Francisco, there is a [movement to ban performing a circumcision](#) in the city limits. This is simply one of the movements to separate the United States from her Judeo-Christian roots.

Lesson 171: Genesis 17:1–12a The New Heart/Our Familial Relationship with God

This lesson will be a little long. There are a great many theological issues that must be sorted out relating to circumcision, the promises of God to Abraham, and regeneration.

So far, we have studied nearly the first 12 verses of Gen. 17:

Gen 17:1–12a When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature, that I may make My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you greatly." Then Abram fell on his face. And Elohim spoke with him, saying, "Behold Me! My covenant [is] with you and you have been the father of a multitude of nations. Your name will no longer be called Abram, but your name has been Abraham, for I have made you a father of nations." I have made you exceedingly fruitful, and I have made you into nations, and kings will come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you. And I will give to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you the land of your wanderings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you [all]. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised.

We studied just exactly how circumcision spoke of regeneration. After being circumcised, Abraham and Sarah would be both sexually revitalized, which represents the concept of new life. New lift is regeneration.

Now all of this is representative. Abraham was not born again because he was circumcised. He had been made righteous in God's sight a very long time ago (Gen. 15:6). In this doctrine, we ran up against the expression *a new heart* and *a new spirit*. What are these things?

There are things in the Doctrine of Circumcision and Regeneration which need clarifying.

What is this New Heart?

1. Let's go back to what is written in Ezekiel about the circumcision of the heart: "Then I will give them one heart, **and I will put a new spirit within them**, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they

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may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God.” (Ezek. 11:19–20). “**I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.**” (Ezek. 36:26–27).

2. God originally created man in His image, and this would include us being created with a body, soul and spirit. The soul allows us to interact with man and the spirit allows us to interact with God.
3. In fact, this is one of the ways that we are made in the shadow image of God; God is a Triune Being, 3 Persons with the same essence; and man was created with a body, soul and spirit, a triune being of sorts.
4. However, when Adam sinned, he lost the human spirit. He no longer was able to communicate with God. He was afraid of God and he hid from God when God called him.
5. When God came to Adam and Adam believed in Him, communication was restored, which means, Adam was spiritually regenerated. In other words, God created within him a new spirit; God restored his human spirit to him.
6. This is what regeneration is. We are given the human spirit; or our human spirit is revived so that we may have fellowship with God again. It is the human spirit which is the target for our trust in Bible doctrine. Without the human spirit, we have only a human soul, which is unable to properly process Bible doctrine. **But the soulish man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned** (1Cor. 2:14). Furthermore, it is Bible doctrine which is the key to our spiritual growth. **Grow in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ** (2Peter 3:18a).
 - 1) The word used here and translated *soulish* is *psuchikos* (ψυχικός) [pronounced *psoo-khee-KOSS*], which means, *soulish; natural; unregenerate*. Strong’s #5591.
 - 2) This word is built upon the Greek word translated *soul*.
7. We are born physically alive, but spiritually dead. Rom 6:23a **The wages of sin is death. And Therefore, even as through one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed on all men inasmuch as all sinned** (Rom. 5:12). See also Gen. 2:17 Rom. 5:17 7:24
8. The soul and the spirit are different and the Bible differentiates between the two. Heb. 4:12
9. It is because of Jesus Christ that we can be regenerated. **It stands written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul," the last Adam [= Jesus Christ] was a life-giving Spirit** (1Cor. 15:45).
10. It is because we exercise faith in Jesus Christ that we are regenerated. **“Truly, truly, I say to you, He who hears My Word and believes on Him who sent Me has everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation, but has passed from death to life.”** (John 5:24).
11. David describes this regeneration in Psalm 51:10: **Create in me a clean heart, O**

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- God, and renew [or, *make anew, repair*] a right spirit within me. The clean heart means that we have been forgiven of our sins and made positionally righteous; and the spirit being renewed is the human spirit being activated or made alive.
12. Jesus Christ insisted to Nicodemus that he must be born again. John 3:1–16
 13. Given Psalm 51:10 and John 3:1–16, we can conclude that regeneration occurs in both the Old and New Testaments.
 14. Regenerated man has a body, soul and spirit. 1Sam. 1:15 Job 7:11 1Thess. 5:23
 15. The believer has his soul, spirit and body preserved. **And may the God of peace Himself sanctify you, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blamelessly at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ** (1Thess. 5:23).
 16. Therefore, because we are born spiritually dead, we come into this world with just a body and a soul. When we are born again, our human spirit is made alive or activated. Before we are born again, we are soulish and unable to process spiritual information. After we are born again, we have a target for spiritual information: the human spirit. Before we were born again, we were estranged from God; we were unable to have fellowship with Him. After we are born again, we are able to know Him and to be in fellowship with Him, both of which are true potentials in the Christian life because we have a human spirit.
 17. Jesus Christ, because He was born without sin (the sin nature is passed down genetically by means of the father, and Jesus did not have a human father), He therefore had from birth a body (John 1:14 Heb. 10:5), soul (Isa. 53:11 Matt. 26:38) and spirit (Luke 23:46 John 19:30). Jesus, therefore, did not have to be regenerated—He never lost fellowship with God.
 18. One of the reasons the Jesus is called the Last Adam (1Cor. 15:45) is, both were born with a body, a soul and a spirit.
 19. Adam sinned, so he had to be regenerated. Our Lord never sinned, so He did not have to be regenerated. 2Cor. 5:21 Heb. 4:15
 20. Conclusion: being born again actually involves a change in our inner person; we are given a human spirit, which allows us to learn and understand God's Word and allows us to have fellowship with God.
 21. To sum up, both Adam and Jesus (the last Adam) were born trichotomous, with a body, soul and spirit. We are born dichotomous, with only a body and soul. The spirit is what allows us to have fellowship with God and where doctrine is stored. When Adam sinned, he lost the human spirit and God had to come to him. Because Adam sinned, we are all born spiritually dead—i.e., without a human spirit. We are born with a sin nature, something that we acquire from our human fathers. However, when we believe in Jesus Christ, we are regenerated, which includes having our human spirit activated or revitalized.

This may help to explain this whole circumcision thing. Abraham was circumcised and all of the males of his household were circumcised because this represented new life. The new life is both physical (he was sexually revitalized) but it was also representative of having new life as a result of being born again.

One more related doctrine:

The key to the relationship between God and Abraham's seed is regeneration, which establishes a familial relationship between God and man.

The Familial Relationship between God and Abraham's Seed

1. The ritual of circumcision establishes a familial relationship between God and Abraham (and his seed). Circumcision is a ritual, so, by itself, it means nothing. However, what is important is what circumcision represents. Circumcision represents sexual regeneration which establishes this familial relationship between Abraham and God.
2. At this point in time, this familial relationship between God and Abraham is undefined.
3. In fact, at this point in time, in Gen. 17, Abraham does not even have any children by his wife Sarai.
4. It will be prophesied and then it will come to pass that Abraham and Sarai will have a son.
5. This familial relationship is part and parcel of being born again. In regeneration, we have the option of knowing God and having fellowship with God.
6. God is personally involved in this regeneration. God the Father planned the cross, Jesus Christ went to the cross, and God the Holy Spirit both reveals this to us and regenerates us. Therefore, we have 3 "men" who will come to Abraham in the next chapter. This is representative of the Trinity involvement in our regeneration and in our spiritual lives.
7. Abraham is already regenerated spiritually. When he believed in Y^ehowah Elohim, God imputed righteousness to him. Gen. 15:6
8. However, what is being established here is a familial relationship based upon circumcision which represents regeneration.
9. God will continue to maintain His covenant with Abraham through his son Isaac and through his son's son, Jacob, down through the ages.
10. The circumcision of Abraham will establish new life in Abraham and new life in Sarah.
11. At this point in time, Abraham is too old to have sex and Sarai is too old to conceive. God will change this. God will regenerate both of them sexually (which represents our spiritual regeneration to new life).
12. Abraham and Sarai do not have the ability to revitalize their own reproductive organs; only God can do this. Similarly, we have no innate ability to revitalize our human spirit. Only God can do that. Only God can regenerate us.
13. When Abraham steps out in faith and has himself circumcised, God will revitalize him sexually. He will become capable of fathering a child and Sarai will become capable of conceiving a child.
14. Circumcision is therefore connected to a rebirth or to regeneration.
15. God tells Abraham: "I will keep My covenant between Me and you, and your descendants after you throughout their generations, as an everlasting covenant to be your God and the God of your offspring after you. And to you and your

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- offspring after you I will give the land where you are residing--all the land of Canaan--as an eternal possession, and I will be their God." (Gen. 17:7–8).
16. Further, God tells Abraham: "This is My covenant, which you are to keep, between Me and you and your offspring after you: Every one of your males must be circumcised. You must circumcise the flesh of your foreskin to serve as a sign of the covenant between Me and you. Throughout your generations, every male among you at eight days old is to be circumcised. This includes a slave born in your house and one purchased with money from any foreigner. The one who is not your descendant, a slave born in your house, as well as one purchased with money, must be circumcised. My covenant will be in your flesh as an everlasting covenant." (Gen. 17:10–13). Therefore, every male child associated with the Jews is to be circumcised. The circumcision is a sign of their rebirth as well.
 17. God has attached great importance to Abraham's posterity and this covenant. They are related to Abraham and, somehow, they are related to God.
 18. Every time a male Jew urinates, he looks down, and he is reminded of this familial relationship which is established, beginning with Abraham and going down through Isaac and Jacob. This is the visible sign between God and the Jews throughout all their generations.
 19. Even very secular Jews today must wonder, now and again, what is my relationship with God all about? What is this circumcision all about?
 20. Think about this for a moment—how would man come up with a concept like circumcision? What man, who knows nothing about circumcision, would look down on his phallus and say, "I've got a great idea: I think I should cut some of the skin away from this"? We have no idea how exactly circumcision originated; but God, in Gen. 17, uses it to establish a relationship between Him and Abraham.
 21. Throughout history (until the Church Age), Jews will all be circumcised; Gentiles will not (although now, many gentiles are circumcised, particularly in countries where there are a lot of Christians). Therefore, every man who is circumcised is genetically (or in a familial way) related to Abraham (I am speaking in principle here; obviously, those coming from the outside and becoming Jews are not genetically related to Abraham; however, either their children or their grandchildren will be through intermarriage).
 22. This is important because Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Universe, will be genetically related to Abraham, even though He existed in eternity before Abraham ("**Before Abraham, I existed eternally**" John 8:58).
 23. From the very beginning, God has been establishing this familial relationship between Himself and regenerated man.
 - 1) God said to the serpent after the fall: "I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel." (Gen. 3:15). So there is a promise to be fulfilled in the Seed of the Woman, and the Seed of the Woman would crush the head of the serpent (Satan).
 - 2) The woman later recognizes that God has given her a new seed in Seth,

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- after Cain murdered Abel (Gen. 4:25).
- 3) God's covenant would then be with Noah and his seed after him (Gen. 9:9).
 - 4) God establishes his covenant with Abraham and his seed in Gen. 12:7 13:15 15:18 17:7–8 24:7; and continues this covenant with Isaac and his seed (Gen. 26:3–4). Isaac transfers this covenant to his son Jacob in Gen. 28:4, which God confirms in Gen. 28:13 35:12.
 - 5) Jehovah God later promised: **"The Lord Himself shall give you a sign. Behold, the virgin will conceive and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel [which means, *God with us*]."** (Isa. 7:14). This is expanded in Isa. 9:6 **"For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be on His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."**
24. Through the virgin Mary, all of this would be fulfilled. Jesus would be born to her, a virgin, so that He is genetically related to Mary and therefore, to all Jews. Luke 1:35 2:11 Matt. 1:23 28:18 John 1:1–2, 14 Heb. 1:8 1John 4:14
 25. Therefore, Abraham, the father of the Jews, is genetically related to Jesus Christ.
 26. In fact, when a few of the genealogies of Scripture are strung together, we have a straight line between Abraham and Jesus.
 27. In the book of Genesis are the seeds of many of the doctrines which would later be expounded upon as time went on. This is known as progressive revelation. We learn more and more about a doctrine as time goes on; God the Holy Spirit reveals more and more about a doctrine as time goes on.
 28. Believers in the Church Age are sons by adoption. Rom. 8:15 Gal. 4:5 Eph. 1:5
 29. Adoption in the ancient world is somewhat different than we think of it. A king or a rich man may look among his own sons and see no one worthy of taking his place or inheriting his fortune. However, he may have an adult slave who is hardworking, intelligent and moral. So, the king or rich man will "adopt" this slave as his son—even though he may be fully an adult—in order to inherit what belongs to the king or to the rich man. A familial relationship is established by means of adoption. This describes our relationship to God.
 30. However, God does not look at us and think, "Yes, yes, yes, this person is worthy to be My son." He looks at Jesus Christ, and He alone is worthy; but we are sons of God because we are in Him and we share His Sonship. **But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, coming into being out of a woman, having come under Law, that He might purchase those under Law, so that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father** (Gal. 4:4–6).
 31. This is established through faith in Jesus Christ. **For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus** (Gal. 3:26). See also John 1:12 1John 3:2

In conclusion, Jews are actually genetically related to Jesus Christ through the Virgin Mary. However, they must exercise faith in Jehovah Elohim in order to be regenerated (Gen. 15:6 2Kings 18:5 Psalm 2:12 5:4 9:10 13:5 Ezek. 36:26–27). In the Church Age, we are sons of God by means of adoption. We believe in Jesus Christ and we are adopted as God's sons in the Beloved.

One of the things that Christians may find confusing is the fact that there is an actual genetic relationship between Jews and Jesus; but that the true relationship between Jews and Jesus is their exercising faith in Him so that they are regenerated (in the Old Testament, this was exercising faith in Y^ehowah Elohim). This is actually a clearer issue for believers in the Church Age—we are not Jews, so we are not genetically related to Jesus Christ (except in the sense of being human). However, we are adopted into the family of God through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul will spend an entire chapter of Romans discussing these issues, a study which we will insert into this Genesis series (in 10 or so lessons).

Lesson 172: Genesis 17:12–13

Slavery in the United States

Gen 17:12a He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations,...

A question that some might have is, *why are males circumcised only; why is there no circumcision for women?* This is because, it is through the man that the sin nature is passed. Men and women are both born with sin natures, but the sin nature is passed down from the man to his children, both males and females. However, only his sons will pass along the sin nature to their children. This is why Jesus is known as the Seed of the Woman (Gen. 3:15). This is why there is the virgin birth (Isa. 7:14 Matt. 1:23). This is why the Coniah curse (which curse represents the sin nature) is so closely tied to two lines of Christ and why one line—the line to Joseph—was cursed (Jer. 22:24, 30). God does not simply devise a miracle because it is way cool; the virgin birth is necessary. Jesus cannot be born without a sin nature unless there is no male involved. Therefore, only males are circumcised, as this represents regeneration, a cutting away and a removal of the old nature.

Being born again means that we can now have a relationship with God through the human spirit. However, in order for that to occur, the sin nature must be shut down temporarily. This is what it means *to be in fellowship*. The body, soul and spirit are all functioning; and the sin nature is set aside or momentarily shut down. When we sin, the spirit is shut down temporarily; our temporal relationship with God is shut down (we are *out of fellowship*), and our sin nature is in control again. The mechanics are simple and have been covered before: we name our sins to God, and our fellowship is restored; we sin, and we are out of fellowship. Although we have studied that in numerous places, most recently this was found in the doctrine [The Spiritual Life Implied and Stated so far in the Book of Genesis](#).

The difference between the man and the woman goes back to original sin. The woman was deceived when she sinned; the man knew exactly what he was doing when he sinned. He could choose between his woman outside of the garden or God inside of the garden, and he chose the woman. Because the man knowingly violated the one prohibition that God set up to test man's volition, the sin nature is passed down through the man.

Therefore, the virgin birth is not just some parlor trick, but absolutely necessary to the incarnation. In order for someone to be born without a sin nature, they must be born apart from a man's genetic contribution, because with that contribution comes the sin nature. Since Jesus is virgin-born, He is born without a sin nature. This is why the Bible is very careful to record the two lines of our Lord: the legal line, in which is the Coniah curse (the sin nature) which goes to Joseph (Matt. 1); and the biological line which goes through Mary (Luke 3:23–38).

Gen 17:12 He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring,

The faith of the Jews was to be evangelistic. We tend to think of Christianity as evangelical, but not the faith of the Jews (the correct understanding of their faith). The Jews had an outreach mission to the nations around them. We find this illustrated in the [Book of Jonah](#), where Jonah goes to Nineveh and evangelizes the Assyrians there (if Jonah had his druthers, he would have preferred to watch God destroy these Assyrians).

In our passage, the rites and rituals of the Jewish faith are extended to those who are their slaves and to the children of their slaves. The Jews were to share their faith in Y^ehowah Elohim with even their slaves.

Because of the way slavery has been incorrectly presented historically, we tend to view slavery as some great evil which the United States practiced more onerously than others, as if this is somehow a sin specific to the United States.

Slavery and the United States

1. Slavery existed as far back as Abraham's time (circa 2000 B.C.) and certainly before that.
2. Slavery was the modus operandi of the world for several millennia and it is still practiced today.
3. Whereas the United States practiced slavery, its practice was no less humane than that practiced anywhere else in the world.
4. Many southern plantations taught their slaves to read and write and presented them with the gospel of Jesus Christ. A believer in Jesus Christ is going to share his faith. Some may argue that this made a slave more valuable and less likely to rebel—and that is true—but it also showed a recognition that slaves were valuable before God as well.
5. However, it was also true that some states outlawed teaching slaves how to read

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- and write (and some masters violated these laws as well).
6. Some missionaries brought the gospel to southern slaves in particular. Even some unbelieving masters allowed this, some hoping that this would make the slaves more obedient.
 7. Some Negro slaves were allowed to go to worship services, and were very much a part of the “second awakening” of the United States (which refers to a spiritual awakening) in the early 19th century. Because they were slaves does not make their spiritual impact any less important to our nation. Slaves who are saved—particularly those who grow spiritually—are extremely important to the spiritual condition of a nation.
 8. Thomas Jonathon Jackson (“Stonewall” Jackson), the famous Confederate Civil War general, organized Sunday School classes for free Blacks and slaves.²
 9. Gospel music was first codified in the book "Slave Songs of The United States" (by Allen, Ware, Garrison, 1867). We know from their history as slaves, they sang work songs, gospel songs, and songs about freedom (depending upon what was allowed in the field).
 10. Slave owners knew that the abuse of their slaves brought about a diminished production. Beating slaves did not result in greater obedience or greater production. Abusive slave owners were more likely to have slaves run away or, worse yet, rebel against them. So, even though there were undoubtedly abuses heaped upon slaves beyond being slaves, this made the slaves far less valuable to the slave owner.
 11. Because tending to cotton fields was so labor intensive under a very hot sun, it was not unusual for slave owners to limit working hours, grant frequent holidays and to provide long rest periods in the middle of the day for their slaves.¹ This is not a difficult concept—if you treat those who work for you well, they will have respect for you as well.
 12. There were Black confederate soldiers (a fact of history which is ignored in our history books).
 13. During the Civil War, many slaves were left with the farms and the women and children. In many cases, the women and children became their responsibility.
 14. Both Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, the 2 great confederate generals, set their slaves free prior to the Civil War, so that no one would mistakenly think that they were fighting for the right to keep slaves.
 15. In fact, both Lee and Jackson spoke out against slavery, nor is there any record of either of them speaking poorly of Negroes (the same could not be said of Lincoln and Grant).³ In fact, General Grant kept his own slaves until the 13th Amendment had been passed, after the end of the Civil War.³
 16. This is not to assert that slavery was not an institutionalized evil nor that there were not acts of abuse and cruelty done to slaves.
 17. This is also not to say that slavery was not an issue in the Civil War. The Confederate Constitution sought to codify slavery in its constitution. The constitutional convention specifically left the practice of slavery out of our United States Constitution.

Slavery and the United States

18. There were moral failings on both sides of the Civil War. The North functioned with great self-righteousness; and the South attempted to codify the immoral practice of slavery in their constitution (immoral because it involved taking free men and enslaving them, which act the Bible specifically teaches as being wrong).
 - 1) This self-righteousness still exists today. In my study of this topic, I came across a discussion thread about Jackson, Lee and slavery, and the self-righteousness of many of the contributors was quite palpable.
 - 2) When you are born into an environment where slavery exists, it is normal to accept it as a fact of life. Some people struggled with the fact of slavery, as did Stonewall Jackson, but you cannot take the societal values of today and self-righteously impose them on people from over 150 years ago.
19. It is a false notion that our Constitution treated Blacks as $3/5^{\text{th}}$ of a person.
 - 1) This represents a great misconception, and something which is continually misrepresented in our schools and in political discourse.
 - 2) Slave states wanted to count slaves as an entire person, so that they (the states) would have a better representation in Congress.
 - 3) Free states argued that, if slaves were merely property, then they ought not be counted at all, thus giving slave states less representation in Congress.
 - 4) So, slave states wanted slaves to count as a full person. Free states wanted slaves to count as property and not as people.
 - 5) The $3/5^{\text{th}}$ compromise codified this fundamental disagreement in such a way that, Black slaves ought to be recognized as people; however, as long as there was slavery, slaves could not be counted as a complete person, thus reducing the South's representation and power in Congress.
 - 6) Reducing the South's representation in Congress would likely eventuate in the abolishment of slavery, which is what the non-slave state representatives wanted.
 - 7) Black freedmen, in the north and in the south, counted as an entire person.
20. Most argue that slavery would have died a natural death in the United States (as it had in Britain) without the Civil War. Britain began, in the late 1700's, to deal with slavery in the courts, and then, in the early 1800's, legislatively with the 1807 Slave Trade Act and the 1833 Slavery Abolition Act (Christian groups like the Quakers played a very active part in this). It is not just possible, but likely, that slavery in the United States would have died out on its own, as was occurring in many countries throughout the world.

Slavery in the United States—An Addendum

1. Today, American Blacks who are descended from slaves could, at any given point

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- in time, choose to renounce their American citizenship and move to any African country they desired. Any Black person in American can, after saving up for a year or two, be financially able to do this. Although I am certain that there must be one or two which do this each year, 99.9% of American Blacks have no interest in becoming the citizens of some African country (I just made that percentage up; but we have no mass exodus from the United States to Africa).
2. You may count slavery among the great evils in our country; yet, the descendants of slaves don't want to return to Africa. They may take on so-called African names, dress, and pretend that they feel this deep association with Africa; but they are not going to go to Africa to live. It would be psychotic to move from the greatest country in the world to some of the very worst countries in the world.
 3. Our current president, Barack Obama, has been back to Kenya, the birthplace of his father. He had the wherewithal at any point in time to live in Kenya; the country of his father. He went to a school in Indonesia, and he could have chosen to, at any point in his adult life, to return to Indonesia and apply for citizenship there. Like any rational person, he chose to remain a United States citizen.
 4. On the other hand, there are millions of Blacks in Africa who would move here to the United States in a moment's notice if given half a chance (and many do, moving here both legally and illegally).
 5. One of the great contrasts is President Barrack Obama and his Kenyan half-brother. The President makes millions of dollars a year because of royalties from his books; on the other hand, his half-brother in Kenya makes less than \$25/year. Fundamental to the difference between these two half-brothers is where they were born. While such a contrast is not typical, but it is certainly illustrative, and we would be hard-pressed to find examples where such income disparity is reversed.
 6. In what is one of the great classical cases of irony in American history, many Blacks have adopted the religion of Islam (particularly in the 70's and 80's) to show their disconnect with Christianity and Americanism. Many adopted Muslim names to give an outward show of their severance from Christianity and the United States. These converts ignored the fact that, Muslims were the slave dealers who captured and sold the slaves who were brought to the United States. They also ignore the fact that many slaves were saved because their masters (or members of their family or by missionaries to the slaves) led them to Jesus Christ.
 7. And, despite turning their backs on their Christian heritage, very few U.S. Muslim Blacks have chosen to return to whatever country of origin that they believe is theirs. Even an American Black practicing Islam in the United States—someone who may rail against the injustices inherent in the American institutions—still recognizes that he is far better off in the United States than trying to make a life in a Muslim country.
 8. The strongest forces against the American institution of slavery in the 1850's were Christians. Christianity believes that Jesus Christ died for all mankind, and that

Slavery in the United States—An Addendum

- color is not an issue when it comes to salvation.
9. While there are still some Blacks today who are desirous of reparations (welfare on steroids), they fail to take into consideration that 600,000 men died in the Civil War; in part, to secure their freedom. Having someone die so that you might be free is something which American Blacks ought to be taught is a true sacrifice, offered on their behalf, and far more significant than reparations.
 10. Some base their claim of reparations on the Bible, where the Egyptians paid reparations to the Jews. However, these reparations were paid directly by the masters to the slaves, not to their descendants who had never been slaves.
 11. National, institutionalized slavery died a natural death in many nations during this time period. However, because this is the devil's world, many forms of slavery still exist today in this world.
 12. We have a different type of slavery today, where whites are enslaved to Black women, who make up a disproportionate part of our welfare and section 8 rolls. Huge portions of our tax dollars—federal and state—are given over to fatherless Black families (and other groups as well, of course). So, for decades, we have been, in a sense, enslaved to the state and federal governments, working the first half of the year in order to pay our taxes, much of it going to people who could work, but do not.
 13. In the ancient world, if Israel, say, defeated Moab in war, then Moab would pay tribute (taxes) to Israel for the next few decades.
 14. One might define slavery as you working and someone else takes and enjoys the remuneration for your work.
 15. For all intents and purposes, we have people working and paying inordinate taxes (inordinate by Biblical standards), and a large percentage of this money is distributed to those who are not working (most of whom could work⁴). This is a form of institutionalized slavery. However, it is not our job as believers in Jesus Christ to disobey the law in order to throw off these bonds of slavery.
 16. The institution of slavery in America was detrimental to America from its founding. However, just as detrimental to our national fabric today are people who do not work and collect money from those who do. As discussed in the laws of divine establishment, one of the most important aspects of life is work. That is the lifeblood and vibrancy, to some degree, of the nation.
 17. In any case, the believer is to live in the world in which he finds himself; we are not told in the Bible that we need to improve the devil's world (John 16:11 2Cor. 4:4 1John 5:19). No matter what we attempt to do as individuals or as a movement, we will never establish perfect environment on this earth.
 18. In every generation, there are evils in this world, in our nation and on our streets. It is not necessarily our mission as believers to go out and try to fix all of these evils. In the devil's world, evil is simply a part of it.
 19. God has a purpose for each and every believer in this world, which purpose we begin to understand by growing in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The Bible accepts slavery as an institutional fact (it has been a fact of human history for no less than 4000 years). Paul urges those who are saved while in slavery do not seek to be free; but, if freed, to use their freedom wisely for Jesus Christ. When dealing with a runaway slave, Paul tells the slave to return to his master; yet, in the letter sent to his master, urges him to set his slave free (1Cor. 7:21 the book of Philemon).

Christianity is not a faith designed to make the devil's world better. It is a faith which ultimately separates the believer from this world (which is the cosmic system under Satan's control). We will be associated with the newly established earth in the Millennium.

Therefore, individual Christians may be involved in various political movements or have various political points of view (apart from revolution). However, the thrust of Christianity is not to change the world in which we live. Christianity changes the believer from the inside out. The mature believer is changed by his thinking (Rom. 12:2). Although Christianity can affect great social change (which includes the abolition of slavery), that is never to be the thrust of Christianity. We are not put on this earth to improve the devil's world; or to rearrange the furniture on the deck of the Titanic.

However, as believers in a democracy, we should support those things which line up with the [laws of divine establishment](#) and oppose those things which don't. This will make the United States an even greater country, which promotes both evangelization and spiritual growth.

¹ Dictionary of Afro-American slavery; Randall M. Miller, John David Smith; p. 150.

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stonewall_Jackson accessed February 8, 2012.

³ <http://www.newswithviews.com/baldwin/baldwin632.htm> accessed February 8, 2012.

⁴ In my life, I have known dozens of people who receive assistance from the government in a number of ways—social security benefits paid to those in their 30's; housing benefits paid to people in their 20's, 30's and 40's; and welfare and food stamp benefits. In very few of those instances can I identify a person who would have gone hungry and homeless if their benefits had been cut off.

Other references include:

<http://www.negrospirituals.com/> accessed November 1, 2011.

<http://www.everystudent.com/features/truth.html> accessed November 1, 2011.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlantic_slave_trade accessed November 1, 2011.

Gen 17:12–13 He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant.

Despite a person being sold or born into slavery, God treated them as people who had rights. He expected Jews to teach them the rituals of Jehovah worship, which would lead them to an understanding of the gospel (as presented in the Old Testament), so that they might believe in Jehovah Elohim and be saved (as per Gen. 15:6). Circumcision represents a rebirth or regeneration, so this, along with many other Jewish rituals, taught the Jews and their slaves about their place in this world and their relationship to the Creator or the Heavens and Earth.

As already pointed out, circumcision is only done to males. There is no female circumcision in the Bible. Female circumcision is a barbaric practice; it is genital mutilation and an attempt to further enslave women to men.

Lesson 173: Genesis 17:1–15

Circumcision and Sarai's New Name

Here is what we have covered so far:

Gen 17:1–12a When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature, that I may make My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you greatly." Then Abram fell on his face. And Elohim spoke with him, saying, "Behold Me! My covenant [is] with you and you have been the father of a multitude of nations. Your name will no longer be called Abram, but your name has been Abraham, for I have made you a father of nations." I have made you exceedingly fruitful, and I have made you into nations, and kings will come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you. And I will give to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you the land of your wanderings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you [all]. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised.

One of the keys to a passage like this is understanding why God had the males circumcised, and we discussed this at length, that circumcision is a sign of regeneration and that regeneration means that our human spirit—that part of us which can commune with God—is reborn. We are all born physically alive but spiritually dead. We have no ability to commune with God in our natural or soulish state. Similarly, all men are born uncircumcised, which represents being born spiritually dead. Circumcision represents our spiritual regeneration, which is being made alive spiritually and able to commune with God.

I like the New Living Translation of v. 12: **From generation to generation, every male child must be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. This applies not only to members of your family but also to the servants born in your household and the foreign-born servants whom you have purchased.** Although the New Living Translation does not give a careful word-for-word translation, it sometimes conveys an accurate understanding not quite found in the careful word-for-word translations. If you are looking for a very readable Bible, I found the New Living Translation to be among the best.

Let's look at the latter half of v. 12 combined with v. 13:

Gen 17:12b–13 Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant.

Regeneration is designed for all mankind. God worked through the nation Israel then much as God works through certain nations today (e.g., the United States, South Korea) to spread the good news of Jesus Christ. Some men were sent out (like Jonah) and some people gravitated toward Israel (like Ruth the Moabite or the Queen of Sheba) and some became a part of Israel through slavery.

At this particular point in time, there is no Israel; there is Abraham, the father of the Jews, and God has appeared to him again to restate His covenant with Abraham and to add the circumcision clause.

Foreigners brought into the nation Israel, whether of their own accord (like Ruth) or those taken in slavery, were to become a part of this covenant that God was making with Abraham. As we will find out, every man in Abraham's camp would be circumcised. God's identification with his people was to be cut into their flesh.

Circumcision was the ritual. The act and affects of circumcision are real and they last a lifetime; just as regeneration is real and it lasts forever. You cannot be un-circumcised (going from circumcision to uncircumcision) just as you cannot be un-regenerated. Once you have trusted in Jesus Christ—an act which takes a few moments—you are forever regenerated; you are forever saved.

What God is doing is establishing a new race of people. Up until now, men were descended from Shem, Ham or Japheth, and there were essentially 3 races of people. God herein will establish a new race, the Jewish race, whose foundation will be regeneration.

Therefore, what we have is all of these people scattered all over the earth; but there is this one group of people who have been regenerated, born again. These people have the potential of having fellowship with God. God has given them a sign—the sign of circumcision, which differentiates them from other peoples. Again, no one could look and see if you are circumcised, under normal conditions, just as no one can look at you and superficially determine whether or not you have been born again.

Although we do not have the word *Jew* yet, we do have the word *Hebrew*, by which this new people will be known. Abraham was called a Hebrew in Gen. 14:13, and that designation comes down to us even today (although our pronunciation is quite different).

Gen 17:14 Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people [lit., *her peoples*]; he has broken My covenant."

Such a person has chosen to ignore the commands of God, which are a ritual to teach regeneration (in this instance). In most cases, this would be the fault of the parents who do not see their relationship to God as being important or defining. If the parents do not have their male children circumcised, this simply indicates that they do not see themselves as being a part of the Abrahamic covenant. A parent who did not see himself as related to God would certainly not teach his children about Y^ehowah Elohim; so, his children would not be regenerated either.

Let me draw your attention to the phrase *his people*; this is a masculine plural noun with a 3rd person feminine singular suffix; so, even though your Bible reads *his people*, it should read *her peoples*. Any time that we find a feminine singular suffix, then we need to figure out, *to what does it refer?* The closest feminine singular noun is *covenant*. So, we are talking about the *peoples of the covenant* here. This covenant is this agreement or contract between God and Abraham. What God has done here is bind those who come after Abraham, for many generations, to this covenant. This was first made clear in v. 7: **“And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and [between Me and] your seed after you in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to you and to your seed after you.”** One portion of this covenant now included circumcision.

The plural of *people* is also interesting. The singular form of this word is ‘am (אָם) [pronounced *gahm*], which means, *people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]*. Strong’s #5971 BDB #766. When found in the singular, ‘am is often refers to Israel (Isa. 62:12 63:18 Dan. 8:24 12:7) or to a particular non-Israeli people (Ex. 21:8 Deut. 28:32 Ezek. 3:5). It can even stand for Israel and for Gentiles in the very same context (Deut. 28:9–10). In the plural, the word is ‘ammîym (אֲמִיִּם) [pronounced *gahm-MEEM*], which means, *peoples, nations; tribes [of Israel]; relatives of anyone*. In general, when in the plural, 99% of the time it stands for Gentile nations (Deut. 4:19, 27 6:14 13:7) or for all nations of the earth (Deut. 7:6 32:8). I mention this because it is odd to find it here with regards to the covenant. We tend to think of this covenant as being between God and Abraham and between God and Abraham’s descendants, as it says here. However, this covenant of relationship, this covenant of rebirth, will be extended to many peoples and countries.

We find this in many passages, such as Acts 13:47–48 **For so the Lord has commanded us, "I have set You for a Light of nations, that You be for salvation to the end of the earth."** [Isa. 49:6] **And hearing, the nations rejoiced and glorified the Word of the Lord. And as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.** And Paul to King Agrippa said, **"Having obtained, therefore, help from God to this day testifying to both small and great, saying nothing but what the Prophets and Moshe said was going to occur; that the Messiah was to suffer, and by His resurrection from the dead He should be the first to proclaim light both to the people [Israel] and to the [gentile] nations."** (Acts 26:22–23).

So God knew that His covenant would be with all believers in the earth, with both gentiles and Jews. And so there is no mistake, this is not covenant theology; this is simply the proclaiming of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Jew first and then to the gentiles (Rom. 1:16). So the peoples of the covenant would not just be Abraham’s seed (in which

case, *people* would be in the singular), but this covenant was offered to all men from all nations.

This translation would help to explain *her peoples*.

Gen 17:14 Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from the peoples of the covenant; he has violated [or, *made ineffectual*] My covenant."

Let's pull this altogether. Circumcision refers to Abraham's sexual regeneration which speaks of his [spiritual regeneration](#). So, in order to remain a part of this covenant, men had to be circumcised, which *means* they must be regenerated. No man has a relationship with God apart from being spiritually regenerated; or, as Jesus said, "You must be born again." (John 3:7b). What we find in Genesis sets the stage for all that will follow in the Bible. Genesis is the foundation for our spiritual lives and for all truth. And this covenant of relationship, this covenant of regeneration, is offered to all peoples of the earth.

Again, I do not want you to think that this is covenant theology. Covenant theology teaches that the Jews were so bad and so rebellious that God just tossed them aside and presented His gospel to the gentiles instead, and that all of His promises made to the Jews were "spiritualized" and transferred over to the church. There are several problems with this approach. First, it suggests that God was unable to look down the corridors of time and realize that the Jews would not only reject His Son, but crucify Him. However, Isa 53:3 indicates that none of this caught God off guard: **He was despised and rejected by people, One Who experienced pain and was acquainted with weakness; people hid their faces from Him; He was despised, and we considered Him insignificant.** So God knew what was going to happen and this was a part of His plan.

There are specific covenants made to Jews only. To the Jew specifically is **the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the temple service, and the promises** (Rom. 9:4b). With respect to the Jews, the covenant with Abraham (and with others to follow) pertains to a specific geographical area. However, to all people, whether in [the Church Age](#) or in the [Age of Israel](#), there is the covenant of regeneration and relationship. The covenant of regeneration is, "You must be born again." (John 3:7b). The covenant of relationship is, **You are all sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ** (Gal. 3:26).

Again, all of God's rituals had great meaning, and this meaning—that circumcision represents regeneration—would be preserved as long as the ritual was continued.

My point in all of this is that **Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from the peoples of the covenant; he has violated [or, *made ineffectual*] My covenant;**" is consistent with the rest of the Bible, with both the Old and New Testaments. Circumcision is being established at this point as a sign of regeneration and as a sign of relationship with God. It is a ritual which has meaning, which meaning was [previously discussed](#) in great detail.

Gen 17:15 And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name.

R. B. Thieme, Jr. has always taught that Sarai means *contentious, bitch*; and that Sarah means *princess*. However, I have been unable to confirm this for the name Sarai. Many times in the Hebrew, proper nouns are identical to specific words or it is clear that they come from specific words. Not so with Sarai. Sâray (שָׂרַי) [pronounced saw-RAY or saw-RAH-ee] is possibly taken from the noun *sar*, which means *prince, leader, commander*. The yodh ending is then taken as the 1st person masculine singular suffix, so that gives us *my prince, my leader, my commander*. Although a lexicon with feminize this and say it is *my princess*, there is no feminine ending to her name. When her name becomes Sarah, that hê ending "feminizes" her name in the Hebrew.

I want you to think back on two incidents. Sarai told Abraham that he needed to have sex with her personal servant, Hagar. Abraham obeyed her. Later, she was pissy about Hagar and her pregnancy, and she was mad at Abraham for having impregnated her. So, Abraham finally says, "Look, you do whatever you want with her; she is your servant girl." So twice, Abraham is recorded as taking orders from Sarai; and both times, this obedience on Abraham's part was clearly a mistake. In this way, Sarai was acting as Abraham's *prince* or *leader*. So, had Abraham said, "She is your servant girl, Sarai; do whatever you want with her;" he would be essentially saying, "She is your servant girl, my leader [my prince]; do whatever you want with her."

However, if Sarai's name is now Sarah, then Abraham no longer calls her *my prince* but he calls her *princess*. God has feminized this woman. And what is more feminine than having a child?

Now let's look at this piece by piece:

Gen 17:15a And God said to Abraham, "Sarai, your wife—you will no longer call her name Sarai;... Now God speaks to Abraham about Sarai, his wife (or, *woman*). The negation along with the imperfect tense of a verb can be reasonably translated *no longer*. So, for 30 or 40 years—however, long Abraham has known Sarai, he has known her by the name Sarai (*my prince*). Yet, at this point in time, both Abram and Sarai will have new names: Abraham and Sarah, by which they will be known forever more.

The new names both mean something and they represent their rebirth; God has added to their name just as He has added human spirits to their persons. Sarah and Abraham have been regenerated for awhile; they have had human spirits for awhile now; but the beginning of the fulfillment of the promises will now begin to kick in for these people with new names. Their relationship with God will no longer be some promise off in the future, but these promises will begin to be fulfilled.

Gen 17:15b...because Sarah [is] her name. Nowhere does God say, "Her new name is Sarah" or "I have *renamed* her Sarah." This simply reads, "Because Sarah [is] her name." This strikes me as being interesting, so let me offer up a theory. We are known, generally,

by the name the our parents gave us: Charley Brown. However, God “remembers” us in a different way. There are very likely people in the Bible who had one name at birth, but, without fanfare or even a mention, are given a different name in the Bible. That is, God the Holy Spirit recalls a person by a slightly different name. Although this is not a great example, few of us think back on President Roosevelt (the second Roosevelt president) by his full name. Most of us know him by FDR. Even though these are simply the initials of his name, it is how many people recall him. That may be the case for many names in the Bible. Some are renamed so that we know about it (Abraham, Sarah, Peter and Paul), but it is very likely that some people were given a different name in Scripture because God wanted us to remember them with that name and what the name signified. So, from time to time, we are going to come across this or that old Bible guy, and it will appear that his name is very apt. From what happens in his life, we may think to ourselves, “this name makes a lot of sense; he does act just like a *Charley Brown*.” That is probably because God the Holy Spirit chose for the writer of that portion of Scripture to give him a more descriptive name, often one that is a play on his given name from birth.

I state this with some hesitancy: *Abram* and *Sarai* are their names as unregenerated; and *Abraham* and *Sarah* are their names as having been born again. As they are born again, they are given new names for the Kingdom of God, just as a child is given a name when he (or she) is born. Again, these new names did not come at the same time as their rebirth; but the new names come with the circumcision (which signifies the new birth) and with the pregnancy of Sarah, which indicates the beginning of the fulfillment of promises to both of them. Now, I said that I state this with hesitancy, because it is not your job or your pastor’s job to think of a new name for you.

I may need to rewrite this section. Their original names came from their unbelieving lives, but they have both been believers in the Revealed God for a very long time. The change which has actually taken place, is, both Abram and Sarai have achieved their potential as believers in Y^ehowah; and this is commemorated by God by giving both of them new names. We might understand these to be their supergrace names.

Their new names have a significance; and what was significant in your new birth was, God regenerated you; God formed or made alive the human spirit within you, which allows you to store information about Him and allows you communion with Him. That human spirit is the target for Bible doctrine; that human spirit is the target for divine truth. Through the accumulation of doctrine in your human spirit, you begin to know and understand God, as well as His plan for you.

What believers too often do is, at salvation, they find some incident or set of incidents in the Bible, and then they copy these incidents. Just like this renaming of Abram and Sarai. They read that and decide, “My name should not longer be *Charley Brown*; it should be Charlemagne!” Now, has God come to you and renamed you? Are you either 99 or 100 years old and you and your spouse have no children and God will bless you with children now? Has God given promises to you that a new race of people will come from you? So you are not really copying what has happened here. You are just lifting some superficiality out of context and doing that. Now, quite obviously, there are not many churches that do

this. I am aware of one cult which, as far as I know, is pretty much dead now. I mention this because this is an unemotional topic for you. You can look at this and recognize that, giving yourself a new name or having some spiritual leader rename you is obviously not something that you need to do in order to make your Christian walk a little bit better. You recognize that simply copying this incident is sort of silly.

The Bible is filled with mandates. The Bible is filled with things that God tells us to do or not to do as believers (there is even guidance for unbelievers). Copying a portion of some set of circumstances in the Bible as best as you can is not the spiritual life. In some cases, it is lunacy.

Back in lesson [#166](#), we have the spiritual life for Abraham. Back in the introduction to this study, in [introductory lessons II and III](#), the most fundamental aspects of the Christian life were discussed. We are mandated to be filled with the Spirit; we are mandated to learn Bible doctrine. Do what is mandated; do not worry about those things which God has not mandated.

Lesson 174: Genesis 17:1–17

Ancient Translations of the Bible

Here is what we have studied so far:

Gen 17:1–15 When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature, that I may make My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you greatly." Then Abram fell on his face. And Elohim spoke with him, saying, "Behold Me! My covenant [is] with you and you have been the father of a multitude of nations. Your name will no longer be called Abram, but your name has been Abraham, for I have made you a father of nations." I have made you exceedingly fruitful, and I have made you into nations, and kings will come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you. And I will give to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you the land of your wanderings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep [or, *guard*] My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you [all]. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from the peoples of the covenant; he has violated [or, *made ineffectual*] My covenant." And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name."

God has come to Abram after 13 years of silence and reaffirmed his covenant with him. God illustrated Abram being born again in two ways: by renaming him and by requiring Abraham to be circumcised. When Abram was renamed to Abraham, God's promises to him were reaffirmed simply by his new name.

Everywhere that Abraham wandered in Canaan, and more, would belong to his descendants forever.

The part of the covenant that was new and very specific was circumcision. Abraham would be circumcised, every male in his household would be circumcised and, from that point on, all male children at 8 days old would be circumcised. As we studied, circumcision will mean the revitalization of Abraham's sex life which indicates regeneration. All rituals found in the Bible mean something. They are not just a recognition of God's authority.

Then *Sarai* (*my prince*) was renamed *Sarah* (*princess*). And then God says:

Gen 17:16 I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."

Abraham is sexually dead and his wife is infertile and God promises them a child; in fact, many nations would come from her and many kings would come from her.

However, before we go any further you need to know that, just as in v. 14, there is a hidden problem of translation of v. 16. Nearly every translation there sounds very similar to what I have written above, but that is not necessarily accurate. However, the problem before was found in the Hebrew text, hidden in the Hebrew text. However, this problem will be apparent with the other ancient translations of the Old Testament.

And I have blessed her; furthermore, I have given you a son from her. When I have blessed her [*him*; according to the Greek, Syriac and targum], then she [*he*; according to the Greek, Latin, Syriac and targum] has become nations—kings of peoples will come [lit., *will be*] from her [*him*; according to the Greek, Latin, Syriac and targum]." This time, the problem is different.

Therefore, according to the targums, the Latin, the Greek and the Syriac, this verse should read:

Gen. 17:16 And I have blessed her; furthermore, I have given you a son from her. When I have blessed him [i.e., *the son*], then he has become nations—kings of peoples will come [lit., *will be*] from him."

I mentioned the targums and a number of ancient translations. Here is a brief background of each.

Ancient Translations of the Bible

Translation	Background
The Targums	<p>The Jews were removed from the Land of Promise in 586 B.C. under the fifth stage of national discipline and taken to Babylon. When the Jews returned to the land 70 years later, they spoke Chaldean (western Aramaic) rather than Hebrew. So that the Scriptures could be understood when read in the synagogue, there was a loose translation given of them in Aramaic. This was eventually written down as the Onkelos Targum and as the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel. These targums date back to the century before the birth of Christ, although the earliest copies of them which we have only date back to A.D. 500. Furthermore, these are paraphrases rather than translations, so there is some interpretation thrown in, and a lot of extra explanatory text. The two named are the most well-known of the ancient targums.</p> <p>It is only recently that this translation is becoming available on the internet.</p>

Ancient Translations of the Bible

Translation	Background
The Greek Septuagint	<p>This is generally a careful translation from the Hebrew into the Greek done around 200–100 B.C., supposedly done by 70 scholars (for this reason, it is also called the LXX, which means <i>the Seventy</i>). This translation would have been based upon Hebrew manuscripts dating as far back as 400 B.C. and even before. This is particularly helpful in 3 ways: (1) some difficult Hebrew words are translated into the Greek, so that we have a better idea as to what these words mean; (2) some portions of the LXX contain portions of verses which appear to have been dropped out of later Hebrew text; and (3) this mostly confirms to us the great accuracy of the Hebrew text, from which many modern translations are made. Let me add one more important function of the LXX: the Greek translation reveals that the Bible has stood essentially unchanged for centuries. No theological group ever got a hold of the Bible and made it conform to their doctrines. There is a clear bias in some modern translations; but the text upon which they are based has stood firm going back to around 400 B.C. at least (which is when the Old Testament had been completed).</p> <p>The Septuagint became the “Christian Bible” in the ancient world. Many early Christians spoke Greek, so it is only natural that they would gravitate towards this version of the Old Testament.</p> <p>The oldest Greek translations that we have today are the Chester Beatty Papyri, which contains 9 Old Testament Books in the Greek Septuagint and which dates back to between A.D. 100-400; and the Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus each contain almost the entire Old Testament of the Greek Septuagint and they both dated around A.D. 350.</p>

It should be noted that the Septuagint was not the only Greek translation of the Old Testament. In fact, Origen, in A.D. 240–250, developed *Origen’s Hexapla*, which was a 6 parallel column text of the Old Testament. In the first column was the original Hebrew text; in the second was the Hebrew text transliterated into Greek letters; in the third was the literal translation of Aquila (a Greek translation of the Old Testament, circa A.D. 130); in the fourth was the idiomatic revision of Symmachus (a Greek paraphrase of the Old Testament, where the overall meaning was key); in the fifth was Origen’s own revision of the LXX; and in the sixth was the Greek revision by Theodotion. So, the idea of a parallel Bible goes back to around A.D. 250. Unfortunately, we have no copies of Origen’s Hexapla today. This would have been a huge manuscript and not easy to produce or sell.

Ancient Translations of the Bible

Translation	Background
The Latin Vulgate	<p>Even as Rome conquered much of the known world, they held onto the Greek culture and the Greek language. However, after awhile, more and more people in the Roman empire began to speak Latin. Therefore, a translation was needed into the Latin, and that was done by St. Jerome. There already were a variety of texts and translations at that time, such as the Old Latin version of the Old Testament. Between A.D. 390–405, Jerome did a new Latin translation of the Old Testament, which appears to have been based on Hebrew manuscripts, but he apparently used the Greek LXX and other ancient translations as well. The history is more complex than this, but this is a reasonable summary.</p> <p>The Latin Vulgate is often used as the basic text for many Catholic versions of the Bible although it is more common for modern English translations approved by the Catholic church use the extent Hebrew manuscripts as well.</p> <p>Jerome apparently translated portions of the apocrypha (the books written in between the Old and New Testaments), but it is not clear that he translated all of them and it appears as if he treated them as separate works from the Old Testament (that is, he did not consider them inspired).</p> <p>Jerome's Latin translation is excellent and very dependable. I have yet to come across any passage in Jerome's Latin translation which is decidedly Catholic. I am not saying there is no bias in the Latin Vulgate; I am simply stating that I have never come across any (most of my work is in the Old Testament).</p>
The Peshitta (the Syriac text)	<p>Syriac is a dialect or collection of dialects from the eastern Aramaic language. We do not know for certain who made this translation into Syriac and there are even some who claim it is the original language for the New Testament. It appears possible that the Syriac version of the Old Testament was done in the first or second centuries A.D. Geisler and Nix place this time period as late as the 3rd century (or even later) and that it is the work of many unnamed people. It appears as though our earliest manuscript of the Old Testament in Syriac dates back to the 9th century A.D.</p>

Of these ancient translations, the Greek and the Latin are the closest to the Masoretic text (the Hebrew). The Peshitta varies slightly more than the Greek and the Latin, but I have come across many instances where the Syriac and Latin agree and are at variance with the Greek. The targums are not very reliable with entire new sentences and phrases thrown in.

However, when it comes to the Greek, Syriac and Latin, the ways in which they differ from the Hebrew text are quite trivial and often represent the constraints of the language. For instance, in the Hebrew, the word *face* is always in the plural. However, it sounds goofy to us in the English to translate this literally to *his faces*; so it is translated *his face*. Because this is just the way it is, no English translation has a footnote telling you, *literally, from the Hebrew, this reads "his faces."* Therefore, many of the differences which we find are simply grammatical nuances in one language which are not found in the other language.

What I personally do not find is, some sort of theological bias slipping in. I don't see a difference in Latin and Hebrew, and then think to myself, "There is that old Catholic bias slipping in again." Several modern English translations show much more of an intentional bias than can be found in the differences between the Hebrew, Greek, Latin and Syriac manuscripts.

We have nearly complete Hebrew manuscripts, but they are dated later than you might think: the Aleppo Codex: contains the complete Old Testament and is dated around A.D. 950. However, more than a quarter of this Codex was destroyed in anti-Jewish riots in 1947.²⁸ There is also the Codex Leningradensis, which is the complete Old Testament in Hebrew copied by the last member of the Ben Asher family in A.D. 1008. There are slightly earlier fragments of manuscripts which are still in existence, as well as the Dead Sea Scrolls, which are dated back to 200 B.C. to A.D. 70 and contain the entire book of Isaiah and portions of every other Old Testament book except Esther. It is the Dead Sea Scrolls which have confirmed to us the accuracy of the Hebrew texts which we depend upon today.

These ancient translations can be found online:

The Targum	http://targum.info/targumic-texts/pentateuchal-targumim/
The Hebrew	http://qbible.com/hebrew-old-testament/
The Greek	http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/gopher/text/religion/biblical/lxxmorph/
The Latin	http://www.latinvulgate.com/verse.aspx?t=0&b=1
The Syriac	http://www.studylight.org/desk/?l=en&query=Genesis+1&section=0&translation=pes&oq=Genesis&new=1

²⁸ Even though I find nearly this exact phrasing in a dozen places on the internet, none of these sites indicate where these riots took place. There were apparently anti-Jewish riots in Britain in 1947, but it appears as though the Aleppo Codex was originally smuggled from Syria to Israel. Geisler and Nix, whom I trust more than information on the internet, write that it was *reported* to have been destroyed, but added that it would be the basis for the *New Hebrew Bible* produced by the Hebrew University. Based on the description in Amazon, there does not appear to be a problem with the Aleppo Codex.

Sources:

<http://www.bible-history.com/isbe/T/TARGUM/> accessed February 20, 2012.

<http://mb-soft.com/believe/txx/targum.htm> accessed February 20, 2012.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate> accessed February 20, 2012.

<http://www.godandscience.org/apologetics/bibleorigin.html> accessed February 20, 2012 and appears to be a good resource for this type of information.

<http://www.bible-researcher.com/vulgate1.html> accessed February 20, 2012.

Norman Geisler and William Nix; *A General Introduction to the Bible*; Chicago; Moody Press, ©1980, p. 507–508, 512–513, 539.

In my estimation, the translation of v. 16, based upon the Greek, Latin and Syriac, should be:

Gen. 17:16 And I have blessed her; furthermore, I have given you a son from her. When I have blessed him, then he has become nations—kings of peoples will come [lit., *will be*] from him.”

This slightly changed translation clears up a problem, which threw me a curve at first: in the Hebrew, this verse speaks of God having blessed Sarah; and then it says, a few words later, *when I have blessed her*. In the repaired translation, God has blessed Sarah and God has blessed her son.

First, God refers back to Sarah, whom He will bless. The perfect tense indicates that this has already taken place for God, because He is outside of time.

Then God says something which really catches Abraham’s attention—he will be given a son from her—from Sarah. God has on several previous occasions, promised Abraham that many nations will come from him and that his descendants would own the land through which he walked. However, this time, he is clearly told that this covenant will be fulfilled through a son by Sarah.

The 3rd phrase I have translated, *when I have blessed him*. The conjunction is the simple *wâw* conjunction (*and*), which can also be translated *when*. The idea is, this will look to a future time, not necessarily even during the lifetime of Isaac, the son who will be born to Abraham and Sarah.

The verb for *has become* is the simple *hâyâh*, which means *to be*; however, when it is followed by a *lâmed* preposition, as here, then it indicates a transformation or a change which takes place. So *he has become nations; kings of peoples will come from him*.

However, God apparently lost Abraham back where He said, “I have give you a son from her.” Sarah? 90 year-old Sarah? She is going to give birth to a son? Abraham is thinking all about that particular promise. His thinking did not keep up with all that God said.

This is the first time that is recorded that God clearly told Abraham that he would sire a son through Sarah. Abraham’s response is interesting.

Gen 17:17 Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"

So, you see that Abraham is not thinking about all that God said here; he is focused on the Sarah bearing him a child part. He can't get over that idea.

Throughout this chapter—and I have not pointed it out in every instance—we have a repetition of phrases. Here, when Abraham falls on his face, the exact words are taken from v. 3. So, God appears to Abraham after 13 years of silence, and Abraham then falls on his face in great reverence. At some point in time in this chapter—the narrative does not tell us when—Abraham then either stands up or sits up. But now, when he hears that Sarah is going to have a child by him, he falls on his face again. This time, it does not appear to be out of fear or respect. It is possible that he is simply hiding the big goofy smile on his face.

Abraham finds this promise made to him to be rather humorous. He knows his own sexual condition; he knows that he is personally incapable of impregnating Sarah. He is incapable of having sex. Although he is not a doctor, Abraham seems to have doubts that his wife is able herself to bear any children.

However, later in Romans, we will read, with regards to this promise, **He did not stagger at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what God had promised, He was also able to perform** (Rom. 4:20–21). So, coming up in a new lesson, I will have to prove to you, even though Abraham is laughing here, he will still be strong in faith.

Lesson 175: Genesis 17:1–21

God's Answers to Prayer/St. Stephen

So far, we have studied the first 17 verses in Gen. 17, the corrected translation of which is below:

Gen 17:1–17 When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature, that I may make My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you greatly." Then Abram fell on his face. And Elohim spoke with him, saying, "Behold Me! My covenant [is] with you and you have been the father of a multitude of nations. Your name will no longer be called Abram, but your name has been Abraham, for I have made you a father of nations." I have made you exceedingly fruitful, and I have made you into nations, and kings will come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you. And I will give to you and to your descendants [lit., *seed*] after you the land of your wanderings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is

My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you [all]. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from the peoples of the covenant; he has violated [or, *made ineffectual*] My covenant." And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name." And I have blessed her; furthermore, I have given you a son from her. When I have blessed him, then he has become nations—kings of peoples will come [lit., *will be*] from him." Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"

Abraham finds the idea of he and Sarah have a child together rather humorous. Then he tells God that he has a solution to this whole problem:

Gen 17:18 And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before you!"

Abraham does love his son, Ishmael. This is his son by Little Egypt, Hagar, Sarah's personal slave. This young man is now 13 years old, and Abraham has great dreams for him. "We don't need some new child for this covenant; We've already got Ishmael; he's a good kid. Consider him." Abraham does not tell God what he is thinking—that the idea of he and Sarah having children strikes him as rather funny.

However, God knows the end from the beginning. God can see into the soul of Ishmael, now, and in the future. God knows about the children of Ishmael and about their children. So Ishmael will not be the son of promise. The covenant of God will not be fulfilled through Ishmael.

Gen 17:19 God said, "On the contrary, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you will call his name Isaac. I will establish My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him.

The verb *shall bear* is a present active participle, and could be rendered, **Sarah, your wife, is bearing you a son**. Although we often translate this as continuous action in present time, the participle can refer to continuous action in the past, present or future. The participle emphasizes the continuousness of the action; indicating that this will be a real pregnancy which will go on for a long time (9 months). In other words, Abraham and Sarah are not going to find some orphan waif somewhere and adopt him.

God has been making promises to Abraham for a long time; and when he dies, these promises need to be transferred. Since God has spoken to Abraham continually about his seed (i.e., *his descendants*), Abraham will have to have some real descendants to whom

God can transfer this promise. Furthermore, this covenant (contract) will be continued with this man's children as well.

Gen 17:20 As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and I will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation.

God respects Abraham's wishes. This is important to note, and many of us just breeze right by this verse without recognizing what it says. God is sovereign, but God has given us free will. God has given us self-determination. God respects our free will. Abraham loves his son Ishmael, and, although God will not grant Abraham's specific request (which is for Ishmael to be the recipient of God's promises to Abraham), Ishmael will sire royalty and God will make him into a great nation. So, God will take into consideration the intent of Abraham's prayer. Because Abraham is speaking to God and making a request, that is a prayer.

With every prayer that we make to God, there is a desire behind that prayer. We may pray for a million dollars, but the desire behind that prayer might be to have some financial security. God may not give us a million dollars, but He may give us financial security. So, He has not granted the specific request of this prayer, but He has granted us the desire behind it.

Let's use the example of, you have met this person that you are in love with, and you think they are wonderful, and you pray to God that you will marry this person.

God's 4 Answers to Prayer

Specific Request; the Desire	God's Answer
God answers the specific request that we make and the desire behind the request.	Your prayer is to marry a particular person, but the desire behind that request is to marry someone that you are in love with, and will continue to be in love with. So God grants the request as well as the motivation or desire behind the request. This does turn out to be your right person that God designed for you.
The prayer is answered, but the desire behind the prayer is not.	God lets you marry that doll, but she turns out to be a horrid person who looked really hot to you at one time, and now, not so much. You have to deal day in and day out with her soul, and you do not find that to be particularly scintillating.
God does not answer your specific petition, but He answers the desire behind that petition.	You do not marry that specific person, but you do marry someone who is far more suitable for you—someone for whom you continue to have an abiding love for.

God's 4 Answers to Prayer

Specific Request; the Desire

God's Answer

God says not to the petition and to the desire behind the petition.

You do not marry that particular person, and, whether you marry or not, the end result is, you do not spend your life with a partner whom you are in love with.

Now, I did leave two factors out of this equation: your volition and the volition of the person that you are in love with. However, I am simply presenting the general principle. In most cases of prayer, the volition of others is involved and God does not reach into our souls and change our volition.

This is how God answers all prayers. There are 4 options. When we pray, always recall God's promise from Rom. 8:28 **We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose** (WEB). This does not mean that your life is going to be great. Your life will be taken care of by God if *you love Him*. There is only one way to love God, and that is through Bible doctrine. You have to get to know God; you must desire to know Him.

What is important here, and you need to have confidence in this: God hears your prayers and considers them and answers all of them (that is, assuming that you have prayed to God while in fellowship). Your free will counts in God's plan.

So, God will bless Ishmael, this son that Abraham adores, but not as a party to this contract. God's covenant to Abraham is going to be established with a son of Abraham, a son born from Sarah.

Gen 17:21 But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year."

3 months after God delivers this promise to Abraham, he and his wife Sarah will have sex. In fact, we don't know if this happens just once or on multiple occasions, but Abraham will be sexually revived on at least one occasion and he will impregnate his wife, now named Sarah. Sarah will find herself to be fertile once again.

Now is the right time in God's plan to move forward. 13 years ago, was the wrong time for Abraham to impregnate Sarah. Abraham, back then, was still trying to bring God's promises to pass by listening to and obeying his wife. She said, "Take my slave girl" and Abraham did. He listened to Sarai and did what she asked. Sarai was *his prince*. They were not ready at that time to be parents to the child of promise. When Sarah became a *princess*, then they were nearly ready for their first child.

You may think that this ought to be the right time for you to marry, for your business to take off, for your stock picks to skyrocket, for you to be advanced in your job; and yet, none of these things are happening. You might even be praying to God several times a day about

these things. There is a right time for God to answer your prayers. You may not be ready for a marriage; you may not be ready for prosperity, and you may not be ready for the added responsibilities that come with success or with a promotion. 13 years ago, Abraham and Sarah were not ready for the next step in God's plan, and they proved this by bringing Little Egypt into the picture. And Abram was every bit as culpable as Sarai because he went along with her idea. Abram should have realized that he could not move the plan of God forward by sin. Even this very day, they were not ready; a year from now, they will be ready to have a son, a son who will take upon himself the promises that God made to Abraham.

Part of the purpose of circumcision was so that Abraham, every time he would urinate, he would remember the promises of God, and how God took that which was dead and made it alive. Every Jew who has been circumcised, should think the same thing. God took that which was dead—Abraham's phallus—and He made it alive; and that God did this to illustrate being born again (or, *being born from above*; i.e., *being born from God*). .

Acts 7:1–8 summarizes much of this. Saint Stephen has been hauled in front of the Sanhedrin (the supreme court of Israel), because of the things which he was saying. It is a dangerous time for a national entity when ideas are seen as so dangerous as to be put on trial (this is different than an organization that advocates the violent overthrow of the government).

Acts 7:1 **Then the high priest said, "Then do you so hold these things?"** These doctrines about Jesus Christ is what the high priest is talking about. Stephen, and other disciples, had been spreading the message of Jesus Christ, our Savior, Who had died and was resurrected, and then was taken by God the Father into heaven. This same Jesus is the Messiah, and this is what Stephen taught.

In the audience of the Sanhedrin are a number of unlikely allies—Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and from Asia (Acts 6:9)—all of whom objected to Stephen's teaching, and hauled him before the Sanhedrin to call him out on him teaching about Jesus.

Here is one man, Stephen, sitting before 71 professional judges, including the high priest of Israel, and there would have been a rather large audience as well, of a variety of people wanting to see Stephen get his comeuppance.

Stephen is asked to be a witness against himself, to tell them what he believes in. He then responds.

Acts 7:2 **And he [Stephen] said, "Men, brothers, and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran.**

The *brothers* in the audience were fellow Jews. The *fathers* were those who were older and had great authority and, ostensibly, great wisdom. *Men* refers to anyone else in the audience.

Stephen will go to the Old Testament, to the father of the Jews, and use him to illustrate what he himself believes in. This goes back to Gen. 12, when God told Abraham to go to the Land of Promise. Abraham was first in Mesopotamia, not far from modern-day Bagdad. He and his family moved up to Haran, which meant that they moved northwest along the Euphrates. This would be not far from the land of Canaan.

Acts 7:3 “And He [God] said to him [Abraham], ‘Go out from your land and from your relatives, and come into a land which I shall show you.’ (Gen. 12:1)

As we have already studied, God came to Abraham and told him to leave his family and to go to a land that God would show him. So, Abraham first went with his family from the heart of Mesopotamia up to Haran; and then he separated from his family and went into the Land of Promise.

Acts 7:4 Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, he moved into this land in which you now dwell.

The Chaldeans lived in the east, more or less in the country of Iran today (which is the cradle of civilization, as this is where man first settled after the flood). Then Abraham was told to move to the land of promise, which was Israel, where all of these Jewish judges listening to Stephen are right now. And, so far, this is nothing for them to become incensed about; everything that Stephen has said, is what they believe.

Acts 7:5 And He [God] gave him [Abraham] no inheritance in it, no, not even a foot-breadth. And He promised that He would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, there being no child to him.

Now God gives Abraham nothing in this land. He promised this land to Abraham’s descendants, even though, Abraham had no children. These are things which most of those in the audience believe. As we have studied, Abraham moves around, going from pasture to pasture, and, during this time, develops a number of good relationships with the people of the land.

What Stephen is doing is, he is taking information which they all know and believe and attempting to logically move them toward the gospel.

Acts 7:6 And God spoke in this way, that his seed would be a tenant in another land, and that they would enslave it [Abraham’s seed] and oppress it four hundred years.

In fact, Abraham’s original descendants would be slaves in another land, and they would be oppressed by the Egyptians for about 400 years (Gen. 15:13 Ex. 12:40–41 Gal. 3:17). So, with this phrase, Stephen takes these men beyond where we are in Gen. 17 and into the book of Exodus.

Acts 7:7 And God said, ‘I will judge the nation to whom they shall be in bondage,’ and ‘after these things they will come out and will serve Me in this place.’ (Gen. 15:14).

God promised that He would judge Egypt, and then bring the Jews into the land, the Land of Promise, the land that God would give to them. Those in the audience are listening, and they agree with this. They do not like Stephen, but they agree with what he has said so far.

Acts 7:8 And He [God] gave him [Abraham] the covenant of circumcision. And so Abraham fathered Isaac and circumcised him the eighth day. And Isaac fathered Jacob, and Jacob the twelve patriarchs.”

Then God gives Abraham the covenant of circumcision. Circumcision represents regeneration; in circumcision, God takes the sexual deaths of Abraham and Sarah and He makes them both sexually and reproductively alive, which [represents regeneration](#). Abraham fathers Isaac and circumcises him on the 8th day, and Isaac fathers Jacob and Jacob fathers the 12 patriarchs of Israel.

And all of the members of Stephen’s audience—those men, brothers and fathers—have all been circumcised.

This is as much as Stephen had to say about this period of time. However, we will return to him once more in the next lesson, to see how his sermon ends.

Lesson 176: Genesis 17:18–22 Acts 7:1–8, 51–60 Stephen is Stoned to Death

In the previous lesson, we looked at St. Stephen’s summary of the history of Abraham, taking us to this point of circumcision in Genesis:

Acts 7:1–8 Then the high priest said, “Then do you so hold these things?” And he [Stephen] said, “Men, brothers, and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran. And He [God] said to him [Abraham], ‘Go out from your land and from your relatives, and come into a land which I shall show you.’ (Gen. 12:1). Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, he moved into this land in which you now dwell. And He [God] gave him [Abraham] no inheritance in it, no, not even a foot-breadth. And He promised that He would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, there being no child to him. And God spoke in this way, that his seed would be a tenant in another land, and that they would enslave it [Abraham’s seed] and oppress it 400 years. And God said, ‘I will judge the nation to whom they shall be in bondage,’ and ‘after these things they will come out and will serve Me in this place.’ (Gen. 15:14). And He [God] gave him [Abraham] the covenant of circumcision. And so Abraham fathered Isaac and circumcised him the eighth day. And Isaac fathered Jacob, and Jacob the twelve patriarchs.”

Stephen has been hauled into the sanhedrin by a very hostile audience, and this is the testimony that he gives, which, grudgingly, they must agree to. So, what Stephen said to

this audience, while he is on trial, is a summary of the events that we have been studying for the past 6 months or so, as well as a summary of the first third of the book of Exodus.

However, before we return to Abraham, let's follow Stephen's speech to its conclusion: Stephen covers much more of Israel's history (which he summarized in Acts 7:9–50), which we will cover at another time. However, this is how it all ends. Stephen then says:

Acts 7:51 **“O stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so you do.**

There have been many generations of Jews who have opposed God. Stephen has given example after example where this has occurred in Jewish history (which examples, we skipped over). Calling these judges before whom he stands, *stiff-necked* conjures up images of the pharaoh of Egypt. Saying that they are uncircumcised of heart and ears means, they have not been regenerated; they have not been made alive. Therefore, they cannot hear what the Spirit of God says.

Being uncircumcised of heart is actually an Old Testament theme. Moses, speaking to the people, urged them, **“Therefore, circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stiff-necked.”** (Deut. 10:16). And Stephen says to his Jewish audience: **“O stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so you do.”** How can they deny this? Throughout Israel's history, they had followed through with the circumcision of the flesh, but these Jews, on many occasions, were stiff-necked and uncircumcised of heart—in other words, they had not even been regenerated. One of the points that we have been studying is, circumcision is a ritual, and this ritual represents being born again. Calling his Jewish audience *stiff-necked and uncircumcised of heart* was a great insult to them, even though it is true. It means that they hear God, and they resist Him.

Stephen continues:

Acts 7:52 **Which of the prophets did your fathers *not* persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of Whom you have now been the betrayers and murderers;..**

Stephen speaks of the prophets as a whole, and asks these judges of Israel, *which prophets did Israel not persecute?* That is tough for them to answer. Nearly all of the prophets were rejected and persecuted by the Jews and by the hierarchy of Jewish government (which the sanhedrin represented at that point in their history). These Jews to whom Stephen was speaking revered the prophets, but they had a difficult time recognizing and applying the fact that Jews in the past had persecuted these same prophets whom they revered. Persecuting prophets in Israel was not some new thing that had never happened before; this is how Israel had always treated their prophets.

The Jews of that day thought that everything was fine. They were very religious and very legalistic, and they performed all kinds of rituals, as found in the Law; so they figured that

they were pretty tight with God. Stephen points out that the Jews, historically, have been at odds with God on many occasions; and, on such occasions, God sent them prophets to set them straight. And they persecuted those prophets.

They even killed prophets who foretold the coming of the Just One, and then Stephen makes certain that they know Who the Just One is: “[the One] Whom you have now been the betrayers and murderers.” Everyone in the sanhedrin knows that this was Jesus Christ. Yet Stephen does not even utter His Name.

Enough time had passed for the people to take stock of what happened. Many of these religious types were at the trials of Jesus, and they were aware that these trials were sham justice. There was no real justice. Jesus was railroaded to the cross. Somehow, the two greatest systems of Law, Jewish law and Roman law, had been subverted, and a man innocent of all charges was led to the cross by means of some of these very same judges.

Acts 7:53 ...who [referring back to the ancestors of those in the court] received the Law through disposition of angels [see Deut. 33:2], and did not keep it.”

These very men, who stand in judgement of Stephen, ready to condemn him to death by stoning, had received the Law and yet they do not keep it. They were stiff-necked and uncircumcised of heart, just like their fathers who had persecuted the prophets before them.

Acts 7:54 And hearing these things, they were cut to their hearts. And they gnashed against him with their teeth.

Quite obviously, this disturbed these Jews tremendously. These judges and those in the audience could no longer hide their hatred of Jesus Christ, which was expressed in their hatred for Stephen. They began to grind their teeth, many probably involuntarily, muttering under their breath.

I want you to notice something else: Stephen, in his entire speech before the sanhedrin, does not utter the name *Jesus*, and yet, everyone knew of Whom Stephen spoke in v. 52. They do not want to hear the name of Jesus; they do not even want His Person implied. Just realizing that Jesus is Who Stephen is speaking about angers them.

One of the years that I taught at a public school, we brought an evangelist (Gary Horton) to speak to the students, and this was an unusual thing for both him and the students, to present the gospel of Jesus Christ to assemblies of 600 students in a public school. However, what was quite amazing is, he gave the gospel clearly and unequivocally without uttering the name of Jesus. Yet, everyone in the room knew of Whom he was speaking. He gave the gospel in clear, unequivocal terms, and yet, no one heard the name of Jesus uttered, but they knew Who Gary Horton was talking about.

Acts 7:55 But being full of the Holy Spirit, looking up intently into Heaven, he saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

Here, we will get a taste of dying grace, to a great man who spoke the truth to the most influential men in all of Israel. He was about to be killed by men filled with anger and hatred, and all he had done was speak the truth to them. He held no weapon against them; he had done no one any harm; he simply spoke the truth, and these men wanted to kill him.

People hate it when you speak the truth, and now, even as then, there are real attempts to stop people from speaking the truth. Most Muslim countries will not even allow you to bring a Bible into their country. There are countries where certain laws favoring homosexuality have resulted in churches being taken to court for teaching portions of the Bible. Since the Arab Spring in Egypt, persecutions of Christians have been routine occurrences, where their churches and houses are burned. It is all about the truth being spoken in the devil's world.

Acts 7:56 **And he said, "Listen, I see Heaven opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.**

Stephen now tells them what he is seeing. He looks and he sees heaven opening up with Jesus Christ standing on the right hand of God.

Acts 7:57 **And crying out with a loud voice, they stopped their ears and ran on him with one accord.**

Here is how angry these men were. Stephen has, in a couple of sentences, spoke of Jesus Christ, but without naming Him by name, and these men are so angered, and they get up as one, cover their ears, so that they do not want to hear, and they all charge Stephen in anger, as a mob. Remember, they are in a court of law, and they have hauled Stephen in there to have him charged with whatever and then have him punished—they want this done with some semblance of legality—and yet they cannot even stand to hear his testimony. His words burn into their souls.

Let's say you proclaimed Jesus as the only Savior before a crowd of Muslims in a mosque; what do you suppose might happen? What Stephen is facing is very similar because he also is speaking to men of uncircumcised hearts and uncircumcised ears. **As it stands written, "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day."** (Rom. 11:8; Jer. 5:21).

Acts 7:58 **And throwing him outside the city, they stoned him. And the witnesses laid their cloaks down at the feet of a young man named Saul.**

This mob apparently grabs Stephen and they haul him outside of the city. It does not appear even that a sentence was pronounced. Stephen got them so upset that this mob simply attacked him. They no longer needed to hear the sanhedrin weigh in.

There is a young trusted pharisee there, and they lay their overcoats down before him, because they are going to work up a sweat stoning Stephen to death.

Jerusalem, in less than 40 years, would be taken down by the Romans. The Jews, as a whole, did not respond to God's calling, and, as a result, the Romans would crush them. They refused to be governed, even though the Romans had treated the Jews with respect and had given them a fair amount of autonomy. But their negative volition toward Jesus Christ resulted in the destruction of their nation.

Acts 7:59 *And they stoned Stephen, who was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."*

At this point, Stephen finally calls out the name *Jesus*, asking for Him to receive Stephen's spirit.

Acts 7:60 *And kneeling down, he cried with a loud voice, "Lord, do not lay this sin to their charge." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.*

And Stephen's final act was a prayer for the very men who stoned him to death.

Let's now return to God and Abraham. I realize that we went off topic, but I could not simply leave Stephen in mid-speech without taking this to the end.

So we go back 2000 years. This is the interchange between Abraham and God; Abraham wants his son, Ishmael, to be the recipient of the covenant from God, and God tells him that Ishmael will be blessed, but the covenant would go to Isaac, a son Abraham would sire with Sarah.

Gen 17:18–21 *And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before you!" God said, "On the contrary, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you will call his name Isaac. I will establish My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and I will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation. But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year."*

Recall that Abraham fell down before God and began laughing; however, he apparently attempts to keep this to himself, and gathers himself and asks for God's covenant to be fulfilled in Ishmael.

This is where we discussed the concept of prayer—the specific thing for which we pray and the intent behind that prayer—and how God answers prayer.

So God would clearly bless Ishmael, but His covenant would be with Isaac, the son not yet conceived. In this way, God would answer Abraham's prayer.

Furthermore, God would Abraham a son through Sarah, something which had not been specified before. It would be a year from now when Sarah would bear Abraham a child, so 3 months would pass before Abraham impregnated Sarah. The word *set time* is

actually, mōw'êd (מוֹעֵד) [pronounced *moh-GADE*], which means, *a specific (set, pre-determined, appointed) time; a point in time; a sacred season, a set feast; an appointed meeting.* Strong's #4150 BDB #417. Therefore, Abraham is going to expect this to happen 360 days from that point. There is no rough approximation implied here.

Gen 17:22 When He had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham.

As is the case in many English translations, there are nuances which are hidden in the Hebrew. There is a very common preposition which is normally translated *with*, but that is not found here. Instead, there are two prepositions which together mean. *from upon, from over, from by, from beside, from attachment to, from companionship with, from accompanying [in a protective manner], from adhesion to, from.* So, there is more here than God simply walking away. God is going up from over Abraham. Now, this can simply indicate that **God went up from companionship with Abraham** (an enjoyment of fellowship with Abraham); but recall also that Abraham has fallen onto the ground twice. So, there is a double meaning here. God physically went up from Abraham, suggesting that God left Abraham by moving vertically. However, there is also the implication that there was companionship and fellowship that God is leaving as well.

God gave Abraham all the information that he needed at that time. Abraham had prayed to God with God being right there in front of him, and God gave him the disposition of that prayer. God made it clear that His covenant with Abraham still stood, but that covenant would be continued with Isaac, who would be born to two sexually dead people, Abraham and Sarah. From death, God would bring life. **And you were dead in your trespasses and sins. But God, who is abundant in mercy, because of His great love that He had for us, made us alive with the Messiah even though we were dead in trespasses. By grace you are saved!** (Eph. 2:1, 4–5).

Lesson 177: Genesis 17:1–3a, 15–17, 23–27 Rom. 4:1–3 Abraham's Circumcision

I want to remind you about vv. 1–3a and 15–17:

Gen 17:1–4 When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature, that I may make My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you greatly." Then Abram fell on his face.

Gen 17:15–17 And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name." And I have blessed her; furthermore, I have given you a son from her. When I have blessed him, then he has become nations—kings of peoples will come [lit., *will be*] from him." Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"

So this strikes Abraham as being rather funny, so much so, that he falls to his face again, before God, and he thinks about how preposterous this all is. However, notice how he responds to what has said. This is what Abraham does this very day:

Gen 17:23 Then Abraham took Ishmael his son and all those born in his house or bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very day, as God had said to him.

Despite Abraham's disagreements with God and desiring to make Ishmael his heir, Abraham still does exactly what God asks him to do—he circumcises himself and all the males of his household. This takes a great deal of faith, both for Abraham and for those males who are under him (those who are his slaves and/or those who work for him).

Gen 17:24 Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.

Abraham may have laughed at what God told him, and he may have doubted this for a short time, but notice that Abraham has acted upon what God said. He was circumcised on the same day that God told him to be circumcised.

Personally, I have no problems with a child being circumcised at 8 days (or whatever). A full grown male being circumcised? That just does not seem like something I would easily agree to participate in. However, Abraham agrees to this—immediately. He may think about this who situation for a few minutes or even a few hours, but on this same day, Abraham has himself and all of the other males at his compound circumcised. That takes a great deal of faith. In this, he will be set apart to God.

Recall that circumcision represents new life in Abraham. It represents his being born again. Sexually, he was dead; yet God will make him sexually alive. From this new life will spring the Jewish race, a people set apart to God, a people whose life comes about as a result of Abraham's faith, Abraham's sexual rejuvenation, and Abraham's obedience.

Note the timing. There is no Isaac yet; there is no pregnancy yet; Sarah may not even know about any of this yet. Abraham, based on his faith in Jehovah Elohim, has everyone, including himself, circumcised. Abraham acts on faith.

Gen 17:25 And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.

Ishmael, a male in Abraham's household, was also circumcised. God did have plans for Ishmael, which plans are suited to his volition and his limited spiritual growth.

Gen 17:26 That very day Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised.

Every male in Abraham's household was circumcised, including his natural son, Ishmael (by the slave girl belonging to Sarah). It appears that Ishmael may have been a believer in Jehovah Elohim.

Gen 17:27 And all the men of his house, those born in the house and those bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

All of those in Abraham's house were circumcised with him; which act is representative of all of them being saved. They were regenerated by faith in the God of Abraham; they revealed their regeneration by agreeing to this act of circumcision. No one appears to say, "Look, Abraham, we have listened to you talk to us about speaking with God, and we have let that go since you have been good to us, but this circumcision idea? This is where we draw the line." **All the men of his house, those born in the house and those bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.** This suggests that they believed Abraham when he spoke of speaking with God.

There are people who are easily confused about learning Bible doctrine. They think that, they learn a little bit and then they either imitate what they have learned or obey what it is that they have learned. So, can you imagine a pastor saying, "And if you want all the blessings of God, then you too must be circumcised!"? Well, actually some early preachers actually taught that, so let me first give you a principle from the New Testament: do not look to start changing your entire life unless it is based upon a clear mandate from God.

1Co 7:17 Only, everybody must continue to live in the station which the Lord assigned to him, in that in which God called him. These are my orders in all the churches. Has a man been called after he was circumcised? He must not try to change it. Has a man been called without being circumcised? He must not be circumcised. Being circumcised or not being circumcised has no value, but keeping God's commands is important. Everybody must remain in the station in which he was called. Were you called while a slave? Stop letting that annoy you. Yet, if you can win your freedom, take advantage of such an opportunity. For the slave who has been called to union with the Lord is the Lord's freedman; in the same way the freeman who has been called is a slave of Christ. You have been bought and actually paid for; stop becoming slaves to men. Brothers, each one must continue close to God in the very station in which he was called. (Williams NT)

What you do not do is hear a sermon in which there are no clear mandates—or worse, read a portion of your Bible where there are no clear mandates—and then attempt to imitate what you found here. If you are reading this and you are uncircumcised, you do not go out and get circumcised. Although this happened back in the 1st century A.D., it does not happen much anymore. However, let me give you an modern-day example of someone reading something in the Bible and then imitating it: the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the gift of tongues. In the Book of Acts, believers from the previous dispensation are given the Holy Spirit as a separate experience from their salvation (they were saved in a previous dispensation during which where they were not given the Holy Spirit). In the Church Age, the Dispensation of the Universal Indwelling of the Holy Spirit, believers from

a previous dispensation were baptized by God the Holy Spirit. However, those saved during the Church Age were all given the Holy Spirit *when* they believed in Jesus Christ. **For by one Spirit all of us, Jews or Greeks, slaves or freemen, have been baptized into one body, and were all imbued with one Spirit** (1Cor. 12:13; Williams). *Baptized* is in the aorist passive indicative—aorist tense is a point in time; passive voice indicates that the action of the verb was received (we did not go out and do something in order to get the Spirit); and the indicative mood is the mood of reality (this really happened). The Bible *never* mandates that a Church Age believer get baptized with the Holy Spirit (never, in any epistle, do we find the baptism of the Spirit presented in the imperative mood).

So, we do not read this passage about Abraham and decide, “You know what, I am not receiving all of God’s blessings because I am not yet circumcised;” nor do we read a few chapters from the book of Acts and decide, “You know what, I am not yet receiving all of God’s blessings because I have not been baptized by the Holy Ghost.”

There is another misapplication associated with this passage. Do not become confused and think that, God is going to give Abraham a son because Abraham obeyed God in this instance of circumcision. God has been making these promises to Abraham for decades now. God never said, “Okay, Abe, this is your final test; pass this, and you get the son I have been promising.” God has already promised Abraham the son of who would inherit all of the promises.

This circumcision was a nice touch—it represented Abraham’s regeneration—that is, his spiritual birth. It is illustrated here through sexual rebirth, but the idea is, God will bring life out of death. Abraham and Sarah are sexually dead. There is nothing that they can do about that. However, with God, all things are possible, and He will bring life from death, which illustrates regeneration. **God has made you alive, you who were once dead in trespasses and sins** (Eph. 2:1). **For God has made us alive together with Christ. even while we were dead in [our] sins** (Eph. 2:5a). **And you, being dead in your sins and the **uncircumcision** of your flesh, God has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and has taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross** (Col. 2:13–14).

Do you see how carefully the book of Genesis lays the foundation for the rest of the Bible? It is as if the Author of the book of Genesis knew what would happen in New Testament, and wrote the book of Genesis accordingly. Recall that there is no question whatsoever that the book of Genesis was written before the time of Christ. People like me believe that the book of Genesis was during the 400 years prior to the exodus, around 1900–1800 B.C. The most liberal theologians believe it to be written at least before 600 B.C. The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Septuagint indicate that Genesis not only had to exist as a book before 300 B.C., but that it needed to be kept in libraries and translated into the languages of that day. My point is, Genesis, no matter how you slice it, was in existence long before Jesus walked on this earth, and yet it forms the perfect foundation for the New Testament. From Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:18–24 Luke 3:38 1Tim. 2:13) to Joseph’s bones (Gen. 50:25 Heb. 11:22), Genesis in the New Testament is testified as to being accurate and literal history upon which our faith is founded.

Paul carefully taught that Abraham was justified by faith and not by this act of circumcision in Romans 4:1–25. Preceding this was Rom. 3, where Paul discusses the Jews and the Gentiles before God, and if there is any place for preeminence (boasting). Paul concludes that chapter by saying, **Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the works of the Law** (Rom. 3:28). Furthermore, God is the God of Jews and Gentiles, and that both those who are circumcised and uncircumcised are justified by Him through faith in His Son (Rom. 3:28–29).

Let's take a look at Rom. 4. In Rom. 4, Paul uses Abraham as an example.

Rom. 4:1 **What then shall we say that our father Abraham has discovered, according to flesh [that is, human viewpoint]?**

Bear in mind to whom Paul is writing: he is writing to the church at Rome, a church that he did not found and a church he had not yet visited (Rom. 1:10–11, 15). In fact, Rome was a step beyond where Paul had gone for his 1st, 2nd and 3rd missionary journeys. It is over 1400 miles to get to Rome from Jerusalem. Paul's heart was in Jerusalem; but God wanted Paul in Rome.

Quite obviously, most of those in the local church at Rome were Gentiles (Romans and Greeks, principally), although it is reasonable, given the subject matter in this letter, that there was a substantial number of Jews who attended this congregation. There were apparently some conflicts of theology at the church of Rome. There are Jews and Gentiles there, not exactly sure how they are to intermingle in this new age. Furthermore, many of those in the church at Rome were spiritually mature believers, given the subject matter of Romans.

However, notice how Paul refers to Abraham: *our father*. We have studied Abraham's genealogy and he was a descendant of Seth (Noah's son). Most of those at Rome are descendants of Japheth and there were probably a smattering of Hamites in the congregation as well (perhaps as slaves). Probably less than 10% of the Roman congregation were descended from Abraham, yet Paul calls him, *our father*. Paul does that to get their attention. Abraham is their father, and he will explain why.

Rom. 4:2 **For if Abraham was justified by works, he has a [reason to] boast; but not before God.**

One of the chief topics of this chapter is *justification*. *Justification* is how God qualifies man to have a relationship with God. We are born with a sin nature and we have Adam's imputed sin affixed to our permanent record, so we stand condemned from the moment of birth. Then, after birth, we all sin. With respect to God, we are in a hole, and early on, we start digging ourselves deeper into that hole. In fact, most of us dedicate our lives to digging deeper and deeper into this hole as we go through life. *Justification* means that God takes away this sin and imputes His righteousness to us (often referred to as +R) on the basis of our faith in Jesus Christ. This does not mean that we begin to act righteous.

It simply means that God has declared us righteous and it is based upon what Jesus did on our behalf on the cross.

It is because of justification that we can have eternal life. We are born with no relationship to God, and then we make it even worse with personal sins. God imputes His righteousness to us as a legal transaction. It is as if we have an overdrawn account and God credits \$1 billion to our account.

We have studied Abraham throughout his life and, although he was a great believer, he also made a great many mistakes. Abraham could not base his salvation upon his works. He will make many mistakes in his life, yet God will continue to be faithful to him.

Paul goes to the Old Testament in order to justify what he is saying. Now, as an aside, Paul's use of the Old Testament ought to surprise you. Certainly, the Jews in the congregation believe in the Old Testament; they believe that it is the Word of God. However, most of those in the congregation are Romans. Paul does not stop and say, "Now, here is what we find in the *Jewish Scriptures*;" he simply begins quoting from the Old Testament. This is the justification for what he is saying. He goes back to the very book that we are studying, Genesis, in order to prove his point.

Rom. 4:3 **For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness."** (Gen. 15:6).

Paul is writing to a Roman congregation with a smattering of Jews in it. However, he cites the Word of God (the Old Testament) as authoritative. He does not hem and haw, and suggest, "Well, you may or may not believe in the Old Testament—I do, of course—but here is what it says." Paul quotes the Old Testament to a Roman audience (this letter to the Romans would be read aloud to the Roman church) unapologetically, as the final authority. The few Jews there accepted this authority; Paul, in this way, was establishing the Old Testament as authoritative to Church Age believers.

We have already studied this passage in Genesis. God's righteousness (+R) was credited to Abraham's account because he *had believed* (perfect tense in the Hebrew; an accomplished fact or point in time) in God. Specifically, as we have studied, Abraham believed Y^{ehowah}, the God of Creation—the revealed member of the Trinity—and God credited his account with +R. Prior to his salvation, the most that Abraham could muster up would be relative righteousness (–R). That is, he could look over at Charlie Brown, and say, "Charlie Brown goes out drinking every night, chasing skirts; I am better than that." Some of the most evil people we know justify themselves and see themselves as righteous. Contemporary examples of Al Gore, Robert Kennedy Jr. and Michael Moore come to mind as those who are involved in great evil. It is highly unlikely that these men see themselves as evil or as destructive to society. Each of these 3 men likely have a very healthy dose of self-esteem and self-righteousness. *That* is –R. That is relative righteousness and self-righteousness. They think they are righteous; they think they are good; and they will let you know it.

I venture onto political blogs and discussions now and again, and when it comes to matters of morality, you have never seen anyone so self-righteous as people on the left when they are criticizing someone on the right who has committed this or that sin. These same people on the left will argue until they are blue in the face that the government should not come into their bedroom; but, when it comes to sexual transgressions by a politician on the right, they will jump all over that politician. This is relative righteousness.

Or, they may smoke marijuana and favor its legalization, but mention Rush Limbaugh, and they will talk about his addiction to painkillers two decades ago as if it were the most horrible sin in the world. Relative righteousness.

God does not look down on Abraham and think, "He is a pretty good guy; he is not out there drinking every night and chasing skirt, like that awful Charlie Brown. I kind of like Abraham for that reason." God justified Abraham (credited absolute righteousness to his account) based upon Abraham's faith in Jehovah Elohim. That very instant that Abraham, in his soul, invisible to everyone but God, expressed faith in Him, +R was transferred into Abraham's spiritual account.

We should complete Romans 4 in the next lesson and close out Gen. 17 in the lesson after that. There is one more pretty impressive thing hidden in Gen. 17.

Lesson 178: Romans 4:1–17

Abraham, our Father

The 4th chapter of Romans deals with Abraham and with his salvation and circumcision. One of the reasons that we do this is, so that you can see how perfect a foundation the book of Genesis is for the rest of the Bible. Abraham is mentioned by name about 250 times in the Bible. Over half of those instances occur outside of the book of Genesis. He is named in the New Testament 74 times, so we ought to know just exactly who he is and why he is so important to us as believers in the Church Age.

Rom. 4:1–3 **What then shall we say that our father Abraham has discovered, according to the flesh [that is, human viewpoint]? For if Abraham was justified by works, then he has a [reason to] boast (but not before God). For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness."** (Gen. 15:6).

We are dealing with Abraham's circumcision. However, he was not justified by his circumcision, or by any other set of works; he was justified by his faith in Jehovah Elohim, the revealed Member of the Godhead—the person to whom Abraham spoke on several occasions.

Note again, that, for this congregation in Rome, Paul calls Abraham *our father*, even though most of the people to whom Paul is writing were not descended from Abraham. Paul will explain what it means for Abraham to be the father of the *uncircumcised* as well.

Rom. 4:4 **But to the one who works** [does acts of righteousness in order to impress God], **the reward is not credited [to him] according to grace, but according to debt.**

At birth, we start in the hole and we begin digging ourselves deeper into this hole as we get older. Let's just say, you are nice to your mother. You have no reason to boast over this. You ought to be good to your mother. You are still in the hole and you are still digging. Let's say, you acted honorably in a business deal—again, you have no reason to boast. You ought to act honorably in your business dealings. Let's say you spent your Thanksgiving at a soup kitchen—this does not impress God. Look at all that God has given to you! That you spend a few hours serving up food for the poor, most of whom will never enjoy the material blessings that you have? That is the least you could do. You are still in the hole. In all of your supposed good works, you still have Adam's imputed sin; you still have a sin nature, and you have sinned within the past hour or so.

Certainly, you have heard of indentured servants, who come and work for Charlie Brown, and the promise is, "You work for me for a few years, and I will give you complete freedom and a nice bank account." Charley Brown charges you for your uniforms, your work clothes, your food and your shelter. So, even though you work year after year after year, and that manumission never happens. Every year, you end up owing more than you did the previous year.

In relationship to God, you are already in a hole at birth and you cannot climb out of, no matter how many good things you do. You are always working from a position of debt, and a debt which is much greater than you can ever repay.

Rom. 4:5 **But to him not working [for salvation], but believing on Him Who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.**

Just like Abraham, who did not work for his salvation; if you believe on the One Who justifies you (declares you righteous), your faith will be the basis for your righteousness. Salvation is not based upon works; it is not based upon your good deeds—you are justified by your faith in Jesus Christ.

Rom. 4:6 **Even as David also says of the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness without works,**

Next, Paul goes back to the psalms of the Old Testament, and cites a principle, but not a particular psalm. The principle is, God blesses (makes happy) the person who has imputed righteousness apart from works.

Rom. 4:7–8 **saying, "Blessed are those whose lawlessness deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord will in no way impute sin." (Psalm 32:1–2a).**

Although this psalm is peculiar to David at a particular point in his life, the principle is the same for everyone who believes in Jesus Christ. Their sins are forgiven—in the Old

Testament, they were covered until Jesus came and died on the cross for those sins—and, in v. 2a, David writes, [Happineses to the man to whom Y^ehowah will in no way impute sin](#). Again, we are in the hole, digging ourselves in deeper and deeper, with Adam's original sin imputed to us, a sin nature which is integral to our person, and personal sins—and yet, David speaks of the Lord *not* imputing sin to us. This is *justification*, where our sins are not imputed to us, but God's righteousness is imputed to us instead.

Then Paul gets very technical.

Rom. 4:9 [Is this blessedness then on the circumcision only, or on the uncircumcision also? For we say that faith was credited to Abraham for righteousness.](#)

Paul asks whether this sort of blessedness of justification is for those who have been circumcised only, or can these blessings be given to the uncircumcision (that is, to gentiles)? Jews were circumcised and gentiles, for the most part, were not. The Jews of this congregation heard this question and perhaps they think to themselves, "To the circumcision only!"

Paul reminds them, Abraham's faith was credited to him for righteousness. At this point, everyone in the congregation is nodding there head. "Yeah, yeah, we got that; Abraham was justified by faith; you just said that."

Rom. 4:10 [How then was it credited? Being in circumcision or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.](#)

Paul's logic at this point is irrefutable. Abraham was declared righteous back in Gen. 15:6 (which actually points back to a time previous to that). Yet, he is not circumcised until age 99 (Gen. 17:24). Obviously, Abraham was credited righteousness for his faith decades before he was circumcised. So Abraham was declared righteous while uncircumcised.

Rom. 4:11 [And he received a sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith while still uncircumcised; so that he might be the father of all those believing through uncircumcision, for righteousness to be imputed to them also;](#)

Circumcision was a sign—a seal of righteousness by faith—given long after Abraham had been justified. Circumcision represents regeneration; Abraham and his wife are born again. They were sexually dead, and yet, from this death will come life. That is the entire concept of regeneration, that we were dead in our trespasses and sins, and yet they were made alive through faith in Jesus Christ. Circumcision, which occurs long after God has justified Abraham (and his wife) is a sign of his regeneration, which took place decades previous.

All who believe in Jesus Christ are made righteous, whether circumcised or uncircumcised and Abraham set this pattern 2000 years prior to Paul writing these words.

Rom. 4:12 and [he is, therefore] a father of circumcision to those not of the circumcision only, but also to those walking by the steps of the faith of our father Abraham during uncircumcision.

Remember back in v. 1, where Paul said that Abraham is our father? Now he explains how Abraham is the father of the circumcision and the uncircumcision alike. Most of the people to whom Paul is writing are Romans and Greeks. They are uncircumcised gentiles. However, they are sons of Abraham, having followed him in faith. Abraham laid out the clear path to salvation—faith in Jehovah Elohim—which path we gentiles follow. The uncircumcised Abraham was justified by faith in Jehovah Elohim; and the uncircumcised gentiles hearing Paul's letter had also been justified by faith in Jesus Christ. In this way, Abraham is their father, just as he is the father of the Jewish race.

Abraham is the father of all who believe.

Furthermore, in this way, gentile believers and Jewish believers are united. Now, this may not seem like a great revelation to us today, but at that time, this was a rather radical thing for anyone to say. Paul makes this point on several occasions. **For by means of one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--Jews or Greeks, slaves or free--and all were made to drink from one Spirit (1Cor. 12:13). There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28).** When it comes to being saved, there are absolutely no social, racial, gender or class distinctions. The alcoholic saved at a gospel mission is no better and no worse than the professional Christian athlete who is making millions of dollars. At the point of salvation, God has a plan for each believer, and the reward in heaven does not depend upon who they were when saved. Every person who has believed in Jesus Christ is baptized into one body and made to drink from one Spirit.

Rom. 4:13 **For the promise that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.**

Furthermore, there is an inheritance that we believers are heirs to. Abraham became an heir to the promises of God through faith in Y^ehowah; and we become heirs to His promises through the same faith in the same God—the righteousness of faith. We are made righteous through our faith in Christ Jesus. Again, this is not some experiential righteousness but it is God's imputed righteousness. We get our bank statement in the mail and, instead of being overdrawn, we find that there is \$10 billion in our account. We may not look like billionaires and we may not act like billionaires, but we are billionaires because of the balance on our account.

Rom. 4:14–15 **For if they of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is made of no effect; because the Law works out wrath, for where no law is, there is no transgression.**

The allegation of legalistic Jews was, God justified those who kept the Law of Moses. Abraham lived about 400 years prior to the Law, so he could not keep the Law; and yet,

he is proclaimed to be justified and regenerated, all on the basis of faith. Paul reasons that, if those who keep the Law are heirs to God's promises, then Abraham's faith, as testified to in the Bible, means nothing and the promises made to him by God mean nothing. If Abraham's status is based upon the Law of Moses, Abraham comes up short, because this Law did not exist for him. He would not have followed the Law because the Law did not exist for him.

The Law defines transgression; the Law does not define salvation. The Mosaic Law is associated with the wrath of God, not with the grace of God.

Rom. 4:16 **Therefore it is of faith so that it might be according to grace; for the promise to be made sure to all the seed, not only to that which is of the Law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all**

Paul draws the conclusion that, the promise is made to all on the basis of faith according to grace; in this way, the promises which God clearly made to Abraham stand because of the faith of Abraham, **who is the father of us all**. How is Abraham the father of us all? We have believed in Jesus Christ, the Revealed Member of the Trinity, and that is counted for righteousness. All of those who have trusted in Y^ehowah God, Jesus Christ, are, in this faith, descendants of Abraham.

Rom. 4:17 **(as it has been written, "I have made you a father of many nations") --before God, Whom he believed, who makes the dead live, and calls the things which do not exist as though they do exist.**

Paul puts a new spin on the promise to Abraham, "I have made you a father of many nations." Even though Israel would come from Abraham, the first Jew, so would several arab nations. Paul applies this to refer to many gentiles who believe in Jesus Christ, as heirs of Abraham, and they will make up many nations as well.

Let's take out the parentheses, and take vv. 16–17 together:

Rom. 4:16–17 **Therefore it is of faith so that it might be according to grace; for the promise to be made sure to all the seed, not only to that which is of the Law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all before God, Whom he believed, Who makes the dead live, and calls the things which do not exist as though they do exist.**

Abraham believed in the God Who makes that which is dead live, and brings into existence things which were not there before. *Making that which is dead live* is regeneration, again, illustrated by circumcision, where God took two sexually dead people and made them alive.

Lesson 179: Romans 4:1–25

Abraham, our Father/Sanctification

We last left Abraham in Gen. 17. God told Abraham, an adult age 99, to be circumcised. Although Abraham laughed about the idea that he and Sarah would have children, he still

was strong in faith and he saw that everyone, including himself, was circumcised that very day.

So far, we have examined Paul's look back on Abraham, our father, as he doctrinally explains this to the church at Rome.

Rom. 4:1–17 *What then shall we say that our father Abraham has discovered, according to the flesh [that is, human viewpoint]? For if Abraham was justified by works, then he has a [reason to] boast (but not before God). For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." (Gen. 15:6). But to the one who works [does acts of righteousness in order to impress God], the reward is not credited [to him] according to grace, but according to debt. But to him not working [for salvation], but believing on Him Who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also says of the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness without works, saying, "Blessed are those whose lawlessness deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord will in no way impute sin." (Psalm 32:1–2a). Is this blessedness then on the circumcision only, or on the uncircumcision also? For we say that faith was credited to Abraham for righteousness. How then was it credited? Being in circumcision or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received a sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith while still uncircumcised; so that he might be the father of all those believing through uncircumcision, for righteousness to be imputed to them also; and [he is, therefore] a father of circumcision to those not of the circumcision only, but also to those walking by the steps of the faith of our father Abraham during uncircumcision. For the promise that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is made of no effect; because the Law works out wrath, for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith so that it might be according to grace; for the promise to be made sure to all the seed, not only to that which is of the Law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (as it has been written, "I have made you a father of many nations") --before God, Whom he believed, who makes the dead live, and calls the things which do not exist as though they do exist.*

Paul first speaks of Abraham as *our father* to the church of Rome, which is mostly composed of gentiles. He makes it clear that Abraham was justified by faith in God; that righteousness was imputed to him because he exercised faith in God. It is his faith in Jehovah Elohim, the Revealed Member of the Trinity, that saves Abraham; and, in this way, he is our father.

Then Paul proves that this faith that justified Abraham justifies all of us, circumcised or uncircumcised. Paul proves this by citing Abraham as sole proof—Abraham was justified (made righteous) while he was uncircumcised. He was circumcised no less than 25 years after he was saved. So Abraham was saved in uncircumcision. Therefore, the salvation of Jesus Christ is for all people, Jews and gentiles, circumcised and uncircumcised alike.

Furthermore, the Law of Moses is related to wrath, not to salvation. Salvation is a matter of faith and grace, not of holding to the Law. We are saved based upon God's grace; not because we are circumcised or keep the Mosaic Law.

Because of the example of Abraham, he is the father of us all—all who have believed—because he is our pattern.

Rom. 4:18 **For he who beyond hope believed on hope for him to become the father of many nations (according to that which was spoken, "So your seed shall be").**

Abraham had no reason to believe that he would become the father of many nations, except that God promised him this; therefore, he believed. God made these promises to Abraham and Abraham believed. This is a tough verse to translate. Let me suggest: **Which [faith] (was) beyond expectation, [yet] he had faith in the expectation that he would become the father of many nations.** Abraham was sexually dead, and yet God made promises to him about his seed (his descendants). These descendants did not exist, and yet Abraham had faith in what God told him, even though such faith went beyond expectation.

We began with Abraham's life when he was 75, and he is now 99 at the point that we are studying him in Genesis. He is married to a beautiful woman and God told him that he would be the father of many nations. However, Abraham is not the father of anyone (except for Ishmael).

Abraham's faith was certainly not perfect. Do you recall that, at one time that God came to Abraham, Abraham said, in essence, "Okay, God, what are you going to promise me this time? Oh, by the way, I don't have that son yet that You promised me from before." Yet, despite this imperfection of faith, God kept His promises to Abraham.

Rom. 4:19 **And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body already dead (being about a hundred years old) or the deadening of Sarah's womb.**

In case you did not quite get v. 18, v. 19 explains it all. Abraham was not weak in faith toward God (like all of us, on some days, his faith was weak and on others, it was strong). However, at the point in time when Abraham should have doubted God the most—when he was sexually dead and had not yet fathered a son by Sarah—he was strong in faith. He did not consider the deadness of his own body nor did he consider the deadness of Sarah's womb. These were *non-issues* to Abraham. Despite all evidence to the contrary, Abraham exercised faith in God and in His promises. This is not difficult to understand; God made us so He certainly is able to bring about anything that He promises, even if we are physically incapable of such things.

Rom. 4:20 **He did not stagger at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God,**

Abraham's faith gave glory to God. He did not stagger before the promises of God in unbelief. He did not look at that which was dead—his inability to father a child—and let that be his reality. He was strong in faith, and the result is, God is glorified. This faith that Abraham had and exhibited is divine good. Paul, 2000 years later, could point out how Abraham's faith glorified God.

As Abraham became older, his faith became stronger, and this faith glorified God. As God's promises became less possible in the human realm, Abraham's faith in God increased.

Rom. 4:21 **and being fully persuaded that what God had promised, He was also able to perform.**

Paul confirms that, in the narrative we are studying, that Abraham had full confidence in God and in what God was able to do. Abraham did not have this blind faith in God. He had been *fully persuaded*, by both the actions of God and the substance of Bible doctrine, that God could do whatever He promised.

Rom. 4:22 **And therefore it [his faith] was imputed to him for righteousness.**

Paul brings us to another conclusion: Abraham's faith was imputed to him for righteousness, based upon all that Paul has written to this point.

Now, I want you to notice the context. Abraham exercised faith in Jehovah Elohim early on—long before circumcision—and God counted that faith to him for righteousness (a point Paul made early on in this chapter). However, we have advanced this to a point where Abraham, having been fully persuaded that God could do that which He had promised, continued to be strong in faith to God, and this was *also* imputed righteousness to Abraham. Does this mean that Abraham was saved a second time? Does this mean that he was born again, again? Not at all; this is an upgrade of righteousness that Abraham has received.

Abraham had experienced spiritual growth and therefore, exercised continued faith in God, and *that faith* was imputed to him for righteousness. This is known as experiential sanctification. In our lives, as we grow spiritually, we will continue to exercise faith in God's Word, and that faith will be to us righteousness.

Sanctification is sometimes translated *sanctification* and sometimes *holiness*. *To sanctify* means *to set something aside [for God]; to purify, to cleanse*. At salvation, we exercise faith in Jesus Christ and we are *set aside to God*. That is phrase I sanctification. However, there are points of time when a combination of faith and doctrine in our souls glorifies God in time, and that is known as phase II sanctification. Here, long after Abraham was saved, this faith was imputed to him for righteousness. Phase III sanctification is when we are removed from this life and we stand before God, cleansed of our sin nature.

There are a lot of words which get thrown around in Christian theology, so let's define this particular word, as it is a frequent theme in Scripture:

The Abbreviated Doctrine of Sanctification

1. General definition: *sanctify* means *to set apart [for God]*. *Sanctification* is both the act and the process which sets us apart to God.
2. Vocabulary:
 - 1) The Hebrew verb is *qâdash* (קָדַשׁ) [pronounced *kaw-DASH*], which means, *to be pure, to be clean; to be holy, to be sacred; to set apart, to consecrate, to sanctify, to dedicate, to hallow*. Strong's #6942 BDB #872. This verb is found in a variety of stems, so that the meaning can vary somewhat.
 - 2) The Hebrew adjective/substantive is *qâdôwsh* (קָדוֹשׁ) [pronounced *kaw-DOWSE*], which means, as an adjective, *sacred, holy, set apart, sacrosanct*; and as a noun, *saint, holy one, set-apart one, sacred one, consecrated one, one set apart to God*. Strong's #6918 BDB #872.
 - 3) The Greek verb is verb *hagiazô* (ἁγιάζω) [pronounced *hawg-ee-AD-zoh*], which means, *to render or acknowledge, or to be venerable or hallow; to separate from profane things and dedicate to God; consecrate things to God; dedicate people to God; to purify; to cleanse externally; to purify by expiation: free from the guilt of sin; to purify internally by renewing of the soul*. Strong's #37.
 - 4) The Greek noun/adjective is *hagios* (ἅγιος) [pronounced *HA-gee-oss*], which means *holy, set apart, dedicated to God, sacred; pure, perfect, worthy of God; consecrated*. Strong's #40.
 - 5) There are a number of other words related to these 4, but this should give you an idea.
3. Sanctification is a 3-step process:
 - 1) Salvation (phase I) sanctification; also called *positional sanctification*: we are set apart to God at salvation. We believe in Jesus Christ and God sanctifies us; we are made holy; we are set apart to God. This does not mean that there are any actual changes in our lives. A person can be saved, set apart to God, and exhibit nothing which suggests that they have changed in any way. However, such a person is set apart to God forever.
 - 2) Experiential (phase II) sanctification; also called *progressive sanctification*: this describes the believer in time. Ideally speaking, the believer is growing by means of Bible doctrine learned while filled with the Spirit (which means, confession of sin). When he exercises faith in Bible doctrine, his righteousness is advanced.
 - 3) Ultimate (phase III) sanctification: the believer is transferred from time to eternity and cleansed of his sin nature.
4. The Bible uses the vocabulary above to speak of all 3 stages of sanctification.
 - 1) Phase I sanctification: **By this will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all** (Heb. 10:10). **For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are sanctified** (Heb. 10:14). See also 1Cor. 1:2, 20 6:11.
 - 2) Phase II sanctification: **As obedient children, do not be conformed to the**

The Abbreviated Doctrine of Sanctification

passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it stands written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." (1Peter 1:14–16; Lev. 20:7). Jesus prayed to God the Father that we would be sanctified in Bible doctrine: Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent Me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth (John 17:17–19).

- 3) Phase III sanctification: ...so that He might present it to Himself, the glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and unblemished (Eph. 5:27). He [God the Father] has chosen us in Him [God the Son] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him (Eph. 1:4b). See also Col. 1:22 1Thess. 3:13 5:23 Jude 24–25.

More information on this topic may be found here:

http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=511

<http://www.swordofthespiritbibleministries.com/images/simplelists//NOTESSZ/Sanctification.pdf>

Rom. 4:23 Now it was not written for him alone that it [righteousness] was imputed to him,

The fact that Abraham's faith was counted to him for righteousness was not something written in Scripture for just Abraham. This is written for all generations after Abraham that faith in Jesus Christ is what is necessary for God to regenerate us, to bring life where there was death, to impute righteousness where there was once only sin. When God the Holy Spirit inspires this or that to be written, there is a purpose for what is written. As John wrote in John 20:31 These things are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Rom. 4:24 but for us also to whom it is to be imputed, to the ones believing on Him who has raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

Gen. 15:6 stands written for us as well, in Paul's time, for Abraham's descendants, and for us today, that we are clear on the fact that, Abraham was saved through faith in Jesus Christ (Y^ehowah to Abraham).

Rom. 4:25 Who was delivered because of our offenses and was raised for our justification.

Jesus Christ, Who was delivered over to the cross because of our offenses, and paid the penalty for our sins. However, we know that we have been saved by this, because God raised Him up again from the dead, for our justification.

Even though this is a review of Gen. 17, that does not mean that you have heard everything there is to hear about this chapter yet. In fact, there are things in this lesson that you have never heard before.

A Chiasmus (I learned this as a *chiasmus* from E.W. Bullinger²⁹) is a narrative set up in a parallel and inverted structure, such that, the first sentence, passage or paragraph is parallel to the final sentence, passage or paragraph; the second matches up with the second-to-the-last; the third matches up with the third-to-the-last, etc. Often, the central portion of the chiasmus is what is the most important, and is designed to stand out.

From Inthebeginning.org: *In a culture wherein words, sentences, paragraphs, episodes were not separated but ran together, there was a need for literary devices to signal the beginning and end of a thought unit. Whereas in a modern literary context, such boundaries are designated by punctuation, paragraphs, chapters, subheadings, or even enumeration, the ancient literary techniques relied upon repeated key words, phrases, and ideas at the start and finish of a thought unit. Thus the fundamental function of such a framing technique was to mark the boundaries of a thought unit.*

Such techniques also allowed a person to more easily recall a section of Scripture (or, whatever), because they would carry first the structure in their minds, and then fill in this structure with the text. Recall that God wanted His Word to be remembered (Deut. 6:9 11:20). Therefore, ancient students, when their kindle was on the fritz, were able to recall passages from the Word of God based upon recalling the structure of the passage.

When we represent a chiasmus, we set it up with indentations so that it appears to resemble an “X” (or a *chi* in the Greek — X).

There are keys which unlock many books and chapters and passages of the Bible. A chiasmus is one of those keys, and it organizes and often explains what a passage of Scripture is all about.

A chiasmus organizes a passage, so that there is a parallel with the beginning of the chiasmus with the end of it; the second portion of the passage finds its match in the second to the last portion of the passage; etc.

Chi [pronounced *khee*] is a letter of Greek alphabet from which this organization gets its name. The idea is, the passage can be lined up against the left side of this Greek letter: X. I realize that you think that is an “X”, but is it actually a chi.

Genesis 17 as a chiasmus:

A Abram's age (1a)

²⁹ *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*; E. W. Bullinger; ©originally 1898; reprinted 1968 Baker Books; p 374. *Chiasmus* is the Greek form; *chiasmus* is the Latin form; the Latin form is more commonly used.

- B The LORD appears to Abram—God’s covenant with Abraham (1b)
- C God's first speech (1b-2)
 - D Abram falls on his face (3)
 - E God's second speech; (Abram's name changed, kings; 4-8)
 - X God's Third Speech: the covenant of circumcision; (9-14)
 - E' God's fourth speech; (Sarai's name changed, kings; 15-16)
 - D' Abraham falls on his face (17-18)
- C' God's fifth speech—God’s covenant with Isaac (19-21)
- B' God "goes up" from Abraham (i.e., He no longer appeared to Abraham) (22)
- A' Abraham's age (24-27)

Chiasmus from <http://www.inthebeginning.org/chiasmus/introduction/chexamples.htm> accessed February 22, 2012 and slightly modified. They also go under the happy name, [The X-Files](#).

The key that you have come across a chiasmus is not that you see the words *chiasmus ahead* written anywhere, but you notice these parallel verses, parallel thoughts, or a set of 3 or more words which match exactly 3 or more words which have come before.

I have no clue that, when Scripture was read, whether such things were noted or not by the cadence, pauses or inflection of the speaker.

What follows is the structure along with the text of Gen. 17:

- A Abram's age (v. 1a): *When Abram was 99 years old*
- B The LORD appears to Abram (v. 1b): *the LORD appeared to Abram*
- C God's first speech—God’s covenant with Abraham (vv. 1b-2): *and He said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature, that I may make My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you greatly."*
- D Abram falls on his face (v. 3): *Then Abram fell on his face.*
 - E God's second speech; (Abram's name changed, kings; vv. 4-8): *And Elohim spoke with him, saying, "Behold Me! My covenant [is] with you and you have been the father of a multitude of nations. Your name will no longer be called Abram, but your name has been Abraham, for I have made you a father of nations. I have made you exceedingly fruitful, and I have made you into nations, and kings will come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants [lit., seed] after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants [lit., seed] after you. And I will give to you and to your descendants [lit., seed] after you the land of your wanderings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."*
 - X God's Third Speech: the covenant of circumcision; (vv. 9-14): *And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall*

keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you [all]. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from the peoples of the covenant; he has violated [or, *made ineffectual*] My covenant."

- E' God's fourth speech; (Sarai's name changed, kings; vv. 15-16): And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name." And I have blessed her; furthermore, I have given you a son from her. When I have blessed him, then he has become nations—kings of peoples will come [lit., *will be*] from him."
- D' Abraham falls on his face (vv. 17-18): Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before you!"
- C' God's fifth speech—God's covenant with Isaac (vv. 19-21): God said, "On the contrary, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you will call his name Isaac. I will establish My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and I will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation. But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year."
- B' God "goes up" from Abraham (i.e., He no longer appeared to Abraham) (v. 22): When He had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham. Then Abraham took Ishmael his son and all those born in his house or bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very day, as God had said to him.
- A' Abraham's age (vv. 24-27): Abraham was 99 years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. That very day Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised. And all the men of his house, those born in the house and those bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

What this chiasm does is, help to organize this chapter into a unified whole. If I want to learn this chapter—even to memorize it word-by-word, I first learn the structure of the chapter, and then I fit the text into this structure. The extensive use of chiasm and other memory aids suggests that much of the early portions of Genesis, very early on, was memorized. This does not take from their historicity; this simply means that a structure was given to various sections, to make this easier to memorize.

There is a second important aspect to a chiasm; the chiasm tells me what is most important in this chapter, and the central theme of this chapter is the very middle of the chiasm (marked with a chi, X): God's mandate to Abraham to be circumcised and for all the males associated with him to be circumcised. Since I have repeated this a few dozen times, when you hear the word *circumcision*, you immediately think of Abraham being *sexually reborn* and you think of *spiritual birth*. This is the key to this chapter.

Now let's move from the center of the chiasm (circumcision) to the E/E' tiers: what happens when you have been born? You are given a name; the person who has given you life gives you your name. Abram is reborn by God; he is spiritually born; and so, God gives him a name: *Abraham*. *Abram* was an exalted father; a *father of high and lofty things*; but now, he is *the father of a multitude*; he is the *father of many*. On the other side of this is Sarai, and for many years of their marriage, Abram called her, "My prince" and she often told him what to do. The end results were not very pretty. However, she is reborn; she is born again by God; therefore, God gives her a name: *Sarah*. She is now Abraham's *princess*.

Now, think in terms of principle, not in terms of chronology. The principle is first, there is the spiritual birth and then there is renaming of this person, which represents imputed righteousness. Because Abraham and Sarah are reborn, they become children of God with His imputed righteousness. The new names represent this new birth and the One giving them new life gave them their names.

God the Holy Spirit, inspiring the writer of these words, from the first book of the Bible, tells us all about being born again; being born from above, and that the One giving them new life—Y^ehowah Elohim—also gives them new names. Again, this is not a call for your pastor or spiritual leader to start giving everyone in his congregation a new name. Did he regenerate you? Of course not! God had regenerated you; and God regenerated Abram and Sarai; and therefore, God is able to name them.

Quite obviously, God did not do all of this when they first believed in Him. At that point in time, Sarai was still telling father of the high and lofty what to do. They had not grown spiritually. Therefore, they were not quite ready to obey God's commands, which commands were designed to have meaning for us down until today.

Let's move out into the D/D' blocks. Abraham falls on his face. It has been 13 years since God has come to him. God even went and spoke to his mistress Hagar, but God has not spoken to him for 13 years. So, when God comes to Abraham, he prostrates himself before Him.

In the second instance that Abraham falls on his face, God reveals to him exactly what is going to happen and how the covenant (promise, contract) is going to be fulfilled. This time, Abraham is laughing, and he hides his response from God. All of a sudden, those promises from God are not for some distant time off in the nebulous future, but God puts a date to it: next year. And God tells Abraham how it will all happen. So, Abraham is laying there, face down, smiling, laughing, and asking himself, "Will Sarah bear me a child? Hasn't that train left the station already?"

We know that Sarah is an extremely beautiful woman; and we may reasonably assume that she and Abraham had relations throughout their marriage, but, nothing came of that. There were no children to be had in all their years of marriage. However, now, even though they could not bear children when they were both healthy and young, God tells Abraham that she will bear him a son, even though they are clearly past the time of fertility.

This gives us (1) the spiritual birth (represented by circumcision); (2) the new names (representing being born into a new family); and (3) the promises of God given to those who are His.

Now let's look at the C/C' block: [and He said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be spiritually mature, that I may make My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you greatly."](#) God comes back to Abraham after 13 years and he tells Abraham to walk before God and to be spiritually mature. Part of that spiritual maturity is to listen to God and to obey Him. Now Abraham expresses some doubt about Sarah bearing him a child, and [God says, "On the contrary, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you will call his name Isaac. And I will establish My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and I will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation. But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year."](#) In both paragraphs, God speaks of His covenant, first with Abraham and then with a yet unborn and not-yet-conceived Isaac. God promises to multiply Abraham greatly and He promises for His covenant with Isaac to be eternal.

In other words, (4) Spiritual maturity means that God's promises are imminent. You will also notice that God has answered prayer, which becomes a greater factor in the life of someone who is spiritually mature.

The B/B' block: [...the LORD appeared to Abram...\[and\] When He had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham. Then Abraham took Ishmael his son and all those born in his house or bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very day, as God had said to him.](#)

God had to wait for awhile. Abraham had to find out that his own works of the flesh, his own human good, was not the way to go. Listening to his wife and obeying her; not the way to go. Having a child by a mistress; not the way to go. So, after 13 years, where there were no doubt some conflicts and difficulties that arose because of what Abraham chose to do, now Abraham is ready and willing to do things God's way, exactly God's way. So

Abraham, despite his falling down and laughing, that very day, circumcises all the males of his household.

And, finally, the A/A' block: When Abram was 99 years old...Abraham was 99 years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. That very day Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised. And all the men of his house, those born in the house and those bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

Abraham is 99 years old when God appears to him and he obeys God right there and then, when he is 99 years old. Abraham is now ready to move forward spiritually; he is ready to get a down payment toward God's promises to him. In one year, Abraham would be blessed with a son, his first and only son by Sarah, when he is 100 years old.

Or, more briefly (taking the A and B blocks together), (5) Occupation with the Person of Christ resulting in obedience to the mandates of God.

Now let's put all of these together: (1) the spiritual birth (represented by circumcision); (2) the new names (representing new life and entering into a new family); (3) the promises of God given to those who are His; (4) Spiritual maturity means that God's promises are imminent; and (5) Occupation with the Person of Christ resulting in obedience to the mandates of God, which will eventually result in fulfillment of God's promises. .

In case you did not get this, we began in the middle of the chiasm and worked our way to the outside, and this gives us the logical order of our spiritual lives.

One more thing about how amazing the Word of God is. This chapter has been around for about 4000 years. Millions upon millions of people have studied it. Yet, to the best of my knowledge, this is the first time that you have heard this chiasm taught in this particular order, going from the center to the outer blocks, resulting in an outline of the spiritual life. Nothing here was new about the spiritual life; but it was just hidden here within this chiasm waiting to be unearthed. The Bible is like that. God's wisdom is great and He wants His Word to be examined thoroughly.

To me, the chiasm is one of the fascinating things in the Word of God. I believe that these historical narratives were repeated for several generations, passed along to many people. Furthermore, we are going to find that the knowledge of God, at this time, was not confined merely to Abraham, but that it existed in many places in the Land of Promise. We have already seen Melchizedek, to whom Abraham paid tithes and to whom Abraham gave respect. But this truth of God's Word and Who and What God is could be found all over the world, sometimes simply remembered by means of a chiasm.

Bible translation used: The Scriptures 2009. Unless otherwise noted, all other quotations will be taken from this translation as well.

In the Scriptures 2009, instead of *God*, we have the word *Elohim*, which is a transliteration from the Hebrew. The other name for God, YHWH (or Jehovah, Yahweh, Adonai, Lord, JHWH, Y^ehowah) is represented with the actual Hebrew יהוה. The reason for there being so many different words used here is interesting. Originally, the Hebrew was written without vowels—not just YHWH, but every single Hebrew word. Because the Hebrew Scriptures (which we know as the Old Testament) were read aloud so often, the reader could look at the Hebrew consonants and know the word that was there. In fact, the Masoretes, who preserved the Bibles' pronunciation, introduced diacritical marks in the 7th century A.D. (these are vowel points, which was added above and below the original Hebrew text). Up to that time, every word in the Bible was read aloud except for one, and that was YHWH. When the Jews came to this proper name, they said, *Adonai* (= *Lord*). As a result, the Jews preserved the pronunciation of the Biblical text for all but one word. Of the nearly 100 translations of the Old Testament to which I refer, any one of those eight forms may be found—and one of them, the Message (I believe) uses *GOD*. Furthermore, Bible translations are not necessarily consistent at this point. One place we may read *Lord*, and elsewhere we may read *Jehovah* in the same translation.

Genesis 17 chapter Sections:

vv.	1–9	God expands on His covenant with Abram and changes his name to Abraham
vv.	10–14	Abram and all males in his troop must be circumcised
vv.	15–17	God gives Sarai a new name and promises the son of promise by Sarah
vv.	18–22	Abraham's prayer to God and God's answer
vv.	23–27	Abraham sees to it that all the males in his troop are circumcised

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines for Abbreviated Exegesis:

v.	22	Abraham's earnest prayer and God's response
v.	22	Prayer and God's Four Answers to Prayer

God expands on His covenant with Abram and changes his name to Abraham (vv. 1–9)

Genesis 17:1 And it came to be when Abram was ninety-nine years old, that יהוה [= YHWH, Y^ehowah] appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am Ēl Shaddai – walk before Me and be perfect.

God comes to speak with Abram when he is 99 years old. We do not know what form God took in speaking with Abram.

God's call for Abram to walk before Him and to be perfect, means, "Walk the spiritual walk and be spiritually mature." Abram was very nearly there.

Genesis 17:2 "And I give My covenant between Me and you, and shall greatly increase you."

God speaks of His covenant once again. In this chapter, God will append His covenant with Abram and put a requirement on Abram and his camp.

Genesis 17:3 And Abram fell on his face, and Elohim [= God] spoke with him, saying,...

Abram falls on his face out of respect for God. He is listening to God.

Abram will fall on his face a second time in this chapter. This will not be out of respect for God.

Genesis 17:4 ..."As for Me, look, My covenant is with you, and you shall become a father of many nations.

God repeats that Abram will become the father of many nations.

God has made a unique covenant with Abram, unlike anything God has promised before or since.

Genesis 17:5 "And no longer is your name called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, because I shall make you a father of many nations.

God changes Abram's name to Abraham.

'Ab^erâ^m (אֲבְרָם) [pronounced *ab^v-RAWM*] means, *father of elevation, exalted father*; and it is transliterated *Abram*. Strong's #87 BDB #4.

'Ab^erâ^hâ^m (אֲבְרָהָם) [pronounced *ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM*] means, *father of a multitude, chief of a multitude*; and it is transliterated *Abraham*. Strong's #85 BDB #4.

God calls for this change of name because He will make of Abraham *many nations*; furthermore, many rulers will come from Abraham.

Genesis 17:6 "And I shall make you exceedingly fruitful, and make nations of you, and sovereigns shall come from you.

God tells Abraham, a man with only one son by a slave girl, that he will be extremely fruitful and that many nations would come out from him.

In all, Abraham will sire seven sons. So far, he has one. And he is 99 years old.

Genesis 17:7 “And I shall establish My covenant between Me and you and your seed after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be Elohim to you and your seed after you.

God’s covenant that He establishes with Abraham would be with his descendants after him as well. God’s covenant will not be established with all of Abraham’s sons; it will only be continued through one particular son.

Genesis 17:8 “And I shall give to you and your seed after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Kena’an [= *Canaan*], as an everlasting possession. And I shall be their Elohim.”

Through Abraham, God will have a people; and God will give this people the land of Canaan. The land that Abraham is wandering through at this time is Canaan and that land will be given as an eternal possession to Abraham and his seed. This will only be his seed through Sarai, his wife. And, to put a further point on it—something not cited in this chapter—this will only be given to those who have believed in the Revealed God, in Abraham’s God.

Genesis 17:9 And Elohim said to Abraham, “As for you, guard My covenant, you and your seed after you throughout their generations.

God warns Abraham to guard His covenant. “You must know what your covenant says and all of your descendants must know it as well.”

Because Abraham and his descendants so carefully guarded and preserved the terms of God’s covenant to Abraham, we are able to study it today.

Abram and all males in his troop must be circumcised

Genesis 17:10 “This is My covenant which you guard between Me and you, and your seed after you: Every male child among you is to be circumcised.

A part of this covenant includes circumcision. This was apparently a known practice and God would require that of Abraham and of all his descendants follow it. This requirement included those who were not a part of the set-apart descendants of Abraham.

The concept here is, circumcision represents regeneration; and all of those under the covenant must be regenerated (and this is done by faith in the Revealed God in the Old Testament; and faith in Jesus Christ in the New).

Genesis 17:11 “And you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall become a sign of the covenant between Me and you.

Abraham must be circumcised.

Genesis 17:12 “And a son of eight days is circumcised by you, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with silver from any foreigner who is not of your seed.

Every male associated with Abraham must be circumcised. If Abraham has a child—and he will have six more sons—they must all be circumcised on their eighth day from birth.

Genesis 17:13 “He who is born in your house, and he who is bought with your silver, has to be circumcised. So shall My covenant be in your flesh, for an everlasting covenant.

Anyone born in Abraham’s house must be circumcised. Even slaves.

What God is saying here is, “Those who ally themselves with you, Abraham, will also be allowed to join you in the regeneration.” In Genesis 15:6, Abraham is said to have believed God, and this was counted to him as righteousness. Every person associated with Abraham will be allowed to follow him in this pattern.

Genesis 17:14 “And an uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, his life shall be cut off from his people – he has broken My covenant.”

Any child who is not circumcised will be cut off from God and his own people for breaking this covenant of circumcision.

God gives Sarai a new name and promises the son of promise by Sarah

Genesis 17:15 And Elohim said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, do not call her name Sarai, for Sarah is her name.

Sarai’s name is changed to Sarah.

Sarai is actually Sârây (שָׂרַי) [pronounced *saw-RAY* or *saw-RAH-ee*], and it means, *my princess, nobility*; it is transliterated *Sarai*. Strong’s #8297 BDB #979.

Her new name would be *Sarah*. *Sarah* is Sârâh (שָׂרָה) [pronounced *saw-RAW*], which means, *princess, noble woman*; it is transliterated *Sarah*. Strong’s #8283 BDB #979.

Genesis 17:16 “And I shall bless her and also give you a son by her. And I shall bless her, and she shall become nations – sovereigns of peoples are to be from her.”

God will bless Sarah in this arrangement. She will bear a son and she will become many nations as well. Now, how that will work is, she and Abram will have one son, Isaac. However, he will have two sons, one of them Jewish and the other one an Edomite. Through Jacob, several different client nations to God are established. There is the united nation Israel; there are two nations formed after Solomon, Judah and (northern) Israel. After a time, Judah will become Judæa.

Genesis 17:17 **And Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, “Is a child born to a man who is a hundred years old? Or is Sarah, who is ninety years old, to bear a child?”**

This strikes Abraham as being very funny and he falls down and laughs. Much different from before, when he fell on his face in reverence to God.

The Hebrew people tend to be very demonstrative in their actions.

Abraham’s prayer to God and God’s answer

Genesis 17:18 **And Abraham said to Elohim, “Oh, let Yishma’ël [= Ishmael] live before You!”**

Abraham says to God, “Let Ishmael live before You!”

When God looks at Ishmael, He does not simply see the man Ishmael. He sees his entire line, and his line does not lead to the Savior. However, Isaac’s line will lead to the Savior. There are millions of free will choices taking place with Abraham down through Isaac and Jacob and on and on; but those millions of free will choices are all about moving through the descendants of Abraham until we come down to our Lord.

Ishmael will also make millions of free will decisions, as will his twelve sons and their descendants. None of these decisions will lead us to Jesus, our Savior.

God cannot make Ishmael the recipient of His promises to Abraham, simply because Ishmael and his descendants will not make the correct decisions down through the ages. Some of them will believe in the Revealed God and some of them might even become mature believers. However, following a few generations of believers, there will be many unbelievers descended from Ishmael.

Genesis 17:19 **And Elohim said, “No, Sarah your wife is truly bearing a son to you, and you shall call his name Yitshaq [= Isaac]. And I shall establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.**

God tells Abraham, “No, what you are asking for is not going to happen. Sarah will bear a son to you. You will call him Isaac and My covenant will be with him and with his seed.” In other words, it will not be with Ishmael and his seed.

Genesis 17:20 **“And as for Yishma’ël, I have heard you. See, I shall bless him, and shall make him fruitful, and greatly increase him. He is to bring forth twelve princes, and I shall make him a great nation.**

“On the other hand,” God says, responding to Abraham’s prayer request, “Ishmael is not simply being kicked to the curb. There will be twelve princes come from Ishmael and I will make him a great nation.”

Genesis 17:21 “But My covenant I establish with Yitshaq, whom Sarah is to bear to you at this appointed time next year.”

God has spoken to Abraham many times about His covenant with him and that covenant will be extended to Isaac, not to Ishmael.

Genesis 17:22 And when He had ended speaking with him, Elohim went up from Abraham.

God made things crystal clear, so He left Abraham with those things to think about. God has now set the pertinent events in history to begin. Abraham is not yet potent, but he will be. Sarah is not yet able to bear a child; but she will be changed.

Abraham’s earnest prayer and God’s response:

Genesis 17:18 Then Abraham said to God, "Oh that my son Ishmael might live before You." (Kukis paraphrase)

Abraham loves his son Ishmael. Ishmael has given him great pleasure and enjoyment over the past thirteen years. God is talking about another son through Sarah, and Abraham does not get it. “I am 99 years old, she is 89 years old; and I already have a son whom I love. Why not allow Ishmael to live before You?”

Genesis 17:19–22 But Elohim said, "On the contrary—your wife Sarah will bear you a son and you will name him Isaac. Furthermore, I have established My covenant as an everlasting covenant, both with him and his descendants after him. Concerning Ishmael, I have heard your request. Listen carefully: I have already blessed Ishmael and I have made him vigorous and I will greatly multiply his descendants. He himself will sire 12 princes alone and I will make him into a great people. However, I will establish My covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will give birth to for you at this time next year." Because He had finished speaking with him, God went up from Abraham. (Kukis paraphrase)

God tells Abraham, “Listen, I have not thrown Ishmael aside. I have not rejected him. He is going to be a great man. He will have twelve princes come from him. He is going to be a great people. But, My covenant is not with Ishmael, it will be with Isaac; and he will be your son next year.”

I learned this from my pastor-teacher R. B. Thieme, Jr..

Prayer and God’s Four Answers to Prayer

1. Every prayer carries with it a specific request and a desire which lies behind that request.
2. Abraham’s prayer is for Ishmael to live before God, meaning, (Abraham is speaking to God) “I want my son Ishmael to be the recipient of Your promises to

Prayer and God's Four Answers to Prayer

me.” What Abraham really wants is for God not to treat Ishmael as trash to be thrown away. The first thing is what Abraham prays for; but the desire behind the prayer is the second thing.

3. God could answer this prayer, *yes, yes*; meaning that Ishmael will take up the promises which God made to his father Abraham. In this way, God would not leave Ishmael behind. The problem with answering Abraham's prayer in this way is, Ishmael would not make the correct decisions in his life to allow God's promises to be fulfilled to him.
4. God could answer this prayer, *yes, no*; meaning that Ishmael will be the recipient of God's promises, but, in his life, he will become such a spiritual failure that God will remove him from this life under the concept of the sin unto death. God does not do that. Ishmael will not be a total failure in life. He will believe in the Revealed God.
5. God will answer this prayer *no, yes*. God says, “Listen, Isaac, your son-to-be, will be the recipient of My promises to you, not Ishmael. However, I am not casting Ishmael aside as unimportant. He will become a great nation and twelve princes will come from him.” God says *no* to Abraham's specific request, but He says *yes* to Abraham's desire that Ishmael have a future.
6. Finally, God could have answered *no, no*. God could have said, “Your son-to-be, Isaac, will be the recipient of My promises to you, Abraham. Furthermore, your son Ishmael is going to wind up being a nobody and die in poverty and obscurity.” This was not God's answer to Abraham.

Bob taught these four responses to prayer on many occasions. I don't know if he ever applied these four responses to this particular example.

[Genesis 17 chapter Sections](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Abraham sees to it that all the males in his troop are circumcised

Genesis 17:23 [And Abraham took Yishma'ël his son, and all those born in his house and all those bought with his silver, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that same day, as Elohim told him.](#)

First thing on Abraham's list was to circumcise everyone. All of the males would be circumcised.

Genesis 17:24 [And Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.](#)

Abraham was 99 years old when he was circumcised.

Somehow, this may have affected Abraham's potency. He will become virile after this time.

Genesis 17:25 *And Yishma'el his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.*

Many pastors have suggest that Ishmael was and unbeliever and that Isaac was a believer, and that is how they are differentiated. That is not the key. The key is Isaac and his descendants; the key is Ishmael and his descendants. God sees Isaac *and* his descendants; and God knows where they lead to. God also can see Ishmael and all of his descendants. One line leads to the Savior and one line does not.

Genesis 17:26 *Abraham and his son Yishma'el were circumcised that same day.*

Abraham is circumcised because he is a believer; and Ishmael is circumcised as a believer.

Genesis 17:27 *And all the men of his house, born in the house or bought with silver from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.*

All of the men in the encampment of Abraham were also circumcised. They had all believed in the Revealed God.

Next week, Gen. 18.

Lesson 181: Genesis 18:1–2

God Again Appears to Abraham/Angelology

This ought to strike you as somewhat interesting: in the previous chapter, God made it clear that certain promises to Abraham were imminent—1 year in the future—and yet, there will be 3 chapters in between Gen. 17 and the fulfillment of Gen. 17. Two of those chapters will deal with great judgments upon the earth (particularly, upon Sodom and Gomorrah).

In Gen. 18, God will appear one more time to Abraham. It is now a month or so later, after God's most recent promises to Abraham, which promises we studied in both Gen. 17 and Rom. 4.

We know the time frame because God promised Abraham, in the previous chapter, that He would return to Abraham in a year's time, and Abraham would have a son by Sarah; and in this chapter, Sarah is not even pregnant yet. Therefore, this chapter takes place less than 3 months after Gen. 17. It is also clear that Abraham has not yet been sexually revived, as vv. 12–13 reveal.

God has just promised Abraham that he would have a son by Sarah in one year (Gen. 17:21), so we would expect that we would see this fulfilled soon. That is not the case. We will not see the birth of Isaac until Gen. 21 and we have only begun Gen. 18. We have a lot to cover before we come to Isaac.

Genesis 18 breaks down easily into two parts: in vv. 1–15, Sarah becomes aware of just how imminent the birth of Isaac is. In vv. 16–33, we will learn about intercessory prayer, blessing by association and the concept of the pivot (how believers in a particular country preserve that country).

There are going to be some remarkable differences in this chapter with regards to God appearing to Abraham. First of all, it is not clear at what point Abraham realizes that this is the Lord to Whom he is speaking. Secondly, God is there with two angels; which is a new thing. Thirdly, Sarah is involved in God's promises to Abraham and engaged in the conversation. Finally, God arrives to pronounce judgment and to carry out this judgment. Abraham, through his prayer to God (face to face) will potentially have an affect upon another part of the world.

Gen 18:1 And Y^ehowah appears to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day.

Abraham has lived near the Oaks of Mamre since Gen. 13:18, a period of roughly 25 years. Being a rancher with probably a great many sheep, Abraham likely has traveled quite a bit with his sheep, probably in a circuit. However, this seems to be his primary residence, or home base, if you will.

You may recall that one of Abraham's allies in the War of the Kings was Mamre, who was an Amorite, who was an okay guy (we know this, because he chose to ally himself with Abraham). It is reasonable to understand that Mamre has allowed Abraham to live on his land and that this association has brought great blessing to Mamre.

This first verse appears to be a title for this chapter or a summary of this chapter. At the same time, it is a transitional verse from chapter 17 to chapter 18. The Bible was not separated into chapters (or even verses). However, you will recall that, by chiasm, Gen. 17 was clearly a separate literary unit. Therefore, this verse deftly moves us from chapter 17 to 18, and announces the content of Gen. 18.

It is the warm part of the day, and Abraham would be sitting outside of his tent to pick up whatever breeze he might. He is probably in a state of being partially asleep.

This narrative is going to be fascinating. We begin with the 3rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect of *to appear* (it means *to see* in the Qal stem; *to appear, to be seen* in the Niphal). So, Y^ehowah, appears (masculine singular) to Abraham.

Let me remind you about God: God is One in essence, but three in Persons. Each member of the Godhead has a different function and a different relationship to us. The 2nd Member of the Trinity is Jesus Christ, known to Old Testament saints as Y^ehowah Elohim (although the name *Jesus* does appear in the Old Testament, hidden in one of the psalms). Y^ehowah Elohim is the Revealed Member of the Trinity, with Whom we directly interact. It is Jesus in Whom we must believe (John 14:1); and it was Y^ehowah in Whom Abraham believed in order to be seen as righteous (Gen. 15:6).

My assumption here is, Abraham is taking a little siesta at this time. He is nearly 100 years old and he is taking some time off. However, bear in mind that Abraham will live to be 175 years old (Gen. 25:7). So, he is in a half-conscious state, and suddenly, there is Jesus Christ in His preincarnate form, standing in front of him. We studied this concept back in Gen. 16, as the **Doctrine of the Angel of Jehovah** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)).

The following web pages seem like reasonable information on the Preincarnate Christ.

Links to Doctrines on the Preincarnate Christ

YCF Adult Bible Fellowship Christology – The Study of Christ (this will open up a pdf in a separate window)

www.ffbc.net/index.php/download_file/738/80/

Valley Bible Church Theology Studies on the Preincarnate Christ

<http://www.valleybible.net/Adults/ClassNotes/TheologySurvey/Christ/PreincarnateChrist.pdf>

The Preincarnate Christ by CAS Ministries:

<http://www.angelfire.com/tx5/jeansptx/preinc.htm>

Come Meet Jesus Christ as Pre-Incarnte God by Louis Rushmore

<http://www.gospelgazette.com/gazette/2006/jun/page2.htm>

I cannot vouch for the rest of the information on their web pages, but these pages appear to be reasonably accurate.

Gen 18:1 And Y^ehowah appears to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day.

However, when Abraham looks up to see Y^ehowah, he sees 3 men.

Gen 18:2 He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing over him. When he looked [again], he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth

The questions which occur to me immediately is, *who are these men* and *who does Abram think that they are?*

Their appearance here seems somewhat sudden—Abraham looks up, and right in front of him are 3 men. In fact, the Hebrew reads that these 3 men are *stationed [standing] over him*. However, that is probably not how your Bible reads. In this verse, we have the masculine plural, Niphal participle of nâtsab (נָצַב) [pronounced *naw-TSAH^BV*], which means, *those stationed, the ones left standing, stationing themselves, who are taking a stand; those standing [at the ready]*. Strong's #5324 BDB #662. This is followed by the preposition 'al (עַל) [pronounced *gahl*], which means, *upon, beyond, on, against, above, over; on the ground of,*

because of, according to, on account of. Strong's #5921 BDB #752. It is affixed to the 3rd person masculine singular suffix, which refers to Abraham.

In the previous verse, we are told that Y^ehowah appears to Abraham; yet, in this verse, he sees 3 men standing over him.

What is being illustrated for us here is the Trinity. These men are not the 3 members of the Trinity taking on physical form and coming to Abram; this could be Jesus Christ in His preincarnate form (He is the revealed member of the Trinity) with 2 angels (say, Michael and Gabriel). What we know for certain is, Jehovah Elohim is among them. That this is Jesus Christ in His preincarnate form traveling with two angels, which explanation will become clear as we continue in this narrative.

I have taken some liberties with this verse (not as much as most translators have), but very literally, this verse reads: **And so he lifts up his eyes and so he looks and, behold, three men are standing over him. And so he looks and so he runs to meet them from an opening of the tent. And so he bows down earthward,...** You will note that we have a repetition of the wâw consecutive and the verb *he looks*.

Let me explain something from the Hebrew, which is not fully understood or even correctly taught in many Hebrew classes: when you have a bunch of wâw consecutives followed by imperfect verbs, you are reading a chronological or logical progression of action, without reference to the duration or the completion of the action itself. Here are the two ways that translators have gotten this wrong: traditionally, it is incorrectly taught that a wâw would transform an imperfect verb (continuous or progressive action) into a perfect verb (completed action). It is called a wâw conversative. Teachers teach this because, much of this action which should be seen as continuous simply isn't. R. B. Thieme, Jr. made mention, from time to time, of the wâw conversative, but, most of the time, seemed to reject that notion (although I do not recall him actually saying that), and took every imperfect verb and made it into continuous action. So, traditional Hebrew scholars render this: **And he lifted up his eyes and he looked,...** R. B. Thieme, Jr. would render this: **And he keeps on lifting up his eyes and he keeps on looking,...** However, the key is not the English tense of the verb, but the chronological progression of these actions, which actions may occur in a moment or which actions may occur over a lengthier period of time. However, what should focus on is the progression: **And then he lifted up his eyes; and then he looked, and, behold, [there are] three men standing over him. And then he looked and then he ran to meet them [running] from the opening of the tent. And then he bowed down low [before them].** I know that this was quite technical, and you may not get it; but, because this is not understood by most translators, some have fudged the translation of this verse. The Hebrew clearly says that these men are standing over Abraham; and yet, he runs to meet them. That doesn't make any sense, so the words *standing over* are changed by some translators to make it sound like these 3 men are off in the distance. The NET Bible, for instance, renders this: **Abraham looked up and saw three men standing across from him.** It takes 4 footnotes for them to explain their translation of this one short phrase.

What pulls this all together is, Abraham looks twice. The first time he looks, they are standing over him; the second time he looks, they are, apparently, off a ways from him.

All three look just like men; there is nothing suggested in this context that they had wings or were translucent or anything else. All Abraham sees is just three men. We will find out that this is Jehovah Elohim and two angels (compare Gen. 18:1–2, 16, 22 and 19:1).

Now, it may strike you as odd for God and two angels to be walking, but the earth, created by God, is a marvelous place. The design of the earth, its plant life and animal life, and mankind, and the actual composition of the earth and its atmosphere is absolutely amazing. So, it should not seem odd that God would allow these angels with Him to enjoy walking upon the earth and taking in all of its great beauty, even in its fallen state (Gen. 3:17–18).

In fact, the earth is such an incredible place that man has worshiped the earth throughout much of human history. Looking back, it is called Gaia worship; today, it is known as *rabid environmentalism* (or, *environmentalism* for short). A distinction ought to be made. God has placed man on this earth to inhabit it and to make the environment what we want it to be. That is, we adapt the environment and use the earth for our own purposes and design. For many of us, that is a house surrounded by a slightly larger lawn, with roads that will take us to stores. It becomes environmentalism when (1) you are so offended by the aesthetics of your surroundings that you want to not just change the way you live, but the way others live as well; and/or (2) you believe that man is destructive to the earth, and that we ought to strive for the earth to be what it is, as if man never existed.

This does not mean that wanting clean air to breathe and clean water to drink are radical notions. That does not mean that, you prefer a wild landscape, and you want to live in a house surrounded by forest (or, whatever). It is even okay if you think your lawn ought to grow wild and never be mowed—just find a place where you can do that without having to spend the rest of your life in court. We are allowed to adapt the earth for our living desires.

Quite obviously, since we are not the only people on this earth, our designs and choices are limited by the respect for others. If you live in a neighborhood, like it or not, there are community standards. Or, if you live along a river, you cannot simply throw your garbage into the river to get rid of it, since, quite obviously, someone else lives down-river from you. Rom 12:18 (WEB) **If it is possible, as much as it is up to you, be at peace with all men.** Heb. 12:14a (BBE) **Let your desire be for peace with all men.**

Two of these *men* are angels; so let's talk about angels for a moment:

77% of adult Americans believe in angels, according to a [December 2011 Associated Press-GfK poll](#). I must admit this surprised me; but it is also good to know, in general, that 77% of adult Americans believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, according to a 2012 [Rasmussen poll](#).

The Abbreviated Doctrine of Angels (Angelology)

1. As previously discussed, these are 2 angels who have come with our Lord to Abraham. However, it is not clear at this point that Abraham knows that this is Jehovah Elohim or that these are angels. Their purpose seems to be tied more to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah than it is to meeting Abraham. Gen. 18:1–2, 16, 22 19:1, 12–13
2. Our word for *angel* is a transliteration from the Greek word *aggelos* (ἄγγελος) [pronounced *AHN-geh-loss*], which means *messenger, envoy, one who is sent, angel, a messenger from God*. Strong's #32. Although this word is often translated *angel* (Matt. 2:19 28:2, 5 Luke 1:13–19 2:9–10), it is not used exclusively for *angels* (Matt. 11:10).
3. The existence of angels is clearly taught in the Bible, as they are found over 100 times in the Old Testament alone. However, this did not mean that people encountered angels all of the time. In Gen. 6, apparently every person had some kind of contact with fallen angels; but after that point, their appearance to man was rare; and since the completion of the canon of Scripture, it is not clear that any contact is allowed between man and angels.
4. Angels were created before man; and man is clearly inferior to angels (although this, apparently, will change). Psalm 148:2–5 Heb. 2:6–9 2Peter 2:11
5. There are both fallen and elect angels. Elect angels have never sinned; fallen angels have followed Satan (which is about a third of the angels—Rev. 12:4). Fallen angels are also called demons in Scripture. Psalm 103:20 Matt. 24:41 Mark 8:38 2Cor. 12:7 Jude 6 Rev. 12:7–12
6. Although I have heard discussion by many theologians about the redemption of angels, I have not come across any evidence that an angel can sin against God and then later be redeemed.
7. Angels apparently have an ability to adopt a physical, human form which functions just as our bodies function. They are able to eat, they are able to grab, and, in the case of Gen. 6, able to copulate with and impregnate human women. Gen. 6 18:8 19:16 Heb. 13:2
8. However, angels appear to have bodies of light which are not governed by the same laws of physics that we are. Daniel 9:21 10:5–6 Matt. 28:2–4 Col. 1:16 Heb. 1:7, 14
9. Although angels are powerful beings, they cannot stand between you and God; they cannot take your salvation from you. Rom. 8:38
10. We appear to be an object lesson for angels, who spend much of their time observing mankind. Eccl 5:6 Daniel 4:13, 17, 23 1Cor 4:9 Eph 3:10 1Tim. 5:21 Heb. 12:1. This is not too different from our obsession with watching movies.

Some of this material came from:

Lewis Sperry Chafer, D.D., Litt. D., The. D.; *Systematic Theology*; Kregel Publications; ©1976 Dallas Theological Seminary; Vol. 7, pp. 13–15.

Robert Dean's Notes, [Genesis Lesson #98](#), 7/19/2005; accessed April 17, 2012.

<http://christiananswers.net/q-acb/acb-t005.html> accessed April 17, 2012.

For additional study, try:

<http://ichthys.com/2A-Angelo.htm>

<http://biblestudyplanet.com/angels-and-demons/>

<http://bible.org/article/angelology-doctrine-angels>

<http://www.versebyverse.org/doctrine/angels.html>

As an aside, I mention the poll about believing that Christ rose from the dead, because this is directly related to our preservation as a nation; one of the lessons that we will learn in Gen. 18.

Lesson 182: Genesis 18:1–8

Abraham Has Fellowship with God

So far, we have studied angelology and the first two verses of Gen. 18

Gen 18:1–2 And Y^ehowah appears to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing over him. When he looked [again], he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth

Let me suggest this explanation. Abraham looks up, out from a half-conscious sleep, and he sees 3 men standing over him or standing by him. He dozes off for a few instances, his mind snaps to what he saw, and he looks again. This time, the men are no longer standing over him, but they are a distance off.

Abraham runs to meet them and he bows himself before them.

Gen 18:3 and said, "O Lord, if I have found grace in your sight, do not pass by your servant.

The word *Lord* here can refer to God and can be a term of simple respect for a man in authority. The form that this word is in is, 'ădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*]. Grammatically speaking, this is the plural form of 'ădôwn (אֲדֹוּן) [pronounced *aw-DOHN*] with the 1st person singular suffix affixed to it. Most English Bibles translate this *my Lord* here and *my lords* in Gen. 19:2, even though this is the exact same form of the word and Abram is addressing 3 men and Lot will address 2 messengers when they come to him (God will not be with them). It is not unusual for this to be simply translated *Lord*. To add to this confusion, Strong gives 2 numbers to this word (Strong's #113 & 136), which merely represent these 2 forms of the same word. And, as if that were not confusing enough, my e-sword identifies the word here as Strong's #136 and as Strong's #113 in Gen. 19:2, even though they are the exact same form of the exact same word. I am not opposed in any way to the different Strong numbers, which is often the case when, say, the present active participle of a verb is separately named as an adjective; however, it strikes me as being rather inconsistent to take these 2 instances of having the exact same word in all respects given 2 different Strong's numbers.

I mention this bit of confusion, because it would be easy to use your [e-sword](#) (or a similar type tool) and to think that the Hebrew word here is ʾădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*] but in Gen. 19:2, the Hebrew word is ʾădôwn (אֲדֹוּן) [pronounced *aw-DOHN*]. Both BDB and Gesenius combine these “two” Strong’s numbers under one grouping. Strong differentiates between them. But, we have exactly the same form and spelling of the same word in Gen. 18:3 and 19:2, even though Strong treats them as different words.

So, Abraham literally says, “*My lords;*” although it is not out of the question to render this *O Lord* or *my Lord*, despite the plural and the suffix. This sort of vocative simply connotes respect and does not necessarily mean that it is a reference to deity every time it is used (see 1Sam. 25:31, for instance). However, for the Pentateuch, Joshua and Judges, this word is used exclusively for Deity (this being the lone questionable example).

The narrative here tells us that YHWH is appearing to Abram. However, in vv. 2–3, it is not clear that Abraham knows who these men are. This could simply be ancient world hospitality that Abraham is practicing here. He sees these men off in the distance, and he gets up and runs to them, and then bows before them, asking if he can refresh them.

[Gen 18:3](#) and said, "O Lord, if I have found grace in your sight, do not pass by your servant.

There are definitely some difficult things to explain from the Hebrew. Most of the time, when we find this word, we translate it *Lord* or *my Lord*; however, it is in the plural and Abraham is speaking to three people (actually, three beings). What follows is, Abraham will twice use the 2nd person masculine singular suffix, rather than the plural. So, is he speaking to three persons or is he speaking to one of them in particular?

Please note what we have so far, when it comes to the number of people that Abraham is speaking to.

Is Abraham Speaking to One Lord or to Three?

First, I will **bold** all of the references to Abraham’s visitor in the singular (verbs in the singular are also marked).

Then **Y^ehowah appears** unto him by the Oaks of Mamre while he is sitting [at] the opening of [his] tent at the time of the heat of the day. Abraham lifts up his eyes and looks up [lit., and so he lifts up his eyes and so he looks] and, behold, [there are] three men standing beyond [over?] him. So he looks and then he runs to meet them from the opening of the tent. Then he bowed down toward the earth, and said, “My Lords, if indeed I have found grace in **Your** eyes, please do not **pass** away from **Your** servant.

Now, let’s go back and see where Abraham is speaking to three beings:

Is Abraham Speaking to One Lord or to Three?

Then Y^ehowah appears unto him by the Oaks of Mamre while he is sitting [at] the opening of [his] tent at the time of the heat of the day. Abraham lifts up his eyes and looks up [lit., *and so he lifts up his eyes and so he looks*] and, behold, [there are] **three men standing** over him. So he looks and then he runs to meet **them** from the opening of the tent. Then he bowed down toward the earth, and said, "My **Lords**, if indeed I have found grace in Your eyes, please do not pass away from Your servant.

Bear in mind, the very words *my Lords* is in question when it comes to how it ought to be translated.

What appears to be the case is, there is the Lord, in His preincarnate form; and He is with two angels (that these are angels, will become clear later in this and the next chapter). Abraham speaks specifically to the 2nd Person of the Trinity.

However, what seems to be implied here—and this has occurred already—is the question, is God One or is God Three? God is One in essence and in purpose; God is Three in Person. You will note that even the verbs are alternately singular and plural.

My point here is, this is consistent with speaking of God as a Trinity, a Unified Whole, yet in three Persons. However, this is not the Trinity appearing to Abraham; this is simply illustrative of the Trinity.

Gen 18:4 Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree,

In the dusty ancient world, men apparently walked everywhere in sandals—Reebok and Saucony having not yet having established outlets in Canaan—and their feet became dry and dirty. It became a common custom in the ancient world for a person returning home or being taken in temporarily as a guest, to wash his feet (or to have his feet washed) and, on some occasions, for oil to be applied to moisten the feet.

Abraham makes a request, using the imperative mood, that they all take a rest under the tree. This further suggests one prominent shade tree in this area or that Abraham is indicating a particular tree near his tent.

The first words which Abraham spoke appear to be directed toward Jehovah Elohim, and they are in the singular. This second set of phrases that Abraham spoke is to all three, as all of the words and suffixes are in the plural in v. 4 (and the same will be true of v. 5).

Gen 18:5 while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on--since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said."

Preparing a meal in the ancient world was quite time consuming. My guess is, a typical meal would take maybe 2 or 3 hours to prepare (unless the food was leftover or being

eaten fresh); depending upon what was being made. Meat would have to be killed, bread would require somewhat of a process, and the oven would have to be heated. This was all quite time consuming, so that, even though a great deal of time was spent on acquiring the food, there was a lot of time spent on preparing the food as well.

Meeting with travelers meant that Abraham would find out the news and the goings-on from wherever these men came—they are sort of a walking newspaper, if you will. Being an older man, Abraham had become much more interested in the news, and right before him are three potential FoxNews reporters with news of the world.

As an aside, even though we know who these men are, it is not clear that Abraham knows who they are. It is not clear that Abraham has even an inkling of who they are. The principle here is **Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for in doing so, some have entertained angels without realizing it** (Heb. 13:2).

The phrase *refresh yourselves* is actually *refresh [plural] your [plural] heart [singular]*. Again, even if this is not the Trinity, the doctrine of the Trinity is embedded in these words—one in heart (essence) and 3 in person.

The third portion of this verse reads: **Afterwards, you will pass on, since you have passed by your servant.** This portion of v. 5 may seem to be a bit wordy and confusing, and we wonder exactly what Abraham is saying. I think that the New Berkeley Version (The Modern Language Bible) captures what is occurring here: **...for this you surely came by your servant.** *An American Translation* by William F. Beck has the same sense: **It was for this you were passing by your servant.** In other words, Abraham is saying, “It is for this reason—that you refresh yourselves and have a bite to eat—that you passed by this way.” You may find this a bit of a stretch, but Abraham strings together 3 particles, which is quite rare: *kîy ‘al kên* (יכ לַעַל כֵּן) [pronounced *kee ahl KANE*], which mean, when taken together, *inasmuch (as), forasmuch as, since, because*.

Abraham does not appear to know that this is the LORD and two angels. He is being extremely gracious to these strangers, inferring that, “This is why God brought you along this way, so that you can stop off here, rest yourselves, wash your feet, and have a meal with me.” He does not realize that they have come his way for two purposes; one to speak of life and the other to speak of death.

Now, let’s look at all of these verses together; when Abraham’s guest is spoken of or to in the **singular**, it will be **bolded**; and underlined when in the **plural**: **Gen 18:1–5** **Then Y^ehowah appears** unto him by the Oaks of Mamre while he is sitting [at] the opening of [his] tent at the time of the heat of the day. Abraham lifts up his eyes and looks up [lit., and so he lifts up his eyes and so he looks] and, behold, [there are] three men standing beyond [over?] him. So he looks and then he runs to meet them from the opening of the tent. Then he bowed down toward the earth, and said, “My Lords, if indeed I have found grace in **Your** eyes, please do not **pass** away from **Your** servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on--since you have come to your

servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." Again, *Lords* is plural, but is used when addressing one person as well. So, there is nothing amiss with the way the Abraham is speaking to these three, but it is still an odd jumbling together of singulars and plurals which cannot really be appreciated in the English, as our 2nd person singular pronoun is identical to our 3rd person singular pronoun.

Gen 18:6 And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, "Prepare quickly three seahs of fine flour! Knead it, and make cakes."

Sarah is in the tent, and Abraham runs in, and tells her what needs to be prepared for their guests. We do not really know how large a *seah* is; and there are some fairly large estimates (15 quarts, according to the NLT; 36 lbs, according to Today's NIV; 20 quarts, according to the NET Bible). If this is strictly being made for these 3 men or for these 3 men and Sarah, then these estimates seem rather large to me. Having made bread before, 1–2 cups of flour is usually needed for a loaf of bread. So, if we are strictly look at a meal for 3–5 people, I would guess that we are dealing with a much smaller amount.

The reason that this is presented as a large amount is in order to keep this in line with 1Sam. 25:18 and 1Kings 18:32, where a seah seems to be a much larger amount. This gives us several options: (1) Abraham is telling Sarah to make an awful lot of bread, most of which would be eaten later (to be eaten by their employees and slaves). (2) a seah is not a particular measure that does not vary, but its size depends upon the thing being measured. So a seah of flour might be used for one loaf of bread; a seah of seed might be used to seed a quarter acre of ground (or, whatever). (3) Or this word was carried over, throughout the years, but it came to denote a different amount in different centuries. Any one of these explanations would allow for these passages to be reconciled.

It appears that Sarah herself will make the bread

Gen 18:7 And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, who prepared it quickly.

In a tradition which has seemed to come down to us, even to today, 4 millennia later, the barbeque is done by the man and the wife is preparing the inside food. Abraham chooses the calf which will be eaten, but has another young man prepare it. This is veal, not beef, that Abraham is serving. Abraham needs to return to speak to his guests.

Gen 18:8 Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

What seems to be the meal is something akin to cottage cheese, warm goat's milk and veal. Whether the bread was eaten first as an appetizer, or with the meal, we do not know. My guess is, start to finish, such a meal would take 2–3 hours to prepare. So, while Abraham is supervising the preparation, these men are resting under the tree, drinking water, and washing their feet.

What seems to be true in Scripture is, the Preincarnate Christ and angels are all capable of eating, although this appears to be for enjoyment and fellowship as opposed to sustenance.

Interestingly enough, it appears to be the tradition for guests to eat first, as Abraham is simply standing by the tree while they eat.

Although this all happened, exactly as spoken of; there is some symbolism here. Abraham does not enjoy complete the fellowship with the Lord because Jesus had not yet died for our sins. So having fellowship with our Lord through the Holy Spirit was not available to believers during the time of Abraham.

Lesson 183: Genesis 18:1–11

God Promises Abraham a Son

So far, Jesus, in His Preincarnate Form, and two angels, walked by Abraham's compound, and Abraham called them over to rest and to be fed.

This is what we have studied so far.

Gen 18:1–8 (MKJV) And Jehovah appeared to him in the plains of Mamre, and he sat at the tent door in the heat of the day. And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him. And when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed toward the ground. And he said, My Lord, if now I have found favor in Your sight, do not pass away, I pray, from Your servant. Let a little water, I pray, be brought, and wash Your feet, and rest under the tree. And I will bring a bite of bread, and will comfort your hearts. After that You shall pass on. For this is why You have come to Your servant. And they said, Do so, as you have said. And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal; knead it, and make cakes. And Abraham ran out to the herd and brought a calf, tender and good. And he gave it to a young man. And he hurried to dress it. And he took butter and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree, and they ate.

Gen 18:9 They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "Behold, she is in the tent."

This is interesting. We have a plural verb of *to say* here. These three men may represent the Trinity (again, this is Jesus Christ in His preincarnate form along with two angels). Perhaps they speak in unison, or perhaps God asks Abraham this, and the other angels chime in.

There is an unseen conflict which we have studied in the past called the [angelic conflict](#). The angels would know all about Sarah and all about God's promises to Abraham. However, these things come to pass in real time for angels, who appear to be confined to time, just as we are. Angels who are allowed to walk upon this earth as men seem to generally have the similar limitations as do men.

Y^ehowah Elohim, being omniscient, certainly knows where Sarah is. However, these angels, knowing that Sarah is a key to the future of human history, do not share this same omniscience.

This verse does not mean that these men had not seen Sarah yet. Likely, in the preparation of these meal, she came in and out of the tent several times. Abraham may or may not have introduced her to them, depending upon the customs of that day. In any case, at this point in time, Y^ehowah God will speak about Sarah specifically. What is occurring is, she is near the tent door listening to what is being said.

The NET Bible points out something which makes a great deal of sense: The particle hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced *hin-NAY*], which means *behold, listen, attention*; often accompanies a gesture of pointing or a focused gaze.³⁰ So Abraham answers by pointing or shifting his eyes in the direction of the tent and says, "In the tent."

Unlike some cultures, the woman is quite prominent in the line of Christ. Not only do we know the entire line of our Lord, but, in many cases, we know a great deal about some of the wives along the way. This is a key theological point and seems to go against ancient traditions of family lines.

Gen 18:9 They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "Behold, she is in the tent."

The reason that God says this is, He wants Sarah's attention for what He is about to promise. What better way to get Sarah's attention than to ask, "Where is your wife, Sarah?" Whatever she was doing at that moment, her ears perked up at hearing her name, and she began to listen in from the tent door flap.

For whatever reason, the culture of that day or personal shyness, Sarah was not out with Abraham and the three. However, Sarah is suddenly the focus of the conversation.

Gen 18:10 Then He said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and, behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him.

Many Bibles have *the Lord said*; but there is no word for *Lord* in this verse. However, we know this is Jesus Christ, in His preincarnate form, speaking to Abraham, which will become clear in Gen. 18:13.

Again, we go from the plural to the singular; in v. 9, *they said*; and in v. 10, *He said*. Again, this is not the Trinity, but it is illustrative of the Trinity.

That God would return to Abraham and Sarah is emphatic in this verse. Interestingly enough, God does not return to Abraham and Sarah, as He does here, in a physical manifestation; but the idea is, God will make certain that she gives birth to the child He has

³⁰ From <http://bible.org/netbible/index.htm> accessed January 22, 2012.

promised them. This will be something which God oversees from conception to birth. Gen. 21:1–2 read: **And Jehovah visited Sarah as He had said. And Jehovah did to Sarah as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.** There is no conversation and no particular action ascribed to God when Sarah gives birth to their son. Now, when their son is somewhere between 3–5 years old, God will speak to Abraham; but prior to that, there is no record of God coming in human form to Abraham at the birth of his son.

There is the option that, God did return to Abraham in physical form, but Abraham did not write about that; however, most of the history of Abraham centers around two things: his meetings with God and where he lives. Therefore, it would seem strange to leave this most important meeting out. After all, this kicks off many of the promises that God has been making to Abraham, which promises Abraham has believed, and which promises God will bring to pass.

Therefore, because of the significance of this birth, God will be there (but not in human form); God will breathe life into Isaac; and there will be a very large number of angels observing this birth and observing Isaac's life (compare Heb. 12:1, where we are said to be **surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses**).

While Jehovah is speaking, Sarah is inside of the tent, as Abraham said, but she is right at the tent door, listening to all that was said. God tells Abram, **"Behold, Sarah, your wife, will have a son."** There is no question as to whom God is speaking about—it is not just going to be some woman named Sarah, but this will be Abraham's wife, Sarah. There is now a specific time frame put on this birth, which had not been done before.

What God says here is a play on the words which Abraham used; and this simply suggests that God is listening to Abraham and God hears Abraham. Abraham says, **"Behold, she's in the tent"** and God says, **"Behold, she will have a son."** I would not be shocked if Abraham's gesture was copied. If Abraham motioned where she was with his eyes, then God very possibly did the exact same thing with His eyes.

Gen 18:11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah.

In case you wonder, at what point do people become old, the Bible answers that here: Abraham is 99 and Sarah is 90—both are past the age of having children, and the Bible calls them *old* at this point. In fact, this is the first time in the Bible that anyone is referred to as being old. And, even though, in your English Bible, you have read passages like, **And Noah was 600 years old**; this is the first time that this word actually occurs in the Hebrew. The word is *zâqên* (זָקֵן) [pronounced *zaw-KANE*], which means, *old, elderly, aged*. Strong's #2205 BDB #278. This word will occur several times in Genesis to designate becoming old and living a full life: Gen. 19:4 25:8 35:29 43:27 44:20. In the plural, this is rendered *elders*.

The second half of this verse is fairly difficult to translate. Very literally, this reads: **Had ceased to be to Sarah a road like the women.** The word *road* is the subject of the verse, because it is a masculine singular noun and the verb requires a masculine singular noun. This gives us **A road like [or, as] the women had ceased to be to [or, for] Sarah.** The word *road* is *ʾōrach* (אֲרָח) [pronounced *OH-rahkh*], which means, *a [well-trodden] road; way, path; metonyms: traveler; traveling company, caravan; and it is used metaphorically to mean: a course [way] of living [or action]; mode, manner, way; a path of life.* Strong's #734 BDB #73. This gives us, **The path of life according to women had ceased to be for Sarah.** Based upon Sarah's age, this has been extrapolated to mean, that Sarah was in menopause, beyond the age of child bearing, and had ceased to menstruate. So, very literal translations, such as Webster's Bible Translation, read: **Now Abraham and Sarah [were] old [and] far advanced in age; [and] it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.** The World English Bible, the Modern KJV, the Literal Translation of the Holy Bible, Young's Literal Translation, the Concordant Literal Version and the Heritage Bible all have very similar and confusing translations. The New King James Version gives a less than literal translation, but footnotes the literal meaning: **Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; and Sarah had passed the age of childbearing** [Literally the manner of women had ceased to be with Sarah]. Therefore, you may like a literal translation, if you are concerned with having an accurate translation; but it is always helpful to have access to a translation that is not quite so literal. If having two Bibles is difficult, then let me recommend either the [NET Bible®](#) for your computer (with footnotes to get the accurate translation) or the New King James Version if you want a Bible you can carry around with you. Or, if you like having access to a number of translations, [e-sword](#) is the best computer program that I have found for this, and e-sword and dozens of translations are free.

In the previous chapter, Abraham was 99 years old and had just been circumcised. In Gen. 21, he will be 100 years old, and with a child. Therefore, this is just a couple months after the circumcision of all of the males in Abraham's group. As was covered in an earlier lesson, circumcision represents the regeneration of Abram's sexual organs, which represents spiritual regeneration (being born again). Abraham will heal from the circumcision, and he will have new life in his phallus. From him will be born the Jewish race. There will be new life in the human race; as the Jewish race begins with Abraham and will be perpetuated by a miraculous birth.

At hearing that they would have a child a year later, both Abraham and Sarah thought about it, and knew that they were old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased with Sarah, which simply means, her periods and her ability to give birth were over a long time ago. At this point, humanly speaking, she was not going to bear a child—Sarah was quite certain of this.

This is a theme found several times in the Bible. A couple gets beyond a point in time where childbirth is possible, and then they have a child. What does this mean? Why did God do it this way? The birth of their son, Isaac, will look forward to the birth of Jesus Christ. His birth will also be improbable (actually, impossible). Both of these births will be miraculous.

Every recorded incident in the Bible is significant. When God is involved in something taking place, it becomes even more significant.

How Isaac's Unusual Birth Foreshadowed Our Lord's	
The Birth of Isaac	The Birth of Jesus
<p>This birth involved life coming from death. Abraham was sexually dead and his wife was unable to bear children; yet Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son, Isaac. Gen. 18:12</p>	<p>Jesus Christ was born spiritually alive although His mother had a sin nature. So, from death, came life. Mary was dead spiritually and yet she bore the Lord. Rom. 5:12, 14, 17</p>
<p>This birth, coming from death, was based upon regeneration (circumcision). Gen. 17:10–17</p>	<p>The purpose of our Lord's birth was so that He would die for our sins, and, because of that, we could be regenerated (born again) at salvation. Rom. 5:10, 17 6:10 2Cor. 4:12</p>
<p>The association of Jesus with death is emphasized because the baby Jesus was wrapped in swaddling clothes (long strips of cloth used to wrap dead bodies). Luke 2:7</p>	
<p>The conception and birth are both miraculous. Abraham was sexually dead. Gen. 18:11–14 Rom. 4:17–19</p>	<p>His birth was miraculous. Joseph, Jesus' legal father, was not a party to the conception of Jesus Christ. He was spiritually dead and would have passed along his sin nature to Jesus. Therefore, Joseph could not participate in the conception of Jesus Christ. Isa. 7:14 Matt. 1:18–19 Luke 1:34, 37</p>
<p>The birth was unexpected. Even when told she would give birth to a son, Sarah laughed. Gen. 18:12</p>	<p>Being born to a virgin was unexpected. This caught Joseph off-guard and he was prepared to put Mary away privately Matt. 1:19</p>
<p>Isaac's birth was prophesied long before he was born, when Abram is 75 years old. Gen. 12:4, 7</p>	<p>Our Lord's birth was prophesied centuries earlier. Isa. 7:14</p>
<p>His birth was foretold prior to conception. Gen. 12:7 13:16 15:4</p>	<p>Jesus' birth was foretold prior to conception. Luke 1:28–31</p>
<p>Abraham's progeny would be royalty. Gen. 17:6</p>	<p>Jesus Christ was royalty by blood and would be royalty in actuality. Luke 1:32–33</p>

How Isaac's Unusual Birth Foreshadowed Our Lord's

The Birth of Isaac	The Birth of Jesus
Through Isaac will come all of the Jews, who are the people of God. Gen. 17:7–9, 19 21:12 Rom. 9:7 Heb 11:18	Through Jesus will be the salvation of the Jews, who are the people of God. Of course, through Him is the salvation of the gentiles as well. Rom. 1:16
God asks, in v. 14, “ Is there anything too difficult for the Lord? ”	The birth of our Lord will set into motion that which will save us. God has found a way, despite the barrier between God and man, to save us, without violating or compromising His character. “ Is there anything too difficult for the Lord? ” When the angel spoke to Mary of her becoming pregnant apart from a man, the angel states: “ For with God nothing shall be impossible. ” (Luke 1:37).
When it comes to the conception and birth of Isaac, God will be there, but He will be working behind the scenes. Gen. 18:10	God worked behind the scenes in the birth of Jesus, His Son. The Holy Spirit <i>overshadowed</i> Mary. Luke 1:35

You may recall the terms *type* and *antitype*. The birth of Isaac is the *type*; and the birth of Jesus is the *antitype*. The circumstances of Isaac's birth seem a little weird and unusual; however, when placed side-by-side its future counterpart, it all fits together.

Type and antitype is one of the great proofs of the Bible. Throughout the Old Testament, there are dozens of types, in all different forms and situations, all of which find their completion or their reflection in the antitype (which is Jesus Christ, or something related to Jesus Christ, e.g., His birth, His crucifixion, His Millennial reign). The way that the Old and New Testaments fit together is an amazing thing. The Old Testament was clearly in existence and established as authoritative before the birth of Jesus (we have manuscripts of most of the Old Testament which predates Jesus' birth by 100–300 years). So these dozens of types had all been committed both to “paper” and to memory as well for hundreds of years before our Lord arrived on the scene. In fact, the Old Testament was composed progressively, over a period of over 1000 years (I believe that the length of time of its composition was probably 4000–4500 years), with every section of this set of progressive writings to contain both types and prophecies of the Lord to come.

There are two short introductory articles to typology which seem fairly reasonable: from [Theopedia](#) and from [Eric Landstrom](#).

There is another fact about our Lord that is nearly completely ignored. His ministry was the most limited ministry in the history of religious figures. Jesus confined Himself to teaching for a very short period of time (3–4 years of a public ministry) over a very small portion of land (he taught only northern and southern Israel), speaking to a very limited audience and He wrote absolutely nothing down. The only other religious figures with this sort of a limited ministry are those you have never heard of, because no one thought to record anything that they did or said. We know about Mohammed, Confucius, and Buddha because their ministries took place over decades, they spoke and taught huge numbers of people in very large geographical areas. Yet, Jesus still fulfilled all that was written in the Old Testament.

Written testimony of our Lord would appear to be ripe for legend and mythology, except for the fact that, what was written about Him was written nearly immediately, principally by eyewitnesses, many copies of which we have which go back to within decades of them being written (this is unknown for ancient documents outside of the Bible). Usually legend and myths are composed hundreds of years later by those who have no direct, 2nd hand or even 3rd hand information about the person they are mythologizing. But we have a plethora of documents, all written within decades of His crucifixion, copied and recopied and distributed throughout the Roman world, so that, if any of it were false, there would have been thousands of eyewitnesses who would have disputed the contents of these documents in writing.

Lesson 184: Genesis 18:1–12

Human Viewpoint versus Divine Viewpoint

Gen 18:1–9 (MKJV mostly) And Jehovah appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre, and he sat at the tent door in the heat of the day. Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him. And when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed toward the ground. And he said, "My Lord [or, *lords*], if now I have found grace in Your sight, do not pass away, I pray, from Your servant. Let a little water, I pray, be brought, and wash Your feet, and rest under the tree. And I will bring a bite of bread, and will comfort your hearts. After that You shall pass on. For this is why You have come to Your servant [i.e., this is why you just happened to walk past my tent]." And they said, "Do so, as you have said." And Abraham quickly went into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal; knead it, and make cakes." And Abraham ran out to the herd and brought a calf, tender and good. And he gave it to a young man. And he hurried to dress it. And he took butter and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree, and they ate. They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "Behold, she is in the tent."

So Abraham is enjoying fellowship with God and two angels, which is what sharing a meal represents. Then the topic turns to Sarah. God obviously knows where Sarah is. The angels with Him may not. God will involve Sarah in a conversation, which God has not done before. However, first God needs her attention, and He gets it when **They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?"** Sarah can hear what is going on, and, obviously, when

she hears her name spoken, she begins to pay close attention to what is being said. Nothing gets a person's attention more than hearing their name spoken.

Gen 18:10–11 Then He said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah.

Now that God has Sarah's attention, He promises Abraham that he would sire a son by Sarah; and the writer of this passage makes it clear that Sarah is beyond the age of childbearing and that Abraham is long past the age of being able to father a child.

Sarah is listening from the tent to what the men have to say, because she heard her name mentioned, and Jehovah promises Abraham that she would bear a son next year. Both Abraham and Sarah immediately thinks, "I'm too old and my spouse is too old as well."

Gen 18:12 So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?"

Literally, this reads, **And Sarah was laughing within herself, saying, "After my being used up, pleasure is [or, has come into being] for me and my husband has become old."**

Sarah is listening near the tent flap, and this strikes her as quite funny. It has been years since she and her husband had sex. He was certainly no longer capable of fathering a child; and she was unable to give birth to a child. God had made many promises to Abraham and these promises all hinge upon Sarah bearing Abraham's child; and that is clearly impossible.

What is being said causes her to laugh to herself (literally, *in her midst*). So Sarah is being polite; she cannot be seen and she is not laughing out loud.

Here is why she is laughing. Abraham, a month or so earlier, was given this promise, and he agreed to be circumcised. At some point, after a month or so, the pain had subsided, Abraham had healed, and he was good to go. Except that he was not.

The word *pleasure* is the Hebrew noun 'ed^onâh (עֲדָנָה) [pronounced *geh-d-NAW*], which means, *pleasure, sexual delight*. Strong's #5730 BDB #726. The masculine form of this noun is 'êden (עֵדֶן) [pronounced *ĠAY-den*]³¹, which means *pleasure; luxury, dainty, delight*. Strong's #5730 BDB #726. You may recognize this word from the beginning of the book of Genesis: 'Êden (עֵדֶן) [pronounced *ĠAY-den*], which means *pleasure*; and is transliterated *Eden*. Strong's #5731 BDB #727. It is the same word, just the masculine

³¹ Quite frankly, I did not really know how to convey a guttural sound which comes from the back of the throat, so I have used ġ and Ġ to indicate the guttural sound. It sounds a little bit like hocking a loogie (and I am amazed that terminology is actually available through Google).

form rather than the feminine form.³² So, this is something you probably did not expect to find in the Bible—Sarah is associating bearing a child with sex, which is associated with pleasure. That is nearly the same word as we find back in the very beginning, when Adam and the woman resided in the Garden of Eden.

If this is actually a separate, but related word, then this would be known as an hapax legomenon [pronounced, *HAP-aks li-GOM-uh-non*, also, *hey-PAKS*] (plural: hapax legomena [pronounced: *HAP-aks li-GOM-uh-nuh*, and *hey-PAKS*]), which is *a word or phrase that appears only once in a manuscript, document, or particular area of literature*.³³ Such words can be difficult to translate; however, often, as in this situation, this has both a masculine form and a verb form, so taking all of these words together in context, we are generally able to determine their meanings.

In the Greek, hapax legomena are even easier to define because (1) there is a lot of literature out there written in Greek which has been uncovered; and (2) often, these are compound words made up of other words that are more common. And, just like in the Hebrew, there are often cognates which can be looked at as well. Also, we have seen these same words translated into Latin and into other ancient languages, so that we have a myriad of ways of determining the meanings of all these ancient words.

My point in all of this—and you may have wondered this from time to time—how exactly are we able to translate Old Testament Hebrew into English? Modern Hebrew is similar to ancient Hebrew, but they are not quite the same language (the same is true of Greek). However, scholars have literally spent their entire lives delving into the actual meanings of these words, which have resulted in great lexicons like Brown-Driver-Briggs and Gesenius.

If you will allow me one more tangent, the scholarly approach to the Bible is based upon hundreds of years of research and thousands upon thousands of scholars. Great Bible teachers like L. S. Chafer, R. B. Thieme, Jr., J. Vernon McGee, Norman Geisler or Harry Ironsides would be nobodies without standing on the shoulders of linguistic, historical, and Biblical scholars who preceded them in time. And, so there is no misunderstanding, every new generation must pick up the flag and advance it. When a generation does not, there is great suffering which results because human viewpoint (Rom. 12:2 Gal. 5:1 Col. 3:2), heavily influenced by the doctrine of demons (1Tim. 4:1–2), influences all that occurs.

I have mentioned human viewpoint on a number of occasions in this study, without really delving into it.

Human Viewpoint Thinking versus Divine Viewpoint Thinking

1. Most Christians think with a variety of influences—they have the norms and standards that they were raised with, societal norms and standards, and some of

³² Some Hebrew scholars treat these as different words; some treat them as the same word. You will note that their Strong's #'s are identical.

³³ From <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/hapax+legomenon> accessed April 24, 2012.

Human Viewpoint Thinking versus Divine Viewpoint Thinking

- what the Bible teaches.
2. After knowing how to get back into fellowship, the key to the Christian life is being able to think like God. **Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renovation of your thinking, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God. For I say through the grace which has been given to me to every one who is among you, stop thinking of yourself in terms of arrogance beyond what you ought to think, but think in terms of sanity for the purpose of being rational without illusion as God has assigned to each one of us a standard of thinking from doctrine.** (Rom. 12:2–3).
 3. Very simply stated, divine viewpoint thinking comes from the Bible doctrine in your human spirit and human viewpoint thinking comes from your human soul.
 4. A person can be a new believer or an unbeliever and have divine establishment thinking, which are the norms and standards of God designed to preserve a nation. Many times, unbelieving children can learn these norms and standards from doctrinally straight parents; or some people can acquire divine establishment norms and standards from having been in the military.
 5. Arrogance is both a mental attitude sin and an indication of human viewpoint. Believers are warned **But He [God] gives greater grace. Therefore [Scripture] says, "God opposes the proud [or, arrogant], but he gives grace to the humble [or, grace oriented]."** (James 4:6). See also Rom. 12:3
 6. One form of arrogance is thinking that your norms and standards are superior to those found in the Bible. Your own norms and standards are not divinely inspired; you learned some of these from your parents and these were modified by the society in which you live (which are affected by your friendships, contacts, the laws that you are subject to, your education, along with advertising, movies, television, literature and art). An example of a societal norm which I have seen change from being correct to incorrect is society's view toward homosexuality—when I was young, it was viewed as sin, abnormal and distasteful. Today, much of society believes that homosexuality is simply how a person is born (which is not exactly correct) and, therefore, not a sin (again, incorrect).
 7. There is no place in the plan of God for human viewpoint thinking. **"My thoughts are not your thoughts, and my ways are not your ways," declares the LORD (Isa. 55:8). Therefore, all who are mature should think this way [as Paul has been teaching]. And if you think differently about anything, God will reveal this to you also [through the continued teaching of Bible doctrine] (Philip. 3:15). Keep thinking objectively about things above [divine viewpoint] and not about things on the earth [human viewpoint] (Col. 3:2).**
 8. Only the believer in fellowship can learn to think like God, building doctrine upon doctrine. **But the unregenerate man of the highest intellectual attainments is not given access to the things of the Spirit of God, for to him they are folly, and he is not able to come to know them because they are understood in a spiritual realm. But the spiritual man investigates indeed all things, but he himself is not being probed by anyone. For who has come to know experientially the Lord's mind, he**

Human Viewpoint Thinking versus Divine Viewpoint Thinking

who will instruct Him? But as for us, we have the mind of Christ (1Cor. 2:12–13). Having the mind of Christ is divine viewpoint, and the apostles were able to teach divine viewpoint.

9. Pastor teachers should make every effort to be teaching from the Word of God to their congregation, instead of human viewpoint. Paul told the Corinthians: **My language and the message I preached were not adorned with pleasing words of worldly wisdom, but they were attended with proof and power given by the Spirit, so that your faith might not be in men's wisdom, but in God's power** (1Cor. 2:4–5).
10. Acquiring divine viewpoint thinking is a day-by-day process of learning the Word of God. You do not suddenly decide, "I am going to start thinking like God thinks;" and then it happens. You get exposed to human viewpoint approximately 23 hours/day (minus your sleep time); and, ideally, you get exposed to Bible doctrine 1 hour per day. Over time, Bible doctrine will overtake human viewpoint in your thinking.

See http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=184 for more information on this topic.

In our passage, Sarah is exhibiting human viewpoint thinking; and Abraham shows divine viewpoint thinking.

Gen 18:12 So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?"

By the words that Sarah is using, we know that she and Abraham had sex in the past. It was pleasurable to her. She says that, asking, "**Will I have sexual pleasure (at my age)?**" It seems reasonable that Abraham shared the promise with her, she knew about him being circumcised—she probably held back her opinion on that—and here it is, a couple months later and nothing has happened.

The gist of this passage makes me think that some initial attempts were made to have sexual relations, but nothing happened. Sexual regeneration has not taken place yet. You will recall that circumcision is all about regeneration. That is what it means. Circumcision is a ritual; regeneration is the reality. Both Abraham and Sarah had been spiritually regenerated; however, they had not yet been physically regenerated to set up the parallel situation.

Circumcision leads to new life, which life will include children. However, this had not yet kicked in.

So, Sarah had thought about sex; she and Abraham probably tried it; and nothing happened—for either of them. So she now asks herself, "**Will I have sexual pleasure (at my age)?**"

Abraham had been circumcised, and the pain was no longer an issue and he had physically healed; however, he is still too old to have sex. Physically, that has not happened yet.

Gen 18:12 So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?"

Interestingly enough, I could find nothing in the Hebrew that indicates that this is a question; however, that is the way that nearly every translator renders this as a question: "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?" We indicate a sentence is a question with certain specific words and with a question mark; but there are no punctuation marks in the Hebrew. As I have mentioned before, the most ancient Hebrew manuscripts would simply be a series of consonants with no spaces from beginning to end. The Hebrew uses two primary words to begin a sentence, and that tells you that sentence is a question. Those words are not found here.

The very end of this verse reads, "And my lord is old." Sarah is still thinking all of this. She is not speaking out loud. Abraham is an old guy. He is nearly 100 years old; and all the standard equipment that he came with is no longer operational—there is nothing to indicate that he will sire a child. This seems to be true, even after being circumcised.

In other words, Sarah is expressing some doubts about this whole thing—not out loud. And yet Abraham, when God told him to get circumcised, that same day, Abraham was circumcised. We are later told: **Yet, Abraham staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform** (Romans 4:20-21). Here, Abraham was thinking with divine viewpoint.

Next time, we will probably complete the first half of this chapter, and touch on alleged Bible contradictions.

Lesson 185: Genesis 18:1–15

God and Sarah/Bible Contradictions

Gen 18:1–12 (MKJV mostly) And Jehovah appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre, and he sat at the tent door in the heat of the day. Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him. And when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed toward the ground. And he said, "My Lord [or, *lords*], if now I have found grace in Your sight, do not pass away, I pray, from Your servant. Let a little water, I pray, be brought, and wash Your feet, and rest under the tree. And I will bring a bite of bread, and will comfort your hearts. After that You shall pass on. For this is why You have come to Your servant [i.e., this is why you just happened to walk past my tent]." And they said, "Do so, as you have said." And Abraham quickly went into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal; knead it, and make cakes." And Abraham ran out to the herd and brought a calf, tender and good. And he gave it to a young man. And he hurried to dress it. And he took butter and milk, and the calf which he

had dressed, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree, and they ate. They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "Behold, she is in the tent." Then He said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were both old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah [Sarah was no longer fertile]. Therefore, Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?"

God has appeared to Abraham, but there are several things which are different from God's previous appearances to Abraham. First of all, it is not clear when Abraham recognizes that this is God. Secondly, God is there with two angels, which has not happened before. Thirdly, God will directly involve Sarah this time. Insofar as we know, God has not appeared to Sarah before, nor has He spoken to her before. Finally, God is there to lay judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah (and 3 smaller cities).

Gen 18:12 So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?"

Gen. 18:12 is what Sarah thought. She did not speak out loud. Now, God will reveal that He is God.

Gen 18:13 The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?'

At this point, we do find God's name, *Y^ehowah*, in the text. His name had not yet been given in this chapter except in v. 1. This suggests that, Abraham knows by this time that this is God. This was established for us at the very beginning; and now Abraham is clearly aware to whom he is speaking.

Abraham is thinking, "I didn't hear Sarah laugh; I didn't hear her say anything." But God did.

Sarah did not say these words from v. 12 out loud. She did not even mouth them. This is what she was thinking, and it made her laugh, which she did so quietly that Abraham could not hear her. However, God is omniscient, so He did hear her—even her thoughts. Contrast that with the question, moments ago of, "Where is your wife Sarah?" (which words were spoken aloud in order to get her attention).

Although Gen. 18:12–13 are never listed as being contradictory, many so-called Bible contradictions are very similar to what we find here. Sarah says: "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?" Then *Y^ehowah* says: "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?'" Obviously, these are not the same words. So, is there a contradiction here?

The explanation here is obvious; Sarah was thinking a number of things: "Will I bear a child at my age? Will I have sexual pleasure with my husband and I being this old?" Only a

portion of what she was thinking is recorded for us in Scripture. It is possible that only a portion of what Jehovah Elohim said is recorded in Scripture. However, my guess is, few of you reading this even noticed the difference between vv. 12–13 until now. Most of the alleged contradictions between the gospels are like this. Don't be overly concerned if some atheist directs you to some web page where they list dozens or even hundreds of "Bible contradictions." Personally, I can answer about half of them off the top of my head, and a half of those that remain with a modicum of research.

As an aside, one thing I have noticed about such sites is, they will rarely update or change any of their "Bible contradictions." That is, you can offer a simple explanation for one of their contradictions, email it to them, but they will not fix that on their website (nor will they add a footnote, saying, *some explain this contradiction in this way...*). Their intention is to shake your faith, not to be honest or honorable. So, for most such websites, the more contradictions they can list, the better, whether easy explanations exist or not. No doubt, they justify this in their own minds, thinking, "Well, that's just one interpretation; I see it as a contradiction." Or, whatever. People love to justify themselves—especially when they are wrong.

In the example above, one website heads my explanation off at the pass: *This [sort of explanation] is used when one verse says "there was a" and another says "there was b," so they decide there was "a" AND "b"--which is said nowhere. This makes them happy, since it doesn't say there WASN'T "a+b."*³⁴ So, preemptively, this Bible site has decided that Sarah cannot think more than one thought—she thinks this one, exact thought, and no more; and, therefore, a passage like this is a contradiction.

However, any reasonable explanation—even if it is incorrect—should remove a contradiction of text. A true contradiction asserts that two narratives are contradictory; that they both *cannot* be true at the same time. If there is an explanation, such as the one that I have given here (Sarah thought more than one thing), the contradiction of text is removed. When you show that two narratives are compatible, that they both explain what has happened, just from different vantage points, then those narratives are no longer contradictory. A reasonable explanation must exist to remove a contradiction of passages, even if it is not the correct explanation.

You may or may not realize, but hundreds and perhaps thousands of books have been written specifically to cause believers to lose their faith in the Bible. Sometimes the authors make claims like, "This book will put to rest forever the idea that the Bible is the Word of God." I have at least one book like this, written maybe 40 or 50 years ago. The Bible is still going strong, and I can almost guarantee you that you have never heard of this author or his book ever before.³⁵ In any case, a search on Amazon books for "Bible contradictions" yields over 2000 results, most of which appear to be books which answer Bible contradictions rather than present them. If this is a topic of interest to you, I would

³⁴ From http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/jim_meritt/bible-contradictions.html accessed May 9, 2012.

³⁵ Some of my books are packed up, so I can't give you the actual name or author. Sorry about that. :)

recommend Geisler and Howe, simply because I have found the books written by Geisler to be scholarly, well-written and informative.

I simply took the first five listed at EvilBible.com

Examples of Contradictions from Evil Bible	
Alleged Contradiction	Explanation
<p>God is satisfied with his works. Gen 1:31</p>	<p>When God restored all the earth, He was pleased with His works. However, man was corrupted, choosing against God, rather than for God, and all mankind, except for Noah's family, had become corrupted (as you will recall, mankind and angels intermingled at that time).</p>
<p>God is dissatisfied with his works. Gen. 6:6</p>	<p>Therefore, what God created, when man was in innocence was good; but what angelic corruption had done to the earth (allowed by man's volition) was awful. Angels corrupted all mankind.</p>
<p>God dwells in chosen temples 2Chron. 7:12,16</p>	<p>In the Old Testament, God revealed Himself and manifested Himself in many ways. Throughout Genesis, so far, He has appeared to Abraham as a man (Gen. 18:1-2). He will appear to Moses as a burning bush, as a cloud that leads the people of Israel by day, etc. The Temple represented Jesus Christ; as did all of the things within and without the Temple; and, therefore, God took up a specialized residence there.</p>
<p>God dwells not in temples Acts 7:48</p>	<p>However, in the New Testament, God reveals Himself in the Person of Jesus Christ, where He becomes the God-man forever. Therefore, having come in human form and died for our sins, there is no reason for God to appear again in any shadow form.</p>

Examples of Contradictions from Evil Bible

Alleged Contradiction	Explanation
<p>God dwells in light 1Tim 6:16</p>	<p>The fundamental difference between the Old and New Testaments is the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Prior to His incarnation, Jesus was revealed in shadow form—that is, through the animal sacrifices (Gen. 3:21 4:3–4 8:20–21) and later through the Tabernacle and then the Temple (the key to 1Kings 18). Psalm 18:7–17 speaks of the judgment of God against David’s enemies, and imagery such as fire, clouds and thunder are used.</p>
<p>God dwells in darkness 1Kings 8:12 Psalm 18:11 97:2</p>	<p>In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is revealed, the God-man, so that we understand exactly what is going on. God is revealed; God is light and Jesus is the light of the world (John 8:12).</p>
<p>God is seen and heard. Gen. 3:9–10 32:30 Ex. 24:9-11 33:23, 11 Isa. 6:1</p>	<p>God the Second Person reveals Himself in the Old Testament in a myriad of ways; and He is Jesus Christ in the New Testament. As Jesus Christ, God is not simply revealing Himself in a different form, but God actually becomes true humanity.</p>
<p>God is invisible and cannot be heard. Ex 33:20 John 1:18 5:37 1Tim 6:16</p>	<p>God the Father is Spirit, Who cannot be seen. Since God the Father is a Spirit, God the Son reveals Him.</p>
<p>God is tired and rests Ex. 31:17</p>	<p>Here, we are comparing an anthropathism to that which is true of God. An anthropathism uses a human characteristic to help explain God’s thoughts, words or actions. By the way, we speak in this sort of way all the time. We speak of the sun rising and setting, but the sun does not rise and set, and most people who have the slightest exposure to science understand this. And yet, scientists themselves will use this sort of language of accommodation. A Bible critic will excuse this sort of usage by himself and his friends; but never allow it to be in the Bible. All anthropathisms, to the skeptic, is an automatic contradiction.</p>
<p>God is never tired and never rests Isa. 40:28</p>	

Here is the point; there may be some better, more imaginative contradictions listed at this and other websites; however, if this is all they have, and these are the first 5 listed (which I would expect to be listed in order to grab the attention of the reader); then they are a lousy beginning. I have at least one book of Bible contradictions and have been to several sites, but I can usually answer most of all of the first ten listed contradictions without using any outside material or using google.

At the same time, the proponents of these websites will mostly argue these points, as if they are Bible scholars (whereas, most of them just cut and paste their material from another website or they took it from another book). Some know the Bible a little; most do not. But, one thing they will never do (at least, in my experience); is they will never *retract* a single allegation, no matter how clearly wrong that allegation is. Most of the time, their justification is, "Well, maybe you are interpreting your Bible that way; but I interpret it this way, and that gives me a contradiction."

These examples were taken from <http://www.evilbible.com/Biblical%20Contradictions.htm> on May 9, 2012. They are the first five listed.

Back to our text:

Gen 18:14 *Is anything too difficult for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son.*"

God would return to Abraham and Sarah in a year, at which time, they will have a son. That means, she will conceive in about 3 months.

The word translated *too hard, too difficult* is actually a verb, the 3rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect of *pâlâ'* (פָּלֵא) [pronounced *paw-LAW*]. *Pâlâ'* means *to do that which is extraordinary [marvelous, incredible], to do that which is unusually difficult [which may or may not be a miracle], to do an extraordinary thing*. Strong's #6381 BDB #810.

Our Lord asks Abraham, "*Is there anything too difficult for the Lord?*" More literally, this reads: *Is [this] matter more extraordinary than Y^ehowah?* This is known as erotesis, where a question is asked, but without expecting to hear an answer for it. God is not soliciting Abraham or Sarah's opinion on this. Jehovah is stating a fact, but states it as a question.

The answer, of course, is *no, what God is proposing here is not more extraordinary than the Lord*. Nothing is too difficult for God. This is His universe. He designed the bodies of Abraham and Sarah, and therefore, God is able to rejuvenate and reinvigorate these bodies. Something which is rarely spoken of, but implied in the first chapter of Genesis, is that God actually changed the laws of physics in the first few verses. He did not necessarily override these laws, but He possibly changed them in fundamental ways when restoring the earth.

What is far more difficult is, God providing salvation for mankind. We are born with Adam's original sin; we have a sin nature; and if we live long enough, we commit personal sins. God is perfect righteousness and perfect justice. God cannot have any contact with sin.

God is able to recognize sin, judge it, and carry out the sentence against sin. Therefore, we stand condemned before God. Yet, God is able to save us. Despite the impassable barrier between man and God, God will tear down that barrier, and yet remain faithful to His Own essence. God *cannot* simply forgive us because He feels sentimental about the creation of mankind (*that*, by the way, is an example of an anthropopathism). God is God, or He is not. He must be perfect righteousness and perfect justice. Therefore, our sins cannot be ignored, overlooked or forgiven because God loves us. That would mean that God is not God.

The very God Who can forgive us our sins without violating His perfect essence is also able to regenerate the reproductive organs of Abraham and Sarah. However, God also regenerated us, an act which is far more complex. [“Is there anything too difficult for the Lord?”](#)

Now, you may wonder, how does Abraham know that God can keep these promises? After all, God has been making promises to Abraham for 25 years, and they seem to be getting greater and more intricate, and yet none of them have actually come to pass. How does Abraham know to trust God? In Gen. 14. Abram, with this rag-tag, minuscule army, defeated the greatest army of his day, absolutely changing human history at that point. I doubt that Abraham fully appreciated the extent of his impact of human history in this incident, but he no doubt understood that God was with him and that he defeated a huge, well-trained army. Now, if God can do that, isn't He capable of bringing to pass all that He has promised? Abraham can always go back to that experience in his life and know that God is Who God says He is.

Here is another reason that we know why Abraham trusted God. We know practically nothing about Abraham's life when he was in the Mesopotamian³⁶ area, but, my educated guess is, Abraham's life, after moving into Palestine area was dramatically changed. God had blessed him greatly. He knew that this was the right place for him to be, and it was God who told him to go there (Gen. 12:1).

If you have been a believer in Jesus Christ for over 5 years, and you have not noticed any remarkable changes in your life, then you simply aren't doing it right. A believer who has spent time growing spiritually in his life will notice great changes (and I mean far more changes than changing from being immoral to moral).³⁷

This does not mean that you ought to force yourself to act like a Christian, whatever that is; but it means that, after believing in Jesus Christ, you then embark on your spiritual life. This does not mean you simply being more moral than you were before (which yields a good result); but that you apply the mechanics of the spiritual life (naming your sins to God to be restored to fellowship) and you learn the Word of God—ideally, under the authority

³⁶ Properly, *Mesopotamia* stands for the area between the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers, but it includes some of the area outside of this region.

³⁷ Most believers—even mature believers—from time to time, will commit acts of immorality. Some people are saved in a state of morality and remain moral throughout their lives.

of a learned pastor-teacher. And so there is no confusion at this point, there are very few believers I have ever seen advance steadily apart from a local church—even those who had access to good Bible teaching and understood its importance. A priority for any believer should be to find a church where Bible doctrine is taught carefully and often.

Gen 18:13–14 The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too difficult for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son."

Having been listening for awhile, Sarah responds to what God told Abraham.

Gen 18:15 But Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. He said, "No, but you did laugh."

Apparently, Sarah threw open the flap and said, "I did not laugh" and God told her that she did. Sarah, no doubt, is beginning to understand who these visitors are (or, at least understand that one of them is the Lord). Her fear is based upon God knowing what she was actually thinking and having that exposed. She realized that Abraham was in fellowship with God right there outside the tent.

God has already named this child:

Gen 17:19 And God said, Your wife Sarah truly shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. And I have established My covenant with him for a perpetual covenant with his seed after him.

Sarah laughed to herself, and you may wonder, *why make a big deal out of this? She laughed, she is embarrassed; let it go.* The verb here is the word *tsâchaq* (צַחַק) [pronounced *tsaw-KHAKH*], which means *to laugh; to mock; to play*. Strong's #6711 BDB #850. Her son's name will be Isaac, which is, in the Hebrew, *Yis'châq* (יִשְׁחַק) [pronounced *yih's-KHAWK*], which means *he laughs; laughing*; and is transliterated *Isaac*. Strong's #3327 & #3446 BDB #850. These are related words. Isaac [*Yis'châq* (יִשְׁחַק)] is derived from *tsâchaq* (צַחַק). The idea is, Sarah now has *laughter* in her belly; and, within this month or the next, she will have *laughter* growing in her belly.

At the end of Gen. 17, we would have expected the next chapter to be about the birth of Isaac. After these 15 verses of Gen. 18, we would expect the next part of this chapter to be about the birth of Isaac. However, Isaac is not going to be born until Gen. 21.

Here is what is coming up; a preview of coming attractions for Gen. 18–22:

Gen. 18:16–33	Under what circumstances will God preserve a city or a nation?
Gen. 19	The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot has political influence in Sodom, but no spiritual influence (which can be contrasted with Abraham, who has spiritual influence where he is, but almost no political influence). We will see that Lot and some of his family are

preserved by God. Furthermore, God is faithful in His word to Abraham.

Gen. 20	The relationship between Abraham and the nation in which he resides. Abraham lies to Abimelech. God remains faithful to Abraham, despite his deplorable behavior. Abraham's influence on this nation is spiritual.
Gen. 21	God fulfills his covenant with Abraham. Abraham makes a covenant with Abimelech, who rules over the area where Abraham lives. Again, Abraham's influence is spiritual, not political.
Gen. 22	God uses Isaac to illustrate the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ for our sins.

Lesson 186: Genesis 18:16–19

Why Abraham Is Told About Sodom

All of these links will work when this lesson is posted online with the others.

At this point, we move to a very different portion of this chapter. Abraham has entertained 3 men, and two of them are angels and one of them is the Preincarnate Christ. During the meal, they asked about Sarah and God made promises specifically to Sarah about how she would bear a child in about a year. When Sarah heard this, she was quite skeptical because she and Abraham were long past the age of bearing children. Therefore, she laughed within herself, so that God said, "You are laughing inside; when you bear a child, you will name him *Laughter*."

However, at this point, Y^ehowah and the two angels must be moving on. It is actually not until Gen. 19:1 where we know for certain that the other two are angels.

The next 4 verses will be packed with information:

Gen. 18:16–19 And the men rose up from there, and looked toward Sodom. And Abraham was going with them to bring them on the way. And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do, And Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the persons of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his sons and his house after him, and they shall keep the way of Jehovah, to do justice and judgment, that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which He has spoken of him. (MKJV).

It may not seem like it, but there is a lot buried in these verses; particularly in v. 19.

Gen 18:16 Then the men set out from there, and they looked down toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way.

Already, Sodom has been important in the life of Abraham. When he and Lot had so many possessions that they could not keep them separate, they decided to split up. The Abraham and Lot Conglomerate became Abraham Inc and Lot's Domestic. Abraham

allowed Lot to choose the direction he would go in, and Lot went south toward Sodom and Gomorrah.

Sometime later, it had come to Abraham's attention that the people of this southern region rebelled against the Assyrians, causing the Assyrians to come and administer the 5th Stage of National Discipline to Sodom. They had already been under the 4th Stage of National Discipline, where they were ruled over by a foreign power; but, in the 5th Stage, this foreign power descended upon them and took them all as prisoner-slaves.

Abraham, with a very small army caught the Assyrian army by surprise and actually put them on the run, freeing their prisoners. This was a victory which changed human history for hundreds of years.

However, there was a reason why Sodom and that general area was under foreign control and later facing the 5th Stage of National Discipline, which was not revealed back in Gen. 14. However, this will come to light in the next chapter.

Gen 18:16 Then the men set out from there, and they looked down toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way.

Man was created to resolve the angelic conflict. These 2 angels with our Lord represent the billions of angels which God created, which angels are looking on, watching us, and learning God's character through what God does with us. Why?

God has already explained to the angels Who He is. He has already held Bible doctrine courses and explained His essence to them, and how He created them, and how they are His creatures to do His bidding. God has told them that He is perfect righteousness, perfect justice; that He is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent; and that He is both truth and love and that His life is eternal. However, simply telling the angels was not good enough.

My father could have explained to me who he was and how he thought and what his values were. However, I can recall specific instances from being a child, and the things which my father did and said, and these had a powerful impact upon me (as do the actions or inactions of any father). I recall my father's character by how he interacted with us kids and with our mom. Much of what I know about marriage and family is a result of 25 years of observing him. Now, had he just told me what was right and wrong, it would not have been enough; he demonstrated day after day who he was and what his relationship to his family was; and that is what I remember.

Angels observe God interacting with mankind in all sorts of different circumstances, and several different dispensations, and Who and What God is becomes very clear to them, based upon these millions of interactions. God explains Who He is in His Word. No doubt, God has told the angels Who He is and what it is all about. However, a third of the angels fell, who did not believe God. So, now God shows to all angels, both fallen and elect, Who He is by the way He interacts with us.

At this point in time in the Bible, we know very little about who or what angels are. We were exposed to Satan in Gen. 3, and here and the next chapter to 2 elect angels. What I have said about [angels](#) in general and Satan in specific has been culled from the rest of the Bible.

There is some point in time in our lives where we thought, "Who are we, where did we come from and where is this place?" God's been here eternally; but we have a point in time where we begin to wonder what our lives are all about. Angels would have been created, and there they are; and they ask, "Who are we, where did we come from and where is this place?" And God told them and God demonstrated His relationship to them; and yet some of them chose disobedience to Him (just as Adam and the woman chose to be disobedient to God).

Angels now observe us, and how God deals with us. And these dealings bring out God's perfect character. And no matter what we do, God has to maintain His perfect character. If He interacts just one time outside of His essence, then He is not God and millions of angels will witness this.

We go to movies all the time, and, in an engrossing movie, we are drawn up into the movie and we learn about the characters and who they are, their strengths and weaknesses, and how they act in this or that circumstance. Angels are, for all intents and purposes, watching a movie. Our lives on this earth is the greatest big budget movie ever produced, with a cast of billions and a running time of thousands and maybe millions of years (we do not know how much time elapsed between the ice age of the earth and its thawing out). Angels find out, throughout this big budget, heavenly production, exactly Who God is and exactly how His character interacts with His rebellious creatures. Angels understand who God is by observing what He does.

[Gen 18:16](#) Then the men set out from there, and they looked down toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way.

[Gen 18:17](#) The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do,

So, now God speaks to the angels who are with Him. Although it doesn't say, it is even possible that he is communicating with them by thinking, so this conversation takes place outside of the realm of Abraham's hearing.

However, since we have this conversation recorded here, it is reasonable that God spoke aloud to these angels, so that Abraham could hear Him. This presumes that the angels will answer, understanding the implications.

[Gen 18:18](#) seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

Notice how God reasons here. God is about to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. In this area are Lot, his wife and their 2 daughters. Recall also that Lot would have originally

taken with him a number of herdsmen who either worked for him or were his slaves. We have no idea what has happened to them. We will find out that all of Lot's possessions—which, at one time, were so extensive, they could not be kept separate from Abraham's—seem to have disappeared.

Abraham is known as the father of the Jews whereas Moses will be known as the father of the nation Israel. Hundreds of years from that point, there will be 2 million people who are descended from Abraham, and they will be in slavery; and God will bring them out of bondage to Egypt and bring them into the Land of Promise. God will make a nation of these people, a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him. Actually, it would be legitimate to translate this verse:

Gen 18:17–18 The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in it [that is, by means of the nation Israel]?"

I am not aware of any translation which translates this verse in this way—that is, every translation says that **all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him**—and there is a reason for this. Here is where some knowledge of Hebrew is helpful. *Him* is a 3rd person masculine singular suffix, which often will refer back to the nearest previous masculine singular noun, which, in this case, is *nation*. However, in the verse which follows, we have five 3rd person masculine singular suffixes, all which definitely refer back to Abraham; therefore, the one in v. 18 should refer to Abraham as well. Therefore, the proper translation would be:

Gen 18:17–18 The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?"

This is what is known as blessing by association, something which we have previously [studied](#). Quite obviously, Abraham is no longer around; there is no way we can ring him up on the phone and meet with him for lunch, in order to receive blessing by association with him. However, his descendants are with us. We are blessed in several ways: (1) first and foremost, our relationship with Jesus Christ, Who is our Savior and our only way to God (John 14:6); and Who is descended from Abraham. (2) We are blessed by the nation Israel, because this is a corporate group of Jews. (3) Finally, we are blessed because of our association with Jews in the United States, where their lives and freedoms are protected.

God is telling these angels how consequential this man Abraham is to the state of the world. Right now, he is simply a fairly wealthy man who is moving about in the land of Canaan, without having any particular ownership of any plot of land. However, God tells the angels that Abraham and his descendants are key to human history. They have already seen Abraham's impact with relationship to the Assyrians from the east (an army which was probably 10x or even 100x the size of Abraham's army).

So God is telling these angels, "Watch this man; he will become a great and mighty nation." Recall, there are millions of people on the earth; the angels have no idea who to look at; and God says, "Watch this man, Abraham. He believes in Me. All of the nations of the earth shall be blessed because of him.

Gen 18:19 For I have known him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has promised him."

There is a lot to be found here in v. 19. Quite a number of translations read, *For I have chosen him*; but the verb is the Qal perfect of *yâda'* (יָדָעַ) [pronounced *yaw-DAHG*], which means, *to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see; to learn; to recognize [admit, acknowledge, confess]*. Strong's #3045 BDB #393. God knew Abraham in eternity past. God knew that Abraham would believe in Him, which resulted in the imputation of righteousness (Gen. 15:6).

Then we have a series of particles that mean, when followed by an imperfect, *to the end that*. What will Abraham do? The Piel imperfect of *tsâvâh* (צָוָה) [pronounced *tsaw-VAW*], which means, *to commission, to mandate, to lay charge upon, to give charge to, charge, command, order; to instruct [as in, giving an order]*. Strong's #6680 BDB #845. Abraham would continue to command and to commission and to instruct his children. How does he do this? First of all, we have the plural noun *children* here, but Abraham only has one child of promise, who is not even born yet. Abraham is not commanding, commissioning and instructing Ishmael, his son by Hagar the Egyptian slave-girl. But Abraham only has one son of promise and that is Isaac. So the plural *children* refers to Abraham's descendants. This gives us, **For I have known him to the end that he will command [and instruct] his children** [i.e., *his descendants*]. How does Abraham do this? It is clear that, even though he will live a long time, he won't go into Egypt where his great grandson Joseph will be prime minister. There is only one way that Abraham can do this, and this is by the Word of God, a portion of which was probably given to him, and a portion of which he will record. Now, the Word of God to Abraham at this time was a few chapters of Genesis and maybe the book of Job. He may have carried this all in his head and he may have committed it to "paper." However, it is via God's Word that he will command and instruct his descendants. It is God's Word which his descendants will continue to hold, protect, guard and add to.

Abraham will not just command and instruct his descendants, but also *his household* (literally, *his house*; but *household* is a legitimate translation). This is very technical. You may recall the concept of [dispensations](#), which was given way back in the introductory lessons. Although most people tend to think of a dispensation as a period of time during which God has a particular plan for believers; it actually means *the administration of a household*. Abraham's household is believers in the Jewish Age, which may or may not be related to him. Rahab the Prostitute, for instance, is not related to Abraham, but she will be in the Dispensation of Israel and possibly in the line of Jesus Christ (Joshua 6:25

Matt. 1:5³⁸). The Word of God, which Abraham has possession of, will become a part of her life; and a part of his commandments to his household, the children of Israel, those related to him and those who chose to become a part of Israel.

So far, this gives us:

Gen 18:19 For I [God] have known him [Abraham] to the end that he will command [and instruct] his children [i.e., *his descendants*] and his household [believers in the Age of Israel] after him to keep [lit., *and they have kept (guarded, protected, preserved)*] the way of Y^ehowah by doing righteousness and justice, so that Y^ehowah may bring to Abraham what He has promised him."

After him refers to those who would follow Abraham. He is the first, and there is a long line behind him, *after him*, just described as his children and his household.

The word *to keep* is a very common word in the Hebrew: *shamar* (שָׁמַר) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*], which means, *to keep, to guard, to protect, to watch, to preserve*. Strong's #8104 BDB #1036. Here, it is in the 3rd person plural, Qal perfect, which generally indicates a past, completed action. It is often translated as an infinitive (*to keep*), but it should really read *and they have kept (guarded, protected, preserved)*.

God is outside of time, which is a difficult concept for us to wrap our minds around, as we experience time by each instant at a time in a linear fashion. God invented time, but He is not confined to time. So here, God is saying, that these descendants and believers have preserved, protected and guarded something.

We have discussed in a previous lesson what the [spiritual life](#) was for people of this era. Another way of describing this spiritual life is, *the way of Jehovah*, which phrase is found for the first time here in this verse. This spiritual life includes salvation, fellowship with God, spiritual growth, and a system of animal sacrifices. This is all recorded in the Word of God, which is what we are studying right now. These words were the Bible for Jews in the Age of the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are known as the patriarchs—the fathers—of Israel).

Although it is certainly possible that this was transmitted verbally, we have instances of writings from this general era. Given that Abraham knew a great many people and was able to communicate with several peoples in this land and in Egypt (suggesting that he could speak several languages), Abraham probably had some exposure to the written word. So I would think that the words that we are studying were written down by Abraham, probably the bulk of which originally came from Melchizedek.³⁹

³⁸ There is a great deal of discussion of this question, but it would seem odd to name the woman Rahab in the line of Jesus if this is just some random woman named Rahab. This is because women were generally not named in the line of anyone, must less in the line of the humanity of our Lord.

³⁹ Let me remind you of the logic here. Abraham has spoken to God on several occasions. However, he appears to be deferential to Melchizedek, since he pays him tithes. This suggests to me that Melchizedek

Let's look at what we have developed so far (bearing in mind that God is speaking to these angels; and, by application, to all angels, who are watching Him).

Gen 18:19 For I [God] have known him [Abraham] to the end that he will command [and instruct] his children [i.e., *his descendants*] and his household [believers in the Age of Israel] after him. And they have kept [*guarded, protected, preserved*] the way of Y^ehowah [the spiritual life for believers in that era] to do righteousness and justice, to the end that Y^ehowah may bring to Abraham what He has promised him."

After *the way of Y^ehowah*, we have the lamed preposition followed by an infinitive: *to do righteousness and justice*. *Righteousness* is the principle of God's character or God's integrity; *justice* is the function or the execution of God's character or integrity. For instance, it is wrong to kill someone; that violates God's righteousness. Justice would mete out punishment for committing that crime. Righteousness condemns the action; justice carries out God's proper response to the action (and God has designed humankind to act on His behalf—Rom. 13:1–5).

Doing righteousness and justice is acting in accordance to the plan of God. *Justice* implies a sort of government; a corporate approach to wrongdoing. Eventually, the nation Israel would come from Abraham, and they would be given a set of laws that define righteousness and a set of judgments, which would define the penalties for deviating from this righteous standard. It is not *Abraham* who is to do righteousness and justice; it is his descendants and his household after him. From Abraham's time, this is a future event, and it will take place over a long period of time; sometimes the way of the Lord will be kept (guarded, preserved) and sometimes it will be lost. However, from the viewpoint of God, Who is speaking, this has already happened. In the past, according to His plan, Israel kept and preserved the way of the Lord. The end result is, God would deliver on his promises to Abraham.

So, again, notice a typical translation of v. 19:

Gen 18:19 For I have known him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has promised him."

Now, when we look at the actual Hebrew, this is a more accurate translation:

Gen 18:19 For I [God] have known him [Abraham] to the end that he will command [and instruct] his children [i.e., *his descendants*] and his household [believers in the Age of Israel] after him. And they have kept [*guarded, protected, preserved*] the way of Y^ehowah [the spiritual life for believers of that era] to do righteousness [the principle of God's integrity] and justice [the function of God's integrity], to the end that Y^ehowah may bring to Abraham what He has promised him."

had something that Abraham did not have, which is, most logically, the Word of God (Gen. 1–11 or 1–12).

Finally, what God will bring to Abraham is the fulfillment of His many promises to Abraham. These promises would all begin with a son, laughter in the belly of Sarah.

God sees all of this as having occurred, even though this is all future to Abraham at this time. These words which God speaks reveals a great many things about the future of Abraham's seed, about what God expects, but of Abraham's descendants and from other believers who adhere to Israel; and about what nation Israel will become. Israel will preserve and protect the way of the Lord, which means, they will preserve the Word of God; and they will do righteousness and justice, which means that nation Israel will adhere to the [laws of divine establishment](#). All of this comes to pass so that God may bring to Abraham what He has promised him.

Again, all of these words are actually spoken to millions of angels, who are watching millions of people interact, and God focuses their attention on this one man, Abraham, telling them, this is the man to watch. This man will affect all human history.

Lesson 187: Genesis 18:16–22 The Influences of Abraham and Lot on Sodom

Here is what we have studied so far:

[Gen. 18:16–18](#) And the men rose up from there, and looked toward Sodom. And Abraham was going with them to bring them on the way. And Jehovah said, "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do, And Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the persons of the earth shall be blessed in him? (MKJV).

God is speaking to these two angels, who will soon bring judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah; and telling them what will happen with Abraham in the future.

[Gen 18:19](#) For I [God] have known him [Abraham] to the end that he will command [and instruct] his children [i.e., *his descendants*] and his household [believers in the Age of Israel] after him. And they have kept [*guarded, protected, preserved*] the way of Y^ehowah [the spiritual life for believers of that era] to do righteousness [the principle of God's integrity] and justice [the function of God's integrity], to the end that Y^ehowah may bring to Abraham what He has promised him."

Now God explains why Sodom and Gomorrah are under judgment.

[Gen 18:20](#) Then Y^ehowah said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave,

Note that we have the phrase [And Y^ehowah said...](#) twice; in v. 17 and then again in v. 20. This suggests that God is first speaking to the angels; but then He speaks to the angels and Abraham. You will notice that there is no intervening narrative and no one says anything; so, the only reason to repeat *and Y^ehowah said*, is to direct these words to someone else.

Abraham knows that this is where Lot is. His ears perk up immediately, in hearing God speak of their sins as being grave. The noun here is the feminine singular of *chattâ'th* (חַטָּאת) [pronounced *khat-TAWTH*], which means *misstep, slip of the foot; sin; sinfulness; a sin-offering; penalty, calamity, misfortune*. Strong's #2403 BDB #308. Notice that it is in the singular here. That would reasonably indicate that there is a trend or a specific type of degeneracy which has overtaken these cities.

Now, look back for an instant at what God has been talking about: *the way of Y^ehowah, executing righteousness and justice*. Although this was specifically tied to Abraham and his progeny, it is also related to the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah, which will follow. There is no real righteousness in Sodom. Justice is not being meted out. Lot is a judge in Sodom, and yet, there is no justice in Sodom.

There is a lesson here which is important for all believers to understand: Abraham has no political power; he has never run for office, he has never voted for anyone. Because of his place in history, God has put Abraham in touch with several prominent political figures, but Abraham's relationship to them is not to get them to adhere to this or that political system or to this or that political party. However, Abraham has already had tremendous impact on the surrounding city-states and will continue to have such an impact, for years into the future, even beyond his death, as v. 19 tells us. Lot, on the other hand, was very politically involved—he became a judge. He wields a great deal of political influence over Sodom; and yet, Sodom is about to be destroyed.

Gen 18:20 Then Y^ehowah said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave,

What has come to God is a *z^eâqâh* (צַעֲקָה) [pronounced *z^eh-âqaw-KAW*], which means, *a cry, an outrage, a cry of distress, an outcry*. Strong's #2201 BDB #277. There is no preposition that means *against* here. This *outcry* is in the construct state, so it is properly translated *the outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah*. This outcry has become great to God, which suggests that great evil is being done in Sodom and Gomorrah—evil which is not tempered with justice. Things are happening in Sodom which should outrage the people; the people should recognize this as unrighteousness. They should be demanding justice. Lot, as a judge, ought to be standing up for what is right; and yet, all of this appears to be beyond his jurisdiction (not legally, but actually).

What is happening in Sodom and Gomorrah is, there were roving bands of insatiable homosexuals who would rape those traveling through their town with impunity. Everyone knew that this was occurring; all of the males in the town had become a part of this. Although this may seem odd or even far-fetched, when criminal males are confined in prison, one of the greatest fears of new prisoners is being subjected to homosexual rape or homosexual domination by another male. If this sort of thing is ignored, it become more prevalent; if it is tamped down, it becomes less so. This will be covered in greater detail when we come to Gen. 19.

Recall again that righteousness is the principle of integrity and justice is the administration of integrity. Righteousness would be the standard, "You will not murder." Justice would be finding and arresting the murderer and bringing him into the court system for execution or incarceration.

As a teacher, I observed the importance of the administration of justice on many occasions. When one student did something wrong, all of the students expected some form of justice to be dispensed. Ultimately, at the school where I taught, for the most unrighteous behavior, parent phone calls, parent conferences, swats, detention, suspension and/or expulsion were the possible outcomes. Two of the strongest punishment were swats and expulsion, which consequences were eventually removed from our school system. What remained, as our schools became more liberalized, were not as effective, and unrighteousness flourished.

As an aside, this is just as necessary in prison, where people have been confined for their behavior already. There needs to be a system of laws and regulations in place that are fair, where wrong behavior is met with consequences. In other words, unrighteous behavior is handled with justice. Otherwise, inmates, who are already prone to anti-social behavior, become even more out-of-control.

When errant behavior is not clearly recognized and dealt with, then society (of any sort) begins to fall apart. This is what was occurring in Sodom and Gomorrah.

Gen 18:20 Then Y^ehowah said, "Because the outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave,

The final verb is the Qal perfect of *kâbêd* (כָּבֵד) [pronounced *kaw^b-VADE*], which means *to honor, to glorify, to recognize; to be great, to be vehement, to be heavy, weighty, burdensome*, Strong's #3513 BDB #457. The idea is, their sin—this great degenerate sin—has become very burdensome upon the people there. This degeneracy trend has begun to infect much of the population in this area, to a point that it is weighing down these people. Their degeneracy and their choice not to mete out justice means that God will have to be the One to mete out justice.

A degenerate sin is a sin that is associated with pleasure or gratification and this sin can spread throughout a population. This is an addictive sin which brings pleasure and is practiced by greater and greater numbers of the population. What comes to mind is, drug addictions, alcoholism, gambling, and various sexual addictions. This occurs in many societies and in all subgroups of society.

Let me give you an example of an addiction: gambling and Wall Street. At one time, Wall Street performed the honorable function of taking money that people wanted to invest and it funneled this money to public companies, who would use this money to expand their business. Although some people throw money at stocks in a way that is gambling, for the most part, this became an accepted way for investors to choose companies in which to invest. Mutual funds became a way to spread out the risk, so, whereas I, individually, might only be able to invest in 1–10 stocks, by investing in a mutual fund, my money would

be pooled with others to be invested into hundreds of stocks, thus reducing the risk of loss. This investment allows for my capital to flow from the cans in the backyard where it is buried to the coffers of hundreds of various companies, who use this money to expand and improve their businesses. You may have some great ideas, but it requires a certain amount of capital to get this idea off the ground; and then additional capital to expand the business. That is the original function of Wall Street, to act as a go-between, between private capital and public businesses.

However, what has happened is, Wall Street has evolved to where you can simply “bet” on the market or a stock or a sector or a commodity going up or going down. No longer is money from the investor going into the coffers of a business or a group of businesses, but people are now making bets on the market, and Wall Street is holding the bets, and skimming their take from the top. So the gambling aspect of Wall Street has infected all of Wall Street; and money invested no longer flows from the investor into a company. Too often, that money is simply making a bet.

In a similar fashion, American Airlines might contract with Standard Oil to buy jet fuel at a particular price 1 year in the future, and Standard Oil agrees to this. This is a normal and legitimate business transaction. However, this has become infected with gambling, so that Charlie Brown, who wouldn't even know what jet fuel looks like, may begin making bets on the price of jet fuel 6 months or a year down the road, as if he were making a contract to buy it, but he has no intention of buying any jet fuel. His “agreement” to buy jet fuel is a bet, hoping that someone 6 months from now will agree to purchase his agreement, and pay the amount he offered. Essentially, it is gambling.

Now, I am not anti-Wall Street, nor do I object to people on Wall Street making decent salaries. However, it has degenerated into a sophisticated gambling casino which is addictive to some people, including the people who work there.

Sodom and Gomorrah have degenerated to a point where God must bring judgment upon these cities. Lot, a believer, now a judge in Sodom, has absolutely no impact whatsoever on his community, even though he clearly recognizes what is going on and that it is wrong (this will all come out as we go further into this narrative, which will continue in Gen. 19).

[Gen 18:21](#) I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to Me. And if not, I will know."

This is interesting. It appears as if God is receiving prayers and calls from Sodom and Gomorrah, but that He has to go see for Himself. What this appears to be is a human function which has been applied to God in order to better explain His actions.

What the Revealed Member of the Trinity will do is, focus the attention of the angels, both fallen and elect, upon this part of the world, how their sin has become a great weight to this people. God has laid out a clear precedent with Adam and Eve; and yet this precedent is rejected in Sodom and Gomorrah.

God is omniscient and He knows all that is going on there. However, we live 3000 years later and we need to understand what is so great and weighty as to cause God to come down to this area and to execute divine justice against it. God will show that you cannot simply allow a population to go down this road of degeneracy without correcting them; which will eventually mean, in this case, their full and complete destruction, executed by divine judgement.

What is missing from most translations is, the first verb has a voluntative *hê* at the end of the verb and is followed by the particle of entreaty *nâ'*. So, the Hebrew can be translated "Let Me go down, if you would, to see..." The particle of entreaty may also be translated *now*, giving us, "Let Me go down now to see..." I work with about 50 English translations of the Bible, and none of them take the voluntative *hê* into consideration; and fewer than half of them have the translation *now*.

This suggests that God is speaking to Abraham now, as much as He is speaking to the angels.

They have done is simply the 3rd person plural, Qal perfect of *to do*. But what follows this is the adverb *kâlâh* (כָּלָה) [pronounced *kaw-LAW*], which means, *completion, complete destruction, consumption, annihilation*. As an adverb, it means *completely, altogether*. Strong's #3617 BDB #478. What they have done has come to a point of completion; a point at which annihilation is the function of justice on this people.

This gives us:

Gen 18:20–21 Then Y^ehowah said, "Because the outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, let Me go down now to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to Me. And if not, I will know."

Again, God is omniscient; He knows exactly what is occurring in Sodom and Gomorrah. He does not have to go there to find out about the cries which were made to Him. However, God is directing the attention of the angels, both elect and fallen, to this part of the world.

I have mentioned that this great sin is homosexual rape, which has become the social life of these cities.

What is being illustrated here (or, actually, when they get to Sodom and Gomorrah) is just how far their sin has taken them. They have become roving bands of homosexual addicts, desirous of other men; and they will rape new men that they find attractive. I realize that this may be difficult to grasp or to relate to. Some men can understand this in terms of women, that they would, like Solomon, want to have a different woman every night. However, men do not get this sort of thing because women are so dramatically different from us. A man is generally not going to find a new willing woman every night that he can then discard when the night is over.

I continue to get ahead of myself, in knowing what is coming up in Gen. 19, but the reasonable question is, you have all of these homosexual men—why can't they simply have sex with one another? And again, this is related to the psyche of men (not just homosexual men, but all men) and their preponderance towards multiple sex partners that they can discard afterwards. One of the things that many people have a difficult time grasping is, a male homosexual at age 40 might have had 500, 1000 or even 2000 sex partners. This is not way out there. And we hear so much about homosexual marriage, but one of the key features of a heterosexual marriage—fidelity—does not exist in a long-term homosexual relationship.

So, what has happened is, the homosexual men in Sodom and Gomorrah are completely out of control and they are led by their sexual lusts. Most people are more familiar with a drug addict in the family or a former friend who has turned to drugs. They undergo a personality change in their addiction, and their lives become more and more centered on the acquiring of this drug—even if it is just marijuana—and using the drug. In the case of marijuana, their criminal activity might be limited. In the case of harder drugs, they may be willing to steal from friends and family members in order to obtain their drugs. For those who have had a family member or a friend like this, there comes a point that you just write them off, put them out of your life, and make them feel as unwelcome as is humanly possible. Their addiction has become so pervasive in their lives that they will do anything to satisfy their craving. Now, if you can understand this, then homosexual acts are very similar in their nature. Not every addiction makes you go out and rob and steal in order to feed that addiction; but some men will rape in order to feed their sexual addiction. So, the roving bands of homosexual rapists in Sodom and Gomorrah—men who are addicted to homosexual activity—made these cities dangers to be in or near.

Thrown into this mix is the sense of power of one man over another; and killer lust as well. Again, if you think that this is far-fetched, simply imagine an all-male prison where all controls are relaxed, and homosexual acts are completely ignored, including homosexual rape. This is Sodom and Gomorrah in Abraham's time.

Lesson 188: Genesis 18:16–33

Why God Preserves a Nation

So far, we have studied the first 6 verses of the second half of Gen. 18:

Gen. 18:16–21 And the men rose up from there, and looked toward Sodom. And Abraham was going with them to bring them on the way. And Jehovah said, "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do, And Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the persons of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I [God] have known him [Abraham] to the end that he will command [and instruct] his children [i.e., *his descendants*] and his household [believers in the Age of Israel] after him. And they have kept [*guarded, protected, preserved*] the way of Y^ehowah [the spiritual life for believers of that era] to do righteousness [the principle of God's integrity] and justice [the function of God's integrity], to the end that Y^ehowah may bring to Abraham what He has promised him." Then Y^ehowah said, "Because the outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their

sin is very grave, let Me go down now to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to Me. And if not, I will know."

Abraham has enjoyed fellowship with God and two angels, and God has called attention to these angels (and all other angels as well) to Abraham and the future of his seed. However, God has come to deal with Sodom and Gomorrah. It is almost as if, Sodom and Gomorrah was a dreadful situation that God had to deal with, and that God took the time to enjoy fellowship with Abraham, which would involve Abraham's thoughts on this judgment.

What is occurring in these cities is all the men will descend upon any traveler and strangers would be raped and often killed. There was unbridled homosexual lust, power lust and killer lust in this particular area.

Gen 18:22 So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD.

This is what God was waiting for. God knows that Lot is there in the Sodom and Gomorrah area, as does Abraham. Now Abraham wants to figure out how to deal with this. He needs to find out from God at what point will God protect the innocent (the righteous—those who have believed in Him) and at what point will He back off on destroying an entire city. How many believers are in a specific geographical area affects how God deals with the geographical area. That is what the next several verses are all about.

Gen 18:23 Then Abraham drew near and said, "Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?"

These angels cannot act apart from God—so, if Abraham stands in front of God, preventing Him from going to Sodom, this temporarily stops the judgment against Sodom.

Abraham is going to be quite bold throughout the rest of this chapter. He speaks directly to God and asks, "Will You sweep away the righteous with the wicked?" Recall that, Abraham and Lot are both righteous because God has imputed righteousness to them because they believed Jehovah God (Gen. 15:6 2Peter 2:7). Today, we are positionally righteous, because we have faith in God's Son (the same Person).

The verb here is a Qal imperfect of *to sweep away, to snatch away, to take away*. Other stems of the verb indicate *destruction, annihilation*. Abraham is using this verb in its tamest sense, almost euphemistically.

Abraham is making the point—probably not knowing the extent of the degeneracy of Sodom and Gomorrah—that there are righteous and unrighteous people living side-by-side there. He is asking, does it makes sense for God to bring down the same judgment upon all these people, righteous and unrighteous alike?

Gen 18:24 Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it?

Abraham has a method to his thinking here, which God knows, understands and indulges. Abraham sets up a hypothetical. God is going to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (and several others), so Abraham asks Him, "What is there are 50 born-again believers there; will you destroy that city, and not spare the believers there?"

Abraham was pretty certain, at the outset, that 50 believers within a city would preserve that city. He was also fairly certain that there were not 50 believers in Jehovah Elohim in Sodom. However, he wanted to start at a place where he felt confident.

Let's take this into the 1950's of the United States. Many people feared total nuclear annihilation of the United States by Russia. However, simultaneously, the United States was filled with believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. In 1949, the evangelist Billy Graham held his first series of revival meetings in Los Angeles and thousands of people showed up every night. Because of the large number of people who responded to the gospel of Jesus Christ, God was not going to allow the annihilation of the United States. No one had any reason to fear nuclear destruction in that era because of what we are studying right now.

Even today, there are huge numbers of believers in the United States. An April 2012 [Rasmussen Reports survey](#) revealed that 86% of American adults believe the person known to history as Jesus Christ walked the Earth 2,000 years ago. 77% Believe Jesus rose from the dead. Rom. 10:9 tells us: **If you profess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe with your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.**

We in the United States have a moral duty to withstand evil throughout the world, whether it be communism or Islam. We can rest assured, because of this passage, that God will not allow the complete destruction of our country. This was true in the 1950's and it is true today. We do not have to ask God, "Suppose there are 50 righteous in our city; will you allow the righteous to be swept away with the wicked?" We know God's answer. Abraham knew that answer. He continues:

Gen 18:25 Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?"

Abraham reasons, if God simply destroys the righteous with the wicked, is that really just? He is not disagreeing that there ought to be judgement brought upon the wicked in Sodom and Gomorrah, but that those who have believed Y^ehowah Elohim would not swept away in this judgment. God agrees with Abraham's reasoning.

Gen 18:26 And the LORD said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake."

God gives Abraham assurances that He would preserve the city for 50 believers. What is being established is, God will preserve certain cities based upon there being born-again believers in that city. This is, more or less, what R. B. Thieme, Jr. called the *pivot*. Given that Lot is who he is, we may reason that God is simply speaking of simply born-again believers.

You will recall that I have made reference to the [spiritual pivot](#) of a nation (another R. B. Thieme, Jr. term). A nation is preserved by several factors

What Preserves and Prospers a National Entity

1. The number of believers within the nation preserves and prospers a nation. This will be borne out by our study of Gen. 18:23–33. Abraham will ask God if He will destroy these city-states, if there are believers there.
2. The number of mature believers within the nation preserves and prospers a nation. R. B. Thieme, Jr. calls these the *pivot*,
3. The relationship to Jews within that national entity.
4. The relationship of that nation to Israel. Obviously, there is no Israel at the time that this takes place, but I am looking forward in this point.
5. The amount of doctrine which is associated with that national entity. How many Bibles is it printing and disseminating; how much truth is found in its literature and in its pulpits.
6. The number of missionaries which are sent out. Again this looks forward in time. Lot could be seen as, to some extent, a missionary. He was not very good and had little intention of spreading the word of Jehovah; but that would have been a good reason for he and Abraham to split up. However, they went their separate ways because they were having constant disputes about personal ownership. Gen. 13:6

This doctrine is clearly related to [blessing by association](#). A nation is blessed because of the believers and maturing believers which live within that nation.

You will note that having a good functioning democracy or republic is not a part of this list. We are blessed in the United States with a wonderful republic, but such a government requires personal morality and integrity, knowledge of the government and knowledge of the issues. At this point, these things are improving among the masses in the United States, but so is the resolve of those on the left and far left. However, what will preserve our nation are the factors enumerated above.

This is why the nations in Iraq and Afghanistan will likely be unsuccessful allies to the United States; while Japan and South Korea have become wonderful long-term allies to the United States. President George W. Bush believed that the key to a free nation was a healthy democracy, so that he attempted to establish a democracy in Iraq and in Afghanistan (I write this in 2012). But helping a country to achieve a democratic form of government will not preserve that nation; nor will it insure that nation will become a long-term ally of the United States.

In England and in several other European countries, the number of believers is decreasing; and, therefore, those who attend church are becoming fewer and fewer as well. At the same time, adherents to Satan's dominate religion of our day, Islam, are growing in numbers. This is why Europe is becoming more and more unstable, more violent and has become increasingly a less popular destination for travelers.

In case you did not yet buy into this, this information will be covered in greater detail in lessons to come with a lot of Scripture included.

I have mentioned the British Empire on many occasions in previous lessons. For a time, this tiny nation England controlled a huge portion of the world, and everywhere they went, they brought civilization, law and order and the gospel of Jesus Christ. The law and order is another way of saying they brought in the laws of divine establishment and gave society order, structure and law. Then, evangelization and Bible teaching could take place. Therefore, God blessed and prospered England at this time.

One of my most favorite maps is below, where all that is in pink is ruled or strongly influenced by the British empire. All of these regions were improved because the Brits took them over. The key to all of this is Bible doctrine and evangelism.



From: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/26/The_British_Empire.png

You have to look carefully to actually see Great Britain, because it is so small by comparison to all that it ruled over.

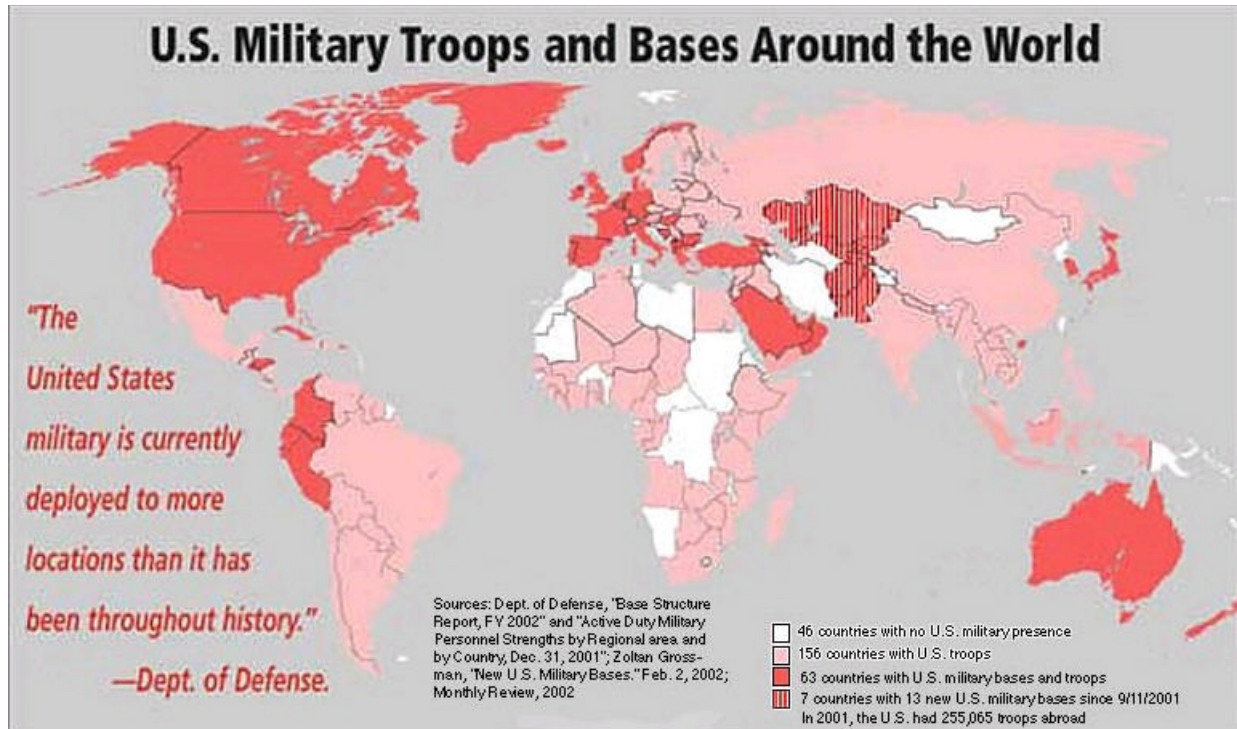
What Britain did in the era was great. God blessed them as a nation and as an empire, and, as the saying goes, *The Sun Never Sets on the Union Jack*. That is, there was always some part of the British Empire which was in daylight.

And yet, where is Great Britain today? They lost their desire to know the Word of God; their churches are all but empty; many have been [converted into mosques](#).⁴⁰ And in their major cities, Muslims rage, refusing to assimilate, and demanding the application of sharia law. England went from being the great empire in the world to a struggling nation beset by debt and a population of those who believe in the welfare state because this is what they have been raised in. Fewer and fewer believers in a nation means that nation goes down and even England may even be thrown upon the dust heap of history.

When I heard prophecy taught and how that the Revived Roman Empire would be hostile to Israel, that seemed rather far-fetched to me. When I first heard that, WWII was not too far in the past where Europe was at war with one another. Furthermore, apart from the holocaust, much of Europe was relatively friendly with the Jew. However, since then the European Union has arisen, and there have been so many Muslims immigrating to Europe that there is a strong anti-Semitic sentiment throughout the larger cities in Europe.

In the United States, our influence has spread in a very different way. We have military bases all over the world, and we have given freedom and have protected the freedom of nations throughout the world. At one time in my life, the idea of a WWIII seemed inevitable, and now, that is no longer the case. This does not mean that a WWIII will not occur; but it is not as imminent as it once was.

⁴⁰ In fact, in Google, I typed in "Churches in England converted..." and before I had completed the word *converted*, Google was ready to fill in the remainder.



What is the key? Believers in the United States; believers with Bible doctrine in their souls; the relationship between the United States and nation Israel, the relationship between the United States and the Jewish people; missionaries who are sent out; and the dissemination of Bible doctrine and the Word of God.

President George Bush had the opportunity of doing something great—evangelizing the Middle East. He was probably the most well-read presidents of our generation and a man who had a greater historical perspective of the world than any president of the past 100 years (apart from Eisenhower and maybe Reagan), but he missed the crucial factor of God's Word.

After we had bombed Japan, General Douglas MacArthur ruled over the restoration of Japan with a kind and benevolent hand. He also [called for](#) 5000 missionaries and 10 million Bibles. It is this approach that has made Japan (and Germany and South Korea) our greatest and most valuable allies in the world today.

President Bush thought that the key to a great nation is democracy; that a middle-eastern democracy is the key to peace in this world. But there will be no peace in the world. And far more important than self-rule is, Bible doctrine. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the key to peace and prosperity, followed by the teaching of the Word of God. This requires the free will of the people.

Just as the British Empire faded away, so can the military influence of the United States. It could disappear in our lifetimes; not because of peace demonstrations but because of a lack of Bible doctrine in the souls of the believers in the United States.

Lesson 189: Romans 13:1–4 (Genesis 18)

Christians within a Nation

Personally, I love working in the Old Testament, and Genesis is possibly my favorite book because it is so packed with doctrinal information. However, all believers right now, while you are reading this, are Church Age believers. You are a believer in Jesus Christ during the Church Age; and I am a believer during the Church Age. We live during a different dispensation from the people in Genesis, so there are a number of things which are different. That is, we have a different set of doctrines by which we are to function as believers. In the book of Genesis, there is no nation Israel, no extensive law to guide a nation; and the first advent of Jesus Christ is future, as is the institution of the church.

However, it is the same God and the same human race (with the resident sin natures); so there are also continuities between the [dispensations](#). Furthermore, God the Holy Spirit inspired the Old Testament just as He did the New; so we would be wrong to ignore or dismiss it as inapplicable to our lives.

The greatest problem with people who study the Old Testament is, they confuse their place in this world and begin to do oddball things like “keeping the Sabbath.” The same person would never start raising and sacrificing lambs, as was done in the Old Testament; but they cannot distinguish between the continuities and differences of these dispensations. Therefore, now and again, we need to be looking into the New Testament and relating what we learn in the Old Testament to our place as believers today.

What we have been studying is believers within a national entity, and that God deals with us as individuals, but He also deals with man corporately. That is, nations and cities (and a variety of other groups) are used by God and dealt with corporately by God, insofar as He blesses some and curses others. Abraham has been bargaining for the preservation of Sodom, based upon what he believes to be true (that there are 10 believers in Sodom).

For a couple of lessons, we are going to move 3000 years into the future from Abraham, and look at the Apostle Paul and the nation of Rome (SPQR = Senatus Populusque Romanus which is translated *The Senate and People of Rome*). Believers in the time of Paul lived in a nation which both persecuted Christian believers and would eventually destroy Jerusalem, killing and scattering the Jews of Judah and Jerusalem.

Paul needed to make certain that believers knew how to interact within and with a national entity which was not necessarily sympathetic to Christianity and portions of which were even hostile towards them.

Rom 13:1 **Let every soul be subject to the higher authorities. For there is no authority but of God; the authorities that exist are ordained by God.** Most of the translation used here for Rom. 13 is the Modern KJV, but it will be modified from time to time.

At the end of Rom. 12, Paul explained to believers how they were to interact with one another and how they were to deal with individuals who were specifically hostile towards them. In Rom. 13 (there are no chapter divisions in the original Greek New Testament), Paul explains our relationship to the nation in which we find ourselves. Whereas, we can draw some application from Gen. 18 and learn some principles, Paul will lay out exactly our place within a national entity during the Church Age.

Paul is making sure that the believer does not overstep his place in a nation and get involved in social action. I saw a great example of this in my own lifetime. Martin Luther King, Jr. became involved in securing civil liberties for blacks in this nation, and he worked tirelessly through churches. Now, that blacks ought to have the same rights as anyone else in the United States is not only reasonable; but constitutional. However, the church was not the proper vehicle for securing those liberties. By working through churches, Martin Luther King, Jr. corrupted the black church in America, and changed it from being a vibrant place of spiritual growth and refreshment to, in many cases, a political vehicle; which has evolved, in many cases, to be a political arm for the Democratic party today and for communism (I understand that about 1 in 10 black churches in America are Black Liberation Churches, and its doctrine is socialistic and communistic at its core). Because of the inordinate admiration for Martin Luther King, Jr., the black church today is a shadow of what it was 60 or 70 years ago. There are certainly black churches which teach the gospel of Jesus Christ, but few teach accurate doctrine, which means, their power and influence are very limited (the destroyed black family is evidence of that).

Martin Luther King, Jr. offered a political solution; a social solution—not a spiritual solution. So, those who followed him became politically active, leaving the teachings of the Bible behind. Many Blacks put their faith in the political system and into social action; and, at the same time, their dependence upon God was transformed into dependence upon the government, which is a logical progression. If a person believes that their interaction with government is more important than their relationship with God, then he will pursue governmental changes and policies, and come to depend upon the government to enact those policies. Logically, that person's happiness will become tied to the actual enactment of specific governmental policies.

Far more important to African Americans is their spiritual heritage than integration and equal rights. When integration and equal rights was seen as the highest good, the true good which was once taught in their churches was left behind, disregarded, pushed out and seemed to become irrelevant to many Black Americans. Therefore, anyone with doctrine in their souls could understand that, this direction that Martin Luther King, Jr. took his fellow African-Americans in was away from the truth of God's Word. Therefore, this movement away from God's Word would be far more destructive to Black Americans than the segregation and prejudice they sought to remove.

There was a time in America when Black families were strong—they had doctrinal values; Black churches taught the gospel and Bible doctrine; and Black unemployment, from time-to-time, was lower than white unemployment (prior to the Great Depression, both Black and white unemployment was below 4%).

So Paul is making certain that the local church does not become a vehicle for social action and social change. Quite obviously, Roman persecution of Christians is evil. As a result, believers, in the time of Paul, did not have equal rights. However, the enemy of Christianity was not the Roman empire. **For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places** (Eph. 6:12).

Therefore, Paul did not organize a human rights march on Rome and demand equal rights for Christians, even though Christians were being persecuted. Paul himself had been imprisoned by the Romans and Paul would eventually be executed by the Roman authorities. Instead, Paul wrote:

Rom 13:1 (ESV) **Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.**

Rom. 13:1 is the general principle. We live in a fallen world; every person on this earth has a sin nature; and we are organized into individual national entities. Whatever governing authorities are over us, we are to obey those authorities.

So there is no misunderstanding, we are allowed two exceptions to this principle: we are mandated by God to go into all the world and evangelize it (Mark 16:15 Acts 1:8 Rom. 10:18 16:26 Rev. 14:6); and churches are to teach Bible doctrine so that the believers in each local church can grow spiritually (Acts 20:28 Rom. 12:1–2 1Tim. 5:17 Heb. 13:7, 17 1Peter 5:2–3). Therefore, Peter, in Acts 5:29, said, **"We must obey God rather than men"** when he was told to stop evangelizing and to stop teaching Jesus.

This does not give us the right to disobey laws that we do not like or that we believe are unjust. That leads to chaos and lawlessness within a national entity.

Therefore, **Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.** God instituted these authorities over men in order to maintain law and order within a society, because it is this law and order which allows believers to both evangelize and to teach the Word of God freely in local churches. Paul and the other apostles were able to travel all over the Roman Empire because law and order had been established throughout.

A good modern example of places where such law and order does not exist is the Middle East and portions of Africa, where the Arab Spring is occurring. Every week, Christians are persecuted and killed; churches are burned down in these areas. These places had strong, brutal dictators because only a strong, brutal dictator could maintain order among Muslims wherein there is a sprinkling of Christians (and sometimes Jews). Since the Arab

Spring has begun, attacks against Christians and Christian churches has been commonplace, occurring often daily in the Middle East and parts of Africa.

We have been made to believe, for instance, that Hosni Mubarak, former ruler of Egypt, was this awful, evil person, and that the people of Egypt bravely stood up as one to oust him. But, the Bible says: **Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.** Egypt was involved with war against Israel on several occasions, which is the wrong side to be on. However, Mubarak maintained the peace with Israel for 3 decades. In the early 2000's, there were sporadic killings of Christians in Egypt, and their laws were definitely discriminatory, but, in 2011, there were [27 attacks against Christians](#) by Islamists in Egypt that resulted in deaths or injuries of Christians.

Therefore, even though there were injustices incurred by Christians by the Roman government, Paul did not go to church after church and complain about how the Roman Empire was being mean to Christians. Paul never taught that we needed to band together and march on the city of Rome. He did not rouse the people of these churches into a resistance against the Roman authorities. The early church would have never grown apart from the order brought to these lands by the Roman Empire. Paul could travel all over the Roman Empire on his 4 missionary journeys because of Roman law and the enforcement of that law. In fact, on one occasion, Paul, as a Roman citizen, exploited his rights under Roman law and appealed to Cæsar (Acts 25).

Rom 13:2 **So that the one resisting the authority resists the ordinance of God; and the ones who resist will receive judgment to themselves.**

It does not matter that you have come across some laws which you find to be unjust. It is not our place as believers to resist the authority over us set by God. Now, we have to be careful here, because in the United States, we live in a government where most laws are enacted by our elected representatives. A believer ought to fully understand the laws of divine establishment, understand to some degree the political issues of the day, and vote accordingly. That is a part of our national heritage. Since we vote for leaders and for some legislation, it is important for us to have an idea as to what we are voting on.

However, the church is not the place to push this or that political candidate or this or that political issue (apart from teaching the [laws of divine establishment](#)). Clearly, in the time of Martin Luther King, Jr., blacks were being discriminated against legally and personally. However, it was not the place of the church to fix that. The church was not to be used as a political vehicle in any way, even though the cause seemed just. Most of the time, when you fix one social problem, a myriad of new social problems appear, often as a result.

Paul is telling those in the Roman church not to resist the Roman authorities. The Roman authorities are placed there by God in order to provide for the freedoms of the people and to protect the people throughout their empire.

Therefore, when you resist authorities over you, you are resisting the ordinance of God; and in your resistance, you will bring judgment from God on yourself. This does not mean that the believer cannot be politically active and even run for office (that is a legitimate calling in life for the believer, just like any other). However, Paul is clear here: if you resist the authorities that God places over you, then you are resisting the clear mandate of God. Furthermore, you are subject to judgment (which is discipline from God).

Let's just say that some socialist is elected president, one who does not understand the founding of America or the principles which made America great. We may not resist this leader by means of unlawful behavior. We are not to organize political opposition to a president like this within our churches. When we resist the authorities over us, we are resisting the ordinance of God and God will judge us as believers.

Rom 13:3 **For the rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the bad. And do you desire to be not afraid of the authority? Do the good, and you shall have praise from it.**

The primary function of government is to maintain law and order. It is to make certain that both Lucy Van Pelt and Charlie Brown can live side-by-side with the same freedoms. As believers, we do what is right and honorable and we obey the laws. Quite obviously, we have some problematic laws. The Bill of Rights in the United States allows us to own firearms; and yet, in some cities, there are impossible restrictions on this freedom. Let me make this clear: if you can be arrested for it, then don't do it. I personally believe strongly in the Bill of Rights and certainly believe that there are ridiculous restrictions which are put upon individuals by lower level governments (state, city or county). However, using the church to right such things is wrong.

Doing good here is obeying the laws of the land; *doing good* is acting in such a way that you are not afraid of the authorities. A simple example is, driving down the road, obeying the traffic laws. If you speed, run red lights, go through stop signs, or drive unsafely, then you have reason to be afraid of the authorities—you could be stopped at any point and ticketed.

It is not our duty as believers to fix all of the national problems and inequities that we see; we are to evangelize, grow spiritually, and obey the laws and authorities over us. As a believer, you ought not to think that, at any moment, the governing authorities can come to your home and arrest you for something that you have done or are doing. If you are doing something for which you could be arrested, then you need to stop doing it. Your works need to be good, and not evil. What you do every day needs to be within the law.

Paul also writes: **Do the good, and you shall have praise from it.** Does this mean that every believer should expect to win a "Good Citizens Award" in his lifetime? No. We are not concerned about the praise of man; it is God Who praises us for obeying the laws over us. However, in this context, it does mean to receive praise from the ruling authority; which simply means, you are approved in your actions and you are not persecuted by the ruling authorities.

Keep in mind, the person writing these words, Paul, was unjustly persecuted by the law; other apostles that he knew were unjustly persecuted by the law, and yet he writes: **For the rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the bad. And do you desire to be not afraid of the authority? Do the good, and you shall have praise from it.** And of those who read these words, I can guarantee you that 99.9% of you have no clue as to what it is to be truly persecuted for your faith.

Lesson 190: Romans 13:1–10 (Genesis 18) Christians within a National Entity

What we have been studying is the latter half of Gen. 18, when God tells Abraham that He is about to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, because of their degeneracy. Abraham will bargain with God face to face, which is where he will try to determine at what point is a geographical entity in danger of being completely destroyed and, at what point does the believer in a national entity affect the actions of God. This led us to Rom. 13, where we ask, what is our relationship to a nation as believers in Jesus Christ?

So far we have covered the first 3 verses of Rom. 13:

Rom 13:1–3 Let every soul be in subjection to the higher authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those who exist are ordained by God. Therefore he who resists the authority, withstands the ordinance of God; and those who withstand will receive to themselves judgment. For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. Do you desire to have no fear of the authority? Do that which is good, and you will have praise from the same,...

Paul lived in the Roman empire where Christians were persecuted by their government, and yet, he writes that believers and unbelievers (every soul) need to be in subjection to the higher authorities, as God ordains the authorities over us. Immediately, this takes revolution off the table.

Rom 13:4 [The authority over you] is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he [the legal authority over you] is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.

God places authorities over us for our benefit. These authorities are God's servant who preside over lawless Christians (yes, Christians can break laws). As the Understandable Version of the New Testament reads: **For they are servants of God for your good. But you should be afraid if you do what is evil, because they do not carry the sword [i.e., for executing criminals] for nothing. For they are servants of God who take revenge [on wrongdoing] by punishing the person who does evil.**

When a person does wrong, authorities have set up consequences for breaking those laws. The ultimate consequence is execution by a Roman authority (in Paul's time). This is why they have swords (that is, to enforce local laws and to administer the ultimate judgement). God expects a national entity to enforce the laws of the land, and to go so far

as to execute criminals. Therefore, anti-capital punishment demonstrations and movements are not of God. Paul nowhere suggests that capital punishment is going too far. In fact, right here, he not only acknowledges capital punishment, but calls the person carrying it out *a servant of God*.

That some people in authority abuse their power is not an issue. In our form of government, we are allowed to vote such people out; and even to gather and demonstrate against such leaders. However, if your political involvement takes away from your spiritual life, then you need to reduce your political involvement. For instance, let's say you are living under the worst president ever elected in the history of our time, and you have a chance to go to Washington D.C. and participate in a demonstration telling this man how terrible he is; but you will miss some Bible classes in order to do this—you choose the Bible classes rather than the demonstration. Your spiritual growth, your prayers, your spiritual influence and the exercise of your spiritual gift are far more important than you carrying a sign in the nation's capitol saying, "We don't like you very much." Let's say, you come back with, "But, I am doing this for my children." Your children need to recognize that your spiritual life is far more important than anything else. Participation in God's plan is more important than anything else. Your children need to take these cues from you.

In the 1950's and 1960's, black children saw that their parents were marching and demonstrating and they were angry and they wanted their rights; and that these were issues in their church which were seen as far more important than the gospel of Jesus Christ and the teaching of Bible doctrine. These young people fully understood the priorities that their parents taught them, and they passed these priorities onto to their children and so on and so forth. The end result was, many churches today may be integrated, but many more of them are corrupt. Also, because politics was taught to be more important than God, many black children did not gravitate toward the church or dependence upon God; they gravitated toward one political party and chose to depend upon government. They learned from their parents that politics trumps the spiritual life.

What happened in the 1960's? Demonstrations during which policemen and military types were called pigs and spat upon and abused. Is this what Paul suggested? Rather, he wrote: **[The authority over you] is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he [the legal authority over you] is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.** Paul calls policemen and military types *servants of God*; not *pigs*.

Rom 13:5 **Therefore you must be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake.**

Paul indicates that we ought to obey the law of the land, not simply because we fear the consequences of breaking the law, but simply because our own norms and standards demand that we obey the law. We should not evaluate a particular circumstance and determine, "You know what, I am sure I can break this law and get away with it scot free. It will be the perfect crime!" We are not to conform to the laws of the land simply because we fear criminal prosecution; we are to obey these laws because our own conscience tells us it is there right thing to do.

In the 1960's and the decades which followed, there were riots, and people destroyed private property, breaking windows and smashing down doors to businesses, as well as stealing what was inside. This occurs today with the occupy movement (which appears to be dying out, so by 2013, they may not be a very good illustration). These things are wrong. Now, maybe an "occupier" does not fear the law, because he is acting in the middle of a small riot, but he ought to act from the norms and standards from his conscience, which tell him, "That is a private business; that is private property; you do not break their windows."

Rom 13:6 For because of this you also pay taxes. For they are God's servants, always giving attention to this very thing.

Now comes the uncomfortable part. We pay taxes in order to have law and order. We pay taxes in order to pay the salaries of the public servants. We are to see these people as God's servants. The Analytical-Literal translation reads: **Then, for this reason, you* also pay taxes, for they are public servants of God attending continually [or, devoting themselves] to this very thing.** The Understandable Version of the NT reads: **This is the reason why you should pay taxes also. For the authorities are God's servants who continually tend to this matter [i.e., of collecting taxes].** God's Word reads: **That is also why you pay your taxes. People in the government are God's servants while they do the work he has given them.** These men are God's servants. We pay taxes in order for them to do what they are authorized to do. Therefore, we must pay our taxes.

Again, Paul does not tie this to a just government; Paul does not say, "As long as this government does what it is supposed to do, you pay your taxes. However, as soon as they get out of line, you withhold tax monies from them." The authorities over you are God's servants and they are doing God's will. You must pay taxes so that their salaries are paid. If they are corrupt or if they abuse their position, your options are limited, but they do not include holding back tax monies.

Rom 13:7 Therefore give to all their dues; to the one due tax, the tax; tribute to whom tribute is due, fear to whom fear is due, and honor to whom honor is due.

The Good News Bible simplifies it to this: **Pay, then, what you owe them; pay them your personal and property taxes, and show respect and honor for them all.**

You are to pay all of your taxes. That is a mandate from God. This is the imperative mood in the Greek. That is what God has ordered us to do. We are to pay all of the taxes that we owe and we are to show respect and honor to those in authority over us.

Now, I certainly understand some people complaining about the leaders of the United States who seem to be marching us off into bankruptcy. How can we respect leaders like this? Our political leaders essentially caused the mortgage crisis of 2000–2012; how do we have respect for this? First of all, we have respect for them because of what God's Word says. Let me remind you that we vote on our officials. And let me remind you that these leaders, God has placed over us for our benefit (Rom. 13:1). Therefore, the Word

of God does not give us an excuse; and the people who are in office, we voted for. So we cannot justify withholding our taxes from them.

Leaders ought to arise saying, “We need to cut your social security, your medicare benefits, several of our federal departments and about a third of the federal workforce in order for our government to balance our budget.” However, someone else comes along and says, “We will not let those evil ____ touch your social security or your medicare; we will protect it for you. And do not worry about losing your job if you work for the federal government, we will protect those jobs. And we will carefully comb through the budget and make certain that your life will be okay.” Well, even though the first person is telling you the truth, most people would vote for the second. So, if the majority of the people in a national entity want to vote for the person who will lie to them, then that is our choice.

Our economy was booming in the years 2002–2007. What would you have thought if the politicians in charge said, “We have a big problem, and we need to stop the expanding economy. The result could very well be a recession.”? Most Americans would have voted these politicians out of office. Newspapers would have run editorials against these people in office, calling them insane for suggesting that we bring a halt to what appeared to be a great period of growth. However, much of this boom was a result of a number of new regulations which gave home loans to people who should not have been given these loans using such gimmicks as *credit rapid restore*. A real leader would have said, this great economic expansion is a balloon that will burst and, is, therefore, a problem and we need to put on the breaks. No leader from either major political party rose up to say that. In fact, even though the housing bubble was a government-sanctioned boom and bust, politicians today are not admitting to that. Many were quick to point their finger at banks and mortgage companies, but also careful not to arrest anyone, because any arrest would lead us right back to government regulations and involvement.

My point is, in a democracy, we vote for our leaders, and Americans have a very difficult time hearing the truth or accepting the idea of any sort of cut back in anything. So we have the leadership that we have demanded. We may want to blame politicians for the debt mess that we are in, but we voted these politicians into office. The national debt did not just suddenly happen overnight.

Let me give you a simple example of fiscal mismanagement. Our system of social security is now taking in less than it is paying out. So, recently, Congress voted—both Republicans and Democrats—to reduce the revenue paid into social security. One group of people had been given a break from paying into social security, and both houses of Congress and both political parties voted to extend this exemption from paying social security for another year. It makes little sense to reduce revenue into a popular program which is going broke; but both political parties agreed to this tax exemption. One political party did it to create an issue; and the other did it in order to keep this from becoming an issue.

On the cost side, social security was originally designed to start paying out about the time most people die. Now, when social security kicks in, many people live an additional 20 or 30 years. As a result, people are being paid far more than they put into social security.

However, politicians of both parties are afraid to either eliminate social security or put it on a more solid footing. And we voted these people into office.

We live in a fallen world. Men have sin natures, and that seems to be doubly true for those in governmental authority (that is not a doctrine, however). However, it is the maintenance of law and order which is what is important, because it is this law and order which allows the gospel message to be spread and for Bible doctrine to be taught.

When it comes to the big issues in our country, certainly the massive debt, national security, entitlements, honest politicians, etc. are important; but even if we fixed every problem for the next generation (which could not ever happen in a fallen world), our children and their children would still have to choose Jesus Christ as their Savior and Bible doctrine as their guide and authority in life. If they did not, the entire country would be messed up again within a few years, if not within a few months.

There are two generations which came out of Egypt with Moses; one failed and the other succeeded. The key was not organizing a great local government. Both generations had Moses ruling over them, one of the greatest spiritual and political leaders in the history of mankind. However, one generation failed because they rejected the teaching of God's Word; and the other succeeded because they responded to the teaching of the Word of God.

Rom 13:8 **Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves the other has fulfilled the Law.**

We have to be careful about interpreting "owe no one anything." Does this mean you cannot get a house loan or a car loan? Does this mean that Paul is telling you here to cut up your credit cards? Of course not. There are laws about lending and usury in the Old Testament. It is legitimate to lend and borrow money. If it were not, the Bible would not have laws regulating such financial activity; there would have been laws against it.

So, what does it mean? This means that you pay your bills. You don't walk away from a cell phone bill or a utility bill simply because you moved. You don't move out in the middle of the night, leaving your landlord holding the bag. You don't borrow money from mom and dad and then neglect to pay it back. **Owe no one anything.** You operate honestly and honorably in life. You would hope that, anyone that you come across in a financial transaction will act just like you would. You want every person who knows you to trust you with regards to any financial transaction that you engage in.

Then Paul quotes from the Ten Commandments:

Rom 13:9 **For: "Do not commit adultery; do not murder; do not steal; do not bear false witness; do not lust;" and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."** Paul is quoting from the Old Testament: Ex. 20:12–16 and Lev. 19:18.

These commandments stand firm, no matter what laws exist for the general public. In the United States, adultery has become decriminalized and it is, in most states, not even an issue in a divorce. However, that does not mean that you may now commit adultery with impunity. It is still viewed by God as a bad choice in life (i.e., a sin), and you will be disciplined for it.

Let's look back at financial integrity back for a moment: when the Bible tells you that you should love your neighbor as yourself, that means that, you will not cheat them financially. On your financial record, your credit record, there should be nothing but a series of "1's", which means *paid as agreed*. The believer should never have a "9" on his credit record, which is a dept that the believer simply walked away from. You are then disobeying, "Owe no one anything" and "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Rom 13:10 Love works no ill to its neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law.

You don't cheat your neighbor; you don't get into donnybrooks with your neighbor; you don't take your neighbor to court; you have a relaxed mental attitude toward your neighbor, whom you may or may not actually like.

At this point, "love" is not an emotion; you don't stand around and work up nice feelings toward those in your immediate periphery. Love refers to the filling of the Spirit combined with the application of Bible doctrine from your soul.

The "Love your neighbor as yourself" essentially commands you to think of the person on the other side of your interaction/relationship/transaction and treat them exactly as you would want to be treated if you were in their place. Quite obviously, cheating them out of money, treating them badly, hauling them into court, etc. is not how you would like to be treated.

Many of these laws and principles apply to all people in a national entity, not just to believers. Paul is writing to believers, but most of these principles should be followed by all men.

In this life, all of us belong to various corporations; we all have corporate identities. We are members of a state, city and county; we are in various geographical areas with other people; we work with other people; we go to school with other people; we are in the military with other people. Therefore, it is reasonable to suppose that God deals with us as individuals, but also as corporate entities. That, in part, will be what we will study next, because Abraham and Lot are both members of corporate entities. In particular, we are looking at how God deals with Lot, a believer, who lives in Sodom, a degenerate city. This will be another chance for us to further examine political influence versus spiritual influence, because Lot is politically connected, and Abraham is not. Lot is in a high political office and Abraham is not. However, Abraham believes God and Abraham has spiritual impact, and Lot does not.

Therefore, we will next examine the concept of a client nation and the pivot, and relate this all back to Abraham and Lot.

Lessons 191–192: (Genesis 18:16–33)

The Doctrine of a Client Nation to God

We have been studying Gen. 18, which speaks of a corporate judgement that God is about to lay upon 5 cities, including Sodom and Gomorrah. Believers tend to become confused when the Word of God extends beyond their individual Christian life. They do not understand that God does not just deal with them as individuals, but God deals with corporate entities—groups of people who are gathered together into a church, or as an organization, a business, a military force or a city, state or nation.

First of all, Sodom and Gomorrah are not client nations. However, in order to take what we are studying in Sodom and Gomorrah, we first need to understand what a client nation is. The term *client nation* was coined by R. B. Thieme, Jr., who coined a lot of new terms for Christian doctrines. Because he coined this term, I will attempt to be faithful to what he taught about the client nation.

The Very Abbreviated Doctrine of a Client Nation

1. Definition of a client nation: a client nation is a national entity wherein Christianity is thriving. Those within the nation are evangelizing and sending out missionaries, as defined in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19). A significant portion of the population are believers in Jesus Christ and a significant percentage of those are mature or maturing believers. God has a relationship with the corporate body of that nation and God uses that nation in a number of ways.
2. I believe that R. B. Thieme, Jr. came up with the term client nation, because there was no real acceptable definition for the term *Christian nation*.
 - 1) Over the years, many theological and semi-theological words have had their meaning fouled through continual misuse.
 - 2) Many understand *client nation* and *Christian nation* to be synonymous term. By that definition, the United States is a Christian nation.
 - 3) Some believe that nation is a Christian nation because Christianity is the dominant form of religion there. This would indicate that the United States is a Christian nation.
 - 4) Unfortunately, too many people associate the term *Christian nation* with a national entity that has established a national “Christian” church or makes religious requirements of its citizens. If a nation of Christians persecutes non-Christians (within or without that nation), then that is completely wrong and out of step with God’s plan. Let me caveat that with, there are times when it is reasonable and in the will of God for a nation of mostly Christians to go to war with, say, an Islamic nation.
3. The concept of a client nation comes from God’s function in the nation Israel; the concept of a corporate relationship with God; New Testament principles, such as

The Very Abbreviated Doctrine of a Client Nation

those found in Rom. 13; and a history of such nations since the fall of Israel in A.D. 70. Essentially the truth of several doctrines are combined to come up with the concept of a client nation.

- 1) God deals with individuals and with corporate entities. God obviously deals with Abraham as an individual; and He dealt with Moses as an individual. However, the corporate identities were also recognized and dealt with by God. Abraham's army was prospered by God in [Gen. 14](#) in what was possibly the greatest military upset in human history. In the context of this tangent we are on, God is dealing with Sodom and Gomorrah as corporate entities. God deals with churches as corporate entities in Rev. 2–3. The saying, "No man is an island;" is actually a true principle.
- 2) As we have already studied, nations in the time of Abraham and before were obsessed with developing a [moral set of laws](#) with which to govern. These laws were similar in many ways to the Mosaic Law. We would expect this of men who are not too far removed from creation. We would expect them to come up with laws that would have a lot in common with the [laws of divine establishment](#).
- 3) That Abraham has a correct understanding of right and wrong was discussed thoroughly when we exegeted [Gen 18:19](#) **For I [God] have known him [Abraham] to the end that he will command [and instruct] his children [i.e., his descendants] and his household [believers in the Age of Israel] after him. And they have kept [guarded, protected, preserved] the way of Y^ehowah [the spiritual life for believers of that era] to do righteousness [the principle of God's integrity] and justice [the function or execution of God's integrity], to the end that Y^ehowah may bring to Abraham what He has promised him.** Therefore, it is reasonable that there were various men at various times who also had concepts of right and wrong, which they used in ruling nations.
- 4) Abraham will develop a relationship with ancient Philistia (which is probably not the same group of people who later settled in that same area); and it will be clear that they are concerned with doing what is right.
- 5) In the midst of all these nations, God created Israel from Abraham's progeny (this is the story of Exodus through Joshua). For 1400 years, God will work within and through the nation Israel, which indicates again that God both relates to and uses corporate entities.
- 6) As we will later study, Abraham does not simply declare Palestine as his land, and go from there. God waits for the proper time. He even told Abraham that [the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full](#) (Gen. 15:16); so God looks at the Amorites (and others in the land) as a corporate body. The land is not just given over to descendants of Abraham; the iniquity of those in the land has to reach a saturation point, and then God will allow those peoples to be destroyed (this is the Old Testament vengeful God you have heard so much about, but possibly never understood).

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- 7) Israel, in several incarnations (as united Israel, and later as a kingdom divided into Israel and Judah) was a client nation to God through which God worked. Within the nation Israel, salvation and Christology was taught (Gen. 15:6 Ex. 12:6–7 Lev. 1–6); and missionaries were sent out (the book of Jonah; and some people came to Israel for wisdom (Bible doctrine—1Kings 10). This corporate relationship is summed up with the phrase, “They will be My people and I will be their God.” (Jer. 32:38; see also Deut. 26:17–19 Jer. 24:7 30:22).
- 8) Some of the laws that God designed for Israel are universal, e.g the Ten Commandments (with the exception of the 4th commandment). The ceremonial laws were designed to reveal the Savior (the various sacrifices) during the dispensation of Israel. And some laws were designed to simply to keep the Jewish race healthy and prosperous.
- 9) With the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and the establishment of the local Christian church and a new set of doctrines for the Church Age, it became clear that God was no longer working through the nation Israel, as it had been conquered and many of the unbelieving Jews had been expelled or killed.
- 10) It is logical that God will continue to work through corporate entities after the fall of Jerusalem, including through national entities.
- 11) It is logical to assume that God would bless some national entities and curse others.
- 12) Rome, which began as being very anti-Christian, eventually became a client nation, which is what preserved the Roman empire for such a long time.
- 13) Believers were not to become politically active demanding change within a nation. As we already studied in Rom. 13, Paul laid down a series of principles concerning the believer’s relationship to the national entity in which he lives, and these principles were the antithesis of revolution. God’s plan for believers within a nation is teaching and evangelizing; so God is concerned simply with freedom to teach and to evangelize.
- 14) Rom. 13 was covered in a previous lesson. The idea here is that, governments and authorities are instituted by God and authorized by God. We are to obey those authorities. We are to obey the laws of the land. We are to pay our taxes to whatever national entity that we live in. We are not to be involved in civil action to overthrow an unjust government nor should we engage in any illegal behavior in order to fix unjust laws. Whatever grievances we have need to be addressed lawfully; and these grievances ought not to be the focus of a believer’s life.
- 15) When Peter says, “We ought to obey God and not man;” in context, he is speaking of evangelizing and teaching Bible doctrine. He is not talking about Christians leading a national revolution. Acts 5:29
- 16) Because of the laws of the land and the authorities over us that law and order are provided for the human race; and law and order allows for Bible

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teaching and evangelization. The only disobedience that we ought to exhibit is with respect to evangelizing and teaching the Word of God. One could make the case that, if a law requires us to sin, we should not obey that law (although, we have to be careful in the application of this principle).

- 17) The Roman empire, as a client nation, arose organically, not as a concerted effort on the part of Christians trying to impose some sort of Christian government, but as a result of believers growing and evangelizing. Nowhere in the Bible are we ordered to make our own nation into a client nation to God. It either is or it isn't it either happens or it does not. We are mandated to **grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ** (2Peter 3:18).
4. The general characteristics of a client nation (which characteristics are true in varying degrees):
 - 1) The Gentile client nation to God is not a Christian nation, in the sense of Christianity being imposed by the government or being an arm of the government. A Gentile client nation is a national entity in which civil government recognizes, to some degree, [divine establishment principles](#) (or see the lengthier **Doctrine of Divine Establishment** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#))). This is summarized in Rom 13:1-10 and codices #1 and #3 of the Mosaic Law (codex #1 = the Ten Commandments and codex #3 are the civil laws found in the books of Moses).
 - 2) Therefore, people are afforded freedom of religion, thought, speech, association and movement. As a result, there is some respect for individual privacy, property and life; and that the national entity preserves these things.
 - 3) The government respects and even encourages the divine institutions of freedom, work, marriage between a man and a woman, and family.
 - 4) Christianity is allowed freedom to operate within that national entity. Believers can assemble and worship; the Bible can be taught; and open evangelization can take place.
 - 5) A client nation will have a significant number of believers in it, but the government cannot persecute believers. Rome was not a client nation when Christianity began, but it became a client nation. As Tertullian wrote of Christians in his time: "We are but of yesterday, and yet we have filled all the places that belong to you -- cities, islands, forts, towns, exchanges; the military camps themselves, tribes, town councils, the palace, the senate, the market-place; we have left you nothing but your temples."
 - 6) A client nation cannot coerce people to become members of any church. Believing in Jesus Christ is a free will choice; it cannot be imposed by parents, by any organization or by the state. Lest you get weird about this, parents should evangelize their children and even require them to go to church; however, children may still rebel against the God Who made them.
 - 7) The function of evangelism occurs freely within the client nation. There

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are those with the spiritual gift of evangelism who will speak to groups of people, the pastor-teacher who will teach the gospel within the church; individual believers who will personally witness for Jesus Christ; and there will be literature available containing the gospel of Jesus Christ. When giving the gospel, believers need to respect the privacy and free will of the hearers. We should communicate the gospel clearly. It is the Holy Spirit that works within the person, not any sort of coercion, social pressure, emotional blackmail, begging, pleading or demanding which will cause the person to believe in Jesus Christ. Even asking for some sort of physical movement like walking forward, raising one's hand is not a part of the gospel message and can confuse the issue.

- 8) Autonomous local churches are allowed to operate without government interference.
 - 9) There is consistent, accurate teaching from the Word of God. This teaching should be based upon the Bible, the gospel of Jesus Christ, the mechanics of the spiritual life, and dispensational teaching.
 - 10) Christian scholarship will be a hallmark of a client nation.
 - 11) From the home base of a client nation, Christian churches will send out missionaries. These missionaries should function while understanding and respecting the indigenous principle (that we teach the gospel of Jesus Christ and Bible doctrine, but that the end game is setting up local churches teaching the Bible by local pastors). Missionaries must avoid interfering in the political activities of foreign governments. No missionary should be teaching politics from the pulpit. They should not be advocates for democracy (or any other form of government), regime change, or portray the current government in a negative light. They are to evangelize and teach the truth of the Word of God.
5. Politics, the believer and the client nation:
- 1) Obviously, it is better to live in a nation blessed by God. It is better to live in a client nation to God than, say, an Islamic nation.
 - 2) However, our focus and our drive should always be spiritual growth, not *fixing* our nation.
 - 3) God does not order believers to leave their nation for a better nation. Now, this may occur in some circumstances; particularly if the nation interferes with spiritual growth and evangelization.
 - 4) However, the believer is not called to political action or revolution.
 - 5) Some believers will be politicians just like some believers will be chefs, bicycle messengers, and janitors. Some believers will be political commentators, political writers, just like some believers will be truck drivers, policemen and soldiers.
 - 6) No matter what your vocation is, all believers are in full-time Christian service and, therefore, all believers need to grow spiritually. That spiritual growth is generally going to occur within a church. God specifically designed local churches for this era and He works through local churches

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- much the same way He worked through Israel.
- 7) The thrust of our lives needs to be a spiritual thrust not a political one.
 - 8) No group of believers will ever establish heaven on earth. No group of believers will change a nation from being evil to being good through political action.
 - 9) We could establish the best political system in the world, and this could be lost almost overnight if the next generation to rise up rejects Jesus Christ and rejects Bible doctrine. The key to corporate blessing from God is the spiritual lives of the corporate entity, not the political system in which they live.
 - 10) Because we live in a democracy, we as believers should do our civic duty and understand the issues and how they relate to the laws of divine establishment. Whatever lines up with the laws of divine establishment, we vote for; whatever does not, we vote against. However, just voting, when you do not know any of the issues is not your civic duty. Obviously, with everything going on, you may not have time to work, tend to your spouse and family, tend to your spiritual life and also be politically aware. Then find an organization which lines up with the laws of divine establishment which makes political recommendations and follow their recommendations. However, a word of warning: such information should not be available in your church. If you are in a church that is politically active and stresses political action, then you are in the wrong church. Let me caveat that with, some churches will use politics in order to make illustrations (which I do) and will, simply because of their size, have a limited political involvement (it seems like the Saddleback Church had both presidential candidates in 2008 to be quizzed by their pastor). This is not necessarily a misuse of the church, if the bulk of the church time is spend on learning and applying the Word of God. In other words, in our country, because it is a democracy, will occasionally deal with politics and political themes. Where it crosses the line is when that becomes the thrust of the church.
6. In short, a client nation is a nation with a concentrated population of believers, a significant portion of which are maturing or are mature. There is freedom within that nation to evangelize within and without; and freedom to teach the Word of God. Because of the concentration of believers, there will be respect for the divine institutions of freedom, work, marriage, and family.
 7. Just as no believer is perfect, no client nation is perfect.

A more complete **Doctrine of the Client Nation** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)).

Probably the most complete written dissertation on this topic may be found here:

<http://kukis.org/Doctrines/clientnation.htm>

MP3 files from Berachah Church on this topic:

<http://rbthieme.org/mp3audiospecials.html>

Robert McLaughlin teaches this doctrine as a 7 part series, the MP3's files can be found here:

<http://www.gbible.org/?proc=srch&scrit=client+nation&cat=0>

An approach to this doctrine for younger children is found here:

http://allaboardgodstrain.org/files/pdf/A_Client_Nation.pdf This is quite helpful if you teach a Sunday School class.

Other sources for information on this doctrine:

<http://www.doctrinalstudies.com/pdf/D081021.pdf>

<http://www.doctrinalstudies.com/pdf/D100928.pdf>

<http://www.doctrinalstudies.com/pdf/D090908.pdf>

<http://nowewont.ning.com/forum/topics/the-client-nation>

<http://gtbm.org/prayer.php?date=2009-09-13>

This vocabulary is spreading even to Baptist churches:

http://www.faith-baptist-church.info/sermon02_1_2009.htm

The next doctrine simply follows the history of client nations from the 18th century into the present. It will help to know the definition of the *pivot*. **The *pivot* refers to the number of mature believers who live in a client nation or under civil government in a specific geographical location.** This terminology is original with R. B. Thieme, Jr.

(This portion came almost directly from R. B. Thieme, Jr. notes). This is simply so that you can see how the history of late western civilization synced up with various concentrations of believers in Jesus Christ.

Bear in mind that, few courses in history ever deal with the impact of Christianity; or, they teach Christianity as being synonymous with Catholicism during the worst periods of the Catholic church. **Their understanding is darkened, and they are alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart** (Eph. 4:18). For this reason, you should never expect a heathen history professor to understand or teach the impact of Christianity.

The History of Client Nations from the 18th Century to the Present

1. In modern history, the 18th century was one of the greatest periods of radical change. It began with the death of Louis XIV in 1715, and terminated with the Congress of Vienna in 1815.
 2. This century cannot be understood from a Christian perspective apart from Louis XIV, whose reign and policy in the 17th century shaped the course of Europe for over 100 years, and the course of everything, including the industrial revolution down to this moment.
 - 1) Louis XIV was called the Sun King. He was a very arrogant person. He ruled France under the concept: "I am the State."
-

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- 2) Louis XIV was a rabid advocate of the divine right of kings. It was he who first wrote, "kings are absolute lords. To them belong, naturally, the full and free disposal of all property of their subjects, whether they be churchmen or laymen." He also said, "God has given kings to men and He has willed that they alone should review their conduct." Today, he would be known as an absolute statist, a sovereign ruler wherein all that the state lays claim to is the state's. Even though this is common in communist, socialist and other totalitarian forms of government, we had this with our current president (Barack Obama, with the aid of Congress), which nationalized nearly \$1 trillion of student loans, one car company, and set the stage for the nationalization of healthcare. It apparently never occurred to President Obama or to the Congress that assuming control of the student loan business was wrong or immoral. Prior to this, housing loans were essentially nationalized during the presidency of George W. Bush, which created one of the worst economic bubbles in our nation's history. My point is that political leaders and political entities often seize greater and greater power, they are operating under power lust, as Louis XIV did.
- 3) Louis XIV ruled for half a century, from 1643 to 1715. He not only impoverished France through many arrogant, useless wars, but in 1685 he did one thing that changed the course of history and brought in the Anglo-Saxon pivot (a national or regional concentration of believers who impact the direction of a nation or group of nations—this will be more carefully defined in a later lesson).
- 4) In 1685, Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes. Up to that point, France had been a client nation due to the presence of the Huguenots, the French Calvinists who, as the middle class, had brought phenomenal prosperity to France.
- 5) But in his terrible arrogance, Louis renounced the Edict of Nantes and began a persecution. Those Huguenots who were not killed left France for several places: Prussia, which became a client nation; Holland, for the Dutch Republic was a client nation; England; and the United States. Charleston, South Carolina was the home of the Huguenots in America; from there they branched out through the Carolinas.
- 6) As believers are persecuted and leave France, we should expect France to suffer nationally as a result. Similarly, two centuries before this, Spain went from being one of the dominant nations on this earth to a third rate nation when it began to persecute the Jews during the crusades.
3. The Reformation was another major factor in the development of the 18th century pivot. In effect, it began in 1517 when Martin Luther published 95 theses and nailed them to the door of the castle church at Wittenberg. That was the beginning of the Protestant Reformation, out of which came new pivots (geographical concentrations of believers, maturing believers, and mature believers) and new client nations:
 - 1) The pivot in the Netherlands resulted in the rise of the Dutch Republic,

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- 2) The pivot in France was made up of the Huguenots,
 - 3) The pivot in Sweden thrived under Gustavus Adolphus,
 - 4) The pivot in northern Germany under Frederick William the Great Elector,
 - 5) And the pivot in England under Cromwell and the wonderful protectorate he provided which was continued under the rule of William and Mary of Orange.
4. The English colonies saw the beginning of the Anglo-Saxon pivot in this hemisphere. To this day, the pivot has only existed in our northern hemisphere; it has never existed south of the Rio Grande.
 5. So the 18th century was a cauldron, a time of great wars, the rise of great generals, great battles, and it was all terminated by the Treaty of Utrecht.
 - 1) In America, the War of Spanish Succession was called Queen Anne's War; it made a definite contribution to the beginning of our fantastic client nation.
 - 2) From the War of Austrian Succession, great leaders emerged, like Frederick the Great; in America it was called the King George's War.
 - 3) The Seven Years War was here called the French and Indian War.
 - 4) The French Revolution terminated with the rise of Napoleon.
 - 5) All these wars made fantastic contributions to history, not only militarily, but also to the rise of the Renaissance and the beginning of the industrial revolution.
 6. The 18th century saw the beginning of inventions which began the industrial revolution. Hargraves invented the spinning jenny, Cartwright the power loom, James Watt the steam engine.
 7. In 1730, at Oxford University, three men held a prayer meeting: John and Charles Wesley and George Whitfield, from which grew a fantastic pivot (Matt. 18:20). As a result, the 18th century was the beginning of client nations from a great pivot of mature believers in England, the United States, northern Germany, and Holland.
 8. The 18th century ended dramatically with the Congress of Vienna in 1815, and a new map of Europe emerged under Metternich. Russia received Poland, Finland, and Bessarabia; Sweden got Norway; Belgium and the Dutch provinces tried to unite into one kingdom (which didn't work) called the Kingdom of the Netherlands; Prussia received half of Saxony, part of the Rhineland; Austria was given the eastern side of the Adriatic: Lombardy, Venetia, and upper Italy. Russia, Prussia and Austria formed the "Holy Alliance," one of the greatest threats ever. For under the command of Alexander of Russia, this Holy Alliance planned to invade the United States, which would have been disastrous!
 9. Out of this great 18th century pivot came the beginning of the greatest missionary activity of all time, with such missionaries as William Carey, Henry Martin, Reginald Hebert, Adoniram Judson, John Scutter in India, Robert Morrison, Dr. Nevius, Hudson Taylor, Peter Parket in China, Dr. James Hepburn, Samuel Brown, Gido Werbecht, Capt L.L. James in Japan, Dr. H.G. Underwood and John Ross in Korea, Pliny Fisk and Levi Parsons, Dr. C.W. Van Dyke and Eli Smith in Beirut; Keith Falconder and Samuel Zweemer in Arabia; Robert Moffat, John

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- Crop, John Redman, Alexander McKay, Thomas McComer, George Grenville, Henry Rich, Adolphus Good, Mary Schlessor and Samuel Crowther and Livingston all in Africa, Capt Allen Gardner in Tierra Del Fuego, David Trumball and H.B. Pratt in Columbia, and L.L. Legters in Mexico.
10. First came the wars, then the pivots, then the missionaries. The wars readjusted history, setting the stage for missionary thrusts. The French lost India to the British. With British rule came the missionaries. The same occurred in Africa. Those nations who succeeded in controlling parts of Africa sent some of the greatest missionaries in history.
 11. This same 18th century saw great changes in culture and the arts. In the field of music came Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart. Great artists included Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Gainsborough, Goya, and Hogarth. Great writers included Alexander Pope, who became the exponent of neoclassicism in English literature, Adam Smith, Edward Gibbon, John Boswell, and Oliver Goldsmith.
 12. All the 18th century's cultural, spiritual, and historical changes pointed to one great pivot. The so-called "holy club of Oxford" started it all.
 - 1) From George Whitfield came Selenas Countess Huntington; the Moravian Brethren were under Count Zinzendorf; Spangenberg went to Pennsylvania; Dober and Nichemann went to St. Thomas, and Christian David went to Greenland. Augustus Montague Toplady became one of the great men involved in that pivot of 1740-1778.
 - 2) Others included John Newton, William Calper, John and Isaac Milner, Henry Venn, Hannah Moore, Robert Rakes, John Howard, William Wilburforce, Grenville Sharp, Thomas Clarkson, William Carey, Henry Martin, and Robert Morrison.
 - 3) Though these are all just names to you, in God's books, these are the great men of history! Some came close but missed the boat, e.g., Immanuel Kant. He was so close, yet he failed.
 13. The Holy Alliance and the Monroe doctrine.
 - 1) During the Congress of Vienna, Metternich authored a League of Nations in Europe. It was led by Czar Alexander of Russia, Emperor Francis I of Austria, King Frederick William III of Prussia, and later Ferdinand VII of Spain was added, making it a quadruple alliance. It formed one of the greatest attacks this hemisphere has ever sustained.
 - 2) The objective of this League was the maintenance of the Catholic religion plus peace and order in Europe. However, this occurred during the time of absolute monarchies and the suppression of all political freedoms.
 - 3) One of the agenda items of the Holy Alliance was to retrieve the colonies Spain had lost, and therefore to invade this hemisphere. At that time, James Monroe was our President. His Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams, was one of the best in our history.
 - 4) On behalf of President Monroe, Adams wrote an answer to that invasion before it began: "If the Holy Alliance subdues Spanish America, the ultimate result of the undertaking will be not to set up a standard of Spain,

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- but to portion out this continent for themselves."
- 5) So Adams recognized immediately the evil that would come out of this. For example, Russia might have taken California, Peru, and Chile, and the Pacific Ocean would have become a Russian lake.
 - 6) This crisis resulted in a speech given to Congress by President Monroe on 2 December 1823, written by John Quincy Adams. "We owe it, therefore, to candor, and to amicable relationships existing between the United States and European powers, to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety." In other words, "you invade any of these areas and we will fight!" As a result, they never invaded.
 - 7) The result was that, in this hemisphere, there were fifteen independent republics involving fifteen million people which emerged from the ruins of the Spanish Empire, to include: Colombia, Venezuela, Equador, Panama, Peru, Bolivia, Mexico, etc. h. Prior to this Monroe doctrine, in September 1821, Czar Alexander of Russia had claimed the entire Pacific coast for the Russians, for he planned to take over this hemisphere.
 - 8) The Monroe doctrine is the last time the United States has had a clear foreign policy. That policy made it possible for this hemisphere to remain in a state of semi-isolation, so that not only could a pivot be formed, but also so that millions of people throughout the world could find eternal salvation through faith in Christ. For we sent out more missionaries than anyone in the world, with the exception of England. And we developed a fantastic pivot in this country! So that the Anglo-Saxon pivot eventually received its strength from the United States of America.

Some of this material came from notes were taken by Cvengr and posted here: <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-religion/2176118/posts> (c) 1989, by R. B. Thieme, Jr. All rights reserved. Nearly all of point 4 was taken from this source. See this post for additional information on these doctrines of the client nation and the pivot. One of the areas in which R. B. Thieme, Jr. excelled in was history; particularly ancient history.

At this point, we are still on a tangent, defining several terms which have been used in this study of Genesis, but barely explained. God gave us a 1000+ page Bible because His plan is rather complex (salvation is moderately simple, as are the basic spiritual skills, but there is more to the Christian life than just those things). As believers, we have personal responsibilities before God and we have corporate responsibilities before God, and these are different. Same God, but we have different roles. This should not be difficult to understand. If you are a teacher or an employer, and you have young people that you teach or employ, your relationship to them is different than the relationship that you have to your own children. What many people do not understand (or refuse to understand) is

that our individual responsibilities are different from our corporate responsibilities. You cannot take your individual responsibilities, toward your aging parents for instance, and treat that as a corporate responsibility, thus relieving you of your personal responsibility. That is, when your aging parents are in need, you do not think that is the government's responsibility. The same thing is true of a child that you sire; it is not the government's responsibility to raise that child, it is your individual responsibility. When it comes to the spiritual growth of your children, that is your responsibility, not the responsibility of the local church. The local church can augment your spiritual teaching but it cannot replace it.

One of the great confusions of modern liberals is, they both attempt to make the state into a god and they attempt to replace areas of personal responsibility with corporate responsibility. As we study these topics, this statement will become more intelligible.

We will return to Gen. 18 shortly. God will deal with Sodom and Gomorrah as a corporate entity, so that it is important that we understand what that means and the ramifications of God's relationship to corporate entities. God deals with a local church as a corporate entity; He deals with your neighborhood, your city and your state as corporate entities.

The key to God's relationship with a corporate entity is the pivot within that entity. This can be any sort of a corporate entity: a school, a local church, a business, a military unit, a nation, a city, a neighborhood; but the pivot is key to how God deals with that corporate entity. We defined the concept of a pivot earlier, but need to go into a lot more detail on it.

The way God deals with a national entity is based upon the believers within that nation. The key to God's blessing for any nation is the number of mature believers found within that entity.

Doctrine of the Pivot

1. Definition of the pivot.
 - 1) The *pivot* is defined as the number of mature believers who live in a client nation or under civil government in a specific geographical location. This terminology is original with R. B. Thieme, Jr.
 - 2) Although a pivot is primarily composed of mature believers, it may also include those positive believers whose positive volition toward the Word of God is moving them towards spiritual adulthood (as we have [previously studied](#), being in fellowship and learning the Word of God is the basis for our spiritual growth—2Peter 3:18).
 - 3) There is a distinction to be made between the believers in the pivot as opposed to those believers who live in [cosmic system](#) (which is Satan's organized strategy to rule the world), whose souls are filled with arrogance and self-righteousness.
 - (1) As an aside, *kósmos* (κόσμος) [pronounced *KOSS-moss*], means *world, world order, arrangement, order, organized world system*. Strong's #2889.

- (2) Kósmos would be used in contrast with the word *chaos*, which means disorder.
 - (3) Kósmos can be used to describe a system of order independent of faith in Christ, as well as for a system of thinking based upon faith in Christ.
 - (4) Believers in the cosmic system are often recognized by their self-righteousness, their distortion of the Word of God, and by their disorientation to reality.
 - (5) As the pivot shrinks, there is an emphasis on dependence upon the government, as well as a call to social action and civil disobedience, particularly when advocated and practiced by believers. I personally witnessed this in a Methodist church which had pamphlets that advocated for an end to apartheid in South Africa and Rhodesia back in the 1970's. Not only had they left their first love (Jesus Christ—Rev. 2:4) but they were so far afield as to corporately advocate for evil.
 - (6) There is an article written by [Joe Phelps](#), who is an example—at least in this article—of a person who has the wrong emphasis. There is no emphasis upon being born-again through faith in Christ; but the emphasis is upon social action and the article referenced attempts to draw parallels between God freeing the Jewish slaves and the Occupy Wall Street movement. I have no idea about the rest of this person's theology; I just know that this particular set of opinions is confused and way wrong.
- 4) As a part of the pivot, growing believers influence the nation spiritually. All believers have civic responsibilities, which are a part of the [laws of divine establishment](#) (which we studied in [Rom 13:1-10](#)).
 - 5) The laws of divine establishment are principles and laws which are designed for nations of believers and unbelievers alike. We have previously [studied](#) these laws. These are principles which preserve and prosper a national entity. These laws are every bit as true as the law of gravity.
 - 6) Christianity cannot be a state-sponsored religion. This is because, apart from a person's free will, Christianity means nothing. That is, we must actually choose, at some point in time, to believe in Jesus Christ, of our own uncoerced volition. However, at the same time, government officials who believe in Jesus Christ should be allowed to express themselves. Furthermore, faith in God and religious symbols related to the culture of a nation need not be hidden or only allowed to be found in private institutions. In our government, the first amendment constrains Congress with respect to making laws which limit religious thought and expression. The first amendment was never designed to limit individuals (or government entities) expressing their faith (which is how it has been twisted).
 - 7) Some religions—particularly Islam—attempt to control the nation and the individuals in the nation with regards to their religious convictions. This

explains why Islamic nations need strong and ruthless leaders, because their people could not be controlled apart from such leadership. You cannot have a nation of people inspired by Satan (for Satan is the father of religion—Matt. 13:38 John 8:41, 44 Acts 13:10) without having strong authoritarian controls on these people. Such countries wander a long distance from the laws of divine establishment and only individuals who are strong and even ruthless can govern such a population.

- 8) The church needs to be able to function freely and independently of government interference, including advocacy, sponsorship or enmity. It is legitimate for the pastor to use politics to illustrate some Christian principles; however, when a church simply advocates for certain candidates or for a certain party, it has gone far outside of its boundaries. It is not up to the state to correct this church; it is up to the people of that church to correct that problem. The influence of the church must be first and foremost spiritual (which does not mean other-worldly). In the teaching of the Word of God, there will be applications to life and illustrations from the world.
 - (1) As a distinction, in the early 1970's, a church may use South Africa or Rhodesia as illustrations of nations who, at that time understood and functioned under the laws of divine establishment; but that same church would not have “get involved” pamphlets to change what is going on in those nations.
 - (2) The way individual believers in the local church handle this is, they quietly leave that church, they elect a different board of deacons, and/or they elect a new pastor. In any case, if the individual believers cannot get political pamphlets removed from their foyer, then they should leave that church.
- 9) This does not mean that Christians should not serve in government. However, believers in government must obey the laws of divine establishment, and they must never seek to force Christianity on others. People either choose to believe in Jesus Christ or they don't; this cannot be a state-mandated decision (even parents cannot mandate this decision). However, it is legitimate for believers who work in government to express their faith, as our nation was founded primarily by believers in Jesus Christ, who saw no problem with prayers beginning this or that governmental function. As an aside, you do not pray before this or that function, just in case, or for good luck. Jesus said, **“When two or three are gathered in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”** So, if 2 or 3 (or more people) are praying to God from that same geographical location, then our Lord is there in their midst. This is quite helpful in the function of any government.
- 10) In a client nation, there must be enough freedom for evangelism, conversion, spiritual growth, and missionary activity. These things are key in any nation.
- 11) There has always been a pivot somewhere in the world, although there has not always been a client nation. Four great pivots were formed in the

- eighteenth century in Holland, Britain, America, and North Germany. All these pivots were responsible for great missionary activity.
- 12) One can see by a [map of the British Empire](#) that God greatly blessed England. Their government encouraged missionaries and spiritual work done in the various countries in the British Empire, and, therefore, the British empire became great. The fall of the British empire goes hand-in-hand with their spiritual decline (R. B. Thieme, Jr. coined the phrase, *spinoff*, to refer to believers who retrogress in the spiritual life).
2. The *spinoff* refers to believers who **have left their first love** (Rev. 2:4) and are in a spiritual downward spiral (R. B. Thieme, Jr. calls this [reversionism](#)). This term means that they *revert* to what they were before. These are saved believers, believers who will spend eternity in heaven, but who have gone astray from the way of God (Psalm 119:176 Matt. 18:12–14 1Peter 2:25). These are believers who spend a great deal of their lives out of fellowship (1John 1:6–7); they do not learn Bible doctrine and they do not grow spiritually. Some knew the Word of God but then began to retrogress in their spiritual lives. In this study, we are viewing such retrogression corporately. *Spinoff* is a term to describe a corporate situation; reversionism can describe individuals or groups of individuals. When a corporate body retrogresses, it is not just one or two believers, but a significant portion of believers who are either not growing or retrogressing from whatever growth stage they were in.
 3. The Pivot and the Client Nation.
 - 1) A client nation will have a pivot of mature believers, who are the invisible heroes of that nation. They are the salt that preserves this nation (Matt. 5:13—salt, in the ancient world, functioned as a preservative).
 - 2) It is because of these invisible heroes that a nation is prosperous because of the concept of [blessing by association](#) (Gen. 12:3 22:18 Gal. 3:8). The general public usually does not recognize that they are being blessed by this association. Many times, these believers function behind the scenes. They are called [invisible heroes](#), a term coined by R. B. Thieme, Jr.
 - 3) The prosperity and blessing in a client nation does not occur through social activism (civil demonstrations, political movements, environmentalism), but through those believers who execute the plan of God. Believers who execute the plan of God may be far removed from the political activity of a nation. They may or may not vote; they may or may not be involved in politics, they may or may not be involved in any sort of civil activity. They are the [invisible heroes](#) who help to preserve the nation in which they live.
 - 4) By normal day-to-day spiritual function, mature believers can move a nation of oppression and tyranny to an establishment government. This does not come to pass by social activism, but simply by the spread of Christianity and accurate principles of doctrine being taught. This is what happened, in fact, in the Roman empire. This has occurred in South Korea. This appears to be occurring in Communist China. The growth of the pivot is what changes the nation. Although there are a huge number of believers now in the United States, it is not inconceivable that our client nation status could change in the next 30 or 50 years and for China to

become the next client nation to God. I'm not saying that as a prediction; but as to what could happen in the future. The great prosperity and blessing that the United States has received is based upon the pivot of believers within the United States. When these believers begin to spinoff into the cosmic system or into political activism or into human solutions, then our nation will retrogress.

- 5) Each generation of believers determines the direction of the nation in which they reside. Although one generation can essentially ensure many of the freedoms of the next; that next generation can lose that freedom for itself or for subsequent generations through its actions and thinking (this is explained in the 4 generation *curse* found throughout the Bible).
 - (1) The idea behind the 4 generation curse is, if one generation arises and they do not teach salvation or doctrine to their children, that can result in a 4 generation curse.
 - (2) It is not that subsequent generations are responsible for the wrongdoing of their parents, but that they continue in their own lives to function apart from Jesus Christ.
- 6) A nation with a large pivot of mature believers guarantees the perpetuation of that client nation, despite the many dangers which appear to be on the horizon. Our own nation is a prime example of this. We currently have one of the worst and inexperienced presidents in American history (I write this in 2012); we are on an economic precipice in several ways (our government is running a yearly \$1.4 trillion deficit); we have a large number of people in this nation whose faith is in government rather than in God; and we have vicious and ruthless enemies who seek our destruction (both Communist and Islamic nations). Yet, at this point in time, we are still the most prosperous and blessed nation on earth with the greatest military of this earth. However, this can change. As the pivot shrinks and the spinoff becomes large, the corporate entity of the client nation is negatively affected. The prosperity and blessing which we receive from God could change virtually overnight.
- 7) As the pivot declines, the client nation declines and is eventually destroyed through the administration of the five stages of national discipline described in Lev. 26 (these are called the [five cycles of discipline](#) by R. B. Thieme, Jr.).
- 8) A client nation has enough freedom in that nation to provide for extensive evangelism without government interference or federal persecution. From this evangelism comes a cadre for the pivot. But not all believers enter this cadre and execute the plan of God. A good pivot is perhaps 20% of all believers. In other words, it is not unusual for someone to have believed in Jesus Christ and then not to have any clue as to what life is all about. Christians more typically live in a state of confusion rather than one of cognizance after salvation.
- 9) One of the greatest enemies to spiritual influence in a nation are believers in the cosmic system. They become apostate through life in Satan's cosmic system. These apostate believers may even become potential

revolutionaries through civil disobedience. They become fanatical crusaders, disrupting the freedom and rights of others through social action. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the civil rights movement are a prime example of believers who got caught up in the cosmic system. What was particularly evil about Martin Luther King, Jr. was, he closely worked with churches in order to achieve his desired social ends. Now, almost all liberals and many conservatives would argue until they are blue in the face that MLK was a great man who did great things. In 2012, the Black family has disintegrated so that 70% of Black babies are born out of wedlock; hundreds of thousands of Black babies are killed in the womb; the unemployment rate and the governmental assistance rate is far higher for Blacks than it is for whites; etc. By nearly any measure, Blacks are far worse off as a sub-group in our population than they ever were. Perhaps you don't know this, but, at one time, Blacks had wonderful family units, that most were believers in Jesus Christ and many were growing spiritually, and that there were times when unemployment among Blacks was *lower* than it was for whites. So the idea that Martin Luther King, Jr. did something great for African-Americans is preposterous. He poisoned Black churches which has led to the soul-poisoning of many African-Americans.

- (1) You may want to counter and say, well, Blacks were discriminated against and treated badly. Of course, that happened. There was hatred in the souls of some whites and that hatred poisoned their own ignorant souls.
 - (2) Liberals today, who claim to be the friend and advocate of the Black man are paternalistic toward Blacks. They treat many Blacks as if they are unable to do for themselves; and, because they believe that Blacks cannot control themselves, they make it easy for Blacks to get abortions. In essence, all that liberals do for Blacks is a result of believing Blacks are inherently inferior and need government to give them a boost or a little extra help, even if this means supporting them financially from cradle to grave. After all, in the mind of a liberal, you cannot expect that Blacks will work hard and be responsible; you cannot expect Black women to control their sexual nature; and you cannot expect that Black men will take responsibility for any of their actions. Therefore, government must step in and take up the slack, because Blacks, in the eye of the liberal, are inferior and unable to overcome difficulties and obstacles on their own.
 - (3) So that there is no misunderstanding, the spiritual pivot in the Black community, which was powerful in the 1950's and before, was very much responsible for blessings which the United States received. However, they were led astray by the civil rights movement, which put political change ahead of spiritual dynamics.
4. Jesus teaches the pivot: in speaking to His disciples, Jesus said, **“You are the Salt of the earth; but, if the salt should lose its strength, what will you use to**

restore its saltiness? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown away, and trampled underfoot.” (Matt. 5:13). Salt was used to preserve food in the ancient world, since refrigerators were in such short supply. The preservation qualities of salt parallel the spiritual growth of the individual. When this spiritual growth loses its power, the nation is no longer preserved.

5. When God made promises to Abraham, God taught the principle of the pivot and blessing by association. Y^ehowah said to Abraham, “I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Gen. 12:3).
6. This chapter that we are studying is an example of the preservation of the pivot. God tells Abraham that He is about to destroy these cities, and Abraham asks, “What if there are 50 righteous men within these cities? Would you still destroy them?” God says that He would not. “Okay, then,” Abraham continues, “What if there are only 45 righteous, would you still preserve the city?” “I would,” God answers. So, there is a point at which the number of believers in a geographical area preserve that area; and there is a tipping point after which, there are not enough to preserve that geographical area. Gen. 18:17–33 (which we have not fully exegeted yet)
7. The History of the Geopolitical Advance of the Pivot.
 - 1) The Dispensation of Israel.
 - (1) The first client nation to God was Israel. The dispensation of Israel was built around four different client nations. Between B.C. 1440 and A.D. 70, God called out a new racial species in order to form the first in a series of Jewish client nations. Blessing was related to those nations. The Old Testament reveals Israel's impact on history.
 - (2) The four different nations were:
 - i The United Kingdom.
 - ii The Northern Kingdom.
 - iii The Southern Kingdom.
 - iv Judah.
 - (3) The administration of the fifth cycle of discipline (the 5th stage of national discipline) to each of the four client nations was as follows.
 - i First of all, the 5th stage of national discipline is the final stage, where the nation is conquered and the people are removed from the land. We already studied this, in a limited way, in [Gen. 14](#), where the city-state of Sodom had first suffered the 4th stage of national discipline (being conquered by a foreign territory and paying tribute to that territory) and was in the midst of the 5th stage of national discipline (being removed from the land of their birth) when Abraham stepped in.
 - ii Assyria administered the fifth cycle of discipline to the Northern Kingdom in 721 B.C.
 - iii The Chaldeans administered the fifth cycle of discipline to the Southern Kingdom in 586 B.C.

- iv The Romans destroyed Jerusalem and completely took over Palestine in A.D. 70. That was the end of all Jewish client nations, and the beginning of the times of the Gentiles.
 - v It should be pointed out that these are not the only ways in which God disciplines a client nation. These were specifically the ways that God would deal with client nation Israel between 1440 B.C. and A.D. 70.
- 2) The Times of the Gentiles.
 - (1) During these times of the Gentiles, no Jewish nation can be a client nation to God, not until the Second Advent of Jesus Christ and the fulfillment of the four unconditional covenants to Israel.
 - (2) The first Gentile client nation to God was S.P.Q.R. (i.e., the Senate and the People of Rome), which we call the Roman Empire. This was the first and in many ways the greatest Gentile client nation to God.
 - i When the Roman Empire reached its peak with a large pivot, there was the golden age of the Antonine Caesars, from A.D. 96 to 192. The historian Gibbon called this period the "golden age of humanity."
 - ii The period of the Antonine Caesars was a time of dictatorship, and yet a time of the most fantastic blessing. This illustrates that the issue is not the type of government, but the pivot of believers.
 - (3) Other great Gentile pivots and client nations of the past include the Goths, the Franks, the Swiss under Calvin and Zwingli, Scotland under Patrick, Sweden under Gustavus Adolphus, parts of Germany under Luther, France under the Huguenots, Great Britain, Brandenburg Prussia under Frederick the Great.
- 8. The Pivot Principle.
 - 1) In essence, a small pivot means a declining Gentile client nation. A small pivot means that there are fewer believers being evangelized and fewer believers being brought to spiritual maturity. This is often seen in churches where the congregants are becoming older, but not being replaced by the next generation of believers. There are fewer and fewer young people in the church.
 - 2) An enlarged pivot occurs when there is successful evangelism (which we saw in the 1950's with Billy Graham, where thousands came to know Jesus Christ in his revivals). A larger pivot means that more and more believers are being brought to maturity through the accurate teaching of the Word of God. And a growing pivot means a wonderful, prosperous, and blessed client nation.
 - 3) It ought to be clear that we live in a wondrously prosperous nation, which would suggest that there is a pivot of mature believers in the United States. However, there are many cracks in the foundation of the United States, which would suggest that this pivot is declining.
 - 4) Although there are many churches throughout the United States which

teach the Bible accurately, these churches are often small. Evangelical movements are much smaller today than when Billy Graham was actively evangelizing. And, in many churches, the number of young people is declining. This suggests a shrinking pivot.

- 5) The pivot is a remnant of mature believers who live in a client nation. They have advanced through the [three stages of spiritual adulthood](#).
- 6) The spinoff is made up of believers who have entered [reversionism](#) and are living in [Satan's cosmic system](#). Negative volition to doctrine and resultant reversionism produces the spinoff.
- 7) When the pivot is too small in any generation, there are great disasters; some are economic, some are natural disasters, some are military-related, and some are terrible governmental policies (which cause people to become very dependent upon government). When the spinoff of cosmic involvement becomes too great, that generation is destroyed. If there is no response to the four stages of national discipline, then God eventually removes that client nation from history. God may use even a more degenerate nation to destroy that which once was a client nation (see Rev. 17-18).
- 8) England is a great example of a nation which has gone through these various stages. At one time, England—this tiny little nation—ruled over about [a fifth of the world](#). The sun never set on the Union Jack (the British flag), because, wherever the sun was, right down below it was a set of nations under the control of the British Empire. Its control and sphere of influence was incredible. And, what was the key? Evangelism and Bible doctrine. And everywhere that England went, they brought to these nations law and order (the laws of divine establishment) and the gospel of Jesus Christ. England was, at one time, the greatest nation in history; and now, it is but a shadow of its former self. One of the other overt manifestations of this fall from grace is, many churches in England are being [converted into mosques](#); and many of their churches are nearly empty. Furthermore, [Britain has become a huge nanny state](#), providing some people care from [cradle to grave](#).
- 9) When divine judgment falls on a nation, the pivot is secure. The pivot is always preserved, even though it also shares in the difficulties of the disaster. However, unbelievers and reversionists (those who turn away from spiritual growth) are wiped out. This will be clear when we finish Gen. 18 and 19.
- 10) While the pivot is secure, the spinoff is always destroyed by historical catastrophe. This is how God administers the [sin unto death](#) to reversionists. Historical disaster separates the pivot from the spinoff.
- 11) If the pivot is too small and the spinoff is too large, then the nation is destroyed. But if the nation is destroyed, the pivot is preserved through the disaster, as per Gen. 19 and Isa. 28:5-6.
- 12) By destroying the great spinoff of reversionists, the Lord protects future generations of history from evil, reversionism, apostasy, and tyranny. The spinoff is destroyed so that the nation will have breathing room for future

- generations.
- 13) Historical crisis and geographical disaster is the means of cleansing a nation from the spinoff of evil. A great spinoff will destroy a nation unless God intervenes with historical disaster to eliminate that cancer. Either the spinoff must go or the nation must go.
 - 14) The divine destruction of the spinoff is therefore comparable to a national rebound. With the infection of reversionism destroyed, the nation takes on new life and continues.
 - 15) If large enough, the pivot is the means of delivering a nation under discipline, either from or through the historical disaster. The example is Judah in 701 B.C. during the Sennacherib invasion. The consistent ministry of Isaiah turned the tide in Judah. When all the establishment means of deliverance fail, response to Bible teaching is the last hope.
 - 16) If the pivot is large enough, not only is the client nation delivered from historical disaster, but a large pivot of mature believers means great blessing by association to the client nation and to all nations around it.
9. Why is a client nation destroyed? Hosea 4:1-6 explains how. Hos 4:1-6 is perhaps the most lucid of all the passages on the fifth stage of national discipline (here, it is all about the Northern Kingdom) and how a client nation is destroyed.
- 1) Hosea 4:1 "Hear the doctrine of the Lord, you citizens of Israel, because the Lord has a court case against the citizens of the nation; because there is nothing of doctrine being taught, there is nothing of grace being applied, and there is no knowledge of God in the nation." This is a call for positive volition toward doctrine as taught by prophet and priest.
 - 2) Hosea 4:2 "Instead, there is lying and deceiving [a lack of personal virtue], there is both murder and stealing and rape [criminality is rampant], and [there is] unrestrained violence."
 - (1) The rise in criminality comes from two sources: moral and immoral degeneration.
 - (2) The Hebrew idiom "blood reaches out and touches blood" means unrestrained violence.
 - 3) Hosea 4:3 "For this cause, the land shall mourn; consequently, everyone who lives in it shall lose strength along with the animals of the field; both the birds of the sky and the fish of the lakes are taken away." One of the signs of degeneration is cruelty to animals and a reduction in the animal population. Today, many of the famous animal populations of Africa are not found in Africa, but in [Texas](#). This is because the pivot of believers in Africa, many of whom were established by the British Empire, have died off or have become the spinoff.
 - 4) Hosea 4:4 "Yet let no one contend [blame others for the judgment] and let no one impugn God, for you people are like those who contend with the priest [the person who communicated doctrine]." The individual believers of the nation are the ones at fault; you cannot blame God for the spiritual decline of a nation.
 - 5) Hosea 4:5 "Therefore, you have stumbled by day [failure to apply doctrine in the daily life]; furthermore, the prophet will stumble with you by night

- [apostate teaching in night classes]. Then I will destroy your mother [nation]." The walk of the believer is confused because believers lack the Word of God in their souls.
- 6) Hosea 4:6 "My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge of doctrine. Because you have rejected doctrine, I will reject you from being a priest nation [client nation]; since you have neglected the doctrine of your God, I will neglect your children [next generation was enslaved]." Are the children bearing the brunt of the spiritual defection of their parents? In part, but the children, through evangelization and spiritual growth can turn this around. The problem is, when one generation loses its spiritual power, the next generation is not exposed to the Lord Jesus Christ or to the Word of God. As we will eventually study, in Exodus, there are two generations who left Egypt with Moses. The older generation died the sin unto death in the desert; the young generation defeated the Canaanites in the Land of Promise and took over the Land of Promise. The next 4 books in the Bible are very careful to distinguish between these two generations.
 - 7) The same subject of national disintegration is found in Isa 28:1-13 as well.
 - 8) When the believer fails, the nation fails.
 - 9) When the believer advances to maturity and joins the pivot in any generation, though that pivot will not be recorded in the pages of history, it will be recorded forever in heaven.
 - 10) Part of escrow blessings to a mature believer is personal, national, and international impact. Rev 3:12, "The winner, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God [a permanent historical record in heaven of all mature believers who had an impact on history as a part of the pivot]; furthermore, he will never vanish from history, in fact, I will emblazon on him the title of my God, the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem [coat of arms of winner] which will descend from heaven [satellite city], also from God a new title [new aristocracy for eternity]."
10. The United States of America, a Client Nation.
- 1) Before it became a nation, the United States of America was already under client nation status as a part of the Anglo-Saxon pivot. As a colony, the United States was already in client nation status.
 - 2) On 4 July 1776, a document was written and unanimously approved: The Declaration of Independence of the Thirteen United States of America.

The Declaration of Independence

"When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to separation.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are

endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed ...

"But when a long train of abuses, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce us to absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty to throw off such a government and to provide new guards for their future security . . .

"We therefore acquiesce in the necessity which denounces our separation, and hold them as we hold the rest of mankind: enemies in war, and in peace, friends.

"We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America, in general congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for rectitude of our intention, do, in the name of and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare that these united colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states; that they are absolved of all allegiance to the British crown, and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain is and ought to be totally dissolved, and that as free and independent states they have the full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and do all other acts and things which independent states may have a right to do.

"And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, we mutually pledge our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."

- 3) From that day on we have been a nation; but before 1776 we were already under client nation status with a 200-year old Anglo-Saxon pivot.
 11. What's the status of the pivot today? How stands the United States of America now?
 - 1) We see the same historical trends occurring as in the eighteenth century. Whereas, before, Russia was our greatest enemy, it is now China which keeps us in check because of our ever-shrinking pivot.
 - 2) Popular among fundamentalist Christians today is Christian activism and civil disobedience. We see a decline in interest in Bible doctrine. Therefore, we see a failure to send out the right kind of missionaries, a failure to form a large enough pivot, and disaster will inevitably result.
 12. Application to the Believer.
 - 1) There are two things the believer must never do when he is depressed by history.
 - (1) Feel sorry for himself.
 - (2) Justify his nation when its on its way down under divine discipline.
 - 2) The believer takes responsibility for his own decisions. If he makes bad decisions, that contributes to the overall failure of the client nation. The solution, of course, is positive volition toward doctrine, the regular use of confession of sin, and spiritual growth.
 13. History of the Pivots.
 - 1) Paul's prayer of Eph 1:15–23 anticipated that Rome would become the
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first Gentile client nation. As he traveled, he was always attempting to establish a pivot through the gospel of Jesus Christ and the teaching of Church Age doctrine. Paul both discovered and helped to establish a great pivot in Ephesus and in the Roman Province of Asia. It was Ephesus that became the "holy city" for the next few centuries. This motivated Paul's prayer in Eph 1:15–23. Rev 2-3 mentions seven of those churches in Asia which also made up the pivot of the Roman empire.

- (1) However, Paul's prayer is effectual for the pivot as it spreads around the globe throughout the Church Age.
- (2) This first pivot, headquartered in Ephesus, can be called the Aegean pivot as it spread to Greece, Cyprus, Crete, Northern Africa, and Rome.

Paul's prayer for the new pivot in Ephesus (mostly the [Understandable Version](#) of the New Testament):

Eph 1:15–16 For this reason also, since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all of the saints [believers in Jesus Christ], I do not stop thanking [God] for you. I keep asking, in my prayers,

Eph 1:17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, will give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation [or, "give you the spiritual gifts of wisdom and revelation"], so you can have full knowledge of God. Note what Paul is praying for; he prays for these Ephesians to have full knowledge of God. In the Greek, this is epignosis (ἐπίγνωσις) doctrine, which is Bible doctrine that has been believed, and is therefore a part of the soul of the believer.

Eph 1:18 I pray that your minds will be enlightened so that you will know what the hope [= confidence from knowledge of doctrine] is, to which God has called you [we are first called to salvation, and then, after we have believed, into the plan of God], and what the glorious abundance is [God has given us great spiritual assets], of God's inheritance in the saints [Note: Paul wanted them to appreciate the value God placed on them],

Eph 1:19–20 and what God's tremendous power [working] in us believers is [This power is] the same as that utilized by God's mighty strength, which He exerted when raising Christ from the dead and seating Him at His right side in the heavenly realms We have access to the same power that God used to raise Jesus Christ from the dead; we are all in possession of the Holy Spirit.

Eph 1:21 [There He is exalted] high above all rulers and authorities and powers and dominion and every name that can be given, not only in this present age but [also] in the one to come. This parallels Rom. 13, which we recently studied, where God is the One Who establishes these authorities.

Eph 1:22–23 And God placed everything in subjection under His [i.e., Christ's] feet, and appointed Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His [spiritual] body. The church is completely filled by Christ, Who completely fills everything in every way. All things, all authorities and all nations, are subject to the control of Jesus Christ. Hence, the oft repeated phrase, *Jesus Christ controls history*.

- 2) The second pivot was the pivot around the Roman Sea, under the one hundred year reign of the Antonine Caesars (this would be A.D. 96–180). The Mediterranean Sea became a Roman lake.

- 3) A great deal of effort was spent A.D. 100–400 determining what the canon of Scripture was, which suggests to me that this pivot continued, although my personal knowledge of history is weak at this point. The merger of the Catholic church with the Roman empire occurred in 380, which increased the political power of the “church” but reduced its spiritual power considerably. This does not mean that everything associated with the Catholic church was evil. St. Jerome translated the Bible into Latin, which is the common language of the people, and it is an excellent translation. Problems emerged because of the unholy alliance of church and state; and the Catholic Church began to do just the opposite of what they had done before: they once sponsored bringing the Holy Scriptures into Latin, so that all could read the Bible; and then they later opposed making the Bible available to the common people.
 - 4) One of the great pivots was 18th century Western European civilization, as evidenced in the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the four great pivots in Germany, France, Holland, and England.
 - 5) Next was the Atlantic pivot of the 19th and 20th centuries.
 - (1) It began with the Age of Discovery and Columbus. Then came the colonization of the western hemisphere, South Africa, other parts of Africa, and India. This was the great period of the British Empire, whose influence caused stability throughout the world.
 - (2) The core of it all was the Anglo-Saxon pivot, mainly found in England and the United States. Unfortunately, this pivot today is practically non-existent in England.
 - 6) In the 21st century, the pivot is still strong in the United States, but there is not much by way of young people replacing the pivot. Some believe that the next great pivot will be found in the Pacific basin.
 - (1) The Pacific was already great at the beginning of this 20th century. It saw one of the greatest revivals ever in Korea in 1905 under Presbyterian missionaries.
 - (2) There is a great deal of evangelism which is taking place in mainland China as well, as well as geographical areas where freedom is encouraged (e.g., Hong Kong).
 - 7) Just as the barbarians invaded the Roman Empire in its decline and were often evangelized, with many becoming strong believers; so today we see the invasion of the peoples of the East, as well as people south of us, coming to the United States to be evangelized.
 - 8) We are obviously spiritually teetering. At times, we lean toward decadent Europe, hoping to follow their failed socialist model; and, at other times, we seem to lean toward freedom and Bible doctrine.
14. The Need for a Pivot.
- 1) The demand for power always exceeds the need for power in human history.
 - (1) In any organization, there's always legitimate power and authority. But the demand always exceeds the need.
 - (2) The slots for legitimate authority requires relatively few people. But

outside of legitimate authority is always the arrogant who demand power, who demand to be recognized. This ought to be obvious in our own democracy. If you followed the 2008 presidential race, it should have been clear that well over half of the candidates had no business whatsoever running for president. They had absolutely no executive experience, and the arrogance of most of the candidates was palpable.

- (3) Many manifestations of arrogance today point to this demand for impact syndrome. When you add arrogance to demand for power, the result is violence.
- 2) Excess of power beyond the demand results in conflict for power.
- 3) The conflict for power results in two destructive categories in history.
 - (1) The self-destruction of a nation from enemies within.
 - (2) The overt destruction of a nation from enemies without, i.e., warfare and conquest.
- 4) The self-destruction of a nation results from several things:
 - (1) A limited amount of evangelism taking place.
 - (2) A lack of believers choosing to move to maturity.
 - (3) A maximum number of wrong decisions from a position of weakness.
 - (4) The arrogance involved in the struggle for power.
- 5) The overt destruction of a nation results from failure to see the necessity for and the proper support for both the military establishment and law enforcement. Law enforcement is our only protection from enemies within (criminals), and the military is our only protection from enemies without.
- 6) Inevitably, both overt and self-destructive concepts in a nation can be averted by only one thing, and that is a large pivot of mature believers. No political system, no type of legislation, and no political leader can deliver a client nation on the way down.
- 7) As goes the believer, so goes the client nation. A large pivot means blessing for the United States; a small pivot means discipline and eventual destruction. We are at a crossroads now, at that point where the survival of this client nation depends on your attitude toward doctrine.
- 8) There are no tragedies in history. People and nations are the products of their own decisions, good or bad. A good decision as defined by the Scripture is:
 - (1) Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (2) Post-salvation epistemological rehabilitation, i.e., perception, metabolization, and application of the mystery doctrine for the Church Age; which will result in spiritual growth for individual believers.

This doctrine was based in part upon notes were taken by Cvengr and posted here:

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As we complete Gen. 18 and go into Gen. 19, it is always worth asking yourself if you are a part of the pivot or a part of the spinoff.

Lesson 196 Rom. 1:21, 24, 26–27 Applications of God’s Corporate Relationships

We have been on quite a tangent for the past 7 or so lessons. The purpose was so that we could have a better understanding of how God deals with mankind corporately. Although Gen. 14 began to set us up for a corporate relationship to God, the latter half of Gen. 18 combined with Gen. 19 marks a dramatic event in human history. The people of a geographical area will become so degenerate that God will destroy them.

Most of us have some sort of understanding of how God deals with us on a one-to-one basis, but few Christians realize that God interacts with corporate entities all the time. In previous lessons, we have seen just what a tremendous influence certain nations have been on the world, and the two most modern examples are England and the United States (whose influence we have already [studied](#)). The key to the great power of these nations is Bible doctrine in the souls of a significant number of their citizens. And as the number of people who are saved and are mature believers decrease, so decreases the power and influence of that nation. England went from being the greatest nation in the history of mankind to being an average European state beset with [radical Muslim problems](#) and near [empty churches](#). England went from being the dominant world power to importing people who would act as the seeds of their internal discipline.

In the past several lessons, we have looked at some specific doctrines related to the nation in which the believer lives and we have examined how God deals with us corporately. During this time, we developed a great deal of vocabulary, which will be reviewed here. The words are linked to a more complete explanation.

Glossary of New Christian Terminology

Term	Definition
Christian nation	This is a term which has been tossed around for years, for for which few could give a solid definition. Many understand a Christian nation to be that in which the government encourages and even mandates Christianity among its people. Since such a concept is anti-Biblical because it implies state-interference with free will, a new term needed to be developed.
Client nation	The client nation is a nation where there are a lot of believers and a lot of mature and growing believers. This nation is known for its evangelization, for its Bible teaching, its Bible scholarship, and missionary activity. The government and leaders may or may not be supportive of such activity. However, generally speaking, such activity is allowed within the national entity. It is this activity which preserves such a national entity.

Glossary of New Christian Terminology

Term	Definition
Corporate relationship with God	<p>God does not simply interact with man individually, which is nearly all that is taught at most churches. We have a variety of corporate or group relationships with God: our family, our business, our school, our neighborhood, our city, our state and our country. Just as corporations of men have relationships with other corporations of men, so the various corporate entities to which we belong has a relationship with God.</p>
<u>Dispensations</u>	<p>God divides up human history into large blocks of time, and God has a slightly different program for each block of time. For instance, during the Age of Israel, God worked primarily through the nation Israel—through its kings, judges, prophets and priests, and through His people, the Jews.</p> <p>During the Church Age, spiritual growth usually occurs as a result of the function of the local church. However, God still deals with national entities, like nations, cities, states, geographical areas, businesses, schools, etc.</p>
<u>Laws of divine establishment</u>	<p>These are laws will protect and prosper a nation. Hypothetically speaking, even a nation without Christians could follow the laws of divine establishment (although this would not occur in practice). The five divine institutions (the volition and function of the individual human soul, work, marriage, family and nation) are recognized and protected and there is a system of just laws and equitable enforcement of same. The result is law and order, freedom and prosperity. There is no freedom apart from law and order.</p> <p>The laws of divine establishment should also protect Christian activity, e.g. churches, evangelism, missionary activity, and Christian scholarship). Protection within the nation is provided by law, a police force and the courts; protection from without is provided by a well-trained military force.</p>
<u>Pivot</u>	<p>These are the mature and maturing believers in a geographical or corporate entity. The way that the pivot goes determines the way that the nation goes with respect to its freedom and prosperity.</p>

Glossary of New Christian Terminology

Term	Definition
Spinoff	<p>These are believers who get sucked into the cosmic system (which is the thinking of Satan as over against the thinking of God). A great modern example of this are the civil rights protestors of the 50's and 60's, many of whom began as strong, Bible-believing Christians, but ended up as political and social activists. They achieved their political ends and lost their spiritual impact.</p> <p>A more up-to-date example would be those who have truly exercise faith in Jesus Christ, but then have gotten caught up in political or social action or attend a church which teaches liberation theology (or any other anti-Biblical organization).</p>

Most of these links are internal and will function when the first 200 lessons are posted online.

Several of these vocabulary terms are original with R. B. Thieme, Jr. and he was the first person, in many cases, to develop these concepts categorically.

Now, let me remind you of what has been going on in our study of Genesis. 23 years previous, Abraham and his nephew had a huge livestock business where they had a large mobile cattle ranch. Things were actually quite good economically speaking. In fact, they had so much livestock, that these two men had to separate into two different companies, because they could not easily keep their stock separate (Gen. 13 circa 1891 B.C.). Abraham gave his nephew Lot the choice of which direction to go in, and Lot chose to go south into the Sodom and Gomorrah area.

Sometime later, the Sodom and Gomorrah area was invaded by kings from the east who apparently had some control over this land via subjugation and taxation until there was a rebellion. The kings of the east came to put down this rebellion and they were going to take the inhabitants of this area (which included Lot) into slavery. Abraham, with a very small army, actually defeated these kings from the east, which dramatically changed human history. In fact, this pushed away the strong military influence of the eastern kings for several hundred years.

Abraham returned the people to the King of Sodom and most of their possessions (although some was kept for payment to Abraham's crew). As we will find out, freedom for this people was not necessarily in their best interest, because this is a very degenerate people. This is why they had undergone the 4th stage of national discipline (being conquered and controlled by an outside nation) and were nearly placed under the 5th stage of national discipline (being conquered and then removed from their homeland). The 6th stage of national discipline is the obliteration of a nation or a people. When God laid out

these stages for Israel in Lev. 26, there is no 6th stage of national discipline for the Jews because God will forever protect His people, the Jews.

As an application, freedom and self-governance is not always the best thing for some people. These people will use their freedom for lawlessness and sexual immorality. Freedom demands both authority and self-control. The more a people are unable to regulate their own behavior, the more they require external controls to regulate them. This is why morality is a part of the laws of divine establishment. Giving people freedom and a limited government does not mean that life will be good. Otherwise, countries like the United States would be popping up all over the world. This is why the United States is so unique: we have freedom and most people in the United States have self-control. We have a good balance of freedom and authority in our country, comparatively speaking. When the authority increases (i.e., the power of government), that often suggests that self-regulation of the people is degenerating.

One of the essential principles of our founding fathers was to establish a government for the purpose of insuring personal freedom. Our Declaration of Independence was all about divine establishment: *We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. - That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.*

Our founding fathers understood that having maximum freedom required personal morality. John Adams: "We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry, would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." Charles Carroll, signer of the Declaration of Independence: "Without morals a republic cannot subsist any length of time; they therefore who are decrying the Christian religion, whose morality is so sublime and pure (and) which insures to the good eternal happiness, are undermining the solid foundation of morals, the best security for the duration of free governments." Thomas Jefferson: "I never ... believed there was one code of morality for a public and another for a private man."

At this present time, in 2012, we have Muslim nations experiencing the Arab Spring, and most liberals (as well as many conservatives), at the beginning of this were [hopeful](#) that this would all [result](#) in Arab democracies occurring all over followed by the establishment of great nations. Many, who paid attention to the Arab Spring, began to back off, and say, *Well, they won't necessarily establish a Jeffersonian democracy right out of the gate.*

However, many Americans misjudged what the Arab Spring was. This is because people have confused notions about a revolution within a country. Many Americans think that this is a good thing; so they were correspondingly hopeful to see all of the revolutions occurring throughout the Muslim world. However, divine establishment requires a balance of

freedom, morality, self-control. Muslims are incapable of such things, apart from a warped morality because their religion is Satanically-inspired.

Since the majority of these peoples in the Middle East are Muslims, they require strong external controls to keep them in line. This is why a Muslim country does best if ruled by a ruthless dictator who can come into their home for nearly any reason and arrest and kill an entire family if he so chooses. Their fear of such a ruler is sufficient to keep their worst instincts and behavior in check. This is why we could impose order and controls in Afghanistan and Iraq; because we had soldiers with weapons keeping the peace. Wrong behavior would result in a person's immediate death. However, as the United States pulls out of these countries, [violence escalates](#).

In Muslim nations where their leaders are weak, or they lack a well-defined authority due to the "Arab spring", they have been persecuting Christians. They have been [burning down churches](#) and [neighborhoods](#); [threatening](#) neighborhoods of Christians, [demanding](#) that Christians self-deport, and [simply](#) killing [Christians](#). This is what we would expect from a Satan-inspired religion (this would be a logical application of Matt. 7:15–20, a passage which contains the phrase, **...by their fruits, you will know them**). This is what we expect when a people like this lack strong external controls.

What is being done here is not a political treatise, but taking the various concepts that we have learned in the past five lessons and applying them to current national and political movements. Good Bible teaching should not inspire political change or move political causes along, but often illustrations from present-day events help to clarify what is being taught in the Bible. God the Holy Spirit uses great events which occurred 4000 years ago in order to teach us certain principles about how God deals with national entities, and this simply applies these same concepts to current events.

I realize that some readers, when Abraham went after the kings of the east with his band of 318 men, possibly internally scoffed at this idea, thinking that this narrative to be part fantasy and part legend. So, how many people live in Israel right now? Nearly 8 million? Now look at what surrounds them: maybe a half billion Muslims who absolutely hate them. There are Muslim grammar schools and even pre-school cartoons which [teach their children to despise Jews](#) and to desire [to kill Jews](#). Kindergarten classes of Palestinians will graduate wearing [Palestinian military uniforms](#), their souls filled with [hatred](#) against the Jews. That is about a 1 to 60 ratio. The Jews have been attacked on several occasions by alliances of nations which have far exceeded them in population. This is why God will promise the Jews: **And you shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. And five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight. And your enemies shall fall by the sword in front of you** (Lev. 26:7–8, MKJV). At some point, you will begin to correlate historical events with the Word of God, and realize that the Bible is the truth of God; that **the Word of God is alive and powerful**.

As we return to our study of Sodom and Gomorrah, this will be the problem: the people do not have strong external controls, so they have allowed the weakness of their sin natures to be transformed into extreme lawlessness. What will occur in Sodom is described in

Rom. 1:21, 24, 26–27: Now they knew who God was, but they did not honor Him as God or thank Him [for their blessings]. Instead they engaged in their useless speculations and their foolish minds were filled with [spiritual] darkness. So, God allowed [or, abandoned] them to have the impure desires of their hearts, and to [practice] degrading behavior with their bodies among themselves. For this reason God allowed [or, abandoned] them to [practice] degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function [i.e., of sex] for what is against nature [i.e., lesbianism]. And men did the same thing, leaving the natural function [i.e., of sex] with women, and burning in their desire for each other. Men committed indecent [sexual] acts with other men [i.e., homosexuality], and [so] brought on themselves the penalty they deserved for this perversion. (AUV–NT).

Gen. 14 set us up for Gen. 19. When many people read through Gen. 14, they seem to think that these people were simply dealing with some unfortunate circumstances. A stronger power came in, conquered them, and subjugated those in the Sodom valley to paying tribute. This did not just happen for no reason. This happened because God was dealing with this corporate entity. The difficulties that they faced were because their personal morality was eroding. The 4th and 5th stage of national discipline was to get their attention.

Lesson 197 Genesis 18

What About the Heathen of Sodom?

We have been, in the past 8 lessons, setting up Gen. 18:16–19:29. God is about to destroy 5 cities and the people who live within them. Therefore, we ought to have some clue as to why this is actually occurring.

A question which might occur to you is, *why these people? Why doesn't God bring them the gospel and save them?*

This brings us to a question asked by believers and unbelievers alike:

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1. God is perfect justice. It is impossible for God to be anything but just. **Y^ehowah is righteous and He loves righteousness** (Psalm 11:7b). **I, Y^ehowah, love justice** (Isa. 61:8a). **God is just** (2Thess. 1:6a).
 - 1) As an aside, *righteousness* is the principle of God's integrity; *justice* is the function of God's integrity.
 - 2) For instance, righteousness would condemn sin and justice would punish it.
2. Many believers do not realize it, but it is God's justice which is usually the most important aspect of God to us. In fact, it is justice that is our point of contact with God, rather than love. We can depend upon our salvation because of what Jesus did on the cross; not because of any good thing that we do. Eph. 2:8–9
 - 1) **He saved us, not because of any good deeds we ourselves had done, but because of His mercy. [He saved us] through the cleansing of new birth**

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- (Titus 3:5a).
- 2) “Do not be surprised that I say to you, It is necessary for you to have a second birth.” (John 3:7; BBE).
 - 3) “Point of doctrine, and let Me emphasize this, that unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3).
 - 4) Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness (Rom. 4:3 quoting Gen. 15:6; ALT).
 - 5) God presented Jesus as the atoning sacrifice [for our sins] through [our] faith in His blood [i.e., His death on the cross]. This was in order to demonstrate His justice when, by using forbearance, He passed over people’s sins in previous generations. [In doing this] God [also] demonstrated His justice [to people] of this present time, that He Himself is just and the One who makes the people right with Him who have faith in Jesus. Where then is the [basis for] boasting [i.e., over being right with God]? There is not any. Is it by [obedience to] a law? Is it by doing certain deeds? Not at all, but by a law of faith (Rom. 3:25–27; AUV–NT).
3. Add this to the fact that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to a change of mind [about Jesus] (2Peter 3:9).
 4. People come to God consciousness in all societies, even when the political structure denies God’s existence (China, for instance, is filled with believers in Jesus Christ).
 - 1) For a person of normal abilities, somewhere between the age of 3 and, say, 21, come to some knowledge of God. They have a concept of God; they have a limited understanding of a Supreme Being which they think about, but Who they cannot see.
 - 2) God consciousness is often reached by means of information about God (correct or false) from others.
 - 3) Sometimes, God consciousness develops as a result of observation and reason.
 - (1) The cosmological approach: based on human intuition and the law of cause and effect (e.g., Aristotle's "the unmoved mover").
 - (2) The teleological approach: the observed order of the universe demands a planner; the plant and animal kingdoms bear the mark of one designer. Developing a belief in chance or happenstance is the result of negative volition at God consciousness, wherein the thinking devises an alternate system.
 - (3) The anthropological approach: the person learns principles of right and wrong and derives from that the idea of an ultimate source. The Bible calls this, **the conscience bearing witness** (found in Rom.2:14–15, which reads: **For when the [unconverted] Gentiles, who do not have the law of Moses, instinctively practice [some of] its requirements, they become their own lawmakers, even though they do not have the law of Moses. In doing this [i.e., practicing some of the requirements of the law of Moses], they demonstrate**

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- that these requirements are written in their hearts. Their conscience tells them this, and their thoughts alternately accuse them [of wrongdoing], or else endorse them [for doing right].).
- (4) The ontological approach: the soul develops the concept of the ideal being.
 - (5) God, in some way, will make Himself known to man. Rom. 1:18–20 For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because the thing which may be known of God is clearly revealed within them, for God revealed it to them. For the unseen things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being realized by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, for them to be without excuse (MKJV).
- 4) The knowledge the unbeliever possesses about God extends to the specific attributes of His essence. That is, they may recognize God as being eternal, all-powerful, omniscient, perfect justice, etc. Rom. 1:18-20 For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because the thing which may be known of God is clearly revealed within them, for God revealed it to them. For the unseen things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being realized by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, for them to be without excuse. Psalm 19:1-6 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the expanse proclaims His handiwork. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor are there words; their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, and he comes forth as a bridegroom from his canopy; he rejoices as a strong man to run a race, going forth from the end of the heavens, and its course is to their ends. And there is nothing hid from its heat.
 5. The Bible describes positive volition at God consciousness: And He has made all nations of men of one blood to dwell on all the face of the earth, ordaining fore-appointed seasons and boundaries of their dwelling, to seek the Lord, if perhaps they might feel after Him and find Him, though indeed He is not far from each one of us (Acts 17:26–27).
 6. If a person reaches God consciousness and is on positive signals (that is, he wants to know more about God); then it is God's responsibility to make sure that this person hears the gospel of Jesus Christ. Because God has stated in His Word that He does not want anyone to perish (2Peter 3:9), we know that God is required to make sure that the gospel gets to this person, no matter who he is, where he lives, or what language he speaks. If God does not do this, then God is not just; and therefore, God is not God.
 7. Believing in God is not enough. A person may believe in a Supreme Being soon after reaching God consciousness, but he must believe in Jesus Christ in order

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to be saved. Jesus said, “**You believe in God; believe also in Me.**” (John 14:1b). See also John 3:7 17:3 James 2:19

- 1) Not believing in Jesus Christ is called disobeying the truth in Rom. 2:8.
 - 2) Those who do not believe in Him are lost. 1Cor. 1:18 2Cor. 4:3–4
8. If a person reaching God consciousness does not want to know Him, then God is not under any legal or moral obligation to provide the gospel for him (although God often does). When a person has negative volition at God consciousness, the gospel is said to be hidden from him. 2Cor. 4:3–4
9. God does not violate our volition. Acts 14:16
- 1) Let me add that, God does often exert some natural pressure upon us. This is still respecting our volition. This may be best understood in the relationship between a parent and an adult son. The parent may put some pressure on the son to get him to respond in a particular way (withhold money, not co-sign a loan), but the parent no longer has the overriding volition on that adult son. When I believed in Jesus Christ, I was under some pressure and difficulties; however, many people have been under similar pressures and difficulties and they did not believe in Him. So, just as a parent might exert influence over an adult son in several ways to help guide his son into making a good decision, this influence may or may not result in the son changing his mind about anything.
 - 2) So, we have many instances in the Bible of people being sick and healed by Jesus; or Paul meeting Jesus in the desert. However, in none of these instances did God reach into that person’s volition and change him from positive to negative.
10. If a person never reaches God consciousness—because he dies in infancy or his I.Q. is too low to understand the concept of God—then that person is automatically saved, because there is no issue of volition involved. 2Sam. 12:19–23 (where David speaks of his deceased infant, saying, “**He will not come to me; I will go to him.**”)
- 1) As an aside, it is our volition which is key, not how good or how bad we are. You can be born into an environment which has led you into crime, into prostitution, into drug addiction, into homosexuality or into alcoholism—it does not matter. If you throw up these positive signals to God, then God must see to it that you receive the gospel of Jesus Christ (that Christ died for our sins and that we may receive eternal life by believing in Him—1Cor. 15:3 John 3:16, 18).
11. The key to heathenism is not where someone lives or what language they speak, but their volition and God’s perfect righteousness. I have heard stories of some Africans walking for days to hear the gospel which was brought to whatever corner of the earth it was that they were living in. How did they find out about a missionary who was speaking? God made certain that those on positive signals were given this opportunity. God made certain that they heard the gospel.
12. Missionaries—good and bad—have gone out all over the earth, to every nook and cranny of this planet, again and again and again. They have learned languages

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which are known by a few hundred people; and they have given to gospel to such people in their language. And people do respond to the gospel.

- 1) Let's go back and tie this into what we have already learned: when a [client nation](#) provides missionaries that go out and give the gospel of Jesus Christ, then God respects and protects that national entity.
 - 2) When a missionary goes out to some remote geographical area, God both protects the missionary and protects the people who respond to the gospel.
 - 3) In the [laws of divine establishment](#), we have talked about the importance of nationalism, and this is because God deals with people corporately (as well as individually). When God deals with a group, it is helpful that group is some sort of an independent entity (like a city or state). This allows for an isolate blessing from God to that group.
 - 4) Islam, which wants to establish one nation under sharia law all over the world, would be acting in opposition to God's plan. Internationalists who want to establish one single nation or a government over all nations are acting at cross-purposes with God's plan. Our only true defense against Islam is the gospel of Jesus Christ.
13. The book of Jonah is about missionary activity when Israel was a client nation to God. Assyrians were positive toward God at God consciousness. The Assyrians were hated by the Jews and by Jonah. God told Jonah to go evangelize the Assyrians and Jonah went in the opposite direction. God turned him around, John proclaimed God's judgment to the Assyrians, and, much to his chagrin, the Assyrians believed in his God, Y^ehowah. Jonah was all in favor of God judging these Assyrians harshly; he did not like at all that God forgave them and regenerated them.
- 1) As an aside, one of the things I worried about as a new believer was being called to the mission field. I had absolutely no interest in this. Those who are pastors, those who are evangelists and those who are called to the mission field make up a small percentage of believers. There are all kinds of spiritual gifts. The spiritual gift (or gifts) given to us by God at salvation is going to be compatible with who we are. God is not going to stick you with some gift that you hate.
 - 2) As another aside, being a successful evangelist has absolutely nothing to do with numbers. That is, Billy Graham of the previous generation may have spoken to millions in his lifetime, and had millions believe in Jesus Christ as a result. He is no more successful than a similarly motivated evangelist today who speaks to hundreds and has a handful of converts every year. God provides the hearers and the venues, and the evangelist and the missionary are to do what God expects of them. If the evangelist faces a crowd of people who were positive at God consciousness but will reject the gospel of Jesus Christ, that is not the responsibility of the evangelist.
 - 3) The same thing is true of the pastor-teacher. You may have a small but

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relatively faithful congregation of 20 or 30; and there may be a 1000. Your faithfulness in studying and teaching is key; the response of the congregation depends upon their volition.

14. What about the true believer in Buddhism or Islam? Don't they get some sort of credit? Isn't this positive volition toward God? Jesus Christ died for our sins; our righteousness is based 100% upon Jesus Christ; not upon any meritorious thing that we do. We are given God's righteousness based upon our non-meritorious faith in His Son. We do not earn salvation; we do not work for salvation; it is a free gift of God. Buddha did not die for our sins; Mohammed did not die for our sins. These men did not represent God; and their teachings which have come down to us do not represent the thinking of God. There is not some sort of a point system and someone who is really dedicated to God (in whatever way that he perceives God to be) is saved. That would be works. Quite obviously, in the teaching of Islam, a really dedicated person might blow himself up along with a dozen innocent people who are near him. This is clearly a work of Satan and not of God (Matt. 7:16). Unbelievers hear a lot of things, and if they are negative toward the gospel of Jesus Christ, they after often drawn into some other false religion. **Go in through the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many there are who go in through it. Because narrow is the gate and constricted is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves** (Matt. 7:13–15 MKJV).
15. There is also the issue of accuracy in evangelism. Even some of the greatest evangelists do not always get the gospel right. They want those in the audience to raise their hands, to come forward, to be baptized, to ask Jesus into their hearts (which takes Rev. 3:20 completely out of context). None of those things save. We can only be saved by what the Bible teaches us: **Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved** (John 3:16, 18, 36). What often happens is, God the Holy Spirit, despite the confusing things that the evangelist says, makes it clear that we must believe in Jesus Christ. Somehow, in our muddled unsaved mind, we do this, and we are saved.
 - 1) It is the Holy Spirit that convinces us of sin, because we have not believed in Jesus Christ. John 16:8–9
 - 2) The mechanics appear to be that the Holy Spirit acts as our human spirit and reveals to us the truth of the gospel. **For who among men knows the things of a man except the spirit of man within him? So also no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God** (1Cor. 2:11 MKJV). **But the natural man [lit., the soulish man] does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned** (1Cor. 2:14 MKJV).
 - 3) Just as our souls help us to understand other people and our environment around us; it is the human spirit which is the storage area for information about God and our relationship to God. The unsaved man (the *soulish man*) is dichotomus, having only a body and a soul (1Cor. 2:11, 14). The

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Bible often speaks of the unregenerate as being dead (Eph. 2:1 Col. 2:13). What is dead is the human spirit, as unbelievers obviously have functioning bodies and souls. The saved man has a body, soul and spirit (1Thess. 5:23). See also Heb. 4:12

- 4) Since the first information that we receive about God and our relationship to Him, is the gospel, and since we do not have a human spirit as an unbeliever, the Holy Spirit therefore would act as our human spirit, and reveal the gospel to us.
 - 5) Then part of being born again (or, *born from above*), also called a *new creation*, would be that the human spirit is made alive. John 1:13 3:2–12 2Cor. 5:17 Gal. 6:15 Titus 3:5 1John 5:1
16. So, a person who has never heard the gospel (and there are very few who have not), is not a heathen because he has not heard, but because he had no interest in God when he developed limited cognizance of Who God is. God's righteousness is not violated for not bringing the gospel to someone who will reject it.

The entire Doctrine of Heathenism ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))

Some of this doctrine came from <http://www.versebyverse.org/doctrine/heathen.html>

Lesson 198 Genesis 18:17–18

God, the Angels, Abraham and Sodom

So far, we have not progressed very far into the second half of Gen. 18, and that is because there are so many doctrines related to what will occur.

In the previous lesson, we looked at the heathen in general and God's relationship to men who have never heard. The reason we are doing this is, God is about to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, and, it is reasonable to ask, how many of them have heard the gospel? How many of them had the opportunity to believe in the God of Israel? It is likely that Lot was a pretty lousy missionary.

God seems to be holding the people of Sodom responsible for great evil. Therefore, it is only fair to ask, how did those in Sodom know who God was? How did they know even the difference between right and wrong? First of all, there are concepts of right and wrong written on the hearts of men (Rom. 2:14–15). And secondly, the people of Sodom knew about Abraham. Abraham and his band of 318 men delivered the people of Sodom from an army so powerful, it had taken control of huge swaths of land throughout Palestine (Gen. 14:5–7). There was a close proximity of the King of Sodom and Abraham and Melchizedek, the priest of God, and their lives all overlapped in Gen. 14. So, the people in Sodom and Gomorrah knew of the power of God. They could have seized upon this opportunity to find out more about Abraham, and, as a result, find out more about his God. They did not choose to do this.

You will recall that Abraham easily came to an agreement with the King of Sodom but that Abraham also had fellowship with the priest Melchizedek. This opportunity was open to all of the people of that area. They had just been thrown into a hopeless situation and Abraham, out of nowhere, delivered them.

This ought to capture your attention. These people have been under pressure for several years, and they were delivered (*saved*, if you will; it is the same word) from a life of human slavery, pain, suffering and hopelessness. That is perfectly analogous to the concept of salvation through faith in Christ. Who delivered them? A man who was a foreshadowing of Jesus Christ (Abraham). A man who placed his trust in God and did the impossible (defeated the armies of the eastern kings' alliance).

And, when it was all over, they even got all of their stuff back. Abraham, who could have kept it all, did not. Don't you think some of them would wonder about how this all happened? Don't you think that some of them would want to express gratitude and possibly get to know why Abraham was motivated to save them. But there is nothing recorded in Scripture, apart from Abraham's meeting with the unnamed King of Sodom, that tells us anything about this people turning themselves around. There is no recorded testimony where a man from Sodom says, "You were motivated by your God to save us and your nephew. Tell me about your God, as we know that your nephew is not much to speak of."

Speaking of Lot, he is one of the best illustrations of God's grace that we can find. He leads what appears to be a worthless life. No one has believed in his God. Even though he holds high political office in Sodom, he is not respected (as we will see in Gen. 19). Let God deliver him first from slavery and then later from destruction. You or I—we might have looked at Lot's sorry spiritual life and thought, "This man is so expendable." But he had two things going for him: he was righteous through faith in Y^ehowah and Abraham was his uncle. Therefore, God heaped grace upon Lot, far more than we would expect.

Now, we meet this people of Sodom again. It has been about 20 years since God delivered them through Abraham. We know from the circumstances that they were under God's discipline and we will find out that they did not respond to it.

The people of Sodom will become so lawless that they will face the 6th stage of national discipline, which is the destruction of the people of a nation. This stage of discipline is not covered in the warnings to Israel (Lev. 26 Deut. 28) because God would never destroy all of His Own people, the Jews. The Jews have a future in God's plan, therefore, God has always allowed Jews to live, even though they have faced great periods of suffering. This is why we all personally know Jews today, but we do not know any Amorites, Canaanites or Jebusites.

At the same time that Abraham rescued Lot, Abraham met Melchizedek, which is possibly when the early Scriptures were passed from Melchizedek to Abraham. This would be circa 1884 B.C. (1888 B.C. by someone else's calculation) (Gen. 14). This is the future plot of ground where Jerusalem would be.

Note how differently God will deal with these geographical areas which are side-by-side: God will destroy Sodom and Gomorrah and its people (preserving Lot and his family, a miserable pivot); and Salem will remain somewhat of an independent plot of ground for the next 800 or so years, even though it sits right in the middle of what will become Israel and right next door to the cities God destroys. These people had to have some regard for God, because Melchizedek is a priest in Salem who knows and worships the God of Abraham. This gives these people a pass. God allows this people their freedom and independence for quite some time to follow. Many centuries later, David will conquer Jebus (Salem) and make it his nation's capitol (Jerusalem). But that is nearly a millennium into the future from the time of Abraham.

The events of Gen. 14 were warnings to those in the Sodom/Gomorrah area. They first were under the 4th stage of national discipline, where another country had come in to take them over; and they paid taxes to that national entity (Lev. 26:23–26). However, because of their rebellion, they were about to go out under the 5th stage of national discipline where an outside power would remove them from the land and, often times, use them as slaves (Lev. 26:27–33). These events should have served as warnings to this population that their corporate identity was crap before God. At the time that these events took place—when we studied Gen. 14—we did not have any idea *why* they faced the 4th and 5th stages of national discipline. Gen. 18–19 explain why the events of Gen. 14 took place. This people, as a corporate entity, were being warned by God.

As an aside, God deals with nations and specific geographical areas in a variety of ways. There is no reason to think that He follows these exact 6 stages of discipline. For instance, even though paying tribute to an outside nation was common in the ancient world, a geographical area under judgment may be enslaved today to a communist government or to a government attempting to control too many things. Or they may have their resources taken and compensated for, but, without this having a positive impact on the country overall. Or they may live under a tyrant dictator. These would all be analogous to the 4th stage of national discipline. Whenever we get to Lev. 26, I will lay out these stages of national discipline—which are specific to Israel, but have some application to other nations—and give real-life examples of them.

There is a great contrast between the city-states, Sodom and Salem. They both had freedom and independence, but Sodom used their freedom to become a debauched people, to the point where, they had become dangerous to neighboring kingdoms (this degeneracy appears to have spread across all 5 city-states).

After Gen. 14, a long period of time passes, during which time, Abraham appears to become even more prosperous and Lot's fortune seems to have been dissipated. It is during this time that Abraham has a son by Hagar, but God continues to be faithful to His promises to Abraham (Gen. 15–16).

Then, God suddenly appears to Abraham when he is 99 and promises him that he and Sarah would have a child in the next year (Gen. 17).

Then, God appears to Abraham again, a few months later. Abraham and Sarah were at home and Jesus Christ, in a Preincarnate form, and two angels walked by their place and were called by Abraham to fellowship with him. As they are beginning to go:

Gen 18:17 The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do...?"

Having been a teacher, I often would ask questions to students, either individually or as a whole, sometimes to elicit from them what they know; but also, to get them to focus on a particular topic. I may ask Charlie Brown a particular question, but I am hoping that most of the remaining 25 or so students respond in their minds to that question. So, God asks these angels: "Should I keep concealing from Abraham that [which] I am doing? He wants them to focus on this particular question. Then God explains *why Abraham*. Remember, Abraham is just some wealthy guy who has some friends in high places; but he has no real influence in Sodom and Gomorrah. So, apart from his relationship to Lot, angels ought to be thinking about Abraham's relationship to Sodom and Gomorrah and what does his opinion matter. The angels were going to Sodom and Gomorrah to destroy those cities, and Lot and his family lived in Sodom.

Gen 18:17–18 The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?"

You will note the complex array of relationships found here. There is God and the angels; God has come to Abraham with two angels, and these two angels will go on to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Furthermore, there are billions of angels which are observing these events. You have God's personal relationship with Abraham, but God brings up another important factor to be considered: this is not just about Abraham, but Abraham will become a great and mighty nation. Furthermore, the nations of the earth will be blessed because of this great and mighty nation. So there is the corporate relationship that God will have with the nation of Abraham; and there is a corporate relationship that God will have with other nations which are blessed in association with the nation of Israel.

Then there is the regeneration suggested here: Abraham is regenerate and God has pronounced him righteous (Gen. 15:6) and because Abraham will lead a great spiritual life (Gen. 18:19), God will bless him and those who are his seed (Gen. 18:18). What is the ultimate blessing? To be eternally associated with the Person of God. Abraham has that; his seed will have that; and many of those in nation Israel will have that. Many of them will trust in the God of Israel.

We have been actually preparing to study Gen. 18:16–33, where Abraham will intercede for the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah; and then Gen. 19, where God will destroy these cities (among others).

Before we return to the exegesis of Gen. 18, let's apply some of what we have just learned to recent historical events. In the late 40's and early 50's, we went into Germany, Japan and South Korea and transformed these countries. The former two countries were our

enemies in war; they became not only our friends, but two of our greatest allies. In South Korea, we belatedly decided to try to put a stop to the spread of communism (something which should have been done at Yalta, a few years earlier). Here it is, 60 years later, and these nations are still our allies, and two of them have strong economies while the third has a stalled economy (but previously strong).

More recently, we went into Iraq and Afghanistan and attempted to establish democracies in those countries as well. It does not take a great prophet to look into the future and conclude that, 60 years in the future, these two countries will not be our allies.

What is the difference? In Germany, Japan and South Korea, evangelism and the teaching of the Word of God was a part of our military effort. General Douglas MacArthur, when speaking to a visiting group of evangelicals, asserted that "Japan is a spiritual vacuum. If you do not fill it with Christianity, it will be filled with Communism. Send me 1,000 missionaries." He asked U.S. missionary societies to send "Bibles, Bibles and more Bibles."⁴¹

Sending Bible and missionaries to war-torn areas like these—even to our enemies—for many years was the automatic response. This is the very essence of a national approach to “turning the other cheek” and “loving your enemies.” What country in the past guided their national enemies to independence and to evangelism and spiritual growth?

As a result of missionaries and Bibles flowing into South Korea, the church in South Korea today is one of the more vigorous in all of the world. Furthermore, North and South Korea stand side-by-side as a testimony to the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In Communist North Korea, there is a country of starving people ruled over by a despotic sovereign. In South Korea, where Christianity has become a powerful force, they have a thriving, prospering economy, one of the greatest in the world. Furthermore, they have one of the highest standards of living for Asia.

However, in Iraq and Afghanistan, we chose, instead to *respect* their evil religion, so, at critical times when we had the power to require these nations to provide freedom of religion, we did not. When we had the opportunity to share the gospel with them, the military shut such activity down. Instead of welcoming missionaries and Bibles, the military burned [Bibles in Afghanistan](#). Although [missionaries are going to Iraq](#), the military is [not encouraging missionary activity](#). Therefore, we ought not to expect anything by way of positive outcomes for nation-building. Whereas, we do not necessarily expect our military to subsidize missionary work, it ought not to be hostile toward it either. Nor should soldiers be prevented from sharing the gospel and the Word of God.

The timeline while Lot is living in Sodom looks like this:

⁴¹ From <http://www.hyperhistory.net/apwh/bios/b4macarthurd.htm> accessed August 1, 2012.

The Timeline of Lot Living in Sodom

Brent MacDonald	Age of Abraham	Reese's Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
		1891 B.C.	Gen. 13:1–4	Abram returns to Bethel in the land of Canaan, returning as a very wealthy man.
		1891 B.C. 1889 B.C. (Klassen)	Gen. 13:5–13	Abram and Lot separate from one another.
			Gen. 13:14–17	God renews His covenant with Abram.
		1884 B.C. 1888 B.C. (Klassen)	Gen. 14:5–16	Lot is taken captive. Abram delivers Lot.
		1883 B.C.	Gen. 14:17, 21–24	Abram speaks with the King of Sodom after his victory.
			Gen. 14:18–20	Abram's meeting with Melchizedek.
		1882 B.C.	Gen. 15:1–21	God's covenant with Abram is given in greater detail.
	85	1882 B.C. 1881 B.C. (Klassen)	Gen. 16:1–14	Sarah gives Hagar, her Egyptian slave girl, to Abram in order to sire a son. Gen 16:3 So Abram's wife Sarai took Hagar, her Egyptian slave, and gave her to her husband Abram as a wife for him. This happened after Abram had lived in the land of Canaan 10 years.
2078 B.C.	86	1881 B.C.	Gen. 16:15–16	Ishmael born to Abraham and Hagar in the land of Canaan. Gen 16:16 Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.
(2065 B.C.)	99	1868 B.C.	Gen. 17:1–8	God renews His covenant with Abram and renames him Abraham. Gen 17:1 When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to him, saying, "I am God Almighty. Live in My presence and be devout.
(2065 B.C.)	99	(1868 B.C.)	Gen. 17:9–14	Circumcision is given as a sign of the covenant and of Abraham's faith in his covenant with God.
(2065 B.C.)	99	(1868 B.C.)	Gen. 17:15–19	Sarai's name is changed to Sarah and Isaac, a future son, is promised the Abraham and Sarah. Gen 17:17 Abraham fell to the ground, laughed, and thought in his heart, "Can a child be born to a hundred-year-old man? Can Sarah, a ninety-year-old woman, give birth?"

The Timeline of Lot Living in Sodom				
Brent MacDonald	Age of Abraham	Reese's Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
(2065 B.C.)	99	(1868 B.C.)	Gen. 17:20	Ishmael's destiny is foretold.
(2065 B.C.)	99	(1868 B.C.)	Gen. 17:21–22	The time that Sarah would give birth is revealed; at a set time in the next year. Gen 17:21 <i>But I will confirm My covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at a set time next year.</i>
(2065 B.C.)	99	(1868 B.C.)	Gen. 17:23–27	Abraham obeys God and circumcises himself and the men with him. Gen 17:24 <i>Abraham was 99 years old when the flesh of his foreskin was circumcised, and his son Ishmael was 13 years old when the flesh of his foreskin was circumcised.</i>
(2065 B.C.)		(1867 B.C.)	Gen. 18:1–15	Jehovah and two angels come to Abraham and promise that Sarah would have a child in a year's time. Gen 18:10, 14 <i>The LORD said, "I will certainly come back to you in about a year's time, and your wife Sarah will have a son!" Now Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent behind him. Is anything impossible for the LORD? At the appointed time I will come back to you, and in about a year she will have a son.</i>
(2065 B.C.)		(1867 B.C.)	Gen. 18:16–21	The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is promised.

The parenthetical dates are derived from what dates are given combined with time information gleaned from the Scripture. See the entire **Abrahamic Timeline** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) for the whole picture. After 23 years, Abraham reasons that, it is only logical that Lot has had some spiritual impact upon the city in which he lives. When Abraham tries to reason with God as to how God should deal with Sodom and Gomorrah, he makes this assumption.

So, for something like 23 years, Lot was, to some extent, a missionary to Sodom. However, it is quite obvious that he had virtually no spiritual influence upon this people. As we will see later, the men who surround his house will not speak of Lot's God. And when Lot speaks to his sons-in-law about judgment coming from God, they think that he is joking. So Lot is without spiritual impact.

Abraham in militarily rescuing this people also seemed to have little impact upon them. There is nothing recorded of men from Sodom seeking Abraham out, or seeking out the priest, Melchizedek. However, in rescuing them, this was God both warning them and reaching out to them. But there was seemingly no positive volition toward God at the point of God consciousness.

Lesson 199 Genesis 18:16–33 Abraham Intercedes for Lot in the City of Sodom

We took a detour from this to examine our place within a nation and what should our relationship to our government be. This is because this latter half of the chapter along with the next will be about God's relationship to various corporate entities. We therefore studied the pivot and the client nation. At this point, we return to Gen. 18.

Gen 18:16–19 (ESV) *Then the men [the two angels with God] set out from there, and they looked down toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way. The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has promised him."*

The *men* in this passage are the Lord Jesus Christ and two angels. Because of Abraham's spiritual impact on the world and because he has family living in the cities God is about to destroy, God asks, "*Should I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?*" God is speaking to these two angels and to all of the angels who are observing this scene. It is very likely that God has focused the attention of the angels on what is going on in Sodom and what is going on outside of Abraham's tent.

Essentially, what God is doing here is teaching the angels. Do you note the preferential treatment that Abraham is getting? God does not appear to be wandering about from ranch to ranch, offering special benefits to each ranch owner. This preferential treatment is for Abraham alone. God will reveal to Abraham what His intentions are, and this is because Abraham has family in Sodom. God gives special benefits and recognition to believers who are advancing spiritually. This is direct blessing from God. Furthermore, this is blessing by association to those related to Abraham.

God has brought two angels with Him, and they have had fellowship with Abraham. The two angels will be the angels that will destroy Sodom and Gomorrah (and 3 other cities), and they represent the angels who are observing what God is doing. We tend to be very anthropocentric when thinking about God and the Bible; but there are a whole host of other beings who observe what is going on. Human history to angels is somewhat of a morality tale, if you will. What happens to us and our interaction with God reveals to all angelic creation the character of God. God's judgments become more understandable when angels see this enacted on the world stage. Angels understand God and their own relationship to God by watching us. You might call world history the ultimate feature film for angels (with a cast of billions) and a running time of 6000 years or more.

It is one thing for God to tell the angels that He is righteousness and justice. It is a whole other matter for angels to observe this with their very own eyes, as God deals with mankind. Because we are anthropocentric, we often give little thought to the Angelic

Conflict, but it is key to the human experience, as our lives and human history explain to angels Who and What God is.

You may have wondered about the expression, *the glory of God*, which occurs 15 times in the New Testament. Is God some grand egotist? Does God need constant attention and adoration? Doing all things to the glory of God reveals His essence; it reveals His perfect character. When we act within the plan of God, we reveal who God is to people and to angels. This is why Paul tells the Corinthians: **So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God** (1Cor. 10:31; ESV). And this is why all that Jesus did was to the glory of God: **Jesus is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high** (Heb. 1:3).

But that which is actively against the glory of God must be removed.

Gen 18:20–21 **Then the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, I will go down now to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to Me. And if not, I will know."**

When Y^ehowah speaks of going to Sodom and Gomorrah to see what is going on, He already knows. God is omniscient. However, Sodom and Gomorrah stand as witnesses of cities which are out of control. Lot has a high political position in the city of Sodom—he is a judge there (Gen. 19:1, 9)—and yet, this sort of evil was occurring. Our takeaway from that is, spiritual influence is much greater than political influence (the spiritual impact of Abraham, who does not even live in the Sodom and Gomorrah metropolitan area far outweighs the political influence of Lot who does).

The idea is, there is this great crying out from Sodom and Gomorrah because their sin is very heavy upon them, that God ought to go down at this time to investigate (the particle of entreaty can be translated *now*). Quite obviously, God is omniscient, so that He knows exactly what is going on there. However, he appears to be engaged in teaching the angels that He is with, at this time, and angels are not omniscient nor are they omnipresent. Therefore, they must be taken to Sodom and Gomorrah because of the cry that has come up to God; but first, there had to be this stop at Abraham's home.

You may ask, *why is this important? Why Does God need to bring angels round to see the degeneracy of Sodom and Gomorrah?* Prior to our time on earth, there were angels and there was God. A third of the angels fell (this is all in the **Doctrine of the Angelic Conflict** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#))); led by Satan. As you may recall, God has already condemned Satan and the fallen angels to the Lake of Fire (Matt. 25:41); but they are not there yet. This suggests that Satan appealed this verdict, and I am sure one of his arguments was, "Why can't we all just get along? Why can't we [fallen angels] simply coexist with You, God? After all, we believe in tolerance and acceptance for all creatures just the way that they are." Sodom and Gomorrah tells us, on the human level, what happens when a degenerate human population goes unchecked, and does whatever they want to do. They will throw off all social restraints. The result of unchecked degeneracy is a place like

Sodom. Places where there is great degeneracy cannot be simply allowed to remain—they become a cancerous tumor. As a corporate body, they act as a cancer to that which surrounds them. Just as cancer inside a human body will destroy that human body, so will a cancerous people destroy the populations they are in contact with.

We found the same thing to be true back in Gen. 6. God allowed the angels to interact with man, and the fallen angels took over the world, leading all mankind, apart from Noah's family, astray. The earth was filled with violence during this period of time.

For us as individuals, this tells us that, self-control is preferable to external controls. But it also reveals that mankind requires external controls.

There is a theme in the Old Testament which is pertinent, which is ignored by a lot of Bible teachers today: God periodically destroyed large groups of people because of their great degeneracy. God would often have Israel go into an area and be commanded to destroy every single man, woman and child. This is because their corrupting influence has reached a tipping point. In Gen. 19, God will use angels; however, in many subsequent chapters, God will use the nation of Israel to destroy great swaths of people. If God used Israel during the Age of Israel to destroy large groups of people, whom do you think God might use in the Church Age? Now and again, God is going to use a client nation to control a population, and even to decimate a population.

Obviously, here we have to be careful. First of all, God came and specifically told Israel which nations to destroy. God does not do that any more. We do not want a president, for instance, who hears the voice of God and that voice tells him what to do. However, we do want leaders who understand the power of the Word of God. FDR, for all of his faults, did understand one thing: the importance and power of the Word of God (and he spoke of this in public addresses). I know less about Truman and Eisenhower in that regard, but I do know that General Douglas MacArthur understood how important the gospel of Jesus Christ and Bible doctrine were, and called for both Bibles and missionaries to go to the countries which we had conquered.

Where we made our great mistakes in the early 2000's in Iraq and Afghanistan was having a Christian president who valued a form of government (democracy) over Christianity. So we imposed democracy on the people of Iraq and Afghanistan, but we did not impose religious freedom. We did not send in Bibles and missionaries. As a result, whereas several generations of Americans have enjoyed Japan, Germany and South Korea as 3 of our greatest allies, who are in key parts of the globe; it is unlikely that Iraq and Afghanistan will join them in a long-term partnership (which is unfortunate, because, geopolitically, these nations are key because of their locations).

Gen 18:22–26 (mostly from the ESV) [So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD. Then Abraham drew near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from You to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death](#)

with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" And the LORD said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake."

So Abraham stands before God and suggests something that he does not think is true. "Let's say that there are 50 believers in Sodom; You would not destroy the city and the 50 righteous as well, would You?" Abraham is pretty certain that there are not 50 believers in Sodom, but he is also pretty certain that God would not destroy Sodom if there are 50 believers there. Therefore, Abraham poses this theoretical question to God. And God agrees with Abraham; He would not destroy Sodom if there are 50 believers there. Quite obviously, *righteous* refers to those who have put their trust in Y^ehowah Elohim (Gen. 15:6). God, in his relationship to an entity such as a city, is not going to destroy that city if there are 50 believers in it. We do not know how large the population was in the Sodom and Gomorrah area, but this gives us the principle the God deals with groups of people corporately and that, generally speaking, God is not going to destroy an entire city if there are believers within that city.

Abraham continues to show impersonal (unconditional and unemotional) love toward his nephew Lot. We recall that they split apart their company because they could not keep their possessions straight, as they had so much livestock (Gen. 13:6–7). Abraham gave Lot the first choice of what land to live on, and Lot quickly took him up on this offer. Abraham has saved Lot in the past (Gen. 14) and now, standing before God, he hopes to deliver Lot once again from the judgment of God.

The more that we know about Lot, the more he seems like a fairly worthless person. However, he has believed in Jehovah Elohim, and he is, therefore, righteous in the eyes of God (2Peter 2:7). What we are witnessing here is an illustration of Jesus always making intercession on our behalf. **Therefore, Jesus Christ is also able to ultimately save us, we who come to God through Him, as He is always making intercession on our behalf** (Heb. 7:25, personalized). Just as Satan went to God and accused Job before God (Job 1:6–11), no doubt Satan was before God talking to God about Lot. "Look at this worthless piece of human garbage; he lives in the midst of all of the sexual debauchery—he is no better and no worse than any of these people here. He has no testimony before this people. They are not affected by his presence. How can you call Lot righteous?" Fortunately, Lot has a mediator speaking on his behalf. That is Abraham, and Abraham represents Jesus Christ, Who is the Mediator between God and man (1Tim. 2:5–6).

Abraham approaches his prayer to God (God is standing right in front of him so his talking face to face with God is not different from prayer in principle). Abraham makes his case with God's essence in view. "Far be it from You to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" If God is the Judge of all the earth, then God must be righteous. How can a righteous God destroy righteous and unrighteous people together, as if there was no difference? And God agrees; if there are 50 believers in Sodom, then He will not destroy that city.

Gen 18:27 Abraham answered and said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes.

Abraham recognizes his place before God, yet asks to continue his reasoning. God has given all of us a mind and God expects us to use it. Nothing in Christianity suggests that you become some kind of a verse-spouting robot.

Abraham admits that he knows that he has no right to second-guess God (this is called grace orientation), but he continues to speak, and to reason with God. Remember, all angelic creation is likely watching this, watching this weak little man, who cannot change forms, who is subject to the tiniest of ailments, a man who will die physically some day after a very short amount of time (compared to angels), a man who could be easily crushed by any angel, speaking to the God Who made him, reasoning with the Lord of the Universe; reasoning with the Lord Who gave him breath. Furthermore, God not only allows Abraham to speak and to reason with Him, but what Abraham says is recorded in the Word of God.

Gen 18:28 Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking. Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?" And He said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there."

Abraham asks, "What if there are only 45 righteous in Sodom?" And God promises not to destroy Sodom if there are 45 believers there.

Abraham will continue to ask about the size of the pivot (called *righteous* in this context) and if God will preserve a city because of fewer than 45 believers.

We do not have a clue as to the overall size of Sodom. My guess is, there is anywhere from 500 to 50,000 (and it is probably closer to 5000). Recall that the people of this area had been recently defeated in a war against the Aramæans, who probably had a force of 3000–30,000 when they attacked.

Gen 18:29 Again he spoke to him and said, "Suppose forty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of forty I will not do it."

What is happening is, Abraham is negotiating with God, trying to determine at what point is a city safe from total destruction. How many believers (righteous ones) must be in the city in order to preserve it? Recall that Abraham was made righteous through his faith in Jehovah Elohim (Gen. 15:6). He is hoping that God will preserve the city because of Lot's family being righteous.

Gen 18:30 Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there." He answered, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there."

Gen 18:31 He said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it."

This tells us that, in the city of Sodom, if there were 20 believers in that city, God would not destroy the entire city. By application, let's look at New Orleans, which was struck by a tremendously destructive hurricane, Katrina. Although the city was knocked back on its heels, it was certainly not devastated. Louisiana has a large population of people who believe in Jesus Christ. However, they also had a huge population of people living on welfare who should not have been, large gangs which had begun to terrorize the city, and great corruption in their politics (many of their politicians used Katrina for political theater within hours of the storm passing over). Katrina, in many ways, began a cleansing process in Louisiana. And, although I have not looked into the spiritual aspects, I am certain that their churches, once drained of water, enjoyed a surge of participants.

Lesson 200 Genesis 18:16–33 Abraham Intercedes for Lot in the City of Sodom

We will complete chapter 18 in this lesson. So far, this is what we have studied in the second half of this chapter:

Gen 18:16–19 The men rose up from there, and looked toward Sodom. Abraham went with them to see them on their way. Yahweh said, "Will I hide from Abraham what I do, seeing that Abraham has surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him? For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Yahweh, to do righteousness and justice; to the end that Yahweh may bring on Abraham that which he has spoken of him."

Two angels and the 2nd Member of the Trinity have come to eat and fellowship with Abraham. They appear as men to Abraham and they will appear as men to Sodom, where the two angels are going.

It ought to be obvious that God does not come to Abraham and consult with him on every natural or supernatural disaster for every geographical area. The line of Abraham is remarkable. His people would become a great nation and all of the nations of the earth would be blessed in him. Furthermore, Abraham would teach his children and their children the way of God, which begins as faith and then grows to experiential righteousness and justice. In this situation, Abraham's nephew Lot lives where God will bring judgment, and God believes that Abraham should be told.

Gen 18:20–21 Yahweh said, "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come to me. If not, I will know."

Many times in the Bible, God will speak, but it is unclear to whom He is speaking. These angels are to whom God speaks, along with all of the unseen angels that God created, both fallen and elect. The Bible unapologetically speaks on angelic creation over and over again. The reason that Job and his friends were unable to understand Job's great

sufferings is, they understood the character of God, but they never considered the Angelic Conflict in their discussions.

God is omniscient, so He knows all that occurs in this world. However, from time to time, He focuses the attention of angels upon certain things. He focused the angels upon Abraham in particular and told what would happen to his bloodline. He focused on the degeneracy of Sodom and that the five cities in this area must be destroyed, because men have cried out to God because of the evil in that geographical area.

It is both logical and reasonable that God is not just speaking about these two angels with Him but all of the angels. Angels are like us, insofar as they can only be in one place at one time. Although we have no idea how many billions of angels that God created, not all of them know about Abraham; not all of them know about what is going on in Sodom. God guides them to observe this part of human history as it actively proceeds in time.

Here, God is focusing on the cries of those who have suffered physical harm and pain because of the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah. It ought to be clear to all observers that, intentionally inflicting harm upon individuals is wrong, and this particular geographical area had reached a saturation point of sinfulness. There was no law and order.

Gen 18:22–25 The men turned from there, and went toward Sodom, but Abraham stood yet before Yahweh. Abraham drew near, and said, "Will you consume the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous within the city? Will you consume and not spare the place for the fifty righteous who are therein? Be it far from you to do things like that, to kill the righteous with the wicked, that so the righteous should be as the wicked. May that be far from you. Shouldn't the Judge of all the earth do right?"

The angels proceed on foot toward Sodom. However, Abraham stands before God, as a mediator, as it were, for the people of Sodom in general and for Lot and his family in particular. Abraham makes an argument to God: "What if there are 50 righteous in the city of Sodom? Would you still destroy it, killing all of the righteous with the unrighteous?" In the Old Testament, the term *righteous* often refers to those who have believed in Y^ehowah Elohim, the 2nd Person of the Trinity (Gen. 15:6). Abraham was quite certain that God would agree not to destroy Sodom if there were 50 believers there. And, he was correct in that assumption.

Gen 18:26 Yahweh said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sake."

Gen 18:27–31 Abraham answered, "See now, I have taken it on myself to speak to the Lord, who am but dust and ashes. What if there will lack five of the fifty righteous? Will you destroy all the city for lack of five?" He said, "I will not destroy it, if I find forty-five there." He spoke to him yet again, and said, "What if there are forty found there?" He said, "I will not do it for the forty's sake." He said, "Oh don't let the Lord be angry, and I will speak. What if there are thirty found there?" He said, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there." He said,

"See now, I have taken it on myself to speak to the Lord. What if there are twenty found there?" He said, "I will not destroy it for the twenty's sake."

Methodically, Abraham continues to reason with God. He reduces the number of righteous by 5, and God agrees that He would not destroy Sodom if there were 45 righteous living there. Then Abraham asks, "What about 40? What about 30? What about 20?" Each time, God agrees that He would not destroy Sodom if there are this many believers living there.

This tells us that God preserves geographical areas when there are a number of believers in those geographical areas. However, there is a point at which God will judge a geographical area.

Personally, I am a child of the 50's, and part of the national psyche in those years was, we had nuclear weapons, Russia had nuclear weapons, and any day now, we might end up destroying one another with these weapons. That is pure hokum. At the same time, Billy Graham was going across the American landscape telling millions of people about Jesus Christ; and probably millions eventually believed in Jesus Christ because of his evangelism. You have to choose, on many occasions, what do you believe? Do you believe the Word of God (God will not destroy a nation with millions of believers) or do you believe what society seems to think, that, any minute now, our country could be destroyed with Russian nuclear weapons?

This does not mean that we, as a nation, act foolishly, and disband our military and disarm our nuclear warheads. Nowhere in the Bible does God suggest that a nation not have a vibrant military. Under King David, a man after God's Own heart, Israel, a theocracy, had one of the great militaries in human history. The Bible even glorifies several of the officers under David's command in two places.

[Gen 18:32](#) Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there." He answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it."

Abraham has assumed that Lot and his immediate family was comprised of 10 people who believed in Jehovah Elohim. We know that there was Lot, his wife, his 2 daughters at home and their fiancées (Gen. 19:5–14). That would be 6 people. There appears to be a daughter who is already married, so that would be two more; and there appear to be 2 or more sons (Gen. 19:12). That takes our total to 10. Abraham had apparently assumed that Lot and his family have all trusted in Jehovah and that they would have evangelized the 2 fiancées and 1 son-in-law. Surely, the time Lot spent in Sodom could account for 3 additional righteous people outside of his own immediate family. After all, Lot has lived there for 23 years. Abraham may even be aware that Lot has a lofty political position in the city of Sodom; he is a judge.

So there is no misunderstanding, Abraham did not talk God down to 10 people, and, had he just kept going, he would have gotten the number down to 4, and that Sodom and

Gomorrah might still be cities today. For the size of the city of Sodom, 10 believers (righteous ones) would have preserved that city—that would have been the bare minimum. So, you may think that New York City or that San Francisco are horribly degenerate cities (and they are, in many respects); there are still a significant number of believers in each city, and those believers preserve those cities. In fact, it is someone ironical that, in both cities, people of faith are often mocked or their churches mocked, but it is because of them that San Francisco and New York City are still cities today.

So, had Abraham said, “What if there are only 4 people? Would You destroy the city for a lack of 6?” And God would have answered, “Yes, I would destroy Sodom, but I would deliver the righteous.”

At one time, Abraham and Lot had so many possessions that their employees were arguing over the ownership of cattle. They had far too many possessions for Abraham and Lot to coexist on the same pastureland; and now, Abraham is counting on Lot and his family to be at least ten people, so that the city of Sodom is preserved. Abraham is not all that concerned for the people of Sodom, whom he knows barely, but for Lot and his family.

It is upon this and many other passages that the concept of a *pivot* is developed (a *pivot* is the number of believers in a geographical area; their number and spiritual advancement determine how God will deal with that geographical area). God has agreed that if there are ten righteous in Sodom, that He would not destroy it. This indicates that the number of believers in a geographical area affects how God deals with the people in that geographical area as a corporate entity. Ten believers in Sodom would have preserved Sodom. However, when we get into Gen. 19, it will be clear that there are four who believe in Y^ehowah Elohim, and that none from this group of four would be considered a spiritual giant.

[Gen 18:33](#) And the LORD went His way, when He had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

Few people appreciate just how much information is tucked into the book of Genesis.

The Seeds of Doctrines Found in Genesis 18

Doctrines	Text/Commentary
Temporal judgement	God does judge nations and cities because of the behavior of its citizenry. God deals with man individually and corporately.
Intercessory Prayer	Abraham is praying on behalf of Lot and his family. Abraham also had a friendly relationship with the king of Sodom (Gen. 14:17, 22–24). We have no idea if this man is still alive.

The Seeds of Doctrines Found in Genesis 18

Doctrines	Text/Commentary
Mediator	Abraham is acting as a mediator on Lot's behalf. To most people, Lot seems to be a pretty worthless fellow, and his family shows little interest in spiritual matters. That is what Satan tells God about you and I; and Jesus Christ is our Perfect Mediator, Who defends us and speaks on our behalf. Zech. 3:1–2 1Tim. 2:5 Heb. 7:25 Rev. 12:10
Prayer	<p>Abraham is praying to God, just as you and I pray to God. Abraham makes it clear that we can pray to God, and base what we ask for on Bible doctrine. Abraham is certain that God will not destroy a city if there are 50 believers in that city. So, that is his starting point, which is immediately confirmed by God.</p> <p>Also, God is a personal God to Abraham; and God listens to Abraham's prayers and answers his prayers. Abraham does not see God as an impersonal force or as a God Who no longer intervenes in human history. God is real and Abraham expects God to hear him and to be reasonable.</p>
Prayer, The Desire Behind	Behind every prayer is a desire. God will consider what Abraham is praying for (sparing the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah) and He considers Abraham's underlying motivation (sparing Lot and his family). God will answer "no" to preserving Sodom and Gomorrah, but He will honor Abraham's underlying motivation and deliver Lot's family.
The Salt principle	Had there been 50 believers in Sodom—if there were just 10 believers in Sodom—God would have preserved Sodom and Gomorrah. Jesus tells His disciples "You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has become insipid, with what will it [the earth] be seasoned? it is no longer useful, except to be thrown out of doors, and walked upon." (Matt. 5:13). Salt, in the ancient world, was used to preserve food, as believers with doctrine preserve the earth. However, there is a point at which God will destroy entire cities and nations.

The Seeds of Doctrines Found in Genesis 18

Doctrines	Text/Commentary
<p>The Pivot and the Influence of Believers in a Society</p>	<p>Believers with doctrine influence a society. A good example of this is the Roman Empire, which began as being very opposed to Christianity, but which became strongly influenced by Christianity. As the Christian Tertullian observed: "We are but of yesterday, yet we fill your cities, islands, forts, towns, councils, even camps, tribes, decuries, the palace, the senate, the forum; we have left you the temples alone." This was accomplished without an armed insurrection against Rome.</p> <p>The norms and standards of believers in Jesus Christ began to filter into the society. Abraham and his people represented a positive influence on the surrounding areas; Lot and his family had almost no influence whatsoever.</p>
<p>Spiritual Influence rather than Political Influence</p>	<p>Abraham has no political office, yet his influence comes down to us even today. Lot was made a judge in his city, which ultimately had no influence on the preservation of his city.</p> <p>This does not mean that believers ought not to be politicians or be involved in some area of politics; it simply means that Billy Graham had a much more profound affect upon the United States did than, say, President John Kennedy.</p>
<p>God's Judgment of Degeneracy</p>	<p>Degeneracy, such as was found in Sodom and Gomorrah, had reached a point when it was infecting all of society. There was no law enforcement to protect the strangers who had come into Sodom. People obviously knew what was going to happen to these strangers, but no one except Lot offered to step in. No one sought to control this outbreak of degeneracy.</p>

Over and over again, we find in Genesis the seed for some of the most important doctrines from the Word of God. It is as if the Author of Genesis actually knew the end from the beginning, and filled the book of Genesis with the seeds of all the doctrine that would follow.

Gen 18:33 And the LORD went His way, when He had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

One more thing needs to be said: we are not guaranteed a never-ending life in our bodies of sin on this earth. We will all die. It is through death that we will be ultimately cleansed of sin. It is through death that we all realize the mortality of our lives and to think about the God Who made us. However, God has a time and a place, and God desires our deaths to be to His glory.

An Abbreviated Exegesis of Genesis 18:

Bible translation used: The Scriptures 2009. Unless otherwise noted, all other quotations will be taken from this translation as well.

In the Scriptures 2009, instead of *God*, we have the word *Elohim*, which is a transliteration from the Hebrew. The other name for God, YHWH (or Jehovah, Yahweh, Adonai, Lord, JHWH, Y^ehowah) is represented with the actual Hebrew יהוה. The reason for there being so many different words used here is interesting. Originally, the Hebrew was written without vowels—not just YHWH, but every single Hebrew word. Because the Hebrew Scriptures (which we know as the Old Testament) were read aloud so often, the reader could look at the Hebrew consonants and know the word that was there. In fact, the Masoretes, who preserved the Bibles' pronunciation, introduced diacritical marks in the 7th century A.D. (these are vowel points, which was added above and below the original Hebrew text). Up to that time, every word in the Bible was read aloud except for one, and that was YHWH. When the Jews came to this proper name, they said, *Adonai* (= *Lord*). As a result, the Jews preserved the pronunciation of the Biblical text for all but one word. Of the nearly 100 translations of the Old Testament to which I refer, any one of those eight forms may be found—and one of them, the Message (I believe) uses *GOD*. Furthermore, Bible translations are not necessarily consistent at this point. One place we may read *Lord*, and elsewhere we may read *Jehovah* in the same translation.

Genesis 18:1 And יהוה [= YHWH, Y^ehowah] appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamrē, while he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day.

There are no actual chapter breaks in the original manuscripts. At the end of Genesis 17, Abraham had been talking to God and he (Abraham) saw to it that every male in his camp would get circumcised. Therefore, even without Abraham being the only male mentioned at the end of Genesis 17, he was primary male mentioned. Therefore, *him* in v. 1 refers to Abraham.

For most of the 13 years of Ishmael's life, God has not appeared to Abraham. However, most recently, God appears to Abraham twice (Genesis 17:1); and in this chapter, a second time. That is because what is taking place is extremely important.

Abraham's tent was found in the midst of a forest of terebinth trees or on the edge of this forest. This would have provided Abraham with the maximum amount of coolness during the warm days.

Genesis 18:2–3 So he lifted his eyes and looked, and saw three men standing opposite him. And when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself

to the ground, and said, “הוהי, if I have now found favour in Your eyes, please do not pass Your servant by.

We do not know the exact nature of these three men. We would assume that One of them is God, the Revealed God, based upon v. 1.

Abraham recognizes that one of these men is the Revealed God. He bows down before them.

These three will go to Sodom; and since Genesis 19 speaks of two angels being in Sodom (Genesis 19:1), we would assume that this is God and two angels, all manifest to Abraham as three men. However, Abraham recognizes that One of them is God.

Genesis 18:4 “Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.

In the ancient world, it was common courtesy to wash the feet of someone coming to your tent or your abode.

Genesis 18:5 “And let me bring a piece of bread and refresh your hearts, and then go on, for this is why you have come to your servant.” And they said, “Do as you have said.”

Abraham is going to gather up some food for them, and he will do this before they tell him why they are there.

Genesis 18:6 So Abraham ran into the tent to Sarah and said, “Hurry, make ready three measures of fine flour, knead it and make cakes.”

Abraham asks Sarah to make some fresh bread for his guests.

Genesis 18:7 And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave it to a young man, and he hurried to prepare it.

Abraham was also going to serve some veal, which is a wonderful tasting meat (I don't know where it can be found anymore).

All of this would have taken some time. My guess is a couple of hours.

Genesis 18:8 And he took curds and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before them, and he stood by them under the tree as they ate.

Abraham serves them all a meal. A portion of this meal appears to be cottage cheese.

Genesis 18:9 And they said to him, “Where is Sarah your wife?” And he said, “See, in the tent.”

They ask about Sarah, which indicates that either Abraham or a servant actually brought the food to these men. Sarah may have cooked or organized the cooking, but she did not come out before these guests. However, that does not mean that she was not interested.

Genesis 18:10 And He said, "I shall certainly return to you according to the time of life, and see, Sarah your wife is to have a son!" And Sarah was listening in the tent door which was behind him.

God tells Abraham, "I will return to you next year and you and your wife will have a son." Sarah was listening in on this conversation.

Genesis 18:11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age, and Sarah was past the way of women.

Abraham and Sarah were quite old at this time and long past the age of having children. Abraham would not have been potent and Sarah would not be fertile.

Genesis 18:12 And Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my master being old too?"

Sarah laughs within herself at the thought of this. How could she and her husband have this pleasure at their age?

Genesis 18:13 And הוהי said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I truly have a child, since I am old?'"

Then God asks Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and question having a child at her age?"

Genesis 18:14 "Is any matter too hard for הוהי? At the appointed time I am going to return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah is to have a son."

God continues, "Is there anything too hard for Me to do?" He repeats His promise to return to Abraham in about a year.

Genesis 18:15 But Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. And He said, "No, but you did laugh!"

Sarah says aloud, "I did not laugh." God corrects her.

Genesis 18:16 And the men rose up from there and looked toward Sodom [= Sodom], and Abraham went with them to send them away.

The men rose up and looked toward Sodom. Abraham walked with them as they went that direction.

Recall that Sodom is where Lot and his wife and two daughters live.

Genesis 18:17–18 And הוהי said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, since Abraham is certainly going to become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?”

God asks the angels, “Should I hide from Abraham what I am doing? Remember that Abraham is going to become a great and mighty nation and all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him.”

Genesis 18:19 “For I have known him, so that he commands his children and his household after him, to guard the way of הוהי, to do righteousness and right-ruling, so that הוהי brings to Abraham what He has spoken to him.”

God points out what Abraham had been doing. “After all,” God says, “He commands his children and his household to guard the way of Y^ehowah.”

The plural of *sons* may seem confusing, as Abraham right now only has one son. Furthermore, this cannot refer to the children in his camp, as God calls them *his sons*. The key is the translation of v. 19a:

For I have known him to the end that he will instruct his sons and his household after him...
(Kukis mostly literal translation)

There are three words strung together here which mean, when so combined, *to the end*. God knows that Abraham has instructed Ishmael; he will instruct his son Isaac; and he will also instruct Esau and Jacob (his future grandsons). However, Abraham, by preserving the words of God, will instruct all of his future sons. Right now, we are studying the very words of God preserved by Abraham about 4000 years ago.

Genesis 18:20 And הוהי said, “Because the outcry against Sedom and Amorah is great, and because their sin is very heavy,...

God also says that there is an outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah because their sin is so great.

Genesis 18:21 ...“I am going down now to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me, and if not, I know.”

God knows all that is taking place, but he focuses angelic attention away from Abraham, for a time, and onto Sodom and Gomorrah.

Angels can only be in one place at once, and God had all angelic creation focused upon Abraham. They will view Sodom, by way of contrast.

Genesis 18:22 So the men turned away from there and went toward Sedom, but הוהי still stood before Abraham.

Abraham is aware that there may be great judgment against Sodom, and he knows that Lot and his family are living there (recall that the two troops split up back in Genesis 13).

Genesis 18:23 And Abraham drew near and said, “Would You also destroy the righteous with the wrong?”

At this point, Abraham questions God. He asks a general question, “Would You destroy the justified man side-by-side with the malevolent person?” (I’ve given a more accurate translation here)

Genesis 18:24 “Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city, would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it?”

Abraham begins to ask about the pivot. “Let’s say that there are 50 righteous souls in Sodom; would you then destroy it?”

Genesis 18:25 “Far be it from You to act in this way, to slay the righteous with the wrong, so that the righteous should be as the wrong. Far be it from You! Does the Judge of all the earth not do right?”

Abraham answers his own question. “Certainly not.”

Genesis 18:26 And הוה said, “If I find in Sedom fifty righteous within the city, then I shall spare all the place for their sakes.”

God confirms that he is correct in his understanding of the application of God’s justice.

Genesis 18:27 And Abraham answered and said, “Look, please, I who am but dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to הוה,...

Abraham correctly understands who and what he is before God, but he presses further this issue with God.

Genesis 18:28 “Suppose there are five less than the fifty righteous, would You destroy all of the city for lack of five?” And He said, “If I find there forty-five, I do not destroy it.”

Let’s say that there are only 45 justified believers in Sodom. Would you destroy the entire city?” God answers, “No.”

Genesis 18:29 And he spoke to Him yet again and said, “Suppose there are found forty?” And He said, “I would not do it for the sake of forty.”

“Let’s say there are forty believers; what about then?” And God says He would not destroy the city.

Genesis 18:30 And he said, “Let not הוה be displeased, and let me speak: Suppose there are found thirty?” And He said, “I would not do it if I find thirty there.”

Abraham drops this number down to thirty, and God says that He would not destroy the city for the thirty.

Genesis 18:31 And he said, “Look, please, I have taken it upon myself to speak to הוהי: Suppose there are found twenty?” And He said, “I would not destroy it for the sake of twenty.”

Abraham says, “What about twenty?” God says. “I would preserve the city for twenty believers.”

Genesis 18:32 And he said, “Let not הוהי be displeased, and let me speak only this time: Suppose there are found ten?” And He said, “I would not destroy it for the sake of ten.”

Finally, Abraham gets down to the number ten and God assures him that He will not destroy Sodom if there are ten believers there. We know that any person who has believed in the Revealed God is righteous, as per Genesis 15:6.

Abraham knows that Lot, his wife and his two daughters are all believers. Now, you will recall that Abraham and Lot split up when they were both too prosperous and could not keep all of their material gains separate. Abraham knows how many servants and hired help have gone with Lot and his family. Given the size of Abraham’s camp, Abraham probably assume that, if anything, Lot’s slaves increased. How many did he have when splitting up with Abraham? I would not be surprised if there were forty-six or more. So, even with the number that Abraham began with, he was certain that God could not destroy Sodom, no matter what is going on with Lot at this time. Abraham has continued to prosper and he assumes that same has been true of Lot.

Genesis 18:33 Then הוהי went away as soon as He had ended speaking to Abraham. And Abraham returned to his place.

As it turns out, there are only four righteous souls in all of Sodom; and one of them will look back longingly.

Now, let’s say Moses kept pushing this, and he got down to only four. God would have said, “For that few, I will destroy the city.”

When it comes to the pivot of a nation, God looks at two things: (1) how many of these are saved and (2) how many of them are in a state of spiritual maturity? This is key in the preservation of any city or state or country.

At one time in the United States, if anyone asked me, “Do we need to move to Texas to experience spiritual growth?” Of course I would have said *no*. However, there are fewer and fewer believers throughout the United States; and far fewer doctrinal believers. This may be a time in the history of our country when you want to live near a doctrinal church, simply as a matter of personal safety. This does not mean that God will not protect you individually wherever you are. God will protect Lot and his family. God does protect His

Own. But I could not say what sort of judgment will come upon you if you live in, say, California. In the past few years (decades), they have suffered great forest fires. Even if you are a hundred miles from the nearest fire, its smoke often hung like a blanket for weeks at a time all over places in the state.

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